Inclusive Classrooms, Inclusive Readers: Examining Learners' Reading Behaviours in a Ghanaian Inclusive School

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Abstract: This study was conducted at the University Practice South Inclusive Basic School in the Effutu Municipality of Ghana's Central Region to explore learners' behaviours toward reading. Guided by an interpretivist research philosophy, the study employed a qualitative approach and adopted a case study design. The population comprised 50 individuals (47 learners and 3 teachers), out of which 14 participants including 12 learners and 2 English Language teachers were purposively selected. Data were gathered using semi-structured interview guide and non-participant observation guide. Interviews were conducted through face-to-face interactions, and thematic analysis was used to interpret the findings. The results revealed that learners generally demonstrated positive attitudes toward reading, particularly when exposed to materials that align with their interests and needs. Key factors influencing learners' reading behaviours included teacher support and motivation, peer influence, fear of failure, and curiosity. Additionally, instructional strategies such as questioning and answering, group discussions, presentations, paired reading, and occasional use of learners' first language were identified as effective in promoting reading engagement. Furthermore, practices such as supportive teacher-learner interactions, library visits, and peer tutoring were found to foster positive reading behaviours. The study recommends that headteachers, teachers, policymakers, and other education stakeholders work collaboratively to establish learner-centred, supportive reading environments that inspire reading motivation and lifelong literacy habits.

Keywords: Reading Behaviour, Inclusive Education, Motivational Factors, Literacy Development, Ghanaian Basic Schools.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Reading has long been recognized as a foundational skill essential for all forms of learning. It allows individuals to transcend their immediate environments, immersing themselves in fictional worlds and experiencing cultures different from their own. Through reading, learners acquire new vocabulary, gain knowledge, develop empathy, and enhance emotional intelligence. As Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi, and Jesmin (2011) emphasize, reading not only expands knowledge but also builds maturity and character, sharpens critical thinking, and fosters awareness of social, economic, political, and environmental issues. Despite the many documented benefits of reading, a growing number of learners do not engage in reading regularly, whether for academic or leisure purposes. Behaviour, as Maxwell (2004) argues, lies at the core of success in any life endeavour. In the context of learning, a positive behavioural disposition is a critical factor for achievement (Coiro, 2012). Behaviour reflects how learners feel about specific tasks, such as reading, and is often evident in how they engage with those tasks (Vehovec, Zubković, & Reinić, 2014). Reading, in its most basic form, involves decoding written or printed text and

deriving meaning through a cognitive process, as outlined by Chomsky (1965).

In this study, reading is conceptualized as a fundamental tool for learning and a key contributor to intellectual development. In today's digital era, literacy skills are more vital than ever, as they improve individuals' lives, foster innovation, and contribute to national development. Countries where significant numbers of learners lack basic reading skills by age 15 risk long-term developmental setbacks (Mullis, Martin, Kennedy, Trong, & Sainsbury, 2009). Enhancing literacy is not only an educational imperative but also an economic investment, yielding tangible benefits for both individuals and society (OECD, 2013; EU High-Level Group of Experts on Literacy, 2012).

In this context, behaviour is understood as the outward manifestation of a person's thoughts or feelings. Positive behaviour often leads to higher levels of performance and is shaped gradually over time through consistent attitudes and habits developed during childhood. Behaviour becomes part of an individual's personality and plays a crucial role in shaping their potential for future growth. A person's ability

to change their life trajectory is, therefore, closely linked to their ability to transform their behavioural patterns. A learner's behaviour towards reading can be described as a set of emotional and psychological dispositions that influence their willingness to engage with reading tasks. According to Rosli, Razali, Zamil, Noor, and Baharuddin (2017), it involves attitudes that either draw learners towards or away from reading experiences. McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang, and Meyer (2012) define reading behaviour as "acquired predispositions to respond in a consistently favourable or unfavourable manner with respect to aspects of reading" (p. 285).

Numerous factors collectively shape learners' reading behaviours, including socio-economic status (SES), parental involvement, instructional practices, access to reading materials, and individual interests. Learners from higher SES backgrounds often benefit from exposure to books and other educational resources, whereas those from lower SES environments may encounter barriers such as limited access to reading materials, which can negatively impact their motivation and proficiency (Amoako, 2016). Parental involvement is equally crucial—when parents actively participate in their children's reading activities by reading with them or discussing books, it fosters stronger reading habits. In contrast, a lack of parental engagement or negative attitudes toward reading can discourage learners from developing a positive relationship with reading (Adjei & Osei, 2019). Understanding these influencing factors is essential for designing effective strategies and interventions to promote positive reading habits. This study, therefore, aims to explore learners' behaviours towards reading and identify the underlying factors influencing those behaviours within the context of University Practice South Inclusive Basic School in Winneba. A deeper understanding of these internal and external influences will provide insight into how learners form their reading attitudes, and ultimately, how educators and policymakers can support improved literacy outcomes.

➤ *Statement of the Problem*

Despite the well-documented importance of reading for academic achievement and personal development, learners' behaviours toward reading continue to pose challenges for educators and researchers alike. Numerous studies have highlighted a worrying decline in learners' motivation and engagement with reading (Smith, 2018; Johnson et al., 2019). While existing literature acknowledges that behaviours towards reading are shaped by factors such as socio-cultural context, home environment, teacher influence, and access to reading materials (Guthrie et al., 2016; Mol & Bus, 2011), few studies have holistically examined how these elements interact to influence learners' reading behaviours and subsequent academic outcomes. Furthermore, while research has shown that learners' enjoyment of specific genres or topics can foster more positive reading behaviours (McKenna et al., 2019; Wigfield & Guthrie, 2010), there is limited empirical investigation into how individual preferences and interests impact their reading habits and engagement levels, particularly within inclusive basic education settings.

At University Practice South Inclusive Basic School (Unipra South), preliminary observations reveal a widespread reluctance among learners to participate in reading tasks during lessons. Both teacher feedback and informal discussions with learners indicate a general disinterest in independent reading activities, though the underlying causes remain unclear. This suggests a critical gap in understanding the specific behavioural and contextual factors affecting learners' disposition towards reading in this setting.

Understanding learners' reading behaviours is essential, as such behaviours significantly influence their reading habits, intrinsic motivation, and ultimately, their academic performance. While some studies have established a positive correlation between favourable reading behaviours and achievement in language-related subjects (Klauda & Guthrie, 2017; Baker & Wigfield, 2019), further research is needed to identify the underlying mechanisms and mediating factors through which these behaviours affect learners' educational trajectories. This study, therefore, seeks to address this gap by examining the behaviours of learners toward reading, the factors influencing those behaviours, and their implications within the context of an inclusive basic school in Ghana.

➤ *Purpose of the Study*

The purpose of the study was to explore learners' behaviour towards reading at University Practice South Inclusive Basic School have on their reading habits.

➤ *Objectives of the Study*

The objectives of the study were to;

- Investigate into learners' behaviours towards reading at University Practice South Inclusive Basic School in Winneba.
- Identify the factors that influence learners' behaviours towards reading at University Practice South Inclusive Basic School.

➤ *Research Questions*

The following research questions were:

- What are the learners' behaviours toward reading at University Practice South Inclusive Basic School?
- What factors influence learners' behaviours towards reading at University Practice South Inclusive Basic School?

➤ *Transactional Theory of Reading*

The Transactional Theory of Reading, proposed by Louise Rosenblatt, offers a comprehensive framework for understanding reading as an interactive and dynamic process between the reader and the text (Rosenblatt, 1978). Rather than viewing reading as a passive act of decoding written language, Rosenblatt's theory conceptualizes reading as an active transaction in which meaning is co-constructed through the interplay of the reader's background knowledge, experiences, emotions, and the text itself (Rosenblatt, 1994). At the heart of this theory lies the reader-text relationship, which emphasizes the mutual influence of both entities. Readers bring their unique perspectives, prior knowledge,

and cultural backgrounds to the reading experience, which in turn shapes how they interpret and engage with the text (Rosenblatt, 1985). Simultaneously, the text exerts influence over the reader by evoking thoughts, emotions, and interpretations, resulting in a dynamic exchange where meaning is created through the transactional process (Rosenblatt, 1978).

A key element of the Transactional Theory is the role of context in shaping reading comprehension. Rosenblatt (1994) highlights that reading does not occur in isolation; rather, it is embedded within broader social, cultural, and personal contexts. These contextual factors such as socio-economic status, cultural identity, language background, and prior educational experiences significantly influence how readers interpret texts. By acknowledging the influence of context, educators are better positioned to support learners in making meaningful connections with reading materials and developing deeper comprehension skills (Rosenblatt, 1985). Another important dimension of the theory is the distinction between aesthetic and efferent reading. Aesthetic reading involves the reader's personal, emotional, and imaginative engagement with the text, focusing on the lived-through experience of reading. Efferent reading, on the other hand, emphasizes extracting information, facts, or practical knowledge from the text (Rosenblatt, 1994). Both models are considered valid, with the mode selected depending on the reader's purpose and the nature of the text.

In the context of this study, which focuses on learners' behaviours towards reading at the University Practice South Inclusive Basic School, the Transactional Theory of Reading provides valuable theoretical grounding. Firstly, the theory's emphasis on the reciprocal relationship between the reader and the text aligns with the study's objective of understanding how learners engage with reading. It suggests that learners' behaviours are shaped not only by the textual material itself but also by their individual experiences, interests, and interpretations. Recognizing this transactional nature of reading allows for a deeper exploration of how learners' personal contexts influence their reading engagement and comprehension.

Secondly, the theory underscores the importance of contextual influences such as the school's inclusive environment, teaching practices, access to reading materials, and socio-economic background which are central to this study. These factors may significantly impact how learners approach and respond to reading activities. Lastly, the theory's distinction between aesthetic and efferent reading modes enriches the study's investigation into learners' motivations and approaches to reading. Some learners may read for enjoyment, emotional resonance, or personal connection (aesthetic), while others may read with the aim of acquiring information or completing academic tasks (efferent). Understanding how learners navigate between these modes provides insight into their preferences, challenges, and the instructional support they may need to become more engaged and proficient readers.

➢ *Learners' Behaviours Towards Reading*

One of essential way to achieve the maximum knowledge is by reading. Chettri and Rout (2013) argue that success and failure of learners' academic life depends on their reading ability. However, Syahputra (2016) also believes that reading is the best receptive skill in learning language to get the knowledge. As reading is a receptive activity, it becomes as a habit when it repeated consistently. This means that reading habits or behaviour is depending on the frequency, materials and amount of time spent to read (Rosli, Razali, Zamil, Noor, & Baharuddin, 2017). A person's behaviour towards reading is characterized as a system of feelings related to reading which makes the learner approach or keep a strategic distance from a situation involving reading (Rosli et al., 2017). According to Turkish Language Association (2005), behaviour can be considered as a repetition of a certain behaviour at certain frequency. Considering learners behaviour, reading action should be continued with different opinions and sources in a certain period (Odabaş, Odabaş, & Polat, 2008). However, it is necessary for the reading activity to be transformed into a necessity and to be perceived as a necessity to be used for life (Arslan, Çelik, & Çelik, 2009). Reading behaviour influences reading behavior as early as childhood, determining whether or not children will read (Chotitham & Wongwanich, 2014).

Further, Feldman (2012) stated that adolescent literacy skills are more difficult to improve due to their behaviour. The researcher therefore collaborates with Feldman that since many adolescences struggles with literacy, they develop negative behaviours toward reading. The above literature clearly indicates that modern education aims to educate the creative individuals who reproduce the knowledge, develop their intellectual skills and have different perspectives (Bulgurcuoğlu, 2016). The most basic action which provides to acquire, understand, and transfer the information, which is the basic tool for the individual to discover his own reality, is reading (Harvey & Allard, 2015).

Habits are nothing but a product of our behaviour towards various things. If we approach the things positively, we absorb positive habits which in turn makes up our benevolent Character. And the greatness of a person is directly dependent on their character. 'Character' is the most important asset which is a potent force in deciding the status of any individual. Good character will always call for praise and applause while bad character would always be isolated. It's aptly said, "If wealth is lost, nothing is lost; if health is lost, something is lost; if character is lost, everything is lost. In simple words, we can say that it is the positive behaviour of a person which can fill him with good habits, and their good habits can make him great. It is very difficult to succeed in life if you have a factual knowledge but don't have a solid foundation required for good character. Character is the biggest part of man's success which can be gained in Toto without any currency. It is in the light of this that it has become necessary to carry out this study on learners' behaviours towards reading at University Practice South Inclusive Basic School through analysis from variables such as the learners' behaviours towards reading, factors that influence their behaviours towards reading, the instructional

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strategies that teachers use in teaching reading and ways of promoting the positive behaviours of learners towards reading. On the other hand, it is assumed that evaluating the learners' behaviours towards reading of basic school learners would enable policymakers, curriculum developers and teachers to design better basic school curriculum that will enable learners improve upon their learning and eventually enhance their academic performance both effectively and efficiently.

According to Iftanti (2015), he stated that behaviour of reading is not only constructed in an individual but also influenced by some external factors such as environment, education, social background, and facilities. Therefore, facilities provided by parents also help learners in developing reading habits, such as book and laptop. Also, Isakson, Isakson, Plummer, & Chapman (2016), positioned those feelings towards reading can be positive or negative and can be reinforced by past experiences that are satisfying or disappointing. Moreover, positive reading behaviours relate to life-long reading and learning (McKenna, Conradi, Lawrence, Jang, & Meyer, 2012). Thus, positive reading behaviours lead to positive reading experiences, which also lead to higher academic performance (Hasan, 2007). Therefore, behaviour towards reading is the most factor that influence learners' success in academic performance and learning. This is supported by Isakson et.al (2016) they believe that if college readers use academic reading behaviours that are appropriate to the task, they are more likely to have successful reading experiences that lead to more positive behaviours. It means that learners' positive behaviours are the most factor, which influences learners' success in learning. Considering learners behaviour towards reading, Hasan (2007) stated factors that contributed to a positive behaviour among adolescents: believing that reading is important, enjoying reading, having a high self-concept as a reader, and the last having a verbally stimulating home environment.

➢ *Factors Influencing Learners' Behaviours Towards Reading*

The impact of an individual's behaviour toward reading has been widely demonstrated (Sani & Zain, 2011). Simply, having a positive behaviour toward reading, viewing it as a leisure activity, and having positive beliefs about one's personal ability to read are predictors of an individual's actually reading ability. While individual learners have different combinations of factors influencing their feelings about reading, their choices and ability to read, there are a few common forces of influence present in the literature: peers, family, English teachers, language acquisition, and learner exceptionalities. A study conducted by Ford, Cabell, Konold, Invernizzi, & Gartland (2012), their findings indicated that English Language Learners' children with higher rates of preschool attendance were those with the highest levels of literacy development in kindergarten, leading the researchers to believe that earlier exposure to and development of orthographic skills is what set these children apart from their peers who attended preschool at lower rates. Besides, research has demonstrated that those children with the lowest levels of orthographic skills at the start of kindergarten then

go on to be poor spellers in first grade (Ford, et. al, 2012). This finding suggests that learners, particularly those with underdeveloped orthographic skills may benefit from early and more intensive written word knowledge instruction and assessment to help them catch up to their peers versus continuing to widen the gap between them. The researcher agrees with literature that reading is a complex process that requires the proper development and coordinated use of many separate cognitive skills. Even before a child learns how to actually read, he or she must develop a number of early literacy predictors or "pre-reading" skills that are composed of several components, including phonemic awareness (Ford et al., 2012).

The researcher has observed over the years and agrees with the reviewed literature that, learners who experience very little demand to use or read in English outside of school, their behaviours toward reading play a much more important role in predicting their literacy abilities than do the behaviours of those children who experience English-supportive environments. The researcher therefore asserts the importance of reading cannot be overstated as it is the key to academic and social progression of children all learners in their lifetime. Children's reading behaviours have for a very long time been an issue of interest to researchers, parents, educators and other stakeholders. There are many motivational variables that affect the reading behaviours of people. Researchers and stakeholders have become more and more aware of the significance of reading motivation (behaviour) in explaining literacy behaviour, according to Clark and Rumbold (2006). As cited in Clark and Rumbold (2006; p. 14), Guthire and Wigfield (2000, p. 408) state "that motivational processes are the basis for the coordination of reading cognitive objectives and strategies." In fact, reading motivation (behaviour) and the ability to read are the foundation on which reading habits are based. In their study, Clark and Rumbold (2006) claimed that intrinsic (internal) and extrinsic (external) motivation are two aspects of motivation for reading, based on varied explanations or goals that produce behaviour. On the other of an activity in response to' external values and demands. Besides, Ryan and Deci (2000) define intrinsic (internal) motivation as an activity performed on the basis of individual interest in the activity itself, and extrinsic motivation refers to the performance of an activity in response to 'external values and demands. "Greater reading frequency and greater breadth of reading"

- "Greater reading enjoyment"
- "Greater retention of key information"
- "Greater persistence in coping with difficulties, mastering the required skills and becoming self-determined in reading tasks."

For them, intrinsic (internal) motivation for reading is also linked to the importance of reading, which denotes the acceptance of reading as a valuable activity; curiosity, which is the desire to acquire knowledge on a particular subject of personal interest; involvement, which is the delight or satisfaction derived from reading certain types of materials or information texts; and preference for challenging reading,

which is the fulfillment of learning or difficult text ideas (Clark & Rumbold, 2006). When children have pleasant and satisfying interactions with books, they begin to appreciate the inner enjoyment and satisfaction that can be gained by reading (McKenna, 1994, as quoted in Baker & Scher, 2002).

Individual self-conceptions will considerably weigh on reading achievements. Self-concept is, according to Duke and Pearson (2002), "a person's idea of himself; that is, what he thinks he is" (p. 6). According to Phajane (2014), children with positive self-concepts tend to be willing to read, enjoy reading, become skilled and become lifelong readers. Self-concept can have direct effect on how a child views the reading process. Learners with a poor self-conception about themselves as readers seem to develop a negative behaviour to reading. They do not participate in reading, in turn, for a fun or enjoyable activity; they perceive reading as a task that should only be done when told to do so (Fountas & Pinne11, 2001). In contrast, learners who believe they are good readers tend to enjoy reading and engage in reading for a leisure activity. Such children tend to develop a positive behaviour towards reading which influences their reader growth and success. Children generally opted for reading or not depending on their behaviour towards reading (Phajane, 2014).

II. METHODOLOGY

Parahoo (2014) describes research design as a plan that outlines how, when, and where data are to be collected and analysed. This study adopted an intrinsic case study design due to its focus on understanding a particular context in depth. The intrinsic case study approach is appropriate when the researcher's interest lies in the unique characteristics of a single case, not for generalizing findings but for gaining a detailed understanding of the case itself. In this case, the study investigated learners' behaviours towards reading at University Practice South Inclusive Basic School in Winneba. This design allowed the researcher to delve into the specific experiences and perspectives of learners within their learning environment. Kusi (2012) notes that the intrinsic case study facilitates detailed exploration within defined spatial and temporal boundaries, making it suitable for examining contextual factors that influence reading behaviour. Additionally, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2003) assert that case studies are action-centred and yield findings that can be directly applied to practice, offering valuable insights for improving teaching and learning strategies in similar contexts.

The study's target population consisted of 50 individuals; 47 learners and 3 teachers at the University Practice South Inclusive Basic School. The participants were selected based on inclusion criteria, which focused specifically on Grade Four learners and their English Language teachers, while all other grade levels were excluded. A sample of 14 participants, comprising 12 learners and 2 teachers, was selected using purposive sampling. The learners were those who frequently visited the reading centre and participated in mobile library sessions, and the teachers were responsible for English Language instruction at the

upper primary level. This sampling method was strategically employed to ensure that participants had relevant knowledge and experiences related to the research topic. As Creswell (2012) points out, qualitative research benefits from smaller, more focused samples that allow for deep analysis, rather than broad generalizations. A larger sample, he argues, could dilute the depth and richness of the data, reducing the capacity for meaningful interpretation.

To collect data, the study employed two key instruments: a semi-structured interview guide and an observation checklist. The semi-structured interview guide was developed to collect rich, qualitative data from both teachers and learners about their behaviours and attitudes towards reading. As Borg and Gall (2003) explain, interviews involve direct verbal interaction and are adaptable to different research settings. The semi-structured format ensured a degree of consistency across interviews while allowing for flexibility in probing deeper where necessary. Two sets of interview guides were developed—one for learners and one for teachers and were reviewed by the researcher's supervisors to assess their relevance and reliability. The guides were pilot-tested at Methodist Basic School, after which several items were revised to improve clarity and coherence before being used for the main data collection. Face-to-face interviews enabled participants to express their views freely, and the researcher maintained a neutral stance throughout the process to minimize bias.

Complementing the interviews, an observation checklist was used to record real-time behaviours of learners during reading activities. According to Marvasti (2004), observation checklists offer a systematic and consistent way of gathering data by documenting specific behaviours, events, or actions as they naturally occur. The checklist included predefined criteria aligned with the study's research questions and objectives, ensuring the relevance and comparability of observations across different settings and times.

Data analysis followed a thematic approach, which is suitable for qualitative research that seeks to identify patterns and trends within a dataset. As Braun and Clarke (2019) explain, thematic analysis involves the systematic identification and interpretation of themes emerging from the data. In this study, each interview was transcribed soon after it was conducted, and the transcripts were cross-checked against the original recordings to ensure accuracy. Coding was done manually, and themes were generated based on recurring ideas and significant statements made by participants. The analysis involved three stages; description, analysis, and interpretation, allowing the researcher to remain close to the data while also drawing analytical conclusions. The observation data were also coded and analysed alongside the interview data to identify converging themes and validate the findings. In some instances, participants' responses were quoted verbatim to preserve authenticity and emphasize key insights. Tesch (2013) notes that such an approach allows researchers to uncover patterns and groupings within the data that may not be immediately obvious.

To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the researcher paid close attention to the concepts of credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability, as outlined by Golafshani (2003) and Lichtman (2010). Credibility was enhanced through peer review and pilot testing, while dependability was maintained through consistent procedures. Transferability was supported by detailed descriptions of the research context, and confirmability was ensured through careful documentation and neutral presentation of findings. As Amankwaa (2016) points out, a qualitative study is considered trustworthy only when its methods and findings are judged credible by its readers.

Ethical considerations were rigorously adhered to throughout the study. Following Resnik (2010), informed consent was obtained from all participants after they were fully briefed on the purpose, procedures, and potential risks of the research. Participants were assured of the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. The researcher met with participants at the school to explain the objectives of the study, the expected time commitment, and how the data would be used. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. All responses were anonymized, and data were securely stored to protect participants' privacy. These measures ensured that the research adhered to high ethical standards while safeguarding the dignity and rights of all involved.

III. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The results indicated that 5 learners (41.7%) were males, while the remaining 7 learners (58.3%) were females, suggesting that the majority of the student participants in the study were female. The average age of the learners was 12 years. Regarding the demographic details of the teachers, both teachers (2), representing 100%, have more than 5 years of teaching experience and hold bachelor's degrees. The study included one male and one female teacher, accounting for 50% gender representation among the teachers. Additionally, the results showed that one teacher is over 40 years old, while the other is between 35-40 years old.

A. Research Question 1: What are learners' behaviours toward reading at University Practice South Inclusive Basic School?

The following themes were developed; motivation for reading, selectivity in reading, help-seeking behaviour and curiosity. The first theme analyzed is motivation for reading.

➤ *Motivation for Reading*

Motivation is a crucial factor in determining the success of any educational program, including reading programs. Learners who are motivated to read are more likely to engage in reading activities, to read more often, and to develop better reading skills. The data suggests some learners are motivated to read while others are distracted. The interviews indicate that some learners are motivated to read because they see it as a valuable tool for learning. However, learners are not always motivated to read, as other activities seem more appealing.

- *These are some of the Excepts from the Field:*
  "I like reading because it's not always teachers would be around to teach, so I need to pick up my books and read."(Learner,1)

  "I like reading because it helps me to learn more." (Learner, 2)

  "I like reading because it improves my reading skills." (Learner, 3)

  "Sometimes I feel like playing." (Learner, 4)

  "When sitting alone and feel like reading, my friends will be playing, and this distracts me, so I join them to play." (Learner, 5)

- *A Teacher Said:*
  "As an English language teacher, if your learner is not able to express themselves when it comes to reading, it brings my zeal down. So, I do encourage them all the time"(Teacher, 1)

➤ *Observation Report*
  [Observation of learners during a reading session revealed that a majority of the learners displayed an internal motivation to read, driven by their genuine interest and curiosity about various topics. They independently selected books and materials based on their personal preferences and actively sought opportunities to read during free time. They also displayed high levels of enthusiasm and eagerness to engage with the reading materials. They actively participated in discussions, asked relevant questions, and expressed their excitement about reading].

From these responses and observation, it can be inferred that learners at University Practice South Inclusive Basic School have a generally positive behaviour toward reading. The learners recognize the importance of reading for their learning and the improvement of their skills. However, there are also some challenges such as distractions from friends who are playing. The teacher's motivation plays a significant role in promoting the learners' behaviour towards reading. Additionally, the learners' motivation for reading is linked to the need for self-directed learning and the absence of teachers to teach. Overall, the data suggests that the learners' behaviours towards reading are shaped by their personal motivation and the support they receive from their teachers. The findings confirmed the results of a study by Guthrie and Wigfield (2017) who found that motivation is what triggers reading. They noted that learners have motivating behaviours towards reading. Also, Hooley and colleagues (2013) found that motivating behaviours help learners to complete course reading assignments. Therefore, understanding what motivates learners to read can inform teachers and policymakers in designing effective reading programs and interventions that can enhance learners' motivation to read.

➤ *Selectivity in Reading*

The responses from the data suggest that learners are selective in their reading. They are more likely to read

materials that are interesting, at their level, or that they think will benefit them. Also, learners are willing to seek out help to engage with more challenging materials.

- *Some Participants Remarked:*

    "I first skim and scan the reading material first to see if it may benefit me. If not, I do not read at all" (Learner 1)

    "If I find the book title interesting, I read it. Also, I like checking the content of the book". (Learner 2)

    "If I see that the book is at my level, I do read" (Learner 3)

    "If it is not my level, I ask my friends to help me read because I want to read". (Learner 4)

➢ *Observation Report*
    [During the observation, learners demonstrated a thoughtful approach to book selection. They actively chose books based on their personal interests, preferences, and reading levels. Learners displayed a willingness to explore different genres and expand their reading horizons. They were observed selecting books from various genres such as fiction, non-fiction, mystery, science fiction, and biographies. Also, the learners showed a preference for books that they could relate to personally. They often gravitated towards stories or topics that reflected their own experiences, cultures, or identities, indicating a desire for books that resonated with their lives].

The result suggests that learners at University Practice South Inclusive Basic School are selective in their reading and tend to choose materials that interest them or that they believe will benefit them. This selectivity may indicate that learners are more likely to engage with reading materials that are relevant to their interests and needs, which could lead to increased motivation and engagement with reading overall. Additionally, the willingness to seek help from peers when encountering challenging materials suggests a collaborative approach to learning and a recognition of the importance of reading for their academic success. The results are in line with the findings of Talley (2017) that a free choice of books could make learners feel more inspired and make it easier for the characters in the selected books to identify themselves. This further affirms to the Social Cognitive Theory that indicates that individual's interests and needs influences their actions (behaviours) toward something (reading). However, it is worth noting that some learners may avoid reading altogether if they do not perceive the material as beneficial or interesting, indicating a need for more diverse and engaging reading materials to promote a love of reading.

➢ *Help-Seeking Behavior*
    Another theme that emerged from the data was help-seeking behavior. The interviews suggest that learners are taking initiative and responsibility for their own learning. Some participants shared the following:

    "If it is not my level, I ask my friends to help me read because I want to read." (Learner 1)

"I need to pick up my books and read." (Learner 2)

➢ *Observation Report*
    [Learners demonstrated a positive behaviour towards seeking help when encountering challenges in their reading. They were observed approaching teachers, librarians, and peers to seek clarification, guidance, or recommendations related to their reading materials. During collaborative reading activities or book clubs, learners actively participated in discussions and openly asked for assistance from their peers. They engaged in conversations, shared their interpretations, and sought additional insights to enhance their understanding of the reading materials. Learners made effective use of available resources, such as dictionaries to address unfamiliar words, concepts, or difficulties encountered during their reading].

The responses from the data suggest that learners are not hesitant to seek help from their peers when they encounter reading materials that are too challenging for them. Asking for help from friends shows a willingness to learn and engage with more difficult texts, which can lead to improved reading skills. Additionally, the statement "I need to pick up my books and read" suggests a self-directed approach to learning and a sense of responsibility for one's own education. Together, these responses indicate that learners at University Practice South Inclusive Basic School have a positive behaviour towards seeking help and taking ownership of their learning.

➢ *Curiosity*
    Another theme that emerged from the study was curiosity. The responses suggest that learners curious about the materials they are reading and are willing to explore them to see if they are worth engaging with further. Some of the participants said:

    "Due to curiosity, I first skim and scan the reading material first to see if it may benefit me. If not, I do not read at all" (Learner 1)

    "I like checking the content of the book" (Learner 4)

➢ *Observation Report*
    [Learners exhibited inquisitive behavior, frequently asking questions about the reading material and showing a genuine curiosity to explore and understand the content in depth. Learners actively engaged with the reading materials, displaying a sense of curiosity through their focused attention, thoughtful annotations, and expressive reactions. They demonstrated a desire to uncover new knowledge and perspectives. Some learners demonstrated initiative in conducting independent research related to the reading materials. They utilized various sources, such as the library, and other reference materials, to satisfy their curiosity and expand their understanding.

The results suggest that curiosity plays a role in learners' behaviours towards reading. Participants expressed that they are curious about the content of the reading material and want to know if it will benefit them before they start reading. This

suggests that learners are not just reading for the sake of reading, but are actively seeking out material that will help them learn and grow. By checking the content of the book, learners are satisfying their curiosity and making informed decisions about what they choose to read. This also suggests that educators can support learners' curiosity by providing reading materials that are engaging and relevant to their interests and needs. The results resonate with Clark and Rumbold (2006) who found out that curiosity, which is the desire to acquire knowledge on a particular subject of personal interest; involvement, makes learners develop a good behaviour in order to derive satisfaction from reading certain types of materials or information texts; and preference for challenging reading. They referred this to as the fulfillment of learning or difficult text ideas.

The overall implication of the data is that learners' behaviours towards reading at University Practice South Inclusive Basic School are influenced by a variety of factors, including intrinsic motivation, external motivation, selectivity in reading, help-seeking behavior, and curiosity. Teachers and policymakers can use this information to design effective reading programs and interventions that take into account learners' motivations and preferences for reading materials. It is important to provide a diverse range of engaging reading materials that are relevant to learners' interests and needs. Teachers can also encourage collaboration among learners to promote a sense of responsibility and ownership for their learning. Finally, promoting curiosity and providing opportunities for learners to explore their interests through reading can enhance their motivation and engagement with reading. The major findings of research question one was that learners at University Practice South Inclusive School have positive behaviours towards reading.

B. Research question 2. What factors influence learners' behaviours towards reading University Practice South Inclusive Basic School?

The following themes emerged from the data on research question two; Setting a very strong foundation for learners, support and motivation from teachers and headmasters, peer influence, fear of failure and curiosity.

➤ *Setting a very Strong Foundation for Learners*
The first theme that emerged from the data was the fact that setting a very strong foundation for learners is a crucial factor to influence learners' behaviours towards reading. It was shared that the foundation of reading is very important since without it leaners cannot be introduced to other stages. A teacher said:

"Firstly, I will talk about the foundation; we have stages where children should be introduced to new things so that they can have more interest in doing things. So, if a learner is from a foundation in which he/she is not introduced to the various stages of doing new things, e.g., reading books, reading stories, or storytelling, going to the library regularly will be pissed off anytime he/she has been a task to read or such a learner will have a turn-off. With regards to those who will have a good foundation (thus they have been introduced

to reading story books, listening to stories, and going to the library regularly) and will have an interest in reading or a positive behaviour towards reading. (Teacher 1)

The data suggests that setting a strong foundation for learners is a crucial factor in influencing their behaviours towards reading. Learners who have been introduced to reading and storytelling from an early age are more likely to have a positive behaviour towards reading than those who have not. This highlights the importance of providing learners with opportunities to engage in reading-related activities from a young age in order to build a strong foundation for their reading skills and behaviours. It also suggests that learners who do not have a strong foundation in reading may require additional support and encouragement to develop a positive behaviour towards reading. The findings of this research confirm the study by Clark and Hawkins (2010) who found that the majority of participants (17,089 learners in England) received a good foundation of reading from their parents. Thus, they opined that parents and the home are one of the main factors in the foundation of a desire for their children to have a positive reading habit.

➤ *Support and Motivation from Teachers and Headmasters*
The first theme that emerged from this data was support and motivation from teachers and headmasters. Some learners mentioned that they are motivated to read because of the encouragement they receive from their teachers and headmasters.

• *One of the Learners Said:*
"I love learning, so I do like reading. When finding it difficult, I ask my teachers to assist me." (Learner 1)

"I have been motivated by the headmaster and teachers to read." (Learner 2)

"My teacher has been telling me that reading is not difficult at all. So, I also believe that. Sometimes when I am finding it difficult pronouncing some words, she breaks down the word piece by piece for me." (Learner 5)

The data suggests that learners in the University Practice South Inclusive Basic School perceive support and motivation from their teachers and headmasters as an important factor influencing their behaviours towards reading. Learners appreciate the assistance they receive from their teachers when finding reading difficult and feel motivated when they receive encouragement and praise from their teachers and headmasters. In addition, the learners feel that their teachers help them to overcome challenges, such as difficulty pronouncing words, by breaking down words into smaller parts, which helps them to improve their reading skills. A study found that a substantial 87 percent of learners who received personalized reading tips from their teachers left secondary school with positive reading behaviour (Duke and Pearson, 2004). This suggests that teachers and headmasters can play a vital role in promoting a positive behaviour towards reading among learners.

➢ *Peer Influence*

Another theme that emerged from this data was peer influence. Some learners feel pressure from their peers to be able to read, and fear being teased or laughed at if they make mistakes while reading. Some participants shared:

- *A Learner Said;*
  "Peers look down on you when you don't know how to read, they call you names and tease you with it, so I try my possible best to learn how to read." (Learner 4)

- *Another Learner Said,*
  "Some of my peers don't like it when others mock me, so they try to make time when they are free then we learn how to read together." (Learner 5)

- *Additionally, One of the Learners Remarked,*
  "Most of the time when you are asked a question by your teacher, and you don't know. Peers in the class laugh and make fun of you. So, I try my possible best to learn how to read." (Learner 7)

The data suggests that peer influence can be a significant factor in learners' behaviours towards reading. Learners mentioned that they feel pressure to learn how to read well to avoid being mocked or teased by their peers. However, some learners also mentioned that they find support and motivation from peers who are willing to learn together and avoid mocking each other. Therefore, the influence of peers on reading behaviours can be both positive and negative, depending on the nature of interactions and relationships within the peer group. The findings contradict Duke and Pearson (2004) who found out that influence of peers hinder proper and good reading habits. This study rather proves otherwise since learners use that as a basis to encourage themselves to read.

➢ *Fear of Failure*

The fear of failure was also another theme that emerged. Some learners expressed a fear of making mistakes while reading or not being able to understand or remember what they have read, which can lead to them avoiding reading altogether. It was also expressed that they do their best to read in order to pass their exams.

- *Some Learners Indicated:*
  "If you are not good at reading, there is no way you can be on top of the class. our teachers grade us on how you are able to read well. So, for me the fear of failing to achieve a good score makes me to read more." (Learner 6)

  "I read more in order to pass my exams. Some of the questions that comes in the exams you can't score it correctly if you don't understand certain key words. So, it is good to read more and understand some words using dictionary". (Learner 9)

  "Most of the time when you are asked a question by your teacher, and you don't know and you make a mistake, my peers in the class laugh and make fun of you. So, am afraid of

making a mistake to be laughed by at my peers therefore, I do not my do possible best to learn how to read." (Learner 11)

- *A Teacher Shared in Affirmation:*
  Some of them like reading whiles others will be kept mute when they are asked to read or during reading in the sense that there are going to be mistakes which their colleagues will make a mockery of them, and others don't like to talk at all. (Teacher 2, Interview Data)

The data suggests that the fear of failure is a significant factor that motivates some learners to read more. They are aware that reading skills are important for academic success and that their grades are partially based on their ability to read well. Some learners also read more to understand key words that may appear on exams. However, the fear of failure can also be a hindrance to some learners, as they are afraid of making mistakes and being ridiculed by their peers. This fear of failure can lead to a lack of confidence and a reluctance to try their best when learning to read.

➢ *Curiosity*

Moreover, curiosity was also a factor that influenced behaviours towards reading University Practice South Inclusive Basic School. Some learners mentioned being curious about the content of the books they are reading and checking to see if it will benefit them before they decide to read.

"I first skim and scan the reading material first to see if it may benefit me. If not, I do not read at all." (Learner 2)

"If I find the book title interesting, I read it. Also, I like checking the content of the book." (Learner 4)

"Some of the books if you read the title, nobody will ask you to read it. They are very attractive." (Learner 12)

The data suggests that curiosity is a significant factor that influences behaviours towards reading among learners at University Practice South Inclusive Basic School. Learners are more likely to read if they find the book title interesting or if they believe the content may benefit them. Additionally, learners mentioned that some books are more attractive than others, indicating that the design or presentation of the book influence their interest in reading it. The results align with Clark and Rumbold (2006) who found out that curiosity, influences learners to develop good behaviour towards reading of materials or information texts; and preference for challenging reading.

The data suggests that both internal and external factors, such as motivation, support from teachers, peer influence, and fear of failure, can influence learners' behaviours towards reading. The overall implication of these themes is that they can significantly impact learners' behaviours towards reading. Teachers and headmasters can provide support and motivation that can encourage learners to love reading and seek assistance when they encounter difficulties. Peers can also have a significant influence on learners, either positively or negatively. Fear of failure can motivate some learners to

read more and improve their reading skills, while it can also be a barrier to learning for others. Finally, curiosity can spark interest in reading and motivate learners to explore and discover new information. Therefore, it is crucial for educators to understand these factors and create an environment that fosters positive behaviours towards reading.

IV. FINDINGS

The major findings of the study were presented in line with the research questions spelt out for the study. The findings revealed that:

- Learners at University Practice South Inclusive Basic School have a generally positive behaviour towards reading. Learners' behaviours towards reading are shaped by their personal motivation and the support they receive from their teachers. Additionally, learners are more likely to engage with reading materials that are relevant to their interests and needs, which could lead to increased motivation and engagement with reading overall. Finally, the willingness to seek help from peers and explore materials indicates a collaborative approach to learning and a recognition of the importance of reading for academic success.
- Setting a strong foundation for learners, support and motivation from teachers and headmasters, peer influence, fear of failure and curiosity are the factors that influence learners' behaviour towards reading.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the study on learners' behaviours towards reading at University Practice South Inclusive Basic School has provided valuable insights into the perceptions and behaviours of learners regarding reading. The findings indicate that while some learners display a positive behaviour towards reading and perceive it as an enjoyable and enriching activity, others may have less favorable behaviours and view it as a chore or uninteresting. It is evident from the research that various factors influence learners' behaviours towards reading, including home environment, access to reading materials, teaching methods, and personal interests. Understanding these factors is crucial in developing effective strategies to foster a reading culture among learners and promote a love for reading. As educators and stakeholders, we have a critical role in nurturing positive behaviours towards reading among our learners. By creating a supportive and inclusive environment that encourages exploration, creativity, and engagement with diverse reading materials, we can ignite a passion for learning and empower learners to become lifelong readers.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made for policy and practice:

- Develop policies that promote early exposure to reading and storytelling. The study found that learners who had been introduced to reading and storytelling from an early age had a more positive behaviour towards reading. Policies that encourage parents and caregivers to read to their children from an early age and that incorporate storytelling into the curriculum could help set a strong foundation for learners.
- Ensure that school libraries are well-stocked with a variety of reading materials that are relevant to the interests and needs of learners. Policies that prioritize library visitation and book borrowing can help promote a culture of reading and support learners in their reading goals. Incorporate cultural relevance into reading materials. The study found that learners are more likely to engage with reading materials that are relevant to their interests and needs. Policies that encourage the use of reading materials that reflect the diverse cultural backgrounds of learners can help promote positive behaviours towards reading.

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