Home Literacy Practices and Academic Performance in English Composition Writing Among Public Senior Secondary School Students in Lagos State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated home literacy practices as correlates of academic performance in English composition writing among public senior secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria. Three research questions and one hypothesis guided the study. Descriptive survey and correlational research designs were adopted. The population comprised all public senior secondary two students in Lagos State. Multi-stage sampling technique was used to select 540 students from three educational districts in the state. A composition writing test and a students' questionnaire were used for the data collection which lasted for 30 days. Thereafter, five seasoned English Language international examiners assessed the students' scripts. Students' scores on the test and their responses in the questionnaires were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Results revealed that ***there was a negative and very weak non-significant relationship between students' levels of exposure to home literacy practices and their academic performance in English composition writing. Hence, it was recommended that p****ublic senior secondary school students in Lagos State should embrace only the relevant home literacy practices that can positively influence their academic performance in English composition writing and frequently make appropriate use of them to improve their English composition writing skills.*

Keywords**:** Home literacy practices, academic performance, English composition writing

Introduction

Literacy is fundamental to human development. It is a basic human right that is non-negotiable to all, people with extensive needs notwithstanding. Globally, the concept of literacy has garnered significant attention, particularly as the world evolves into a global village. According to UNESCO (2018), literacy is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate and compute, using printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. To International Literacy Association (2018), literacy development is essential, gradual and lifelong processes through which individuals acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to understand, interpret and use written language effectively to communicate, think and learn. **National Center for Family Literacy** (2023) opines that meaningful literacy experiences within the home support the children/students in the development of writing and critical thinking abilities.

A home is the physical structure where a family or individuals reside. It provides shelter and a space for various daily activities like cooking, eating, sleeping, and social interactions. Psychologically, home is a place of comfort, belonging, and emotional security where one finds solace, support and a sense of identity, often intertwined with family bonds and cultural roots (Selvan, 2023).). As a significant agent of literacy development in Nigeria, the home play an indispensable role in children's cognitive, linguistic and learning/literacy skill development. It is the primary environment where early literacy practices are nurtured which provides the foundation for children's educational journey. The home environment includes parental involvement, materials available at home, and these are very important as many researchers seem to agree that pupils are more successful when their parents are involved in helping them read and write (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017). The parents-children interactions expose children to language and narrative structures (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017). The home environment provides the earliest important knowledge and skills for the development of writing skills, and subsequent exposures to more literacy facilities and practices could empower the children to further develop their literacy abilities, especially where the environment is supportive of the abilities. Examples of such home literacy practices according to Abdulrahaman, et. al., (2020) include the use of videos, animations, podcasts, websites, magazines, games, reading of books, watching of television shows/movies, engaging with interactive video contents and other media sources.

Arrow and Finch (2013) examined the home literacy practices in early childhood (4- to 5-year-olds) in New Zealand to ascertain whether families follow patterns of literacy practices consistent with those found in the literature. The findings showed that among other home literacy activities the students engaged in were TV watching, use of DVD or video player, playing computer games, playing video games on a mobile device, reading, being read to, writing or sketching, playing with indoor toys, and engaging in outdoor activities. The result revealed that they participated in a variety of activities and used a variety of devices from different families in a variety of situations,

including ambient, cooperative and independent ones.

Lieberman, Bates and So (2009) investigated young children's learning with literacy practices and found that the children were exposed to computer-delivered and online activities; console video games; handheld media, occasionally with GPS or an accelerometer, in cell phones and other wireless mobile devices; electronic toys and learning systems; dolls and robots; physically active games using dance pads, sports equipment, or stationary bikes as the interface to the game; and online communities and social networks; among others. The researchers also observed that many of the popular commercially available digital media products for young children were never studied or tested to provide definitive evidence of their benefits or drawbacks. The researchers made recommendations for further studies to investigate the usage and effectiveness of some young children's digital media and other home literacy practice in order to improve the design of future media products intended for the same age group. Neumann and Herodotou (2020) identified YouTube as one of the popular multimedia literacy platforms used by young children, but with reservations concerning the inappropriate video content and limited quality.

Huber, Highfield and Kaufman (2018) carried out a study that made Australian parents report on their young children's home literacy practices. Parents reported their child's technology ownership, engagement with traditional and new media, joint media engagement, as well as children's preferences and quantity of media use. Four hundred and five families with children from one to eight years were purposively selected for the study. Of all the media activities outlined, the study revealed that majority of the children practiced television watching and book reading- electronic and paper-based reading notwithstanding. Others included playing with touchscreen/digital toy boxes, and different varieties of apps.

According to **Arrow and Finch** (2013), socioeconomic disparities can have great influence on the availability and quality of home literacy resources. He emphasized that not all students have unequal access to home literacy resources including digital devices and internet access, and this creates a digital divide that affects academic performance. Foster et al., (2005) cited in Amosun & Ogunyebi, 2022) also maintained that home literacy environments vary between cultural contexts, and from one family to another. The authors emphasized that upon entry into the school, children from different home environments possess significantly different knowledge about language and print, and that the differences often translated into subsequent differences in their reading and writing abilities. To establish the relationship between home literacy practices and academic performance, Amosun and Ogunyebi (2022) looked at the home environment as a correlate of the growth of elementary school students' reading skills in Ibadan Metropolis using correlational survey design. A set of questionnaires were used to collect the opinion of 120 grade-three students used for the study. Pearson product movement correlation coefficients was used to analyse the data. Among other things, the results indicated a strong positive correlation between students' reading abilities and their home environment. Conversely, while home multimedia literacy can be beneficial, it can also lead to digital distractions and overuse which impact negatively on academic performance. According to Satrial, et. al. (2016), excessive use of entertainment media, social networks, and gaming at home can divert students' attention from their studies. Consequently, users, including students, must exercise discretion in managing both their time and the content they consume, particularly when it comes to online gaming (Yu et al., 2021).

Presently in Nigeria, English Language is one of the core subjects offered in senior secondary schools in Nigeria. Unfortunately, many students' academic performance in the subject have been very discouraging for years, especially in the aspect of writing (WAEC, 2020). According to WAEC (2020), candidates' achievement in English Language Paper Two in WASSCE is a product of their abilities in English composition writing, comprehension and summary. While writing composition attracts 50marks, comprehension and summary attract 20 and 30 marks respectively. Invariably, a student who performs poorly in English composition writing may likely perform poorly in the entire subject. As Chinyere (2013) averred, some writers may be more skilled than others: some may find writing easier and more satisfying depending on their exposure to some literacy practices. To certify a student competent or literate in English composition, the student's expertise in all the assessment variables: content, organization, expression and mechanical accuracy, must be considered (WAEC, 2020).

To ascertain why some candidates perform poorly in English composition writing in their externally standardised tests, Bakare and Obi (2021) investigated candidates' academic achievement in English Language from 2009 to 2020 and found that candidates' English composition scripts were bedevilled with many weaknesses, including

ignorance of the basic rules of English grammar; wrong use of punctuation marks, poor spelling; wrong amalgamation; indiscriminate insertion/ omission of punctuation marks; indiscriminate use of capital letters; use of text message abbreviations among others. The researchers revealed that these weaknesses were because of poor syllabus coverage, students' negative attitude to English Language especially English composition writing, non-provision of teaching and learning materials, and English Language phobia, among others.

WAEC (2012) also attributed candidates' poor performance in English composition writing to their ill preparation by teachers and parents. This obviously affirms the fact that parents have a critical role to play to enhance their children's academic performance in English composition writing. To mitigate the observed poor academic performance, Okebukola, et al. (2015) recommended that students should be exposed to other modern literacy practices including e-learning since a good number of them are addicted to social media interactions. Since students constantly visit social media platforms, it might be helpful to embed the teaching and learning of difficult concepts like writing into these multimedia literacy platforms to ensure that they are taught where their minds are. This presupposes that the adoption of the different literacy practices in the teaching and learning of English composition writing might have influence on students' academic performance. This study therefore sought to identify the home literacy practices among public senior secondary schools students in Lagos State, Nigeria, their levels of exposure to such practices and establish the relationship between the students' levels of exposure and their academic performance in English composition writing.

Statement of the Problem

English Language is a very important subject for every student in Nigerian schools. Despite its importance, many students' performance in the subject has been very discouraging, especially because of their deficiencies in English composition writing. Previous studies were largely on intervention using innovative strategies to improve students' performance in English continuous writing, with little attention paid to home literacy practices that could influence academic performance in general. This study therefore identified the home literacy practices among public senior secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria, and the extent to which the students' levels of exposure to these practices reflected on their academic performance in English composition writing.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were to:

(1) Identify the home literacy practices among students in Lagos State, Nigeria.
(2) Determine students' levels of exposure to home literacy practices.
(3) Ascertain students' academic performance in English composition writing.
(4) Ascertain the relationship between students' levels of exposure to home literacy practices and their academic performance in English composition writing.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

(1) What are the home literacy practices among public senior secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria?
(2) What are the academic performances of students in English composition writing?

Hypothesis

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

There is no significant relationship between Lagos State public senior secondary school students' levels of exposure to home literacy practices and their academic performance in English composition writing.

Methodology

The study employed the correlational research designs.

Population of the study comprised all the 87,991 senior secondary two (SS2) students from the 326 public senior secondary schools in Lagos State. Tara Yamane sample size estimation method was used to select 540 students for the study. The multi-stage sampling technique was adopted. Firstly, the 87,991 SS2 students in public senior secondary schools in Lagos State was already clustered into six educational districts (Districts 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6). From the six clustered educational districts, three (3) educational districts were purposively selected for proximity reasons. From each of the three educational districts selected, three publicly owned senior secondary schools were randomly selected. Thereafter, 60 SS2 students were randomly selected from each school. The instruments used were Composition Writing Test which is a standardized test and Students' Questionnaire on Home Literacy Practices (r=0.89).

After administration, descriptive statistics (frequency counts, percentages, mean and standard deviation) were deployed to analyse the research

questions, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used for the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: What are the home literacy practices among English Language public senior secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria?

The home literacy practices among English Language public senior secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

S/N	Home literacy practices
	Use of:
1	Mobile phones
2	Marker board
3	Radio
4	Pictures/images
5	Magazines
6	Newspapers
7	Tape-recording cassettes
8	Projector
9	Computers
10	E-mail
11	Online videos
12	Interactive games
13	Blogs
14	Social networks
15	Instagram
16	WhatsApp
17	Internet
18	Textbooks
19	Television
20	Facebook
21	Twitter
22	YouTube

Home literacy practices among English Language public senior secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria

Table 1 indicates that English Language public senior secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria generally were involved in 22 home literacy practices. The result revealed that the respondents were exposed to the use of mobile phones, marker board, radio, pictures/images, magazines, newspapers, tape-recording cassettes, projector, computers, e-mail, online videos, interactive games, blogs, social networks, instagram, whatsapp, internet, textbooks and television, among others. This implies that the respondents were exposed to many literacy practices at home. This corroborates the findings of **Arrow and Finch** (2013) that among the literacy practices the students engaged in at home were watching of TV, using video players, playing computer games, reading textbooks and being read to, and playing video games on mobile devices. In the same vein, Huber, Highfield and Kaufman (2018) revealed that Australian parents reported that majority of their children live transforming home literacy practices included television watching, book reading (electronic and paper-based), and playing with touchscreen mobile devices with varieties of apps. Also, after investigating young children's learning with literacy practices wikis at home, Lieberman, Bates and So (2009) identified computer-delivered and online activities; use of videos; cell phones and other wireless mobile devices; games; online communities and social networks among others as some of their children's live transforming literacy practices at home.

Research Question 2: What are the students' levels of exposure to home multimedia literacy practices?

Lagos State English Language public senior secondary school students' levels of exposure to the identified home literacy practices were categorised into "never"', "rarely", "sometime", "often" and "very often", and are presented in Table 2.

Table 2
Respondents' levels of exposure to home literacy practices

Statement	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Very Often	Mean	Standard Deviation
mobile phones as literary tool at home	42 (8.8)	38 (8.0)	83 (17.5)	79 (16.6)	233 (49.1)	3.8905	1.33147
marker board as literary tool at home	146 (30.8)	74 (15.6)	91 (19.2)	69 (14.6)	94 (19.8)	2.7700	1.50961
radio as literary tool in schools	107 (22.6)	67 (14.1)	108 (22.8)	81 (17.1)	111 (23.4)	3.0464	1.46775
pictures/images as literary tool in sch	48 (10.1)	48 (10.1)	115 (24.1)	85 (17.8)	181 (37.9)	3.6352	1.34143
magazines as literary tool in schools	134 (28.5)	85 (18.0)	112 (23.8)	68 (14.4)	72 (15.3)	2.7006	1.41029
newspapers as literary tool in sch	144 (30.1)	79 (16.5)	119 (24.8)	54 (11.3)	83 (17.3)	2.6931	1.44341
tape recording as literary tool in sch	246 (51.9)	81 (17.1)	72 (15.2)	44 (9.3)	31 (6.5)	2.0148	1.27829
projector as literary tool in schools	278 (57.9)	60 (12.5)	56 (11.7)	39 (8.1)	47 (9.8)	1.9938	1.38059
computers as literary tool in schools	162 (33.9)	58 (12.1)	100 (20.9)	65 (13.6)	93 (19.5)	2.7259	1.52347
emails as ol in schools	104 (21.9)	65 (13.7)	99 (20.8)	91 (19.2)	116 (24.4)	3.1053	1.47464
online videos as literary tool in sch	71 (14.9)	49 (10.3)	131 (27.5)	101 (21.2)	125 (26.2)	3.3354	1.35994
interact games as literary tool in sch	78 (16.6)	54 (11.5)	137 (29.1)	89 (18.9)	112 (23.8)	3.2191	1.37013
blogs as literary tool in schools	232 (49.5)	76 (16.2)	75 (16.0)	42 (9.0)	44 (9.4)	2.1258	1.35840
social networks as literary tool in sch	99 (20.9)	62 (13.1)	96 (20.3)	91 (19.2)	125 (26.4)	3.1712	1.48090
instagram as literary tool in schools	161 (34.0)	66 (14.0)	57 (12.1)	66 (14.0)	123 (26.0)	2.8393	1.63113
whatsapp as literary tool in schools	**49 (10.3)**	**36 (7.6)**	**81 (17.1)**	**92 (19.4)**	**217 (45.7)**	**3.8253**	1.35361
internet as literary tool in schools	**49 (10.4)**	**28 (5.9)**	**75 (15.9)**	**102 (21.6)**	**218 (46.2)**	**3.8729**	1.33416
textbooks as iterary tool in schools	**20 (4.2)**	**16 (3.4)**	**60 (12.6)**	**119 (25.1)**	**260 (54.7)**	4.2274	1.06680
television as literary tool in schools	**47 (9.9)**	**49 (10.3)**	**85 (17.9)**	**93 (19.6)**	**201 (42.3)**	3.7411	1.35724
facebook as literary tool in schools	98 (20.7)	57 (12.0)	78 (16.5)	78 (16.5)	163 (34.4)	3.3186	1.54625
twitter as literary tool in schools	208 (44.3)	63 (13.4)	49 (10.4)	44 (9.4)	106 (22.6)	2.5255	1.63725
YouTube as literary tool in sch	**74 (15.9)**	**53 (11.4)**	**84 (18.0)**	**76 (16.3)**	**179 (38.4)**	**3.5000**	**1.48433**
Average Mean						3.103509	1.415504

Note: Figures in brackets are in percentages.

Table 2 shows that the students' levels of exposure to the various home literacy practices varied from the lowest level/level one (never) to the highest level/level five (very often). The Table reveals that 233 (49.1%), 79 (16.6%), and 83 (17.5%) of the students were exposed to the use of mobile phones as a home literacy practice with levels of exposure at very often, often and sometimes respectively. Just a few, 42 (8.8%) of the students were at the second level of exposure because they rarely made use of mobile phone as one of their home literacy practices. Quite a negligible number of the students, 42 (8.8%) had the lowest level of exposure to the use of mobile phones as a literacy practice because they had never made use of it. Also, a good number, 181 (37.9%), 85 (17.8%), and 115 (24.1%) of the students were at the exposure levels of very often, often and sometimes respectively, taking cognisance of the use of pictures and images for literacy purposes at home. Only 48 (10.1%) of the respondents indicated that they had never had such literacy exposure at home. Invariably, though at different levels, not less than 89.9% of respondents were exposed to use of pictures and images at home for literacy reasons.

Similarly, Table 2 clearly reveals the following students' different levels of exposure to home literacy practices: 125 (26.2%) and 112 (23.8%) for very often, 101 (21.2%) and 89 (18.9%) for often, 131 (27.5%) and 137 (29.1%) for sometimes, 49 (10.3%) and 54(11.5%) for rarely, as well as 71 (14.9%) and 78 (16.6%) for never, in terms of the use of online videos and interactive games respectively. Considering WhatsApp, internet, textbooks, television, Facebook and YouTube, reasonable numbers of students were more exposed to the practices at the very often, often, and sometimes levels, than at the levels of rarely and never (the students' lowest level of exposure to the home literacy practices). From Table 2, 260 (54.7%); 233 (49.1%); 218 (46.2%); 217 (45.7%); and 201 (42.3%) of the respondents indicated that they were engaged in the use of textbooks, mobile phones, internet, WhatsApp and television respectively, very often (the highest level of exposure). Generally, among all the home literacy practices itemised on Table 2, the highest number of students made use of textbooks at home for literacy purposes at the highest level of exposure (very often). This was not surprising because it is expected of every child, especially within the school age to not only have textbooks, especially on the subjects they are offering in school, but also read them even when at home for better understanding of the subjects, and their environment, among others.

Table 2 further indicates the mean and standard deviation scores of the students' levels of exposure to the identified home literacy practices. The table shows that the students had a commendably high level of exposure to 13 practices, with mean values not less than 3.0, out of the 22 home literacy practices. The 13 practices with mean values not less than 3.0 included use of textbooks (4.2274 and 1.067), mobile phone (3.89 and 1.331); internet (3.87 and 1.334); WhatsApp (3.83 and 1.354); television (3.74 and 1.357); pictures/images (3.64 and 1.341); youtube (3.50 and 1.484); online videos (3.34 and 1.360); facebook (3.32 and 1.546); interactive games (3.22 and 1.370); social networks (3.17 and 1.481); emails (3.11 and 1.475); and radio (3.05 and 1.468), in terms of the mean and standard deviation scores respectively.

These findings corroborate Neumann and Herodotou (2020) who identified YouTube as one of the popular literacy platforms often used by young children at home. Also, Huber, Highfield and Kaufman (2018), after investigating Australian children's home digital/multimedia live transformations, established that of all the media activities outlined, majority of the children often practiced television watching, book reading, playing with touchscreen media and different varieties of apps. In line with these findings, Arrow and Finch (2013) research showed that among the home literacy practices the students engaged in were watching TV, using DVD or video player, playing computer games, playing video games on a mobile device, reading and being read to, and that there was variation in the average daily time spent at home on each of the practices. This time variation is likely to be responsible for the variations in Lagos State English Language public senior secondary school students' levels of exposure to the home literacy practices. This also was emphasised by Foster et al., (2005) cited in Amosun and Ogunyebi, 2022) that home literacy environments vary between contexts, and from one family to another. Hence, children from different home environments possess different abilities and levels exposures to home literacy practices.

It could also be inferred from Table 2 that some students who were highly (very often) disposed to the use of some of the practices like mobile phone, textbooks, and television, among others, might not have had good level of exposure to a reasonable number of the other practices many students were exposed to very often. This finding was in line with that of Arrow and Finch (2013) who established earlier that not all students had equal access to home literacy resources, and this of course might create disparities on their levels of exposure to each of the identifies home literacy practices. Hence, to ascertain the students' level of exposure to home

literacy practices, it becomes ideal to consider the aggregates of such students' levels of exposure to all the home literacy practices they were exposed to. With the grand mean score of 3.104 and standard deviation of 1.416, it means that the students had good level of exposure to the identified practices. This implies that generally on the average, Lagos State English Language public senior secondary school students had reasonable level of exposure to the identified home literacy practices.

Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between Lagos State public senior secondary school students' levels of exposure to home literacy practices and their academic performance in English composition writing.

To test the hypothesis, Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation Analysis was conducted between Lagos State public senior secondary school students' levels of exposure to home literacy practices and their academic performance in English composition writing. The students' responses to each of the home literacy practices were computed, and subsequently used as a single variable to correlate their academic performance in English composition writing. The result is presented in Table 5.

Table 3
Relationship between Lagos State public senior secondary school students' levels of exposure to home literacy practices and their academic performance in English composition writing

		Home literacy practices	Academic performance
Home literacy practices	Pearson correlation	1	-.082
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.122
	N	358	358
Academic performance	Pearson correlation	-.082	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.122	
	N	358	489

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 5 shows that there was a negative and very weak non-significant relationship between Lagos State public senior secondary school students' levels of exposure to home literacy practices and their academic performance in English composition writing (r = -.082, $P > 0.05$). Therefore, the hypothesis was not rejected. This implies that Lagos State public senior secondary school students' levels of exposure to home literacy practices had little or nothing to do with their academic performance in English composition writing. The students' levels of exposure to home literacy practices did not positively influence their academic performance in English composition writing. Invariably, as the students' level of exposure to home literacy practices increased, their academic performance in English composition writing decreased.

The finding corroborates Satrial, et. al, (2023) who stressed that excessive home literacy practices including use of social media, and online gaming divert students' attention from their studies and cause them to perform poorly academically. In other words, while home literacy practices can be beneficial, they can also lead to digital distractions and overuse which impact negatively on academic performance. It is therefore very pertinent that children, especially Lagos State public senior secondary school students be properly and sufficiently guided on the usage and usefulness of their home literacy practices to ensure optimal effect and improved academic performance, especially in English composition writing.

Conclusion

The study assessed the home literacy practices among public senior secondary schools in Lagos State, ascertained the students' levels of exposure to the identified practices, and the correlation between such levels of exposure and the students' academic performance in English composition writing. The study established that Lagos State public senior secondary school students were exposed to numerous home literacy practices with different levels of exposure to each of the practices. On the average, the students had reasonable level of exposure to home literacy practices. However, their numerous exposures to all the practices did not correlate with their academic performances in English composition writing as majority of them performed woefully in the test.

These indeed exposed further that public senior secondary schools in Lagos State need to pay serious attention to the teaching and learning of English composition writing in their schools for a better change in their students' academic performance in English Language which is presently the medium of instruction and assessment in Nigeria, especially at the senior secondary education level. It is also pertinent that parents and teachers guide their wards/students on how to effectively and efficiently make proper use of the numerous home literacy practices for English composition writing learning purposes. Without proper monitoring and adequate mentorship, such practices may end up being serious distractions to the students, instead of influencing their academic performance positively.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

(1) Parents/guardians and teachers should observe their children/wards' levels of exposure to their home literacy practices that could enhance their proficiency in English composition writing and be more intentional in engaging them with such practices more frequently with serious monitoring to avoid unnecessary distractions.

(2) Public senior secondary school students in Lagos State should embrace only the relevant home literacy practices that can positively influence their academic performance in English composition writing and frequently make appropriate use of them to improve their English composition writing skills.

(3) Teachers and parents/guardians of public senior secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria should pay special attention to their children/wards whose academic performances in English composition writing seem too poor and engage them with frequent exercises with prompt feedback on their performance.

(4) Parents of public senior secondary school students in Lagos State, Nigeria who are qualified but have never participated in the coordination and marking exercise for WASSCE or NECO should endeavour to do so to be abreast of the English composition writing assessment variables and provide the appropriate guide for their children.

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