

PARENTAL VARIABLES AND READING COMPREHENSION PERFORMANCE AMONG PRIMAY SCHOOL PUPILS IN UYO SENATORIAL DISTRICT OF AKWA IBOM STATE

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ABSTRACT

This research centred on parental variables and reading comprehension performance of Primary school pupils in Uyo senatorial district of Akwa Ibom State. The purpose was to establish how parental variables; parental educational background and parental occupation influenced pupils reading comprehension. Two research questions and two hypotheses were formulated for this study. Ex-post facto research design was used in this study. The population of the study consisted of 9,009 primary four pupils in Uyo senatorial district while 420 Primary four pupils were randomly selected to participate in the study. Stratified random sampling technique was used to draw sample for this study. Two research instruments were used for the study. Parental Variables Questionnaire (PVQ) and Reading Comprehension Performance Test (RCPT). The research experts from the Department of English, Early Childhood and Special Education and Department of Educational Foundations evaluated the instrument taking into consideration the curricula objective of study. Reliability coefficient of 0.76 and 0.67 for PVQ and RCPT were obtained respectively. These indicated high reliability of the instruments to measure what was intended to measure. The results showed that parents' with high educational background like PhD holders had a mean performance of 82.67 while those with NCE and first school leaving certificate had a mean performance of 55.54 and in the research hypothesis one, the significance lies in the PhD holding parents. Pupils whose parents had Professional Occupations had a mean performance score of 70.40 while Parents with lower income occupation had a mean performance score of 56.60. From the findings in this study, it was concluded that parental have significant influence on the reading comprehension performance of their children. It was recommended that parents should endeavor to allocate quality time to educational activities and parents should not allow their occupation affect their children's education.

Keywords: Reading, Reading Comprehension, Parental Involvement, Parental Educational background, Parental occupation.

Introduction

Reading is the ground of almost all processes of learning and is necessary for pupils not only to acquire the language but also to learn other subjects. Reading changes from what is primarily called word recognition through a process of comprehension; Reading comprehension is "the process of simultaneously extracting and constructing meaning

through interaction and involvement with written language” Reading comprehension, which is related to students’ academic performance, is a good predictor of later school performance. Dias, Montieland Seabra (2015). Reading comprehension skills is important in the early years of a child’s schooling as this will enhance their ability to read. Parental involvement takes many forms like good parenting, providing literacy rich environment, good models of constructive and educational values. Parents are not equal in their involvement as various factors such as environment, parental educational background and parental occupation affect parental involvement. Hopkins(2015) also established that the major reason why parental involvement is so strong is because the children spend more of their time from infancy throughout their childhood outside school under the influence of their parents. Thus, a parent who does not ignite good morals and a learning culture will not improve academic performance. Children’s reading abilities seem to be rooted in the early stimulation they receive at home. Parents can contribute to the development of children’s reading abilities during shared book reading, reading out loud, vocabulary development and word games Sénéchal and LeFevre (2014).

Yeung and King (2016) opined that parent’s interaction at home counts for the learning development of children. They noted that every child needs a conducive home environment to be a well-adjusted individual. A child being read to regularly from the early stage of life begins to show growing enjoyment of the experience and their attention span increases. Early home activities start children’s literacy development by providing early experiences Sénéchal and LeFevre (2014).

Parental involvement in their children’s reading comprehension activities refers to activities in which parental behaviors interact with children’s literacy learning.. In a study by the Harvard Graduate School of Education (2018), the consistent parental educational assistance rendered to children contributes greatly in aiding their academic success at school. The role of the home literacy environment remains important in stimulating older children. Reading for early childhood is an activity of telling pictures and pronouncing the letters that adults do with children. It is necessary for children because reading can add new vocabularies, improve the ability to express ideas, increase curiosity and develop children’s imagination. Moreover, increasing interest in reading to children is more important than children can read quickly (Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2018). However, as children get older and are able to read themselves, their individual print exposure contributes to their reading comprehension as well. Gilkerson (2017) Parents differ in their involvement towards pupils reading activities at home and their academic performance. Kementerian Pendidikan dan Kebudayaan, 2018).

Parent relationships are important to pupil comprehension reading performance. This is because in a favorable relationship, parents devote more attention to educating their children and show more enthusiasm, which can provide children emotional support and in turn enhance their academic performance and reading ability.(Huat 2015) From birth children are described as communicators interested in their surroundings. Parents with high educational qualification have increased vocabulary structure and languages. Early manifestations of how children practice reading are embedded in their family structure. As children enter school, they are differently prepared by their families to benefit from educational experiences which manifest in their reading and comprehension skill. Parents’ education level has been found to

strongly influence the amount and quality of children's reading, but the relationship is strongly mediated by other factors. Lara (2019) Educated parents have many books in the home and read them to their children early in life. Parental involvement is one of the most important contributors to school completion and academic success. School achievement improves to the extent to which parents encourages learning.

Parental educational background refers to the education that parents received in their school learning period. It is parents' highest educational attainment. Parents with high educational qualification have much more time, energy and knowledge about education, and they are inclined to express more warmth and affection in order to cultivate a favorable parent-child relationship. A parent's level of education influences parents' knowledge, beliefs, values, and goals .parental behaviors are indirectly related to children's school performance, Ramirez(2020).

Parental occupation: This refers to a job or a profession that supports the parents to provide for the needs of the home. Parents' occupation affects their income and plays an important role in the standard of living of the family. Parents with low occupational status face more financial pressure and emotional exhaustion, which are associated with low income and self-efficacy, Odoh (2017). This may cause parents to use negative, unkind strategies to get along with their children and result in an undesirable parent-child which may deprive children of advantageous psychological circumstances that benefit their cognitive development and reading comprehension performance. Parental occupation also determines individual type of settlement Children living in deteriorating neighborhoods have weaker language, poor vocabulary development and reading skills. Occupational related income may determine access to learning opportunities and resources which plays a role in learning outcomes. High skilled occupation increases financial resources, reduces poverty and economic hardship, Odoh (2017)

Bellibaş (2016) opined that the occupation of parents also determines the type of school their children attend. Children who are surrounded by rich and increasing conversation have an overwhelming advantage in vocabulary development and understanding the structures of the language. With regard to occupation, low occupation status or prestige generally indicates heavy physical labor, long working hours, low wages, and unstable working opportunities (with a relatively high probability of being laid off). This may force parents to expend time and energy that would otherwise be directed toward supporting their children's study.

Some educational theory explains interaction between pupils, learning and their environment. Bandura's social learning theory (1977) posits that people learn from one another via observation, imitation and modelling. Social learning theory combines cognitive learning theory (which posits that learning is influenced by psychological factors) and behavioural learning theory (which assumes that learning is based on responses to environmental stimuli. In Bandura's social cognitive theory, environment and cognition are important factors in development. Bandura (1977) explained how parents, peer and teachers influence children by serving as model for behavior.

Rotter's theory (1982) recognizes that situational factors and reinforcement influence behavior. Rotter emphasized the unity of interdependence of personality in which a person's

experiences and interaction continually influence one another. Rotter believed that personality, cognitive and social development hinge largely on the range, diversity, and quality of the individual's experiences with other people. Early in life, these important figures are usually our parents and teachers and even our peers.

In spite of the fact that most text books are written in English language, the ability origin ability to read affects every aspects of life. Reading comprehension ability is influenced by prior reading ability and language ability. The home is the informal institution; the child's initial development of intellectual potentials for success in educational process depends largely on the home background and experiences. This experience explains the interaction between children and their parents. Apart from the relative lack of interest and poor reading habits among pupils, other common reading problems include inability to recognize sound and pronounce, inability of pupils to put sound together in pronunciation and reading of sentences, some can read, but do not understand. The low level of comprehension is evident in pupils' inability to read for exact meaning. However as a backdrop, inability to comprehend when reading has bred more vices like examination malpractice and drop outs from school. It therefore becomes imperative to investigate how parental variables (parental educational background and parental occupation) influence reading comprehension performance among primary school pupils in Uyo Senatorial District of Akwa Ibom State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to determine the influence of parental variables on reading comprehension achievements of pupils. This study has the following objectives:

1. To determine the influence of parents' educational background on the reading comprehension performance of pupils.
2. To determine the influence of parents' occupation on the reading comprehension performance of pupils.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in the study.

1. What is the influence of parents' educational background on the reading comprehension performance of pupils?
2. What is the influence of parents' occupation on the reading comprehension performance of pupils?

Hypotheses

Two hypotheses were formulated for the study.

1. There is no significant influence of parents' educational background on the reading comprehension performance of pupils.
2. There is no significant influence of parents' occupation on the reading comprehension performance of pupils.

Methodology

Research design: This study is a descriptive survey and it adopted the ex-post facto research design. According to Mathooko, Mathiooko and Mathooko (2007), an ex-post facto design explores a quasi-experimental study examining how an independent variable present prior to study affects a dependent variable.

Area of the study. This research was carried out in the Akwa Ibom North East Senatorial District Nigeria. The area is located on latitude 4°48' to 5°23' North to 7°48' to East. The main drainage systems are the Qua Iboe River, Ikpa River and the Cross River. It belongs to the sub-equatorial climate region. It experiences two main season; the wet and dry season. The main annual rainfall recorded for the area is 243mm. The area belongs to the equatorial rainforest vegetation belt, but due to human activities the rainforest have been replaced in most part by oil palm vegetation type. The settlement patterns in the region include: rural settlement which comprises dispersed, nucleated and linear settlement patterns. The urban settlement occurs mostly in the local government headquarters. There are currently nine local government areas that make up the senatorial district. These include Uyo, Itu, Uruan, Ibesikpo Asutan, Nsitlbom, Nsit Ubium, NsitAtai, Ibiono Ibom and Etinan. Educationally, the area has outstanding higher institutions namely University of Uyo, Uyo and Akwa Ibom State College of Education, Afaha Nsit, Nsit Ibom, School of Health Technology, Etinan and a private owned Uyo City Polytechnic, Uyo. The area is not highly industrialized. However, the available industries may be grouped into three broad categories namely: local crafts industries, small scale industries and modern manufacturing industries. Government is making effort in the development of tourism industry through the opening of the Golf Resort and Ibom Le Meridian at Nwaniba in Uruan Local Government Area. In the area of communication, five radio stations and two television stations are located within this senatorial area. At least, the headquarters of the nine local government areas can be reached easily on land, either through federal or state roads. This accessibility makes movement of people and good within and outside the senatorial possible. There are 382 public primary schools and several private schools in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District and Primary and secondary level of education is free and compulsory in this area. The choice of the area of study was necessitated by the fact that the literacy level in this district is high and there are many public schools within the area.

Population of the study: The population of this study comprises 9,009 primary four pupils in public primary schools in Uyo senatorial district of Akwa Ibom State.(Department of Planning, Research and Statistics, State Ministry of Education and Universal Basic Education, MOE/SUBEB 2020).

Sample and sampling technique: Multi stage sampling technique was used to select the sample .432pupils out of the 16 schools from four local government areas. Simple random sampling was used in each public school, 27 pupils were selected from each school. This gave a total of 432 pupils.

Instrumentation

A researcher developed instrument Parental Variable Questionnaire (PVQ) and Reading Comprehension Performance Test (RCPT) was used to collect data. The parental variable questionnaire (PVQ) was designed to assess parental educational background and parental occupation. The items were designed with simple language that the pupils would be able to understand and to tick (✓) as appropriate. The parental variable scale (PVS) was scored based on the different categories. The Reading Comprehension Performance Test (RCPT) contained reading passages for pupils to read and answer the questions arising from the passages. It was made up of Sections A, B and C. Section A consisted of five multiple choice

questions Section B consisted of 10 questions that required filling the blank spaces. Section C consisted of 10 questions of filling in the space with correct answers from the box.

This gave a maximum score of four (4) marks each for the twenty-five questions in Section A, B and C totaling one hundred (100) marks.

Validation of the Instrument: To ascertain the face validity of the instruments for the study, the instruments were given to three research experts for validation. The research experts were selected from the Department of English, Early Childhood and Special Education and Department of Educational Foundations. The experts evaluated the instrument taking into consideration the curricula objective of study and adequacy of the items based on the objectives, research questions, hypotheses of the study and area of coverage of the study. Corrections and comments were noted and used to produce the final draft of the instruments.

Test-retest reliability method was used to establish the reliability of the instruments. The Instruments (PVQ and RCPT) were administered on 20 pupils who were not part of the study sample but shared the same characteristics as the population under study. After two weeks of the first administration, the same instruments were administered to the same pupils with the order of the items on the questionnaires altered. This generated two sets of data. The data generated were subjected to Kuder Richardson 21 for the parental variables questionnaire and Pearson product moment correlation was used for the Reading Comprehension performance Test (RCPT). The result shows a reliability coefficient of .76 and .67 for PVQ and RCPT respectively. This indicated a high reliability of the instruments to measure what it was intended to measure.

Data Analysis

The data collected and collated were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research questions and the Analysis of variance (ANOVA) to test the hypotheses at .05 levels of significance. The mean scores were used to answer the research questions.

1. What is the influence of parents' educational background on the reading comprehension performance of pupils?

Table 1: Mean analysis of pupils' reading comprehension based on parents' educational background

Parental Educational Background	Gender	n	Mean 0	Std. Deviation
M.Sc Holding Parents	Father	46	64.0	6.0
	Mother	18	84.40	5.0
	Total	64	74.20	7.8
Traders/Business owners Parents	Father	70	59.08	11.00
	Mother	57	52.00	14.60
	Total	127	55.54	18.28
NCE/School Cert	Mother	52	63.35	5.6
	Father	46	60.42	5.8
	Total	98	61.88	8.06
HND/B.Sc Holding Parents	Father	47	69.00	9.07
	Mother	80	77.00	7.45
	Total	127	73.00	11.73
PhD Holding parents	Father	9	80.00	5.00
	Mother	3	85.34	4.36
	Total	12	82.67	6.63

The mean scores of the pupils in the reading comprehension test was computed. The result shows that performance in reading comprehension by pupils get better as the level of education of their parents increases. Pupils whose parents are Ph.D holders had a mean performance score of 82.67, this was followed by wards whose parents are MSc. Holders 74.20. Mean performance scores of pupils whose parents are NCE/School cert holders is 61.88. The result shows that performance in reading comprehension by pupils get better as the level of education of their parents increases. The result further reveals that pupils reading comprehension performance scores increased as their Mothers' educational level increased.

What is the influence of parents' occupation on the reading comprehension performance of pupils?

Table 2: Mean analysis of pupils reading comprehension based on parents' occupation

Parental occupation	Gender	Mean achievement		
	of parent	n	score 0	Std. Deviation
Professional Occupations	Father	72	70.80	4.56
	Mother	25	70.0	6.45
	Total	97	70.40	7.89
Middle Class Occupation	Father	129	60.00	8.33
	Mother	79	60.00	5.66
	Total	208	60.00	10.07
Technicians/Traders	Father	42	58.9	14.56
	Mother	73	54.30	11.23
	Total	115	56.60	18.38

Table 2 gives the summary of the influence of parents' occupation on the reading comprehension performance of pupils. The result shows Pupils whose parents have Professional Occupation had a mean performance score of 70.40, followed by Middle class occupation like teachers, civil servants with a mean performance score of 60.00. The Parents with low occupation that make up the low income earners, like Technician and petty traders, the pupils had a mean performance score of 56.60. This shows that parental occupation does influence academic achievement of their wards.

Hypothesis One

There is no significant influence of parents' educational background on the reading comprehension performance of pupils.

Table 3: Analysis of Variance for Reading Comprehension performance of pupils based on parents' educational background

Variables	SS	Df	MS	Fcal	Fcrit
Between Groups	2599.926	3	866.64	10.59	2.70
Within Groups	34046.036	417	81.84		
Total	36645.962	420			

*significant at .05 alpha level

Table 3 shows the summary of the analysis of variance test of significant difference in reading comprehension performance of pupils based parents' educational background. The result shows that the calculated f-value is 10.589 at .05 alpha level with 417 degree of freedom and the critical f-value is 2.696 since the f-cal is greater than the f-crit, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant influence of parents' educational background on the reading comprehension performance of pupils.

There is no significant influence of parental occupation on the reading comprehension performance of pupils.

Table 4: Analysis of variance for pupils reading comprehension performance based on parents' occupation

Variables	S S	df	MS	Fcal	Fcrit
Between Groups	1803.625	2	901.81	10.79	2.70
Within Groups	34842.337	418	83.56		
Total	36645.962	420			

*significant at .05 alpha level

Table 4 shows the summary of the analysis of variance test of significant difference in reading comprehension performance of pupils based parents' occupation. The result shows that the calculated -F-value is 10.79 at .05 alpha levels with 417 degree of freedom, the critical f value is 2.70. Since the f-cal value is greater than the f-crit value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus, there is a significant influence of parents' occupation on the reading comprehension performance of pupils.

Discussion of Findings

The result of hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant influence of parents' educational background on the reading comprehension performance of pupils. This is so because parents with high academic attainment would want their children to be high achievers too, as such they take pleasure in reading to the child and reading with the child. This finding is in line with the finding of ([Wen et al., 2016](#), [Lara \(2019\)](#) and [Ramirez \(2020\)](#)) that highly educated parents value education more, they support their children's educational endeavours, and take interest in their child's reading performance to ensure their success in school. This finding is corroborated by [Kim et al., 2017](#) that the level of educational attainment of parents exposes their children to certain experiences which affect their life styles, especially academic attainment

The finding in hypothesis two reveals that parents' occupation has a significant influence on the reading comprehension performance of pupils. Closely tied to occupation are experience, knowledge and income of parents. This findings corroborates with the findings of [Cheng and Fang\(2016\)](#), [Odoh \(2017\)](#) Parents who belong to high professional occupations are High income earners and are capable of paying educational bills of their children in good school, provide good home environment that will support the child's continuous learning after school. [Usaiani and Abubakar \(2015\)](#) Also, pupils with Parents who are academics like lecturers and teachers tend to take more keen interest in the education of their children. The finding is in line with

[Bellibaş \(2016\)](#) also opined that pupils whose parents work in professional occupations generally outperform other pupils, while students whose parents are low income earners tend to achieve less compared to their peers.

Conclusion

Parents with higher educational qualification and professional occupations are more involved in their children's reading and academic activities, hence increase academic performances of their children. Parents who are more involved at home with their children's education seem to motivate the students for higher academic performance in school.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parental involvement allows parents to monitor and participate in school academic activities, allowing parents to collaborate with teachers for improved reading activities
2. Schools should establish a daily routine and help parents to monitor home activities and provide support to their children at home
3. Parents should not allow their occupation affect their children's education negatively. Hence, parents with demanding occupation should employ the services of professional to help their children in reading comprehension and other educational pursuit.
4. Governments and other non-governmental organization should provide libraries and other educational programme to enlighten parent on parental involvement.

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