

IMPACT OF GAMES ON PUPILS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN READING COMPREHENSION IN PRIMARY SCHOOL IN DELTA NORTH SENATORIAL DISTRICT

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Abstract

The study was designed to find out the impact of games on pupils' academic achievement in reading comprehension in primary schools in Delta North Senatorial District. The study descriptive research design. Impact of Games on Pupils' Academic Achievement in Reading Comprehension" (IGPAARC) instrument was validated for the study. Two research questions were raised to give direction to the study. The population of the study comprised all the two thousand, seven hundred and seventy-two (2772) primary two pupils in all the primary schools in Delta North Senatorial District in Delta State. [State Universal Basic Education Board, 2021/2022 (SUBEB)]. The total sample was 216 primary two pupils were randomly selected from the selected primary schools in the study area. The reliability of the instrument was determined using K-R20 (Kudar Richardson). Co-efficient of internal consistency was used to find out the internal consistent of the 16 items used for the objectivity of the study. The statistical tools used for computing and analyzing the response scores were frequency count and mean rating scales. Based on the research questions that guided the study, the results revealed that pupils taught using games teaching methods obtained a high mean achievement score in reading

Introduction

Children in primary school aged between 6-12 years plus are called pupils. Developmentally, children within the age bracket are active, playful, gregarious, curious and within the concrete operational stage of piagets' intellectual development. Therefore, they need quality interactions with peers, objects and events in their social environment. Education is an instrument "peer Excellence" for effecting national development. This statement indicates the importance of education to every Nigeria citizen, which begins at the primary level. Primary education is the education that provides young learners with the fundamental of reading, writing, listening, speaking, skill acquisition, information and attitudes necessary for proper adjustment in the society. Lending credence to the above, the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2014) defined primary education as the education to children aged to 12 plus. That is to say, primary education is the first stage of formal education which is the key to the success or failure of the whole education system. This level of education has among its goals, the inculcation of permanent literacy and numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively. At this level of education, the medium of communication is the language of the immediate environment.

Language is an essential tool in life of every individual. It enables human beings express their feelings, thoughts, ideas, and appreciation. Ugwoke and Eze 2010, defined language as an arbitrary system of symbols which enables them to communicate an infinite number and varieties of messages, meanings, intentions, thoughts, request and item of information. It is an activity that involves self-expression with parts of human speech sounds combined with sentences and the combination leading to ideas and thoughts. In the same vein, Trager (2001) describes language as a system of arbitrary vocal symbols by means of which a social group co-operates. Language however, can be defined as a means of expressing thoughts and ideas between two or more persons. Language has been a major factor for learning in Nigeria. The National Policy of Education (2014), recommended L1 and L2 on the language of instruction for both the lower and upper primary school level. Basically, there are four language skills that are universally recognized by linguist and language educators which include, listening, speaking, writing and reading. These language skills are used by children to analyze words they come across. They are used to process information

and apply knowledge. According to Kolawole (2007), these basic language skills help learners seek information which they need as they make progress in life and school. The skill acquired in reading can enhance acquisition of other language skills.

Reading is an indispensable tool for learning which is one of the basic skills for language development. Reading is an activity that every child engages in from the day the child commences the educational career. Ogbonna (2014) perceives reading as the ability to recognize and understand character or speak words that may be written on paper or other formats of recording. Thus, the ability to read is one of the determiners of pupil's success or failure. Reading is a multifaceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation, Hardy (2017). Throwing more light on reading, Baker (2011) states that reading starts with the use of eye and the memory to recognize shapes, pattern and letters of the alphabet and ends with using past experience and background knowledge to confirm what is read. This confirmation indicates that they read and comprehend what they read. Reading provides the basis for the primary school curriculum and to ensure that children learn to read effectively, they must be taught and teachers must understand the way in which reading skills are learnt.

The importance of reading to primary school child cannot be over emphasized due to the facts that it is a fundamental part of education and a crucial factor in language development in children, leading to a good solid education. For this reason, Dorkchandra, (2010), stresses that reading is an important language skill for those learning English on a second language, for academic success and professional development because reading is the basic for all other area of learning. Obidike (2013) also highlighted the importance of reading when he stated that reading is considerably vital to the attainment of literacy in school. reading involves two basic components. One of such component is reading comprehension. It is one of the key strategies of reading skills that allows learners to make text meaningful.

Reading comprehension is the application of skill that evolves other purposes (listening or oral comprehension) to a new form of input (text). According to Lukman (2022), reading comprehension is not something for which our brains have evolved; it is a level of understanding of a message or text. If one master the skills of understanding the meaning, structure and organization of words, sentences and paragraphs, one will understand whatever that is being read and improve their performance academically. Reading comprehension is the ability to construct meaning through spoken or written communication. Al-

Al-khasawneh (2019) explains that the comprehension of a reading text is shown by a learner's ability to respond correctly to the issues raised in the text in question form. Therefore, it is important that reading is the goal of reading comprehension. The reader must be able to construct meaning and make correction based on what they know and what they are reading. Al-khasawneh stated further that the more knowledge pupils have about topic reading, the more they are able to form connections between what they know and what they have read. Reading and reading comprehension are interrelated skills. For pupil to be able to comprehend what they are reading, they have to develop comprehension skills in reading. However, research has shown that there is still poor academic achievement of pupils in reading comprehension.

Academic achievement is recognized as one of the important goals of education globally. It is a product of number of factors operating within the individual and within which are categorized into intellectual, emotional and environmental. These three factors, according to Spinath (2012), largely determine one's academic achievement. Pupils reading performance can also be relevant in their level of academic achievement. Reading achievement refers to the reader being able to use the skills that are needed to read grade level materials fluently and with understanding Houth, (2014).

Findings of Adeniye (2010) revealed that a longer number of elementary school pupils lack literacy skills especially reading comprehension which they require in their formal and non formal learning situation Adenyi stated also that some of the pupils find it difficult to read and understand, while some of them show carefree attitude to reading. The reason for the persisting poor academic achievement according to Okpara (1995), could be that teachers are using conventional talk or lecture method rather than the strategies that will involve the pupils in active participation. Researchers such as Kolawole, Adepogu and Adelore (2000), identified teachers choice of method as one of the main factors of poor academic achievement of pupils in reading comprehension. Karanje (2015), reports that poor reading often have low-self-esteem which results in their decreasing learning achievement. Also poor reading comprehension can hinder problem solving skills as well because people need to fully understand what they read in order to be competent problem solvers. In the same vein, Widdowson (2015) describes factors that affect reading comprehension which includes the readers' background and prior knowledge, quality of reading materials and types of teachers and text instruction. Therefore there is need to adopt a method that will engage the pupil in active learning and participation and that is games.

It is expedient to note that young children learn by doing things. It will be absolutely difficult for them to remember what they have taught without practical experience to demonstrate the ideas. They may hear but forget, they may see but cannot remember, they may do things but cannot understand. Therefore, there is need for practical demonstration and the essence is to employ games for the teaching of reading comprehension. All learning activities of children involves games, hence, game is used as the central agent and motivating force for all aspect of children's learning. Igboabuchi and Azubuikwe (2006). When teachers and parents use engaging games to give up instruction and practices, children will continue to associate reading with fun instead of hard work. By using educational games, learning speed reading comprehension concept is kept fresh and enticing. For this reason, it will allow children to get repetition they need to learn increasingly. As they explore, they learn abstract comprehension concepts, new topics and techniques that will help them understand difficult texts. Teacher Resources (2019).

However, when reading comprehension is taught with games, it is expected to have different atmosphere in the teaching learning process. Games are expected to provide a better atmosphere and a lot of fun while learning in the classroom.

Brewster et al (2002), proposes advantages of using games in reading comprehension as follows:

- i. Games provide hidden practice of specific language, pattern, vocabulary and pronunciation.
- ii. Games can help to improve attention, span, concentration, memory, listening skills and reading skills.
- iii. Increases communication among students which provides fluency, practice and reduce the domination in the class by teachers.
- iv. It creates fun atmosphere, and reduces the distance between teachers and students.

The above information makes it clear that games makes the learners feel the atmosphere "play while learning". Moreover, they are numerous games that are employed to teach reading comprehension to pupils. Some of these games according to Hartgill (2008). And Elui (2011) includes: card games, word-word matching games, match's box game, lucky draw, word dice etc.

In this study, the researcher will adopt two types of games: fishing games and clock game. These are amazing games to help pupils learn to spell and read words to emphasize, quicker recognition of words and reading comprehension. Hartgill is of the view that children need a lot of games to play with to assist them

with the relevant skills they need in order to succeed in school. Primary Education level is the formation stage of children and as such, it is essential for teachers in primary schools to device adequate strategies to improve learning situation in school. Adekpoju and Adelore (2000), identified teachers' choice of method as one of the main factors of poor academic achievement. Research has also shown that games have been used to teach other subjects such as mathematics, social studies, history among others. Therefore, it is on this premise that the researchers decided to investigate the effect of games on pupil's academic achievement in reading comprehension in Delta North Senatorial District of Delta State.

However, in trying to explore the dynamics in achievement in pupils reading comprehension, gender has been identified as a critical element which might be of great effect in studying the effect of games on pupil's academic achievement in reading comprehension. Pupils characteristics such as gender have also been linked to early measure of language and learning. Gender is the societal meaning assigned to male and female. It is used to describe the behaviour expected of an individual on the basis of being born a male or female (Mbotto & Basseyy, 2004). Research on reading carried out by National Literacy Trust (2012) in United Kingdom detected that at 5 years of age, there is a gap of 11% points between boys and girls achievement in reading. This is attributed to three factors: the home where girls are more likely to be given book gifts; the school where boys think reading is a feminine activity; and the idea that boys prefer more tasking activities to perpetuate gender identity.

Statement of Problem

Reading is an indispensable tool for learning and as such it can only be meaningful if it is understood. Manifestation of reading difficulty start with the inability of the reader to recognize words which is the key to proficiency in reading. It is therefore important that every reading comprehension activity children are introduced to must make sense in print. Children need to understand the relationship between symbols and sounds they represent which is an important step in reading comprehension. Observation by the researcher in the course of school visit that teachers still read for pupils at the upper primary section, and they are still lacking literacy skills especially in reading comprehension. The reason has been attributed to teachers use of ineffective strategies or conventional talks rather than the strategies that will involve them in active participation. Several questions comes in mind considering how children are taught using conventional method, the people will not be able to experiment,

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practicalize, construct and explore considering the fact that the national policy of education stipulated that in primary school, teaching shall be by practical, exploratory and experimental method. However, this traditional method of teaching of reading comprehension to primary school pupils has been an obsolete strategies that lack active participation, motivation and academic achievement in reading comprehension.

Games however may likely to be an effective teaching strategy and have been used in other subjects whereby children participated maximally in the teaching and learning process. Researchers have also shown that pupils who were engage in games were able to improve in their reading abilities as well as comprehension. Therefore, the study sought to empirically investigate if using the game strategy could help improve pupils academic achievement in reading comprehension.

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this study is to critically investigate the effect of games on the academic achievement of pupils in reading comprehension.

Specific and Objectives

Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

1. Influence of using game in teaching reading comprehension among Primary School Pupils in Delta North Senatorial District.
2. Influence of gender on games in reading comprehension among Primary School Pupils in Delta North Senatorial District.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.

1. What is the influence of using game in teaching reading comprehension among Primary School Pupils in Delta North Senatorial District?
2. What is the influence of gender on games in reading comprehension among Primary School Pupils in Delta North Senatorial District?

Literature Review

The review of related literature was done under the conceptual frame work. Major concepts such as Reading, Reading Comprehension, Games, Academic Achievement were discussed. From the review literature, it was shown that reading is an interaction between the reader, the author and the test. It was also shown that reading provides the basis for primary school curriculum and ensures that children learns effectively, must be geared towards the ability of the

child to communicate effectively. The importance of reading improves child's vocabulary and imagination and acts as a sources of information. It was also shown that children who are encourage to read at early age will have better comprehension of things around them. They may develop smart thinking abilities and more receptive to creativity and ideas that other children their age lack. Reading is a goal to reading comprehension. The comprehension of a reading text is shown by a leaner's ability to respond correctly to issues raised in a text. Readers must be able to construct meaning and make connection based on what they know and what they read. However, the review literature shown that with games in the classroom, learning speed reading concept is kept fresh and enticing. This will allow children to get the repetition they need to learn abstract comprehension concepts as they explore new topics and learn techniques that will help them to understand difficult text. Games have been shown to have advantages and effectiveness in reading and learning vocabulary.

The literature on pupils achievement in reading comprehension revealed that achievement of pupils continue to be low and many researchers have pinpointed teachers oblivious of appropriate teaching strategies and teaching materials among others are the reason for pupils poor academic achievement. It also revealed that teachers use of conventional method in teaching reading comprehension in school presently, but low achievement. Researchers stated that the use of reading games strategies has helped to improve children's reading abilities and enhances their academic achievement. Consequently, the study has not be carried out in North Senatorial district of Delta State on the effect of games on pupils' academic achievement in reading comprehension in primary schools. The gap in literature therefore necessitated the interest of the researchers in trying out the reading games strategies on pupils academic achievement in North Senatorial district of Delta State.

Methods

These procedures was adopted in the conduct of the study under the following sub-headings: Research Design, Area of the Study, Population of the Study, Sample and Sampling Techniques, Instrument for data Collection, Validation of instrument, Method of data collection and Method of data analysis. Descriptive survey research design was used for the study, with a population of two thousand, seven hundred and seventy-two (2772) primary two pupils in all the primary schools in Delta North Senatorial District in Delta State. [State Universal Basic Education Board, 2021/2022 (SUBEB)]. The study was conducted using random sampling technique; one primary school was randomly

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selected from each of the nine (9) Local Government Areas in Delta North Senatorial Districts.

In selecting the respondents for the study, class registers for primaries two were collected from the teachers to pick 24 pupils each from the nine schools and the first pupils in the register and every other pupil that follows. On the whole, 216 pupils were used for the study of which 102 was made up of girls and 114 boys from the nine selected schools. Instrument for data collection was structured questionnaire; it was titled “ Impact of Games on Pupils’ Academic Achievement in Reading Comprehension” (**IGPAARC**) by the researchers. The questionnaire was consisted of two sections (A and B). A dealt with the demographic data of the respondents while section B consisted of 16 items of modified likert type of questions for responses on Impact of Games on Pupils’ Academic Achievement in Reading Comprehension in Primary schools in Delta North Senatorial District in Delta State. Content and face validity were used for the instrument validation, the supervisor of this study and two other experts in Childhood Education Unit and Measurement and Evaluation both in University of Nigeria, Nsukka validated, evaluated and ascertain adequacy of the questionnaires in answering the research questions raised for the study . The reliability of the questionnaire was established using the test-retest method and subjected to the use of Person Product Moment Correction, which gave a reliability index of 0.87. The data collected were critically analyzed using frequency count and mean rating scale.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the influence of using game in teaching reading comprehension among Primary School Pupils in Delta North Senatorial District?

Table 1: Mean scores responses on the influence of use of game in teaching reading comprehension among Primary School Pupils.

S/N	Items	S A	A	D	S D	N	MEA N	REMAR K
	Words for fishing games Make simple sentences with these words:							
1.	City	88	96	10	22	216	3.16	Accept
2.	Abuja	96	90	10	20	216	3.21	Accept
3.	Friend	98	84	16	18	216	3.21	Accept
4.	Happiness	88	96	10	22	216	3.16	Accept
5.	Travelled	94	94	12	16	216	3.23	Accept
6.	Park	98	84	16	18	216	3.21	Accept
	Grand Mean						3.20	

The result from table 1 with the grand mean score 2.26, shows there is great positive influence in **using games in teaching pupils reading comprehension in primary School in Delta North Senatorial District?**

Research Question 2: What is the influence of gender on games in reading comprehension among Primary School Pupils in Delta North Senatorial District?

Table 2: Mean scores responses on the influence of gender on games in reading comprehension among Primary School Pupils in Delta North Senatorial District?

S/N	Items	Gender	SA	A	D	S D	N	MEAN	Remark
	Words from a reading passage for the clock games. Filling the missing letters of these words:								
7.	St- -am	Boys/ Girls	135	34	24	23	216	3.30	
8.	Fru- ts	Boys/ Girls	98	84	16	18	216	3.21	Accept
9.	Wo- kers	Boys/ Girls	96	90	10	20	216	3.21	Accept
10.	Fa- -er	Boys/ Girls	88	96	10	22	216	3.16	Accept
11.	H- - vests	Boy/ Girls	98	84	16	18	216	3.21	Accept
	Make simple sentence with these words:								
12	Plant	Boy/ Girls	120	68	12	16	216	3.35	Accept
13	Help	Boy/ Girls	94	94	12	16	216	3.23	Accept
14	Watch	Boy/ Girls	88	96	10	22	216	3.16	Accept
15	Dry	Boy/ Girls	140	66	8	2	216	3.59	Accept
16	Need	Boy/ Girls	98	80	12	26	216	3.27	Accept
	Grand Mean							2.93	

Table 2 with the grand mean score of 2.93 revealed that **Gender has a high influence on the mean achievement scores of pupils exposed to games in reading comprehension.**

Summary of Findings

Based on the research questions that guided the study, the results revealed that:

1. There is great positive influence in **using games in teaching pupils reading comprehension in primary School** in Delta North Senatorial District?
2. Gender has a high influence on the mean achievement scores of pupils exposed to games in reading comprehension.

Discussion of Results

The results emanating from the study showed that the use of games has positive influence in teaching reading comprehension primary schools. The finding of this study is in line with the finding of Harins (1984) which stated that there is need for practical demonstration and the essence is to employ games for the teaching of reading.

An evaluation of the achievement scores of male and female pupils taught reading using games showed that female pupils taught reading using games performed significantly better than the male groups that were exposed to conventional method. This placed games teaching method in the position of central agent and motivating force for all aspects of children's learning. This is in line with earlier assertion of Teoria (2007) that games are indispensable part of teaching materials. This also relates to the findings of Hartgill (2008) that games helps children to develop reading skills that can be used for children demonstrating reading difficulties or disabilities. This implies that games activity is natural to children and as such, all learning activities of children involve games.

Conclusion

Based on the findings and discussions of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. There is great positive influence in **using games in teaching pupils reading comprehension in primary School** in Delta North Senatorial District?
2. Gender has a high influence on the mean achievement scores of pupils exposed to games in reading comprehension.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommend that;

i. Teacher preparation institutions should incorporate games teaching method in the relevant areas of their curriculums units and expose both pre-service and in service teachers to the use of game reading methods to enhance teaching and learning.

ii. Seminars and workshops should be organized at the Local Education Authorities, Education Zones, State and Federal ministry of Education where teachers, curriculum planers and textbook authorities will be taught various ways of using game teaching method.

iii. Writers of textbooks should be encouraged to include in their study guide the relevant game reading skills so as to help children to develop reading skills that can be used for children demonstrating reading difficulties or disabilities.

iv. Male and female pupils should be exposed equally to reading via game reading method since the study revealed that games activity is natural to children and as such, all learning activities of children involve games. This will help to eliminate gender imbalance in the classrooms, because the objective of learning is to help students to learn and acquire knowledge not in favour of male or female.

V. Parents should provide their children with quality childcare, books and toys to encourage children in various learning activities in schools.

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