

**AN ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS' READING HABITS IN THE DIGITAL
ENVIRONMENT AT NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND
TECHNOLOGY, BULAWAYO, ZIMBABWE**

**BY
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**A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Publishing of the Department of Publishing and Media
Studies, Moi University**

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DECLARATION

Declaration by the candidate

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree to any other university, college or any other person for academic purposes or any other purpose. No part of this work may be reproduced without the prior written permission of the author and/or Moi University.

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DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my beloved fiancé Lovely Ntuthuko Ndlovu. May the Lord richly bless you and multiply the fruits of your hard work and tenacity. “It’s neither by might nor power, but by my spirit says the Lord”!

To my family: my mum, my brothers, my sisters, my aunties and my uncles for their tireless and constant encouragement in order for me to accomplish my dreams and for the support they gave me to make me what I am today.

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ABSTRACT

Reading habits are an essential part of life skill and development especially considering new knowledge development and problem solving skills in our daily life. Students in academia acquire knowledge through learning and reading print and electronic sources. It is feared that reading is threatened by various other emerging, influential and competing media products. This competition might lead to inadequate concentration on the act of academic and leisure reading and thus leading to its complete demise if not total extinction. This study sought to investigate students' reading habits at National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in the midst of a rapidly growing and expanding digital environment and to recommend strategies that can promote sustainable reading habits. The objectives of this study were to: evaluate students' reading habits at NUST; establish factors that contribute to the alleged poor reading habits at NUST; identify obstacles and find out their effects on the creation of viable and sustained reading habits among university students; examine the effects of digital media on students' reading habits, examine the role of publishers, libraries and other stakeholders in the publishing industry in enhancing and sustaining reading habits in the digital environment and to formulate strategies that can be employed in the development of sustainable reading habits among youth in Zimbabwe. The study was guided by two theories; constructivism theory by Jerome Bruner and the cognitive theory of multimedia learning devised by Richard Mayer. The survey adopted a mixed methods research design through qualitative and quantitative approaches. Simple random sampling was used to select 98 respondents from the total students' population. Data was collected using questionnaires and interviews. Research findings revealed that there are poor reading habits among university students at NUST as most students perceive reading as a way to achieve academic success and not for general knowledge or leisure. The worsening state of reading is to be blamed on the arrival of various emerging, influential and competing digital media because students have become so much obsessed with the digital media that they do not see the interest in leisure reading. The study recommended that students should be provided with a conducive reading environment both at home and at school, adequate relevant reading materials, and proactive public awareness programmes on the importance of reading for self and national development.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ICTs	– Information Communication Technologies
NUST	– National University of Science and Technology
UNDP	– United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	– United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
ZIBF	– Zimbabwe International Book Fair

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

The low level of reading habits among Zimbabweans in general and university students in particular is one of the many challenges faced by authors and publishers of African literature. Reading habits are an essential life skill. According to Liu (2005) reading is still the most efficient method for communicating words. Reading is not limited to increasing knowledge but it also builds maturity and character, sharpens thinking, and widens awareness in social, economic, political, and environmental issues (Abidin, 2011). Abidin (2011) goes on to state that reading is not a process that is inculcated over night; it takes effort and hard work. Inculcating a reading habit pays off handsomely in our lives either directly or indirectly.

According to Sigauke (2008) too much exposure to television, social networks and other media technologies has undermined the habit and culture of reading even among the more privileged and educated sectors of society in Zimbabwe. Liu (2005) states that the growth of digital media may give negative implication to reading that people are less engaged in extensive reading and lack the ability to read deeply and sustain a prolonged engagement in reading. It does not matter whether people read from printed paper or from a screen, as long as they love reading. It is the lack of this love for reading that is worrying the publishing industry in Zimbabwe. A more complex society demands increased rather than decreased reading, regardless of the medium through which reading is done. According to Mushakavanhu (2011), most people in Zimbabwe regard

reading as an activity connected to school or formal education. They regard it as an activity that has to be endured during a short period at school and then abandoned when people complete the required stages of school. Therefore, the issue of reading whether it is for learning or leisure is important since it helps broaden people's experiences and knowledge (Green, 2002).

Zimbabwe as one of the most literate countries in Africa needs to develop and sustain a culture of reading as this can add quality to life, provide access to culture and cultural heritage, empower and emancipate citizens as well as unite people (Abidin, 2011). Reading is an essential part of life and development (Ruterana, 2012). It cannot be denied that reading carries great importance in people's lives. Reading should be promoted through partnership between the public and the private sector. Parents, teachers and society at large should stimulate the habit of reading books, newspapers, magazines and other information sources by taking up the challenge themselves before encouraging children.

According to Hove in Mushakavanhu (2011) most education systems in Africa are examination oriented; students are never taught to read as a pleasurable experience in itself without thinking of examinations. Reading is not just for school, it is for life. Becoming a skilled and adaptable reader enhances the chances of success at school and beyond (Green, 2002). According to Mayowa (2012) reading sharpens the mind, makes one reason rationally and objectively as well as projects one for greatness in life.

A reading culture on the other hand is the process of building up a positive reading attitude. When youth habitually and regularly engage in reading books and other information bearing materials that are not necessarily required for their

advancement in their disciplines or careers, they can be said to have inculcated a meaningful reading culture (Mayowa, 2012).

According to Githiora, Kiplang'at and Otike (2009) continuous reading is essential in the acquisition of knowledge and information in order to be at par with the changes and developments that are taking place. Makenzi in Oyuga (2009) states that reading does not only allow people access to information, knowledge and literature, but also helps them develop a critical and independent thinking that will serve them for the rest of their lives. To achieve sustainable human development requires people who are literate and able to think critically and analytically (Makenzi in Oyuga, 2009). As important as reading is, it is an irony of life that university students today are not fully embracing reading and exploiting its potential yet the country has a high literacy rate (Mukomborenwa, 2011).

After many years in which Zimbabwe has experienced political and economic pressures, leisure reading as a pastime is at risk. Adesanoye & Ojeniji (2005) say a good book reading culture is required to sustain the growth and diversification of a book industry. A reading habit is identified as the single most important determinant of a student's success in education and in our modern complex society (Green, 2002). It is devastating that we are losing generations to social networks and other emerging and influential digital media, especially the youth who are expected to be expanding and deepening their knowledge through reading. The concern is not about reading the printed word only, but that the youth will be enfeebled as readers if the present trend in communication continues. The development of reading habits should ideally start in early childhood and be nurtured through adulthood. The process should build a literate

nation that can transform itself into an informed and knowledgeable society capable of playing a rightful role in the global village (Kachala in Ruterana, 2012).

Holte (1998) said that a situation in which most people rarely read, either because they lack the skill or simply because they do not care enough to take time to read will pose serious problems to society in the future. People nowadays are believed to have less time to devote to reading than in the past decades. In fact Weel (2011) has stated that purely time wise, the presence of many media jostling for attention on one screen is the reason why reading might not fare so well in a multimedia environment.

With a vast and speedy amount of available digital information, people particularly university students, are spending more time skimming and browsing for information on the internet (Liu, 2005). Some scholars argue that the arrival of digital media, together with the fragmentary nature of hypertext, is threatening sustained leisure reading (Birkets, 1994; Liu, 2005). Birkets further notes that the generation that grow up in the digital environment lacks the ability to read deeply and to sustain a prolonged engagement in reading. Already some youth cannot get away from computers and other digital devices and these technologies have undermined the habit and culture of reading, even among the more privileged and educated sectors of society in Zimbabwe. These negative trends, if unchecked would make the reading culture and literacy rates continue to decline in Zimbabwe even though it is reputed to be a country with a highly educated populace in Africa.

1.2 National University of Science and Technology (NUST)

The study focused on assessing students' reading habits at National University of Science and Technology (NUST) in the midst of a rapidly growing and expanding digital environment. NUST is a progressive university established by an act of the Zimbabwe Parliament in 1991 as the second university. Using English as the language of instruction, NUST provides an invigorating intellectual climate, which fosters an academic community where both staff and students can expand the frontiers of knowledge in science and technology. NUST is located in the city of Bulawayo, South West of Zimbabwe. It offers a variety of programmes through its six faculties namely; Applied Sciences, Built Environment, Commerce, Communication and Information Science, Industrial Technology and Medicine.

1.2.1 Motto

The motto of NUST is "Think in other terms". Considering the motto of the university one wonders how students can "think in other terms" if they do not have time devoted to sustained leisure reading. Thus, students need to fully embrace reading and exploit its potential for knowledge gain as well as self and national development.

1.2.2 Vision

The vision of NUST is "To be a world class centre of excellence in teaching, research, innovation and entrepreneurship for sustainable development". Participation in sustainable development, research and innovation requires knowledge gain from reading. Therefore, reading should never be taken for granted; students need to be well read to achieve academic success and general knowledge for sustainable development.

1.2.3 Mission

The mission of the university is “To contribute positively towards the advancement of humanity through the provision of knowledge-based solutions to scientific, technological, economic and social challenges”. Achievements of the mission are guided by the following core values: honesty and integrity, innovativeness, excellence and diligence, intellectual freedom, equity, and social and environmental responsibility. Therefore, to help achieve the mission of the university, students need to take both academic and leisure reading serious.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Reading habits are an essential part of life skill and development especially considering new knowledge development and problem solving skills in our daily life. Thus, reading whether for learning or leisure is imperative given that it helps broaden people’s experiences and knowledge. Students in academia acquire knowledge through learning and reading print and electronic sources. It is feared that reading is threatened by various other emerging, influential and competing media products. This competition might lead to inadequate concentration on the act of academic and leisure reading and thus leading to its complete demise if not total extinction. The alleged apprehension due to such demise of a reading habit is the emergence of a generation who cannot meditate on written facts to solve life problems or a generation that cannot write too.

It is alleged that university students rarely take time to enjoy reading for leisure. Instead, these upcoming scholars who are expected to be the reading lot in society seemingly and strictly perceive reading as a way to achieve academic success and not

for general knowledge or leisure. It has therefore become an irony of life that as important as reading is, university students are not fully embracing reading and exploiting its potential. It is thus devastating even to society that the emerging generations may fail to expand and deepen their knowledge through reading. With the increasing availability of digital media and the corresponding amount of time that people; particularly students spend on digital media, reading habits as previously known have drastically been affected. The researcher therefore, wanted to find out factors that have adversely affected students' reading habits, especially in the digital environment.

1.4 Aim of the Study

The study sought to investigate students' reading habits at the National University of Science and Technology in the midst of a rapidly growing and expanding digital environment and to recommend strategies that can promote sustainable reading habits.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this research were to:

- i. Evaluate students' reading habits at NUST.
- ii. Establish factors that contribute to the alleged poor reading habits among university students.
- iii. Examine the effects of digital media on students' reading habits.
- iv. Identify obstacles and find out their effects on the creation of viable and sustained reading habits among university students.
- v. Examine the role of publishers, libraries and other stakeholders in the publishing industry in enhancing and sustaining reading habits in the digital environment.

- vi. Formulate strategies that can be employed in the development of sustainable reading habits in Zimbabwe, despite the growth in digital media.

1.6 Research Questions

Based on the research objectives, the following research questions were formulated:

- i. How are the students' reading habits at NUST?
- ii. What factors contribute to the alleged poor reading habits among students?
- iii. What effects do digital media have on students' reading habits?
- iv. What are the obstacles and their effects to the creation of viable and sustained reading habits among university students?
- v. What roles do publishers, libraries, and other stakeholders in the publishing industry play in enhancing and sustaining reading habits in the digital environment?
- vi. What strategies can be implemented to promote and sustain student's reading habits despite the growth in digital media?

1.7 Assumptions of the study

The research was based on the assumption that the rapid growth in digital technology and expansion of the digital environment has kept away many students from developing desirable reading habits.

1.8 Scope of the study

Conceptually, the research was specifically directed towards the assessment of reading habits among university students at NUST in the midst of a rapidly growing digital

environment. It does not matter whether students read from printed paper or from a screen, as long as they read. Geographically, the study focused on university students (undergraduates) from NUST in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Book publishers, university librarian, ZIBF co-ordinator and lecturers in this university were consulted as key informants for the purposes of the study.

1.9 Significance of the study

The study is significant because it identified the factors influencing the reading habits among university students and sought to provide information for decision makers to use in making policies geared towards improving the reading habits of university students. Since reading contributes to knowledge acquisition, through the findings university students will get a better understanding and appreciation of reading as a vital tool in fighting illiteracy and enhancing self-development. The findings of this study would also help publishers and decision makers identify means of effectively promoting sustainable reading habits despite the growth in digital technology. The creation of viable reading habits will in long-term contribute to national development, because reading is key to development. Thus, creating awareness on the importance of reading for leisure that will be derived from the study can improve both social and economic development of many communities in Zimbabwe. The knowledge acquired from this study would also contribute to better understanding of the phenomena of reading habits in Zimbabwe and in contributing to future research in similar areas generally. In addition, the findings of the study would assist the Zimbabwean authorities, especially the Ministry of Education to look into how to accommodate reading in the school curriculum.

1.10 Summary

This chapter was concerned with the presentation of the background to the study. The particular issue to be solved was highlighted through the problem statement, in which the actual reason for conducting the research project was given. It outlined the aim of the study and research questions. An insight into the significance and relevance of the study was also given. A set of assumptions were made and these were clearly stated together with the scope and the limiting factors. All these gave the foundation upon which this research was conceived.

1.11 Definition of Terms

Digital environment: a simulated place made through use of one or more computers (Unknown, 2011).

Electronic / Digital media: refers to digitized content that can be transmitted over the internet or computer networks. This can include text, audio, video and photo content that has been encoded. After digital media is encoded it can be easily manipulated, distributed and rendered (played) by electronic devices and is easily transmitted over computer networks (Unknown, 2011).

Literacy: is the ability to read for knowledge and write coherently and think critically about the written word. Literacy can also include the ability to understand all forms of communication such as body language, pictures, video and sound (reading, speaking, listening and viewing) (Green, 2002).

Reading: is the ability to decode what has been encoded for the generation of meaning (Abidin, 2011). It is an active and skill-based process of constructing meaning or gaining knowledge from oral; visual and written text but not everything we say we read is print (Liu, 2005).

Reading culture: it is making reading a way of life because of the enjoyment, interest and motivation derived from it (Weel, 2011).

Reading habits: refers to the creation of a strong desire to read that continues throughout the student's life (Oyegade, 2011).

University student: a student enrolled in university.

Youth: persons between the ages of 15-24. It is the period between childhood and adult age (UNESCO, 2011).

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter links the study to the theoretical framework. Literature related to the research is exploited; highlighting obstacles to the creation of viable reading habits, the importance of reading, the role of publishers, role of libraries and the role of ZIBF (Zimbabwe International Book Fair) in the development of viable reading habits. The literature is guided by the research objectives identified in chapter one, and includes a detailed discussion on digital media and its effects on students' reading habits. Thus, literature review helps the researcher to identify research that is related to the study and placing each work in the context of its contribution to the understanding of the research problem being studied (Kemoni, 2008).

2.2 Theoretical Framework

To accomplish the aim of this research, two theories which are closely related to the research topic, namely the constructivism theory (Abidin, 2011 originated by Jerome Bruner, 1960s) and the cognitive theory of multimedia learning (Mayer, 2009) were used. A theoretical framework is an examination of the existing or self formulated theories in relation to the research objectives (Oso and Onen, 2008). It enables the researcher to draw new conclusions, improve actions and generate theories that are relevant to the study.

2.2.1 Constructivism theory

Constructivism theory is a theory of knowledge which argues that humans generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences and ideas (Abidin, 2011). Information age and technology have caused us to reconceptualise the learning process and design new learning approaches. For example, the new media technologies can be used as a powerful tool to allow students to construct complex knowledge bases. They facilitate knowledge exploration by students. Students can work independently to find information on the internet, create and build information through designing web sites, and communicate and share knowledge through the electronic devices. The constructivism theory places the ultimate burden of learning on the learners and not the tools employed to learn which includes teachers and technology. The constructivist theory expects students to be actively involved in the teaching and learning process; the environment is democratic, interactive and student-centred.

2.2.2 Cognitive theory of multimedia learning

The second theory used is the cognitive theory of multimedia learning. In this theory learning is seen as an active process which includes filtering, selecting, organizing and integrating information (Mayer, 2009). It assumes that a combination of words and pictures rather than words alone is an effective way to achieve multimedia learning. As for student practice, the theory of multimedia can be applied to inculcate better and interesting reading habits. Thus, the printed word is no longer the only way students can get informed. They acquire information and knowledge through reading both print and electronic sources. Therefore, students play proactive roles seeking the information that they need.

2.2.3 Application of the theories to the study

A combination of these two theories contributes to both print and electronic reading habits. Electronic information which is an integration of text, graphics and sound attracts the reader to pursue the internet as a source of information. Thus, information passes through the stages of filtering, selecting, organizing and integrating. The integration of text, graphics and sound enhances better reading habits among students. Nowadays youth are considered to be digital natives (techno savvy), what attracts them most to reading are the text, graphics and sound. Nithy (2011) stated that information is ubiquitous. Universities and lecturers only need to facilitate learning instead of playing the role of 'information suppliers'. Students are independent with the changes in technology and education.

2.3 A brief historical overview of reading

Reading is a cultural activity that has undergone profound changes since its inception. Walter (2008) pointed out that the earliest basic script dates from about 6,000 years ago. Furthermore, the first full alphabet did not have its beginning until the Greeks developed their alphabet about 750 B.C. Putting this time frame into an individual perspective, Wolf (2008) poetically wrote that despite the fact that it took our ancestors about 2,000 years to develop an alphabetic code, children are regularly expected to crack this code in about 2,000 days.

Providing insight into the cultural history of reading, Darnton (2009) pointed out that up until the third or fourth century A.D., Europeans had to unroll a book to read. Scrolls would eventually evolve into folded pages, which in turn eventually became gathered pages or the book as it is recognized today. Manguel (1998) stated that early Christians

adopted the codex because they found it a convenient format for keeping their spiritual texts hidden from Roman authorities. These early Christians were the forefathers of the men who later read and transcribed their religious texts in monasteries.

Interestingly, these early scribes first did their work by reading out loud to themselves. Not until the ninth century did monastic regulations begin requiring silent reading (Manguel, 1998). By the thirteenth century the practice of men reading silently and alone became commonplace. This shift to silent reading was a profound change; one that Darnton (2009) suggested involved a greater mental adjustment than the shift to printed text. Yet the coming of printed text did represent a substantial social shift. In the middle of the fifteenth century, the German entrepreneur Johann Gutenberg produced his first printed versions of the Bible using his fantastic invention of movable type. The printing press had been born.

For the first half century of its existence the printed book continued to be an imitation of the manuscript book. No doubt it was read by the same public in the same way. But after 1500 the printed book, reached new kinds of readers and stimulated new kinds of reading. Increasingly standardised in its design, cheaper in its price, and widespread in its distribution, the new book transformed the world. It did not simply supply more information; it provided a mode of understanding, a basic metaphor of making sense of life (Darnton, 2009).

By the eighteenth century Europeans had largely begun to switch from reading intensively to extensively (Darnton, 2009). Reading was a solitary silent process only for the educated elite who could afford to buy books. For the rest of the population, as Darnton (2009) pointed out, reading was a social activity which took place in workshops and taverns, while children played, women sewed, and men repaired tools.

In the eighteenth century, Gutenberg's invention became commercialized and industrialized. Griswold (2008) pointed out that during the height of the industrial

revolution reading finally became a widespread leisure activity in Europe and North America. And as the post-industrial information society developed, reading became necessary for many occupations in the skilled labour force. Griswold (2008) also argued that the past two centuries have been the golden age for leisure reading, and that readers in most societies have usually been a minority.

2.4 Current reading trends in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe, one of the most literate countries in the African continent has been portrayed as lacking a reading culture (Mushakavanhu, 2011). Reasons advanced for this accusation have been varied. But the worst culprit cited is the current education system (Mushakavanhu, 2011). According to Mushakavanhu (2011) the whole education system in Zimbabwe is a manufacturing process of careerism; people have to study to become accountants, doctors, lawyers, engineers and so forth. To a greater extent, students read to pass examinations. Education with the book as its instrument was brought by missionaries who encouraged people to go to school and read mostly religious books. Thus, these mechanical reading habits were inherited from the colonial past.

2.4.1 The Zimbabwean education system

The education system has emphasised more on classroom reading while discouraging, whether directly or indirectly leisure reading. According to Hove in Mushakavanhu (2011) most education systems in Africa are examination oriented, students are never taught to read as a pleasurable experience in itself without thinking of examinations. Most of the new graduates do not value reading for leisure and broadening of knowledge. Mukomborenwa (2011) stated that some University of Zimbabwe students

claim that they have never read a novel and admit that they only read when they have examinations. Hove in Mushakavanhu (2011) pointed out that universities and colleges are producing what he calls the 'new illiterates', they have their degrees and diplomas, but hardly take time to sit and enjoy reading for leisure. In many ways the school curriculum has been blamed for the half baked readers that the school system releases into the job market (Tapureta, 2011). The literature syllabus in schools, instead of encouraging reading, could also be a contributing factor to the lack of good and sustained reading habits. During literature lessons, learners are drilled for examinations and there is no time for leisure reading. This view does not inspire students into reading in their leisure time since they associate reading with textbooks and attending school. Reading is part of something that they, in some ways are forced to do, so that they can become successful in the future. Evidently the education system's examination oriented structure can be seen as one of the obstacles to creating sustained reading habits.

2.4.2 People's buying power

There have been arguments that students do not read because they cannot afford to purchase books. This argument is clearly a non-starter. One has to observe the amount of money and time that people spend for example, in places of entertainment such as restaurants, movie houses and clubs to see that poverty is not the real issue. It is more a question of priorities, a question of values than affordability. The younger generation now, if they can find a dollar or two, would prefer to spend the money, browsing the internet, on social networks, playing games on a computer or sitting on their phones for hours, rather than reading newspapers online or downloading books. Public and private libraries exist to take care of these needs. Nevertheless, it is surprising how few people visit these institutions for the purpose of reading for leisure.

2.4.3 Leisure time

Most Zimbabweans just do not create time to sit down and read for leisure. Most are tired after a day's work and are happier to just lie back in front of a screen rather than find a few minutes to read for leisure. According to Adesanoye and Ojeniji (2005) free time is spent at weekend engagements such as religious events, funerals, weddings and parties. Such engagements leave little time for people, especially youth to sit and enjoy the pleasures of reading.

2.4.4 Zimbabwe's literacy

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Education, Scientific and Culturally Organisation (UNESCO) have continued to report 91.9% literacy in Zimbabwe, apparently based on the data provided a decade ago by UNESCO and the Zimbabwean government in the 2002 census (Mukomborenwa, 2011). At this stage, this optimistic calculation is certainly out of date. According to Mukomborenwa (2011) about 10-15% of rural children never finish a full year in school, and another 30% never reach secondary school. It therefore seems unlikely that Zimbabwe still has the highest literacy rate in Africa. The impact that school dropouts have on the literacy rate is obvious and this also affects the development of sustainable reading habits. Mukomborenwa (2011) went on to argue that since 2005, the number of school dropouts increased due to pressure of school fees; the number of public libraries also diminished and reading for leisure became a rare phenomenon.

2.5 The benefits of leisure reading

Reading is one of the most useful aids that a man has so far discovered in his long and continuous struggle to reach a deeper meaning of life (Green, 2002). It is often found more important than other channels of communication due to the relative permanence of the written word. Reading not only allows people access to information, knowledge and literature, but also helps them develop critical and independent thinking that will serve them for the rest of their lives. Participation in socio-economic development and other national development programmes requires knowledge gain from reading.

2.5.1 Intellectual benefits

Part of the high value placed on reading may have something to do with the intellectual benefits of reading. The practice of reading helps to strengthen literacy proficiency; the more you read the better reader you become. Willms (1999) stated that youth who read in their leisure time at home score significantly better on literacy scores. When it comes to university, students who read for leisure as well as for study do better academically than students who do not read beyond what is required for their coursework.

2.5.2 Adds quality to life and enhances chances of success

Reading is essential to full participation in modern society. It adds quality to life, provides access to culture and cultural heritage, empowers and emancipates citizen as well as brings people together. Sisulu in Igwesi, Chimah and Nwachuku (2012), stated that reading is one of the fundamental building blocks of learning. Becoming a skilled and adaptable reader enhances the chances of success at school and beyond. Reading is not just for school, it is for life. Reading in all its variety is vital to being better informed, have a better understanding of yourself as well as others. It makes one to be a

thoughtful and constructive contributor to a democratic and cohesive society. It is therefore a necessity to making the present generation more aware of the benefits and importance of reading and ensuring that they have the literacy skills required in the modern society.

UNESCO (2011) pointed out that reading enhances the quality of life in different ways including:

- i. Educational enhancement: good readers become orators and fluent in their academic discussions, readers are always rich in vocabulary, have high comprehension skills and easily apply skill in order to attain their goals be it during examination, public forum or write-ups.
- ii. Social enhancement: reading helps to widen one's knowledge. A reader will be in a position to make contact with others and to share their feelings and experiences. Reading enables readers to know how to solve problems.
- iii. Political enhancement: reading newspapers and magazines widens our political knowledge. We know our obligations and rights and voters can make careful political choice if they have access to information through reading.
- iv. Economic enhancement: reading also makes better understanding of economic issues in one's own country and the world at large.
- v. Security enhancement: information acquired through reading facilitates readers' personal and interpersonal relationship. It enables him/her to identify warnings and avoid dangers ahead.

- vi. Psychological enhancement: one of the most important gifts a parent can give to a child is to enable him/her to love reading. The time spent together with the child promotes his positive attitude towards reading.
- vii. Health enhancement: a reader enjoys healthcare delivery services without necessarily going to the hospital. Reading around on medical care guides him/her about health issues and helps to acquire rightful living and to sustain life itself.

2.6 Obstacles to the creation of sustainable reading habits among students

There are several obstacles that impede the creation of sustainable reading habits among students. Studies show that many students dislike reading because they do not find pleasure in this practice either at their home or in school environments during their literacy journey (Baleeta, 2005; Chika, 2009; Commeyras & Mazile, 2011). Baleeta (2005) for example, discussing barriers to reading in Uganda, noted that to many students reading is not a pleasant experience to be savoured and seized at free moments. The root cause for this should be traced back in children's literacy acquisition, and reading habit development. He therefore argues that it is incumbent upon parents and early school educators to cultivate a lifetime reading habit into children. Indeed, research shows that parents who like to read will also want their children to love reading. However, this ideal in many African societies is marred with home and school challenges such as parents' illiteracy, poverty, lack of school libraries, the high cost of books, and so on (Parry, 2005).

2.6.1 Access to reading materials

According to Rosenberg (2003) there are millions of people, mainly in Africa and other developing regions, who are functionally literate but, do not read anything simply because they have no access to books in their native languages relevant to their lives and aspirations, and thus there are no books, journals or any information material which is of interest to them. This is supported by Ambatchew (2011) who noted that the situation of literacy in the developing countries of Africa, Asia and Latin America is exacerbated by weak publishing sectors and a poor purchasing power of the population which contribute to a severe shortage of quality indigenous reading materials, making the acquisition of reading and sustaining of reading not impossible for all but the elite. Tella and Akande (2007) reported that pupils in Africa depend largely on the notes given by their teachers as the major source of reading materials because other reading materials are inadequate or unavailable.

Youth need access to a wide range of reading materials to help them acquire and maintain fluent reading skills, broaden horizons and think independently and critically. Improving access to relevant information is a prerequisite for strengthening literacy skills, widening education and learning opportunities. Lack of reading materials therefore hinders the development of viable and sustainable reading habits.

2.6.2 The education system

Another factor that inhibits the reading habits of students is the education system which has a narrow perception of reading. The school system approach towards reading has made students conceive it as a once and for all activity associated with passing

examinations, getting a certificate, getting a job and attaining promotion (Sarjant, 2005; Magara & Batambuze, 2005). Reading is connected with passing examinations and is seen as a way of accomplishing academic success. This view does not inspire students to read in their leisure time since they associate reading with textbooks and attending school. Reading is part of something that they in some ways are forced to do, so that they can become successful in the future. Evidently the education system's examination oriented structure can be seen as one of the obstacles to creating reading habits. Hence, once the above targets are achieved, students cease to have interest in reading books and other information materials. This result is present because teachers basically teach and request students to read their course notes or what is examinable (Mugisha, 2010). Thus, they forget that reading is a life-long skill that should transcend not only the examinations, but also the classroom. As a consequence, Izizinga (2000) noted that students imbued with such reading perception lack motivation and interest in reading in their everyday life to the extent that they even develop a habit of considering reading tasks assigned to them in schools as a burden.

2.6.3 Language

The language of instruction in Africa has played an important role in this circular character of problems that make it hard to embrace a reading habit. Indeed, in most African, Latin American and Asian countries, the languages of instruction after the first three years in school are normally not used in the immediate environment of the population; however, they enjoy a privileged status over the indigenous languages (Brock-Utne, 2001). In addition, almost all important literacy productions are produced in foreign languages, often referred to as languages of wider communication in which

only the elite, by far the minority, enjoy the benefits of being literate, and the rest are marginalised with their mother tongues (Yates, 1995).

For information to be consumed it has to be available in a language spoken by the majority. Almost half of African languages do not exist in writing and probably have not been transcribed. The present practice of several languages being used alongside the languages of the former imperial powers maybe expedient in the short run but it is short sighted thought to the language question.

2.6.4 Poor reading campaigns

There is generally poor reading campaign in Zimbabwe. Little attention is given to educating the general public on the invaluable benefits of inculcating reading habits in youth. It is therefore very pertinent to educate the general public on the importance of reading habit through the radio, television, seminars and conferences. If people are enlightened through available media on the invaluable importance of developing good reading habits, then lifelong learning would not be seen as a burden because people will naturally see reading as everyday life. Therefore, there is need to embark on sustainable reading campaigns quite indispensable for developing lifelong reading habits.

2.6.5 Lack of time

Most people also do not read because they claim they are always busy and do not have time to spare for leisure reading. Tihamiyu as quoted by Adesanoye and Ojeniji (2005) stated that reading for leisure demands free solitary time as well as motivation as the self-esteem to self actualisation level of Maslow's' hierarchy of human needs.

However, set against these pre-requisites for good reading are various socio-economic impediments, including the pursuit of multiple income-earning activities by most people, which often eliminates leisure time. In general, Zimbabweans need to work so as to make a living and leisure time is therefore reduced. Free time is spent at weekend engagements like weddings, funerals, parties and religious events. Such engagements leave little time for people especially youth to sit and enjoy the pleasures of reading.

2.6.6 Digital media

The worsening state of reading habits among students at NUST and in Zimbabwe at large can also be blamed on the fast pace of globalisation. With the growing amount of digital information available and the increasing amount of time that people particularly the youth, spend on electronic media has begun to affect people's reading habits (Liu, 2005). The arrival of the digital media together with the fragmented nature of hypertext is threatening sustained reading. According to Hindu in Ambatchew (2011) in this age browsing the net, playing with funky mobile phones, passing statuses and non-stop short-message-service (SMS) on social networks seem to be the order of the day; reading has become an archaic idea for most people.

While technology is slowly taking a steady control over people's lives, reading habits are dying fast. Reading in a networked and permanently online environment is threatened by various emerging, influential and competing media products. This competition might lead to inadequate concentration on the act of reading and thus leading to its complete demise if not total extinction. While there is no doubt about the

huge conceptual and pragmatic opportunities offered through the influence of digital media, there is an absolute risk posed to sustained reading habits (Abidin, 2011).

2.7 Promoting the reading habits

The process of developing and promoting reading habits should start at an early age of childhood and nurtured into adulthood. It calls for combined efforts of educators, publishers, librarians, authors and booksellers alike.

2.7.1 Role of publishers in promoting reading habits

Developing reading habits is also difficult without the involvement of publishers. Publishers have the most important role to play. They are responsible for the production of relevant reading materials as according to the interest of the targeted groups. According to Luey (1995) it is vital to keep a steady vision of so disparate an audience, as students, they vary in ability and interest; so publishers should publish to appeal to as many as possible. They must arouse their interest, pique their curiosity, and answer their questions and keep them reading. Smith (1990) stated that publishers' business in society is communication. It happens that the book is at present the most important tool for that purpose and most people believe it will continue to do so despite the new developments in information and communication technologies (ICTs). Githiora *et al* (2009) argued that publishers should through their association device strategies that they can use to enhance reading habits in the country. Such strategies can combine reading competitions, story writing, poem recitation and exhibitions, among others. Gordon (2003) argued that enabling a population to read requires a publishing industry, which must engage a cadre of appropriate writers and produce their work in a pleasing form.

2.7.2 Role of libraries in promoting reading habits

Otike (2012) defined a library as an information centre where information is acquired, organised and disseminated to the people in need. Today, the role of libraries and professional librarians is changing worldwide. They are no longer passive keepers and preservers of books; rather, they have evolved to become facilitators of information and lifelong learning opportunities with an emphasis on service, identifying user needs and communicating solutions. Modern libraries are unfolding the community's learning potential by providing information on community issues, such as health, employment, continuing education and local history. This equitable access to information is essential to enable educated and informed citizens to participate in a democratic global community.

Libraries in general provide a very conducive environment that encourages people to engage in meaningful reading, learning and research activities (Igvesi *et al*, 2012). They prepare students to develop positive attitudes towards reading and the possibilities of learning basic language structures and forms. According to Igvesi *et al* (2012) libraries play an important role in providing a wide range of reading materials. Apart from textbooks, they provide access to supplementary learning materials such as computers and audio visual materials. To inculcate reading habits, libraries should give priority to users by providing materials that attract their interest, and should provide information materials that appeal to all categories (Otike, 2012). Librarians also engage in coaching fresh users on the use of the library materials. People using the library for the first time may not be accustomed with retrieving information from the library. It is the onus of the librarians to educate the fresh users on information retrieval process such as the use of library catalogues, indexes and abstracts. Thus, libraries play a crucial

role in developing reading habits of people so that they enjoy the company of books and other information materials and derive the maximum benefit from them that will pay dividends in the long run creating a body of readers who will rummage, as it were, the shelves of libraries in the process discovering the beauty lying hidden in the classics.

2.7.3 Role of book fairs in promoting reading habits

Book fairs play a major role in promoting reading habits. According to Otiye (2012) book fairs draw the public to a wide range of materials available on the market. Schools, institutions of higher learning and the general public are informed of what is in the market. The Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF) is a book publishing event which brings together booksellers, publishers, writers and agents from many parts of the English speaking world. It is Africa's premier book and publishing trade fair, showcasing the largest and most diverse annual exhibition of books, magazines, journals, CDs, DVDs as well as printing and publishing technology on the continent. It hosts an Indaba (Seminar) each year on a different topic within the African Book chain, whose proceedings are published in an annual collection. During proceedings there is a Reading Tent for children and a Young Persons Indaba. The reading tents are an outreach tool used to promote reading, stimulate a desire and love for leisure reading, develop reading skills and create lifelong reading habits among children. During the reading tents events, children engage in loud and silent reading, reading competitions, creative writings, storytelling and educational games among others. Young Persons Indaba engages in discussion forum on specific topics. All these activities play an important role in the development of reading skills in students. They are aimed in the

long run to develop the aspect of creativity and critical and analytical thinking in students. But most importantly they promote reading habits.

2.7.4 Role of teachers in promoting reading habits

Teachers should encourage reading for pleasure and as a prerequisite for continuing education. Unfortunately, many students learn only the technique of reading at school and often do not experience anything more challenging than textbook-based learning and textbook-based teaching. Most students associate reading with examination purposes and they finish with that mentality in their minds. As education involves not merely memorizing information but the ability to learn independently throughout life, students need to learn how to do research on their own and to explore a subject beyond the information that is given in class. Teachers can encourage these critical literacy skills by introducing students to the library and by teaching them information retrieval skills. Teachers should encourage effective use of the library by students by giving them assignments that will require students to use library resources (Otiike, 2012). Teachers are also important in the cultivation of a reading habit and they should initiate and encourage students to read.

2.8 Digital media and reading

The advent of digital media and the growing collection of digital documents have had a profound impact on reading. According to Weel (2011), in the last five years or so, a new generation of applications and web-based services has emerged with the common denominator allowing users to become producers and create virtual identities which allow them to engage in a number of social spaces and activities. Although, for instance,

there is much hype about the so-called Web 2.0 and its educational potential, very little is known about the effects of becoming a content producer with a potentially unlimited audience at a very early age and even less about the impact of creating and nurturing virtual social networks, be that through the net or by way of using mobile phones, and a particular idiom, to set up communities which, in many ways, operate free from any adult supervision. Weel (2011) further explained that the extent to which young people are used to dealing with technologies shows clearly that they will be different from previous generations of youth with respect to their comfort with this technology and the extent to which they use all forms of technology in their daily lives. As technology increasingly finds its way into mainstream culture, the types and uses of technology in students' programs have also expanded dramatically to include computers, tablets, e-books, mobile devices, handheld gaming devices, digital cameras and video camcorders, multimedia players for music and videos, digital audio recorders, interactive whiteboards, software applications, the internet, streaming media, and more. These technologies are increasingly expanding the tools and materials to which young people have access both in their homes and in their classrooms and have become vital sources of abundant information and knowledge to students.

New media technologies according to Liu (2005) are diverse tools and resources used to communicate and to create, disseminate, store and manage information. These electronic media create a spirit of joy, fun, adventure and imagination to youth and help to associate reading with pleasure (Igwesi *et al* 2012). Although a number of scholars argue that the arrival of digital media is undermining sustained reading (Birkets, 1994; Liu, 2005), some (Igwesi *et al* 2012) stated that they play a vital role in engaging students in learning activities and offer a wealth of reading strategies, lessons and

activities. They argue that they can be entertaining and educational, and can open up new worlds for students, giving them a chance to travel across the globe, learn vicariously about different cultures, languages and gain exposure to ideas they may never have encountered in their own local community (Igwesi *et al*, 2012). They go on to say that these new media technologies develop some sense of humour in students and can enable them to develop the right attitude towards reading.

Digital media contribute to a transformative shift in reading. According to Liu (2005) they introduce a number of powerful advantages that are traditionally absent in the printed environment, such as interactivity, non-linearity, immediacy of accessing information and the convergence of text, images, audio and video. Reading is still the most efficient method of communicating words. A more complex society demands increased rather than decreased reading regardless of the medium through which reading is done. Digital documents are easy to search and also allow more opportunities in accessing more information, for example a document on the web has an average of nine links (Liu, 2005).

2.9 Evolution of reading

People started to read things extensively in the early 1800s. They read all kinds of material and read things only once before racing on to the next item (Darnton, 2009). From the evolution of reading it is not difficult to imagine that browsing or scanning is becoming a principal reading pattern in today's information-intensive environment. With an increasing amount of time spent on reading electronic documents, the screen-based reading is emerging. According to Liu (2005) the screen-based reading behaviour

is characterised by more time spent on browsing and scanning, one-time reading, non-linear reading and more reading selectively. In an increasingly digital environment, readers, especially young readers, are likely to gradually develop the screen based reading habit and to increasingly use a variety of strategies to cope with the information- abundant environment. On the other hand, readers will continue to use the printed word for much of their reading activities, especially in-depth reading.

2.10 Measures of developing reading habits

For a reading habit to develop there are several measures that should be considered that encourage and enhance a reading habit. All stakeholders; authors, publishers, parents, schools, government, libraries and the society at large have a crucial role to play. All efforts should be combined so as to make an impact in the achievements of the task. Promotion of reading habits should be done nationwide for it to be effective. Before a reading habit can be promoted, it is important to encourage a reading interest. Mohanraj (2004) defines a reading interest as, the predilection that the reader develops for a particular genre of imaginative literature or for informative literature dealing with one of the branches of knowledge.

For people to develop a reading habit they should first be taught how to read. Magara and Batambudze (2005) point out that reading education should be introduced in school and reading competitions held regularly in order to sustain interest in the subject. At home those parents who are able to read should do it to their children every night. Thus, children who have grown up with reading will develop into habitual adult readers. According to Mayowa (2012) the problem of readership, therefore, has nothing to do

with lack of potential readers; but rather, it boils down to questions of relevance, accessibility, pricing (vis-avis the average income of the targeted audience) book promotion and distribution generally. Therefore, it is the task of publishers and authors to ensure that the relevant materials, according to the needs of the market, are made available and are distributed through bookshops, libraries and other distribution centres across the country.

Oyegade (2011) states that once a child has been taught to read and develop the love for books, he/she can explore the wealth of human experience and knowledge derived from reading. Hence children missing this opportunity of getting in touch with books at this stage, find it difficult to acquire reading habits in their later years. As Oyuga (2009) put it the reading habit is best formed at a young impressionable age in school; once formed, the habit can last one's life. Chika (2009) asserts that reading is an intellectual action which is possible only if a person has formed a habit of reading and practicing it since childhood.

The factors to be considered as contributing to promoting reading habits according to Chika (2009) entail:

2.10.1 Home environments

Home environments play a major role in children's reading habits. Long before children develop the cognitive and linguistic skills necessary for reading, early experiences with printed and oral language establish a foundation for learning. Home characteristics according to Chika (2009) can create a climate that encourages children to explore and

experiment with language and various forms of texts. Some of the major aspects of the home environment that contribute to reading habits development are:

2.10.1.1 Activities fostering literacy

The literacy related activities that parents or caregivers engage in with children help develop positive attitudes towards reading. Thus, adults and older children reading aloud to young children, and early association with the reading materials establish a positive attitude towards reading which eventually motivate young readers (Chika, 2009).

2.10.1.2 Language at home

The fact that children learn to read depends heavily on their early experience with language. The language spoken at home and how it is used is an important factor in reading literacy. Thus, use of different languages or dialects at home and school may cause problems for young students learning to read.

2.10.1.3 Economic resources

Important aspects of the home environment include the availability of reading materials and educational resources. Homes that make such resources available convey to children the expectation that learning to read is a desirable and worth goal (Ambatchew, 2011).

2.10.1.4 Home-school connection

Research shows that students who discuss their school work and what they are reading with parents are higher achievers than those who do not (Igwesi *et al*, 2012). Involved parents can reinforce the value of reading, monitor children's completion of reading assignments for school and encourage children through praise and support.

2.10.1.5 Students' out-of-school literacy activities

The child not only enjoys reading for recreation but also for practicing skills that are being learned. Reading for leisure or to investigate topics of interest is the hallmark of lifelong reading. They may choose to spend their out-of-school time reading books or magazines, looking up information on the internet or going to a local library to read or take out reading materials.

2.10.2 School environment

Many factors in school affect the reading habits and literacy acquisition directly or indirectly. These include:

2.10.2.1 School policy and curriculum

Literacy policy and curriculum at the school level establishes the context for the formal reading instruction children receive from the beginning of the formal schooling. Such policies may include decisions about the emphasis on reading instruction in relation to other content areas. In turn, such decisions according to Igwesi *et al* (2012) help to shape the environment within the school and the resources that are required.

2.10.2.2 School wide programs

School programs that provide the basic needs to students with specific focus on reading and literacy development may directly support the acquisition of skills and attitudes towards reading literacy.

2.10.2.3 Classroom

The context of the classroom cannot be overlooked when considering factors affecting reading literacy and habits. Even though the curricular policies and resources of the school often set the tone for accomplishment, classroom activities are likely to have a more direct impact on their reading development than the school environment.

2.10.2.4 Teachers

Teachers should encourage reading for leisure and as a prerequisite for continuing education. Unfortunately, many students learn only the technique of reading at school and often do not experience anything more challenging than textbook-based learning and textbook-based teaching. They are able to read aloud, but are effectively incapable of learning autonomously from written text. Teachers should be strongly committed to providing supplementary reading materials and train students how to use them for the benefit of the students.

2.11 Summary

This chapter started off by defining what is meant by literature review and justifying the need to carry out such a review in a study of this nature. It then presented the

theoretical framework upon which the study was based namely, Constructivism Theory and the Cognitive Theory of Multimedia Learning and their relevance to the study. It also discussed, in brief, the historical overview of reading, that it has undergone profound changes since its inception. The researcher reviewed literature on the benefits of leisure reading as well as the obstacles and challenges to the creation of sustainable reading habits among students citing the education system as the worst culprit. The chapter also examined the impact of digital media on students' reading habits as these new technologies are increasingly expanding the tools and materials to which young people have access both in their homes and in their classrooms and have become vital sources of abundant information and knowledge to students. It also discussed the measures that should be considered in developing reading habits among students.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is set out to give an account of how the research was undertaken. It provides methods that were used to investigate the problem and the merits and demerits of the methods. It explains the research design that was used, the population and sampling procedure, as well as the data collection methods that were used in carrying out the study. According to Haralambos and Holborn (2000) any research work requires a methodology to reach its conclusions. It must always have ways of providing and analysing data so that theories can be tested, accepted or rejected.

3.2 Research design

In this research, a mixed methods approach was adopted. An exploratory survey was then carried out at NUST. Creswell (2003) refers to a mixed methods research as one that focuses on collecting and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study. Its premise is that the use of quantitative and qualitative approaches in combination provides a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (Creswell, 2003). A research design is a structure that holds together the research and enables one to address research questions in ways that are appropriate, efficient and effective (Kumar, 2005). It determines the methods to be used in collecting and analysing data. Kumar (2005) states that surveys take a broad, systematic view of a topic at a specific time and collect empirical data on it. A survey was preferred for this study because it is widely viewed as very effective in collecting and analysing

information about people's perceptions and larger populations. It seeks to obtain information that describes existing phenomena by asking individuals about their perception, attitudes, behaviour or values (Taylor, Sinha and Goshal; 2008).

3.2.1 The quantitative approach

In this study a descriptive quantitative approach was adopted and it helped the researcher evaluate the statistical output in a proper context. According to Creswell (2003) a quantitative approach establishes statistically significant conclusions about a population by studying a representative sample of the population. The population included the entire group being studied. It does not matter if the population is broad or narrow; only that it includes every individual that fits the description of the group being studied. The quantitative data included closed-ended information on students' reading habits which the researcher gathered using questionnaires from students.

3.2.2 The qualitative approach

The study also used a qualitative approach and it helped the researcher obtain in-depth data concerning reading habits among students at NUST. According to Walsh (2003) a qualitative approach describes an event in its natural setting. This is a subjective way to look at reading habits as they are and try to explain them. Instead of providing a broad view of a phenomenon that can be generalized to the population, qualitative research seeks to explain a current situation and only describes that situation for that group. The qualitative data included open-ended information that the researcher gathered through questionnaires and interviews from the respondents. The open ended questions allowed the respondents to supply answers in their own words.

3.2.3 Mixing the methods (mixed methods)

By mixing the methods, the research provided a better understanding of the problem than if either approach had been used alone. In other words, both the quantitative method and the qualitative method form a more complete picture of the problem than they do when standing alone. Whereas the quantitative method sought to describe and analyse results statistically, the qualitative method sought to arrive at conclusions by explaining students' reading habits as they were. Even though conducting a mixed method study is not easy, it helps answer questions that cannot be answered by quantitative or qualitative approaches alone, hence adding value to the study. This mixed method approach; therefore helped the researcher to collect all the information needed for the study and allowed the researcher to orient questions according to the predetermined objectives.

3.3 Study Population

For this research, the target population were $\pm 5\ 000$ university students from NUST in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe. Key informants were the university librarian, twelve (12) lecturers picked randomly from the university's six faculties namely; Applied Sciences, Built Environment, Commerce, Communication and Information Science, Industrial Technology and Medicine. Six publishing managers from six dominant publishers who are: Mambo Press, College Press, Lleon Publishers, Priority Publishers, ZPH Publishers and Consultus Publishing Services (former Longman Zimbabwe) and the Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF) co-ordinator were part of the key informants. A population simply refers to the individual, groups or entities that are of interest to the

researcher (Mugo, 2010). According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) a population is a group of respondents from which samples are taken for measurement.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

A sample is basically a portion or fraction of the total population that the researcher chooses to contact and make personal or impersonal interactions with (Mugo, 2010). It is a set of respondents selected from a larger population for the purpose of the study. The purpose of sampling was to select a representative group which enabled the researcher to gain information about the population under study.

3.4.1 Students sampling procedure (target population)

The total sample size constituted 98 students from NUST. This university has an estimated number of $\pm 5\,000$ students. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the sample size. The technique was chosen because it ensured that each member of the target population had an equal and independent chance of being included in the sample. The sample size was determined by applying Yamane's (1967) formula (**see also appendix H**):

$N =$ number of total population $= \pm 5\,000$

Where $e = 10\%$ which is the level of precision

n is the sample size, which is the representative group

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2} = \frac{5000}{1 + 5000(0.1)^2} = 98.$$

3.4.2 Key informants sampling procedure

The researcher used purposive sampling to select the key informants. Purposive sampling is used for validation of a test or instrument with a known population, collection of exploratory data from an unusual population and it is used in qualitative studies to study the lived experience of a specific population (Kumar, 2005). That is, the researcher selects the sample using his/her experience and knowledge of the group to be sampled. The university librarian, six publishing managers from six dominant publishers and the ZIBF co-ordinator were purposively interviewed as key informants. Another set of questionnaires was distributed to 12 lecturers at NUST who were picked randomly from the university's six faculties namely; Applied Sciences, Built Environment, Commerce, Communication and Information Science, Industrial Technology and Medicine. Based on the researchers' judgement and for convenience, only two lecturers were picked from each faculty. This was done so as to supplement information given by students and also to solicit for new insights that may have been left out. Creswell (2003) asserted that the information usually given by the key informants gives the study the right focus.

Table 3.1 Indicating sampling procedure

Participants	Institution	Total	Targeted
Students	NUST	5000	98
Lecturers	NUST		12
Chief Librarian	NUST		1
Publishing Managers	Publishing Houses		6
Co-ordinator	ZIBF		1
Total			118

3.5 Data collection instruments

Questionnaires and interview schedules were used as data collection instruments in this study. According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) questionnaires and interviews are the common research instruments in a survey research design. In view of this assertion, the researcher evaluated these instruments in terms of their suitability to the entire study bearing in mind the objectives, research questions, the population characteristics, time available and relative cost. Data collection refers to the process of collecting and preparing ordinary bits and pieces of information found in the environment (Kumar, 2005). The instruments used for data collection are explained below.

3.5.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were designed to address the research objectives and targeted university students (see **Appendix C**) and lecturers (see **Appendix D**). The use of the questionnaires helped the researcher collect data from a large population by exposing them to a set of standard questions within a relatively short period of time. A questionnaire is a list of questions sent to a number of people for them to answer. There were open-ended and close-ended questions although there were more of the latter. The open-ended questions gave the participants complete freedom to express their answers as they wished and gave as much detailed information as possible or as the participants felt appropriate. The close-ended questions elicited either 'yes or no' answers. Questionnaires were used because of their ability to save time and money. They are very cost effective when compared to face-to-face interviews, especially for studies involving large sample sizes and geographic areas (Kumar, 2005). The questionnaire covered the important areas of what students read, how they read, and when they read.

3.5.2 Interviews

Interviews were also used to complement questionnaires. The use of face-to-face interviews helped the researcher gather in-depth information from the key informants in order to back up and verify the findings obtained through the questionnaires. Structured interviews were employed whereby interview schedules were prepared to guide the researcher and ensure that focus was maintained to the aim and questions that the research sought to answer. An interview is a two way purposeful conversation by an interviewer to obtain information relevant to the research (Taylor et al, 2008). Interviews were held with the librarian (see **Appendix F**) at NUST Library, six

publishing managers (see **Appendix E**), and the ZIBF co-ordinator (see **Appendix G**) who were singled out as key informants, hence the need to conduct interviews with them, so that detailed information could be obtained.

3.6 Data collection procedures

This is a way of collecting information using clearly laid down procedures and rules. The researcher designed questionnaires bearing in mind the aim and objectives of the research. The first set of questionnaires was distributed to 98 students and a different one to 12 lecturers as described in the sampling procedure. The questionnaires were accompanied by a letter to the respondents (see **Appendix A**) explaining the purpose of the study and the use of the information they are going to provide. In the case of interviews, the researcher obtained an introductory letter (see **Appendix B**) from the Head of Department of Publishing and Media Studies; School of Information Science; Moi University to enable her to conduct the interviews. The researcher then designed and administered three interview schedules to the university librarian, six publishing managers and the ZIBF co-ordinator. She made appointments with the interviewees before the actual process, through the phone for the convenient dates, time and venues to carry out the interviews. As a measure to enhance the response rate, questionnaires were delivered and collected personally by the researcher.

3.7 Data presentation, analysis and interpretation

The analysis of data entailed establishing the frequency of ideas, attitudes or concepts within the whole body of collected data and using several presentation methods to make these ideas visible. Data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and meaning

to the mass of collected information (Creswell, 2003). This involved the following steps: data examination; data tabling; and data coding. Examining the data involved grouping the responses under major categories according to the research questions being answered. Data coding enabled the researcher to quickly retrieve and collect together all the data that had been associated with a particular category of the research objectives. This was tabled into text, frequency, cumulative or scatter-gram tables depending on the type of data in question. From these tables, several graphs were drawn to enhance visual display of the results yielded by the study. A screening and editing exercise was also carried out to ensure consistency, legibility and completeness of the data. The responses from questionnaires and interviews were quantified into percentages and inferences were made to the population.

3.8 Validity and reliability of research instruments

To ascertain the validity and reliability of the research instruments used in this study, the researcher carried out a pilot study, by distributing questionnaires to five (5) students. This was to establish clarity, validity, and reliability of the instruments employed. The pilot study helped to reveal the misconceptions of the respondents and the need to rephrase some of the questions for more clarity and relevance to the research. Detected errors were corrected. Validity was ensured by aligning the questions in the research instruments with the aim and objectives of the study. Validity is concerned with establishing whether an instrument is measuring what it purports to measure. Reliability refers to the consistency that an instrument demonstrates when applied repeatedly under similar conditions (Kumar, 2005).

3.9 Ethical considerations

When conducting the study the researcher ensured that ethical issues were considered in order to maintain integrity. Participants were informed about the aim and objectives of the study and its significance to them. Voluntary participation in the research was ensured and the respondents were assured that the information they were going to provide was going to be treated with absolute confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only. The participants were also assured that the information was not going to be made available to anyone who is not directly involved in the study. All respondents to the research remained anonymous throughout the study.

3.10 Dissemination of findings

Both hard and soft copies of the thesis will be availed at the School of Information Sciences and the Margaret Thatcher Library, Moi University; as well as at the National University of Science and Technology Library in Bulawayo, Zimbabwe where the copies will be made available to other scholars. The thesis will also be uploaded on the internet for those who cannot access these two institutions.

3.11 Summary

This chapter highlighted the research methodology and data research instruments that the researcher used in carrying out the study. A mixed methods approach was adopted for this study. It discussed the study population, sampling procedures, data collection procedures as well as data presentation and analysis procedures. A detailed discussion of the data collection instruments, that is, questionnaires and interviews, especially with regards to their relevance and usefulness in this research was also made. Emphasis was

given on the measures that were put in place to mitigate some of the inherent shortcomings of the data collection tools that were adopted so as to increase validity and reliability of the research and its findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

The main focus of this chapter is to make a critical analysis and presentation of various findings of the research on students' reading habits at National University of Science and Technology in the midst of a rapidly growing and expanding digital environment. This was in light of the perception that reading is feared to be dying out as more time is spent nearly exclusively on screen based and digital leisure activities. Data was collected using questionnaires and interviews. In this chapter, the findings of the study are presented, analysed and interpreted. Analysis simply involves the ordering and structuring of data to produce knowledge (Taylor *et al*, 2008). The thrust is to provide meaningful summaries through a range of presentation techniques from the large volumes of raw data collected. Tables and graphs are basically the main presentation tools used. The idea is to group, categorise or organise; collate and relate; analyse and deduce meanings that would answer the main research questions from the collected data. In appropriate instances, comparisons are made with results from other studies to check for ambiguity, consistency and relevance as well as reliability, and thereby to construct validity. The literature review was instrumental in understanding the results of this study.

4.2 Response rate and characteristics of the sample population

The data collection exercise involved the distribution of questionnaires to a total population of 98 students, 12 lecturers and conducting a total of eight (8) interviews with key informants.

4.2.1 Questionnaire and interview response rate

A total of 110 questionnaires were distributed. A set of 98 questionnaires were distributed to students and 90 were returned, representing a 91.8% response rate. The other set of 12 questionnaires were distributed to lecturers (key informants) and they were all returned, representing 100% response rate. A total of 8 interviews (for key informants) were scheduled by the researcher and they were all successful. The researcher managed to interview all the key informants targeted and a response rate of 100% was obtained. The distribution of respondents is indicated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Distribution of respondents

Participants	Sample Population	Responses	Percentage
Students	98	90	91.8
Lecturers	12	12	100
Librarian	1	1	100
Publishing managers	6	6	100
ZIBF co-ordinator	1	1	100
Total	118	110	93.2

4.2.2 Distribution of students by gender

Figure 4.1 summarises respondent's (students) distribution by gender. Out of 90 students who returned the questionnaires 55 (61.1%) were males and 35 (38.9%) females.

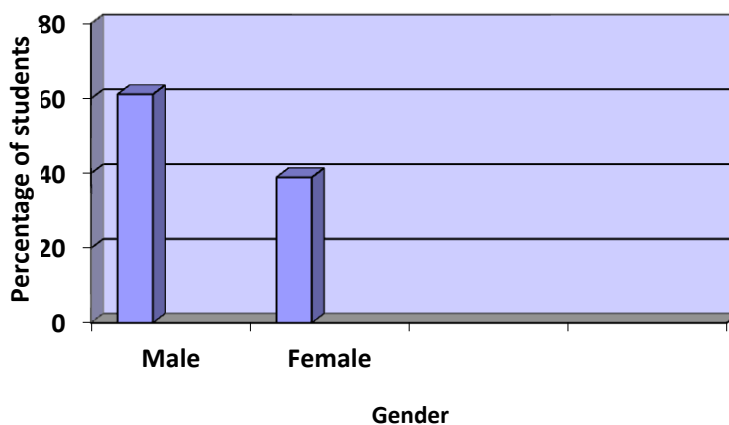


Figure 4.1 Distribution of students by gender

4.2.3 Distribution of students by age

In an attempt to capture a representative perception from various ages, the respondents (students) were stratified in terms of their age. Out of 90 students who returned questionnaires; 28 (31.1%) were aged below 20 years, 52 (57.8%) were aged 20-24 years (this is considered a normal age range for undergraduate students) and 10 (11.1%) were aged 25 and above (see Figure 4.2).

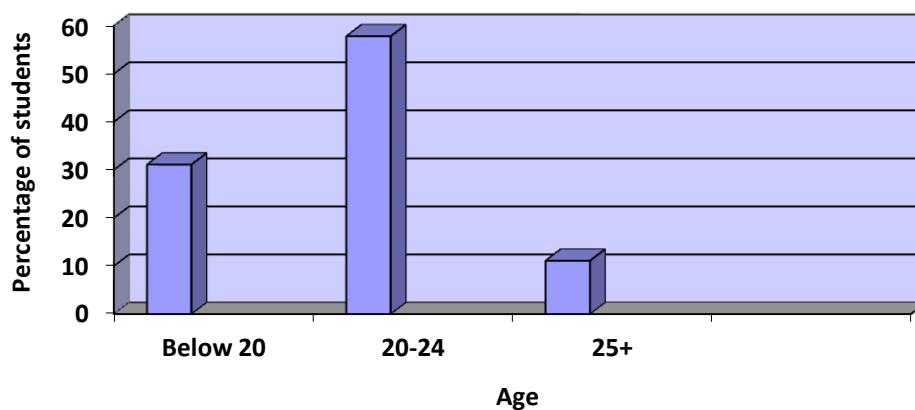


Figure 4.2 Distribution of students by age

4.3 Students' reading habits

Findings on students' reading habits were analysed through the types of reading materials students read, amount of time spent on reading per week, sources used to get the reading materials and the time of day spent on reading. Findings were also analysed based on how often students visited the library, how often they borrowed reading materials from the library, the type of materials that they borrowed, what they considered to be the reason they needed to read, whether they had a personal library or not and on how often they bought reading materials. While analysing findings on students' reading habits, the researcher also looked at the activities that students engaged in during their leisure time as well as what hindered them from reading.

4.3.1 How often the students read and the type of materials read

Figure 4.3 illustrates student's frequency of reading. Out of 90 students, 40 only read during examinations, 13 respondents read once a week. Ten (10) read twice a week and 12 read every two days. Of all the 90 respondents only 15 read on a daily basis.

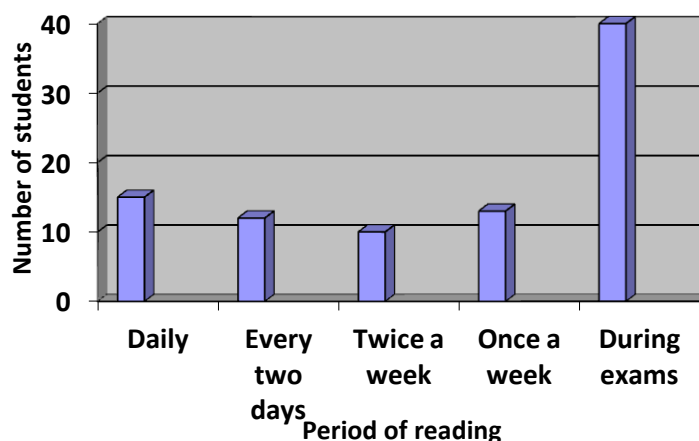


Figure 4.3 Students' frequency of reading

Figure 4.4 illustrates the distribution of the types of reading materials i.e. newspapers, magazines, journal articles, books and digital media that the students read. Majority of the students 58 (64.4%) acquire information from digital media every day. This is followed by books 15 (16.7%), newspapers 7(7.8%), magazines 6 (6.7%) and journal articles 4 (4.4%). From the results there is a high rate of digital media use, in addition to books and newspapers among university students. This may explain why university students were assumed to have abandoned reading other information sources for digital media as indicated by some studies in the past (Ruterana, 2012; in her study of reading

culture in Rwanda). The trend may have shifted to a digital reading habit which is totally different from the conventional one.

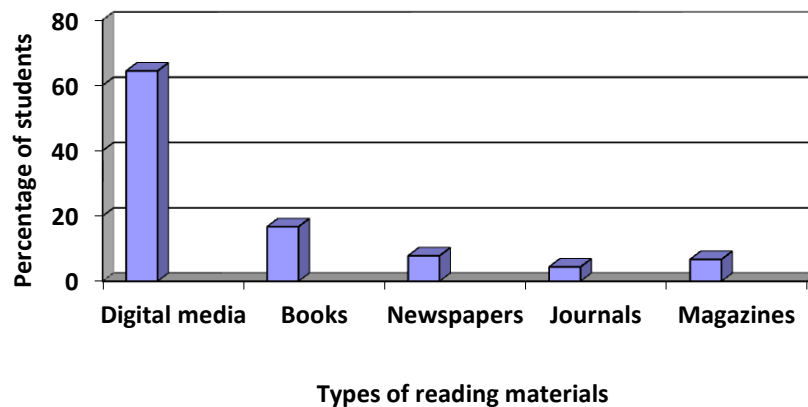


Figure 4.4 Types of reading materials

4.3.2 Time spent reading per week

A small number of respondents indicated that they read in the morning 15 (16.7%) and in the afternoon 11 (12.2%). The classes that the students need to attend during the day may influence the reading time, which naturally take place more at night 48 (53.3%). About 16 (17.8%) respondents indicated that they only read when they were free or when there was need for them to read.

Table 4.2 shows the distribution of amount of time spent on reading per week by students. The results indicate that university students spend considerable amount of time on reading. About 41.1% (37) of the students read between seven to nine hours per week. On average, the students spent about four to six hours per week on reading. This result is somewhat expected due to the academic activities that require a significant

amount of reading time in order for one to perform well academically. However the amount of time spent on reading is attributed to reading information on the digital media and academic books rather than other materials such as newspapers or magazines. The high amount of time spent on reading may have also conformed to the findings by Liu (2005), who conducted a study on reading behaviour of people in the digital environment and concluded that people read more in the digital age. This is because information can be obtained faster, cheaper and more conveniently via the internet.

Table 4.2 Time spent reading per week

N = 90

Time	Respondents	Percentage
Less than 1 hour	8	8.9
1-3 hours	18	20
4-6 hours	20	22.3
7-9 hours	37	41.1
Above 10 hours	7	7.8
Total	90	100

4.3.3 Time spent weekly on reading according to gender

A comparison on gender and hours spent on reading indicates that females read for more hours than males (Figure 4.5). A total number of 20 females read seven to nine hours weekly compared to 17 males. Four (4) females spend more than ten hours weekly on reading compared to 3 males. A higher number of females (11) spend four to six hours on reading compared to 9 males. On contrary, only males (18) spend one to three hours on reading compared to 9 males. Overall, the findings show that females read for longer hours than males. These findings are also similar to past studies, which indicated that females read more than males (Ross, 2002, who conducted a study on reading in the digital age). This might be so because, when asked what they considered to be the need for them to read the majority of males said to pass examinations. Thus, most males spend few hours on reading because they wait to read during the examination time.

N = 90: males = 55, females = 35

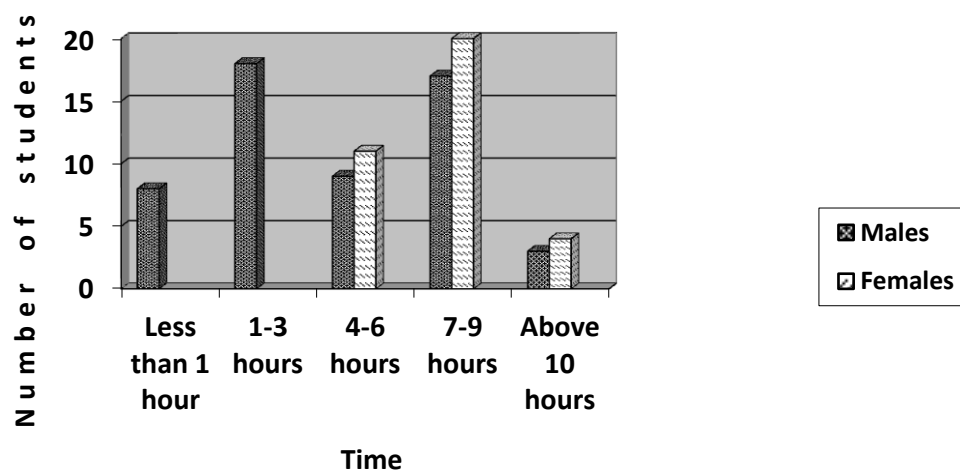


Figure 4.5 Time spent weekly on reading according to gender

4.3.4 Sources of reading material

The respondents stated several sources from where they obtain their reading materials. These include libraries, friends, internet and others. The internet was found to be the most frequently used source of reading materials (used by 52 students (57.8%)). This is followed by friends (18 students (20%)); university library (14 students (15.6%)) and other libraries (6 students (6.7%)). This is illustrated on Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Sources of reading materials

N = 90

Source	Respondents	Percentage
University library	14	15.5
Internet	52	57.8
Friends	18	20
Other libraries	6	6.7
Total	90	100

4.3.5 How often students visit the university library

From the data gathered it emerged that most students just visit the library during examination time. This was represented by 28.9% (26) of students who visit the library during examinations; 14.4% (13) visit the library once every month; 14.4% (13) visit the library weekly; 22.3% (20) visit the library twice a week; 5.6% (5) visit the library

on a daily basis and another 14.4% (13) have never visited the library. The fact that 28.9% (26) of respondents visit the library during examinations actually reveals that students read only with an aim of passing examinations and only for academic purposes. This is also illustrated on table 4.4.

Table 4.4 How often students visit the university library

N = 90

Period	Respondents	Percentage
Daily	5	5.6
Twice a week	20	22.3
Weekly	13	14.4
Monthly	13	14.4
During examinations	26	28.9
Never	13	14.4
Total	90	100

4.3.6 Students' book borrowing frequency from the library

A significant number of respondents have never borrowed books from the library. This also included the final year students who are soon set to leave the university. About 32.2% (29) of students have never borrowed a book from the university library, 28.9%

(26) borrow books from the library after every month; 22.2% (20) borrow books once every two weeks, 8.9% (8) once a week and another 7.8% (7) borrow books twice a week. About 80% (72) of the respondents borrow academic books and 20% (18) borrow motivational books from the library. This may be the reason why university students are said to be reading for academic purposes only and not for general knowledge or pleasure as indicated by some studies in the past (Ruterana, 2012).

Table 4.5 Library book borrowing

N = 90

Book borrowing frequency	No of students	Percentage
Twice a week	7	7.8
Once a week	8	8.9
Once every two weeks	20	22.2
Once a month	26	28.9
Never	29	32.2
Total	90	100

4.3.7 Students with a personal library

About 30 (33.3%) students have personal libraries while the remaining 66.7% (60) do not have libraries. Most students said they do not see the need of having a library and some of the reasons they gave for not having a library are:

- ❖ The cost of putting up a library is high
- ❖ Most do not see the need to have one and;

- ❖ The preference of borrowing books from friends.

The categories of books that respondents had in their personal libraries include; academic constitute 55%, religious (25%), motivational (12%), fiction (5%) and magazines (3%). None of the respondents had scientific or even biographies in their personal libraries. Majority of them had academic books in their personal collections.

When asked what else they read excluding academic work, a significant number of 50 (55.6%) students said they read online news and articles, 25 (27.8%) read Bibles and motivational books and 15 (16.6%) students said they read magazines and novels. This revealed that digital media contribute to a transformative shift in reading. According to Liu (2005) the digital media introduce a number of powerful advantages that are traditionally absent in the printed environment, such as interactivity, non-linearity, immediacy of accessing information and the convergence of text, images, audio and video. Thus, this being a study based on the constructivism theory and the cognitive theory of multimedia learning, electronic information which is an integration of text, graphics and sound attracts the reader to pursue the internet as a source of information. Students, as digital natives use these new media technologies to construct complex knowledge bases, find information on the internet and communicate and share knowledge.

4.3.8 How often do students buy reading materials?

From the data gathered it can be generally concluded that students rarely buy books. At least 50% (45) of the respondents confessed to not having bought a single book in their collection. The 4.4% (4) who had bought a book did so in a span of a year; 24.4% (22)

download their reading materials from the internet and another 16.7% (15) buy newspapers daily; 4.4% (4) buy magazines once a month. None of the respondents bought their books monthly or weekly. It was clear therefore that so many students did not have any idea about the importance of having personal collection of books because they only read when they had examinations. Some students (15); (16.7%) also stated that books are expensive and they cannot afford to purchase them. The cost of a novel ranges from US\$ 6 – 20 per copy, a factor that contributes to preference to spend their money browsing the internet, on social networks or chatting on their smart-phones.

4.3.9 Reasons for reading

The study sought to find out what the students considered to be the reason(s) they needed to read. This was deemed necessary in identifying student's reading habits and trends. They gave the following varied responses in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Reasons for reading

Reasons	Respondents	Percentage
To pass examinations	82	91.1
For leisure	26	28.9
Personal development	66	73.3
Push time	20	22.2
To be informed	74	82.2

The results revealed that 82 (91.1%) students had the perception that reading is done to pass examinations. About 74 (82.2%) said they read to stay informed, 66 (73.3%) read for personal development, 26 (28.9%) read for leisure and 20 (22.2%) read just to push time. Those who read to pass exams (91.1%) saw reading as a way of accomplishing academic success. Students are never taught to read as a pleasurable experience in itself without thinking of examinations (Mushakavanhu, 2011). Therefore, this view does not inspire students into reading in their leisure time since they associate reading with academic books and attending school. According to Mugisha (2010) in his study on assessment strategies among students in higher education in Rwanda, this comment is valid because lecturers basically teach and request students to read course notes or what is examinable.

As a consequence, students imbued with such reading perception lack motivation and interest in reading in their everyday life. Incidentally, students who partake in reading either for leisure, to push time or any other reason will end up being informed citizens who can make informed life decisions and hence be able to determine a course for their future.

4.3.10 Activities during leisure time

Students were also asked, using an open ended question, about the types of activities that they do during their leisure time. Most students 86 (95.6%) watch television/ movies as their main activity during leisure time. This is followed by surfing the Internet, religious activities, social networking, listening to music, and so forth (see Table 4.7). Thus, the majority of students cease to have interest in reading during their

leisure time due to the new media technologies which offer huge opportunities at the same time undermining the habit and culture of reading. Thus, reading is threatened by various emerging, influential and competing media products which have led to inadequate concentration on the act of reading, and also less time dedicated to reading.

Table 4.7 Activities that students engage in during leisure time

Activities	Respondents	Percentage
Watching television/ movies	86	95.6
Surfing internet (for personal and academic research)	80	88.9
Religious events	60	66.7
Social networking (facebook, whatsapp, twitter, mxit, etc.	60	66.7
Listening to music	50	55.6
Reading	40	44.4
Travelling	40	44.4
Sporting	30	33.3
Shopping	30	33.3
Hanging with friends	20	22.2
Sleeping	2	2.2
Drinking beer	2	2.2

4.3.11 Factors that hinder students from reading

Respondents were also asked, in a close ended question what hinders them from reading. This question mainly needed to establish the reasons behind the alleged poor reading habits among students. The factors were presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Factors that hinder students from reading

N = 90

Factors	Respondents	Percentage
Limited time	41	45.6
Lack of interest	20	22.2
Inadequate reading materials	29	32.2
Total	90	100

Data gathered revealed that 45.6% (41) of the students do not read because they claim they do not have time to spare for leisure reading. This is supported by Adesanoye and Ojeniji (2005) who stated that reading for leisure demands free solitary time as well as motivation as the self-esteem to self actualisation level of Maslow's hierarchy of human needs. Five (5) (5.6%) students went on to stress that they are tasked with a number of duties both at home and at school that they end up not having time to read for leisure.

About 32.2% (29) of students stated that they do not read simply because they do not have access to information materials which is of interest to them. This is because the

university library where most students borrow their books does not have leisure reading information materials. Books are also expensive and students cannot afford to purchase them, with novels costing from US\$ 6 – 20 per copy and students have limited disposable income from which they can buy books. “The dollar is difficult to come by”, claimed one student. Therefore other respondents said if they can find a dollar or two they would prefer to spend their money browsing the internet, on social networks or chatting on their smart-phones. As for student practice, the cognitive theory of multimedia can be applied to inculcate better and interesting reading habits as most students prefer to spend their money and time browsing the internet. Thus, the printed word is no longer the only way students can get informed.

The 22.2% (20) lot of respondents said they do not read because they do not have interest in reading. A number of studies show that many students dislike reading because they do not find pleasure in the practice either at their home or in school environments (Baleeta, 2005; Chika, 2009; Commeyras and Mazille, 2011). Baleeta (2005) for example, discussing barriers to reading in Uganda noted that to many students reading is not a pleasant experience to be savoured and seized at free moments. Also with the advent of new media technologies, students are so much obsessed with digital media that they do not have interest in reading. Based on the constructivist theory which expects students to be actively involved in their learning process, these technologies may play a vital role in engaging students in learning activities and offering a wealth of reading strategies, lessons and activities.

4.4 The importance of reading

The respondents were also asked whether reading is important or not. All respondents agreed that reading is important and gave the following reasons to why they said so.

4.4.1 Keeps the reader informed and helps acquire knowledge

Almost all respondents including key informants stated that reading helps keep a reader informed and gives people knowledge. Thus, reading in all its variety is vital to being better informed, have a better understanding of yourself and others. As one respondent puts it, “reading keeps you up-to-date with what is happening around the world, informs you about current affairs, health, politics, economy and environment, and makes you become a good and a wise leader”. Therefore, reading allows people access to information and knowledge that will serve them for the rest of their lives. Thus, participation in socio economic development and other national development programmes requires knowledge gain from reading.

4.4.2 Intellectual benefits

Data gathered also showed that part of the high value placed on reading may have something to do with intellectual benefits. They stated that the practice of reading helps strengthen literacy proficiency, the more you read the better reader you become. Some also said that reading improves the way one may reason as well as developing one’s language and communication skills. It is therefore a necessity to make the youth aware of the importance of reading to ensure that they have literacy skills required in the modern society.

4.4.3 Adds quality to life and enhances chances of success

Respondents including key informants stated that reading empowers people with information and skills needed in their daily life. They said it brings enlightenment and helps people in their decision making both at home and at their work places. Some also stated that reading refreshes the mind and develops the cognitive aspect of life. This also is supported by Igwesi *et al* (2012) while discussing the use of ICTs and audiovisual resources in developing children's reading habits in Nigeria, claim that reading adds quality to life, provides access to culture, and cultural heritage, empowers and emancipates citizens as well as bringing people together. Respondents also claimed that reading enhances the chances of success at school and beyond. Thus, students who read in their leisure time do better academically than students who do not read in their leisure time. Such reading also helps students to develop critical and independent thinking.

4.5 Effects of digital media on students' reading habits

About 86.7% (78) of students were of the view that the digital environment has brought a positive impact on their reading habits. It was also found that 88.9% (80) of students prefer to browse the internet during their leisure time. As such, students feel that appropriate use of digital media can have a positive impact on their reading habits and can help them improve on their academic performance since it facilitates information access, enhances reading habits and accelerates academic success by making information available. One respondent (key informant) stated that;

“Digital media enhances reading habits and culture, but the problem is that students use electronic media for entertainment and not for reading purposes”.

Another key informant (a lecturer) also claimed that “nowadays students read more due to the new media technologies”.

Some students (20; 22.2%) also stated that digital media gives a variety of information materials and it is convenient. There is no longer need for them to go to the library or visit bookshops looking for information materials. Another student also claimed that with the coming of electronic gadgets there is no longer need for them to move around carrying books, newspapers and magazines as they can read these online from their smart-phones, laptops and so forth, anywhere at any time.

According to Liu (2005) who conducted a study on people’s reading preferences indicated that people read more in the digital age. This is because information can be obtained faster, cheaper and more conveniently via the internet. Therefore, this being a study based on the constructivism theory which places the burden of learning on students, with the advent of electronic media students can work independently to find information on the internet, communicate and share knowledge through electronic devices. Lecturers only need to facilitate learning instead of playing the role of information suppliers. Students are independent with the changes in technology and education. Thus, the constructivism theory can be applied to inculcate better and interesting reading habits. Students play proactive roles seeking the information that they need. Igwesi et al (2012) also support this view by arguing that these media technologies create a spirit of joy, fun, adventure and imagination to youth and help to associate reading with pleasure.

On the other hand 12 (13.3%) students claimed that health-wise these new media technologies affect the eyes and reduce the concentration on the act of reading and hence affecting reading habits negatively. As one student put it;

“The light on the screen affect the eyes and one cannot afford to concentrate on the screen for longer hours which can be a daunting exercise”.

Another student also stated that reading from a computer is a demoralizing exercise and can make one lose focus. Some key informants (lecturers) also claimed that students use digital media for entertainment and not for reading purposes. They said that students prefer to watch and listen than read as they spend disproportionate amount of time chatting on social networking sites. This is somewhat supported by Chika (2009) who argues that the arrival of digital media undermines sustained reading.

4.5.1 Use of new media technologies to support reading activities

The research findings showed that student use of new media technologies can positively impact on their reading habits. Firstly, data gathered revealed that 86.7% (78) of university students daily use new media technologies to support their reading and learning activities. As such reading habits are actually improving because of the advent and wide use of the internet, hypertext and multimedia (Liu, 2005). Garrison and Kanuka (2004) while discussing blended learning in higher education compared blended reading environment and traditional reading environment and observed that more effective and efficient reading occurs in blended environment and that the success levels of students are raised. This gives students a wide range of materials to get information to help them read and study.

Secondly, students browse the internet mostly to research, chat with friends on social networks and to read online news. Some students also claimed that they use new media technologies to download information materials from the internet and store them on their electronic devices to facilitate reading. According to Liu (2005) these technologies are diverse tools and resources used to create, disseminate, store and manage information. These technologies are increasingly expanding the tools and materials to which young people have access both in their homes and at school and have become vital sources of abundant information and knowledge to students. Thus, students can easily interact and chat with one another, browse the internet to find information thereby adding the use of computers, smart-phones and other electronic gadgets to their reading habits.

4.6 Obstacles to the creation of sustainable reading habits among students

Respondents including key informants were also asked about the obstacles that impede the creation of sustainable reading habits among youths. They cited inadequate reading materials, limited time, lack of interest in reading, the education system, the advent of electronic media, poor reading facilities as well as limited purchasing power as they claimed that books are expensive and people have very limited disposable income from which they can buy books.

4.6.1 Inadequate reading materials

About 32.2% (29) of students and 2 publishing managers said lack of access to reading materials is the major obstacle to the culture of reading in Zimbabwe. Some key informants also said reading has to do with having access to information materials that

are relevant to their lives and aspirations, and thus there are no books, journals or any information which is of interest to them. One respondent (student) said “even newspapers are politically biased and for one who is looking for fair, accurate and just news one ends up losing interest in buying let alone reading them”. Thus, most studies on reading habits have also shown that reading habits improve if students have access to information materials that are of interest to them (Ruterana, 2012; Ambatchew, 2011, and Tella and Akande, 2007).

4.6.2 Poor purchasing power

According to the respondents including key informants, limited purchasing power among the population is another factor which affects students’ reading habits. Some publishing managers said reading has to do with the means and resources to acquire reading materials. This is also supported by Ambatchew (2011) who notes that the situation of reading culture is exacerbated by weak publishing sectors and poor purchasing power of the population which contributes to a severe shortage of quality indigenous materials, making the acquisition of reading materials nigh impossible for all but the elite. Books are expensive in Zimbabwe and students cannot afford to purchase one, with novels ranging from US\$ 6 – 20 per copy and students have limited disposable income from which they can buy books. “The dollar is difficult to come by”, claimed one respondent (key informant). Another student stated that;

“Many people are in search of satisfying their basic needs. When you look at the prices of books in bookshops, many people can hardly think of purchasing a book which costs US\$18 for only reading. They would rather buy food or clothing”.

“Also all daily newspapers cost US\$1 and most students will prefer to purchase airtime and browse the internet or chat on social networks if they can find a US\$1”.

Thus, people generally strive to satisfy their basic needs and it is not easy to make ends meet in the Zimbabwean economy where people rely on foreign currency. Therefore, in a daily struggle to survive, information materials are very far down on the list of priorities.

4.6.3 Education system

Lecturers and some students said that the academic tradition (learning, teaching and evaluation) emphasises reliance on course notes reading and evaluation mechanisms that require students to write exams using notes. Evidently, the education systems’ examination oriented structure can be seen as one of the obstacles to creating a reading habit as one student puts it,

“At university, we rely on our notes to succeed in examinations, where then can we develop that habit and culture of reading if it is not encouraged”?

Magara and Batambudze (2005) in their study towards a reading culture in Uganda also support this notion by asserting that even the literate stop reading after finishing examinations. Thus, a reading habit cannot be present in a situation like this, where reading is only part of the school context and not all aspects of life.

Another respondent (a lecturer) pointed out that students are spoon-fed and do not know the importance of reading in education as well as in general life. Thus, from the results obtained, the education system does not encourage reading practices susceptible of developing a reading habit or culture. It is rather based on reading course notes which play a crucial role in writing examinations. Thus, according to Mugisha (2010) students' success is determined in accordance with the extent to which they had memorised the lessons taught. Ruterana (2012) also stated that other factors responsible for inhibiting the reading culture in Africa include the education system with a narrow perception of reading. Thus, the school system approach towards reading has made students conceive it as a once off activity associated with passing examinations; hence once this is achieved students cease to have interest in reading. This view therefore, does not inspire students to read in their spare time as they associate reading with academic books and attending school.

4.6.4 Limited time and lack of interest in reading

About 45.6% (41) students claimed that they are always busy and hardly have time to read for leisure. One student argued that;

“I am always assigned with a lot of household duties (home) and a lot of assignments (school) that I hardly get time to read for leisure but read to acquire academic success”.

Other students stated that they do not read because they do not have interest in reading. A number of studies (Baleeta, 2005; Chika, 2009; Commeyras and Mazille, 2011) show that many students dislike reading because they do not find pleasure in the practice

either at their home or in school environments. Baleeta (2005) for example, discussing barriers to reading in Uganda noted that to many students reading is not a pleasant experience to be savoured and seized at free moments. Also with the advent of new media technologies, students are so much obsessed with media that they do not have interest in reading.

4.6.5 Digital media

Some key informants also pointed out that the worsening state of reading is to be blamed on the arrival of digital media. One lecturer stated that students are so much obsessed with the digital media that they do not see the interest in leisure reading. “They are busy seeking for pleasure instead of knowledge”, claimed one key informant. Another key informant (lecturer) argued that due to the availability of information on the internet, students just copy and paste without even reading or grasping ideas. Liu (2005) also argues that the arrival of digital media has threatened sustained reading. He goes on to say that, with the growing amount of digital information and the increasing amount of time that youth spend on electronic media has begun to affect students’ reading habits. Some students said they spend a lot of time on social networks which seem to be the order of the day and reading has become an archaic idea for most of them.

4.6.6 Poor reading facilities

Students also pointed out that the reading facilities at home and within the university are not conducive to a good reading environment, which leaves a lot to be desired. Firstly, they said the university library itself is small with students always packed like

commodities. Same for lecture rooms, there is no quiet room for pleasure reading. In view of this, the university librarian said the new library is under construction which is likely to accommodate all the students. Secondly, students argued that books are few compared to students who need them; hence it is discouraging for students who want to read. Lastly, students stated that the electronic resources (e-resources) section is so small, with a few computers and a student is allowed one hour per day which is always not enough. There is also poor internet connection and load shedding of electricity which make access to e-resources difficult. Yet the university's motto is "*think in other terms*", therefore how can students 'think in other terms' if the university library itself is not conducive to a good reading environment.

Some students (10; 11.1%) also stated that there is poor motivation both at school and at home which led them to assert that they did not have role models to encourage them on their routes to reading. They confessed that they were not provided with reading materials and facilities while they were young and hence they never developed reading habits. Thus, problems related to reading facilities with regard to poor internet connections, library facilities and lecture halls are identified as major obstacles to a viable reading and studying environment. As a result, few students visit the library as others lose motivation and interest in frequenting and using the library to read for various reasons.

4.7 Promotion of reading habits

The process of developing and promoting reading habits should start at an early age of childhood and nurtured into adulthood. It calls for combined efforts of educators, publishers, librarians, authors and booksellers alike. This section discusses the role played by publishers, libraries, lecturers and book fairs in their endeavour to promote reading habits. These were the key informants in this study.

4.7.1 Role of publishers in promoting reading habits

Six publishing managers from six dominant publishing companies in Zimbabwe were interviewed as key informants to find out the role played by publishing companies in the creation and promotion of reading habits. These companies are; Mambo Press, College Press, Lleemon Publishers, Priority Publishers, ZPH Publishers and Consultus Publishing Services (former Longman Zimbabwe). Data gathered shows that publishers are involved in the publishing of books but do not have activities directed towards the promotion or creation of reading habits. One publishing manager said that;

“Publishers are responsible for the production of relevant reading materials to the interest of the target groups and universities are not our target audience”.

One publishing manager said that even though some universities purchase their literature books they have not targeted universities as their market. They also stated that their sales people visit universities only if invited to exhibitions and not necessarily to market their books. The findings also show that publishers occasionally visit university libraries and other tertiary institutions as they do not have books targeted for the

university market. Another respondent (publishing manager) said that because of the business system they only target the primary and secondary school market and only produce books directed to meet the needs of these markets as they are sure that the books will be bought. While past studies (Gordon, 2003) show that enabling a population to read requires a publishing industry, which must engage a cadre of appropriate writers and produce their work in pleasing form; Zimbabwean publishers on the other hand, have not been actively involved in the creation and promotion of reading habits; they only concentrate in the business of publishing.

4.7.2 Role of libraries in the promotion of reading habits

Libraries are general said to provide a very conducive environment that encourages people to engage in meaningful reading, learning and research activities (Igvesi *et al*, 2012); but according to the research findings this is somewhat contrary to NUST library. Respondents (students) pointed out that the university library itself is small with students always packed like commodities. In view of this, the university librarian said the new library is under construction which is likely to accommodate all the students. Students also argued that books are few compared to students who need them; hence it is discouraging for students who want to read. Yet, according to Otike (2012) in his study on the role of libraries in promoting reading habits in Kenya libraries should give priority to users by providing materials that attract their interests and should provide information materials that appeal to all categories. Lastly, students stated that the electronic resources (e-resources) section is so small, with a few computers and a student is allowed one hour per day which is always not enough. There is also load shedding of electricity and poor internet connection which when combine make the

access to e-resources difficult. Thus, such problems related to library facilities make students develop negative attitudes towards reading whether it is for leisure or academic purposes.

Data gathered from the librarian also revealed that most students use the library in the evening as they will be having classes during the day. Libraries are said to play an important role in providing a wide range of reading materials (Igwesi *et al*, 2012), but this is not the case at NUST Library as the librarian when asked the variety of information materials they have stated that they only have academic books and journals only in their shelves.

When asked if the library meet the students' reading needs, the librarian said it academically do, because the library is open from 9am to 9pm during weekdays and 9am to 4pm on Saturday and closed on Sundays and public holidays. The participant also stated that the library has computers which are well connected to the internet for students who want to access e-resources or browse the internet. The librarian also said that in their endeavour to create a conducive reading environment they discourage students who open social networking sites using library resources. The librarian also went on to say that they ensure that every student who visits the library is accommodated although it has a limited space. The participant also pointed out that the library has not performed any activity directed towards the promotion of a reading culture or meant to improve students' reading habits.

4.7.3 Role of book fairs in promoting reading habits

The researcher also interviewed the Zimbabwe International Book Fair Co-ordinator on the role the book fair plays in promoting reading habits. From the data gathered it was found that the book fair draws the public to a wide range of books available on the market. The book fair usually has a children's reading tent which is an outreach tool to promote reading. It stimulates a desire and love for leisure reading, develop reading skills and create lifelong reading habits among children. The study also found out that during the book fair event, children engage in reading activities like; reading competitions, storytelling and creative writing. Such activities play an important role in the development of reading habits in students. They also help develop creativity and analytical thinking in students.

4.7.4 Role of teachers in promoting reading habits

The research also sought to find out the role played by teachers (in this case, lecturers) in promoting reading habits among students. It is said that teachers should encourage reading for leisure and as a prerequisite for continuing education. A questionnaire (see **Appendix D**) was also sent to lecturers to find out more about students' reading habits. Data gathered revealed that almost all lecturers encourage students to read beyond classroom notes as it helps develop language and communication skills. It was found that some lecturers give students assignments which require research beyond classroom notes because class notes are skeletal guides to issues for research. They said they always encourage students to read because it brings enlightenment and it helps students get diverse ideas and opinions to issues. Most lecturers said based on the assessment of students work, it really shows that quite a number of students read beyond course notes

and that a significant number of students have a very good reading behaviour. Thus, from the findings it shows that lecturers are playing an important role in the cultivation of students' reading habits.

4.8 Strategies that can be employed in the development of sustainable reading habits

Respondents were also asked to suggest possible solutions to the obstacles that inhibit the creation of sustainable reading habits and also propose measures to improve the current reading habits among students. Their responses were as follows:

4.8.1 Availing reading materials

The respondents claimed that if more relevant information materials were availed within the reach of students at an affordable price; students can develop better reading habits.

4.8.2 Providing adequate reading facilities

According to the outcry by most students that the reading facilities at home and within the university are not conducive to a good reading atmosphere; they therefore claimed that students should be empowered with all the reading facilities they need. The reading space in the library shall be created, internet connections should be increased and a wide range of reading materials should be availed to the students at the right place and at the right time. Students also stated that the university library should purchase a generator that can be used when there is no electricity.

4.8.3 Making reading part of the curriculum

Some respondents suggested that reading activities should be incorporated into the syllabus, which shall be examinable, so that students are encouraged to read and hence develop meaningful reading habits. They are of the view that since reading is not examinable most students tend to neglect it and hence read only what is examinable. Thus, reading should be made part and parcel of learning. Lecturers should also use presentation and discussion as part of teaching strategies and give students assignments that require research beyond classroom notes.

4.8.4 Incorporating digital media in teaching and learning activities

Respondents also suggested that digital media should be incorporated as part of teaching and learning activities as it has had a profound impact on reading. This is because technology is increasingly finding its way into mainstream culture, the types and uses of technology in students' programs have also expanded dramatically to include computers, tablets, e-books, mobile devices, handheld gaming devices, digital cameras and video camcorders, multimedia players for music and videos, digital audio recorders, interactive whiteboards, software applications, the internet, streaming media, and more. These technologies are increasingly expanding the tools and materials to which young people have access both in their homes and in their classrooms and have become vital sources of abundant information and knowledge to students.

4.8.5 Parents and primary school teachers should play their roles

Some respondents argued that the most appropriate time to develop a reading habit is at a young age. They said reading should be instilled to a child by the parents and/or

primary school teachers at a tender age (catch them young). This is because childhood is the most receptive period in human life and as such the child absorbs whatever they see, they hear and whatever they experience which becomes part of them, they assimilate all the impressions. It's a habit acquired in childhood and will stay embedded in their minds to the end of their life. As they read more and more books the roots of the habit go deeper and deeper.

4.8.6 Organising reading awareness events

Some respondents suggested that universities must organise awareness events for students concerning the importance of reading. These may include reading competitions, writing competitions, storytelling as well as encouraging students to form book clubs. With such awareness students may develop interest in reading and hence improve their reading habits.

4.9 Summary

This chapter focused mainly on trying to transform the vast amounts of raw data into comprehensible information that is useful and meaningful to readers. It presented the data collected from the respondents through questionnaires and interviews. The data was analysed and presented using tables and graphs. This was done in a manner that was consistent with the objectives that the researcher had set to achieve through the research project. Since the aim of the study was to investigate students' reading habits, it was found out that students have poor reading habits because the majority of students perceive reading as way of accomplishing academic success and not for general knowledge or leisure. Major findings also indicate that the lack of reading habits among

students are attributed to the education system's approach to reading which makes students conceive it as a once off activity; limited access to reading materials; limited purchasing power among the population; lack of time and interest in reading and poor reading facilities. It was also found out that the worsening state of reading is to be blamed on the arrival of the digital media because students have become so much obsessed with the digital media that they do not see interest in leisure reading.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is a capstone to all the chapters. It provides a summary of the major findings based on the aim and objectives of the study. Recommendations are given to address the obstacles to the creation of viable and sustained reading habits among students. In this regard, the chapter logically gives summarised answers to the research questions identified in chapter one and gives conclusions based on the findings. The recommendations are informed by a combination of the framework of analysis, literature, suggestions from respondents during the research process as reflected by their views in the questionnaire and interviews.

5.2 Summary of findings

This section of the study provides a summary of the research findings based on the aim and research objectives that were formulated in chapter one.

5.2 1 Student's reading habits

Research findings on students' reading habits revealed that:

1. There are poor reading habits among university students as most students perceive reading as way to achieve academic success and not for general knowledge or leisure. This is indicated by the fact that most students only read during examinations and a few read on a daily basis.

2. The type of materials read by students indicates a shift in students reading behaviour as most respondents claimed that they read information they acquire from digital media almost daily because the internet is seen as an increasingly important information source. The trend may have shifted to a digital reading habit which is totally different from the conventional one.
3. The internet is the major source of information for most students.
4. The amount of time spent on reading per week by university students is considerate. This is due to their engagement in the academic activities that require a significant amount of reading time in order for students to perform well academically. This engagement may have resulted in their selection of reading materials that are less fictional and more academic in nature.
5. Females read more hours than males.
6. Most (26) students visit the library during exams and a significant number of students (13) have never visited the library.
7. A significant number of students (29) have never borrowed books from the library including the final year students who are soon set to leave the university.
8. About 33.3% (30) of students have personal libraries and the remaining 66.7% (60) do not have libraries as they do not see the need of having one.
9. Academic books constitute a higher percentage in the categories of books that students have in their personal libraries.
10. Students rarely buy books. About half (45) of the respondents confessed to not having bought a single book in their collection.

11. About 91.1% of students read to pass examinations; 82.2% to stay informed; 73.3% for personal development; 28.9% for leisure and 22.2% to push time.
12. Majority of students (86) spend their leisure time watching television/ movies and browsing the internet (80). Reading is very far down from the list of their priorities as only 40 students claimed that they read during their leisure time.
13. Forty-one (41) students do not read because they claim that they do not have time to spare for leisure reading; 29 do not have access to information materials which is of interest to them and 20 claimed that they do not have interest in reading.

5.2.2 Impact of digital media on students' reading habits

Research findings revealed that:

1. Use of electronic media has a positive impact on students' reading habits as it helps them improve on their academic performance by facilitating information access, enhancing reading habits and accelerating academic success by making information easily and widely available.
2. Use of electronic media gives a variety of information materials. Information can be obtained faster, cheaper and conveniently.
3. Digital media is convenient as with the coming of electronic gadgets there is no longer need for students to move around carrying books, newspapers and magazines as they can read these online from their smart-phones, laptops and so forth, anywhere at any time.

4. Health-wise digital media affect the eyes and reduce the concentration on the act of reading and hence affecting the reading habits negatively. Reading from a computer is a demoralizing exercise and can make one lose focus.
5. Students browse the internet mostly to chat with friends on social networks. They are so much obsessed with the digital media that they do not see the interest in leisure reading.
6. Most students daily use new media technologies to support their research and learning activities but due to the availability of vast information on the internet students just copy and paste without even reading or grasping ideas.
7. In an increasingly digital environment, students are likely to gradually develop screen-based reading habits and to increasingly use a variety of strategies to cope up with information-abundant environment. On the other hand students will continue to use printed information materials for much of their reading activities, especially in-depth reading.
8. The findings of this study confirm the belief by Weel (2011) in his study on book culture to reading culture that as many adolescents today are fairly techno-savvy, teachers or educators should go beyond teaching technical skills to integrating new media technologies in the language classroom where students can truly explore and experience the internet as a resource.

5.2.3 Obstacles to the creation of viable and sustained reading habits among students

Research findings revealed a number of obstacles that impede the creation of sustainable reading habits among youths. These entail:

1. Inadequate reading materials
2. Limited time and lack of interest in reading
3. The education system's examination-oriented structure
4. The advent of digital media
5. Poor reading facilities and
6. Limited purchasing power

5.2.4 Promotion of reading habits

Developing a reading habit calls for combined efforts of educators, publishers, librarians, authors and booksellers alike. This section summarises the results on the role played by publishers, libraries, lecturers and book fairs in their endeavour to promote reading habits. These were the key informants in this study.

5.2.4.1 Publishers

Research findings show that:

1. Publishers are involved in the publishing of books but do not have any activities directed towards the promotion or creation of reading habits.
2. Publishers occasionally visit university libraries and other tertiary institutions as they do not have books targeted for the university market.
3. Publishers only target the primary and secondary school market and only produce books directed to meet the needs of these markets as they are sure that the books will be bought.

5.2.4.2 Libraries

Research findings revealed that:

1. The university library does not meet the reading needs of the students as it is so small with students always packed like commodities. In view of this, the university librarian said the new library is under construction which is likely to accommodate all the students.
2. Reading materials are few compared to students who need them; hence it is discouraging for students who want to read.
3. The electronic resources (e-resources) section is so small, with a few computers and a student is allowed one hour per day which is always not enough. There is also load shedding of electricity and poor internet connection which when combined make the access to e-resources difficult.
4. The library has academic books and journals only in their shelves.
5. The library is open from 9am to 9pm during weekdays and 9am to 4pm on Saturday and closed on Sundays and public holidays.
6. In their endeavour to create a conducive reading environment the library employees discourage students who open social networking sites using library resources.
7. The library has not performed any activity directed towards the promotion of a reading culture or meant to improve students' reading habits.

5.2.4.3 Book fairs

Research findings revealed that:

1. The book fair (ZIBF) draws the public to a wide range of books available on the market.
2. The book fair usually has a children's reading tent which is an outreach tool to promote reading. It stimulates a desire and love for leisure reading, develop reading skills and create lifelong reading habits among children.
3. During the book fair event, children engage in reading activities like; reading competitions, storytelling and creative writing.

5.2.4.4 Lecturers

From the research findings it emerged that:

1. Most lecturers encourage students to read beyond classroom notes as it helps develop language and communication skills.
2. Some lecturers give students assignments which require research beyond classroom notes because class notes are skeletal guides to issues for research.
3. Lecturers always encourage students to read because it brings enlightenment and it helps students get diverse ideas and opinions to issues.

5.3 Conclusion

This study was conducted to investigate students' reading habits at National University of Science and Technology in the midst of a rapidly growing and expanding digital environment and to develop strategies that can promote sustainable reading habits. From the findings it can be concluded that there are poor reading habits among

university students in Zimbabwe as most students perceive reading as a way to achieve academic success and not for general knowledge or leisure. The development of reading habits in the life of any individual should commence at the early stages of life. To inculcate a reading habit, attention should be given to the early childhood development when children are taught to learn to read and read to learn at the same time. This habit should be carried out through one's life.

University students cannot be considered a reading society if they do not take serious interest in reading for pleasure. Reading based on passing examinations is not reading at all since the practice is likely to disappear soon after finishing examinations. Students regard reading as an activity connected to formal education that has to be endured during the schooling years and then abandoned when people complete their required stages of school. Yet reading should become part of life and development. It is evident from the findings that most students read at their own pleasure and at their own convenience and only for academic reasons. Most of these students read only to pass examinations and not to equip themselves with the relevant knowledge which will help sharpen their thinking and widen awareness in social, economic, political and environmental issues.

It can also be concluded that students nowadays have less time devoted to reading due to the presence of electronic media jostling for attention, which is the reason why reading might not fare so well in a multimedia environment. Students prefer to spend a lot of time browsing the internet, chatting on social networks (whatsapp, facebook, mxit, twitter, viber etc), and watching television and movies which has threatened sustained reading. The study also concludes that the arrival of digital media is

contributing to a shift in reading; screen-based reading is emerging. This is indicated by the amount of time students spend on digital media and the number of students who use electronic media to support their reading and learning activities. Thus screen-based reading is becoming a reading pattern in today's information-intensive environment. However, it can also be concluded that students will continue to use the printed word as a source of information for their academically activities.

From the findings it can also be concluded that students have never bought books. This is also a major issue of concern regardless of the reason why they do not buy them since it is the major reason why they do not have personal libraries. Even those who have libraries just wait to inherit books and other information materials from their friends, parents or be given gifts so as to have a library and prefer not to buy the books.

The study further concludes that there are a number of obstacles that impede the creation of sustainable reading habits among students. These include; lack of reading materials, lack of time and interest in reading, the education system's examination-oriented structure, the advent of electronic media, poor reading facilities (especially the university library which does not provide a conducive reading environment and hence not meeting the reading needs of students) and the limited purchasing power of the population (people have limited disposable income from which they can buy books).

5.4 Recommendations

The study was conducted to investigate students' reading habits at National University and Science and Technology in the midst of a rapidly growing and expanding digital environment and to develop strategies that can promote sustainable reading habits.

Therefore, based on the research findings and in an attempt to improve students' reading habits the following recommendations were made:

5.4.1 Availing reading materials

Information materials should be availed within the reach of students at an affordable price; both at home and at school so that students can develop better reading habits. The university library authorities should make sure that a wide range of relevant reading materials (apart from academic books), and information reading materials which appeal to all categories and are of interest to students are provided in the library. Parents should also take the responsibility of developing their children's reading habits by providing reading materials at home and encouraging their children to read. The relevant stakeholders involved in the publishing industry should reduce the price of books so that books are affordable to all and not the elite.

5.4.2 Stimulating the habit of reading

Parents should stimulate the habit of reading books, magazines, newspapers and other information sources by taking up the challenge themselves before forcing it on children. This is because childhood is the most receptive period in human life and as such the child absorbs whatever they see, they hear and whatever they experience which becomes part of them, they assimilate all the impressions. Reading is a habit acquired in childhood and will stay embedded in their minds to the end of their life. As they read more and more information materials the roots of the habit go deeper and deeper.

Lecturers should use presentation and discussion as part of teaching strategies and give students assignments that require research beyond classroom notes. Lecturers also need to appreciate the importance of reading. This will afford them the opportunity to motivate and encourage their students to read widely.

5.4.3 Empowering students with all reading facilities

Students should be empowered with all the reading facilities they need. A reading space in the library shall be created, internet connections shall be increased and a wide range of reading materials shall be availed to the students at the right place and at the right time by parents and library authorities.

5.4.4 Making reading part of the curriculum

The government through the Ministry of Education should incorporate reading into the syllabus, which shall be examinable, so that students are encouraged to read and hence develop meaningful reading habits. This is because reading is not examinable and most students tend to neglect it and hence read only what is examinable. Thus reading shall be made part and parcel of learning. Lecturers should also use presentation and discussion as part of teaching strategies and give students assignments that require research beyond classroom notes.

5.4.5 Incorporating digital media in teaching and learning activities

Digital media shall be incorporated as part of teaching and learning activities as it has had a profound impact on reading. This is because technology is increasingly finding its way into mainstream culture, the types and uses of technology in students' programs

have also expanded dramatically to include computers, tablets, e-books, mobile devices, handheld gaming devices, digital cameras and video camcorders, multimedia players for music and videos, digital audio recorders, interactive whiteboards, software applications, the internet, streaming media, and more. These technologies are increasingly expanding the tools and materials to which students have access both in their homes and in their classrooms and have become vital sources of abundant information and knowledge to students.

5.4.6 Organising reading awareness events

Universities should organise awareness events for students concerning the importance of reading. These may include reading competitions, writing competitions, storytelling as well as encouraging students to form book clubs. With such awareness students may develop interest in reading and hence improve their reading habits. Mass media (Television and radio) should also incorporate reading programmes on their list so as create awareness on reading. With this, students may become more inquisitive and more encouraged to read and hence develop meaningful reading habits.

Thus, for any educational system to be effective and to ensure sustainable development in any nation, it is therefore indispensable to inculcate reading habits from scratch in order to have informed citizens who will intellectually advance the nation to globally competitive level. This could be done by providing a conducive reading environment such as libraries, provision of adequate reading materials, and proactive public awareness programmes on the importance of reading for self and national development.

5.5 Recommendations for further study

Since it was found out that most students read from their electronic devices, future studies can focus more on:

1. Impact of technology on youths' reading habits in Zimbabwe. With focus on how the new media technologies are affecting the reading of print information materials.

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Appendix A

Questionnaire Accompaniment Letter

Dear Respondent

I am a student at Moi University (MU) in Kenya studying towards a Master of Science Degree in Publishing Studies. I am carrying out a research project entitled: **An assessment of students' reading habits in the digital environment at National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Bulawayo, Zimbabwe.**

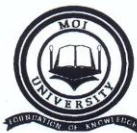
I am kindly asking for your assistance in completing the questionnaire and your co-operation will be greatly appreciated. The information that you are going to provide will be treated with absolute confidentiality and will be used for academic purposes only.

Thank you in advance for taking part in this study.

Yours faithfully

Admire Moyo

Appendix B
Introductory Letter



MOI UNIVERSITY

Tel No.: +254 053 43720, 43597, 43620
Fax: +254 053 43047, 43360
Email -hodpublishing@mu.ac.ke

P.O. BOX 3900
ELDORET
KENYA

DIRECT. 053- 43041
REF. SIS/PMS/IMC/58

SCHOOL OF INFORMATION SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLISHING AND MEDIA STUDIES

31st May 2013

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir,

RE: DATA COLLECTION THESIS RESEARCH BY
- ADMIRE MOYO IS/MSC/12

The above named is an MSC student in the Department of Publishing and Media Studies, School of Information Sciences, Moi University.

Ms. Moyo would wish to carry out research entitled **"An Assessment of students' habits in the digital environment at National university of Science and Technology, Zimbabwe"**

We are kindly requesting that you allow her collect data in your organization.

PUBLISHING & MEDIA STUDIES DEPARTMENT

for 
DR. Emily J. KOGOS
HEAD:
PUBLISHING AND MEDIA STUDIES
/mkm

Appendix C

Questionnaire for students

Instructions

- i) Do not write your name on the questionnaire.
- ii) Answer all the questions.
- iii) Show responses by ticking the respective answer box where applicable or by filling in the spaces provided.
- iv) You are encouraged not to leave blank spaces.

Section A

1. Age.....
2. Sex.....
3. Faculty.....
4. Year of study.....

Section B – Research Questions

1. How often do you read?

	Daily	Every 2 days	Twice a week	Once a week	During Exams
News Papers					
Magazines					
Books					
Journals					
Electronic Media					

2. When do you read?

Morning

Afternoon

Night

When you are free

3. How much time do you spend reading per week?

Less than 1 hour

1-3 hours

4-6 hours

7-9 hours

Above 10 hours

4. Does the type of reading (print based or electronic based) you say you do in the above questions, sustain a good reading culture? Please explain.

.....
.....
.....

5. a) Is reading important? Yes No

b) Why?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

6. What do you consider to be reason(s) why you need to read? Please tick.

To pass exams

For leisure

Personal development

Push time

To be informed

7. Where do you get your reading materials?

University library

Other libraries

Friends

Internet

8. How often do you visit the university library?

Daily

Twice a week

Weekly

Monthly

During examinations

Never

9. How often do you borrow reading materials from the library?

Twice a week

Once a week

Once every two weeks

Once a month

Never

10. What type of reading materials do you usually borrow from the library?

- Religious
- Academic
- Cookery
- Motivational
- Romance
- Fiction
- Scientific
- Other

11. a) Do you have a personal library? Yes No

b) If yes, what type of information materials do you have in your personal library?

- Religious
- Academic
- Cookery
- Motivational
- Romance
- Fiction
- Magazines
- Scientific
- Other

12. How often do you buy reading materials?

	Daily	Every two days	Twice a week	Once a week	Monthly
News Papers					
Magazines					
Books					
Journals					
Magazines					

13. Excluding classroom notes, what else do you read?

.....

.....

.....

14. a) Does digital media impact on your reading habits? Yes No

b) How?

.....

.....

.....

15. Does the new media technologies support your reading activities?

Yes No

If yes, explain

.....

.....

.....

16. What activities do you engage in during your leisure time?

.....

.....

.....

17. What hinders you from reading?

- Lack of time
- Lack of reading materials
- Lack of interest in reading
- Other. Specify.....

18. What do you think are the obstacles behind students' poor reading habits?

.....
.....
.....
.....

19. In your own opinion, what actions would improve the reading habits among youth in Zimbabwe?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your time.

Appendix D

Questionnaire for Lecturers

Instructions

- i) Do not write your name on the questionnaire.
- ii) Answer all the questions.
- iii) Show responses by ticking the respective answer box where applicable or by filling in the spaces provided.
- iv) You are encouraged not to leave blank spaces.

Section A

1. Faculty.....

2. Educational qualifications (indicate your level by ticking the highest educational qualification achieved).

<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor	<input type="checkbox"/> Bachelor & postgraduate diplo
<input type="checkbox"/> Masters	<input type="checkbox"/> PHD

3. Discipline.....

4. Seniority status

<input type="checkbox"/> Lecturer	<input type="checkbox"/> Teaching Assistant	<input type="checkbox"/> Staff Development Fellow
<input type="checkbox"/> Senior Lecturer	<input type="checkbox"/> Professor	<input type="checkbox"/> Associate Professor

5. Do you perform administrative responsibilities?

<input type="checkbox"/> Dean	<input type="checkbox"/> Head of Department
<input type="checkbox"/> Other. Specify.....	

6. Length of service.....

Section B – Research Questions

1. What can you say about the reading behaviour of your students?

<input type="checkbox"/>	Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Good	<input type="checkbox"/>	Average
<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor	<input type="checkbox"/>	Very Poor		

2. What are the factors that contribute to the reading behaviour as per your assessment in question 1 above?

.....

.....

.....

.....

3. Do you think reading is important? Yes No

Why?

.....

.....

.....

4. a) Do you encourage students to read beyond classroom notes?

Yes No

b) Give reasons for your answer in 4a above.

.....

.....

.....

.....

5. In your assessment (based on assignments, examinations and class presentations), what percentage of your students do you think read beyond classroom notes?

<input type="checkbox"/>	0-10%	<input type="checkbox"/>	11-20%	<input type="checkbox"/>	21-30%
<input type="checkbox"/>	31-40%	<input type="checkbox"/>	41-50%	<input type="checkbox"/>	Above 50%

6. a) Do you agree that there are poor reading habits among students?

Yes

No

b) If your answer to question 6a is yes, what do you think are the obstacles behind the existing poor reading habits among students at NUST?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Do you think the growth of electronic or digital media has contributed to poor reading habits and culture among the youth? Explain.

.....
.....
.....

8. In your opinion, what strategies should be implemented to promote a culture of reading among university students despite the growth of electronic media?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

9. Any other comment related to reading habits

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your time.

Appendix E

Interview schedule for the Publishing Managers

1. What type of reading materials do universities buy from your list?
2. Do you visit universities to market your products? How often?
3. During your visits to universities do you interact with;
 - a) Students?
 - b) University libraries?
 - c) University bookshops
4. a) What is your observation with the type of materials they buy?
b) What is your observation with their interest in reading?
5. What proportion of students buy reading materials?
6. What activities do publishers perform in the promotion of reading habits?
7. Do you agree that there are poor reading habits among youths today? Justify your answer.
8. What do you think are the obstacles to the creation of sustainable reading habits among youths?
9. Do you think the growth of electronic media has contributed to poor reading habits among youths? Explain.
10. What measures would you put forward for improving the current reading habits among youth in Zimbabwe?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix F

Interview schedule for Librarian

1. What is the intensity of the library use? (Morning, afternoon or evening)
2. Do you have a variety of reading materials? State them.
3. Do you think the library is meeting the students' reading needs? Justify your answer.
4. a) What special programmes and activities do you have that promote reading habits?
b) Have the special programmes improved students' reading habits?
6. What do you think are the obstacles to the creation of sustainable reading habits among youths today?
7. Do you think the growth of electronic media has contributed to poor reading habits among the youth? Explain.
8. What measures do you propose for improving the current reading habits among the youth in Zimbabwe?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix G

Interview schedule for Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF) Co-ordinator

1. What role does ZIBF play in the promotion of reading habits?
2. What programmes does ZIBF have that promote reading habits? Have they helped improve the reading habits among the youth in Zimbabwe?
3. What problems do you face in your endeavour to promote reading habits?
4. What do you think are the obstacles to the creation of sustainable reading habits among youths today?
5. Do you think the growth of electronic media has contributed to poor reading habits among the youth? Explain.
6. What measures do you propose for improving the current reading habits among the youth in Zimbabwe?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix H

Determining the sample size

Sample size for $\pm 3%$, $\pm 5%$, $\pm 7%$, and $\pm 10%$ precision

Levels where confidence level is 95% and $P= 5$

Size of Population	Sample size (n) for precision (e) of			
	$\pm 3%$	$\pm 5%$	$\pm 7%$,	$\pm 10%$
500	A	222	145	83
600	A	240	152	86
700	A	255	158	88
800	A	267	163	89
900	A	277	166	90
1000	A	286	169	91
2000	714	333	185	95
3000	811	353	191	97
4000	870	364	194	98
5000	909	370	196	98
6000	938	375	197	98
7000	959	378	198	99
8000	976	381	199	99
9000	989	383	200	99
10000	1000	385	200	99
15000	1034	390	201	99
20000	1053	392	204	100
25000	1064	394	204	100
50000	1087	397	204	100
100000	1099	398	204	100

Source: Florida Cooperative Extension Service, Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences, University of Florida. PEOD-5, 1992.