Socio-Economic Status, Parental Involvement, and Students' Achievement in Reading Comprehension

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Abstract: The development of reading skills in students should be taken seriously by parents and teachers. Every student needs to develop effective reading skills in order to succeed in school. This study examined the effects of socioeconomic status and parental involvement on students' achievement in reading comprehension. This study utilized the quasi experimental design. Using multi-stage sampling techniques, a sample of four hundred and eighty-nine (489) students were selected. Reading Comprehension Achievement Tests (RCAT) which served as pre-test and post-test were developed and used to collect data from the respondents. Descriptive statistics and ANOVA were used to analyze the data collected. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. The results obtained showed that socioeconomic status and parental involvement had no effects on students' achievement in reading comprehension. It was suggested that this study could be replicated in other parts of the state and other states in Nigeria to see if the same results will be obtained.

Keywords: Reading, Socio-Economic Status, Parental Involvement, Academic Achievement, Comprehension

1. INTRODUCTION

Reading books is generally accepted as one of the ways of acquiring information about the world and a source of learning. Learning to read and reading to learn are therefore among the most important skills that should be encouraged by the school. The future of today's student is dependent on how well he/she can read and comprehend a variety of texts thoughtfully, assess the credibility of their sources and apply the knowledge acquired to his/her civic, personal and professional life.

Reading is crucial in learning all aspects of the English language. It is the basis for all good work in English language. All students learning the English language in a second language situation need to know different varieties of the English language and their usage. It is only through reading books and other printed materials that such varieties can be learnt. Books provide most students with situations in which learning takes place and can provide direct experiences of language needed as part of real life, in the same way the native learner gets his/her first language.

Reading cannot be said to have taken place if comprehension did not take place. Therefore, the comprehension of a text is the ability to understand and solve problems encountered during the reading stages – before, during and after reading. To be a good reader or understand clearly what others write requires a wide range of vocabulary. Many students do not come from homes where books are available or where they are encouraged to read books. As a result of this, they do not have books to read. The harsh realities of the economic situation in Nigeria have prevented many parents from providing their children with books to read. Some parents see reading as a mere waste of time, a luxury they would not have their children engage in. They would rather have their children solve problems in mathematics, than engage in reading novels and story books. This type of negative attitude by parents would not help in the development of positive reading skills in the children.

It is believed that the method of reading instruction helps students to develop a positive attitude towards reading. Teachers should take into consideration that no single method can best meet the reading needs of their students or solve the students' reading problems. The teacher therefore, should be encouraged to use a combination of methods that would meet the reading needs of his/her students. This paper identified three methods of reading instruction. These are the basal

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method, the language experience method and individualized method.

The basal method is a systematic way of developing comprehension and the learner's vocabulary is controlled. The method revolves round the teacher. The teacher performs the following activities: establishes the purpose for reading the story by arousing students' curiosity, introduces new vocabulary, relates the story to students' prior knowledge and experiences, and guides the reading of the story. The teacher also asks the students to read the rest of the passage silently to answer posed questions or prepare to answer the questions at the end of the reading selection. One main disadvantage of this method is that the students' reading interest may be stiffed as the teacher is responsible for the selection of reading materials.

The language experience is another method of reading instruction. It depends on the link between experience and education using students' narration as the basis for reading instruction. It is a viable way to improve reading and writing. The idea behind this method is that what a student thinks, he/she can say, what he/she can say can be written and what can be written can be read (Brozo and Simpson, 2002).

The individualized method stresses that each child should be presented with learning materials according to his level, ability and limitations. The student is at liberty to choose his/her reading material which helps a student to follow his/her comprehension level and this ensures learning. It makes reading in this classroom similar to the reading in the real world.

The home has a great influence on the child's psychological, social, emotional and economic states. Parents are the first socialization agents in the life of an individual. They play important roles in the lives of their children and help them to develop positive attitudes towards their life and learning (Al-Matalka, 2014). In effect, parental socio-economic background of a child influences him/her in every area of life. The indices of socioeconomic status (SES) are education, income and occupation. It is believed that a well-educated person would have a good occupation and sizable income. Parents with good education are likely to be favorably disposed to providing skills and problem-solving strategies for their children to learn (Ogunsola & Adewale, 2014). Long and Pang (2016) argued that parents' socio-economic status is important in predicting children's achievement in school. Parents' from high and middle socio-economic background provide quality home environments and academic resources such as books, computers, educational software and home libraries.

Reardon, Valentino, Klogrides, Shores and Greenberg (2013) and Gabriel, Muasiya, Mwange, Mukhungulu and Ewoi (2016) found that students from high socio-economic background had a higher mean score in academic achievement when compared with their counterparts from a low socio-economic background. Hernadez (2012) and Boibito, Appendende and Ekefe (2011) are of the view that parents from low socio-economic background have limited resources to look after their children, so they perform poorly in school. These children are always absent from school and this could eventually lead to them dropping out of school. In addition, older children are made to look after their younger siblings thereby making attendance to school poor and performance low. Students from low socio-economic background are likely to live in low income neighborhoods, which are often hazardous and are more likely to have low quality social, municipal and local services (Hernadez, 2012). Adolescents who live in high quality environments are likely to perform better than those who live in low quality environments (Long & Pang, 2016). Children from high socio-economic background are exposed to a variety of experiences that can favour cognitive development (Ghaemi & Yazdanpanah, 2014).

Parental involvement is another vital factor that affects learners' academic achievement (Zedan, 2012). Many researchers have highlighted the need for parental involvement in their children's school education (Mante, Awereh & Kumea, 2016; Carr, 2013). Zedan (2012) and Alika and Ohanaka (2013) found that parental involvement increased students' performance and enhanced their academic achievement. They also found out that there is a positive relationship between academic achievement and parental involvement/encouragement. However, Harris and Robinson (2016) found no clear positive correlation between parental involvement and achievement.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Some researchers are of the view that many Nigerian students and by extension students in Edo state do not read on their own. Ogenyi (2014) highlighted the fact that Africans, especially Nigerians do not read. He is of the view that reading has lost its place to the passive unproductive time killers such as television and cellular phones. Also, Otagburuagu and Nnamani (2014) are of the view that many Nigerian students have developed an evasive attitude towards reading. They opined that many Nigerian students see reading as a necessary evil which should be avoided as it encroaches on their leisure time. They also lamented the fact that many students look for revision notes and abridged versions of standard work instead of reading full length novels. Uyi-Osaretin (2011) on her part found that pupils in Benin City, Edo State do

not have reading materials and do not read on their own. Students' lack of interest in reading would affect their performance in English language and other content areas.

Based on the above, how can students be motivated to read? Does socio economic status of students affect their reading achievement? Are parents who show interest in their children's reading and discuss their reading difficulties more likely to have children who see reading as fun?

To carry out this study, three hypotheses were raised.

H_{01}: There is no significant difference in reading comprehension achievement among students from different SES taught using different methods of teaching reading.

H_{02}: There is no significant difference in reading comprehension achievement among students with different levels of parental involvement taught using different methods of teaching reading.

H_{03}: There is no significant interaction effect of SES and parental involvement among students taught using different methods of teaching reading.

3. METHOD

This study utilized a quasi-experimental design which made use of a 3x3x3 factorial design. The independent variable of this study was methods of instruction with three levels (basal, language experience and individualized) socio-economic status with three levels (low, middle and high) and parental involvement made up of three levels (never involved, sometimes involved and always involved) constituted the intervening variable. Achievement in reading comprehension was the dependent variable.

The population of this study was made up of 12,203 junior secondary school students. The sample of this study was made up of 498 students (273 boys and 225 girls). To select the sample, the schools were stratified according to school type (all-boys, all-girls and mixed schools). Then, using the simple random sampling technique, a school was selected from each school type giving a total of three selected schools. From these schools, three intact classes were selected and randomly assigned to treatment groups. The schools selected were labeled 'I', 'II' and 'III'. From these three schools, nine intact classes (three from each selected school) were labeled 'A', 'B' and 'C'.

The instruments for the study were two achievement tests titled 'Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (RCAT), Tests 1 and 2 designed by the researchers and used as pre-test (Test 1) and post-test (Test 2). Test 1 (Pretest) was made up of two parts. Part A was a questionnaire titled "Students' Socio-economic Status and Parental Involvement Questionnaire (SSESPIQ)" This questionnaire solicited information such as parental education, occupation and level of parental involvement from the respondents. Part B was made up of two comprehension passages. Each comprehension passage had ten multiple-choice questions.

Test 2 – the post-test was made up two comprehension passages which contained ten multiple-choice questions each. The RCAT (Test 1) and the bio-data information questionnaire were together in order to get unbiased information from the respondents. It enabled the researchers to relate and match the students with their test results.

The researchers sought and obtained permission from the principals of the schools studied before embarking on the experimental session. One period of 35minutes per week from the English studies periods of each of the classes was used. In all, the students were exposed to eight sessions (they were taught one period a week for eight weeks). Three different instructional packages for the three groups which reflected the three methods of reading instruction – the language experience, the individualized and the basal were used. Each lesson plan consisted of the target comprehension skills and were similar, except in methodology.

To ensure the validity of the instruments, a table of specification was developed and items were developed according to the specifications. The achievement test items were trial tested in two junior secondary schools not used in the study. The questionnaire was given to three experts in the Department of Educational Evaluation and Counselling Psychology, Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Nigeria for face and content validity. Their corrections were taken into consideration in the final draft. To ensure the reliability of the RCAT (Tests 1 and 2), the two tests were each administered to 50 students in two different schools not included in the study. The scores obtained were subjected to Kuder Richardson Formula 20 (KR–20) and an internal consistency reliability coefficient of 0.71 (Test 1) and 0.85 (Test 2) were obtained for the two tests respectively.

The pre-test was administered by the researchers and three research assistants three days to the commencement of treatment. First, the questionnaire SSEPIQ was administered. The researcher explained the questionnaire to the students. The students were given time to fill this after which they were given the comprehension passages (in Part B). The post-test (Test 2) was administered to the students on the last day of the treatment sessions (that is eight weeks after the pre-test was administered). The data

collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics, ANCOVA and ANOVA.

For the Reading Comprehension Achievement Tests (RCAT), all correct responses were coded one (1) and all wrong responses were coded zero (0). For the socio-economic status, the total score any respondent could obtain was twenty-three (23). Respondents with 0-6 scores were categorized as low socio-economic status, scores of 7-12 as middle socio-economic status and scores 13 and above as high socio-economic status. Also for parental involvement, the highest score obtainable

was 30. Respondents scores were categorized as follows: 0-5 as never involved, 6-15 as sometimes involved and 16-30 as always involved. All hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

4. RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in reading comprehension achievement among students of different socio-economic status using different methods of teaching reading.

Table 1.   Mean of Distribution of the Effects of Socio-economic Status (Low, Middle and High)

Methods	Category of Socioeconomic Status	N	*X*	SD
Language Experience	Low Socioeconomic Status (Score 0 to 6)	31	10.87	3.585
	Middle Socioeconomic Status (Score 7 to 12)	128	11.91	2.864
	High Socioeconomic Status (Score 13and above)	12	12.00	3.104
	Total	171	11.73	3.031
Individualized Method	Low Socioeconomic Status (Score 0 to 6)	13	12.77	3.244
	Middle Socioeconomic Status (Score 7 to 12)	49	13.35	3.025
	High Socioeconomic Status (Score 13 and above)	7	13.14	2.035
	Total	69	13.22	2.955
Basal Method	Low Socioeconomic Status (Score 0 to 6)	24	6.96	2.851
	Middle Socioeconomic Status (Score 7 to 12)	72	8.28	3.616
	High Socioeconomic Status (Score 13 and above)	2	8.00	5.657
	Total	98	7.95	3.486

Table 1 shows that the thirty-one (31) students taught using language experience method, belong to low SES with a mean score of 10.87, and a standard deviation of 3.585; one hundred and twenty-eight (128) belong to middle SES with a mean score of 11.91 and a standard deviation of 2.864 while twelve (12) are from a high SES with a mean score of 12.00 and a standard deviation of 3.104.

Also, the students taught reading using the individualized method were ninety-six (96). Out of this, thirteen (13) of them belonged to a low SES with a standard deviation of 3.244 while those from a middle SES were (49) and had a mean score of 13.35 with a standard deviation of 3.025 and those from a high SES were seven (07) with a mean score of 13.14 and a standard deviation of 2.035.

Ninety-eight (98) students were taught using the basal method; twenty-four (24) of them belonged to a low SES with a mean score of 6.96 and a standard deviation of 2.851; seventy-two (72) belonged to a middle SES with a mean of 8.28 and a standard deviation of 3.616; while two (2) respondents belonged to a high SES with a mean score of 8.00 and a standard deviation of 5.657.

Table 2. ANOVA of Effects of SES by Methods

Methods	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Language Experience	Between Groups	28.087	2	14.044	1.538	0.218
	Within Groups	1533.539	168	9.128		
	Total	1561.626	170			
Individualized	Between Groups	3.472	2	1.736	0.194	0.824
	Within Groups	590.267	66	8.943		
	Total	593.739	68			
Basal	Between Groups	31.342	2	15.671	1.297	0.278
	Within Groups	1147.403	95	12.078		
	Total	1178.745	97			

Table 2 shows that in the three (3) socioeconomic levels (low, middle and high), those taught using the reading language experience method had an F-value of 1.538. This is significant at 0.218 and therefore not significant at 0.05 level selected. Also, students belonging to the three (3) socioeconomic levels taught using the individualized method had an F-value of 0.194. This is not significant at 0.824 which shows that there is no significant difference in the reading comprehension achievement of the sampled students. Students from the three (3) socio-economic levels taught reading using the basal method had an F-value of 1.297 significant at 0.278 which shows that there is no significant difference at the 0.05 level. Table 2 shows that there is no significant difference in the reading comprehension achievement of students from different SES taught reading using different methods.

Hypotheses II: There is no significant difference in reading comprehension achievement among students with different parental involvement levels taught using different methods of teaching reading.

Table 3. Mean Distribution of the Effects of Parental Involvement by Method

Methods	Category of Parental Involvement	N	X	SD
Language Experience	Never Involved	5	13.40	3.362
	Sometimes Involved	160	11.71	3.060
	Always Involved	6	11.00	1.414
	Total	171	11.73	3.031
Individualized Method	Never Involved	8	11.50	2.138
	Sometimes Involved	147	11.95	3.330
	Always Involved	10	11.80	2.741

	Total	165	11.92	3.238
Basal Method	Never Involved	11	6.82	3.516
	Sometimes Involved	143	8.71	3.443
	Always Involved	8	8.50	2.449
	Total	162	8.57	3.422

Table 3 shows that the five (5) students taught reading using the language experience method and whose parents were never involved had a mean score of 13.40 and a standard deviation of 3.362. It also showed that one hundred sixty (160) students whose parents were sometimes involved had a mean value of 11.71 and standard deviation of 3.060 while the six (6) subjects whose parents were always involved had a mean of 11.00 and standard deviation of 1.414. One hundred and sixty-five (165) of the respondents were taught using the individualized method. Eight (8) of them who have parents who were never involved yielded a mean value of 11.50 and standard deviation of 2.138; while, one hundred and forty-seven (147) of the respondents with a mean score of 11.95 and a standard deviation of 3.330

had parents who are sometimes involved. Ten (10) respondents taught by the individualized method, whose parents were always involved, had a mean score of 11.80 and a standard deviation of 2.741. Table 3 further shows that one hundred and sixty-two (162) respondents were taught reading using the basal method, out of which eleven (11) have parents who were never involved and with a mean of 6.82 and a standard deviation of 3.516. Respondents whose parents were sometimes involved were one hundred and forty-three (143) with a mean score of 8.71 and standard deviation of 3.443; while, those whose parents were always involved were eight (8) with a mean of 8.50 and standard deviation of 2.449.

Table 4. ANOVA of Methods by Parental Involvement

Methods	Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Language Experience	Between Groups	17.232	2	8.616	0.937	0.394
	Within Groups	1544.394	168	9.193		
	Total	1561.726	170			
Individualized	Between Groups	1.709	2	0.855	0.081	0.923
	Within Groups	1718.267	182	10.607		
	Total	1719.976	184			
Basal	Between Groups	36.730	2	18.365	1.579	0.209
	Within Groups	1848.881	159	11.628		
	Total	1885.611	161			

With regards to parental involvement, students taught using the language experience method had an F-value of 0.937 which was significant at 0.394. This shows no significant different in reading achievement of the students. Those taught using the individualized method had an F-value of 0.081 significant at 0.923. This shows that there is no significant difference in the

reading comprehension achievement. Those taught using the basal method had an F-value of 1.579 significant at 0.209 which shows that there is no significant difference in reading comprehension achievement of students taught reading using different methods based on parental involvement.

Hypotheses III: There is no significant interaction effect of socioeconomic status and parental involvement among students taught reading using different methods of teaching reading.

Table 5.   ANCOVA of Interaction Effects of Method by Socioeconomic Status and /Parental Involvement

Methods	Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Language Experience	Corrected Model	759.245[a]	12	63.270	12.459	0.000
	Intercept	650.310	1	650.310	128.055	0.000
	pretest score	658.097	1	658.097	129.588	0.000
	sex	3.170	1	3.170	0.624	0.431
	socio economics status	25.864	2	12.932	2.546	0.082
	parental involvement	17.319	2	8.659	1.705	0.185
	sex * socio economic status	20.153	2	10.077	1.984	0.141
	sex * parental involvement	10.638	2	5.319	1.047	0.353
	socio economic status * parental involvement	4.952	2	2.476	0.488	0.615
	Error	802.381	158	5.078		
	Total	25094.000	171			
	Corrected Total	1561.626	170			
Individualized Method	Corrected Model	136.041[b]	8	17.005	2.229	0.037
	Intercept	531.766	1	531.766	69.710	0.000
	pretest score	89.816	1	89.816	11.774	0.001
	sex	5.205	1	5.205	0.682	0.412
	socio economic status	0.556	2	0.278	0.036	0.964
	parental involvement	6.069	2	3.035	0.398	0.674
	sex * socio economic status	3.753	1	3.753	0.492	0.486
	socio economic involvement * parental involvement	0.065	1	0.065	0.009	0.927
	Error	457.699	60	7.628		
	Total	12648.000	69			
	Corrected Total	593.739	68			
Basal Method	Corrected Model	401.880[c]	9	44.653	5.058	0.000
	Intercept	5.581	1	5.581	0.632	0.429
	pretest score	319.817	1	319.817	36.228	0.000
	sex	2.177	1	2.177	0.247	0.621
	socio economic status	5.906	2	2.953	0.334	0.717
	parental involvement	1.998	2	0.999	0.113	0.893

sex * socio economic status	0.111	1	0.111	0.013	0.911
sex * parental involvement	13.696	1	13.696	1.551	0.216
socio economic status * parental involvement	11.109	1	11.109	1.258	0.265
Error	776.865	88	8.828		
Total	7371.000	98			
Corrected Total	1178.745	97			

Table 5 shows an F-value of 0.488, significant at 0.615, testing at an alpha level of 0.05. This shows no interaction effect of socioeconomic status and parental involvement using the language experience method. Similarly, Table 5 shows an F-value of 0.009, significant at 0.926, testing at an alpha level of 0.05, which shows no interaction effect of method (individualized) by parental involvement. Also, using the basal method, Table 5 shows an F-value of 1.258 significant at 0.265 testing at an alpha level of 0.05. It can be concluded that there is no significant interaction effect of method by socioeconomic status by parental involvement on students' achievement in reading comprehension. The hypothesis which stated that there is no significant interaction effect of socioeconomic status and parental involvement of students taught reading using different methods of teaching reading was therefore retained.

5. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results of this study revealed that socio-economic status has no significant effect on students' achievement in reading. This result is at variance with the findings of Ogunsola and Adewale (2014) and Long and Pang (2016), which indicated that parents who belong to a high SES provide their children with enabling environments and rich educational resources that enhance their children's academic performance and achievement. However, some students who come from homes where reading materials are provided may not actually engage in reading. This is because of distractions from other sources, such as satellite television, computers and cellphones.

The result of this study showed no significant interaction effect of methods and socioeconomic status on students' achievement in reading comprehension. This may be because the researchers provided reading materials in the reading corner established in their classroom (the group taught using the individualized method). The students were encouraged to borrow books, bring books from home and share with their classmates. The reading corner provided opportunities for students from different SES to borrow books and engage in leisure reading.

The result of this study revealed that parental involvement had no significant effects on students' achievement in reading comprehension. One would have expected that children whose parents cared about their reading and provided all the support would perform better than counterparts without parental support. The result of this study is in consonance with that of Harris and Robinson (2016). Both studies found no significant relationship between parental involvement and students' academic achievement. It was however at variance with the findings of Zedan (2012) and Alika and Ohanaka (2013), which indicated a positive relationship between parental involvement and students' academic achievement.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study showed that SES and level of parental involvement have no significant effect on students' achievement in reading comprehension. Also, there was no significant interaction effect of instructional method by socio-economic status and parental involvement on students' achievement in reading comprehension. As a result, it was concluded that the provision of reading materials in schools can make up for the deficiency of such materials in the homes, in such a way that children coming from poor homes can still benefit and learn to read effectively. Therefore, to enhance the cultivation of reading habits and interest in leisure reading, efforts should be made to provide reading materials for students. This will enable children from homes were books are not available to get reading materials to read.

Since reading is a skill needed both in and out of school, there is a need therefore for schools to provide materials both in the classes and the libraries for students to engage in individual reading. In addition, parents should be encouraged to be more involved in their children's reading activities. They should at the least

provide reading materials such as books, novels, newspapers and magazines. This will further sharpen the students' interest in reading. In light of these findings and recommendations, it is suggested that this study should be replicated in other parts of Edo State, Nigeria and in other parts of the country to see if the same results will be obtained.

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