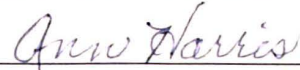


**RELATIONSHIPS OF SIXTH GRADE READING ATTITUDES AND
ACHIEVEMENT IN VARIOUS SCHOOL CALENDAR STRUCTURES**

KATHRYN STEWART OSBORNE

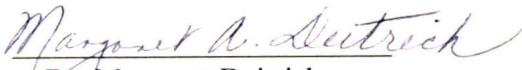
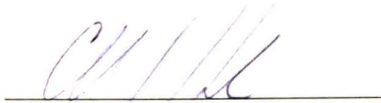
To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a field study written by Kathryn Stewart Osborne entitled "Relationships of Sixth Grade Reading Attitudes and Achievement in Various School Calendar Structures." I have examined the final copy of this field study for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Education Specialist, with a major in Elementary Education.

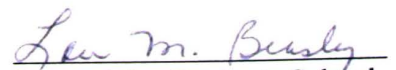


Dr. Ann Harris, Major Professor

We have read this field study
and recommend its acceptance:


Dr. Margaret Deitrich
Dr. Carlette Hardin

Accepted for the Council:


Dean of the Graduate School

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Date

4-17-03

Relationships of Sixth Grade Reading Attitudes and Achievement
in Various School Calendar Structures

A Field Study

Presented to the
Graduate and Research Council of
Austin Peay State University

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Education Specialist

Kathryn Stewart Osborne

Spring 2003

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated to my family who encouraged me to continue my education, achieve my dreams, and supported me in the goals I set for myself. I would like to dedicate this to my dad because he is the first person who made me believe that this was possible.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to my professors at Austin Peay State University who inspire me to be the best teacher I can be. Thank you to the director of this study, Dr. Ann Harris. Her professionalism, high expectations, and leadership enabled this project to be a success. Thank you to my other committee members, Dr. Margaret Deitrich and Dr. Carlette Hardin for their time and suggestions for this project. I also want to thank my colleague and classmate, Lori Anne Williams, for all the study sessions, library meetings, and encouragement as we complete our Education Specialist Degrees.

ABSTRACT

This research compared year-round calendar schools with traditional calendar schools to identify the extent of any differences between reading scores and reading attitudes of sixth grade students. The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (T-CAP) was used to compare standardized reading test scores of sixth graders in two different school districts with the national average score in reading. A reading attitude survey was given to a sample of sixth graders in each school district. The scores of the reading attitude survey were then compared to determine the extent of any correlation between the students' T-CAP reading scores and the results from the survey. It was determined there was a weak correlation coefficient of .55 which indicated no significant differences. The results from the *t-test* indicated no significant differences exist between the year-round school district's reading scores and reading attitudes and the traditional calendar district's reading scores and reading attitudes.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Standardized test scores in reading are not as high as they could be in traditional calendar schools when compared to the national average. Students are struggling with reading and are below grade level.

Importance of the Problem

The students are struggling with reading which impacts every other aspect of the curriculum. This also impacts standardized test scores that are used to evaluate schools.

Relationship of this Study to the Problem

Better understanding of the year-round school calendar and its effect on reading scores impact how schools structure their current calendar. The intercessions that provide remedial instruction and shorter summer breaks may better enable students to retain their knowledge and improve their reading skills. The year-round school calendar may also improve the students' attitude toward reading due to more time for reading for pleasure and assignments over the breaks.

Research Questions

1. How will students perform in year-round schools and traditional calendar schools on standardized tests in reading when compared to the national average?
2. How will students in year-round schools score on a reading attitude survey and

standardized reading subtests when compared to students in traditional calendar schools?

Hypotheses

There will be no significant difference in students' scores on standardized tests of students in year-round schools and students' scores on standardized tests of students in traditional calendar schools when compared to the national average.

There will be no significant difference in students' scores on a reading attitude survey who are on a year-round school calendar than students who are on the traditional school calendar.

There will be no significant difference in individual students' standardized test scores and reading attitudes who are on a year-round school calendar when compared to individual students' standardized test scores and reading attitudes who are on the traditional school calendar

Definition of Terms

1. Year-round school (YRS): Schools that have a 180 calendar year, but have a two-three week break in fall and spring.
2. Standardized Tests: The Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (T-CAP) administered in Tennessee.
3. Intercession: A week long time period for students to receive enrichment and/or remedial courses during the two-three week break of year-round school schedules.

Assumptions

1. It was assumed that the standardized tests were given under the directions of the administration requirements.
2. It was assumed the Hawthorne effect was not a factor because both school districts' calendars have been set for several years.
3. It was assumed the administration of the reading attitude surveys was similar in each district.

Limitations

1. This study was limited to two school districts in the southeastern United States.
2. The sample was limited to sixth grade students and their standardized test results for reading subtests.
3. The sample who was administered the reading survey was limited to one reading class in each district.

Delimitations

The boundaries of this study included only sixth graders from two school districts in the southeastern United States.

Preview

To reach this goal, this field study proposed that studies of current research were reviewed on year-round schools when compared with traditional calendar schools. A study was conducted comparing year-round school reading scores and traditional school

reading scores to the national average. A survey was given to a class in each district to compare reading attitudes of students in a year-round school and traditional school. The scores from this survey were then compared to the participating students' standardized test scores in reading to identify any correlation between reading attitudes and test scores. When the findings were compiled, recommendations were made to help improve reading test scores.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Year Round School Effects on Reading Scores

The problem statement specifies a concern about low reading scores on standardized tests in traditional calendar schools. These low reading scores impact the entire curriculum and education standards. There are studies that state year-round school (YRS) standardized test scores on reading subtests are improved when compared to traditional school calendar standardized test scores (Alcorn, 1992; Ananda, 1997; Sheane, Donaldson, & Bierlein, 1994; Roby, 1995; Shields & Oberg, 1999). These studies report slight to significant increases in test scores when these schools adopt a year-round calendar. School districts are examining their calendars to see if YRS can benefit their students and improve academic achievement (Shields, Oberg, & Larocque, 1999). The purpose of the traditional calendar school is for the agrarian society. Since this population is dwindling, the only reason for this calendar is because it is what has been done for over 100 years. This routine is outdated and there is no educational value to the current calendar (Warrick-Harris, 1995).

Reading instruction in YRS and students' attitude toward reading are improved when compared to traditional schools. Teachers of YRS have noticed an improvement in the reading instruction and involvement of students in the discussions. This encourages student to succeed even if they are struggling readers. The students read books during the intercessions whereas before they would not have time or would be exhausted with other

homework. The students are prepared to discuss their reading assignments when they return to school (Shields & Oberg, 1999).

Some studies have found that YRS has no impact on reading standardized test scores, but no research has shown that YRS has a negative impact on students' reading scores. The studies that show no impact on reading scores still state there is a possibility YRS does impact other areas such as attitude or motivation (McMillen, 2001; Ritter, 1992). The positive impact on students' attitude toward reading contribute to the overall success of achievement in year round schools.

Year Round School Effects on Academic Achievement in Content Areas

Academic achievement in all subject areas can be impacted by YRS calendars. The YRS calendar has positive effects on academic achievement because the students do not forget as much material during the summer as students on the traditional calendar (White, 1992; Gregory, 1994; Shields & Oberg, 1999). The learning process is more efficient, there is a reduction in learning loss, and less time is spent reviewing previously learned material (Agron, 1993). Most studies have stated that when a YRS calendar is adopted, the students have positive gains or no negative impact on academic achievement (Ananda, 1997; McChesney, 1996; McMillen, 2001; Sheane, Donaldson, & Bierlein, 1994; Shields & Oberg, 1999).

Results from a San Diego study identified students from a YRS as scoring higher on standardized tests than students from traditional schools. Also, more students from YRS than traditional schools met the objectives on standardized tests (Alcorn, 1992).

Mathematics scores are also a concern that administrators, teachers, and parents have because they are lower than they should be. One study indicated that YRS sixth grade students outperformed traditional school students in mathematics achievement (Roby, 1995). Professionals suggest the YRS calendar increases student learning, minimizes less than quality instructional time, and improves test scores (White, 1992; Worthen & Zsiray, 1994).

Positive Effects of Intercessions

An intercession is the two-three week break between instructional time on the year round school calendar (Dlugosh, 1994; Sanders, 2001). Intercessions may have an impact on the positive academic achievement of YRS (Sheane, Donaldson, & Bierlein, 1994). The success of YRS can be attributed to the effective intercessions that at-risk students attend during the school break. These intercessions are an immediate and interceptive tool to provide quality instruction and intervention than summer school has ever been (Ballinger, 1998; Gandara & Fish, 1994; Sheane, Donaldson, & Bierlein, 1994).

The intercessions are not used strictly for at-risk students. These intercessions can also be used as enrichment courses to challenge high achieving and gifted students. They can also be used for out-of-town educational field trips (Gregory, 1994; Sanders, 2001).

One study surveyed students who attended a remedial intercession. The surveys reported that 98% of the students enjoyed the intercession program, 94% felt more confident in their academic abilities, and 91% liked school better since they attended the program (Ananda, 1997).

These students' standardized test scores were examined to evaluate the success of intercessions. Over half of these at-risk students achieved mastery on the standardized tests and 86% mastered the writing section (Ananda, 1997).

Students that are required to attend intercession periods are the students that have not mastered the instructional material during the first grading period. Attending an intercession benefits the students because they are given the opportunity to master the material before school begins again and they have the chance to be on the same level as their classmates when they return to school (Sanders, 2001).

Positive Effects on Teachers

Teachers can become physically and emotionally exhausted due to their rigorous schedule. The YRS calendar has shown to have a positive effect on teachers. Studies show that teachers of YRS have higher teacher attendance than teachers of traditional calendar schools. The YRS calendar gives teachers the breaks they need so they do not have to take off as many days as the teachers of the traditional calendar (Ballinger, 1998; Kocak, 1996; White, 1993).

Many teachers work part-time jobs during the summer. It is an advantage for these teachers to teach in a year-round school. Teachers have the opportunity to make extra money by teaching one week of an intercession period and still have a weeklong break. These teachers can make extra money and remain in their field of expertise (Opheim, Mahajer, & Read, 1995; Sheane, Donaldson, & Bierlein, 1994).

One study interviewed teachers about their stress level related to their job. They reported that the stress level in year-round schools was less than traditional schools

(Campbell, 1994). One teacher who was supportive of YRS responded that the burnout was less for teachers and students and that the teachers now have the ability to be more prepared when they return to school from the intercessions (White, 1992).

Some teachers feel that society does not respect their work schedule. Year round school gave teachers a more improved image in society because they appeared more professional without the long summer break (White, 1992). The YRS schedule is also more feasible for students and enables them to transist more smoothly to the workplace because most jobs do not have time off the entire summer (Shields & Oberg, 1999).

Teachers have the opportunity to reevaluate their teaching strategies, classroom management, and research future objectives with the intercession periods that they do not have time to do on a traditional calendar. Teachers that are able to reevaluate their teaching become better educators. Their students benefit from these results and test scores, attitudes, and classroom environment will reflect the benefits (Shields & Oberg, 1999).

Year-Round School Effects on Diverse Learners

Studies have shown that YRS benefits diverse students with learning disabilities, special education children, and bilingual students. These students have fewer retentions and higher test scores compared to matching students on a traditional calendar (Alcorn, 1992; McMillen, 2001; Opheim, Mahajer & Read, 1995).

Students who struggle academically retain less information over the summer break compared to their classmates. They forget more and are not as prepared when the

traditional calendar begins. The students begin the school year already behind their classmates (Alcorn, 1992; Gregory, 1994; Shields & Oberg, 1999).

One study examined a school with two-thirds of its students as English Language Learners (ELL). Of the school's fourth and fifth graders, 87% passed the standardized test for the state. This is a great increase compared to the same school as a traditional calendar school with only 67% passing the standardized test four years ago (Gregory, 1994). Studies have been found to be consistent with each other when the research has discovered that year-round school is very beneficial for lower achieving students, ELL, and any student that has fallen behind in their grade level achievement (McMillen, 2001).

Students' Attitudes Toward YRS

Students that attend year-round school have a more positive attitude towards school than students from a traditional school. They have a two-three week break ahead in the calendar every nine weeks to look forward to, and they are anticipating their return to school when it is back in session (Gregory, 1994). Studies of year-round school have shown to improve student self-esteem. There are also fewer discipline problems reported by the administration. Students are spending more time in the classroom instead of the office (Sheane, Donaldson, & Bierlein, 1994).

Other Benefits of YRS

Year round school benefits education, students, and teachers in other areas besides academic achievement. Athletics are affected positively by year round education.

Coaches are in contact with their athletes 12 months out of the year, and students are conditioned throughout the year. Studies report that there is a decrease in crime activity of students who attend YRS compared to students of traditional schools. Students do not have as much time to be bored like they are three months in the summer (Warrick-Harris, 1995). Students are less likely to drop out of school if they are enrolled in YRS. Higher graduation rates in YRS are being compared to traditional schools. Another benefit is fewer discipline problems reported from schools that are on YRS schedules when they are compared to the same school before they converted from a traditional calendar (Sheane, Donaldson, & Bierlein, 1994).

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

Participants

The sample for this study was the total population of sixth graders in two school districts in a southern state. All of the sixth graders from 2001-2002 in both districts were used for this study. One school district is on the year-round school calendar. It is located in a large city and includes four different schools. This district has been on the year-round calendar for nine years. There were 267 students' standardized test scores in reading to be used for the year-round school district.

The other school is on the traditional nine-month calendar. The school district is more rural with six different schools used for the study. There were 708 students' standardized test scores in reading to be used for the traditional school district.

Permission was sought from the Institutional Review Board (see Appendix A-1), a year-round school district (see Appendix A-2), and a traditional calendar school district (see Appendix A-3). Permission from the parents and students (see Appendix A-4) was sought before the study was administered. The risks to the subjects were minimal.

Instrument

In this study, the Tennessee Comprehensive Assessment Program (T-CAP) reading subtests from 2002 were used as the measuring instrument. The T-CAP is designed for grades three through eight and consists of subtests for the various subject areas.

Establishing test validity is an ongoing process. Teachers, parents, students, and test developers reviewed the standards and process throughout the production of the test. These procedures guarantee excellence in content, psychometrics, scoring, and reporting of the results.

The objectives were compared against national, state, and professional organizations' standards publications. Curriculum guides and standards from across the country determine the common goals and objectives on the test.

A national representative group of teachers, parents, and other educators focus on types of resources needed before, during, and after the administration of the standardized test. The tests were then written, objectives created, and standards set for content, grade level appropriateness, and equity.

A Likert-type attitude toward reading survey (see Appendix B) was administered to a class of sixth graders at a traditional school and a year-round school. The schools were randomly selected from the districts. The classes that were selected have reading scheduled at the same time of day, have the same number of students, and have similar instructional structure. The survey determined the extent to which the year-round school calendar or traditional calendar affected students' reading attitudes. There were 10 questions on the survey that the students answered about their feelings toward reading and books. The students responded Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Positively worded questions were scored by assigning five points to SA, four points to A, three points to U, two points to D, and one point to SD. Negatively worded questions were scored by assigning five points to SD, four points to D, three points to U, two points to A, and one point to SA. Students that

scored 39-50 were considered as having a positive attitude toward reading. Students that scored 26-38 were considered as having a somewhat positive attitude. Students that scored 13-25 were considered as having a slightly negative attitude toward reading. Students that scored 1-12 were considered as having a negative attitude toward reading.

Procedures

All students from both school districts were stratified according to their scores, which were divided into five achieving categories on the 2002 T-CAP reading subtests and compared with the other district. The control group was composed of the students on the traditional school calendar and the experimental group was composed of the students on the year-round calendar. The students were divided into the following five classifications: Lowest Achieving Students, Lower Achieving Students, Middle Achieving Students, Higher Achieving Students, and Highest Achieving Students. Each classification from the traditional school district was compared with same classification in the year-round district.

A sample from each district participated in the Likert-type attitude survey. The samples had one hour of reading per day. The T-CAP was administered at approximately the same time of the year, and the students received approximately the same type of instruction in reading class.

Confidentiality was ensured for both school districts and the students. The districts' names were not recorded in this study and the information given to the researcher by the districts omitted the individual school names, teachers, and students.

The survey results were compared to the T-CAP scores of the same students that were administered the survey to determine if there was a correlation between the students' standardized test scores and positive reading attitudes. The surveys that were collected will include students' names. These names were used to compare T-CAP reading results with their reading attitude scores. The names were not recorded in the field study project. The results were identified as the traditional calendar school and the year-round calendar school.

Statistical Procedures

A *t-test* for independent samples was used to test for a correlation between reading attitudes and standardized test scores of both school districts. The results from both samples were then compared with each other to identify any significant differences in reading attitudes and test scores of traditional and year-round schools.

CHAPTER IV

DATA AND RESULTS

School Population

The year-round school district sample has four schools with the sixth grade in its building. The schools were categorized according to population from the least amount of sixth graders (School A) to the highest amount of sixth grade students (School D). Figure 4-1 shows the population of the sixth graders in each year-round school in the district. This school district has been structured using the year-round calendar for nine years.

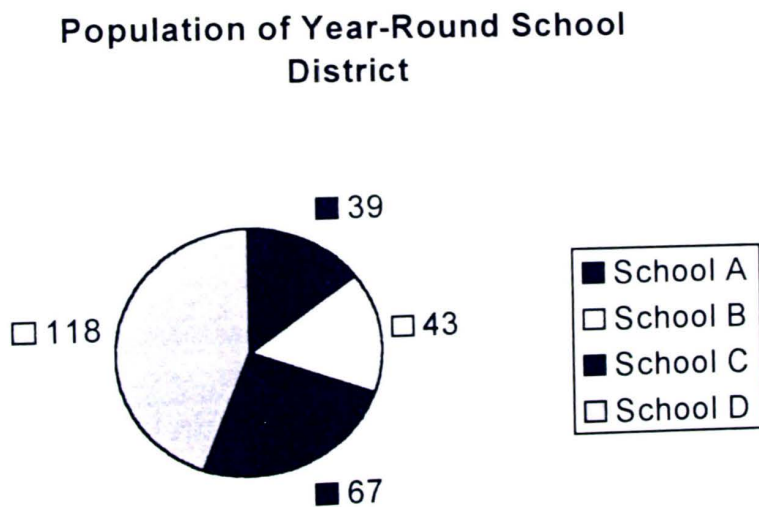


Figure 4-1. Population of sixth grade students of the year-round school district.

The traditional calendar school district sample has six schools with the sixth grade in the building. The schools have been categorized by the enrollment of sixth grade students from the least (School A) to the highest amount of students (School F) in each school. Figure 4-2 shows the student enrollment of sixth graders in each school in the traditional calendar school district.

Population of Traditional School District

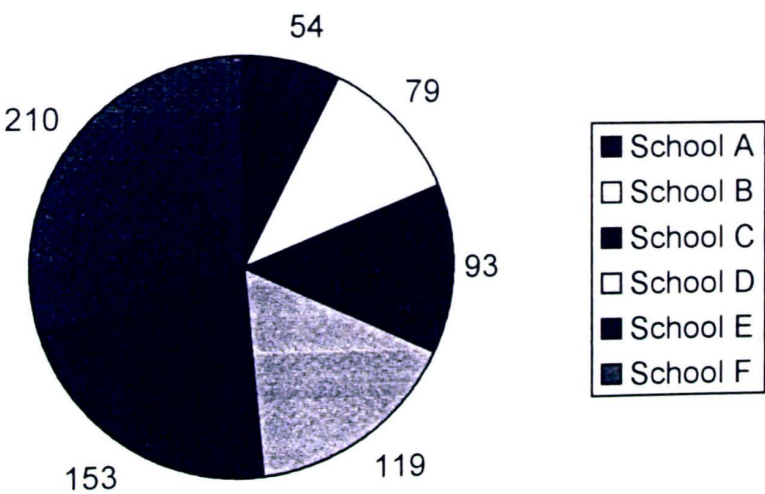


Figure 4-2. Population of the sixth grade students of the traditional school district.

Comparison of Student Reading Scores of Both School Districts

Figure 4-3 identifies the standardized test reading scores from the 2002 T-CAP test which compares the year-round school district, a traditional calendar school district, and the national average for reading. The national average for reading scores in the sixth grade is 64. The year-round school district is very close with a score of 62. The traditional calendar school district has a reading score of 55.

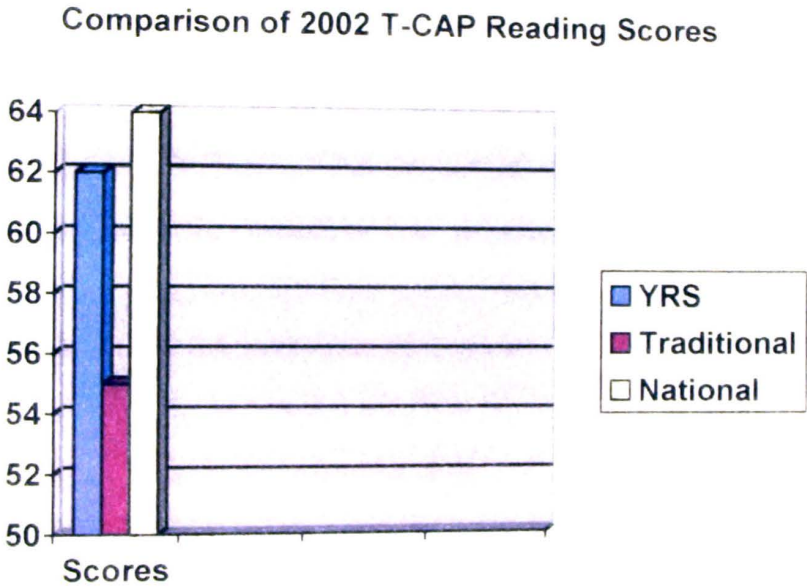


Figure 4-3. Comparison of 2002 T-CAP reading scores.

Students of both school districts took the T-CAP test the week of April 12, 2002. The system score report divides the students' scores of each school on the various subtests on the T-CAP into the following five categories: Lowest Achieving Students, Lower Achieving Students, Middle Achieving Students, Higher Achieving Students, and Highest Achieving Students. These scores are then compared to the national average.

There are four year-round schools and six traditional calendar schools. The four year-round schools and four traditional schools were compared to the national average in Table 4-1. Traditional Schools E and F were omitted due to their large population that was not found in the YRS. The summary report that was distributed to each school district in the state summarized the scores and compared each group with the norm (see Appendix C). The scores show the difference between the students' scores and the national average. A positive number represents the Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) units above the norm group the students scored. A zero represents the students scored the same as the norm. A negative number represents the NCE units the students scored below the norm. A score of +/- 7 represents significantly above or below the national average.

Table 4-1. Sixth grade reading scores compared to the national average.

Schools	T. S. A	T.S. B	T.S. C	T.S. D	YRS A	YRS B	YRS. C	YRS D
Lowest Achieving	4	11	-2	8	4	5	22	18
Lower Achieving	5	12	-2	8	2	1	17	16
Middle Achieving	3	9	-5	3	2	-3	14	11
Higher Achieving	0	2	-7	0	4	-2	15	15
Highest Achieving	-2	-1	-3	2	-4	-6	15	14

The Lowest Achieving Students of the traditional school scored significantly above the national average in Schools B and D, slightly above the norm in School A, and slightly below the norm in School C. The Lowest Achieving Students of the year-round school scored significantly above the national average in Schools C and D, and slightly above the norm in Schools A and B in their district.

The Lower Achieving Students of the traditional calendar school scored very similar to the Lowest Achieving Students in comparison to the national average. Traditional Schools B and D scored significantly above the norm, School A scored slightly above the norm, and School C scored slightly below the norm. The Lower Achieving Students of the year-round school were also comparable to the Lowest Achieving Students. Year-Round Schools C and D scored significantly above the norm, and YRS A scored slightly above the norm, and YRS B indicated average, the same score as the norm. No year-round school scored below the norm in the Lowest and Lower Achieving Students category.

Traditional School B was the only school in the district to score significantly above the norm in the Middle Achieving Students Category. Traditional Schools A and D scored slightly above the national average, and Traditional School C scored slightly below the norm. Year-Round Schools C and D scored significantly higher than the national average in the Middle Achieving Students Category, YRS A scored slightly above the norm, and YRS B scored slightly below the norm.

Traditional School B scored slightly above the norm in the Higher Achieving Students category, Traditional School A and D scored average in comparison to the norm, and Traditional School C scored significantly below the norm. No Traditional

School scored significantly above the national average in the Higher Achieving Students category. Year-Round Schools C and D scored significantly above the national average in the Higher Achieving Students category. Year-Round School A scored slightly above the norm, and Year-Round School B scored slightly below then norm.

In the Highest Achieving Students category, Traditional School D scored slightly above the norm. Traditional Schools A, B, and C all scored slightly below the norm in this category. Year-Round Schools C and D both scored significantly above the norm in the Highest Achieving Students category. Year-Round Schools A and B scored slightly below the norm in this category.

One noted observation is the year-round school district did achieve significantly above the norm with the higher ability students whereas no traditional school achieved significantly above the norm in these categories. The scores for the lower ability students were more similar in both districts. However, over 50% of both calendar schools scored below the norm in the category of Highest Achieving Students. This is an unusually high number and a possible concern for educators.

It should also be noted that Traditional School C taught sixth-grade reading and Language Arts combined in a one-hour period whereas all other schools taught sixth-grade reading for one hour and Language Arts for one hour. All other schools in the sample had twice the amount of Reading/Language Arts as Traditional School C. This could be one explanation for students achieving below the norm in all categories.

Survey Results

Students from the year-round school and traditional school completed a survey that measured their attitude toward reading. There were 10 questions on the survey that the students answered about their feelings toward reading and books. The students responded Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD). Positively worded questions scored by assigning five points to SA, four points to A, three points to U, two points to D, and one point to SD. Negatively worded questions were scored by assigning five points to SD, four points to D, three points to U, two points to A, and one point to SA. Students that scored 39-50 were considered as having a positive attitude towards reading, 26-38 was considered a slightly positive attitude, 13-25 was considered slightly negative, and 1-12 was considered as a negative attitude. The reading attitude scores were then compared to the students' T-CAP scores from 2002 to identify a correlation between their reading attitude and the students' standardized test scores.

Consent forms were distributed to all students in the class of the traditional school and 17 out of 22 students returned the consent forms as a 77% return rate. Sixteen students and parents marked yes on the consent form while only one student and parent marked no, for not participating in the study. The study included 11 females and 5 males.

The students from the traditional school circled their responses on the ten-question survey in their reading class two days after the consent forms were distributed. Each question with responses by the actual number of students stratified by gender is graphed in detail in Figures 4-4 through 4-13 in Appendix D-1.

The survey responses from the traditional calendar school indicated that most of the students enjoyed receiving books as presents. It appears they do have preferred genres and enjoy reading these books. Half of the students stated that they did not read more during the summer than the school year. It can be assumed that the long summer break does not necessarily allow students to read more in their free time. Only three students felt that they did not do well on reading tests while the remaining students indicated a high self-concept in their ability on reading tests. Students that have confidence in their abilities generally do better on tests. The majority of the students indicated that their parents do not read with them. This does not necessarily mean the parents do not encourage reading, but it can be concluded the parents are not involved with their child's reading interests as they may have been in the student's primary or elementary years.

The results from the survey (see Table 4-2) showed that none of the students had an extremely high attitude toward reading. Four students, one male and three females demonstrated a positive attitude toward reading. Nine students, three males and six females scored a slightly positive attitude on their survey responses. Three students, one male and two females are considered as having a slightly negative attitude towards reading. A positive note to educators is the fact that no students demonstrated a negative attitude toward reading. Figure 4-14 shows the attitudes in a bar graph.

Table 4-2. Traditional school responses on the reading attitude survey.

Category	Positive Attitude	Slightly Positive Attitude	Slightly Negative Attitude	Negative Attitude
Males	1	3	1	0
Females	3	6	2	0
Total	4	9	3	0

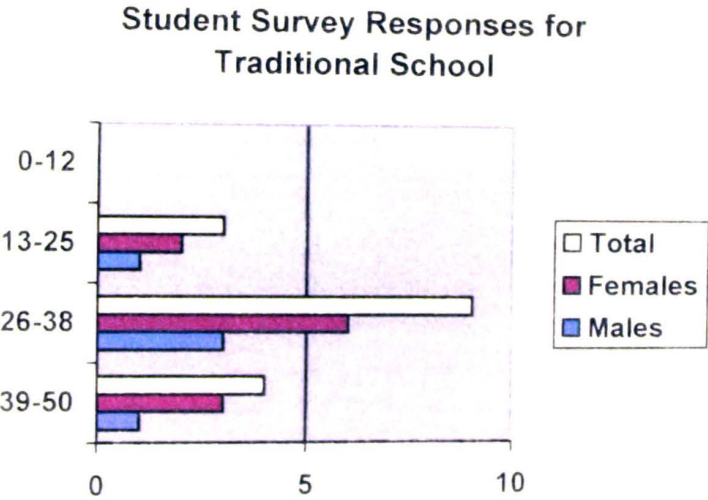


Figure 4-14. Survey results from the traditional calendar school.

The comparison of attitude among male scores to their scores on the T-CAP reading subtests is startling. In the graph below, the male students were ranked in the order of highest to lowest on the reading attitude surveys. When plotted, the reading scores did not follow the same pattern as the reading attitude scores. Student B had a slightly positive attitude towards reading, but scored below average on the 2002 T-CAP reading test. Student C scored the second highest of the sample on the test, but scored the third lowest on the reading attitude survey. It can be concluded that students may do well on the reading test, but not necessarily have a positive reading attitude. Students may also score low on the reading test, but have a positive reading attitude (see Figure 4-15).

**Comparisons of Male Students in
Traditional School on T-CAP
Scores and Survey Results**

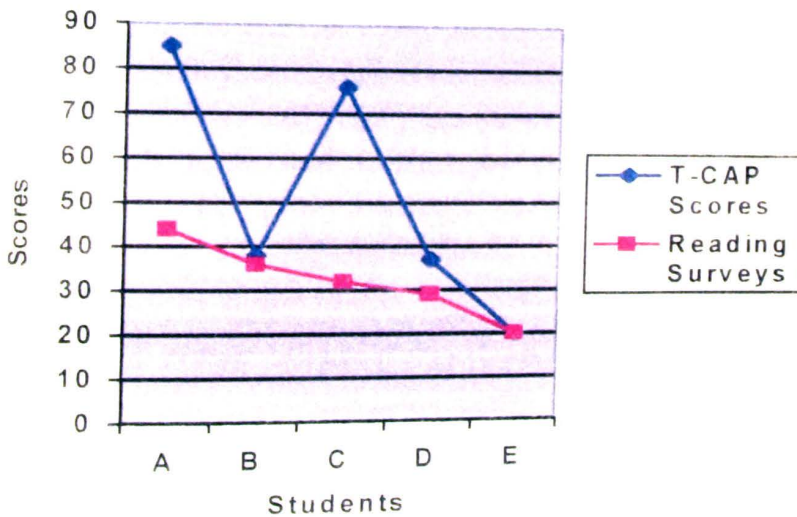


Figure 4-15. Traditional school male survey responses and test scores

The female students' differed results were varied. The females were also in a ranking order from highest to lowest on their reading attitude surveys, but their T-CAP results are not in that order. These female students may have a positive or neutral attitude in reading, but they scored low of the reading portion of the T-CAP test. Students may also have a negative attitude towards reading, but scored above average on their T-CAP test in reading (see Figure 4-16).

Comparison of Female Students in Traditional School on T-CAP Scores and Survey Results

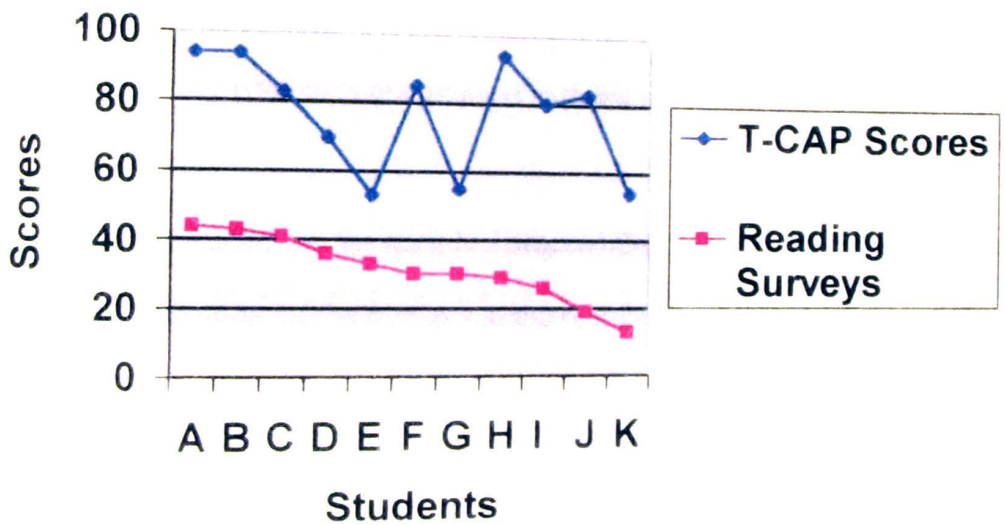


Figure 4-16. Traditional school female survey responses and test scores.

The consent forms were given to a reading class in the year-round school district with a wide range of academic reading ability. An administrator from this school district randomly selected the school and class. The reading class was held during first period, the same as the traditional calendar school. The class used both literature books and novels as their reading materials.

Consent forms were distributed to the class and 17 out of 23 students returned the consent forms, with a 74% return rate. All students and parents gave the researcher permission to conduct the survey and use the students' standardized test scores with the exception of one student; she and her parents chose not to participate in the survey. There were 9 females and 7 males who participated in the survey. Students from the year-round school participated in the survey two days after the consent forms were distributed. Questions and responses are graphed in detail in Figures 4-17 through 4-26 in Appendix D-2.

Only five of the students in the sample disagreed that they read for pleasure in their free time. The remainder of the students in the sample stated they do read in their leisure time. None of the students agreed with the statement that they read more in the summer than the school year. It can be concluded that their summer is shorter and does not allow extra time for pleasure reading. All of the students agreed or strongly agreed with doing well on reading tests. None of the students had a poor self-concept on their ability to succeed on reading tests. This self-confidence may impact students' ability to take reading tests. The majority of the students stated their parents did not read with them often. This was similar to the traditional school responses. None of the students

felt that it takes them a long time to read a book. They all disagreed or selected neutral on the survey, indicating they feel they can read a book in a feasible amount of time.

The results from the survey (see Table 4-3) showed that three students, one male and two females, had a positive attitude toward reading. Twelve students, six males and six females demonstrated a positive attitude toward reading. One male student demonstrated a slightly negative attitude towards reading. None of the students, as shown in the bar graph, demonstrated a negative attitude (see Figure 4-27).

Table 4-3 Year-round school responses on the reading attitude survey.

Category	Positive Attitude	Slightly Positive Attitude	Slightly Negative Attitude	Negative Attitude
Males	1	6	0	0
Females	2	6	1	0
Total	3	12	1	0

Student Survey Responses for Year-Round School

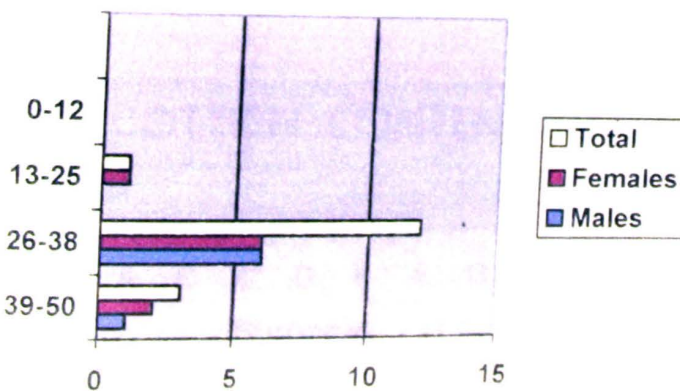


Figure 4-27 Year-round school survey responses.

Again, graphing the male attitudes and comparing to their T-CAP scores, the findings are similar to the traditional school. The male students were ranked and plotted in the order of highest to lowest on the reading attitude surveys. The T-CAP scores also naturally follow the same pattern. The higher the T-CAP scores, the higher the reading attitude. It is surprising that Student F, however, exhibited higher reading attitude score averages in relation to his low T-CAP score. Also, Student G had the lowest attitude score, but a relatively high T-CAP score (see Figure 4-28).

Comparison of Male Students in Year-Round School on T-CAP Scores and Survey Results

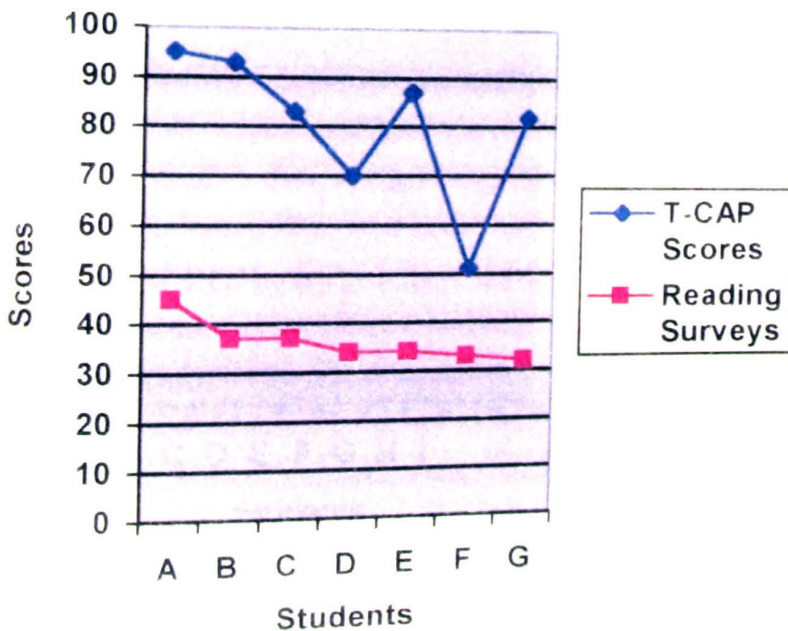


Figure 4-28. Year-round school male survey responses and test scores

The female students differed from the males in their results. The females were also in a ranking order from highest to lowest on their reading attitude surveys, but their T-CAP results are not in that order (see Figure 4-29). These female students may have a positive or neutral attitude in reading, but they scored low on the reading portion of the T-CAP test. Students may also have a negative attitude towards reading, but scored above average on their T-CAP test in reading. Three female students scored in the 99th percentile in reading, but their reading attitude scores were very different. It can be concluded that students may do exceptionally well on the T-CAP test, but this does not indicate a positive attitude towards reading.

Comparison of Female Students in Year-Round School on T-CAP Scores and Survey Results

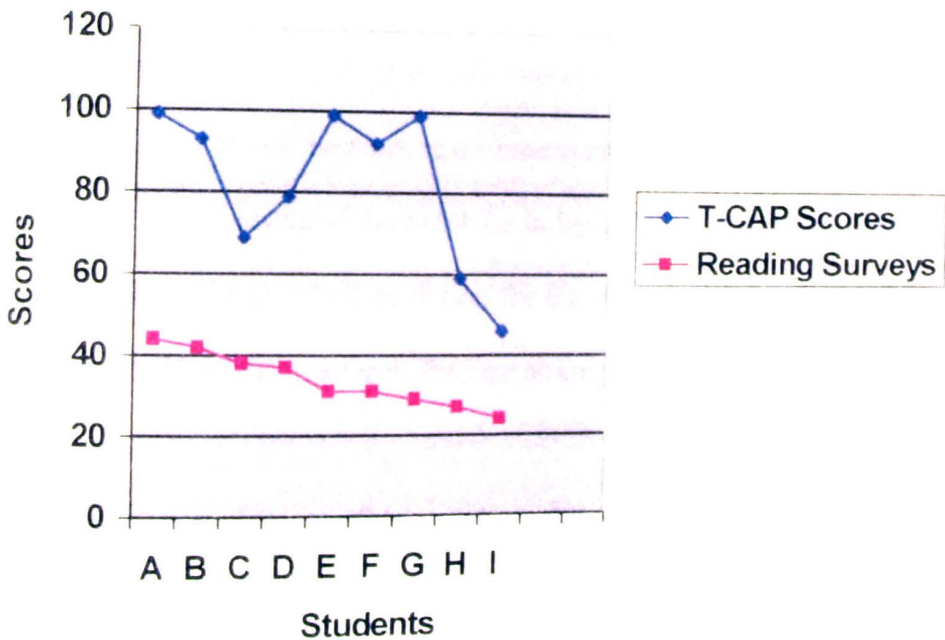


Figure 4-29. Year-round school female survey responses and test scores.

Statistical Results

Table 4-4. Results from *t*-test for independent samples.

Group	n	\bar{X} Of T- CAP	\bar{X} of Survey	S.D. of T- CAP	S.D. of Survey	DF	Critical T Test	Corr.	<i>t</i> -test for T-CAP	<i>t</i> -test for Su
T	16	71.75	31.56	20.79	9.15	30	1.697			
YRS	16	81	34.69	17.31	5.87	30	1.697	.55	.09	.13

The mean score on the T-CAP test of the traditional school sample was 71.75.

The mean score on the T-CAP test of the year-round school sample was 81. Despite the 10-point difference, the analysis of the *t*-test for independent samples indicated no significant difference. The standard deviation on the T-CAP scores means that there is a great difference among students' test scores. The traditional school had a greater difference than the year-round school.

The mean score on the reading attitude surveys of the traditional school sample was 31.56. The mean score of the reading attitude surveys of the year-round school sample was 34.69. The analysis of the *t*-test for independent samples indicated no significant difference. The standard deviation for the survey was not as varied as the test. The traditional school had the greater difference among scores than the year-round school.

The correlation coefficient of the reading attitude survey and individual standardized test scores was .55, indicating a weak correlation. A one-tailed direction indicated there was no significant difference between the results from the survey and the reading attitude survey in either district. These findings may be severely limited due to the sample numbers. The small sample may have impacted the data. If a larger sample

had been used, then a different outcome may have occurred. The entire results from the *t-test* can be found in Appendix E.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This study was conducted to identify any differences between year-round school and the traditional calendar school in comparison of national standardized test scores in reading and attitudes toward reading. Two school districts were involved in this study to identify any differences between the sixth grade results from the 2002 T-CAP standardized test in reading. The summary report indicated two out of four of the year-round schools did score significantly above the national average in all ability groups in reading on the T-CAP test. Two of the traditional calendar schools achieved significantly above the national average in three of the five ability groups in reading on the T-CAP test. The six remaining schools scored slightly above or below the national average in all categories. It appears there is no significant difference between the reading scores of the two samples based on the information from the summary report given to each school district in comparison with the national average.

A sample from each school district was selected to complete a reading attitude survey to compare reading attitudes between the two districts. The results from the survey were then compared to the individual student's reading T-CAP score from 2002 to identify any correlation between reading attitudes and test scores. Based on the research conducted on the results, the null hypotheses were accepted. There appears to be no significant difference between students' attitudes toward reading and reading test scores

in year-round schools and traditional calendar schools. The correlation between the T-CAP scores and reading surveys was .55 indicating a weak correlation.

Conclusions

Research Question One

The traditional and year-round school samples that were used in this study did not indicate a significant difference in comparison of national standardized test scores in reading from the 2002 T-CAP test for sixth graders. The Summary Report distributed to each district indicated the norm, NCE, and significant scores above/below the national average. Each school in both districts was compared and observations were made based on the test score results. Two year-round schools scored significantly above the national average in the Higher and Highest Achieving Students categories while no traditional calendar school scored significantly above the national average in the Higher and Highest Achieving Students categories. These results were based on the information in the T-CAP summary report given to the administrators of each district. Educators can infer that these schools are using reading strategies to improve reading skills for higher achieving students which can be used in any school to increase reading scores. The other categories and schools' scores remained relatively the same indicating no significant difference.

Research Question Two

The research from the *t-test* indicated no significant difference between the students' standardized reading tests and reading attitudes between the two school samples. The correlation between the T-CAP test scores and survey results was .55 indicating a weak correlation.

It appears there is little difference between students' attitudes toward reading and reading test scores based on the samples' results. Therefore, it can be concluded that students who attend year-round school will not necessarily score higher or lower on standardized test scores than students of traditional calendar schools. It can also be concluded that students who attend year-round schools will not necessarily have a more positive attitude towards reading compared to students of traditional calendar schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are proposed based on the data and results gathered from this study:

1. It is recommended that a larger sample of schools from both school calendars will be used in future studies.
2. It is recommended that a larger sample of students will participate in the reading attitude survey in future studies.
3. It is recommended that standardized test scores from several years be used in future studies.
4. It is recommended that school districts examine other schools to identify ways to improve reading test scores in all of the different ability groups.

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LIST OF REFERENCES

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A-1

Permission from the Institutional Review Board

Austin Peay State University Institutional Review Board

January 24, 2003

Kathryn Osborne
c/o Ann Harris
Education
APSU Box 4545

RE: Your application dated January 20, 2003 regarding study number 03-015: Sixth Grade Reading Achievement in Year-round Schools Versus Reading Achievement in Traditional Calendar Schools (Austin Peay State University)

Dear Ms. Osborne:

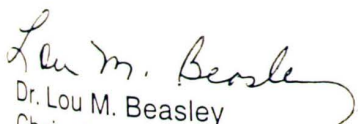
Thank you for your response to requests from a prior review of your application for the new study listed above. Your response was reviewed at the January 21, 2003, meeting of the Austin Peay Institutional Review Board.

This is to confirm that your application is now fully approved. The protocol is approved through one calendar year. The consent form as previously approved remains in effect. You must obtain signed written consent from all subjects.

You are granted permission to conduct your study as most recently described effective immediately. The study is subject to continuing review on or before December 2, 2003, unless closed before that date.

Please note that any changes to the study as approved must be promptly reported and approved. Some changes may be approved by expedited review; others require full board review. Contact Lou Beasley (221-7414; fax 221-7641; email: beasleyl@apsu.edu) if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,



Dr. Lou M. Beasley
Chair, Austin Peay Institutional Review Board

APPENDIX A-2

Permission from the Year-Round School District



Murfreesboro City Schools

Administrative Offices
Marilyn Mathis, Director of Schools
2552 South Church Street, Suite 100
Murfreesboro, TN 37127-3342
615-893-2313 Fax 615-893-2352

March 5, 2003

Austin Peay State University Institutional Review Board
Austin Peay State University
Clarksville, TN

To whom it may concern:

Katie Osborne has permission to conduct her graduate study in collaboration with the Murfreesboro City School System. It is our understanding that Ms. Osborne will be viewing reports of sixth grade TCAP scores and comparing those scores with Robertson County students' scores. In addition, Ms. Osborne will be administering a reading attitude survey to one of the classes in our district. It is also our understanding that Ms. Osborne will have signed consent forms from the parents before that survey is administered.

Murfreesboro City Schools appreciates the opportunity to work with Austin Peay State University and looks forward to a copy of the results obtained by Ms. Osborne so that they may be used to further excellence in education.

Sincerely,

Linda Arms Gilbert, Ed.D.
Associate Director for Instruction and Professional Development

cc: Marilyn Mathis
Ann Kelly

APPENDIX A-3

Permission from the Traditional Calendar School District

Robertson County Schools

Dr. Danny L. Weeks, Supervisor of Secondary Education
P.O. Box 130
Springfield, Tennessee 37172
Telephone (615) 384-5588 Fax (615) 384-9749


Tuesday, January 28, 2003

Katie Osborne
Robertson County Schools

Please accept this letter regarding your request to conduct a professional research study in the Robertson County School System. Based on the information outlined in your proposal, and with the approval from the Institutional Review Board, the Director of Schools has approved your request to conduct this research.

If my office may be of any assistance to you in the data collection process, please do not hesitate to contact me at any time.

Sincerely,



Dr. Danny L. Weeks

APPENDIX A-4

Consent Form

Consent to Participate in a Research Study **Austin Peay State University**

You are being asked to allow your child to participate in a research study. This form is intended to provide you with information about this study. You may ask the researcher listed below about this study or you may call the Office of Grants and Sponsored Research, Box 4517, Austin Peay State University, Clarksville, TN 37044, (931) 221-7881 with questions about the rights of research participants.

1. Title of Research Study:

Sixth Grade Reading Achievement in Year-Round Schools Versus Traditional Calendar Schools: Relationships of Attitudes Toward Reading

2. Principal Investigator:

Ms. Kathryn Osborne, White House Heritage School

Faculty Supervisor: Dr. Ann Harris, Austin Peay State University

3. The Purpose of the Research:

This research study is a requirement for the Degree of Education Specialist. Standardized test scores in reading are lower than they should be. A possible solution to help improve students' reading level is to change the structure of the school calendar. This research study also wants to see if reading attitudes differ in the two school districts. Students' attitude toward reading could possibly affect test scores. My school district is currently researching the year-round school calendar to see if it will benefit the students over the current regular calendar.

4. Procedures for this Research:

If you consent and your child agrees to participate in this research study, he or she will be given a reading attitude survey. The classrooms to be chosen for the survey will have similar characteristics such as reading at the same time of day, similar style, similar teaching strategies, and learning abilities. This reading attitude survey will be used to measure how students feel about reading. The scores from these surveys will compare attitudes toward reading in a year-round school versus a regular school. Only the students' responses will be recorded. Your child's name, school, or teacher will not be written down as part of the research project. These scores will then be compared to your child's 2002 TCAP test scores to identify any comparisons between reading attitudes and test scores.

5. Potential Risks or Benefits to You:

Your child does not have to answer any question on the survey that he or she does not wish to answer. You or your child may withdraw from participating in the survey at anytime. You can choose to not give permission for your child's scores to be used in this study.

6. Informed Consent Statement:

I have read the above and have been told what the study is about, why it is being done, and any benefits or risks involved. I agree to allow my child to participate in this study and understand that by agreeing to participate, I have not given up any of my human rights. I understand that I have the right to withdraw my consent and have my child stop participating at any time during the study and all data collected from me will be destroyed. If my child or I choose to withdraw, that choice will be respected and we will not be penalized or coerced to continue.

If I have questions about this study I may call Dr. Ann Harris (Professor, Education Department) at 931-221-7757 or Ms. Kathryn Osborne, (Researcher) at 615-672-0311.

Please indicate your choice by placing an **X and your initials** on the appropriate line.

 Yes, I agree to allow my child to participate in this study.

 No, I do not want my child to participate in this study.

Signature of Student

Date

Signature of Parent/Guardian

APPENDIX B

Reading Attitude Survey

Reading Attitude Survey

Directions: This is a survey to tell how you feel about reading. The score will not affect your grade in any way. You read the statements and choose one answer by circling the one that represents how you feel about the statement.

SD = Strongly Disagree
D = Disagree
U = Undecided

A = Agree
SA = Strongly Agree

1. I read in my free time for pleasure.

SD D U A SA

2. I like to receive books as presents.

SD D U A SA

3. I read more during the summer than the school year.

SD D U A SA

4. I do not like to read.

SD D U A SA

5. I do well on reading tests.

SD D U A SA

6. I have enough time to read for pleasure.

SD D U A SA

7. My parents read with me often.

SD D U A SA

8. I would rather be doing anything else than reading.

SD D U A SA

9. I have read one book I enjoyed in the past week.

SD D U A SA

10. It takes a long time for me to read a book.

SD D U A SA

APPENDIX C

System Summary Report

System Summary Report

This summary report is given to each school district in the state of Tennessee explaining the evaluation of the T-CAP test for each grade level and subtest.

Administrators and teachers use this information to plan the curriculum and devise teaching strategies for the next year.

The topics included in the summary report include General Interpretation, Observations, and the five achieving categories which the students are divided is graphed for easy interpretation. The General Interpretation sheet divides the students into five percentile groups: Lowest Achieving Students Local Percentiles 1-10; Lower Achieving Students Local Percentiles 11-25; Middle Achieving Students Local Percentiles 26-74; Higher Achieving Students Local Percentiles 75-89; and Highest Achieving Students Local Percentiles 90-99. Their scores categorize the students, and each category is an average of the students' scores. This average is then compared to the national average in each subtest. The plus and minus (-) values, given in National Curve Equivalent (NCE) units, show how far above or below the norm group the students scored. The difference numbers are considered educationally significant when the NCE difference is (+) or (-) 7 or more. The difference is one-third of an NCE standard deviation. "Significantly above average" is defined as +7 or more NCE units above the national norm group. "Significantly below average" is defined as -7 or more NCE units below the national norm group. "Average" is defined as -1, 0, or +1.

APPENDIX D-1

Survey Responses from the Traditional School Sample

Question One: I read in my free time for pleasure.

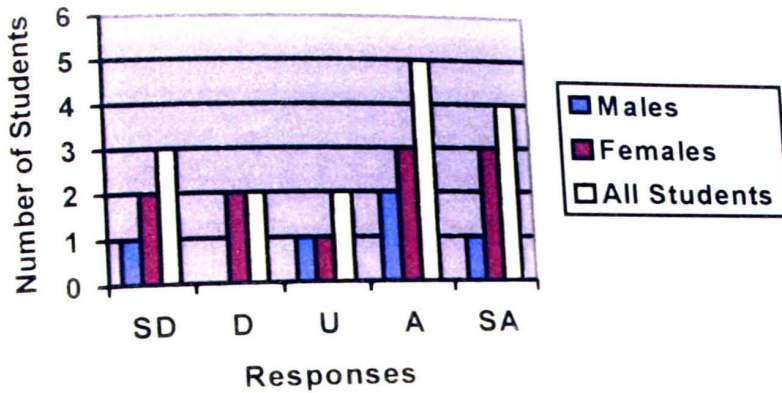


Figure 4.4. Traditional school question one survey responses.

Question Two: I like to receive books as presents

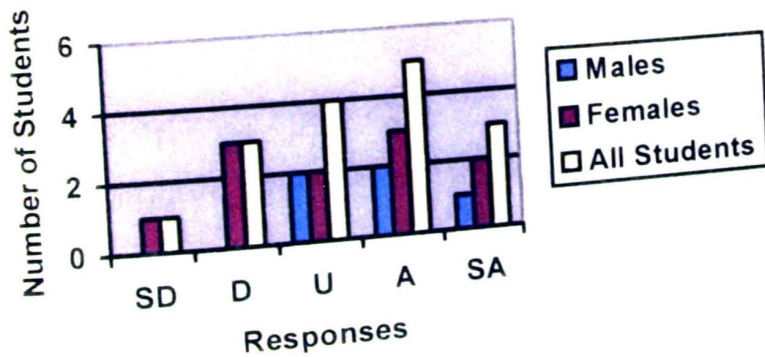


Figure 4-5. Traditional school question two survey responses.

Question Three: I read more during the summer than the school year.

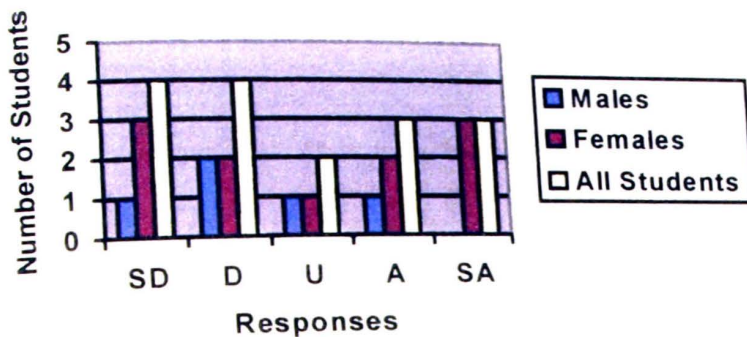


Figure 4-6. Traditional school question three survey responses.

Question Four: I do not like to read.

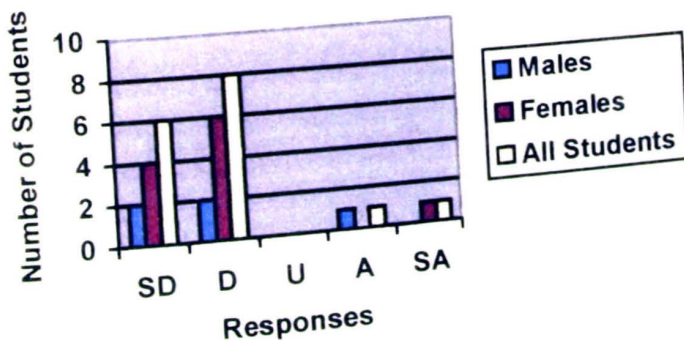


Figure 4-7. Traditional school question four survey responses.

Question Five: I do well on reading tests.

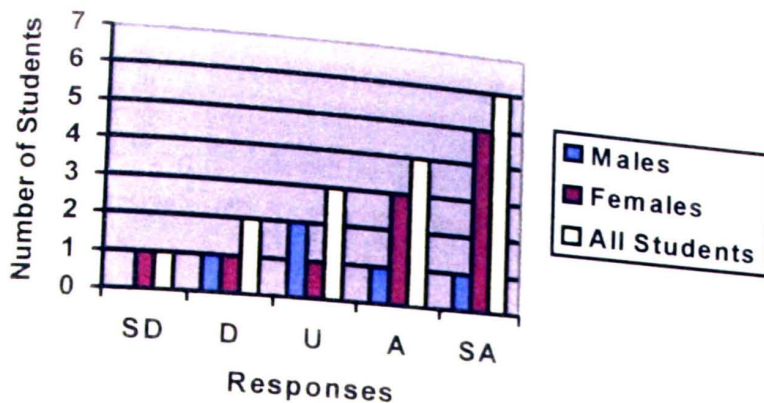


Figure 4-8. Traditional school question five survey responses.

Question Six: I have enough time to read for pleasure.

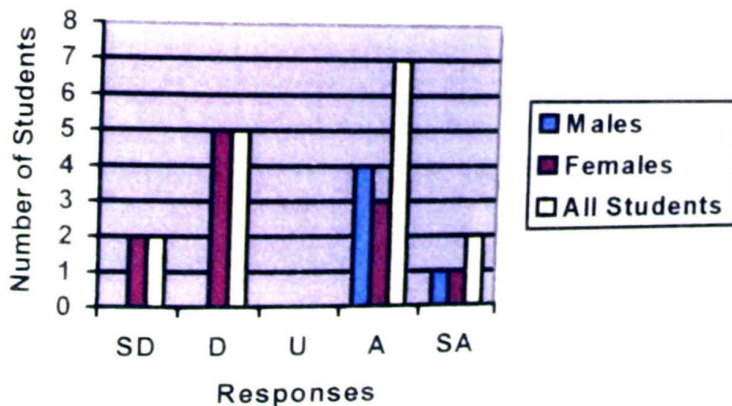


Figure 4-9. Traditional school question six survey responses.

Question Seven: My parents read with me often.

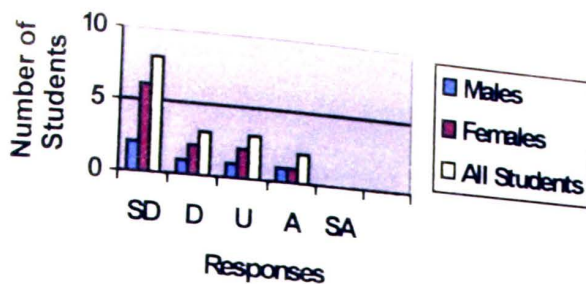


Figure 4-10. Traditional school question seven survey responses.

Question Eight: I would rather be doing anything else than reading.

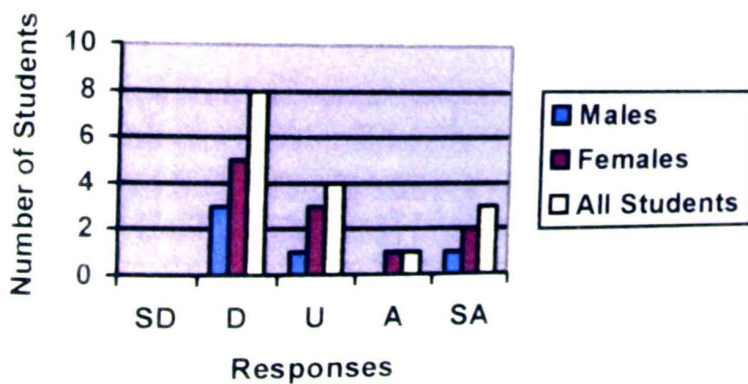


Figure 4-11. Traditional school question eight survey responses.

Question Nine: I have read one book I enjoyed in the past week.

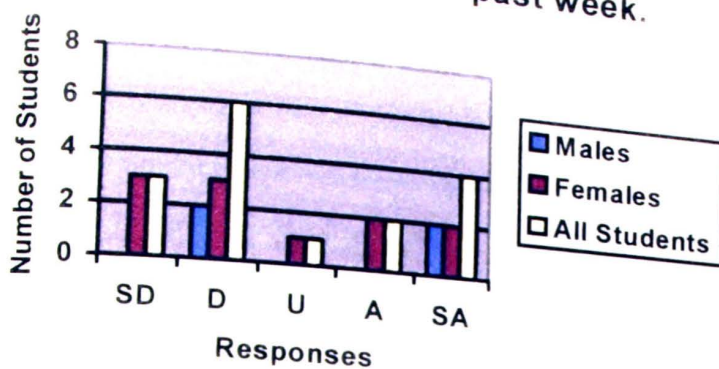


Figure 4-12. Traditional school question nine survey responses.

Question Ten: It takes a long time for me to read a book.

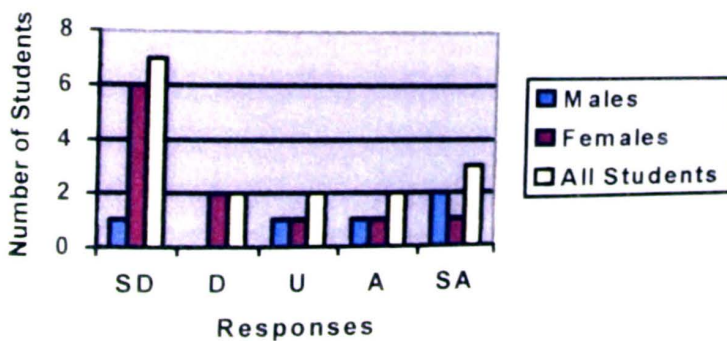


Figure 4-13. Traditional school question ten survey responses.

APPENDIX D-2

Survey Responses from Year-Round School Sample

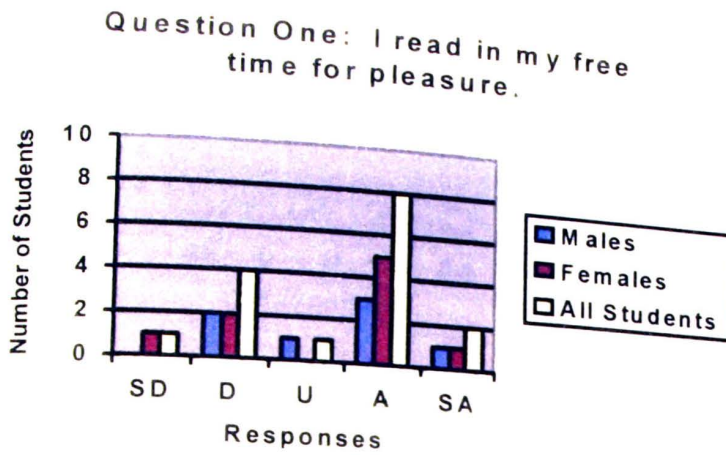


Figure 4-17. Year-round school question one survey responses.

Question Two: I like to receive books as presents

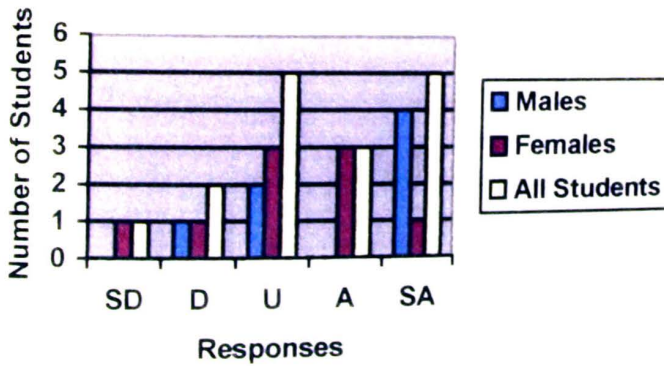


Figure 4-18. Year-round school question two survey responses.

Question Three: I read more during the summer than the school year.

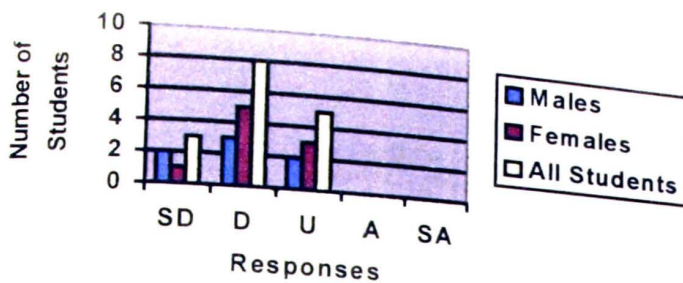


Figure 4-19. Year-round school question three survey responses.

Question Four: I do not like to read.

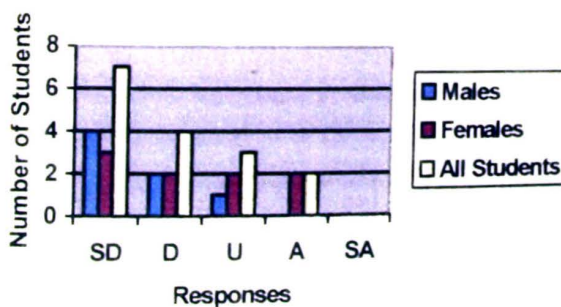


Figure 4-20. Year-round school question four survey responses.

Question Five: I do well on reading tests.

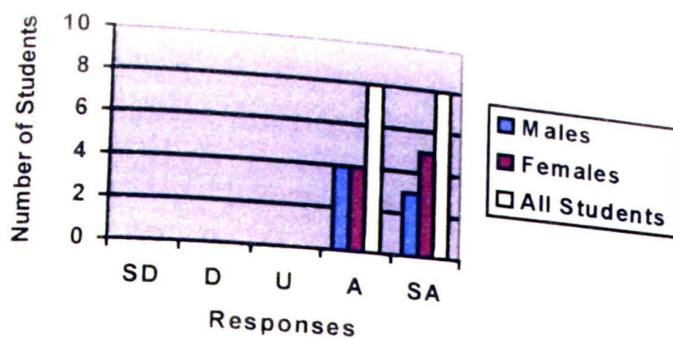


Figure 4-21. Year-round school question five survey responses.

Question Six: I have enough time to read for pleasure.

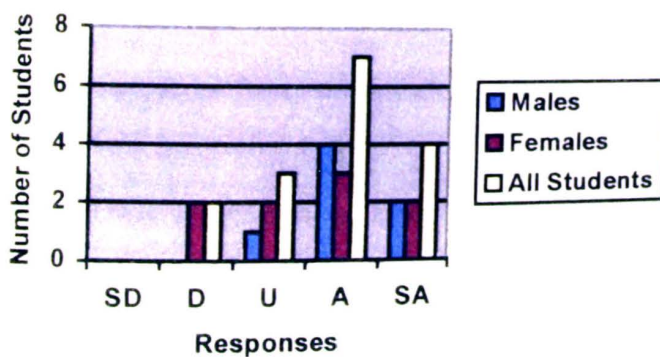


Figure 4-22. Year-round school question six survey responses.

Question Seven: My parents read with me often.

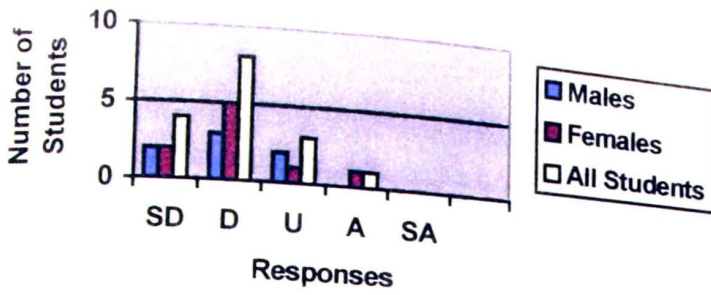


Figure 4-23. Year-round school question seven survey responses.

Question Eight: I would rather be doing anything else than reading.

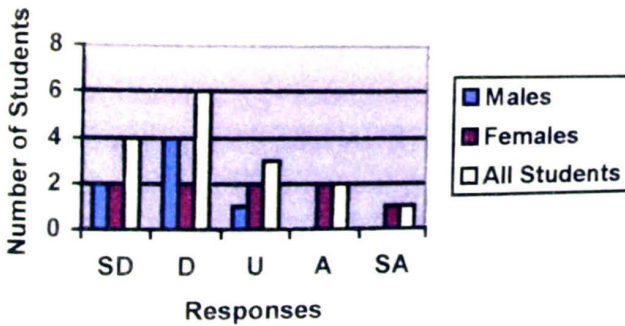


Figure 4-24. Year-round school question eight survey responses.

Question Nine: I have read one book I enjoyed in the past week.

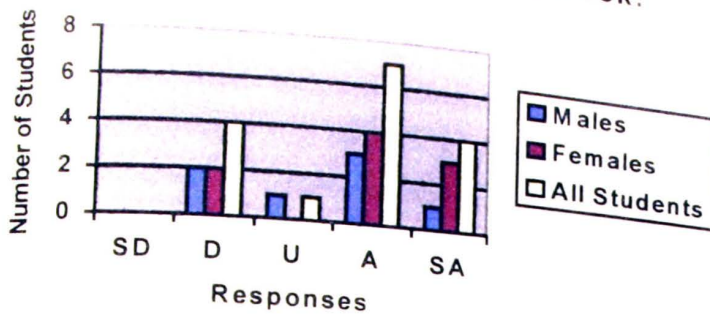


Figure 4-25. Year-round school question nine survey responses.

Question Ten: It takes a long time for me to read a book.

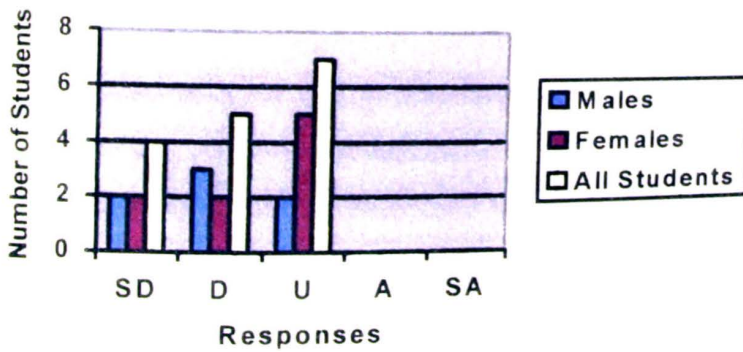


Figure 4-26. Year-round school question ten survey responses.

APPENDIX E

T-test Results

t-test Results

Student	Group	T-CAP	RAS
1	1	85	44
2	1	94	44
3	1	94	43
4	1	83	41
5	1	70	36
6	1	76	36
7	1	53	33
8	1	76	32
9	1	85	30
10	1	55	30
11	1	94	29
12	1	46	29
13	1	80	26
14	1	20	20
15	1	83	19
16	1	54	13
17	2	95	45
18	2	99	44
19	2	93	42
20	2	69	38
21	2	83	37
22	2	93	37
23	2	87	34
24	2	70	34
25	2	51	33
26	2	82	32
27	2	99	31
28	2	99	29
29	2	59	27
30	2	46	24
31	2	79	37
32	2	92	31

Correlation of T-CAP and Survey: .55

Traditional sample T-CAP mean: 71.75

Traditional sample Survey mean: 31.56

Year-round sample T-CAP mean: 81

Year-round sample Survey mean: 34.69

Traditional T-CAP S.D.: 20.79

Traditional Survey S.D.: 9.15

Year-round T-CAP S.D.: 17.31

Year-round Survey S.D.: 5.87

T-test for T-CAP: .09

T-test for Survey: .13

Ftest for diff of variances: .096

VITA

Kathryn is from Cross Plains, Tennessee, and graduated from East Robertson High School in 1993. She began Austin Peay State University in 1993 and received her Bachelor of Science Degree in Interdisciplinary Studies in 1997, Master's of Education in Curriculum and Instruction in 2000, and plans to receive her Education Specialist Degree in Elementary Education in 2003. She has taught five years in sixth grade in the Robertson County School System where she serves on Board committees for the County Spelling Bee, Year Round School, and Extended Education.