

Influence of Attitude to Reading on Comprehension Performance Among Secondary School Students in Katsina Central, Nigeria

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Abstract: This study investigated the influence of Attitude to Reading on Comprehension Performance among Secondary School Students in Katsina Central, Nigeria, the study has three research objectives, three research questions and tested three null hypotheses. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study and a simple multistage sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 600 students from a population of 22,911 SS II students of secondary school students in Katsina Central, Nigeria. Two Instruments namely, Reading Attitudes Questionnaire (RATQ) and The Reading Comprehension Performance Tests (RCPT) were used. the reliability coefficient of 0.763 and 0.712 for RATQ and RCPT respectively. Null hypotheses were tested at $P \leq 0.05$ levels of significance using multiple regression, Analysis of variance (ANOVA), and t-tests. The result shows that secondary school students' attitude to reading accounted for 0.05% of the total variance in comprehension performance ($R^2 = .005$, $P > 0.05$). Therefore, there is no significant influence of secondary school students' attitude to reading on their comprehension performance in Katsina Central, Nigeria. Results further revealed that there is significant difference in the comprehension performance of male and female secondary school students in Katsina Central, Nigeria ($t\text{-value} = .460$ & $p\text{-value} = > 0.05$). Results also indicated that respondents are statistically different in comprehension performance this implies that, there is significant in the comprehension performance of secondary school students in Katsina Central, Nigeria based on class sections (Arts, Science & Commercial classes). Finally, some recommendations were made, which include, Parents should be sensitive to their role as role models in recreational reading. They should exhibit positive attitude to recreational reading and encourage their children to read beyond prescribed school texts in order to boost their academic performance, so that, they can acquired the needed competences for them to contribute to the general development of the society.

Keywords: Attitude, Reading, Comprehension, Performance.

1. Introduction

Reading comprehension is a dual action procedure of extracting and constructing meaning by means of juxtaposition of experience with written language (Snow, 2002). Extracting meaning from text is to understand what the author has explicitly or implicitly stated. Constructing meaning is to interpret what the author has written based on the reader's

background knowledge, background, skill and efficiency. Reading is a means by which further learning takes place. In other words, a person learns to read and reads to learn.

There are two sources of obstacles to students attaining comprehension in reading that Sadeghi (2017) called internal and external factor. Internal factor means from within the person of the reader. It includes students' cognitive abilities, strategies, background knowledge and effective characteristics. Meanwhile, external factors are factor appearing from beyond the person of the reader. It includes text variable, context variable, and author variable.

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According to Rayner et al., (2011) reading is a very complex skill that is very important in many societies where a great deal of knowledge is shared in writing. Since the 1970s, cognitive psychology researchers have acquired a great deal of knowledge about the reading process.

Annamalai and Muniandy (2013) as cited in Kassim et al., (2019) showed reading attitude is feeling or what an individual feels about reading. Reading attitude is also related to one's acceptance or rejection of reading activities and depends on free experience and the social system around the individual. A study conducted by Affidah and Siti (2013) regarding the reading attitudes of students at UiTM Sarawak found that the majority

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of students liked reading activities (80.6%) and made reading activities a hobby (68%). As much as 38.8% of respondents agree that they are active readers. Based on observations at Shailendra Senior High School Palembang, most students have the same problem when they have to read, which may be caused by a low vocabulary and confusion about how to read from where and how to read.

The importance of English is highlighted by Pennycook (2017) who says, “English is used as an official or semi-official language in over 60 countries, and has a prominent place in a further 20 countries.”. One of those countries is Indonesia. In Indonesia, English is a foreign language that is taught to the students starting from secondary school level as a compulsory subject. English has four main language skills that are related each other. They are listening, speaking, reading and writing. Alfassi (2004) states that reading is a complex cognitive activity essential for sufficient functioning and for obtaining information in modern society. Reading is believed as one of the best ways to enhance knowledge and to develop one’s skill. However, reading can be challenging, particularly when the material is unfamiliar, technical, or complex. Comprehension of reading is also challenging. Readers may understand each word separately, but linking them together into meaningful ideas often does not happen as it should be. These readers can decode the words, but have not developed sufficient skills to comprehend the underlying, deeper meaning of the sentences, the paragraphs, and the entire text. McNamara (2017) describes comprehension as the ability to go beyond words, to understand the ideas and the relationships between ideas conveyed in a text.

2. Attitudes Towards Reading

Attitude towards reading mainly depends on learners' psychological state of mind and emotions (Smith and Li, 2020). Attitudes are also defined as the “predispositions to respond in a consistently favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given object” (Cunningham, 2008). Attitudes toward reading are defined as an individual’s feeling about reading, and behavior such as selecting and reading books. Attitude as a learned disposition on how to behave. Based on Guthrie & Wigfield, (2000), one’s success in reading skills is correlated to the attitude towards reading. It is concluded that the leading factor that directly affects students’ reading performances are the students’ attitudes towards reading. Similarly, Morgan and Fuchs (2017) describe that good readers tend to have good reading comprehension level and have positive attitudes towards reading. Therefore, if students have positive attitudes towards reading, they tend to be more successful in English course at school

A learner’s attitude can change due to environmental influence, conditions, interests and peers' motivation and influence, or the way the person currently feels. The “object” in the definition can be a thing, process or behavior, which has a direct or indirect effect on attitude with respect to a learner’s personal experience and belief towards the object and the norms for this object in society (McKenna et al., 2012). Reading attitude is an affective domain which includes feeling, thought, belief and intention (McKenna et al., 2012). These constituents

make up the basic construction of meaning. It is assumed that regular reading activity can positively influence reading attitude and motivation and that a positive attitude towards reading supports reading achievement in the future. There are many discussions as to whether reading attitude affects reading achievement or whether it is mostly the other way around. Some researchers assume that if the relationship between reading attitude and reading achievement is moderate and/or weak, this is not because of students' negative feeling towards reading, but because of a lack of practice and poor abilities in reading, which cause difficulties in achievement. However, other researchers (McKenna et al., 2012) claim that a positive attitude in reading could affect high achievement in reading, while still other researchers (Graham et al., 2012) maintain that reading attitude is primarily influenced by reading achievement. Hence, reading attitude and reading achievement could impact each other in the reading process.

3. Reading Achievement

Reading achievement is performance in reading and ability to utilize reading skills with fluency and comprehension. The literature points out that reading achievement may be affected by certain factors. For example, researchers (McKenna, 2012) have demonstrated that the affective domain – i.e., attitude – could affect reading attainment positively if reading activity is well developed. Baker state that reading achievement relates to motivation and posit “achievement motivational theory”, where a reader’s intentions and goals are crucial for achievement because his/her achievement in reading is more successful if he/she is motivated. However, poor reading skills and constant failure in reading achievement could negatively influence learners' attitude towards reading activity.

4. Levels of Comprehension

Students comprehend at various levels. The three levels of comprehension as identified by Osikomaiya, (2020); Osikomaiya, (2017) and Mabekoje, (2012) are: literal comprehension, interpretative/inference comprehension and critical/evaluative comprehension.

A. Literal Comprehension

Demands understanding of ideas and information explicitly stated in the passage. The skills in literal comprehension include knowledge of word meaning; recall details directly stated or paraphrased in the writer’s own words and understanding of grammatical cues. Comprehension at this level is a pre-requisite for comprehension of the other level and it is the most familiar and simplest form of comprehension.

B. Inferential/Interpretative Comprehension

Is another level of comprehension. This level demands understanding of ideas or information not explicitly stated in the passage. The relevant skills here include reasoning with information presented to enable one understand the author’s note, purpose and attitude, infer factual information, main ideas, comparison, cause and effect relationship not explicitly stated in the passage and summary of the story content.

C. Evaluative/Critical Comprehension

Requires analysis, evaluating and personal reaction to information presented in the passage. The skills involved are reader's ability to react personally to information in a passage, indicating its meaning to the reader. The critical role of reading widely at increasingly more challenging levels cannot be overemphasized.

Dehbozorgi, (2012). Awe (2014) studied the relationship between reading attitudes and reading comprehension performance of secondary school students. It was found that a total of 65.75% of the students had a generally negative attitude towards reading: 61.13% of them performed well only at the literal level of reading; 38%; 60% and 65.87% at the inferential, evaluate and creative levels, respectively. Also, there was a very high, positive and significant relationship between the students' reading attitudes and their reading comprehension performance ($r=0.0835$ df 798 $P \leq 0.05$). These findings implied that negative attitudes to extensive reading could lead to students' poor performance in reading comprehension, which could in turn lead to poor performance in English language (Awe, 2014).

5. Statement of the Problem

The issue of academic performance in English language among secondary school students in both internal and external examinations is a menace that every effort is geared towards finding implementable panacea to. Experience of these researchers as teacher trainers, examiners and as justified in literatures have hinted as the prevailing unimpressive reading attitude of students as major source of the often occurrence poor performance. Findings (Lawal, 2018; Iliyas, 2021; WAEC, 2021) have established the influence of poor reading on academic performance. Olaofe (2017) found that the problem of students' academic underperformance is a problem of inadequate or poor reading culture. It is instructive to also note that as secondary school students are being prepared for the rigorous study at the tertiary level, every concerted effort has to be made to put these candidates in better stead of preparation through very positive reading attitude as antidote to failure. For a fact that there have not been studies on this lingering problem in Katsina State, this study, therefore, attempt to examine the attitude of the students to reading in relation to their performance in reading comprehension in Katsina central, Katsina State. This would be done with a view to seek strategies to improve the attitude of the students that when accomplished will definitely steer improved academic performance of the students generally across disciplines.

The success or failure of students is often attributed to the students' attitude towards reading and reading habit. Unfortunately, many students are defective and lack abilities to read and comprehend what they read. These contribute to the persistent decline in the students' performance across school subjects. Students who cannot read cannot benefit from a formal education. Ability to read and comprehend is a skill that students need in order to be successful in their academic pursuit. Students' positive perceptions would assist them in developing

good reading habits and good comprehending ability. In line with the above, the study, examines the influence of attitudes to reading on comprehension performance among secondary school students in Katsina central zone, Katsina State, Nigeria.

A. Objectives of the Study

The study is aimed at examines the influence of attitudes to reading on comprehension performance among secondary school students in Katsina central zone, Katsina State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study's objectives are to:

1. Determine the influence of secondary school students' attitude to reading on their comprehension performance in Katsina Central, Nigeria.
2. Find out the difference in the comprehension performance of male and female secondary school students in Katsina Central, Nigeria
3. Investigate the difference in the comprehension performance of secondary school students in Katsina Central, Nigeria based on class sections (Arts, Science & Commercial classes).

B. Research Questions

1. What is the influence of secondary school students' attitude to reading on their comprehension performance in Katsina Central, Nigeria?
2. What is the difference in the comprehension performance of male and female secondary school students in Katsina Central, Nigeria?
3. What is the difference in the comprehension performance of secondary school students in Katsina Central, Nigeria based on class sections (Arts, Science & Commercial classes)?

C. Hypotheses

1. There is no significant influence of secondary school students' attitude to reading on their comprehension performance in Katsina Central, Nigeria
2. There is no significant difference in the comprehension performance of male and female secondary school students in Katsina Central, Nigeria.
3. There is no significant in the comprehension performance of secondary school students in Katsina Central, Nigeria based on class sections (Arts, Science & Commercial classes).

6. Methodology

The descriptive research design was adopted for this study. The population comprised all the public secondary schools in Katsina Central, Nigeria while the target population was the SSS II students of the sampled schools. Six hundred (600) students were selected through the stratified random sampling technique from schools in the four zonal education quality assurance offices in Katsina central senatorial zone of the state (Katsina, Rimi, Dutsin-Ma and Safana zonal Education Quality Assurance).

The two instruments used for the study were: Reading Attitudes Questionnaire (RATQ) on modified four point Likert

Scale which contained eighteen statements that measured the three types of attitudes towards reading behaviour. Positive attitudes were determined by a combination of responses from Strongly Agree and Agree while negative attitudes were determined by a combination of responses from Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The Reading Comprehension Performance Tests (RCPT) is made up of two comprehension passages. Each passage featured ten multiple choice questions that tested students' comprehension skills of the identified four skills. Three test items were set for each of the skills except the creative skill which had only one test item. The last three levels which are considered the most essential skills that respondents must acquire to perform well in reading task had the highest marks allotted to them. Respondents' performance level was based on the following criteria: high, average and low performance. Scores within the range of 24-34 were taken as high performance; 12-23, average performance; and 0-11, low performance. The validated instruments had reliability coefficient of 0.763 and 0.712 for

RATQ and RCPT respectively. The instruments were administered to the subjects and the scores were collated and coded for analysis with the SPSS software package. Descriptive statistics (Percentages) were used to answer research questions while the null hypothesis was tested with multiple regression, Analysis of variance (ANOVA), and t-tests. The results are as shown in the tables presented below.

A. Data Presentation

Table 1

Distribution of respondents by zonal education quality assurance (ZEQA) in katsina central zone and class level

S/N	ZEQA	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Katsina ZEQA	150	25%
2	Rimi ZEQA	150	25%
3	Dutsin-Ma ZEQA	150	25%
4	Safana ZEQA	150	25%
Total		600	100%

Table 1 shows that a total of 150 (25%) SSS II students each were sampled from Katsina, Rimi, Dutsin-Ma and Safana zonal Education Quality Assurance respectively. The total sample was 600 students. The researcher purposely used SS II students as the respondents considering the fact that students at that level have been academically exposed and may be able to handle the questionnaire, while those in SS III, are preparing for their final examination and may not have time to participate in the study, and SSI are new in the school and may not be stable enough to participate as respondents.

Table 2

Distribution of respondents by gender in katsina central zone and class level

S/N	Gender	Frequency	Percentage %
1	Male	365	60.8%
2	Female	235	39.2%
Total		600	100%

Table 2 indicated that a total of 365 (60.8%) SSS II students (respondent) sampled from Katsina, Rimi, Dutsin-Ma and Safana zonal Education Quality Assurance were male and 235 (39.2%) were female.

B. Hypothesis Testing

The result of the null hypothesis generated for the paper is presented as follows:

1) Hypothesis One

There is no significant influence of secondary school students' attitude to reading on their comprehension performance in Katsina Central, Nigeria.

Table 3

Linear regression table of influence of respondents' attitude to reading on comprehension performance

R = .072					
R Square = .005					
Adjusted R Square = .004					
Standard Error = 5.42126					
Analysis of Variance					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	92.015	1	92.015		
Residual	17575.258	598	29.390	3.131	.077
Total	17667.273	599			

Table 3 shows that secondary school students' attitude to reading accounted for 0.05% of the total variance in comprehension performance ($R^2 = .005$, $P > 0.05$). Thus, this percentage showed no statistical significant influence of secondary school students' attitude to reading on their comprehension performance in Katsina Central, Nigeria. Therefore, there is no significant influence of secondary school students' attitude to reading on their comprehension performance in Katsina Central, Nigeria. Thus, hypothesis one is accepted.

2) Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the comprehension performance of male and female secondary school students in Katsina Central, Nigeria.

Table 4 shows the results of the independent samples t-test with calculated t-value of 13.576 ($t = 13.576$, $df = 598$, $p < 0.05$). Since the p-value of 0.000 is less than the 0.05 alpha level, the null hypothesis four is rejected. This finding indicates that there is significant difference in the comprehension performance of male and female secondary school students in Katsina Central, Nigeria.

3) Hypothesis Three

There is no significant in the comprehension performance of secondary school students in Katsina Central, Nigeria based on class sections (Arts, Science & Commercial classes).

Table 5 reveals an F-value of 142.311, which is significant at 0.05 alpha level, since p-value is less than 0.05 ($.000 > 0.05$). It implies that respondents are statistically different in comprehension performance. Therefore, the stated hypothesis three is rejected. This implies that, there is significant in the comprehension performance of secondary school students in Katsina Central, Nigeria based on class sections (Arts, Science & Commercial classes).

Table 4 presents the results of Scheffe's Post Hoc analysis, which investigated the comprehension performance of secondary school students in Katsina Central, Nigeria, across three class sections: Arts, Science, and Commercial. The analysis revealed a significant difference in comprehension

Table 4
t-test table of respondents' comprehension performance

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	DF	t-cal.	Sig.(p) t-value
Comprehension Performance	Male	370	33.9000	5.28364	598	13.576	.000
	Female	230	28.4826	3.74016			

Table 5
ANOVA table of respondents' comprehension performance based on class sections

Source	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F- Value	Sig. F-value
Between Group	5703.686	2	2851.843	142.311	.000
Within Group	11963.587	597	20.040		
Total	17667.273	599			

performance among the three groups. Notably, Science class students achieved the highest mean score (36.0680), outperforming their peers in Arts (mean = 29.8281) and Commercial (mean = 29.0183) classes.

Table 6
Scheffe's post hoc table on respondents' comprehension performance based on class sections

Class Section	N	Subset for alpha = 0.05	
		1	2
Commercial	109	29.0183	
Art	285	29.8281	
Science	206		36.0680
Sig.		.248	1.000

The findings suggest that Science students excel in comprehension performance compared to their peers in other class sections. This could be attributed to various factors, such as teaching methods or curriculum design.

7. Discussion

The finding of this study revealed that there is no significant influence of secondary school students' attitude to reading on their comprehension performance in Katsina Central, Nigeria, majority of the students sampled had negative attitudes towards reading. Therefore, the finding on the influence of reading attitude on students' comprehension performance supported several earlier findings namely Dehbozorgi (2012), Kocaarslan (2016); Awe ((2014); Bastug (2014); and Sani (2011). that there was no significant correlation between attitude and students' comprehension performance. In Kocaarslan's finding it was only 14% the variance of reading comprehension could be explained by reading attitude while in this current study reading attitude gave influence 0.05 % on comprehension performance. It was less than the previous research findings. However, the result of this study contradicted the study of Rafi, Islam, & Cahyani, (2021), Pambuji (2015) that reading attitude influences students' reading comprehension. In addition, According to Kear & Michael (2003), one of the factors that influence reading activities is the student's own attitude towards reading.

Related studies also supported the finding of this study such as Lawal (2008) opines an individual who lack the awareness of the values of reading cannot develop positive attitude to reading. In the same vein Petscher (2010) and Seitz (2010) corroborate the assertion that learners' positive attitude to reading are highly critical sign for their high scores in reading comprehension performance. Adebileje (2001) and Awe (2014) in their contributions revealed that most Nigerian Secondary

School learners and those at the tertiary levels had understanding of only the literal meaning of what they read. That is their performance level is higher at the literal level while they often perform poorly at the other three levels. In addition to the acquiring of rich vocabulary the learner gets acquainted with the strategies required for decoding meaning and invariably becomes proficient in language use. There is hardly any doubt that it is attitude to reading and proficiency in language use that enables learners to read, comprehend and consequently develop intellectually. In sum, the finding implies that positive attitude to reading is a foundation for reading comprehension performance and indeed, other language skills and general academic achievement.

8. Conclusion

1. Secondary school students have negative attitude towards reading and so they have not been performing well in reading comprehension
2. The performance level of the students in reading comprehension was low.
3. Majority of them had low scores at the higher-order skills of reading comprehension while they had high scores at the literal level.
4. Reading attitude correlated significantly, both positively and highly with reading comprehension performance of the students.

9. Recommendations

1. Teachers of English should themselves develop the habit of reading extensively and thus serve as role models for learners. They should know the interrelationships of intensive, literal and extensive reading behaviour as this will enable them to assist learners to develop a balanced rather than a lopsided attitude towards them. Above all they should always strive to be efficient facilitators of reading, ensuring that the learners maintain enhanced positive attitudes to reading comprehension so that other stakeholders will be motivated into supporting the school system fully.
2. Teachers Trainers such as colleges of Education and Faculty of Education in Universities should equip the service of teachers with the knowledge and skills required for teaching the three types of reading behaviour and reading comprehension in secondary schools.
3. Parents should be sensitive to their role as role models in recreational reading. They should exhibit positive attitude

to recreational reading and encourage their children to read beyond prescribed school texts.

4. Education Policy Makers, school authorities and other stakeholders in education industry should appraise the importance of reading in the school curriculum and reflect this in their policies. Public and private schools in both rural and urban centers should be adequately stocked with materials that will serve the reading interest of learners. Partnership between education planners and teachers is crucial for effective teaching and learning in schools.

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