

Comparative study of the reading habit of day and boarding secondary school students in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, Nigeria (To be published in Researcher - research)

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Abstract: The study was carried out in some secondary schools in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja Nigeria. The secondary schools were chosen from Abuja Municipal, Bwari, Gwagwalada and Kuje Area Councils using multi random sampling method, 8 of the schools were day school while the other 8 were boarding schools. A total number of 144 questionnaires were administered to 72 boarding students and 72 day students. Among many information collected were personal characteristics of the students, assessment of students reading habit and the influence of students' reading habit on their academic performance. Results and discussion were presented using frequency counts, percentages, Pearson correlation analysis and T-test were used to test the hypothesis. The study indicated that almost equal percentages SS I, II and III students in all the secondary schools were selected and they were mostly between the ages of 15-17 years. More of the boarding students read regularly because they have scheduled time for reading in their curriculum, they sometimes use and borrow library books. Day students read occasionally especially during examination as they were more involved in non-academic social chores. In their academic performances, more boarders were above average than the day students. However, t-test analysis showed that there was no significant difference between the academic performances of day and boarding students in secondary schools in Abuja, Nigeria. Most of the students affirmed that reading has positive influence on their academic performance. Environmental influence, parental and teachers influence, peer pressure and school curriculum were some of the factors militating against better reading habits. Parents and teachers alike are encouraged to train the mind of their wards/students towards reading and reduce their home and school chores.

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Key words: Academic performance, boarding, day students, reading habits, academic performance

1. Introduction

Every literate person is expected to develop the rudiments of reading and the culture of reading always so as to add quality to life (Holte, 1998). Collins and Cheek (1999) describe reading as a process that requires the use of complex thought processes to interpret printed symbols as meaningful units and comprehend them as a thought unit in order to understand a printed message. It is an exercise which involves the organs of sight and the thinking faculty, working together to interpret a printed message so as to understand it. Reading and general literary skills keep one informed and current about happenings in different fields and careers and thus are strongly related to economic success and educational achievement (Laitsch, 2005). Douglas (2000) asserted that every child must become fully competent in reading to succeed in school and discharge responsibilities as a citizen of a democratic society; he further reported that reading is a means of attaining educational and professional excellence. Without reading a student or a learner cannot make meaningful progress in his or her academic pursuit. In the same vein, a teacher cannot be effective in his or her career without reading. Okebukola (2004) affirms that, through reading,

humans have the tools to transmit knowledge to each succeeding generation. In our society today, many factors combine to erode the culture of reading in the lives of both adults and young people. This study therefore compared the reading habits and the academic performance of day and boarding secondary students in the Federal Capital Territory of Nigeria, Abuja. Therefore the objectives of the study are to:

- describe the personal characteristics of day and boarding students
- assess the reading habit of day and boarding students
- examine factors affecting the reading habit of the respondents
- compare the academic performance of day and boarding students

Hypothesis (Ho)

There is no significant difference between the academic performance of day and boarding students in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria

2. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Structured questionnaire tagged 'Comparative study of the reading habit of day and boarding secondary school

students in the FCT, Abuja, Nigeria’ was used to collect information from the respondent students. The questionnaire were in two parts, first part required the students to supply their personal characteristics while the other section comprised of open and closed questions. Four teachers (one from each school) were also interviewed.

2.1 Population and Sample

The study was carried out in some secondary schools in the FCT, Abuja Nigeria. The secondary schools were chosen from Abuja Municipal, Bwari, Gwagwalada and Kuje Area Councils using multi-random sampling method, 8 of the schools were day school while the other 8 were boarding schools. A total number of 144 questionnaires were administered to 72 boarding students and 72 day students. All the 144 questionnaires distributed to the respondents were recovered.

2.2 Administrative Procedure

All the respondent students were administered the questionnaires in their various schools. The questionnaires were distributed with the help of the teachers of the participants. The students were assured that their responses were to be treated as confidential.

2.3 Data Analysis

The data collected from the survey were analyzed and result presented using frequency counts and percentages. Pearson correlation analysis and T-test were used to test the hypothesis one.

Pearson correlation coefficient (r) formula is given as:

$$r = \frac{n\sum X - \sum X\sum Y}{\sqrt{n\sum x^2 - (x^2)}\sqrt{n\sum Y^2 - (Y^2)}}$$

Where

X = Academic performance of secondary day students

Y= Academic performance of secondary boarding students

n= number of respondents

∑=Summation sign

T-test was also used to test the significant of r

With formula

$$t_c = r \frac{\sqrt{(n-2)x^2}}{\sqrt{1-r}}$$

Where

R= correlation between the variables

N=number of respondents

t_c = t-calculated

3. Results and Discussion

In Table 1, it was indicated that less number of SS III students in day school responded to the questionnaire whereas SS II had the highest percentage. In the boarding school equal percentage of SS II and III students responded to the questionnaire. There were higher percentage of SS I day students than from boarding school but this was *vice versa* for SS III students. The highest percentage of respondents from both the day and boarding students were between 15-17 years old, while the oldest was 21 years old, day student. Majority of the respondents were science-based while the least was commercial based. Based on the subject offered, Science based boarding students had the overall highest percentage of 66.67%.

Table1: Percentage distribution of the students by their personal characteristics

Variable	Day students		Boarding students	
	No.	%	No.	%
Class				
SS 1	24	33.33	22	30.55
SS 2	25	34.72	25	34.72
SS 3	23	31.95	25	34.72
Total	72	100	72	100
Age				
12-14	21	29.17	22	30.56
15-17	39	54.16	40	55.55
18-20	11	15.28	10	13.89
21 and above	1	1.39	0	0
Total	72	100	72	100
Subject offered				
Science	45	62.50	48	66.67
Art	18	25.0	18	25.0
Commercial	9	12.5	6	8.33
Total	72	100	72	100

Source: Field Survey, 2014

In Table 2, it was shown that higher percentage of boarding school students (68.89%) read in the school library regularly than their correspondent day students (59.88%). Reading habits is a culture that must be developed early through a well-planned library collection. Up to 60.78 % of the day students indicated that they read regularly at home after normal school hours and during the holidays. About 89.97% of the boarding students agreed that they read after school hours during their preparatory classes and even in their hostels. Only 53.25% of the day school students claimed they read regularly after school hours.

Larger percentage of the day school students (48.33%) made use of the library only when they have assignment and about 25.75% of them said they read their class notes only. It was further shown that 83.50% of the boarders read other books apart from their class notebooks. Most of the day (86.25%) and boarding students (96.66%) read library books in addition to their class notes. More of the day school students indicated that they read novel to improve their spoken and written English while the less percentage of the boarders read others books other than novel to improve their English language. In his own opinion, Otong

(2002) affirmed that lack of adequate library materials hinders the reading habit of student and that the most pathetic part is that even teachers that are to be role model to student have limited ideas about how to develop good reading habits. Only 2.23% of the boarders do not read their books except during examination periods, while larger percentage of 13.40% of the day school students read only during the examination. About 2.10% of the boarding students agreed that they do not read at all but only depend on class teaching while up to 4.33% of the day students fall into this category. Small percentage of the day school students (9.33%) said that they were usually occupied with house chores and this often detracted them from regular reading of their books. Three of the teachers were interviewed stressed that there was dwindling reading habits in secondary schools especially in day school students. They attributed the drop in reading habit of the children to too many distractions in the society; ranging from various types of electronic gadgets in homes to lack of proper attention by parents and teachers. They opined that reading should be formally introduced in the school curriculum.

Table 2: Assessment of the reading habit of day and boarding students in Abuja Nigeria

Reading Habit	Day		Boarding	
	No	%	No	%
I read in the school library regularly	70	59.88	72	68.89
I read at home regularly	72	60.78	-	-
I read after school hours	71	53.25	72	89.97
I made use of the school library to do my assignment only	72	48.33	72	40.00
I read my class note only	69	25.75	70	16.50
I read my class note and library books	72	86.25	72	96.66
I read novel to improve my English language	71	56.50	71	50.60
I read during examination only	72	13.40	72	2.23
I don't read at all but depend on class teaching	69	4.33	72	2.10
I am too busy with house chores to read	72	9.33	-	-

Concerning the reading periods of the respondents, high percentage of the boarding students (64.45%) indicated they read their books at scheduled time daily; this was 10.00% higher than that of the day students (Table 2). Lower percentage of the boarding students indicated that they read any time daily (18.

83%) or read every day (33.33%). None of the boarding students read once a week and even among the day students, only 6.69% read only once a week and 5.00% rarely read. Very close percentage of the day or boarding students claimed they read when occasion demands i.e. 20.00 and 21.11% respectively.

Table 3: Reading profile of day and boarding students in Abuja Nigeria

Reading period	Day		Boarding	
	No	%	No	%
At schedule time daily	70	44.45	72	64.45
Any time daily	72	60.84	71	18.83
Every other day	72	49.94	72	33.33
Twice a week	71	39.89	72	2.33
Once a week	72	6.69	71	0.0
When occasion demands	70	20.00	72	21.11
Rarely	72	34.33	72	5.00

Table 4: The academic performance of day and boarding students in Abuja Nigeria

Variable		Day		Boarding	
		No	%	No	%
Academic performance					
Excellent	1	1.01	4	5.14	
Above average	8	10.78	11	15.88	
Average	44	31.19	34	46.64	
Below average	14	39.67	13	17.67	
Very poor	10	14.6	5	77.35	
Total	72	100	72	100	
Influence of reading on academic performance of students					
Positive	60	85.71	68	94.44	
Negative		-	-	-	
No influence	6	8.12	3	4.18	
I don't know	4	5.03	-	-	
No response	2	3.04	1	1.38	
Total	72	100	72	100	

The students' academic performance was rated and assessed for a session. It was observed that 67.66% of the boarders were above average while about 42.98% of the day students fell into this category. While 14.6% of the day students performed very poor academically, only half of this percentage among the boarders fell into this category. About 85.71% of the day school students acknowledged the fact that reading had a positive impact on their academic performance; larger percentage of the respondent boarders (94.44%) shared similar conviction. It was only 8.12% of the day student that indicated that reading have no effect on their academic performance while about 3.04% said that they do not know whether reading influences their academic performance or not.

More boarders than their day students counterparts believed that environmental factors affect their reading habit (Table 5). In contemporary Nigeria, there are so many factors influencing the ability to cultivate the skill of reading. Ozmerit *et al.*, (2005) emphasized the importance of environmental influence

as a major factor in the development of students' reading potentials. The environment of most children is not conducive for reading; it is in the light of this that some prefer their children to go to boarding school for proper discipline and to inculcate better reading habit (Greany, 1986). About equal percentage of the boarders and the day students (53.33%) indicated that parental influence affect their reading habit. Parents should nurture the habit of reading in their children by introducing them to reading early in life. When this is done, it will be difficult to break such a habit. Larger percentage of the boarding students believed that peer group pressure, school curriculum, teachers and library facilities influence their reading habit. Anderson and Pearson (1984) affirmed that apart from sitting down to read regularly, student still need a role model that is very competent, effective and efficient in the teaching of reading. Mefor (2010) urged all Nigerians schools to launch a readership promotion campaign which will help to inculcate the culture of reading in children.

Table 5: Factors affecting the reading habit of the respondents

Factors Affecting the Reading Habit	Day		Boarding	
	No	%	No	%
Environmental factors	72	73.33	72	76.67
Parental influence	71	53.33	71	53.33
Peer group pressure	72	66.50	72	73.33
School curriculum	72	56.10	70	66.67
Teachers influence	72	36.67	72	58.81
Library facilities	69	36.67	72	63.33
Other(s) (specify)				
No response	72	32.48	72	12.35

Table 6: Other requested information from the respondents

	Day		Boarding	
	No	%	No	%
Do you belong to a reading club in the school or elsewhere	72	39.66	42	36.71
I have relevant textbooks in my subjects				
i. All	35	48.61	61	84.72
ii. More than half	7	9.72	12	27.77
iii. Less than half	3	4.17	15	20.83
iv. None at all	0	-	10	13.89
Total	72		72	
The type of book I like to read most is				
i. textbook	71	30.2	72	56.6
ii. notebook	70	57.10	69	61.40
iii. magazine/novel	72	46.30	70	31.30
iv. e-book	69	14.50	70	49.50
The use of electronic gadgets/media disturb my reading	68	41.30	71	70.10
My school authority motivate successful and excellent readers	72	52.47	70	70.10
What is the number of hours I devote in playing games, watching television, chatting with friends and listening to music per week?	70	13.30 h	71	5.30 h

Source: Field Survey, 2014

More day school students than the boarders (2.95% higher) were found to belong to a reading club in their school or elsewhere (Table 6). This might be due to the fact that there were more arts students in day schools in the FCT, Abuja. Up to 84.72% of the boarders claimed that they have all their relevant textbooks. This was 36.11% higher than that of day students. Also 34.72% of the day students had less than half of the relevant textbooks in their subjects whereas it was only 4.17% of the boarding students that fell into this category. More boarding schools students read their notes and textbooks more than the day students. Up to 49.50% of the boarders used to read e-book but revealed that bit was more of social network and not directly relevant to their academic work. Fayose (1978) hinted that the value of book as a medium of learning in terms of understanding depends on reading skills employed in the use of the books. However, the continuous increase in the prices of textbooks had led most parents to find it difficult to purchase the relevant textbooks for their children and wards. DVD/ DVC plates are sold at very minimal prizes hence most young ones easily go for them for their leisure time

Only 14.50% of day students were e-book complaint. Lower percentage of the day school students than the boarders believed that the use of electronic gadgets media disturb their reading habit. Igbokwe and Obidike (2012) reported that parents and school authority should set out time for their wards or students

for watching television, playing video games and chatting with friends and also surfing the internet so as to avoid distraction from the electronic media). While the day school students devote larger number of hours (an average of 13.30 h/week) to playing games, watching television, chatting with friends and listening to music, boarding school students devoted only 7.30 h for such purposes. Kaufaman (2007) opined that watching home video have negative influence on student reading habit. Students with poor reading ability may experience poor grades at schools, get easily distracted and frustrated, have behavioral problems, seems to dislike school, and often fail to develop to their full potential (Rubin 2002).

Table 7 showed the results of the correlation coefficient which is 0.9620 (Table 7a). This indicated that there was highly significant correlation between the academic performance of day and boarding students. The t-test calculated is 0.668 and it is less than t-tabulated (1.96) at 5% level of significance. The decision here is that null hypothesis (H_0) is accepted and the alternative H_1 is rejected. This means that there was no significant difference between the academic performances of day (secondary) school students and boarding students in Secondary schools in Abuja, Nigeria. This was not at par with the assertion of Adetunji and Oladele (2007) who carried out a similar study among the students in Osogbo, Osun State, Nigeria.

		day	boarding
Day	Pearson Correlation	1	.962**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	144	144
Boarding	Pearson Correlation	.962**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	144	144
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).			

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
										Lower	Upper
Day and boarding	Equal variances assumed	5.409	.020	.668	286	.505	2.27668	3.41007	-4.42546	8.97882	
	Equal variances not assumed			.668	286.405	.505	2.27668	3.41007	-4.42561	8.97898	

4.0 Conclusion

This research revealed that secondary school boarding students spend more time especially after the normal school hours to read, they also perform better in their academics. Therefore, in order to improve the reading skill and the education performance of secondary school students in general, it is important that the parents, teachers, librarians and government should be fully involved.

The following recommendations should therefore be noted:

- School teachers should teach students the art of reading and how to use the library. Co-operative bodies and institutions should organize reading competitions with attractive rewards for successful competitors, and relevant media houses should feature such programmes.
- Parents/guardian should reduce their house chores of their wards in order to create time for reading and they should develop interest in reading to motivate their children to read and also present gifts of books to them.
- Reading period should be included in the students' time table
- School libraries should be furnished with adequate relevant and current reading resources.
- Parents/guardian of day students should have scheduled time for their reading in order to live an explanatory life.

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