

Investigating the Reading Preferences of Young Female Readers of Hausa Popular Prose Fiction: A Feminist Approach

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Abstract:

Reading the story of popular romance fiction is the most powerful social activities among women in the Western countries, Europe, Asia and Africa for their leisure and enjoyment. In this study an attempt has been made to understand the reading habits and preferences of the young adult female readers of Hausa popular romance fiction, the contemporary romance fiction are popular because it deals with unimaginable relationship between men and female, the novels help them to solve some issues on courtship, inequality, domestic violence and social change. In this study a face to face interviews was employed to collect their views, feelings and understanding of 10 young female readers through the Rosenblatt's Reader-response theory (1978). The data were analyzed using the constant comparative method. The findings of the study indicated four main outcomes which revealed the major motivating factors which includes; (i) image of flashy car appeared at the cover page (ii) image of beautiful flowers, (iii) image of golden ring (iv) Heart images, this images played a significant role for encouraging the readers to select a novel and read the story enjoy the freedom from breaking free of gender constraints through those stories consider it as part of their lives (Kitchen, 2016; Roach, 2010).

Keywords: *Hausa popular romance genre, Reading preferences, Motivation for reading, Young adult female readers, Reader-response theory*

1. Introduction

Reading popular romance genre now a days is a social activity engaged in by most young female readers through out their life time for leisure, entertainment and enjoyment. According to (Gilbert & Fister, 2011; Krashen, 2011), reading is the thoughts of a author communicated to audiences/readers through a written and printed sequence of words. It was also indicated that reading any literary texts is an interactional activity between male and female i.e children, young adult and other people who has interest and motives to achieve in life (Abdullah et al., 2012; Kavi, Tackie, & Bugyei, 2015; Smith, 2012). Any reader wish to read a particular text not only gets to share the thoughts and ideas of the writer but is also capable to understand the written words of the author. Reading also served as a bedrock of knowledge increase that widen the readers awareness of contemporary social issues regarding human lives.

It is was observed that a good reading habits and preferences plays a major role for the enhancement of human personalities and mental capabilities. This paper focuses on the reading preferences of young female readers of Hausa popular romance genre in northern Nigeria that have been concern of literary educators, literary critics and social commentators on the production, distribution, genre and its readers. Therefore, Hausa popular romance genre is a contemporary prose fiction written by young authors both male and female that focuses on courtship, empowerment and social change (Adamu, 2006; Whitsitt, 2003). The purpose of this study is to describe the reading preferences of 10 young female readers of Hausa romance readers. Findings from this study will provide insights into the reading behaviors of these females as well as help raise awareness on the role of reading popular romance genre towards the achievement of their social change and enjoyment.

1.1. Research objectives

The general objective of this study is to investigate the reading habits and preferences from 10 young women readers selected from their popular romance reading clubs. The specific objectives are:

- To explore and information about their reading motivation and preferences.
- To provide an adequate information about motivating factors that influence their attention for selecting a novel to read.

2. Literature Review

The main purpose of the paper is to investigate the reading preferences of young women readers of Hausa popular romance fiction. Therefore, as it was discovered that most of the available literature focuses on the college students reading preferences in the classroom contexts. For instance: (Early, 2011; Gallik, 1999; Olanrewaju, 2016; Priajana, 2015; Raju, 2014; Schneider-Mayerson, 2010). For instance,

Gallik, (1999) conducted a survey of college students on their time spent in pleasure reading that enhance their academic achievement. The researcher employed chi-square calculation to determine the significance difference between the two reading groups of the students. The findings indicated that recreational reading habits is help

the students in making their predictions about academic success. Secondly, it was reveal that students who spend more time reading have more knowledge on their academic skills and success. Schneider-Mayerson, (2010) studied the role of popular fiction in the development of romance fiction and the emergence of the criticism since 1960s. The study highlights the role of feminist influence of both the scholars and writers. Finally. It explored the significance of the popular romance in the hearts of almost all the women readers such as formulaic escapism, failing marriages, unfaithful wives suggest some ideas of developing cordial relationship in marriage and feminist ideology.

Raju, (2014) examined university students leisure reading habits using a questionannaire and nunstructured interviews for data collection. The study also employed a simple statistics for the analysis. The findiings indicated that about 54 percent of the participants shows positive impact on pursuing reding for pleasure. It also reveals that reading clubs in the university enhance motivation in promoting a reading culture among the students. Priajana, (2015) investigates the reading habit and preferences of the student teachers studying in Malang Malaysia, the researcher used the questionnaire which comprise 40 items made for evaluating reading habits, reading preferences of the students. The findings shows that about half of the participants appreciate in leisure time and it is important in their everyday lives. Olanrewaju, (2016) investigates student's reading attitude in the federal collge of education Abekuta, Nigeria. The researcher distributed 500 copies of questionannaires for data collection, the results shown that female students read the narrative prose fiction than their female conterparts. It was observed that almost all the students visited library to read newspapers while others prefered to read prose fiction for their leisure and entertainments.

All these previous studies explored the reading habit and preferences in the classroom contexts that means there is a shortage on reading preferences of Hausa popular romance fiction in which this current study explored it from one of the second major languages after Swahil in Sub-sahara of West Africa.

3. Methodology

In this paper, in order to explore the reading habits and their preferences among young female readers of Hausa popular romance fiction, it employed a feminist approach for selecting 10 readers through a purposive techniques from their reading clubs where the researcher asked every participants in happier mood and listens actively for the sake of their understanding, ideas and responses in their own words (Maykut, Maykut, & Morehouse, 1994). An indepth interviews was adopted for data collection. The researcher transcribed the responses and coded into categories/themes as guided by (Dawson, 2002; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

4. The Findings

Four outcomes emerged from the data analysis process and revealed the nature of the young female readers of Hausa popular romance genre responses with the cover pages they chosed to discuss. Each outcome is based on the readers interpretations, feelings and understanding.

Outcome 1 Reader Respond To Her Favourite Beautiful Image of Golden Ring

Well, the image that captures my attention is the one which truly portrays what the book is talking about for instance, I liked novel with a cover design with a beautiful golden ring, any moment I glanced it what comes into my mind is love story. There are front cover images that you don't have to read the book before you understand their contents. So, this is another kind of front cover image that motivates me in selecting a Hausa novel.

Outcome 2 Reader Respond To Her Favourite Image of Beautiful Flowers

These images depend on the author and what he/she talks about in the novel. The image can be a beautiful house, image of beautiful queen sitting in the place, etc It all depends on the topic or subject in the novel. My best front cover image is beautiful flowers appeared on the cover designs of any novel it really motivates me to select and read the story to know what happen between a hero and heroine either will end with happily ever after.

Outcome 3: Reader Respond To Her Favourite Front Cover Image of Beautiful Girl

The ones which you can guess the contents of the novels as you see them. For instance, if you see the image of a shabby woman or girl, you will come to the conclusion that the book is talking about suffering. And if it is about love or marriage, you will see a beautiful woman in a very nice outfit.

Outcome 4 Reader Respond To Her Favourite Image of Beautiful Heart

As a reader of these romance novels there are so many images appeared at the front covers every reader has their own choice and preferences like me for instance I like the images of beautiful heart which means every love relationship between a boy and girl develop their cordial agreement to lovers as time goes on agreed to marry and develop a family in their society. Therefore based on this image whenever I saw a novel with heart designs what comes into my mind is love affairs between a male and female.

Outcome 5 Reader Respond To Her Favourite Image of Beautiful Heart

Well, these front cover images are very important because they play a vital role in marketing the books. A reader can assess the front cover image and say what the book is all about. So, the images have their roles to play even if you have not advertised the book anywhere.

Outcome 6 Reader Respond To Her Favourite Image Of Flashy Car

The front cover images are very beautiful. They beautify the books and serve as illustration of the contents of the books. As reader of this popular romance genre I like the front images of beautiful house with surrounding and flashy cars are parked inside it. I really appreciate to select and read the story. Sometimes I feel to have such house to live I will be very happy if my dream comes true.

Outcome 7 Reader Respond To Her Favourite Image Of Flashy Car

Yes, of course. If I see any captivating or scary front cover image, I feel anxious to read the story. The front cover images are put for marketing purposes. Many readers look at the images before looking at the title. Therefore, every writer has various ways of using such images on their novel just to attract the attention of their readers.

Outcome 8 Reader Respond To Her Favourite Image Of Young Bride Girl

Of course, the front cover images attract my reading interests me, I feel the urge to read even if I didn't read the blurb. There are those with young girls or of a bride in her beautiful wedding gown sometime I feel elated, especially when the story tallies with the image on the cover. So I want assure you that if not because of this beautiful designs appeared on the cover page I would have not take my time going to the bookshop, selected a novel and read the story.

Outcome 9 Reaader Respond To Her Favourite Image of Beautiful Flowers

As a reader of this popular romance genre what motivates me to select a novel to read are images of beautiful flowers and many more, images served as a signifier to human vision every reader who glanced it will feel to buy and read such stories to know what was writteen in it. I want say that the appearance of the images improves my reading motivations because always I like to see a beautiful and clourful thing in my life, if not because of such designs I will have not bought any novel and find time to read the story. I want assure you that reading the popular romance genre enhances my reading skills and knowledge. I also commend the effort made by these young authors for providing reading materials in our society.

Outcome 10 Reader Respondent To Her Favourite Image of Beautiful Flowers

I have been reading this love story novels for the past 5 years, the popularity of Hausa romance genre is well known to every funs due to the nature of the production, distribution and its readership. The writers used different front cover images as one of their literary devices to catch the attention of the readers. Meanwhile, my best front cover images is beautiful flowers, I like it because it is very descriptive ways of how love relation between young a girl and boy. During my reading time I hope the story will end with happy ever after. In the reading practices I learn a lot from the text both from narrative techniques, character's role, language use for writing the hall story it enhances my communication competence.

5. Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study may likely be confirming some of the previous findings of other researchers and on similar subject matter. For instance, the results of Hashim and Hamdan (2014) explored some Malay popular romance novels focusing on covers images of chickness and trendy cloth, desirable hip and characters' role in the story. The studies also emphasized the role of front covers as an important to the marketing ways of attracting it readers. The findings of this study corroborate with findings of Lirola (2010) analyzed two multimodal leaflets on the covers to attract the attention of visitors in Spain. It was also affirmed here that cover images played a significant

role for attracting every individual both male and female readers of popular romance genres.

As it was observed from previous studies that the main objective usage of different beautiful images on the cover of a romance novel would potentially act as an agent for social change on feminist ideology, force marriages, inequalities and other social vices affecting women development in African continent. Furthermore, the covers of Hausa popular romance novels also reflect a birth of a new social status enabling the exclusive knowledge domain of courtship relationships and constructed gender positions of women in romance novels to open to the flow of negotiation and constructed feminine positions that is integral to the formulation of their readership preferences for leisure, pleasure, entertainments and loving kindness may be possible that extends beyond all boundaries.

The research further revealed that young female readers have mentioned that the appearance of these front cover images enhances their reading habits of the popular romance, they also affirmed that if not because of these literary attributes used by the authors they will have not find time to select and read the story that will help to mould their spoken competence and written skills in the language.

6. Conclusion

The reading preferences in Hausa popular romance genre is an important tool for lifelong learning of young female readers that leads to the overall development of the individual readers. The study reveals that the young female readers romance novels regularly to improve their knowledge, to acquire language skills and as a recreation activity. These front cover images served as major motivation factors for reading by the young female readers are to get better language skills in life, to become good public speakers and enhances their general knowledge, inspirational thinking. promotes moral, psychological, cultural and social development as well as increases reader's knowledge of things happening around and beyond them through extensive reading. It was indicated that the images that appeared on cover pages improve the reading habits and preferences who are to be good readers in the future, the findings of this present study emerged from a discovery process grounded in the data analysis and not from predetermined categories. Finally, this present study differs from many past studies in that the young female readers expresses their divergent responses were generated from their self-selected front cover images. Given these significances, the findings of this study were the results of an authentic discovery process (Kadir, Maasum, & Vengadasamy, 2014; Purves, 1988).

7. Recommendations for Future Studies

Based on the findings, the study concludes that young female readers engaged in reading practices and preferences both for entertainment and leisure activities. The participants of this study comprised only female readers selected from a voluntary Hausa popular romance reading clubs. Future investigations could examine a different readers both male and female across age grade levels, from schools. The participants in this study were predominately female readers from northern Nigeria. It would be good for future studies to include a more diverse population with regards to ethnicity

from other part of the six geo-political zones or from other different region of the world.

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