Parental Involvement and Socio-Economic Status as Determinants of Reading Performance of Children with Mild Intellectual Disability in Ibadan, Oyo State

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Abstract

This study investigated the influence of socio-economic status of parents and parental involvement on the reading performance of children with mild intellectual disability in Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria.The study adopted a descriptive research design of the correlational type. Twenty seven family members and twenty six children with mild intellectual disability as participants were purposively selected. Four research questions were raised and answered at significant level of 0.05. The instruments used were questionnaire and an achievement test to determine the reading ability of children with mild intellectual disability. The questionnaire had a general co-efficient alpha of 0.85 while the achievement test on reading had an alpha value of 0.74. Inferential statistics of Multiple regression was used as a method of data analysis. The findings revealed that there was no significant relationship between parental involvement, socio-economic status and reading performance of children with mild intellectual disability. It is therefore recommended that other variables not considered in this study should be looked into when dealing with reading performance of children with mild intellectual disability in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Introduction

The ability to read is seen as a highly valued behaviour hence, children with mild intellectual disability who are able to read have the capability to contribute positively to society, solve problem, make decision, and be economically useful. Thus, they are able to meet their personal need and that of the society.

The importance of reading in nations' development as pointed by Mefor (2010), cannot be overlooked. Reading is seen as bedrock for future success/achievement in virtually all facets of life (Kliewer and Landis, 1999). Reading skills is one major factor that determines students' achievement academically. Bright and McGregor (1970) describe reading as the "core" of the English syllabus which is largely responsible for students' achievement. They explained further that reading to a large extent is responsible for oral and written expression. It is seen as a pathway to achieving academic success. Reading as one of the literacy skill is seen as a key to accessing knowledge, gaining independence and making choices (Houston and Torgeson, 2004). Reading triggers children imagination, encourages quick learning as well as broadens perception about ideas and expand horizons and helps readers know more about happenings in the environment. Reading plays a very important role in enhancing academic achievement of students. It is a tool for learning other subjects and a yardstick for measuring students' progress academically.

Carson (2001) submits that doors of the world are opened to people who are able to read and thus reading strengthens spelling, vocabulary, comprehension and makes classroom interesting. Looking at the indispensability of reading, children with intellectual disability must not be

relegated but taught how to read. The No Child Left Behind Act of 2002 affirms that the most fundamental job of any nation's education system is to teach children to read which includes children with intellectual disability. Research supports the view that this group of students be taught to read in a manner similar to other students who struggle to learn to read (Allor, Mathes, Roberts, Cheatham and Champlin, 2010).

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1997 amended in 2004 is a federal law which requires all students to have access to general education curriculum. Students' with mild intellectual disabilities must beexposed to reading (Houston and Torgeson, 2004). In addition, No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 expects all students including those with disabilities achieve adequate yearly progress in grade level standards although the progress in meeting these standards may vary, based on alternative assessment (Mathes, Champlin and Cheatham, 2010).

Despite the obvious importance of reading skill, it has become so glaring that children with mild intellectual disability have difficulty decoding printed words which makes reading have little or no meaning to them. Some of these reading difficulty experienced by children with mild intellectual disability can be attributed to parents Socio-Economic Status (SES) (parent educational level, income and profession) and parental involvement. It is generally accepted that parental SES has an impact on students' academic achievement. For example, children whose parents are on high SES have a better chance of participating in formal education (Hasley, Health and Ridge, 1980). Parents' level of education has a multifaceted impact on the ability of children to learn in school. In a study by Goodwin and Goodwin (1995), children whose parents have primary school education or less were more than three times likely to have low test scores or were made to repeat a class than children whose parents' level of education had at least secondary schooling. Omaraka (2001) finds out that parents with little formal education likely not to have the tendency of understanding language used in school which limits their ability to support learning and assisting their children in school related activities. As much as reading is seen as an essential component of success in most academic subjects and functional literacy, it is needed for students with intellectual disabilities to achieve independence. Hence, achieving this, parental SES and involvement must not be relegated to the background(Polloway, Patton, Serna and Bailey, 2013).

Acquisition of reading skill cannot act in isolation, parents' socio-economic status and involvement are essential family factors that could be responsible for reading performance of children especially children with mild intellectual disability. Parents must be ready to help their children with mild intellectual disability by providing effective reading materials for their children at home, they must be ready to do their quota in assisting their children academically and their responsibility must not be left to teachers alone. Additional effort by parents in enhancing reading ability of children with mild intellectual disability can yield greater result and thus help children with mild intellectual disability become independent readers. There is no boundary to parents' participation which indicates the need and importance of parents' active participation in the development of reading skill of children with mild intellectual disability. Bruner (1975) reiterates that parents are the key teachers, socializing agent and caregivers of children.

Teaching children with mild intellectual disability require large amount of repetition for them to make

meaningful progress. Also, making coherent mental representation of information or story in text presented to them is essential in order to enhance comprehension of what is read. Inspite of the emphasis on teaching individuals with mild intellectual disability by National Federation of Teachers, 1999; No Child Left Behind Act 2001, teaching reading to intellectual disabled has been largely ignored because it is assumed that reading skill is beyond the intellectual capabilities of most children with intellectual disability and at best might have been taught to recognize some limited number of words (that is, high frequency words) and as such four to five children with mild to moderate intellectual disability may never achieve minimal level of reading independence. Allor, Mathes, Roberts, Cheatham and Champlin (2010) state that using strategies and techniques that are helpful will provide them with skill necessary for them to understand text and derive meaning from text.

According to Holloway, Yamamoto, Suzuki and Mindwich (2008), a great deal of research in the United States and other Western Countries supports the notion that parental involvement generally has a positive effect on children's achievement in which reading is inclusive. Avvisati, Besbas and Guyon (2010) noted that although parents are aware of the need of their involvement in their child's education and its importance in children achieving educational success, how this involvement may occur is not so clear to many parents. Hence, the following suggestions were made by Govender (2007)on ways in which parents could get involved in their children's education by spending time talking with the child and sharing the child's activities, also they should read with the child in a pleasant atmosphere and emphasis should be on reading for pleasure and the child should be a meaningful contributor in the home by having a reasonable set of work responsibilities.

In order to encourage active parent participation in their children's education, Mathew (2012) recommends training programmes for parents who have limited formal education. Furthermore, he suggests that such programmes should include teaching reading and functional skills which are essential for all-round development of children especially children with intellectual disability. Through this training, learning environment of children is extended from four walls of the school to the home.

Parents play a vital role in training and development of children with intellectual disability. In training of functional skills (in which reading is included) among children with mild intellectual disability, parents help a lot in achieving target goals. Parents are considered as leading mentors for children throughout their life-time because parents can be involved in any part of education and training of their children. Neuman (2011), says when parents are involved in teaching reading to their children with intellectual disability it produces improvement in the child's outcome (Karnes and Taska, 1975).

Baine (1991) suggests the following modes for parents' involvement of their children with intellectual disability; it is necessary for parents to breakdown each activity into small bits/steps, repetition and drill method is frequently used for children with intellectual disability, demonstration of tasks is also important when teaching children with intellectual disability to enhance understanding of concept, learning through games. Games related to reading and functional skill can enhance acquisition of reading skill. The games must not be autonomous which implies that both parents and children are involved in playing the game to make the game interesting and participatory

for the child, through which he/she enhances ability to read. Additionally, parents can also give reinforcement to increase the possibility of desired behaviour.

Another major factor that is responsible for acquisition of reading of children with intellectual disability is socio-economic status of parents. For example, with language/reading the environment provides fewer or no opportunity to use language/reading in cognitively complex ways. Children born into poverty show several language development problem and poor reading ability (Kaiser and Delaney, 1996). Verbal ability and reading achievement appear to be more affected by family income (Duncan and Brook-Gonn, 1997). Special education teachers and psychologists have found poor students brought up in disadvantaged cultures and environments to be deprived of skills needed to succeed (Grossman, 2002).

Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design of a correlational type. The method was chosen because it employs a number of variables. Hence, descriptive research design can be explained as describing, explaining and validating research findings. The study respondents were family members and children with mild intellectual disability in Ibadan, Oyo state.

The sample consisted of 53 respondents drawn from among family members and children with mild intellectual disability in selected schools in Ibadan, Oyo State. Twenty seven respondents were family members while 26 represented children with mild intellectual disability.

Family Influence on reading performance questionnaire was used to gather data. It contained two sections (A and B). Section A sought information on personal data and socio-economic of parents while section B sought information on parental involvement as a determinant of reading performance of children with mild intellectual disability with a test-retest reliability co-efficient of 0.84, (Adapted from the work of Stacey Timkey 2015) . An achievement test on reading was developed to determine the reading ability of pupils with mild intellectual disability which shows test-retest reliability co-efficient of oral reading as 0.74.

Results

Research Question 1:

What is the significant relationship between the independent variable (parents' socio-economic status) and reading performance of children with mild intellectual disability?

Table 1:Relationship between Socio-Economic Status of Parents and Reading Performance of Learners with Mild Intellectual Disability

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	R	P–Value	Remark
Parents' Socio–Economic Status	6.350	1.980	27	0.179	0.449	NS
Reading Performance	26.08	15.352	27			

NS at 0.05 level.

Testing of research question 1 is presented in Table 1 showing relationship between parents' socio-economic status and reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability. The result shows

that there is no significant relationship between the parents' socio – economic status (parent educational attainment, profession, income) and reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability (r = 0.179). The mean of parents' socio – economic status is given as 6.350 and that of reading performance is 26.08, while the standard deviations of the two variables are 1.98 and 15.35 respectively. The implication of the finding is that parents' socio – economic status (parent educational attainment, profession, income) has no significant relationship with reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability.

Research Question 2:
What is the significant relationship between independent variable (parental involvement) and reading performance of children with mild intellectual disability?

Table 2: Relationship between Parental Involvement and Reading Performance of Children with Mild Intellectual Disability

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	R	P–Value	Remark
Parents' Involvement	52.31	4.287	26	0.234	0.261	NS
Reading Performance	26.08	15.352	26			

NS at 0.05 level.

The result of research question 2 is presented in Table 2; it shows the relationship between parental involvement and reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability. The findings shows that there is no significant relationship between parental involvement and reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability (r = 0.234). The mean value of the parental involvement is given as 52.31 while that of reading performance is 26.08. The standard deviation values are 4.287 and 15.352 respectively. The implication of this findings shows that there is no significant relationship between parental involvement and reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability.

Research Question 3:
What is the relative influence of parental socio-economic status and parental involvement on reading performance of children with mild intellectual disability?

Table 3: ANOVA Table Showing the influence of Independent variables (Parental involvement and Parent SES) on the reading performance of children with intellectual disability

Model	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Remark
Regression	356.79	2	178.394			
Residual	4744.41	17	279.083	0.639	0.540	NS
Total	5101.200	19				
R = 0.264 R Square = 0.070 Adjusted R Square = -0.039 Std. Error of the Estimate = 16.706						

The analysis of research question three which tests for the influence of family factors (SES and Parental involvement) on the reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability in Ibadan is shown in Table 3. The analysis of the research question shows that there is no significant influence of family factors on the reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability. (R= 0.264). The coefficient determination (Adjusted R Square = 0.070) shows that 7.0% of the total variation of family factors is accounted for the change in the reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability. The linear combination of the predictor variables were found not to have significant influence on reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability ($F_{(2, 17)}$ =0.639); P > 0.05 which implies that family influence did not significantly influence the reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability.

Research Question 4:
What is the composite influence of parental involvement and SES on reading performance of children with mild intellectual disability?

Table 4: Relative contribution of the Independent variables (Parents Involvement and Socio Economic Status) on Reading Performance of Learners with Mild Intellectual Disability

Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient		Stand. Coefficient	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta Contribution		
Reading Performance	(Constant) Parents Involvement Socio Economic Status	-21.549 .744 1.503	49.040 .895 1.935	 0.194 0.182	- 0.439 0.831 0.777	0.666 0.418 0.448

Table 4 shows the relative contribution of two independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights, viz: Parents involvement (β = 0.194), Socio Economic Status (β = 0.182). The results show that parents involvement and socio economic status of parents were not significant to reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability. This means both parents' involvement and socio economic have no significant influence on reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability in the composite influence

The following values were obtained for each of the independent variables: Parents' involvement P = 0.418; Socio economic status P = 0.448. From the table, both parents involvement and parents socio economic status have no significant influence on reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability.

Discussion

The result shows that there is no significant relationship between the parents' socio-economic status (parent educational attainment, profession, income) and reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability which negates the research finding that indicates that children from low-SES households and communities develop academic skills more slowly, compared

to children from higher SES groups (Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeier and Maczuga, 2009).

The findings show that there is no significant relationship between parental involvement and reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability which implies that learners with mild intellectual disability could improve reading performance with or without the parents involvement because they learn at their own pace. Moreso, they may lack adequate attention expected from their parents.The analysis of the research question shows that there is no significant influence of independent variables on the reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability which negates the findings of Holloway, Yamamoto, Suzuki and Mindwick (2008) whose research in the United States and other Western countries supports the notion that parental involvement generally has a positive effect on children's achievements. Parents who are more involved with their children's schooling become knowledgeable about schooling systems, communicate the importance of education to children, help children learn strategies to enhance their perceptions of competence, control over-achievement outcomes and structure learning experiences that result in the development of skills (Holloway et al. 2008).

Conclusion

The study examined the influence of parental involvement and socio-economic as determinants of reading performance of children with mild intellectual disability in Ibadan, Oyo state. The findings of the study show no significant influence of both parental involvement and socio-economic status on the reading performance of learners with mild intellectual disability. It is therefore concluded that other factors should be put into consideration when dealing with reading performance of children with intellectual disability in Ibadan.

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