



School Factors as Determinant of Reading Achievement of Senior Secondary School Students in Ogun State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study explored the difference between school factors and achievement in reading comprehension. Two major instruments - questionnaire and achievement test in comprehension were used to elicit response from respondents. Data on the relevant variables are collected from 600 SSII students in Ijebu Ode Local Government, Ijebu Northeast Local Government and Ijebu East Local Government Areas, Ogun State, Nigeria to test two hypotheses. Data analysis involved using multiple regression analysis to test these hypotheses. The result shows that the combinations of school factors do not predict achievement in reading comprehension. The relative influence of each of the factors is also very low as only two out of the ten factors predict achievement in reading comprehension. This finding has implications for all stakeholders involved in secondary school education to help in salvaging the ugly trend of underachievement in reading comprehension among senior secondary school students in Nigeria in general.

Keywords: Reading Achievement, School Factors, Reading, Comprehension, Relative Influence and Predict

Introduction

As important as millions of cells contained in a man's body is to life, likewise the ability to read with maximum efficiency and comprehension is crucial to effective academic functioning. There is a strong connection between ability to read with maximum understanding and academic success of learners of any category (Stokes, 2015). Unfortunately, however, students at the secondary school level of education in Nigeria are faced with myriads of reading challenges (Adetunji & Olagunju, 2014; Ayedun, 2014). This is because they are expected to engage in many reading activities while reading in

their various subject areas. They are expected to read books related to sciences, humanities and social sciences. The type of strategies requires to tackle each of these various reading activities are as diverse as these disciplines are. As a result, a number of factors within the school environment of the learners are needed to salvage the difficulty a child might encounter in a bid to read to learn. The purview of this academic venture is to therefore examine some of the school related factors and the relationship they exert on achievement in reading comprehension among senior secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

An investigation into various works of reading experts shows that the Nigerian secondary school students are under achievers in their reading comprehension (Ayedun, 2006, 2014; Ayodele, 2012; Agbo, Kadiri & Ekwueme (2019; Adekola, 2022; Sotiloye & Bodunde, 2018) .These experts all attributed the continuing mass failure of the senior secondary school students in their internal and external examinations, notably senior school certificate examination (SSCE), General Certificate Examination (GCE) and Joint Admission Matriculation Board (JAMB) examinations, to underachievement in reading comprehension. They all concurred that the dearth of factors crucial for effective teaching of reading such as library stocked with relevant reading materials in most secondary schools in Nigeria, as well as ineffective manner of handling its teaching and learning, are responsible for most academic underachievement generally. This is because every academic venture requires a great deal of maximum reading efficiency but a situation whereby those saddled with the responsibilities of its teaching and learning are ineffective and underachievers in reading themselves further compounded this difficulty. Another reason hinges on the fact that, quite a great number of the Nigerians secondary school teachers have this strong impression that reading instruction should be terminated right from the mid-primary school, forgetting that adults alike are also faced with so many reading challenges (Ayedun, 2014).

This problem is not however limited to Nigeria's society alone, in other words, reading problem among students has remained a global phenomenon. Review of studies of some foreign researchers such as (Coster, 2017; Dawkins, 2017; National Reading Panel 2020; Maclaughlin, 2018) further revealed the global nature of problems associated with underachievement in reading as a result of factors inherent in most of the schools investigated by these researchers. They all attributed the problems faced by learners in a bid to read with proper mastery to poor facilities and ineffectiveness on part of the teachers saddled with its teaching and learning. The preoccupation of the current study is not however devoted to the investigation of the works of these foreign scholars anyway. Considering the crucial role of reading in teaching/ learning situation, and its importance in the successful expression of the secondary's school curriculum, one then begins to wonder why there is an upsurge of this ugly development. For example, Alice (2019) sees

reading as a tool subject, and that a child educational progress hinges on his ability to read. Garba (2018) considers it as the core of curriculum. Aside from the statement of these researchers, the prevailing deep concern about reading has grown largely due to the fact that the demands made on readers of various categories - children, teenagers, secondary school students, youths as well as adults are far greater today than it used to be in time past. This is not because of the large volume of the materials to be read abounding globally alone but also in the complex nature of interpreting what has been read. Today, unlike before, readers have to read not only from numerous textbooks abounding worldwide, webs and online reading have made demands on readers to be more academic oriented and challenging. The consequence of the scenario just described is that, as more reading challenges become the order of the day, likewise, underachievement in reading comprehension has continued unabated and its negative impact on the performance of the Nigerians' students in senior school certificate examination results in English language year in and out is visible. Mass failure is often recorded on sections devoted to comprehension and summary passages, which require a great deal of ability to read and comprehend fully (Ayedun & Ogunnaike, 2018).

Okedara (1997) observed that within the five years of (1987 - 1993), the average percentage of candidates who failed English language due to lack of mastery of comprehension and summary passages, which requires adequate knowledge of reading was 66.0%, while only an average of 34% passed. Ogunnaike (2001) probing further also observed that the mass failure of candidates who sat for WASSCE/GCE between (1993 - 2003) was due to lack of understanding of the basic subject matter being stressed by the writers of various summary and comprehension passages set before these candidates. Trends of performances since the submissions of the scholars just cited have remained the same except for some marginal improvements from 2016 to 2018. During these years, percentages of students with credits in English Language May/ June school certificate examinations were 52.97% in 2016, 59.22 in 2017 and 54.59% in 2018. Before these three years however, records of performances in percentile as shown by West African School Certificate Examination results indicated the following: 2009 - 25.99%; 2010-24.99%; 2011- 30.99%; 2012- 38.81%; 2013 -36.57%; 2104- 31.28%; 2015-38% (Premium Times, Agency Report, March 28, 2018; Daily Post, July 6, 2018).

The crisis in the education sector orchestrated by mass failure in English and Mathematics examinations since 2009 has assumed a worrisome dimension that a special Senate Committee on Education (SCE) had to be set up to "re-evaluate the missing link" (Olujimi, 2018, online). According to this source, "we have some teachers who do not do research and cannot read and write" (Olujimi, 2018, in Premium Times, 2018). There is no doubting the fact that most of the failure rates under review were caused due to reading challenges.

Many other factors within the school environment of the learners have also played

significant role in contributing to underachievement in reading comprehension. One of the factors examined by researchers as well is the dearth of functional library in most secondary schools in Nigeria. The investigation conducted by Akande and Oyedapo (2018) reaffirmed this position. Looking at the effect of poor reading habits among secondary school students in Nigeria, the researchers linked the negative consequence of poor reading habits to inability to write coherently and smoothly. This has led to abysmal performances in their various examinations. Lack of functional libraries and good librarians in most of the schools they investigated were singled out as the underlying variables inhibiting efficiency in reading and ultimately poor performance in academic writing.

Likewise, Ebisemen and Pearl (2017) considered the influence of school libraries usage in promoting reading culture in secondary school. These researchers used correlation coefficient to test hypotheses on influence of school libraries and reading culture with three hundred and eighty-four (384) students in six secondary schools in River state, Nigeria. They discovered significant relationship between availability of information resources and students reading culture. The results further showed that “utilization of school library and students reading habits are significantly related” (p.2). Many other studies have also shown the deplorable states of libraries in most Nigerians’ secondary schools (Abimbola & Akanya, 2012; Moruf, 2015; Ashavar & Mwuese, 2014).

The efforts of some non- governmental organizations (NGOs) and the Ogun State government, in order to encourage good reading habits and promote the use of library illustrate this assertion further. In 2013, the Ogun State chapter of the Nigerian Library Association had a conference in which the problem of poor reading culture among secondary school students and the poor state of the library in the state secondary’s schools were discussed. Some secondary school students invited took part in various competitions and quiz organized by the organizers to promote good reading habits and regular use of library (Bamidele, Haliso, & Onuoha, 2016).

Another factor of equal significance in the determination of success or failure in reading is the teacher factor. This is because the success or failure of activities taking place in the classroom to a very great extent, are determined by the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of the teacher handling the class activities (Lodge et al., 2018; Aina, Olanipekun, & Garuba, 2015). Effective teachers are those that are able to use every beneficial skill at their disposal to disseminate information to students. They monitor the progress of their students and ensure that they are well engaged in every area of their learning difficulty. They motivate their student[^] within and outside the school; their assistance in order to ensure positive learning go beyond the classroom alone (my emphasis). As enunciated by Oviawe (2016), “Teaching is an art and the quality of teaching depends on the love, dedication and devotion of the teacher towards the subject of knowledge” (p. 111).

The interpretation of the just concluded assertion is that, apart from the number of

years of training and teaching experiences that are also crucial parts of measure of teacher effectiveness (Perry, Bridges, & Burrow 2015; Onyekuru & Ibegbunam. 2013. & Fazalur. Nabi, Yasmin, Saheed, & Muhammad, 2011), other natural attributes of teachers' personality are crucial in the determination of success or otherwise in the classroom and the teaching and learning of reading is also inclusive. This is because indices like teacher's positive attitude towards the learners and expression of genuine love and concerns to academic and non-academic needs of the child are not restricted to the four walls of the classroom or the qualifications of teachers alone. Giving encouragement to students by teachers on selection of good reading materials, browsing of online webs to source for reading lists of different types on behalf of learners, giving students useful reading tips, making the teaching of reading interesting and devising different techniques for teaching reading have all been attributed to good achievement in reading comprehension (Ayedun, 2014).

Sheu and Adegbemile (2014) embarked on investigation of teachers' quality and students' academic performance in Kaduna State, Nigeria. They found out that the performance of students academically was poor because most of the teachers teaching the students they examined were ill-equipped and concluded that teachers' qualities could go a long way in determining academic achievement of students. They concluded by recommending that the Nigerian College of Education certificate holders still teaching in most of the schools investigated should go for their degree programs in order to upgrade themselves.

This information provides the rationale for the study under discussion. It stresses the fact that achievement in reading comprehension can be enhanced should there be improvement on the provision of some essential school factors and if good efforts are injected to its teaching and learning by the teachers. The finding of this study would provide some empirical basis for counseling the teachers and all stakeholders involved in secondary education that student achievement in reading comprehension and academics generally are related to teachers' professional characteristics and availability of some essential reading facilities.

The Problem

The study is aimed at finding out the extent to which some factors (availability of library, the extent to which the library is stocked with books, motivation by teachers, teachers and professional characteristics. Frequency of visits to the library, frequency of reading assignments given by teachers, dexterity displayed by teachers when handling reading comprehension, time devoted to teaching reading, creating enabling atmosphere for self-reading habit and the teaching of comprehension skills), offered explanation for the dismal state of achievement in reading comprehension and their effects on performance in English Language examinations. Specifically, the study provided explanation to the

following questions:

(1). To what extent will the school factors when taken together predict achievement in reading comprehension?

(2). What is the relative contribution of each of the factors to achievement in reading comprehension?

Based on the above questions, the following hypotheses would be tested:

(3). Would the joint contributions of school factors predict achievement in reading comprehension?

(4). Would the relative contributions of each of the school factors predict achievement in reading comprehension?

Methodology

Sample

The sample was derived through cluster sampling procedure. The investigators stratified all the secondary schools in Ijebu land into three Local Government Areas; namely, Ijebu Ode Local Government, Ijebu East Local Government and Ijebu North East Local Government Areas of Ogun state, Nigeria. Simple random sampling was used to select 35% of the schools in each local government area to take part in the study. In each of the selected schools, random sampling was also used to pick one class of SSII to take part in the study. Thirty students in each of the selected classes took part in the study. In all, the subjects consisted of 600 students (352 girls and 248 boys) from a total of twenty (20) secondary schools. Their ages ranged from 15-18 years (means age = 15.8 years SD = 2.1).

Instruments

Two valid and reliable instruments were used to collect data for this study. They were: Questionnaire on school factors that influence students' achievement in reading comprehension (independent variables). These questionnaires were adopted from the one constructed by Ayedun (2014) to investigate the rate of assimilating the English language curriculum content by students. The items elicited response of students on:

- a) Availability of reading library in their schools
- b) The extent to which these libraries are equipped
- c) Frequency of visits made to these libraries
- d) Motivation given by teacher to encourage the use of these libraries.
- e) Frequency of teaching reading by their teachers
- f) Dexterity displayed by teachers in reading classroom.

Response to questionnaire items involved the listing of the various school factors that influence achievement in reading comprehension based on the following:

- a) Yes/no option scored 2 or 1 point respectively.
- b) As for items involving options, a weight scale 4,3,2,1 was used with the most desirable outcome weight of 4, while the least weighted 1. The total score was total index of school factors' influence on reading comprehension achievement. The questionnaires were validated by presenting it to four lectures in Language Education unit of College of Specialized and Professional Education, Tai Solarin University of Education, Ogun State, Nigeria, for test of reliability. The questionnaires had a test - retest reliability index of 0.91
- c) Comprehension achievement test (CAT).

A comprehension passage testing the basic skills of reading comprehension was presented before the subjects. These passages were taken from the SSII English Language curriculum. It contained twenty question items with the maximum score put at hundred percent (100%) i.e., 5 marks allotted to each question. The total score of each of the participants was taken as index of performance in reading comprehension skills. Some reading experts helped in the validation of these instruments to ensure that the test items were suitable for the target subjects. The split half index of 0.78 (N125) was employed for the instruments.

Data Collection

The researcher with the assistance of five higher institution students collected the data but the collation as well as the scoring of the comprehension achievement test was personally carried out by the researchers. In all, 600 - senior secondary school II students returned their questionnaires and scripts for the comprehension passage; the multiple regression analysis was employed to analyse the data.

Results

Presented below are the results of the findings:

Table 1: Summary of regression analysis showing the influence of 10 school factors (independent variables) on the achievement of the respondents (dependent variable)

Source of Variation	DF	SS	MS	F-ratio	P
Due to regression	11	6131.86599	557.44236		
				1.7435	0.608
Due to residual	538	187993.96735	319.71763		

Sig. at the .05 level

Multiple R (Adjusted) = .17773

Multiple R² = 0.3159

Standard Error of Estimate = 17.88065

This table shows the combination of ten school factors (independent variables) on the achievements of the respondents (dependent variable). The factors do not influence the achievements of the respondents. The table at the F -ratio of (1.74355 with 11, 588 p>.05) indicates no significant relationship. The results give multiple R of .17773 and standard error of estimate (EE) to be 17.88065.

Table 2: Relative influence of the 10 school factors (independent variable) on the achievement of the respondents

Item	Factors	Reg.Coeff (B)	Std Error (B)	T - Value	Sig. of T
1.	Is there a library in your school?	.039716	3.396283	.834	.4048
2.	Is the library well - equipped with good and modern books?	.030464	1.895943	.669	.5038
3.	How often do you go to the library to read books?	.016068	.790171	.350	.7266
4.	How often does your teacher encourage you to go to the library to read?	.55055	1.1393039	1.215	.2249
5.	How often are you given reading to do at home by your teacher?	.116156	1.244151	2.636	.0086
6.	Does your teacher teach you reading comprehension skills?	.28085	2.628095	.631	.5280
7.	Does your teacher give you the chance to choose the types of books you want to read?	.006222	1.529576	.149	.8814

8.	Does your teacher make the teaching of reading interesting?	.111810	2.875957	2.530	.0117
9.	How often does your teacher give you the opportunity to share your readings with others in	.013431	.763871	.313	.7544
10.	How often is reading taught in your class?	.011585	.765046	.264	.7921

This table shows the relative influence of each of the 10 school factors (independent variable). As can be seen from this table, factor 5, i.e. “how often are you given reading to do at home by your teacher? And factor 8 i.e. does your teacher make the teaching of reading interesting? Give the significance of t to be .0086 and .0117 respectively. Other variables are not significant since they all have significant oft to be greater than .05.

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of the study revealed that the school factors investigated did not predict or influence reading achievement of the respondents. For example, in table, the p- value at .0608 gave an indication that the ten factors put together cannot be used as reliable measure of achievement in reading comprehension. In a simple clear term, all these ten factors put together do not jointly predict achievement in reading comprehension. Also, the multiple R adjusted of 17773 indicated a very low relationship when dealing with the analysis of the variance, while the multiple R square of .03159, showed that only 3.1% is the total contribution of all these factors to reading achievement. This finding provides a close link with the study of some researchers who also stressed the importance of good reading library and achievement in reading (Kojo, Baffour, & Banleman, 2018). Obanya (1982) also reported that under achievement in reading among the Nigerian secondary school students were due to the non-availability of good reading libraries. Of relevance to the study as well is the study conducted by Needman et al. (1991) and the National Education Ctoal Panel (1997), (although foreign scholars yet applicable to the current study), whose findings revealed that the greatest obstacle to literacy for even the American poorest children is the scarcity of books and the under-utilization of the few public libraries available.

Associated with current discovery are the findings of (Brophy, 1986; Dole, 1985; Duffy et al., 1986), whose findings also revealed that teachers’ lack of practical instructional talk that made visible their invisible thinking while teaching reading comprehension had profound adverse influence on achievement in reading comprehension. Okedara (1997)

and Kolawole (1999) also corroborated this assertion that problem associated with reading comprehension could be explained based on ill - equipped nature of teachers saddled with the responsibility of teaching English Language in the Nigerian secondary schools.

The second table which showed the relative influence of each of the factors to reading achievement as earlier emphasized shows that factors 5 and 8 with 0086 and 0 1 1 7 respectively indicated a significant relationship since the value of p is less than 0.5. Apart from these two factors, other factors do not individually predict achievement in reading comprehension. This is a worrisome scenario to the Nigerians' secondary education system.

Recommendations

The teaching and learning of reading should not be terminated at the lower level of primary school any longer since it is crystal clear that the adults as well are faced with myriad of various reading challenges. It must be ensured that the teaching and learning of reading should cut across all the curriculum of secondary school. It should be accorded the status of a separate subject as it is done in most advanced countries. Competent teachers should therefore be employed to handle its teaching and learning. The state of most of the Nigerian secondary school libraries is terribly appalling and so, efforts should be devoted to equipping them with books that are relevant to learners' need and interest. Parents as well as teachers should help in creating awareness in regard to the usefulness and importance of reading in order to raise the current dwindling standard of education in Nigeria and particularly, Ogun State, Nigeria. Lastly, the government should devote quite a great deal of effort to infrastructural development in the state- owned secondary schools and possibly assist the privately-owned secondary schools in this regard as well.

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