

# Correlates of Hausa Language Reading Ability among Adult Learners in Borno State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

Hausa language is one of the widely spoken and a major language in Northern Nigeria. It is a language that is used as a medium of instruction in adult literacy classes in some states in Northern Nigeria. There are newspapers, magazines and literary books written in Hausa language to be read for the purposes of information, education and entertainment. This study is therefore an attempt to evaluate the correlates of Hausa Language reading ability among Adult Learners in Borno State, Nigeria. Consequently, three objectives and hypotheses were formulated and tested respectively by the researcher. Of the 238 adult literacy centres in the State, 24 (12 male literacy centres and 12 female adult literacy centres) were randomly selected by lot with four centres representing each group selected. The sample consisted of 298 adult learners made up of 196 male learners and 102 female adult learners in the 24 literacy centres. Four research instruments were used to collect data for this study. These are: i) Learners Social Learning Environment Questionnaire ii) Mental Ability Test iii) Instructors Teaching and Centre's Quality Questionnaire and iv) Reading Ability Scale. The findings in this study revealed there are significant positive relationship between reading ability and mental ability, centre quality instructors teaching quality, the relationship between Hausa language reading ability and each of the predictor variables were found to be statistically significant. There were no significant differences between male and adult literacy learners in Hausa language reading ability indices. Based on the findings, appropriate recommendations were made.

**Keywords:** Correlates, Hausa Language, Adult Learner, Borno State

## 1. Introduction

Right from the days of pre-colonial Nigeria, there have been efforts to promote literacy in Hausa. The Northern Publishing Company had been publishing a lot of reading materials for the purposes of information, education and entertainment. Notable amongst the publications are the newspaper titled *Gaskiya ta fi Kwabo*. There were also a lot of literary books such as the *Magana Jari Ce* and *Iliya Dan Maikarfi*. These were story books that capture and captivate the reading attention of a reader in Hausa language. Added to these is the fact that the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) airs a news programme as well as other programmes in Hausa language.

The existence of all these literacy piece makes it appealing for a Hausa man in the Northern part of Nigeria to seek to read works prepared in the language so that s/he could understand the content put into such literary piece. Yet, it lamentable that there are still people in Northern Nigeria who cannot read in neither English nor Hausa language. It is particularly disheartening that even in literacy centres for adults where these adults are taught in Hausa language, to find adults who could still not read. The question here then is could their reading ability be as a result of their mental ability, centre quality, social learning environment or instructors teaching quality? That is what this study found out.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

The following objectives were formulated by the researcher to guide the study:

- i. To determine the relationship between adult literacy learners reading ability in Hausa language and social learning environment, learner's mental ability, instructors teaching.
- ii. To determine the relationship between Hausa reading ability index and the predictor variables. (mental ability, centre quality, social learning Environment, instructors teaching quality)
- iii. To determine the whether males and female adult literacy learners differ significantly in Hausa language reading ability.

## 3. Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested by the researcher:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant relationship between adult literacy learners reading ability in Hausa language and social learning environment, learner's mental ability, instructors teaching.

H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between Hausa reading ability index and the predictor variables. (mental ability, centre quality, social learning Environment, instructors teaching quality)

H<sub>03</sub>: Male and female adult literacy learners do not differ significantly in Hausa language reading ability.

#### 4. Methodology

The study adopted a correlational design relating the specific variables to reading ability indices in Hausa language. The population comprised all adult literacy learners in all literacy centres in Maiduguri metropolis of Borno State, Nigeria. There were 288 literacy centres in the metropolis with a total of 2,052 literacy learners. Out of this number, 1,112 were males while 940 were females (Borno State Agency for Mass Literacy, 2001). Of the 238 adult literacy centres, 24 (12 male literacy centres and 12 female adult literacy centres) were randomly selected by lot with four centres representing each group selected. The twenty four centres enrolled 298 adult learners made up of 196 male learners in 12 literacy centres and 102 female adult learners in the 12 centres. Four research instruments were used to collect data for this study. These are: i) Learners Social Learning Environment Questionnaire ii) Mental Ability Test iii) Instructors Teaching and Centre's Quality Questionnaire and iv) Reading Ability Scale. The researcher with the help of well trained research assistants administered the research instruments within a period of 72 days in all the selected literacy centres. Multiple correlational analyses and step wise regression and t-test of independent means were used to analyze the data collected.

#### 5. Data Analysis, Results and Discussion

Below is the presentation of the analyses made from the data collected from the field.

**H<sub>01</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between adult literacy learners reading ability in Hausa language and social learning environment, learner's mental ability, instructors teaching quality and learning centre's quality. Multiple correlation analysis and multiple were done to test the hypothesis. The results are presented in tables 1 and 2.

The obtained result are present in table 1 and 2 (see appendix 1) which revealed that, there are significant positive relationship between reading ability and mental ability, centre quality instructors teaching quality, with corresponding coefficients of 0.287, 0.227 and 0.241. The relationship between mental ability and each of the centre quality, social learning environment and instructors teaching quality had coefficient of 0.206 and 0.270 respectively while social learning environment had a positive significant relationship with instructors teaching quality of 0.386. A step-wise regression analysis in which the dependent variable was regression on the independent variable of mental ability, centre quality, social learning environment and instructors teaching quality accounting for 24.5 percent of the variable in terms of contribution (see table 2).

The result of the step-wise regression analysis revealed that mental ability have the highest explanatory power of eight percent, social learning environment adding seven percent to the explanatory power to add up to 15 percent. Other variable of centre quality and instructors teaching quality increased the power by eight and one percent respectively on the whole the four variables accounted for 24 percent of the Hausa language reading ability variance.

Table 3 shows that male literacy centers had reading ability index of 47.0 in Hausa while the female literacy had an index of 49.32. The difference of 2.12 in favor of the female was however not statistically significant. The hypothesis is therefore accepted, that is, there was no there was no significant difference between male and female adult literacy centers in Hausa reading ability.

#### 6. Findings

1. There are significant positive relationship between reading ability and mental ability, centre quality instructors teaching quality,
2. The relationship between Hausa language reading ability and each of the predictor variables were found to be statistically significant.
3. There were no significant differences between male and adult literacy learners in Hausa language reading ability indices.

#### 7. Discussion

The first finding was that there was a significant positive relationship between reading ability and mental ability, centre quality instructors teaching quality. This finding agrees with that of Burt and Peyton in Vaela (2012) that some internal and external factors contribute to the speed and ease in acquiring second language literacy among Adults immigrants in the United States of America. The finding also supports the position of Burt and Peyton (2003) that the factors associated with language learning by adult persons are classified into what they called internal and external factors. The internal factor has to do with the learners while the external factor covers the learning environment, instructional materials, policies, curriculum, learners' experiences etc.

The second finding was that the relationship between Hausa language reading ability and each of the predictor variables were found to be statistically significant. Robinson (2007) maintained that instruction needs to focus on language form (grammar, syntax, and spelling) as well as meaning. The reasons for this finding may not be farfetched as the factors related to language reading and learning are strongly and positively correlated.

The third finding was that there was no significant difference between male and adult literacy learners in Hausa language reading ability indices. The finding tallies with Politzer (2006) study of ninety undergraduate foreign language learners' use of language skills. In the study, he found a 'relatively minor' difference between male and female learners. Hence, concluded that this was so because "females make a greater use of social interaction strategies". Meaning that the strategy one employs to learn a language varies with their workability.

### 8. Conclusion

From the study carried out so far, it is clearly evident that correlates exist in the reading ability of adult learners in Hausa language. This was evident in the following findings: there are significant positive relationship between reading ability and mental ability, centre quality instructors teaching quality. The relationship between Hausa language reading ability and each of the predictor variables were statistically significant. And there were no significant differences between male and adult literacy learners in Hausa language reading ability indices.

### 9. Recommendations

1. The following recommendations were made based on the findings from this study:
2. The adult literacy centres should engage adult learners in activities that would promote their mental abilities. These activities include but are not limited to their reasoning skills, and verbal skills.
3. The literacy centres should make efforts to provide a conducive learning environment that would promote the teaching and learning of Hausa language in the literacy centres.
4. The government should encourage the adult learners to enroll in post literacy programmes so that they do not relapse into illiteracy.

### References

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### Appendix 1.

**Table 1: multiple correlation analysis result of Hausa reading ability index and the correlates of (mental ability, centre quality, social learning environment, and instructors teaching quality)**

N=24

Variables	Reading ability	Mental ability	Centre quality	Social learning environment	Instructors teaching quality
Reading ability	-	0.287*	0.216*	0.227	0.241
Mental ability		-	0.043	0.121	0.089
Centre quality			-	0.206*	0.270*
Social learning environment				-	0.386*
Instructors teaching quality					-

Significant at p < 0.05

**Table 2 Result of step -wise regression of Hausa reading ability index on the four independent variable (mental ability, centre quality, social learning environment, instructors teaching quality)**

Independent variable	R	R <sup>2</sup>	% of Variable contribution	Ranking order of R <sup>2</sup>
Mental ability	0.28	0.08	08	4
Centre quality	0.380	0.15	15	2
Social learning environment	0.48	0.23	23	3
Instructors teaching quality	0.49	0.24	24	1

**Table 3: Comparison of male and female literacy centers with respect of Hausa language reading ability. Ho3: Male and female adult literacy learners do not significantly differ in Hausa Language reading ability. A t-test independent means was employed to test hypothesis (see table 3)**

Variables	Gender	N	Mean	S.D	t-value
Hausa reading ability	Male	12	47.20	2.46	1.12
	Female	12	49.32	3.14	