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Parental Involvement as Predictor of Reading Habit among Senior Secondary School Students in a Senatorial District of Osun State, Nigeria

Bamise, Olasehinde Fadekemi*
Reference Section, Hezekiah Oluwasanmi Library, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Osun State, Nigeria
ofbamise@oauife.edu.ng

Akande, Samson Oyeniyi
Department of School Library and Media Technology, Faculty of Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan, Nigeria.
nyakand@yahoo.com

Corresponding Author*
Email: ofbamise@oauife.edu.ng
GSM: 09137155357

Abstract

Studies have identified some factors that could help improve students' reading habit. Apparently, there is scarcity of studies on the relationship between parental involvement and reading habit of students in Osun East senatorial district of Osun State, Nigeria. This study examined the prevalence of parental involvement and the extent to which parental involvement could predict the students' reading habit. The study was a descriptive survey. Multistage sampling procedure was adopted. 10 state owned secondary schools were selected in Osun East senatorial district of Osun State, Nigeria. Second year students in senior secondary schools (SSII) were proportionately selected. Descriptive statistics with Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to analyse the data. The null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance. There were 293 males and 320 females. The mean age was 15yrs $\pm$ 1.32. 530 (86.5%) of the students experienced a moderate level of parental involvement in their reading activities. Parental involvement was found to have a positive significant relationship with reading habit. In addition to providing emotional supports to their children, there is a need for parents to be practically involved in the reading activities their children to improve the students reading habit.

Key words: Parental involvement, Reading habits, Study habits, Children, Students, Books

Introduction

Parental involvement is a term used to explain any support a child gets from a parent or custodian, especially someone who has a direct rapport with the child. A support from parents is capable of increasing students' academic and social growth (Durisci & Bunijevac, 2017). This could greatly influence the reading and educational activities of children across ages and places parents' support

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at the central part of a child's life. It adds to the development of students' attentiveness to reading. Parents' good impression about reading is pleasurably transferred to their children. Considering the volume of school work, intricacy of class activities, and socio-emotional issues that make students' task for academic success more difficult, one would expect an increase in parental support and involvement in academic activities of students. Students tend to put more effort to read in order to do well scholastically when they are encouraged especially by their parents. Sengonul (2022) emphasized that students need to be complimented and encouraged to read to the best of their abilities to excel. Parents who fail to be involved in their high school boys' and girls' reading activities give the message that school is not important, grades and school attendance do not matter. Invariably, students in such a situation feel left alone to do whatever they like. Undoubtedly, parents have significant influence on children's dispositions towards reading. Parents' encouragements and supports on reading activities are pointers to stronger reading motivation for students. Szenczi, Fejes, Vígh, Hódi, and Tary (2023) recognised that as parents also participate in students' reading activities, they provide the motivation students need to finish their assignments at home and also develop an irresistible affection for reading.

Statement of the Problem

As students advance in academic level, parental involvement seems to be declining dramatically. Many parents believe their children at secondary school are becoming matured enough to be responsible for their own academic motivation. Decline in parental involvement at this level produce negative effects on the children's achievement, motivation and academic progress. Parents who fail to provide an atmosphere that promotes reading may keep their children from working to their highest abilities. Academic success is the byproduct of extensive reading and not only hinges on the quality of schools or the expertise of teachers. Observably, there is scarcity of concrete empirical studies on the influence of parental involvement on reading habit of senior secondary school students in Osun State. Against this backdrop, this study investigated parental involvement as predictors of senior secondary school students reading habit in Osun East senatorial districts of Osun State, Nigeria.

Objectives

1 identify the level of parental involvement in the reading activities of secondary school students in public schools in Osun State;
2 determine the relationship between parental involvement and secondary school students' reading habit in public schools in Osun State;

Research Questions

The following research question was answered in this study

1. What is the level of parental involvement in reading activities of students?
2. What is the relationship between parental involvement and secondary school students' reading habit?

Research Hypothesis

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The following null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance:

There is no significant relationship between parental involvement and reading habit of senior secondary school students in Osun East and West senatorial districts.

Methodology

This study investigated the relationship between reading habit and parental involvement in students' reading activities and examined the level of parental involvement in students reading practices in Osun East senatorial district. The study adopted the use of questionnaire with a scale of 13 items measuring parental involvement in the reading activities such as: parents telling students the necessity of reading to academic success, asking students to complete homework/assignment, helping students with homework and assisting them in planning time for homework, chores and other responsibilities among senior secondary school students in SSSII. Likert scale of Never True, Almost True, True and Very True was adopted. Weight values of 1 was assigned to never True; 2 to Almost True; 3 to True; 4 to Very True. The variable scores (VS) ranged from 1 to 4; the closer the value to 4 the higher the significance of the variable for the participants; that is, the higher the level of parental involvement. The Average Variables Score (AVS) for the table was calculated by the summation of all the scores divided by the number of variables measured in the table. In this study, it denotes the level of parental involvement in the reading activities of the students.

The scale was pretested and found to have the reliability coefficient of 0.86. Data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The level of parental involvement was determined using weighted average and the benchmark for Low, Moderate and High. The relationship between parental involvement and reading habit was determined using PPMC and the hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significant. 627 copies of questionnaire were administered and 613 (98%) was found suitable for analysis.

Table 1: Mean scores of parental involvement in the reading activities of senior secondary school students in Osun East and Osun West senatorial districts

S/N	Parent involvement activities	NT Rank=1	AT Rank=2	T Rank=3	VT Rank=4	$\bar{x}$ or VS	%	S.D
1	My parent(s) tell me reading is necessary for academic success	46 7.5%	41 6.7%	106 17.3%	420 68.5%	3.47	86.8	0.91
2	My parent(s) asks and ensure I do my homework/assignment	47 7.7%	54 8.8%	134 21.9%	378 61.7%	3.38	84.5	0.93
3	My parent(s) buys recommended textbooks for me	97 15.8%	85 13.8%	154 25.1%	277 45.2%	3.00	75.0	1.11
4	My parent(s) helps me with my homework,	89 14.5%	102 16.6%	173 28.3%	249 40.7%	2.95	73.8	1.07

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	plan my time for chores and other responsibilities							
5	My parents(s) ensures I complete my homework before I do anything else	100 16.3%	123 20.0%	171 27.9%	219 35.8%	2.83	70.8	1.09
6	It is worthwhile to read because my parent(s) loves reading	297 48.4%	77 12.6%	98 16.0%	141 23.0%	2.14*	53.5	1.24
7	Unless I ask, my parent(s) may not buy me books	313 51.0%	79 12.9%	103 16.9%	118 19.3%	2.04*	51	1.20
8	Whatever grade I obtain does not matter to my parents	347 56.6%	99 16.1%	74 12.1%	93 15.1%	1.86*	46.5	1.13
9	My parent(s) does not monitor my homework completion	380 62.0%	77 12.5%	73 11.9%	83 13.6%	1.77*	44.3	1.11
10	My parent(s) buys and brings daily newspapers to the house	371 60.4%	132 21.6%	55 9.0%	55 9.0%	1.67*	41.8	0.97
11	I receive books as gifts from my parents(s)	419 68.4%	98 15.9%	40 6.6%	56 9.1%	1.56*	39.0	0.96
12	My parents share with me what they read	474 77.3%	69 11.3%	43 7.0%	27 4.4%	1.38*	34.5	0.80
13	My parent(s) used to read bedtime stories and fairy tales to me when I was younger	511 83.4%	68 11.0%	16 2.6%	18 3.0%	1.25*	31.3	0.65
Total variable score						29.3		
Average Variables Score (AVS) = 29.3/13 = 2.25.								
AVS expressed in percentage = 2.25/4 x 100 =56.3%								

* Scores below Average Variable Score of 2.25. Key to table: NT = Never true, AT = Almost True, T = True, VT = Very true

The Average Variables Score (AVS) for Table I is 2.25. This shows a moderate level of parental involvement in the reading activities of the students is 56.3%. “My parent(s) tell me reading is necessary for academic success” has the highest VS of 3.47 (86.8%); followed by the “My parent(s) asks and ensure I do my homework/assignment” with VS of 3.38 (84.5%). “My parent(s) used to read bedtime stories and fairy tales to me when I was younger” has the least VS of 1.25 (31.3%). Eight variables (asterisked in Table I) have VS below the average variable score of 2.25.

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Table 2: Norm test showing the level of parental involvement in the reading activities of senior secondary school students in public secondary schools in Osun East and West senatorial districts

Interval	Mean index	Levels parental involvement	Frequency	Percentage
1-17		Low	3	0.5
18-34	**29.23**	Moderate	530	86.5
35-52		High	80	13.1

Table 2 reveals that majority of the student (86.5%) experience a moderate level of parental involvement in the reading activities of senior secondary school students in public secondary schools in Osun State in the study. (13.1%) experience a high level of parental involvement in their reading activities; while (0.5%) experience a low level of parental involvement in their reading activities. It can be deduced that there was a moderate level of parental involvement in the reading activities of the students.

Table 3: PPMC showing the relationship between parental involvements and reading habit of senior secondary school students in public secondary schools in Osun East and Osun West senatorial districts

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	n	r	p value	Remark
Parental involvement	29.2316	4.6818				
			613	.251*	.000	Sig.
Reading habit	45.4307	5.8967				

*Sig at 0.05 level

Table 3 shows that there is a positive significant relationship between parental involvement and reading habit of senior secondary school students in public secondary schools in Osun East and Osun West senatorial districts (r = .251, n= 613, p.000<.05). The hypothesis was rejected. This implies that parental involvement improves the reading activities of the students positively in the study.

Discussion

Finding from this study revealed a moderate level of parental involvement in students' reading activities. This finding is similar to that of Mantey (2020) in which, a moderate level of parental involvement was observed in the education of the students. The study further suggested that an average level of parental involvement could bring about positive learning outcomes. In a study by Gonida & Cortina (2014), the respondents indicated that their parents were involved in checking and ensuring the completion of their daily homework. Also, in the work of Schmuck (2011), respondents received help from parents with homework completion and had their parents help them work through stressful condition regarding school works.

In Siror (2015), respondents indicated that their parents bought books for them, set time for story books and encouraged them to read. Parents play substantial roles in the education of students.

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Payment of school levies, provision of reading and other required materials, supervision to ensure completion of homework among other activities are required of supportive parents to improve students' reading habit. Findings in the study revealed that parents motivate their children to read by telling them that reading is necessary for success.

Parents need to recognize and acknowledge that their activities at home are much more important in developing reading habit and contribute to students' success in school (Khan, Farooq, Begum & Imad, 2019). Regardless of their educational status, parents acknowledge the value of reading to education. In this study, findings showed that parents expressed their desire to support their children's reading activities. However, data analysis showed that their involvements were tilted towards emotional encouragement. For instance, majority of the respondents indicated that their parents told them reading is necessary for academic success, asked and ensured they do their homework/assignment. Undoubtedly, parental emotional encouragement has the potential to enhance students' reading habit. Nevertheless, parental involvement goes beyond moral supports. There is a need for parents to be actively involved in their children reading activities.

Keaton (2017) emphasized that parent involvement is not just prompting a child to do his or her homework, or telling the child to finish up his/her school assignment, it involves the actions taken in particular to improve students' accomplishments and conducts. Parents who are actively involved in their children's learning practice are considered to be apprehensive of their children's education (McNeal, 2014). 'My parent(s) used to read bedtime stories and fairy tales to me when I was younger' and 'I receive books as gifts from my parent(s)' activities had the mean values below the weighted mean. This showed that parents were not practicing the activities. Reading bedtime stories and fairy tales to a child instills the love for reading and it is a way to make the child develop interest in reading when he/she becomes an adolescent (Samur, 2021). Similarly, giving books to someone's child as a gift fosters a love for reading. It is a way to frame reading as a reward (Pradana, 2015). It also creates an avenue for parents to discuss books with their children.

There are excellent ways parents could assist their children in secondary school to develop an impressive reading habit. Parents could check and monitor homework completion, read with their children and talk to their children about school and education regularly and provide their children with the basic necessities for learning. Monitoring the children's reading activities, and supervising homework completion, reading with their children in no small way could improve reading habit. Having parents as role model stimulates a love of reading from the family circle and give more supports to students. Role models increase the chances that students would read more for recreation better than their peers who do not have family members as reading models (Caliskan, 2022). Obviously, not all parents possess the knowledge and skills to be reading models. However, they should be involved in the reading activities of their in secondary school in whatever way they could as the strength of these children in reading and development of an inspiring reading habit might largely depend on parental involvement.

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Conclusion

The study investigated parental involvement as a predictor of reading habit of public secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria. The study revealed a moderate level of parental involvement in the reading activities of senior secondary school students in public secondary schools in Osun East and Osun West senatorial districts in Osun State, Nigeria. The study also showed that parental involvement had positive significant relationships with reading habit. Hence the hypothesis tested was rejected. If the students must develop reading habit, parents' contributory role should not be lagging. Although, parental involvement may not have a direct influence on the academic outcome, but it goes a long way to motivate, arouse students' interests and persistence in reading which invariably leads to the development of an inspiring reading habit.

Recommendation

To improve the reading habits of senior secondary school students, the study recommended that, parents should be more actively involved in the reading activities of their children. In addition to providing emotional supports, supplying needed reading materials, parents are encouraged to practice activities such as: giving books as gifts, sharing with their children the books they read. Also, parents who are able to read should serve as reading models for their children.

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