

Home environmental factors affecting students' academic performance in Abia State, Nigeria

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Abstract: The study determined some home environmental factors affecting the academic performance of students in Abia State, Nigeria. Survey research design was adopted for the study. Three research questions guided the study. The data were generated using structured questionnaire. A sample of 200 respondents from both junior and senior secondary school students and their parents were drawn through simple random sampling technique from secondary schools in the study area. Descriptive statistics example frequency, percentage and mean were used to analyze the data collected. The finding of the study revealed among others that none provision of adequate educational material by parents and non-chalant attitudes of some parents towards the education of their children as well as the socio-economic status of the student's family, all affect the students' academic performance. Also revealed by the study are possible way of amelioration which among others includes giving proper orientation to the parents, on the implication and consequences of the type of family they may decide to adopt on the child's overall being especially the child's academic performance. Based on the findings it was recommended that parents no matter their busy schedule should make out time to sit down with their children or wards and check their children's academic work, direct them where necessary, discuss the academic problems of their children with their teachers or school guidance counselors so as to detect the students problem early enough and tackle it before it affects the students.

Keywords: Home environment, Factors, Academic Performance

Introduction

A home is a place where one lives permanently, especially as a member of a family or household. It is a place of residence or refuge. A home is not a mere transient shelter. Its essence lies in the personalities of the people who live in it.

Home Environment is the surroundings, where one live. According to G.U.Anene (Anene, 2005) environment is the aggregate of all internal and external conditions affecting the existence, growth and welfare of organisms. It is an influence an individual came in contact with after the hereditary has been through the gene plasma. G.U.Anene explained that environment can be divided into physical, social and abstract environment. Physical environment is the objects or materials found in the home, school or community. It also includes the people like parents, siblings and peers (Anene, 2005).She also explained that the social environment is the social life, societies and club affecting the individual. Abstract environment is the reactions, feedback and the responses received on interactions with others. The author further explained that environment can also be classified as urban or rural environment. The focus of this study is on the home environmental factors affecting the academic performance of the students. This therefore, entails the objects, materials, parents, siblings, peers and social life that exists in the home in which the students find himself/herself. All the variables in the home that affect a person's existence, behavior and performance constitute the home environmental factors.

Academic Performance on the other hand is the outcome of education; it is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved the educational goals. According to G.Bossaert, S.Doumen, E.Bugse and K.Verschuerenc (Bossaert, Doumen..., 2011) academic achievement is commonly measured by examination or continuous assessment; however, there is a general agreement on how it

is best tested. In some countries, the achievement of school is measured by the academic performance index. In Nigeria, academic performance is measured majorly by the student's performance in external examinations like WEAC Examinations both Senior and Junior WEAC, NECO examinations and JAMB examinations.

O.C.Chukwudi (Chukwudi, 2013) discovered that individual differences in academic performance have been linked to differences in intelligence and personality. He explained that students with higher mental abilities as demonstrated by IQ test (quick learners) and those who are higher in conscientiousness (linked to effort and achievement motivation) tend to achieve highly in academic settings. Early academic achievement enhances later academic achievement. However, a number of factors contribute to that. It has also been discovered that certain factors can either influence or hinder the academic performance of students at any level of education. Such factors emanating from the school environment, curriculum planning and implementation, siblings/ Peer group influence, Home Environment eg parents, socialization patterns in the home, location of the home, modern gadgets at home and so on. The target of this study is on home environmental factors affecting the academic performance of students. The student's home environment can either accelerate or hinder a student's academic performance.

A home has earlier been defined as a place of residence or refuge when it refers to a building. It is usually a place in which an individual or a family can live and store personal property. K.Magnuson (Magnuson, 2007) pointed out that parent's academic socialization is a term describing the way parents influences student's academic achievement by shaping students skill, behaviors and attitude towards school. He further explained that parent's influences student through the environment and discourse parents have with their children. This means that academic socialization can be influenced by parent's social economic status. Thus highly educated parents tend to have more stimulating learning environments.

C.Ajila and A.Otutola (Ajila, Otutola, 2000) stated that parent of all classes realized the importance of education. They also pointed out that different families create environment that influences children's intellectual growth and educational motivation in different ways. The function of the family among others includes rearing, protecting and educating the children and such function can be performed in the home, thus a home is an essential agent of education.

Home environments influence adolescents' aspiration. The social upbringing of the child begins from home (family). It is the home that makes the child to identify himself with the society, culture, religion or social class. Thus the home continues to exercises a strong influence over the child's live and academic performance in the school. It has to be noted that homes differ in terms of their significances in the social orders. For instance, some have more prestige, money etc. while some have wider experience and knowledge of how to operate within the society or school environment.

C.Anene (Anene, 2005) stated that the home is the single most significant environmental factor in enabling children to develop the trust, attitude and skills that will help them to learn and engage positively with the world- a process that starts at birth, if not before. It is the foundation from which babies and young children and youths can grow to achieve their full potential. Good home learning environment provides the love, security, simulation, encouragement and opportunities that help children to flourish. The quality of parent-child relationship is fundamental to children's longer –term development. Warmth, encouragement and an absence of hostility are key element in positive home environment.

C.Nanalee (Nanalee, 1997) pointed out that as children grow beyond babyhood, a positive home learning environment provides social interaction, attention and activities which promote the development of positive attitudes to learning, as well as the acquisition of physical, intellectual, language, social and emotional skills. The amount that parents talk to babies and young children and the way they talk to them have been shown to have a direct positive impact on children's linguistic and intellectual ability. At the age of 3 and 10 parents can provides the building blocks for literacy and cognitive development by; chatting as much as possible during normal daily life, using a wide vocabulary praising rather than criticizing, talking to children about things, using language with a high information content, giving children choices rather than simply directing them, listening and

responding to what children say. Research has established that parents' socio-economic background, including education and income, has a substantial impact on children's outcomes. Ample evidence also documents the influence of parenting behaviors on children's development from babyhood to late adolescence.

It is not out of place to imagine that the type of family, parents' level of education and their socio-economic background can have possible effects on the academic performance of children in school. What so ever affect the development environment of children would possibly affect their education or disposition to it (Hill, 2004). Parental status is one of such variable when a woman's nutritional status improves, so too does the nutrition of her young children.

Education being one other major means of providing an opportunity in life and belong to a suitable social class, modern Nigeria family now plays crucial roles in the performance of children in school. It is widely recognized that many factors are involved in child's academic performance such factors as parental education level, occupation, income, social class and type of parenthood for instance the socio-economic characteristics of the family in school. They have a bearing also on the duration of his stay and achievement at school. The type of family and level of parents education and their socio-economic status influence the choice of school they place their children. N.E.Hill (Hill, 2004) pointed out that socio economic status of parents has some influence on the academic performance of children.

Children from families with low socio-economic status are at a greater risk of hunger, homeless, sickness, physical and mental disabilities, violence, teen parenthood, family stress and educational failure. Student from low socio economic background that encounter these environmental factors are four times more likely to have learning disabilities than students from high socio economic background while a combination of these environmental factors accelerate academic success. A student, who has not eaten for days and has clothes that do not fit, cannot maintain focus in a classroom. G.U.Anene (Anene, 2005) argues that students from high social economics status compared to students from low social economic status families that students coming from low socio economic background are not provide the same tools as the students from wealthy families, they are entering schools already behind those not living in similar conditions. Similarly it is believed that factors such as malnutrition lack of motivation in homes, spousal violence, and single parents as well as impoverished home environment affects the development of intellectual ability negatively (Mario, 2006). This means that students from low socio-economic backgrounds tend to be below or just an average in their intellectual development particularly when this phenomenon is accessed in terms of scores or tests.

Statement of Problems

Good education does not happen by chance. It is a product of effective teaching and learning coupled with the effort of the teacher, the school, the students, parents and their various home environments. Often a time the blames on the poor performance of students in school are shifted to the teachers and the school authorities.

Most families in our society seem not to give adequate attention to the education of their children. It appears some of the parents have erroneous notion about the performance of their children, they do not know and seem to fulfill their role of guidance and encouragement in the child's performance in schools. Some people also have the notion that the mass failure or success in schools could be traced back to the teachers and the school authorities. While other people see socio-economic status of the family as an influence to the child's academic performance.

However, some research works have revealed that the performance of the students is a joint effort of both the school authorities and that of the parents in different home environment.

This calls for further research to find out the causes of the poor performance of the students and then proffer solution to that. In Abia state for instance, some students and parents have the notion that the factors responsible for the re-occurrence massive failure of student in junior and senior West African School Certificate Examinations (WASCE) is the factor emanating from the school authorities and the teachers alone. Some students even go to special Centre's while few enlightened parents maintained

that there are some factors in student's home environment which also contribute to that. It is on this premise that this study was set out to identify some of the home environmental factor affecting the students' academic performances and proffer solution to that.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to identify the home environmental factors affecting the academics performances of student in Abia State Post-Primary Schools. Specifically, the study determined:

- the present academic performances of students in junior and senior West African School Certificate Examination (WASCE) examination;
- the home environmental factors responsible for the performances;
- suggest ways of achieving better performance.

Research Questions

1. How do you describe the academic performance of the students in the senior and junior WASCE in the recent years?
2. What are the home environmental factors that contributed to the performances?
3. What are the possible ways of enhancing the academic performance of the students?

Methodology

The design of the study was survey and the study area is Abia State, Nigeria.

The population for the study comprised four (4) main groups of respondents namely JSS111 and SS111 students in Abia State secondary schools, the parents of the students and the secondary school principals. Records available in Abia state statistical year book revealed that there was a total enrolment of 23684 Junior Secondary School 3 students (JSS3), 18576 Senior Secondary School 3 Students (SS3) during the 2011/2012 academic. Also there were 220 schools and 220 school principals. According to the chairman of the Parents/Teachers Association of the corresponding schools there were 42260 parents of both JSS3 and SS 3 students. (Abia State Statistical Year book, 2012)

Sample and Sampling Techniques

In Abia state secondary schools system, 5 model secondary schools were purposively selected based on the population of the schools. The populations of the JSS 3 students in the 5 models schools were 100 students while that of the SS 3 students were 200. 5 principals of the selected model secondary schools were also involved in the study; however, the principals of the schools were used during the preliminary studies to determine the present academic performance of the students i.e. (no.1 objective of this study). The report from the principals academic records showed that the academic performance of the student were poor. Then 20% of the population of the JSS3 and 40% of SS3 students in the school were determined respectively and then selected randomly for the study. Also studied were the parents of the selected students. The sample then comprised 20 junior secondary school students and their parents (40), and 80 senior secondary school students and their parents (160), making a total sample size of 200 respondents randomly selected from the population.

Instruments for the Study

The instrument was 20 items structured questionnaire which were in four (4) sections – A, B, C and D. The question was developed after an extensive review of literature. Section A collected information on the personal data of the respondents. Section B was designed to collect information on the academic performance of the students. Section C was designed to collect information on the home environmental factors affecting the academic performance of students while section D collected information on the suggestion/possible ways of enhancing the academic performance of the students in the home. The instrument was on four (4) point scale and score as follows: Strongly Agreed (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) = 2, Strongly Disagree (SD) = 1

Validation and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by two experts from the department of Home Economics/Education. The reliability of the instrument was established through test-retest method. Ten copies of the instrument were administered to the same group of students who were not part of the study twice within a time lag of two weeks. The data collected from the two were then correlated in order to determine the coefficient of the stability, using spearman's correlation coefficient. The result yielded a coefficient of 0.67.

Method of data collection

The 200 copies of the structured questionnaire were administered by the researcher and two trained research assistant by hand to the respondents. After 2 days interval the researcher and the research assistant collected the completely filled questionnaires. Out of the two hundred (200) questionnaires distributed. All the copies of the questionnaire were returned by the students giving a return rate of 100 percent.

Data analysis techniques

Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using frequency table, percentage and mean. Based on the four point scale namely strongly Agreed (SA) = 4, Agree (A) = 3, Disagree (D) =2, Strongly Disagree (SD) =1, a mean of 2.50 was taken as the minimum acceptable mean score which an item will score before it is accepted. Any mean below 2.50 will be rejected while mean from 2.50 and above will be accepted.

Results and discussion

Table 1

The Mean Response of the Respondents on the Home Environmental Factors Affecting the Academic Performance of the Students.

S/N	Home Environmental Factors	Mean \bar{x}	Remarks
1	Late enrolment of the student in a good school.	3.03	A
2	None provision of adequate education materials/supervision of the students' academic work when return from school.	3.60	A
3	Poor Parents/students relationship in the home.	2.95	A
4	None chalant attitude of Parental towards the education of the student.	3.57	A
5	Socio-economic status of the student's family has influence on the students' academic performance.	3.20	A
6	The income level of the family determines the type of the school the child attends.	3.15	A
7	The adequacy of the provision of necessary school materials to the students affects the student's academic performance.	3.38	A
8	The socio-economic status of the family influences a child's self-esteem and confidence in school.	2.72	A
9	The family structure of the student can affect the academic performance of the student.	3.59	A
10	A broken home can affect a student academic performance.	3.50	A
11	The household size can affect the academic performance of a student	3.57	A
12	Disagreement between parents can affect a student academic performance.	3.10	A

Key: X=Mean Response of the Respondents, A= Acceptable mean score.

In the above table, the respondents agreed that all the 12 home environmental factors above affect the academic performance of the students as revealed by their mean scores which were all up to and above the acceptable mean score of 2.50 with item no. 2 having the highest score of 3.60. (Table 1).

Table 2

Mean Response of the Respondents on the Solutions to the Home Environmental Factors Affecting the Academic Performance of Students.

S/N	Solutions	Mean \bar{x}	Remarks
1.	Adequate Provision of the student's educational needs, teaching, and supervision of the students work at home by parents can enhance the student's academic performance.	3.45	A
2.	Educated and high income earner parents can provide the educational needs of the student.	2.84	A
3.	Family size and Parental attitudes (interest) towards the student's academic work/activities enhances student's academic performance.	3.10	A
4.	Existence of Cordial relationship between a student's parents motivates the student to study hard.	2.72	A
5.	Early enrolment of the students in a good school by parents can enhance his/her academic performance.	3.10	A
6.	The existences of cordial relationship e.g. unity, Love and care in the student's family can enhance student's academic performance.	3.44	A
7.	The academic level of the student's parents and positive attitude towards education can enhances the student's academics performances.	2.84	A
8.	Provision of modern gadgets at home and good communication network in the home enhances the student's academic performances.	3.40	A

In the above table, all the home environmental factors identified can enhance the students' academic performances. This is shown vividly by their means scores which were all above the acceptable means scores. However item no. 13 which deals with the adequate provisions of the student's educational materials, supervision of their work at home by their parent motivates the students to work harder and this enhances their academic performances. (Table 2).

Summary of the findings

1. None chalet attitude of some parents towards their child's education and Late enrolment of the student in a good school affects the academic performance of the student.
2. None provision of adequate education materials/supervision of the students' academic work when return from school by parents affects the academic performance of the student.
3. Parents/students relationship in the home.
4. Socio-economic status of the student's family has influence on the student's academic performance.
5. The income level of the family determines the type of the school the child attends.
6. The adequacies of the provision of necessary school materials to the students have remarkable influence on the student's academic performance.
7. The socio-economic status of the family influences a child's self-esteem and

- confidence in school.
8. The family structures of the student can affect/influence the academic performance of the student.
 9. A broken home can affect a student academic performance.
 10. The household size of a student can affect or influence his academic performance.
 11. The existence of a cordial relationship between parents, children and siblings can enhance a student academic performance.

Discussion of findings

The study investigated the home environmental factors affecting the academic performance of the students in Abia State, Nigeria. In table 1, the result indicated that a number of home environmental factors affect the academic performance of students. However, of all the factors, the none provision of adequate educational materials/supervision of the students' academic work when return from school with a mean score of 3.60 is the highest. This shows the degree of importance on the parents being able to provide adequate educational materials to their children/wards and making out time to check the students' academic work from time to time. This finding is in agreement with C.Ajila and A.Olutola (Ajila, Olutola, 2000) who identified and categorized problems of inadequate supply of students with adequate facilities for school work as problem traceable to students' problems caused by parents and society at large and problems of government policies and funding of education.

This is also in support with G.U.Anene (Anene, 2005) who opined that families should provide their children and wards with adequate educational materials as well as make out time to supervises or look into their academic work when they are back from schools. This practice motivate students to work hard in school so that their parents will not sold them at home when they open their books at home and discover that they are not doing well academically in school. It will also help parents to discover the subjects the student is finding difficult so that arrangements can be made to give remedial studies in those weak subject areas before it becomes too late.

The findings also indicated that a number of home environmental factors can enhance the academic performances of students. Such factors like provisions of adequate educational materials to the students, teaching, and supervision of the students work at home by parents, Enrolment of the students in a good school, the existences of cordial relationship, Love and care in the student's family, the academic level of the student's parents and positive attitude towards education, provision of modern gadgets at home and good communication network in the home among others, all contributes immensely to the students' academic performances. This implies that home environment plays vital role in the children's academic performance. The findings of the study are in line with C.Nanalee (Nanalee, 1997) who stated that the provisions of educational materials and stimulating environment can enhance the students' academic performance. Also O.C.Chukwudi (Chukwud,i 2013) observed that parents with high educational background tend to motivate their children to have interest in their academic work; this also enhances the performance of students in school. Magnuson (Magnuson, 2007) pointed out that siblings and peer group influence at home and provisions of modern electrical gadgets at home like television, radios, home videos, tape recorders, computer systems and so on also promote the academic performance of the students.

The home has a great influence on the students' psychological, emotional, social and economic state. C.Ajila and A.Olutola (Ajila, Olutola, 2000) stated that the home affects the individual since the parents are the first socializing agents in an individual's life. This is because the family background and context of a child affect his reaction to life situations and his level of performance. Although, the school is responsible for the experiences that make up the individual's life during school periods, yet parents and the individual's experiences at home play tremendous roles in building the personality of the child and making the child what he is. S.M.Ichado (Ichado, 1998) concluded that the environment in which the student comes from can greatly influence his performance in school. Although, the home environment or family has been recognized as having a lot of influence on the academic performance of students, C.Ajila and A.Olutola (Ajila, Olutola, 2000) pointed out that other aspects of parental environment such as the structure of the family have been grossly neglected yet they have great influence on the academic performance of the students. S.M.Ichado (Ichado, 1998) noted that parents'

constant disagreement affects children emotionally and this could lead to poor academic performance in school.

The family lays the psychosocial, moral and spiritual foundations in the overall development of the child. While the mother's significant role in this cannot be over-emphasized. Studies on father-child relationship suggest that the presence of a father in the home influences significantly the development of a child (Agulanna, 1999). Thus, parenthood is a responsibility requiring the full cooperation of both parents who must ensure the total development of their offspring(s). Structurally, a family is either broken or intact. A broken family in this context is one that is not structurally intact for various reasons death of a parent, divorce, separation, desertion and illegitimacy in which case, the family was never completed (Conkline, 1996). This analysis becomes necessary because life in a single parent family can be stressful for both the child and the parent. Such families are faced with the challenges of diminished financial resources. These conditions are not conducive for effective parenting. This is because when the single parent is overburdened by responsibilities and by their own emotional reaction to their situation; they often become irritable, impatient and insensitive to their children's needs thus resulting to poor academic performance of the child.

Conclusions

As was pointed out earlier, good education does not happen by chance. It is a product of effective teaching and learning coupled with the conscious effort of the teacher, the school, the students, parents and their various home environments. Therefore, a child for excellent academic performance requires in addition to other factors a good home environment. Children vary in their ability and attitude to learn, parents should therefore recognize this and attend to their children as an individual. They should also try to establish and maintain a good home environment where love, hardworking and excellence are encouraged in order to bring out the children's best academic performance.

Recommendations

Based on the result of the findings of study, the following recommendations among others are made:

1. Parents should provide their children/wards with essential materials that will help them improve on their academic performance.
2. The principals of post primary schools in the state should discuss/educate parents on the importance of providing adequate learning materials as well as creating learning environments in their homes to their children. This could be discussed in the Parent/Teachers Association meetings.
3. The three tiers of government in Nigeria should establish and equip more adult education centres for the training of illiterate parents; this will improve the academic level of some illiterate parents so that they will know the necessary roles they should play in the enhancement of their children's academic performance.
4. Parents should endeavor to encourage and give their children/wards adequate time to read and do their home works at home rather than engaging them with domestic works and watching of non-educational movies most of the time.
5. Literate parents/busy parents should squeeze out time out of their tight schedules to stay with their children and check their academic progress.
6. Parents should make out time to reach out with their children's teachers from time to time to update them with their children's academic progress. This will help identify the student's academic problems so as to handle it promptly before it affects the students.

If the above recommendations are strictly adhered to, the problem of poor academic performance of students will be minimized if not totally eradicated.

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