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TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE CAUSES AND MANAGEMENT OF READING DIFFICULTIES AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN KABO LOCAL GOVERNMENT OF KANO STATE

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Abstract

This study investigates teachers' perceptions of the causes and management of reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government Area of Kano State descriptive survey design was used, with 260 teachers selected using simple random sampling. Two questionnaires were designed: the Questionnaire for Teachers' Perception of the Causes of Reading Difficulties (QTPCRD) and the Questionnaire for Teachers' Perception on how to Manage Reading Difficulties (QTPMRD). The validations of the two Questionnaires were carried out by the lecturers from the department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Faculty of Education, Kwara State University. The reliability of QTPCRD and QTPMRD were established by using test-retest method and the coefficients were 0.74 and 0.78 respectively. However, the study, revealed that, lack of child's interest, professional teachers, reading materials and absenteeism were the major causes of reading difficulty. Furthermore, frequent reading , identifying the sound of the letters and words before pronunciation, encouraging independent reading to the child, and teaching pupils different types of grammar were the major ways of managing reading difficulties among primary schools pupils. However, the study revealed that There was no significant difference in the perception of teachers of the causes of reading difficulties among primary school pupils based on school type ($t = .526$; $df = 258$; $p > 0.05$). And also revealed that There was no significant difference in the perception of teachers on how to manage reading difficulties among primary school pupils based on School type ($t = -1.171$; $df = 258$; $p > 0.05$). the study conclusively shows that lack of child's interest, professional teachers, reading materials and absenteeism by the child were the causes of reading difficulties. However, frequent reading to the child and identifying the sound of the letters and words before pronunciation were the ways of managing reading difficulties. Some recommendations were made: Teachers should use different methods to develop and retain pupil's interest in order to avoid reading difficulty among primary schools' pupil.

Keywords: Teachers, Perception, Reading; Causes, Management,

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INTRODUCTION

Education it is the art of formal training that is given in schools and institutions resulting into One's ability read, writes and calculate, While the National Policy on Education (2013) describes primary education as: '"the education giving to children aged 6 – 12 years".

However, primary education could simply be referred as the first level of education where formal teaching and learning takes place. Most of the time children at this level are facing different challenges on how to blend letters to construct words. Reading difficulties refers to the condition in which a child shows difficulty when reading.Although, reading is one aspect of language skills that is learned in primary schools with the aim that pupils understand the meaning contained in the reading well and correctly. So if pupils are unable to identify or understand the meaning of words from objects mentioned by others it means they are facing reading difficulties. The form of difficulty learning to read which has the most dominant tendency faced by all most pupils in primary schools this will lead to the low learning outcomes in other subjects. However, to avoid such and others the study investigated teachers' perceptions of the causes and management of reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government Area of Kano State.

According to Sardor, Oyshajon. And Rushana, (2020) reading difficulty is a deficit in processes relating to decoding phonetic knowledge, word recognition and comprehension. However, Plesssis, (2023) stated that, Children with reading difficulties also hampered in learning. One of the most signs of reading difficulties is reversals, children with this problem often confuse letters like b and d, either when reading or writing for example sometimes read or write words like “rat” for “tar” , “won” for “now”. Another sign is elision that is when a child sometimes reads or writes “cat” when the word is actually “cart” among others. Moreover, Adanna (2017) stated that dyslexia is a reading disorder characterized by trouble with reading irrespective of normal intelligence. Major observable features of dyslexia may include difficulties in spelling words, reading quickly, writing words, pronouncing words when reading aloud and understanding what one reads. These difficulties are involuntary and children with these disorders have a normal desire to learn. Furthermore, reading difficulties can be referred to as letter omission, insertion of extra letters, substitution of similar looking words or sounds and the use of improper inflection during reading by the child. However, Raheem, Tahir, Ullah and Arshad, (2021) submitted that reading difficulties can be referred as lack of understanding of what is being read due to the length and complexity of sentences, too many unfamiliar words, organization of the material, complexity of idiomatic expressions, and difficulty of the concepts presented by the author (National Teachers Institute and National Open University of Nigeria 2016). Therefore, reading difficulties refers to the situation or condition in which a child displays difficulty in reading.

There are many Causes of Reading Difficulties; some of them include these:

i. Conventional Learning Process.In some schools, language learning is still carried out using conventional approaches and strategies preventing pupils from learning actively and creatively because teachers dominate,
ii. The teaching materials used by the teacher in learning to read come from textbooks used by the school
iii. Vocalizationthe pupils habit that is reading aloud apart from affecting reading speed and comprehension this habit will also irritate other pupils
iv. Lip movement somepupils moved their lips while reading. this habit will also affect comprehension and reading speed
v. Head movement when reading, many children also move along word for word in the reading material so that the head regularly moves from left to right, then returns to the left, and so on, this habit will hamper reading speed because head movement is far less than eye movement and
vi. Regression (backwards) they often do repetition while reading, for example, reading a sentence or paragraph, and then being unsure of its content or feeling that you don't understand it, then the reader returns and repeats the sentence or paragraph, so a lot of time is wasted, some pupils do not focus on and lack concentration, so they do regression or backward repetition. This habit will undoubtedly affect reading comprehension among others(Prihatin,Permata, Kholifatu andAsy'ari, 2020).

However, the causes Reading Difficultiesinvolves:lack of interest by the children' in reading, poor background knowledge and inability to comprehend the text's contents (Kusumarasdyati, 2007).Furthermore, Rivera and Aggabao (2020) stated that the causes of reading difficulties includes, inadequate teaching and learning materials, high teacher pupil ratio and others, poor phonological recoding or decoding. Additionally, the causes of reading difficulties are: lack of English language development in learners, lack of English reading materials, insufficient word recognition strategy and lack of comprehension skills, inadequate English reading materials, improper teaching methodology and insufficient English language development (Mule, 2012).

The solutions to be offered to manage reading difficulties are to set specific time by the teacher to speak to the child, teacher to find out how child is progressing in reading, the teacher should ask what group child belong to and how

the child is compared with others in class(Plesssis, 2023). Also, another ways to be offered for this problematic problem are: to provide children with an understanding of good reading techniques, the government, universities, and schools should work together to hold basic training on matters related to computers and the internet to overcome technology failure so that teachers can access various information from the internet such as accessing news videos which can be used as teaching material in learning to read, the teacher, as a motivator, must motivate pupils so that they become interested and motivated to take part in learning, prepare conducive classroom environment. Reading requires focus and concentration; of course, environmental conditions must be designed as well as possible to focus on learning (Prihatin, Permata, Kholifatu, andAsy'ari,2020). Additionally, the schools should make resources available to buy supplementary reading materials for use by learners and that teachers encourage learners to borrow books from libraries to practice reading independently(Mule, 2012).

However, to manage reading difficulties among primary schools' pupils in all schools should have sufficient reading materials to cater for the reading needs of the learners, the school should continuously provide the necessary teaching materials, such as newly updated books and supplementary reading books, continuous training for teachers should be encouraged to enhance their knowledge and skills in both oral and reading to make them effective teachers on whom learners can model, teachers should be motivated to improve their English through coming out with and engaging in initiatives such as the English Language Proficiency Programs, teachers should encourage independent reading by learners, teachers should set up a library in an area of the classroom to which learners frequently have accesses during the class time. They should display as many books as possible with visible illustrations that attract learners‟ attention It is also advisable for schools to involve parents in their endeavor to teach learners to read in English(Shumba andGada, 2018)

Mule (2012) investigated the causes of reading difficulties affecting reading English among Grade four (4) learners in the Ogongo circuit in Namibia. The results revealed that 69.6% were unable to read the texts beyond the frustration level, and only 30.4% at the instruction level. Furthermore, Shumba and Gada(2018) carried out research on the causes of reading difficulties in rural primary school pupilsin Bondamakara Cluster in Mutoko District U.S.A. The findings revealed that, inadequate English reading materials, improper teaching methodology and insufficient English language development were causes of reading difficulties in Bondamakara cluster. Lack of English language development was a result of insufficient teacher- learner interactions during the English lessons. The results from the tests indicated that decoding, phonemic awareness; word recognition skills and comprehension might impede reading proficiency in Grade six and although a section of learners proved to have the abilities to read fluently they could not answer satisfactorily the questions based on the text read. The result revealed that 35.71% were unable to read the pseudo words beyond the frustration level, and only31.43% at the instructional level.

Subsequently, Rivera, and. Aggabao, (2020) conducted research on reading difficulties of grade 5 pupils in English in Isabela State University, Cabagan, Isabela, Philippines. The findings of the study pointed out that grade 5 pupil had difficulties on word recognition and reading comprehension. They tend to mispronounce English words and their behaviouraffects their performance while reading.However,Prihatin, Permata, Kholifatu, andAsy'ari, (2020) Made research on Reading Skills Problems and Their Solutions in Egypt. The results of the research, it was found that several problems faced when learning to read were (a) conventional learning processes, (b)technology failure and media availability experienced by teachers, and (c) improper reading techniques. All the above studies failed to carry out a research on causes and management of reading difficulties among primary school pupils. In the locale in which this study is being conducted. Based on this existing gap the study examined Teachers' Perception of the Causes and Management of reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State.

The school types focused by the researcher in this study were public and private schools and therefore used as moderating variable. Mule (2012) has indicated reading difficulties among primary school pupils based on school type. As a result, the region attempted to ensure the development of reading proficiency among primary-phase learners. This study, however, focused on identifying the causes of reading difficulties in order to suggest an intervention strategy.

However, researchers such as Lerner (2000), and Dickinson and Neuman (2006) maintain that children who are exposed to books in their early years learn to read more easily in private schools than in public schools. His finding indicated that children with reading difficulties in private primary schools were significantly lower, unlike in public primary schools, where the number was higher. This might be attributed to the number of pupils per class, the availability of textbooks, and qualified teachers. Shumba and Gada (2018) submitted that language teachers detect the learners' reading problems at an earlier stage in private schools than in public schools. This may be done in order to avoid other life problems associated with reading difficulty that can deter children from academic progress. Reading problems also need to be detected in time before they become a hindrance to the reading development of primary school pupils. As a result,

differences in reading difficulties among primary pupils based on school type will be examined when to further confirm what has been done by previous researchers.

Statement of the Problem

Reading is one of the aspects of language skills that is learned in primary schools which help the primary school pupils to identify the meaning contained in the reading accurately. However, if pupils are unable to pronounce and comprehend the meaning of words contained in the reading correctly may end up with low academic performance which will affect their development in the later time. Empirical evidences on reading difficulty have been documented in all over the world including the area of the study, Rivera and. Aggabao, (2020) also observed that at least one in five children has significant difficulty learning to read.. Hence the need to carry out study on Teachers' Perception of the Causes and Management of reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. What are the Causes of Reading Difficulties among Primary School Pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State?
2. What are the Ways of Managing Reading Difficulties among Primary School Pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State?

Research Hypotheses

The Following Hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

Ho1: there is no Significant Difference in the Perception of Teachers of the Causes of Reading Difficulties among Primary School Pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State based on School Type.

Ho2: there is no Significant Difference in the Perception of Teachers on how to Manage Reading Difficulties among Primary School Pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State based on School Type.

Methodology

The researcher used a descriptive survey design for the study. The population focused on by the researcher in this study was 855 Teachers in Kabo Local Government of Kano State (Kabo L.G.E.A 2023).A research advisor was used to determine sample size and a sample size of 260 was recommended and sampled. Simple Random sampling was used to select teachers that participated in the study. The two instruments designed for this study were: Questionnaire for Teachers' Perception of the Causes of Reading Difficulties among Primary School Pupils (QTPCRD) and the Questionnaire for Teachers' Perception on how to Manage Reading Difficulties among Primary School Pupils (QTPMRD). Both the questionnaires were self-designed and they were divided into (Section A and B). Section A contained personal information of the respondents school type). Section (B) contained a set of close-ended items based on four parts and structured on a four-point Likert scale. Keys Strongly Agree (SA) = 4; Agree (A) = 3; Disagree (D) = 2; and Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1. The validations of the two Questionnaires were carried out by the lecturers from the department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Faculty of Education, Kwara State University. The reliability of QTPCRD and QTPMRD were established by using the test-retest method and the coefficients were 0.74 and 0.78 respectively. The coefficients were determined with the use of Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). The data collected for the study were analyzed using descriptive mean and inferential statistics (t-test). Mean statistics were used in the analysis of the research questions while t-test was used in testing the null hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Research Question One: What are the causes of reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State?

Table 1: Table showing the causes of reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Child's Socio-Economic Background	10(3.8)	10(3.8)	116(44.6)	124(47.7)	1.64
2	Physical Abnormalities of the Child	15(5.8)	13(5.0)	112(43.1)	120(46.2)	1.70
3	Mental Imbalance	20(7.7)	24(9.2)	105(40.4)	111(42.7)	1.82
4	Psychological Imbalance	8(3.1)	55(21.2)	92(35.4)	105(40.4)	1.87
5	Lack of Interest of the Child	208(80.0)	40(15.4)	6(2.3)	6(2.3)	3.73
6	Lack of Professional Teachers	188(72.3)	44(16.9)	4(1.5)	24(9.2)	3.52
7	Inadequate Reading materials	194(74.6)	57(21.9)	3(1.2)	6(2.3)	3.69
8	Lack of parental care	15(5.8)	18(6.9)	120(46.2)	107(41.2)	1.77
9	Absenteeism by the child	195(75.0)	46(17.7)	10(3.8)	9(3.5)	3.64
10	Late Coming by the child	11(4.2)	19(7.3)	118(45.4)	112(43.1)	1.73
11	Lack of organizing pupils in different ways during the lessons	8(3.1)	18(6.9)	110(42.3)	124(47.7)	1.65

Decision Rule: Not a cause (1.00 – 2.49) **A cause (2.50 – 4.00)**

Table 1 shows the causes of reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State. The respondents agreed that the following were the causes of reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State: Lack of Interest of the Child (Mean = 3.73), Lack of Professional Teachers (Mean = 3.52), Inadequate Reading materials (Mean = 3.69) and Absenteeism by the child (Mean = 3.64).

Research Question Two: What are the ways of managing reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State?

Table 2: Table showing the ways of managing reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State.

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	Mean
1	Frequent reading to the child	201(77.3)	45(17.3)	8(3.1)	6(2.3)	3.70
2	Teaching Children Sound of the Letters Appropriately	8(3.1)	7(2.7)	111(42.7)	134(51.5)	1.57
3	Identifying the sound of the letters before spelling	182(70.0)	52(20.0)	5(1.9)	21(8.1)	3.52
4	Identifying the sound of the words before pronunciation	163(62.7)	52(20.0)	22(8.5)	23(8.8)	3.37
5	Using Sufficient Reading Materials	8(3.1)	10(3.8)	114(43.8)	128(49.2)	1.61

6	Organizing Frequent workshops to the Teachers	14(5.4)	11(4.2)	122(46.9)	113(43.5)	1.72
7	Teachers encourage independent Reading by pupils	181(69.6)	46(17.7)	22(8.5)	11(4.2)	3.53
8	Organizing Libraries in an area of the classrooms	10(3.8)	9(3.5)	116(44.6)	125(48.1)	1.63
9	Arranging the Class into different groups	20(7.7)	16(6.2)	113(43.5)	111(42.7)	1.79
10	Teaching pupils different types of grammar	179(68.8)	57(21.9)	8(3.1)	16(6.2)	3.53
11	Encouraging Pupils to do Activities to Understand passage through Questions, Plays or Drawing Pictures	10(3.8)	11(4.2)	115(44.2)	124(47.7)	1.64

Decision Rule: Not a way (1.00 – 2.49) **A way (2.50 – 4.00)**

Table 2 shows the ways of managing reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State. The respondents agreed that the following were the ways of managing reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State: Frequent reading to the child (Mean = 3.70); Identifying the sound of the letters before spelling (Mean = 3.52), Identifying the sound of the words before pronunciation (Mean = 3.37), Teachers encourage independent Reading by pupils (Mean = 3.53), Teaching pupils different types of grammar (Mean = 3.53).

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers of the causes of reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State based on school type.

Table 3: Table showing difference in the perception of teachers of the causes of reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State based on school type.

School type	**N**	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**T**	**Df**	**Sig**	**Remark**
Private	69	26.97	5.64				
Public	191	26.61	5.29	.526	258	.599	Not Significant

Table 3 shows the difference in the perception of teachers of the causes of reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State based on school type. There was no significant difference in the perception of teachers of the causes of reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State based on school type ($t = .526$; $df = 258$; $p > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value (.599) is greater than 0.05.

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers on how to manage reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State based on School type.

Table 4: Table showing the difference in the perception of teachers on how to manage reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State based on School type.

School type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Df	Sig	Remark
Private	69	32.12	6.90				
Public	191	33.12	6.80	-1.171	258	.242	Not Significant

Table 4 shows the difference in the perception of teachers on how to manage reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State based on School Type. There was no significant difference in the perception of teachers on how to manage reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State based on School type ($t = -1.171$; $df = 258$; $p > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value (.242) is greater than 0.05.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that the following were the causes of reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State: Lack of Interest of the Child, Lack of Professional Teachers, Inadequate Reading materials and Absenteeism by the child. This finding is in line with finding of Kusumarasdyati (2007) who indicated that lack of interest by the children' in reading is one of the causes of reading difficulties, furthermore, the study agreed with the finding of Rivera and Aggabao,(2020) who Stated that the causes of reading difficulties includes, inadequate teaching and learning materials, high teacher pupil ratio. However, the study is in line with finding of Mule, (2012) who agreed that improper teaching methodology and insufficient English language development of the teachers are the causes of reading difficulties. Also, the respondents agreed that the following were the ways of managing reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State: Frequent reading to the child, identifying the sound of the letters before spelling, identifying the sound of the words before pronunciation, teachers encourage independent reading by pupils and teaching pupils different types of grammar. However, this finding is in line with finding of Shumba, and Gada,(2018) who pointed out that, to manage reading difficulties among primary schools' pupils all teachers should encourage independent reading by learners, continuous training for teachers should be encouraged to enhance their knowledge and skills in both oral and reading to make them effective teachers on whom learners can model, Additionally, the schools should make resources available to buy supplementary reading materials for use by learners and that teachers encourage learners to borrow books from libraries to practice reading independently (Mule, 2012).

Moreover, the study revealed that, there was no significant difference in the perception of teachers of the causes of reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State based on school type and therefore, there was no significant difference in the perception of teachers on how to manage reading difficulties among primary school pupils in Kabo Local Government of Kano State based on School type. However, both the hypotheses were therefore not rejected.

Conclusion

The research investigated the Teachers' Perception of the Causes and Management of Reading Difficulties among Primary School Pupils. The finding of the study conclusively shows that lack of interest of the child, lack of professional teachers, inadequate reading materials and absenteeism by the child were the major causes of reading difficulties among primary schools in Kabo Local Government of Kano State. However, the study conclusively, revealed that frequent reading to the child, identifying the sound of the letters before spelling, identifying the sound of the words before pronunciation, teachers encourage independent reading by pupils and teaching pupils different types of grammar were the major ways of managing reading difficulties among primary pupils schools in Kabo Local Government of Kano State.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made:

1. Teachers should use different methods to develop and retain pupil's interest in order to avoid reading difficulty among primary schools' pupils
2. Teachers should provide adequate reading materials for pupils with reading difficulty
3. Government should employ professional teachers and organize training and retraining of teachers on how to handle pupils with reading difficulties

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