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## RE: LETTER OF ACCEPTANCE

I am pleased to inform you that your article titled: **Influence of Socioeconomic and Demographic Factors on Reading Attitude of Primary School Pupils in Ibadan, Nigeria**, has been reviewed by our reviewers and accepted to be published in Nigerian Libraries vol. 47 no.2 (Dec 2014).

Congratulations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matthew Idowu Ajibero', is written over a horizontal line.

Prof. Matthew Idowu Ajibero

Editor-in-Chief

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**Influence of Socioeconomic and Demographic Factors on Reading Attitude of  
Primary School Pupils in Ibadan, Nigeria**

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## **Abstract:**

The article examined the influence of socioeconomic and demographic factors on reading attitude of primary school pupils in Ibadan North East Local government, Nigeria. The study is a descriptive survey design of post-positivism research paradigm. The population of the study consists of primary five pupils in seventy seven public primary schools and nineteen private schools. The sample size included two hundred and twenty students from one private and one public school chosen in each of the four zones in Ibadan North East Local government using simple random technique. Religion, area of residence and possession of a room at home was significant in influencing reading attitude of primary school pupils in the study while type of school, gender, and age range do not have effect on their reading.

## **Introduction**

Reading is a fundamental tool that pupils need to further their academic success and inculcate good behaviours. Good reading attitude is crucial to young children's academic achievement during their school years. Problems encountered in literacy sometimes have a devastating effect on children's academic motivation and achievement. However, children who did not grow up in a literacy-rich environment need a significant event like a book-gifting event, an interesting book, stimulating or fascinating trip to the library to influence their having the right attitude towards reading (Clark and De Zoysa, 2011). Attitudes towards reading have been defined as students' feelings about reading, which result in approaching or avoiding reading tasks. Attitudes are acquired through learning and can be changed through persuasion using variety of techniques. Attitudes, once established help to shape the experiences the individual has with object, subject or person. Although attitude changes gradually, people constantly form new attitudes and modify old ones when they are exposed to new information and new experiences (Akinbobola, 2006). Attitudes are related to the general experience of reading like enjoyment in reading with family in reading certain formats. In most cases, generalised attitude could make reading a boring exercise. These attitudes, whilst significant, are most influenced by another set of attitudes that relate to confidence and perceived ability as a reader (Clark and De Zoysa, 2011).

A child that reads regularly is bound to have a multi-dimensional personality (Montoya, 2011). Such child would stand apart as an intellectual from the average student on the basis of

knowledge accumulated and developed as a result of reading. The benefits of book reading include sharpening of children's thought and enhancing long attention span. A child who has developed the art of book reading is more likely to think and understand nuances of life. Book reading has academic importance because the child will have better vocabulary and speech apart from improved memory aspect. The child will also be more imaginative and vivid in life and more likely to have stronger bonds with his parents (Snow, 1998).

Reading attitude fulfills a pivotal role in the development and use of lifelong reading skills. Kush, Watkins and Brookhart (2005) concluded that the student's attitude toward reading is a central factor affecting reading performance. Several researchers (Kazelskis, Thames, and Reeves, 2004; Krashen, Lee and McQuillan, 2010) have postulated that attitudes affect children's motivation and subsequent reading achievement by increasing or decreasing the amount of time that they engage in reading. This study investigated the influence of socioeconomic and demographic factors on reading attitude of primary school students in Ibadan, Oyo state Nigeria.

### **Review of Literature**

Reading is one of the basic things a child does in the early stages of formal education, while some children learn to read before they start schooling, others would learn it at school. It is through reading that children broaden their understanding of life because reading opens up a whole new world from which children see themselves and others. Reading enables creativity to blossom in the child and it gives them the tools to explore their talent while learning about themselves and their societies. However, the attitude of children plays a significant part in the explanation of their performance to reading. Onwubiko (2010) in his finding reported that many students developed negative attitudes to learning, probably due to the fact that teachers are unable to satisfy their aspiration or goals and this could also translate to reading. Literature like that of Clark and De Zoysa's (2011) study are of the opinion that demographic and socio-economic factors have a great influence on reading habit, especially in reading effectively in official language because mother tongue and cultural background do have influence on reading efficiency. The home print environment influences reading attitudes of young children even when income, parental education, language used at home, and other aspects of the home environment were controlled (Baker, Scher & Mackler, 1997; Baker & Scher, 2002). According to Oyewusi (2012), no child, especially in developing countries, can afford to purchase all books

he/she requires throughout his school years. This necessitates the need for providing library resources so that such child is not placed at the disadvantage of using high quality books for lack of funds. Apart from the home, access to books from sources outside the home is also an issue as well as access to libraries. The studies like that of Krashen, Lee and McQuillen (2010) suggested that access to books in school libraries can also mitigate the effects of low socio economic factors. In other words, reading activity at home has significant positive influence on students' reading achievement and attitudes towards reading (Rowe, 1991). Teachers may not be able to encourage reading among the students due to non-availability of reading materials.

Age plays a significant role on academic performance as younger students tend to perform better than their older counterparts and this may also affect reading (Lee, Brooks-Gunn, and Schnur, 1988). Socioeconomic factors such as family income level, parents' level of education, race and gender also influences the quality of education which has a great influence on reading ability of school children (Kristin, 2011). Socio-economic factors refers to a person's overall social position to which attainment in both social and economic domain contribute, this entails occupation and income, educational attainment/level and family structure/size. Studies have shown that children from low Socio-Economic Status (SES) families are likely to have difficulties with their studies, lower levels of literacy and display negative attitudes to school (Lawani, 2004). According to Rattu (2012), students self profile, parents' occupational status and education, family support and the place of residence have greater effect on the student's performance. In other words, childrens' educational success depends very strongly on the socio-economic status of their parents. Parent's financial status influences a number of factors that can either help or hinder a child in developing good reading attitude. Kristin (2011) observed that wealthy families with financial resources would send their child to high-quality schools, hire tutors and obtain supplemental education sources. However, students from low-income families may not be able to attend a high quality school and probably develop a negative attitude to reading. To ensure that students develop good reading attitude and habit, it is imperative that influence of these factors on pupil's performance be sort and kept on check. Families advantaged socially, educationally and economically foster high level of achievement in their children and may as well provide psychological support for their children through environment that encourage the development of skills necessary for success at school (Baker, Scher and Mackler, 1997; Baker and Scher, 2002).

Further, parents' attitude toward reading and home literacy environments cuts across cultures. For example, in the Western culture like U.S and Europe, personal autonomy and self-reliance are valued by children (Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier, 2002). This attitude is obvious through parents who encourage children to pursue their own goals and make their own choices (Chai, 1996). Also, in traditional Chinese culture, parents' influence are different because children are viewed as interdependent and children's conformity to the expectations of their parents and teachers is most valued. In the African context, parents are expected to make most decisions for their children for example decisions on choice of job, course of study and whom to marry are often influenced by the choice made by parents.

In Nigeria, public schools where the cost of education is minimal if not almost free are owned by the government and they are typically attended by children from low economic background and these schools are poorly funded by the government. There are no reading or library periods on most Nigerian school time table. Children are only taught about reading skills during the English language classes. In addition, private schools in Nigeria are owned by individual and NGOs and fees are either highly or moderately charged from parents. Preliminary investigations have revealed that some private schools in Nigeria include activities such as library/reading lessons, excursion, swimming and music activities into their school periods. There is a wide gap between children who attend privately owned schools with children who attend government established schools. Personal observations have also shown a difference especially in spoken English between children from illiterate parents who are resident in low income areas and residents in highbrow areas. This study will therefore investigate demographic and socio-economic factors that may influence reading attitude among primary school pupils in Nigeria.

### **Objectives of the study**

The specific objectives of the study are to

- 1 Identify attitudes that affect reading of primary school pupils in Ibadan North East Local Government Oyo State.
- 2 Investigate the demographic factors that influences reading attitude among primary school pupils Ibadan North East Local Government Oyo State.

3. Examine the influence of socio-economic factors on the reading attitude among primary school pupils Ibadan North East Local Government Oyo State. .
4. Examine the factors affecting the attitude of primary school pupils towards reading Ibadan North East Local Government Oyo State.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are the attitudes that affect reading among primary school children in Ibadan North East Local Government Oyo State?
2. To what extent does demographic factors influence reading attitude among primary school pupils in Ibadan North East Local Government, Oyo State?
3. What are the socio-economic factors that influence reading attitudes among primary school pupils in Ibadan North East Local Government, Oyo State?
4. What are the preferred reading materials of primary school pupils in Ibadan North East Local Government Oyo State?

### **Methodology**

The study is a descriptive survey design of post-positivism research paradigm, a post-positivist research is based on the assumption that the method to be applied in a particular study should be selected based on the research question being addressed (Wildemuth, 1993). The population of this study includes both public and private primary schools in Ibadan North East Local Government (INELG) Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The inhabitants of the local government are predominantly Yoruba, although it is highly heterogeneous with people from Nigeria's diverse ethnic backgrounds who are either in the private or public service or engage in commercial activities (Ibadan North East Local Government Bulletin, 2013). The population of the study consists of primary five pupils in the seventy seven public primary schools and nineteen private schools in the council area. The council is the largest in Oyo state, and reputed for been among those with the largest numbers of student enrollment in Nigeria (INELG, 2013).

The INELG was divided into four zones: South, West, North and East in order to have a representation of all the zones in the local government for this study. The sample of one private

and one public school was chosen in each of the zones using simple random technique through balloting procedure. This included four public and private primary schools. The total enumeration procedure was adopted in the administration of the questionnaire to primary five pupils in the schools. Primary five pupils were selected for the study because most private primary schools do not have primary six classes.

The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire named "Influence of demographic and socio-economic factors on reading attitude of primary school children" (IDSFRA). The questionnaire included both close and open ended questions. The questionnaire was divided into four (4) sections and these sections included fifteen questions. Section A solicited information on the demographic of the respondents, Section B solicited information on their socio-economic information and Section C included questions on reading attitude of the respondents.

The data collected was analyzed using both descriptive statistics which included frequency counts, percentages, means and standard deviations while the inferential statistics is multiple regression.

## **Results and Discussions**

### **Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

A total of two hundred and twenty copies of the questionnaire were administered in to primary five pupils in the eight primary schools and a total of 207 questionnaires were returned by the pupils and analysed for this study. This indicated a response rate of 94% the schools.

The data collected revealed 51.7% respondents were from public schools while 48.3% were from private schools. This indicates that appreciable number of parents take their child(ren) to public schools more than private schools. This could be because the area under study is occupied by low income earners and the public schools owned by the government operate free education where the children do not pay school fees. The demographic profile of the respondents revealed that there were 85 (41.1%) male and 122 (58.9%) female who participated in the study. The result revealed that 34 (11.6%) respondents were between 7-9 years old, 139 (67.1%) respondents were 10-12 years old and 44 (21.3%) respondents were 13 years old and above. In



addition, 101 (48.8%) respondents were Christians, 101 (48.8%) Muslims, while 5 (2.4%) belong to other religious affiliations. A total number of 176 (85%) respondents were from families of more than four members while 31 (15%) were from families less than four members, this showed that majority of the children were from fairly large family. According to Chase (2011), religious affiliation plays a role in the education of children, they could hinder education and reading in children. Reading attitudes may also be influenced by home and family size of a child either positively or negatively. Studies have also shown that personal autonomy and self-reliance are valued by children as practiced in the Western countries like United State America and Europe (Oyserman, Coon, and Kemmelmeier, 2002) especially with space at home. This study has revealed that most Nigerian children from large family may not have privacy in terms of accommodation because they have to share their rooms with others in the family.

#### **Attitudes that affect the reading**

The respondents were asked to indicate statements that revealed their attitude towards reading. As shown in Table 1, the result showed that majority of children who participated in the study preferred to read only when their friends are with them ( $\bar{x} = 2.92$ ). Over crowded homes and environment could account for this attitude. The results also revealed that some of the respondents read when forced ( $\bar{x} = 2.72$ ), some indicated that they liked reading instead of playing ( $\bar{x} = 2.49$ ) and some revealed that they did not like reading at home and school. According to Akinbade (2007), good environment is necessary to promote effective learning among children in order to help them have high academic achievement. Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala, and Cox (1999) opined that effective and purposeful reading often involves choice. In addition, peer group plays important roles in the reading and learning outcomes for children living in a neighborhood (Lee and Burkman, 2002).

Table 1: Attitudes of Primary School Pupils on reading in INELG

s/n	Items	SA	A	NS	D	SD	Mean
1	I read only when my friends are with me	51 24.6%	20 9.7%	51 24.6%	64 40.0%	21 10.1%	2.92
2	I read only when am forced to do so	50 24.2%	71 34.3%	9 4.4%	41 19.8%	36 17.4%	2.72
3	I like reading instead of playing	74 35.7%	31 15.0%	45 21.7%	41 19.8%	16 7.7%	2.49
4	I read for fun at home	59 28.5%	78 37.7%	26 12.6%	27 13.0%	17 8.2%	2.35
5	I love reading during holidays	71 34.3%	44 21.3%	59 28.5%	19 9.2%	14 6.7%	2.33
6	I like playing instead of reading	94 45.4%	30 14.5%	30 14.5%	28 13.5%	25 12.1%	2.32
7	I prefer reading in the library	90 43.5%	52 25.1%	33 15.9%	24 11.6%	8 3.9%	2.07
8	I love reading mostly at school	84 40.6%	83 40.1%	17 8.2%	15 7.2%	8 3.9%	1.94
9	I like reading both at home and at school	100 48.3%	55 26.6%	33 15.9%	6 2.9%	13 6.3%	1.92
10	I prefer reading books with colors and illustrations	130 62.8%	28 13.5%	10 4.8%	21 10.1%	18 8.7%	1.88
11	I prefer reading at home	87 42.0%	91 44.0%	13 6.3%	6 2.9%	10 4.8%	1.85

Key: SA = Strongly Agree 5 A = Agree 4 NS = Not Sure 3 D=Disagree 2 SD = Strongly Disagree 1

### Demographic factors that influences reading attitude among primary school pupils

The relative contribution of demographic factors on reading attitude of the children was investigated. Table 3 revealed that the relative contribution of types of school ( $\beta = .086, P >.05$ ), gender ( $\beta = -.097, P >.05$ ), age range ( $\beta = -.060, P >.05$ ), religion ( $\beta = -.186, P <.05$ ), family size

( $\beta = -.032$ ,  $P > .05$ ), area of residence ( $\beta = -.145$ ,  $P < .05$ ), and possession of personal room at home ( $\beta = .193$ ,  $P < .05$ ) respectively on attitude towards reading (Table 2). The result revealed that religion, area of residence and possession of a room at home was significant in influencing reading attitude of primary school pupils in the study. Ibadan North Local government area of Oyo State is a densely populated area occupied with large number of traders who are illiterates. In addition, most of the respondents are from large families and they do not have rooms to themselves and this factor may stall reading because of distraction. The result indicated that type of school, gender, and age range do not have effect on the reading attitude among the children. According to Clark and De Zoysa (2011), the home literacy environment influences children to take part in storytelling and other literacy development activities because they are motivated by these activities (through enjoyment or motivating factor such as an extrinsic reward) to develop positive attitude towards reading

The result also indicated that religion, area of residence and possession of a room at home was found significant in influencing reading attitude of primary school children. The study by Chase (2011) showed that residential locations often groups people together socially especially people with similar incomes and similar backgrounds. Low reading attitude can be closely correlated with the location of residence (Montoya, 2011) because reading attitudes may be influenced and affected by home and family size of a child. This study observed that most Nigerian children do not have the privilege of luxury as regards to having personal rooms where they could read at home.

Table 2: Demographic factors influencing reading attitude among primary school pupils

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	t	Sig.
	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$		
(Constant)	23.220	3.904		5.948	.000
Types of school	.891	.976	.086	.913	.362
Gender	-1.014	.740	-.097	-1.370	.172
Age range	-.551	.761	-.060	-.724	.470
Religion	-1.759	.673	-.186	2.614	.010
Area of residence	-6.272E-02	.031	-.145	-2.044	.042
Possession of a room at home	2.100	.856	.193	2.452	.015

#### Socio- Economic factors influence on reading attitudes of primary school pupils

Table 4 shows the relative contribution of each of the independent variables that is educational qualifications of parents ( $\beta = .083, P >.05$ ), parents occupation ( $\beta = -.047, P >.05$ ), parents' ability to buy books ( $\beta = .083, P >.05$ ), engaging in trade after school ( $\beta = .096, P >.05$ ), having a library at home ( $\beta = .037, P >.05$ ), and affording to read online ( $\beta = .209, P <.05$ ) on the reading attitude of the respondents. The study found that parents' financial ability to purchase books and afford online reading was found significant. Educational qualifications of parents, parents' occupation, trading after school hours and library at home did not influence reading attitudes of primary school pupils in INELG significantly. Personal observations by the researchers revealed that children from low income parents and children who reside in locations of low economic status in Nigeria do read less because they have inadequate accommodation which affects those who prefer to read privately. Those from low income status would also have distractions from hawking and farming. Preliminary investigations has also revealed that areas in Ibadan North East such as *Oje* and other high density areas are highly populated by traders and socially delinquent people and this may have effect on reading attitudes of children living there.

Table 4: Socio- Economic factors influencing reading attitudes in primary school pupil's

Model	Unstandardized Coefficient		Standardized Coefficient	T	Sig.
	$\beta$	Std. Error	$\beta$		
(Constant)	9.908	4.772		2.076	.039
Educational qualifications of parents	.247	.235	.083	1.050	.295
Parents occupation	-.198	.312	-.047	-.636	.526
Parents often bought books	.335	.315	.083	1.064	.289
Trade after school	.996	.888	.096	1.122	.263
Library at home	.415	.983	.037	.422	.673
Read online	2.477	1.057	.209	2.343	.020

### Preferred Reading Materials

The respondents were asked to indicate the types of materials preferred by them. In order of preference for private school pupils, the study revealed that 65 (49.3%) respondents preferred reading story books, 30 (22.7%) preferred comics, 10 (7.5%) preferred novels, 17 (13%) school books while 10 (7.5%) preferred other reading materials like newspapers. The study also revealed that 36 (48%) respondents from public schools preferred reading story books, 15 (20%) preferred comics, 4 (5.3%) preferred novels and 6 (8%) preferred other materials like magazines (Table 5). Children's personal experiences in reading are related to attitudes toward reading and the type of book made available to them. Children enjoy and get attracted to colourful materials such as story books which make reading interesting. Chihemen's study (2007) agrees with this, he opined that children love books (comics and cartoons) that are predictable, have vivid pictures, and related to their lives. If children get discouraging answers to their questions about life issues, they may form a negative attitude toward reading.

Table 5: Preferred reading materials of primary school pupils in INELG

	Private school N 132	Public Schools N 75
Type of books	Frequency (%)	Frequency (%)
Story book	65 (49.3%)	36 (48%)
Comics	30 (22.7%)	15 (20%)
Novels	10 (7.5%)	4 (5.3%)
Schoolbooks	17 (13%)	14 (18.7%)
Others	10 (7.5%)	6 (8%)

### Conclusion and Recommendations

In Nigeria, most public schools funded by the government do not have adequate facilities like libraries to enhance the education of children hence the reason for most parents to send their children to private schools with better school facilities. However, the type of school attended by a child is assumed to determine his reading capability, this study has revealed that children in spite of the type of school they attended tend to have the same preference for reading materials. Etwinsle and Astone (1994) affirmed that a child from a generally moderate or upper-status school is far less at risk than the child in a community school of low-status. The children from large families, who do not have personal rooms which could promote privacy and enhance concentration while reading, may not have good attitude towards reading. Baker, Serpell, and Sonnenschein (1995) revealed that children's attitudes towards reading are associated with their home activities and motivation. Thus, for Nigerian children to cultivate better reading habits the home environment would have to be conducive.

In addition, demographic variables like religion, age, and gender have less influence on reading habit of primary school children while their area of residence, religion and possession of a room was discovered to have influenced their attitude to reading. Akinbade (2007) confirmed that the home background influences reading attitude because a good environment is necessary to promote effective learning in primary schools. Etwinsle and Astone (1994) also noted that children who attend higher status school have less risk of having low reading ability than those who attend lower status school. Thus, Nigerian children would read better when they live in a better environment and have rooms to themselves because large family size may cause distraction and prevents privacy.

Socio-economic factor like parents occupation influences the purchase of books for the children by their parents. According to Kristin (2011), parents could be judged by what they earn which would influence if they could afford extra books for children aside from school textbooks. Nigeria is a developing country that is affected by economic recession which includes high rate of inflation and unemployment that children now get involves in fending for the family by trading to augment their parent's income. Children used for this study may not be able to afford the use of the internet and computers to assist in downloading readable materials from the internet due to financial constraints. This implies that apart from reading of books these children may not be able to access the internet because their parents may not be able to afford such. Montoya (2011) suggested that children should be nurtured towards reading long before they begin preschool and kindergarten school.

Schools should be equipped with well stocked libraries (electronic and print resources) and programmes such as debates and quizzes that would help keep the children alert and encourage reading should regularly be planned by school authorities. Regular training programmes for teachers on reading should be introduced in teacher training programmes. In addition, Nigerian parents should support and encourage their children by reading aloud to them. Montoya (2011) confirmed that parents reading out to their children improve their bond and relationship. The socio-economic situation in Nigeria should be improved so that parents would be able to afford the high cost of books and to also provide a good and conducive accommodation for reading.

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