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EFFECT OF QUESTION-ANSWER RELATIONSHIP TEACHING STRATEGY ON PUPILS READING COMPREHENSION ACHIEVEMENT BASED ON PRIMARY SCHOOL LOCATION AND TYPES IN OBI LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION AUTHORITY OF NASARAWA STATE

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Abstract

The study investigated the effect of question-answer relationship teaching strategy on pupils reading comprehension achievement based on primary school location and types in Obi Local Government Education Authority of Nasarawa State. The study was guided by four research questions and four null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level. Quasi-experimental pre-test, Post-test non-randomised control group research design was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised. 3,439 primary five pupils made up of 1,318 males and 2,121 females in 2023/2024 academic session in Obi Local Government Area of Nasarawa state. The sample size for the study was 187 primary five pupils drawn using purposive and simple random sampling techniques through multi-stage sampling procedure. The instrument utilized for data collection was Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (RCAT). The instrument was subjected to face validation by three experts, two in the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and an expert in Measurement and Evaluation, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The content validation was established using the table of specifications. The reliability of RCAT was determined using Kuder-Richardson formular 20 (k-R20) which yielded 0.86. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) to test the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed among others that pupils in public primary schools taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy had greater achievement mean gain score than their private school counterparts. Further result showed that pupils in primary schools located in urban areas taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy had greater achievement mean gain score than their rural counterparts. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that Universal Basic Education Board should organize training programmes such as seminars, conferences and workshops for primary teachers in rural and urban areas to enable them upgrade their skills and knowledge on the use of QAR strategy for teaching reading comprehension.

Keywords: Question-Answer Relationship, Reading Comprehension, Achievement, Conventional Teaching Method, School Location, School Type

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Introduction

Primary education is the first stage of education which is designed to improve the literacy and numeracy of children. Abimbola, Erunke and Abdul (2024) opined that primary has been regarded as the most important as well as the most patronized by people. They added that this perhaps may be due to the fact that it is the foundation of the whole educational pursuit, which is expected to provide literacy and enlightenment to the citizens. Primary education is meant for six years of formal schooling to equip pupils with basic skills and knowledge which prepare them for secondary education. One of the core subjects in primary school is English Language.

English language is a subject that enables pupils to improve their reading, writing and speaking skills. Otieno, Bett and Changeiywo (2024) pointed that English Language is a core and compulsory subject in formal schooling which is intended to not only help learners improve their communicative competencies in the language but also build general competencies that help them learn other subjects efficiently as well as prepare them for lifetime learning. English Language is the official medium of instruction in primary schools in Nigeria. It is one of the compulsory subjects which must be passed by pupils before they are offered admission in secondary level of education in Nigeria. One of the compulsory contents in which pupils are tested in English Language examinations is reading comprehension.

Reading comprehension is described by Mbachi, Okonkwo and Nweke (2024) as the act of studying to enable one understand the main ideas or specific information from a given text or passage. They added that it involves studying a text to have a clear understanding and provide correct answers to questions on the passage. Equipping students with the skills to answer questions in reading comprehension depends on the teaching method applied by a teacher. Okebukola, Olaniyan-Shobowale and Crowntney (2024) noted a teacher may be good at the content area of what to teach but adopting a wrong teaching method may end up jeopardizing the primary objective of teaching a learner how to read. Okebukola et al expatiated that amidst the teaching methodologies available to teachers in the classroom, conventional teaching method remains a common method of teaching reading comprehension in Nigeria.

Conventional teaching method is an oral presentation of ideas and concepts by teachers for learners to listen and take down the notes with little or no inputs in the teaching and learning process. Mbachi et al (2024) described conventional teaching method is a teacher-centred instructional approach that involves the use of chalk, chalkboard and text in presenting lessons without or little explanation. In conventional teaching method, teachers stand in front of the classroom to present the contents of their lessons to pupils. Bukar, Bularafa, Mustapha and Gana (2024) asserted that in conventional method, the learners most of the time, say few words in response to some questions raised by the teachers because they are expected to be passive listeners. The conventional teaching method tends to make teaching processes more theoretical and memorizing to pupils and could thereby make them to lose interest in classroom activities. Sometimes, the teachers monopolize process of imparting knowledge to pupils which necessitates innovative and teacher-pupils interactive method of teaching reading comprehension. Suswika, Herlina and Faridah (2020) noted that one of the innovative teaching techniques for assisting learners in answering narrative text questions is Question-Answer Relationships (QAR) strategy.

Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy is an instructional approach which shows how text is structured and organized to enable learners to locate and comprehend vital information. QAR helps learners to identify different levels of questions to enable them to provide accurate answers to a given text or passage. Ade and Sri (2024) noted that using QAR strategy, the teacher can establish a relationship between the questions and responses which makes it simple for the learners to locate the answer to the question. It gives the knowledge of where answers can be found in a passage. Green and Marz (2024) which described QAR as a teaching technique that enables learners to understand that the answer to a question is directly related to the type of question asked. Continuing, Green and Marz stressed that it enables learners to learn that questions can textually explicit and know they can go to the passage and find the information they need. They added that it can enable learners know that some questions are textually implicit and know they must make inferences based on information contained in the passage. QAR aids learners in comprehending what they have read and correctly answer questions to improve their academic achievement.

Academic achievement is the result obtained by people who are exposed to test and examination. This aligns with the submission of Onuoha and Oguji (2024) that academic achievement is the outcome of education which is measured by scores of learners in examinations and continuous assessment. However, the academic achievement of pupils seems to be below expectations in Obi Local Government Area of Nasarawa State. Obi Local Government Education Authority (2023) indicated that the number of candidates that sat for National Common Entrance examinations in the Local Government Education Authority (LGEA) in primary schools for the year 2020, 2021 and 2022 were 18,145, 20,213 and 21,332 respectively and the number of candidates that obtained credit and above in English Language were 9,183, 10,004 and 10,312 which represented 50.6%, 49.5% and 48.3% of the population that sat for the examinations. This shows that there is a decline in academic achievement of pupils in English Language in Obi LGEA, Nasarawa State. The problem encountered by male and female pupils in reading comprehension in Obi LGEA, Nasarawa State may contribute to the decline in academic achievement of pupils in English Language. Many factors could influence the achievement of pupils in reading comprehension among them is school type.

School type is the kind of ownership and management of primary institution of learning. School type could be either public or private primary school. According to Okosun and Isabu (2023) noted that public schools are institutions owned, overseen and administered by governmental authorities, ministries or agencies, while private schools are those that have been founded, sponsored, administered, and controlled by individuals, non-governmental organization, religious or social groups. Private primary schools tend to charge high tuition fees than their public counterparts. There seem to be general impression of people that public primary schools are meant for less-privileged people who can not pay high tuition fees in private primary schools. Private primary schools tend to have computers and interactive (white) boards which are useful in teaching the students. Public and private primary schools tend to differ in physical infrastructure, number of staff, modes of operation and teaching pupils which may affect their reading comprehension achievement. Some parents in Obi LGEA tend to enroll their children in private primary schools because they believe that private school pupils outperform public ones in English Language in national examinations. However, Folake, Oresanwo Onyeka, Adelu and Aderemi (2023) found out that school type of (public or private) did not influence the academic achievement of learners in the English language reading comprehension test. On the contrary, Letsholo-Tafila and Alimi (2019) reported that the mean reading comprehension achievement scores of the pupils in the

private primary schools was significantly higher than that of their counterparts in public schools. Also, Nadori, Bouylmani and Erguig (2020) revealed that private school learners achieve better than public school counterparts in the reading comprehension. Public and private primary schools are spread across different locations.

School location is the areas in which learning institutions are sited. These areas could be rural or urban areas. Amadi (2020) asserted that unequal conditions present in different learning environments may lead to differences in reading achievement among learners from schools in different locations. Amadi further said that the differences in school facilities, learners' attitude towards learning and methods of teaching may be observed in schools from different locations. Akinwumi (2017) reported that there was significant difference in reading comprehension achievement of learners in urban and rural Also, Amadi, Nnamani and Ukoha (2018) reported that there was a significant difference in the mean achievement scores of urban and rural school pupils in reading in favour of pupils from urban schools. The need arose for new studies to take school types and location into consideration in an attempt to build new evidence on effect of question-answer relationship teaching strategy on primary school pupils reading comprehension achievement in Obi Local Government Education Authority of Nasarawa State.

Statement of the Problem

One is worried with persistent decline of 50.6%, 49.5% and 48.3% in academic achievement of pupils in English Language in National Common Entrance Examination for the years 2020, 2021 and 2022. The difficult of pupils to answer questions from reading comprehension could contribute to the persistent decline of academic achievement of pupils in English Language. The dominant conventional method may not left out of the factors that adversely affect the academic achievement of pupils in English Language. Equally, public and private schools in urban areas have different quality of teachers and facilities that could possibly determine the teaching strategy and reading comprehension achievement of pupils. The use of question-answer relationship in teaching reading comprehension is one of the innovative instructional delivery strategies through which students' interest in a subject could be stimulated. In the light of the above, the problem of the study was to find out the effect of question-answer relationship teaching strategy on primary school pupils reading comprehension achievement in Obi LGEA of Nasarawa State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to ascertain effect of question-answer relationship teaching strategy on pupils reading comprehension achievement based on primary school location and types in Obi Local Government Education Authority of Nasarawa State. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

1. Mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy.
2. Mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method.
3. Mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy.
4. Mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy?
2. What are the mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method?
3. What are the mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy?
4. What are the mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy.
2. There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy.
4. There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method.

Methods

A quasi-experimental design involving a pretest, posttest, control group was adopted for the study. The study was carried out in Obi Local Government Area of Nasarawa state. The population of the study comprised 3,439 primary five pupils made up of 1,318 males and 2,121 females in Obi Local Government Education Authority of Nasarawa State. The sample size for the study was 187 primary five pupils drawn using multi-stage sampling procedures. In the first stage, purposive sampling technique was used to sample four primary schools that meet the criteria for the study on the basis of school types, school location, qualified teachers and good learning environment. In the second stage, simple random sampling (balloting without replacement) was used to draw four intact primary five classes in public and private primary schools located in rural and urban areas into control and experimental group. In the third stage, simple random sampling technique without replacement was used to select two schools for the experimental group and the other two for the control group. The sample size for the study was 187 respondents made of 88 pupils for experimental group (43 pupils in public and 45 pupils in private primary schools) and 99 pupils for control group (49 pupils in public and 50 pupils in private primary schools).

The instrument for data collection was Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (RCAT). The instrument was adapted by the researcher from First School Leaving Certificate standardized tests of 2016, 2017 and 2018. The instrument was divided into two sections. Section A elicited information on the gender of the pupils, while section B is made up of 15 multiple objective test items with four different answer options. The topic covered only reading comprehension in the primary five syllabuses. The instrument was subjected to face

and content validation. The face validation was established by three experts, two in the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, and an expert in in the Department of Science Education, all in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University. The content validation was established using table of specification. The reliability of the instrument was established using Kuder-Richard 20 which yielded a reliability of 0.86.

The research assistants who are English Language teachers in primary five classes from the sampled schools in Obi LGA were briefed for two weeks regarding the teaching methods. The experimental group teachers were given detailed explanations on how to incorporate the question-answer relationship strategy into the lesson and the general requirements of the research. The control group teachers were briefed on the general requirements of the research since they were required to use conventional method lesson plan to teach without involving question-answer relationship strategies. The study lasted for six weeks using the normal period allocated for English Language in the sampled schools. To control the initial differences of subjects in these intact classes, Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was employed for data analysis. The regular English Language teachers in the schools under the study were used to prevent experimental bias. The improvement of post-test scores due to having taken a pre-test by the participants was controlled in this study through a longer time interval of five weeks between the pre-test and post-test. Maturation effect on pupils was controlled by limiting the experimental periods to six weeks. The items in the instrument was renumbered and reshuffled to minimize the ability of the pupils realizing that they were being re-tested. The researcher collected data for the study using four research assistants who are in Obi LGEA, Nasarawa State. At the end of the exercise, the data was analyzed. Data obtained were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions and Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was used to test all the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. In the test of hypotheses using ANCOVA, F ratio value was used to determine the acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses. The null hypothesis was rejected if p-value is less than the level of significance (0.05), if p-value is greater than or equal to 0.05, null hypothesis was accepted.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy?

Table 1: Mean Pre-test and Posttest Achievement Scores of Pupils in Public and Private Primary Schools taught Reading Comprehension using Question Answer-Relationship Strategy

Type	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Pretest SD	Posttest SD	Mean Gain
Public	43	3.51	10.37	0.96	1.81	6.86
Private	45	3.22	9.98	0.95	2.06	6.76

The result presented on Table 1 shows that the pretest mean achievement scores of pupils in public primary schools taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy was 3.51 with standard deviation of 0.96; their posttest mean achievement score was 10.37 with 1.81 value of standard deviation and 6.86 mean gain. The pretest mean achievement scores of pupils in private primary schools taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy was 3.22 with standard deviation of 0.95; their posttest mean score was 9.98 with 2.06 standard deviation and 6.76 mean gain. The mean achievement gain difference between mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using question answer-

relationship strategy was 0.10 in favour of pupils in public schools. The results showed that the pupils in public primary schools taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy had greater achievement mean gain score than their private school counterparts.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy.

Table 2: Summary of ANCOVA on Difference between the Mean Achievement Scores of Pupils in Public and Private Primary Schools taught Reading Comprehension using Question Answer-Relationship Strategy

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	Decision
Corrected Model	12.954[a]	2	6.477	3.658	.030	
Intercept	225.757	1	225.757	127.513	.000	
Pretest	1.063	1	1.063	.600	.441	
School Type	12.707	1	12.707	7.177	.009	S
Error	150.489	85	1.770			
Total	3689.000	88				
Corrected Total	163.443	87				

a. R Square = .079 (Adjusted R Square = .058)

Table 2 shows that at 0.05 level of significance, 1df numerator and 87 df denominator, the calculated F is 7.177 with P-value of .009 which is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy.

Research Question 2: What are the mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method?

Table 3: Mean Pre-test and Posttest Achievement Scores of Pupils in Public and Private Primary Schools taught Reading Comprehension using Conventional Teaching Method

Type	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Pretest SD	Posttest SD	Mean Gain
Public	49	2.88	6.27	0.93	1.37	3.39
Private	50	3.10	6.60	0.91	1.36	3.50

The result presented in table 3 shows that the pretest mean achievement scores of pupils in public primary schools taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method was 2.88 with standard deviation of 0.93; their posttest mean achievement score was 6.27 with 1.37 value of standard deviation and 3.39 mean gain. The pretest mean achievement scores of pupils in private primary schools taught reading comprehension us using conventional teaching method was 3.10 with standard deviation of 0.91; their posttest mean score was 6.60 with 1.36 standard deviation and 3.50 mean gain. The mean achievement gain difference between mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method was 0.11 in favour of pupils in private schools. The results showed that the pupils in private primary schools taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method had greater achievement mean gain score than their public school counterparts.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method.

Table 4: Summary of ANCOVA on Difference between the Mean Achievement Scores of Pupils in Public and Private Primary Schools taught Reading Comprehension using Conventional Teaching Method

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	Decision
Corrected Model	65.456[a]	2	32.728	26.885	.000	
Intercept	121.993	1	121.993	100.211	.000	
Pretest	62.684	1	62.684	51.492	.000	
School Type	.477	1	.477	.392	.533	NS
Error	116.867	96	1.217			
Total	4281.000	99				
Corrected Total	182.323	98				

b. R Square = .359 (Adjusted R Square = .346)

Table 4 shows that at 0.05 level of significance, 1df numerator and 98 df denominator, the calculated F is 1.217 with P-value of .533 which is greater than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method.

Research Question 3: What are the mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy?

Table 5: Mean Pre-test and Posttest Mean Achievement Scores of Pupils in Primary Schools Located in Rural and Urban Areas taught Reading Comprehension using Question Answer-Relationship Strategy

Location	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Pretest SD	Posttest SD	Mean Gain
Rural	43	3.33	9.35	0.99	1.81	6.02
Urban	45	3.40	10.96	0.94	1.74	7.56

Table 5 shows that the pretest mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural areas taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy was 3.33 with standard deviation of 0.99; their posttest mean achievement score was 9.35 with 1.81 value of standard deviation and 6.02 mean gain. The pretest mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in urban areas taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy was 3.40 with standard deviation of 0.94; their posttest mean score was 10.96 with 1.74 standard deviation and 7.56 mean gain. The mean achievement gain difference between pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy was 1.54 in favour of schools in urban areas. The results showed that the pupils in primary schools located in urban areas taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy had greater achievement mean gain score than their rural counterparts.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy.

Table 6: Summary of ANCOVA on Difference between the Mean Achievement Scores of Pupils in Primary Schools Located in Rural and Urban Areas taught Reading Comprehension using Question Answer-Relationship Strategy

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	Decision
Corrected Model	134.377[a]	2	67.189	29.428	.000	
Intercept	307.643	1	307.643	134.746	.000	
Pretest	77.613	1	77.613	33.994	.000	
Location	51.633	1	51.633	22.615	.000	S
Error	194.066	85	2.283			
Total	9431.000	88				
Corrected Total	328.443	87				

R Square = .409 (Adjusted R Square = .395)

Table 6 shows that at 0.05 level of significance, 1df numerator and 87 df denominator, the calculated F is 22.615 with P-value of .000 which is less than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Therefore, there is significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy.

Research Question 4: What are the mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method?

Table 7: Mean Pre-test and Posttest Mean Achievement Scores of Pupils in Primary Schools Located in Rural and Urban Areas taught Reading Comprehension using Conventional Teaching Method

Location	N	Pretest Mean	Posttest Mean	Pretest SD	Posttest SD	Mean Gain
Rural	50	2.76	6.16	0.80	1.40	3.40
Urban	49	3.22	6.71	0.98	1.27	3.49

Table 7 shows that the pretest mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural areas taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method was 2.76 with standard deviation of 0.80; their posttest mean achievement score was 6.16 with 1.40 value of standard deviation and 3.40 mean gain. The pretest mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in urban areas taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method was 3.22 with standard deviation of 0.98; their posttest mean score was 6.71 with 1.27 standard deviation and 3.49 mean gain. The mean achievement gain difference between pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method was 0.09 in favour of schools in urban areas. The results showed that the pupils in primary schools located in urban areas taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method had greater achievement mean gain score than their rural counterparts.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method.

Table 8: Summary of ANCOVA on Difference between the Mean Achievement Scores of Pupils in Primary Schools Located in Rural and Urban Areas taught Reading Comprehension using Conventional Teaching Method

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	P-value	Decision
Corrected Model	65.522[a]	2	32.761	26.927	.000	
Intercept	118.373	1	118.373	97.291	.000	
Pretest	57.919	1	57.919	47.604	.000	
Location	.543	1	.543	.446	.506	NS
Error	116.801	96	1.217			
Total	4281.000	99				
Corrected Total	182.323	98				

R Square = .021 (Adjusted R Square = .021)

Table 8 shows that at 0.05 level of significance, 1df numerator and 98 df denominator, the calculated F is .446 with P-value of .506 which is greater than 0.05. Thus, the null hypothesis was not rejected. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method.

Discussion of Findings

The finding of the study revealed that pupils in public primary schools taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy had greater achievement mean gain score than their private school counterparts. This disagreed with the finding of Nguyen and Nguyen (2018) which indicated that mean achievement score of students in private schools taught reading comprehension using QAR was higher than that of those in public schools. The difference in geographical location and time span which is associated with change in operations of public and private schools could account for the inconsistency in the findings. Pupils in public primary schools recorded superior reading achievement than their counterparts in private schools probably due to the fact they are taught by qualified teachers certified by the government. Pupils in public primary schools could read text, recognize answer in the text and remember the information in the text which may be responsible for the high reading comprehension achievement than their counterparts in private schools.

It was also indicated that there is significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy. This contradicted the finding of Nguyen and Nguyen (2018) which showed that QARS had on significant effects on students' reading comprehension achievement of students in public and private schools. The difference in maturity of the participants of the studies could account for the disagreement between the findings.

The result of the study showed that pupils in private primary schools taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method had greater achievement mean gain score than their public school counterparts. This is in support of the finding of Muhammad-Jamiu (2023) which revealed that students in private schools taught using conventional teaching method recorded better achievement mean score than those in public schools. The possible explanation for this finding is that teachers in private schools tend to give personalized attention to each pupil, while applying conventional teaching method than teachers in public primary schools characterized by over-crowded classroom. This finding explains that teachers in private primary school control classroom, teach reading comprehension, explains

ideas and ensure pupils copy notes to improve their achievement than their counterparts in public primary schools.

It was also revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method. This disagreed with the finding of Muhammad-Jamiu (2023) which indicated that students in public and private schools taught using conventional teaching method differ significantly in their achievement mean score. The teachers who apply conventional teaching method mainly use textbooks and similar strategies which could account for the no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in public and private primary schools taught reading comprehension. Reading comprehension achievement of pupils taught using conventional teaching method is independent on school types and environment under which teaching took place.

The result showed that pupils in primary schools located in urban areas taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy had greater achievement mean gain score than their rural counterparts. This result is consistent with that of Solihin and Muaz (2021) which indicated that students taught reading comprehension using the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy recorded higher mean achievement scores in urban areas than those in rural areas. The higher reading achievement in favor of pupils in urban areas could be connected to the availability of more physical facilities and qualified teachers. The qualified teachers in primary school in urban areas tend have more facilities to arouse interest of students in reading comprehension than their counterparts in rural areas.

Further result showed that there is significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using question answer-relationship strategy. The finding is in line of Solihin and Muaz (2021) which indicated that there was no significant difference in the mean reading comprehension achievement of students in urban areas and those in rural areas taught reading comprehension using the Question-Answer Relationship (QAR) strategy. This disagreement in finding could be connected to the fact the studies centred on QAR strategy tend to be suitable in teaching reading comprehension to students.

It was indicated that pupils in primary schools located in urban areas taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method had greater achievement mean gain score than their rural counterparts. This agreed with the finding of Ekeanyanwu (2021) which showed that conventional teaching method had a higher effect on the urban students than the students in the rural area. The finding could be explained by the fact that primary schools in urban areas have more educational facilities and other teaching materials than the ones in rural areas. The deplorable conditions of facilities in rural areas could contribute the higher reading achievement recorded by their counterparts in urban areas.

It was also revealed that there is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores of pupils in primary schools located in rural and urban areas taught reading comprehension using conventional teaching method. This disagreed with the finding of Ekeanyanwu (2021) which indicated that there is a significant difference between urban and rural students' mean achievement score taught using conventional teaching method. Conventional teaching method is similar in schools irrespective of the location which could account for no significant difference in the mean reading comprehension achievement scores.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, it was concluded that the teachers' use of question-answer relationship strategy in teaching reading comprehension has significant effects on the reading comprehension achievement of male and female pupils in public and private primary schools located in rural and urban areas. However, QAR strategy favoured pupils from public primary schools than those in private schools, whereas conventional teaching method favoured those pupils from private primary schools than those in public schools. Pupils from primary schools in urban areas demonstrated superiority in reading comprehension achievement over their counterparts from rural areas under the two treatment types (question answer-relationship strategy and conventional teaching method).

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Local Government Education Authority should embark on periodic supervision of English language teachers in public and private schools to ensure QAR strategy is used to replace the conventional method of teaching reading comprehension.
2. Universal Basic Education Board should organize training programmes such as seminars, conferences and workshops for primary teachers in rural and urban areas to enable them upgrade their skills and knowledge on the use of QAR strategy for teaching reading comprehension.

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