



Reading Habits as a Predictor of Library Resource Use among Inmates in Selected Correctional Centres in Oyo State, Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study examined reading habits as a predictor of library resource use among inmates selected from correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study employed a survey research design. The study population comprised 2316 inmates, and the sample size was 378 inmates. A proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to collect data in each of the correctional centres. The instrument for the study was a questionnaire, namely the Reading Habits Scale (RHS) and the Extent of Use of Library Resources Scale (EULRS). The instruments were validated and found to be reliable, with an index of 0.8 using Cronbach's alpha statistic. The research questions were answered using frequency count, mean and standard deviation, while the hypothesis was tested using multiple regression. Reading habits significantly influenced the use of library resources by inmates in correctional centres ($Adj\ R^2 = 0.15$, $F(3, 366) = 22.567$, $p < 0.05$). Also, some resources were used to a great extent (textbooks and dictionaries) while some resources were used to a low extent (law books, encyclopedias, newspapers/magazines, computers, internet facilities). Based on these findings, the study recommended that correctional authorities should address the low use of computer and internet facilities by investing in these resources. In addition, welfare officers should organize book clubs, reading contests, and motivational talks to foster reading habits among inmates.

Keywords: Correctional Centers, Inmates, Reading Habits, Utilization

Introduction

Library resource use is not an isolated phenomenon but could be predicted from reading habits. Reading habit serves as a factor influencing the use of library resources. Reading habit among inmates shows how frequently, willingly and purposefully inmates read. It is also assumed that inmates with a strong interest will look for a variety of resources that match their needs. Encouraging and developing consistent reading routines or duration could lead to more meaningful use of these resources. They will also become independent readers and prioritize their time, balancing reading with other activities and responsibilities. Reading habits directly shape how often and how effectively inmates use library resources. It is assumed that inmates who read regularly are more likely to visit the library, search for materials, and engage with books, newspapers, and learning resources that support their personal and educational goals. Inmates with weak reading habits rarely use the library. That is, it leads to low library patronage. Therefore, reading habit is a direct predictor of library resource use in correctional centres.

Statement of the problem

Despite the importance of library resources to support literacy and rehabilitation in Nigerian correctional centres, the level of use remains low (Afolabi & Afolabi, 2019; Obiano et al., 2020). This low utilization could be linked to weak literacy level or poor reading habits (Morken et al. 2021), which reduce inmates' motivation to seek and use available materials. However, the extent to which reading habits actually predict inmates' use of library resources is not clearly understood. There is also limited literature that shows a direct relationship between reading habits and the use of inmates. This gap necessitates an empirical investigation to determine whether reading habits can improve library utilization and support rehabilitation outcomes.

Research objectives

The main objective of this study is to investigate the extent to which reading habits predict the use of library resources by inmates in selected correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Specific Objectives

1. Find out the reading habits of inmates in correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria.
2. Determine inmates' extent of use of library resources in the correctional centres of Oyo State, Nigeria

3. Determine the predictive influence of reading habits on the use of library resources by inmates in correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria

Research questions

1. What are the reading habits of inmates in the correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria?
2. To what extent are the library resources used by the inmates of the correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria?

Hypothesis

H₀₁: Reading habits have no significant influence on the use of library resources in the correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Significance of the study

The study will be significant to inmates by improving reading habits, which empowers them with knowledge on various topics, thereby enhancing personal development. Reading will also offer escape from the environment and reduced stress, which contributes to their mental well-being. The study will also be of immense help for the inmates, as the outcome of the study will enhance their awareness of the benefits of library resources to their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. For policymakers, the findings of this study will inform them about the development of libraries in correctional centres, so that the needs of the inmates will be met, thereby allocating resources effectively to support library services and programs in correctional centres. It will also help in the design of educational programs that address the reading needs of inmates and support their rehabilitation.

Furthermore, the study will be significant to correctional librarianship by providing evidence on how reading environments and time constraints influence inmates' reading habits, thereby informing the design, management, and advocacy for more effective rehabilitative library services in correctional centres. It will also assist Library and Information Science scholars to extend theories of information access and reading behaviour to inmates within restrictive institutional settings, contributing empirical insights on information use in correctional environments.

Literature review

The concept of “Reading Habits” combines two distinct words:” Reading” and “Habits”. Reading is an action of a person who reads, while a habit, on the other hand, is a product of this action or learning. Habits have been studied extensively in the behaviourist tradition (Watson, 1913; Guthrie, 1935; Pavlov, 1927). According to them, habit is seen as repeated behaviour that is established through learning. They also believe that some behaviours turn quickly into habits, whereas others may require painstaking practice and frequent repetition. That is why Apari and Okebukola (2024) believe that early cultivation and sustained practice are key to long-term habit formation. Habit can also be seen as something that one does often or regularly, especially something that is hard to stop doing (Cambridge Dictionary). Habit is expected to foster library resources among inmates in correctional centres.

Reading habits are a multi-dimensional construct encompassing the frequency, duration, and nature of reading as well as the types of materials engaged with and the contexts in which reading occurs (Kulikauskiene & Naujokiene, 2023; Eze et al., 2023). They involve both behavioural patterns - often and how much a person reads - and cognitive or affective dimensions such as preference and intrinsic interest (Abid et al., 2023). Similarly, Hassan et al. (2021) considered reading habits as the frequency a reader regularly reads, considering the students’ reading preferences, interest in reading, attitude toward reading and reading problems. This is also in line with behavioural patterns combined with attitudes and preferences toward reading materials. In the correctional centres, these habits are strongly influenced by the surrounding environment. It has been discovered by some scholars that limited library hours, overcrowded spaces, or restricted access reduce the frequency and duration of reading (Opesanwo & Awofeso, 2024; Sharda & Tiwari, 2024). Also, availability, encouragement from welfare officers or fellow inmates and diversity of resources affect the choice of materials to be read by inmates (Asiru et al. 2024; Opesanwo & Awofeso, 2024). Thus, the environment of correctional facilities plays a critical role in shaping inmates ‘reading behaviours, making accessibility, resource quality and supportive infrastructure essential for fostering positive reading habits.

Library resource use

The concept of “use” in the context of library resources pertains to how individuals engage with the library’s collection and services to meet their information needs. That is, the utilization

of library information resources and services in solving one's academic or other personal problems. It also involves examining the interaction between library users and staff, reflecting the dynamic process of access, utilization and satisfaction. This supports the definition given by Okeuhie et al. (2021), as the extent to which library users make use of library resources to satisfy their information needs. This underscores that the core driver of library resources usage is the underlying information need, which shapes users' behaviour and engagement.

The use of information resources has been reviewed by different researchers from different angles. The single criterion for retaining a document within a library's collection, as well as the retention of a service provided in the library, is simply for the use of the library's resources and services. It is also significant in guiding a library's collection development effort. This was supported by Vera and Ufuoma (2021) that the use of library resources is the ability to make effective and independent use of resources and services. Similarly, Okeuhie et al. (2021) and IFLA (2022) states that, the ultimate goal of library resources is use, because libraries are known as social institutions and their practical function is to identify, acquire, organize, and repackage information resources and make them available to the people for whom the library is established usually in a conducive environment (Bouaamri, 2024; Lawal & Kannan, 2020). In light of this, IFLA (2022) defined the use of library resources as how individuals access and interact with materials, tools, and services offered by libraries to meet their information needs and support their learning and research. This encompasses borrowing books, accessing digital resources, participating in library programs, and utilizing reference services.

Empirical evidence on predictive relationships

There is very limited empirical research that specifically measures reading habits and the use of library resources by inmates. This serves as a research gap in the literature. Although there is existing literature that provides supporting context, but not include direct measurement (Garner, 2020; Sharda & Twari, 2024). Evidence from a qualitative study of Australian prisons by Garner (2020) revealed that the prison environment – particularly the presence of unstructured time-plays a significant role in motivating inmates to read, thereby influencing both frequency and duration of reading activities. Although quantitative measures of reading time were not provided by Garner, the study offers strong interpretive evidence that environmental conditions shape reading behaviour in correctional centres. Similarly, in a case study of a district jail library in India by

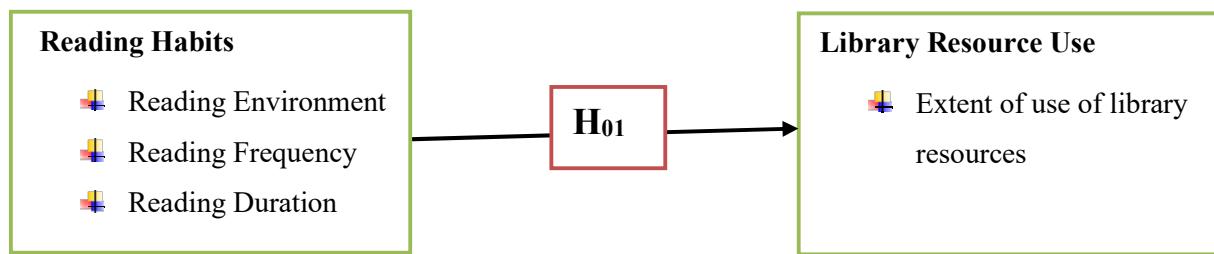
Sharda and Twari (2024), it was discovered that the availability of resources and physical facilities influences inmates' engagement with reading materials. This suggests that the reading environment plays a significant role in shaping reading behaviour. Furthermore, Yusuf and Awoyemi (2016) investigated Reading Habits of Users as Determinants of the Utilization of Library Information Resources in Two Selected Public Libraries in the South-West, Nigeria, using a descriptive survey research method. Data were collected through a combination of questionnaires, interviews and observation at the study locations. The findings of the study showed a significant relationship between the reading habits of users and the utilization of information resources of the selected public libraries. It was also discovered from the study that users of the libraries possessed some form of reading habit, and some also read to pass examinations, while the majority read to upgrade their knowledge. Although limited research has specifically examined this predictive relationship in Nigerian correctional centres, available evidence suggests that weak reading habits contribute to low library usage among inmates. Addressing this gap is essential for improving literacy programs, strengthening correctional library services, and enhancing rehabilitation results.

Theoretical framework

The Engaged Reading Model was the theory adopted for reading habits, and it was developed by Guthrie and Wigfield (2000). The framework provides a comprehensive explanation of how motivation, cognitive strategies, and social contexts interact to influence reading engagement and achievement. Application of this model to inmates suggests that reading habits develop when they actively engage with texts, have access to a supportive reading environment, and read frequently for meaningful purposes. The key indicators of this engagement are reading engagement, reading environment, reading duration, reading frequency, reading purpose, and reading diversity. For this study, reading environment, reading frequency and reading duration are the major indicators used.

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) was adopted for the use of library resources. The theory was originally developed by Katz et al. (1974). According to this theory, inmates turn to library resources to satisfy their specific needs, such as seeking information, academic, recreation, and personal development. These needs define their purpose of use, while the extent of use reflects how adequate, relevant and accessible the resources are.

Conceptual model



- **Reading Environment:** A conducive reading environment will enhance library experience, encouraging inmates to spend more time reading and exploring resources, thereby increasing the extent of use of available materials.
- **Reading Frequency:** It is assumed that inmates who read more frequently are more likely to use library resources regularly, resulting in higher levels of resource utilization.
- **Reading Duration:** It is also assumed that longer reading duration motivates inmates to access a wider range of library resources, predicting greater depth and extent of library resource use.

Methodology

The purpose of this study is to investigate reading habits as a predictor of library resource use among inmates in selected correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria. This study adopted a quantitative descriptive research design using a survey research method, which will guide in collecting primary data from the study population that will enable the researcher to evaluate the study variables. This method was adopted to focus on inmates' reading habits and use of library resources in selected Oyo State correctional centres. The study has selected two thousand, three hundred and sixteen (2316) inmates from two (2) correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria, as of December 2024. The two correctional centres are Agodi Custodial Centre and Abolongo Correctional Centre. The population comprised 1,479 from Agodi Custodial Centre and 837 from Abolongo Correctional Centre. There are several formulas for calculating the required sample size. This study has followed the formula given by Taro Yamane (1967). Taro Yamane's sample size determination formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where: n = Sample size, N = Population, e = Error Margin

Therefore, the sample size of inmates was calculated using Taro Yamane's formula, with a 5% sampling error; the required sample size is:

$$n = \frac{2316}{1 + * 0.05 * 0.05}$$

$$n = \frac{2316}{1 + 2316 * 0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{2316}{1 + 5.79}$$

$$n = \frac{2316}{6.79}$$

n (total sample size of inmates) = 341

Adjusting the sample size for a 10% non-response

$$n_f = \frac{n}{1 - f}$$

$$n_f = \frac{341}{1 - 10\%}$$

$$n_f = \frac{341}{1 - 0.1}$$

$$n_f = \frac{341}{0.9}$$

$$n_f = 378$$

n_f (total adjusted sample size of inmates) = 378

The sample size has been calculated using the above-mentioned formula. The required sample size was 378. The sample was drawn from 378 inmates who were made up of 241 inmates from Agodi Custodial Centre and 137 from Abolongo Correctional Centre using a proportionate stratified sampling technique. A structured questionnaire was constructed to evaluate the extent of use of library resources and reading habits of inmates (EURH). To ensure face validity, the instrument was evaluated by experts in the field of library and information science. Their valuable feedback and suggestions were taken into account during the instrument's development. To further guarantee content validity, the questionnaire items were closely aligned with the study's objectives and based on previously reviewed literature. Some items were adapted from related empirical studies, while others were constructed by the researcher, drawing from conceptual literature. The

Cronbach's alpha reliability test for library resources use was 0.8, while that of reading habits was 0.791, which is approximately 0.8. For construct validity, all the constructs were above 0.5, which suggests a strong sampling adequacy

Data collection procedure

Inmates who were available at the time of administration of the questionnaires were used. Ethical approval was also obtained from Babcock University Health Ethical Committee (BUHREC), and informed consent was also obtained. A letter of introduction was obtained from the Department of Information Resources Management. Permission was obtained from the officials at various correctional centres. Inmates were assured of a high level of confidentiality and anonymity of all the information being requested of them and supplied, and that it would be used for academic purposes only. A letter of completion of data collection was obtained from the Nigerian Correctional Service.

Data analysis

The data obtained were analyzed using both descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentage distribution, mean, and standard deviation) for research questions and inferential statistics (multiple regression) for the hypothesis.

Analysis of research questions and hypothesis

RQ1: What are the reading habits of inmates of the correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 1: Reading habits of inmates of the correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria

Reading Habits	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Mean (\bar{x})	Std. Dev.
Reading environment					3.00	0.64
I am more likely to read when the environment is quiet.	143 (38.6%)	165 (44.6%)	44 (11.9%)	18 (4.9%)	3.17	0.82
I schedule library hours motivate me to engage in reading regularly	118 (31.9%)	165 (44.6%)	52 (14.1%)	35 (9.5%)	2.99	0.92
I feel compelled to read when I see a fellow inmate reading, too	113 (30.5%)	159 (43.0%)	58 (15.7%)	40 (10.8%)	2.93	0.95
Welfare officers or Library staff encourage me to read more often	116 (31.4%)	148 (40.0%)	61 (16.5%)	45 (12.2%)	2.91	0.98
Reading duration; I read for					2.63	0.70
Two to three hours a day	105 (28.4%)	153 (41.4%)	66 (17.8%)	46 (12.4%)	2.86	0.97
One hour at a time	87 (23.5%)	158 (42.7%)	71 (19.2%)	54 (14.6%)	2.75	0.97
Half an hour at a time	67 (18.1%)	146 (39.5%)	67 (18.1%)	90 (24.3%)	2.51	1.05

15 minutes at a time	85 (23.0%)	93 (25.1%)	70 (18.9%)	122 (33.0%)	2.38	1.17
Reading frequency; I read					2.58	0.65
Every day while in the correctional centre	116 (31.4%)	150 (40.5%)	50 (13.5%)	54 (14.6%)	2.89	1.01
Occasionally, depending on my mood or the availability of materials	85 (23.0%)	154 (41.6%)	79 (21.4%)	52 (14.1%)	2.74	0.97
Once a week	62 (16.8%)	129 (34.9%)	88 (23.8%)	91 (24.6%)	2.44	1.04
Only once a month	50 (13.5%)	100 (27.0%)	110 (29.7%)	110 (29.7%)	2.24	1.03
						Overall Mean = 2.73, 0.43

**Source: Author's computation (2025)

Table 1 revealed that inmates in correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria, generally acknowledge that they have established reading habits ($\bar{x} = 2.73$, S.D. =0.64). Overall, inmates demonstrated moderate reading habits, which were influenced by reading environment ($\bar{x}= 3.00$) and reading duration ($\bar{x}= 2.63$). Reading frequency had lower results ($\bar{x}= 2.58$).

RQ2: To what extent are the library resources used by the inmates of the correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria?

Table 2: Extent of use of library resources by the inmates

To what extent do you use the following library resources?	VHE (%)	HE (%)	LE (%)	VLE (%)	Mean (\bar{x})	Std. Dev.
Textbooks	161 (43.5%)	166 (44.9%)	22 (5.9%)	21 (5.7%)	3.26	0.81
Dictionaries	153 (41.4%)	144 (38.9%)	43 (11.6%)	30 (8.1%)	3.14	0.92
Law Books	98 (26.5%)	143 (38.6%)	77 (20.8%)	52 (14.1%)	2.78	0.99
Encyclopaedias	93 (25.1%)	130 (35.1%)	104 (28.1%)	43 (11.6%)	2.74	0.96
Newspapers / Magazines	73 (19.7%)	157 (42.4%)	80 (21.6%)	60 (16.2%)	2.66	0.97
Vocational resources	57 (15.4%)	144 (38.9%)	111 (30.0%)	58 (15.7%)	2.54	0.93
Fictions / non-Fictions	68 (18.4%)	120 (32.4%)	122 (33.0%)	60 (16.2%)	2.53	0.97
Magazines/bulletins	58 (15.7%)	126 (34.1%)	101 (27.3%)	85 (23.0%)	2.42	1.01
Computers	23 (6.2%)	59 (15.9%)	155 (41.9%)	133 (35.9%)	1.92	0.87
Internet facilities	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.5%)	54 (14.6%)	314 (84.9%)	1.16	0.38
						Overall Mean = 2.51, 0.44

**Source: Author's computation (2025)

Table 2 revealed that inmates of the correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria, utilized the library resources to a high extent ($\bar{x} = 2.51$). This indicates that, on average, inmates use library resources to a considerable degree, though significant variations exist across different types of materials. Textbooks were used to a high extent ($\bar{x} =3.26$), followed closely by dictionaries (\bar{x}

$=3.14$), law books ($\bar{x} = 2.78$), encyclopedias ($\bar{x} = 2.74$), newspapers/magazines ($\bar{x} = 2.66$) and vocational resources ($\bar{x} = 2.54$). Digital resources such as computers ($\bar{x} = 1.92$) and internet facilities ($\bar{x} = 1.16$) indicate a low extent of use.

H₀₁: Reading habits have no significant influence on the use of library resources in the correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Table 3: Influence of reading habits on use of library resources in the correctional centres

Variables	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)	T-Stat.	Prob.	R ²	Adj. R ²
(Constant)	1.460	.144		10.113	.000	0.156	0.149
Reading frequency	.222	.036	.323	6.172	.000		
Reading duration	.057	.033	.089	1.695	.091		
Reading environment	.111	.034	.159	3.298	.001		

Dependent Variable: Use of library resources. F (3, 366) = 22.567, $p < 0.05$. T (DF = 366)

**Source: Author's computation (2025)

Table 3 showed that reading habits have a significant influence on the use of library resources in the correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria (Adj. R² = 0.149, F (3, 366) = 22.567, $p < 0.05$). The model explains 14.9% (Adj.R² = 0.149) of the variance in library resource utilization. The results lead to a rejection of the null hypothesis, indicating that reading habits do significantly influence library resource use. Among the specific reading habits, reading frequency emerges as the strongest and most statistically significant predictor, with a beta coefficient ($\beta = 0.323$, $t (366) = 3.173$, $p < 0.05$). This positive relationship suggests that inmates who read more frequently are substantially more likely to use library resources. Reading environment also shows a statistically significant positive influence, with a beta coefficient of ($\beta = 0.159$, $t (366) = 3.298$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that a conducive reading environment encourages greater use of library resources, likely because comfortable and quiet spaces make reading more appealing and sustainable. In contrast, reading duration did not exhibit a statistically significant influence ($\beta = 0.089$, $t (366) = 1.895$, $p > 0.05$). This suggests that how long inmates read during each session does not predict their overall use of library resources.

Discussion

The findings demonstrated that reading is a recognized activity within the correctional centres, but its practice is influenced significantly by the reading environment and reading

duration. The findings of this study align with the work of Opesanwo and Awofeso (2024) that states that the prison library environments encourage reading and contribute to inmates' learning and rehabilitation. This is also in line with the study of Garner (2020), which indicated that both the prison environment and the way time is experienced significantly shape reading behaviours. Also, Muhamad et al. (2023) state that factors such as home environment, family income, access to books, and parental involvement influence students' reading habits.

Inmates' extent of use of library resources in correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria, was great. Although there is a significant variation across the different types of library resources. Specifically, inmates in the correctional centres use some of the library resources like textbooks and dictionaries to a very great extent, while some were used but not as extensively as core educational materials like encyclopedias, law books, newspapers/magazines, and vocational resources. Resources such as fiction/non-fiction, magazines/bulletins, computers, and internet facilities indicated a low extent of use. The study revealed a progression from high usage of traditional educational materials to low usage of digital resources. That is, basic library resources were highly utilized while modern/digital resources were of low extent. The differences in the extent of use of library resources by inmates are in line with the work of Ayaowei et al. (2024). They discovered that books were accessible and used to a great extent, while dictionaries, handbooks, directories, journals, manuals, and reports were accessible and used to a low extent. This is also in line with the study by Jacob et al. (2024) that e-books, computers, and printers were not available and were not used in the correctional centres. Furthermore, the study is similar to the one asserted by Obiano et al. (2020) where traditional resources (textbooks, magazines, fiction books, chairs and lighting) were used in high extent while modern/ digital resources (video tapes, DVDs, library software, audio cassettes) were utilized to a low extent.

The null hypothesis was rejected because reading habits positively and significantly influence the use of library resources by inmates in correctional centres in Oyo State, Nigeria. Reading frequency emerges as the strongest and most statistically significant predictor. The positive relationship suggests that inmates who read more frequently are substantially more likely to use library resources. Also, a reading environment encourages the use of library resources, but reading duration does not. Specifically, it was discovered that interventions aimed at encouraging regular reading and improved reading environment will effectively promote engagement with library resources in correctional centres. Although, as earlier noted from the literature, there are

no studies that measure reading habits and library resource use among inmates, but literatures that provides strong support for habitual reading behaviour and increased use of library resources. In line with this, Garner (2020) stated that inmates often rely on books and libraries to manage unstructured time in prison, which increases both their motivation to read and their frequency of library resource use. Also, evidence from a survey in a prison in Germany showed that inmates engage in reading activity, with many spending extended periods reading daily and obtaining most of their reading materials from the library. This shows the relationship between habitual reading and library resource use (UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning, 2020).

Recommendations

Correctional authorities should enforce “quiet reading hours” in the library based on the strong consensus that a quiet reading environment enhances reading habits. The environment around the library should be quiet during the reading hours. The extent of use of library resources was great in the aspects of textbooks and dictionaries. Therefore, the correctional centres should maintain the procurement of textbooks and dictionaries, as these are the most utilized and valued resources. Welfare officers should also organize outreach and regular orientation on how to use library resources. Policy makers should boost inmates’ reading habits in Oyo State correctional centres by funding, secure well-stocked libraries, appointing trained librarians, and establishing regular, structured library hours that make reading accessible and rewarding.

Conclusion

The study demonstrates that inmates’ reading habits are a significant predictor for library resources, with higher reading frequency, duration and reading environment in correctional centres, Oyo State, Nigeria. This suggests that habitual reading behaviour plays a critical role in shaping inmates’ engagement with library resources. The research also confirmed that inmates utilize library resources to a great extent, showing a clear preference for materials that support educational goals and personal development.

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