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**The Impact Of Good Parenting On The Intellectual Arousal
And Cognitive Development Of The Child:
Implications For The Effective Management Of The
Universal Basic Education (Ube) Programme In Nigeria**

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ABSTRACT

This paper focused on the role that good parenting can play in intellectual arousal and cognitive development of the child and how this can help in the effective implementation and management of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria. The population for the study were students in the Junior Secondary School. Using the random sampling method, 10 schools were selected from the three senatorial districts in Delta State. Still using the same random sampling, 200 students were selected. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. So copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the 200 students. From the data gathered, it was found that many of them do not receive good parenting as a result of the type of family they belong. The families pay more attention to the material needs of the children than involving themselves in stimulating the love for academic pursuit. As a result of this, many of the children do not have that inner drive or zeal for academic pursuit; thereby not realising the value of school education and personal effort. The paper concluded that if the UBE programme, indeed the entire school system is to succeed, parents must be alive to the responsibility of stimulating in their children the zeal for academic matters.

INTRODUCTION: Reading through journal articles, newspapers, listening to news during news broadcasts by media houses, one is bombarded with ills which are perpetuated by learners in the school system. Such ills range from violence to vandalization of school property, truancy and overwhelming involvement in examination malpractices. While not saying all children in the school system are bad, the extent to which these ills affect the school system is detestably high. Hence many educationists and well-meaning Nigerians have been concerned in trying to find the root-causes of these problems with a view to proffering solutions to them. This is very necessary now particularly with the introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria. Amongst the objectives of the UBE programme as contained in the National Policy on Education (2004) are:

(i) acquisition of literacy, numeracy, life skills and values for life-long education and useful living

(ii) to develop in the entire citizenry, a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion

These are laudable objectives which when achieved will be of benefit to the learners as well as the larger society especially as it is universal, compulsory and free. However, it is one thing to design a programme and another matter entirely for the persons for whose sake the programme has been designed, to make use of the opportunity in full.

A school system populated by highly committed and motivated learners can easily help a society to achieve its educational goals. A look at the school system shows otherwise. A school system having committed learners will be relatively free from the ills mentioned at the beginning of this write-up. Much is expected from parents if the stated UBE objectives are to be realized. The Nigerian society, like all other societies in the world, has witnessed so many changes. Some of these changes include political social and economics. Some of the effects of economic changes in the Nigerian society include high level of poverty and subsequent involvement of women in the workforce (UNICEF, 2001). This leads to what is known as dual-income families (Schaefer, 2005) in family life. With such changes, also

come changes in the parenting which children are given in the family, as children are likely to spend more time alone rather than with the mother.

Family life in present day Nigerian society has also been affected by modernity and urbanization. With modernity come changes in values and life-styles. The mass media has contributed a lot towards these changes. Television sets are common household items. With the influx of second-hand television sets, it is now within the reach of every household. Even when any household does not have, the children in that family can readily view it either at a neighbor's house or in any of the video rental clubs/shops that abound in almost all corners of the street. In some states of the federation, for example, in Delta State, almost all major towns have giant public televisions that air programmes nearly 24 hours. According to the Nigerian Demographic and Health Survey (NDHS 1999), in urban areas as much as 58% of the population own TV and Radio sets while in the rural areas, up to 14% of the population own sets.

This in effect means that children may spend a considerable time watching television programmes: If this happens, televisions may be playing the role of parents. It is possible that these changes have negatively affected the type of parenting that parents give to their children which in turn may have affected the children negatively. This may also have been responsible for the negative behaviours and lack of academic commitment among learners.

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this paper is to examine the type of parenting that children receive in contemporary Nigeria and to examine how much influence or otherwise, it may have on children's intellectual arousal and cognitive development. This becomes necessary because the success of the UBE programme, indeed the entire system of education is very much dependent on having students who are expected to have high appetite for academic consumption.

The role of the family in the academic arousal in the learner: Parents who want their children to be academically focused are likely to involve them in activities that stress academic activities (Schunk, 2008). The formative years of the child is very important

and how parents get involved in all aspects of the child's school could make or mar the zeal for academic pursuit. As noted by Hill & Craft (2003) and Masten & Coatsworth (1998), when parents attend school functions, contact the school about their children, monitor and help their children with their homework and project, they are communicating strong educational values to their children as well as conveying the value of effort. Baumrind (1989) identified three styles of parenting -- authoritative, authoritarian and permissive. The authoritative parents provide children with warmth and support. They have high demands such as high expectation for achievement but provide support and encouragement through good communication, explanations and encouragement of independence. The second style is where the parents are strict and assert power. There is no communication between them and the children. In the third type, parents are moderately responsive but lax in demands and tolerant of misbehavior. Of these three styles of parenting, there is positive relationship between authoritative style and meaningful learning (Spera, 2005). Meaningful learning occurs when there is personal involvement (cognition) and feelings. And is self-initiated. The net result of such meaningful learning is that it is pervasive. It is pervasive in the sense that it affects learner's behavior, attitude and personality (Rogers & Frieberg, 1994). This is to say that meaningful learning which is a result of the inner drive for acquiring knowledge, positively affects the learner as everything about him changes for the better. If this is the case, then such a learner will not be involved in negative activities that will not only negatively affect him but also negatively affect others as well as the school. This is because his zeal for academic pursuit occupies him so much that there is no time to engage in any negative activity.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS: The following research questions are designed to guide the research. These are:

- (1) Are many families' single or dual income families in Nigeria?
- (2) Does family type positively or negatively affects parents playing their roles as authoritative parents to their children?

- (3) When parents fail to play their roles as authoritative parents, does it negatively affect the intellectual and cognitive development of their children?

METHODOLOGY

Population and Sample: The populations for this study were JSS111 students drawn from different secondary schools across Delta State. The schools are government owned otherwise known as public schools. The schools were randomly selected from the three (3) senatorial districts in Delta State. Three schools were selected from Delta North, four (4) from Delta Central and three (3) from Delta South, making a total of ten (10) schools. Still using the same random sampling technique, twenty (20) students were selected from each of these schools. This brought the total sampled students to two hundred (200).

Instrument: The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire. The questionnaire contained ten (10) items with alternative responses provided. Copies of the questionnaire were made and distributed to the 200 students. The questionnaire contained the following items and respondents were required to tick the answer that corresponds to their response.

- (1) What is your mother's occupation?
(a) Trading (b) Teaching (c) Banking (d) Civil-Servant (e) Full-Time housewife
- (2) Do you come home with your mother after school?
(a) Yes (b) No
- (3) When does your mother arrive home finally for the day?
(a) 5-6p.m (b) 6-7p.m (c) 7-9p.m
- (4) When does your father return home?
(a) 5-6p.m (b) 6-7p.m (c) 7-9p.m
- (5) Does your father provide food, clothing, school fees and other things you need?
(a) Yes (b) No
- (6) Do your parents go through your school-work and help with your assignment?
(a) Yes (b) No
- (7) Do your parents take time to visit your school to know of your progress in school?
(a) Yes (b) No
- (8) Do your parents attend your school functions such as PTA meetings and prize giving ceremonies?
(a) Yes (b) No

(9) What do you do more at home when you come back from school?

(a) Read and do assignment (b) Watch TV and play video games (c) Play and visit friends

(10) Do you relax by reading novel?

(a) Yes (b) No

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

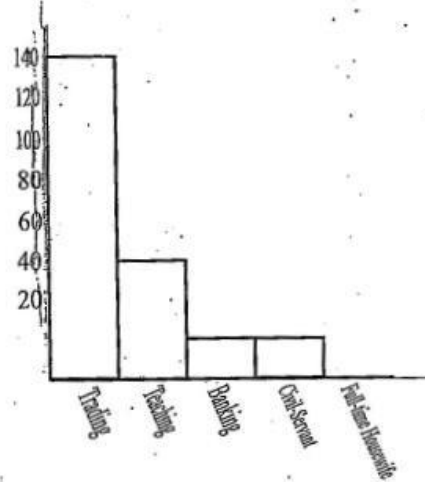
Presentation of Data - The responses to each of the items are presented in numbers and percentages and also graphically in histogram charts

Item 1: What is your mother's occupation?

Table 1a: Responses in number and %

	Responses	%
Trading	140	70
Teaching	40	20
Banking	10	5
Civil-Servant	10	5
Full-Time housewife	Nil	0
Total	200	100

Table 1b: Histogram Presentation



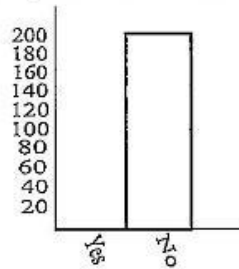
From this table, it will be seen that all the mothers of the respondents are engaged in one form of employment or the other. So all the families of the 200 students are dual income families (DIF).

Item 2: Do you come home with your mother after closing from school?

Table 2a: Responses in number and %

	Yes	%	No	%
Nil	0	0	200	100
Total	0	0	200	100

Table 2b: Histogram Presentation



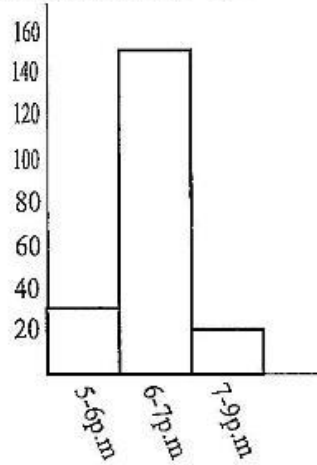
From this table, none of the students come home with their mothers after closing from school i.e. They come home alone

Item 3: When does your mother arrive at home finally for the day?

Table 3a: Response in number and %

	No	%
5 - 6p.m	30	15
6 - 7p.m	150	75
7 - 9p.m	20	10
Total	200	100

Table 3b: Histogram Presentation



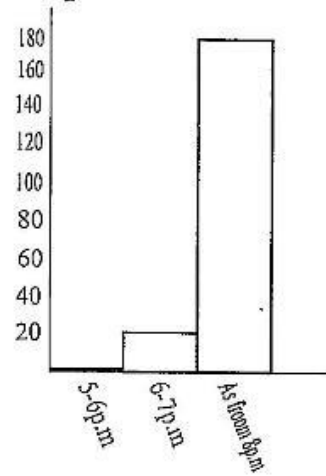
From this table, 150 or 75 percent of the mothers do not arrive home between 6.00p.m and 7.00p.m.

Item 4: When does your father return home?

Table 4a: Responses in number and %

	No	%
5 – 6p.m	Nil	0
6 – 7p.m	20	10
As from 8p.m	180	90
Total	200	100

Table 4b: Histogram Presentation



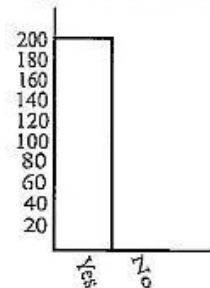
This table reveals that many of the fathers of the sampled students do not arrive home to be with their families till as from 7.00p.m

Item 5: Does your father provide for food, clothing, school fees and other things you need?'

Table 5a: Responses in number and %

Yes	%	No	%	Total
200	100	Nil	0	200

Table 5b: Histogram Presentation



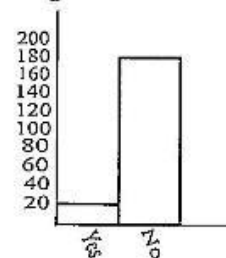
This data reveals that the fathers provide for the material or physical needs of all the respondents.

Item 6: Do your parents go through your school-work and help with your assignments?

Table 6a: Responses in number and %

Yes	%	No	%	Total
20	10	180	90	200

Table 6b: Histogram Presentation

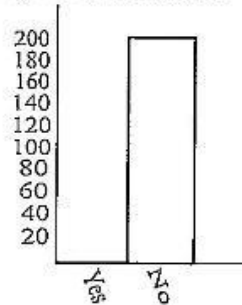


This data reveals that many of the parents do not show concern with whatever academic activities their children must have gone through in school for the day; neither do they involve themselves in their children's home-work.

Item 7: Do your parents take time to visit your school to know of your progress in school?

Table 7a: Responses in number and % Table 7b: Histogram Presentation

Yes	%	No	%	Total
Nil	0	200	100	200



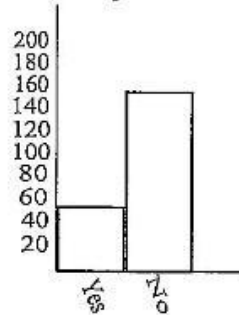
The response to this shows that the parents of all the respondents never took time to visit their children's schools to ascertain or find out how their children are fairing in school.

Item 8: Do your parents attend your school functions such as PTA meetings and prize-giving ceremonies?

Table 8a: Responses in number and %

Yes	%	No	%	Total
48	24	152	76	200

Table 8b: Histogram Presentation



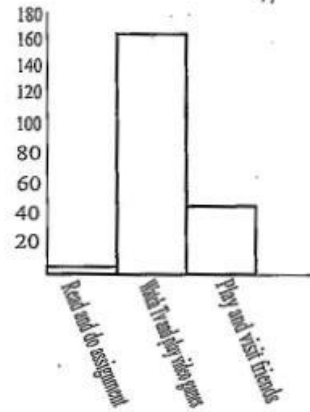
This data reveals that many of the parents are not involved in functions organized by their children's schools.

Item 9: What do you do more at home when you come back from school?

Table 9a: Responses in number and %

	No	%
Read and do assignment	2	1
Watch TV and play video games	168	84
Play and visit friends	30	15
Total	200	100

Table 9b: Histogram Presentation



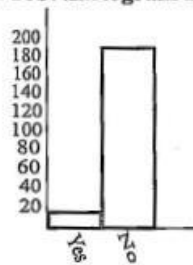
From the responses, it could be deduced that very many of the children, 168 or 84 percent of them were either watching television or playing video games after school hours.

Item 10: Do you relax by reading novels?

Table 10a: Responses in number and %

Yes	%	No	%	Total
2	1	198	2	200

Table 10b: Histogram Presentation



This response revealed that only a negligible of the respondents, only 2 of them or 1 percent engage in reading novels.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION: From the responses in table 1, it was discovered that all the families were dual income families. This indicates that due to economic changes in the Nigerian society, more women have joined in income-generating activities in order to cope with the increased financial needs of the family. The challenge of providing the necessities of life may compel both parents in the home to seek means of sustenance. This may ensure a more comfortable life-style, as well as meeting the material needs of the members of the family. The responses of the children in table 5 further confirm that the children's material needs are provided by their fathers. However, there is a negative side to this dual-income

return home from school to meet homes empty of mothers. In addition to this, many of the mothers do not get back home to their children, till as from 6.00p.m. When a mother spends long hours away from her children, the children in turn will not get what they need most – the time and attention of the mother. This is dangerous for the children, as children need a lot of motivation to cultivate the love for meaningful learning. Even the hours of interaction with the children is also reduced. With such few hours of meaningful interaction if it does take place at all, there is little or no time to stimulate the love for learning in the child. This is because by this time, the children must be tired and be getting ready to go to bed. The responses also reveal that the children have fathers that can be best described as providers of basic necessities of life – food, clothing and

ends. This indicates that the fathers are in the family but are not involved in the schooling life of their children. They do not see themselves as educators and counselors. This is poor parenting. In such an environment, devoid of parental interaction, it will be difficult for children to develop the love and value for academic pursuit.

Very many of the children also spend many hours of unsupervised time watching television and or playing video games or playing with their friends. What can be deduced from this is that parenting has been left in the hands of television, video game and friends. These cannot provide the school-child with that impetus to engage in meaningful learning. In all likelihood, the children are likely to be exposed to degrading and violent entertainment from these avenues. Little wonder that many children exhibit negative behaviours in schools in imitation of their poor parenting from these sources. This is in agreement with the findings of Shaw, 2004; Shaw & Wood (2003)

Table 6 reveals that very many of the parents, 180 of them or 90 percent of them fail to ask their children about their academic activities after arriving home. When parents do not go through their children's school work at the end of the day, or do not assist them with their assignments or homework this is poor parenting. It is also poor-parenting when parents are not involved in their children's school functions, as table 7 and 8 show. By not doing this, parents are indirectly sending the message that they do not have high value for academics and do not value effort. In the face of such poor parenting, little wonder that only 2 of the 200 respondents ever had the initiative to engage in reading novels as a way of relaxation. In the face of such poor parenting, children's academic arousal and cognitive development are hampered.

Way Out of Poor Parenting: As educators, parents must give example. Children are more influenced by their parent's action. If children are to cultivate the love for academic growth, parents are expected to take special interest in their academic work by going through their school work from time to time; provide educative materials, increase length of time spent with the children; cultivate the habit of reading themselves and discourage the

children from engaging in examination malpractice by regularly giving them exhortation on self-reliance.

As friends, parents should find time for recreation with their children; parents should work and play with their children. Doing things together strengthen family ties and children can then see their parents as role models. Through this, they can imbibe family values. A child who has identified and imbibed positive family values is likely to grow up more responsible and better committed to academic pursuits

IMPLICATION FOR THE UBE PROGRAMME AND THE ENTIRE SCHOOL SYSTEM: In September 1999, a Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme was introduced and its implementation began in 2000/2001 academic session. The programme involves a 9-year compulsory education for the Nigerian child (6 years in primary and 3 years in Junior Secondary Education). Amongst the general and specific aims of the programme are:

- : To engender a conducive learning environment and
- : To develop in the entire citizenry, a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its promotion

From the findings of this paper, it will be very difficult for these goals to be achieved due to poor parenting, which many children are being given. Except parents rise up to the challenge, there can never be a stimulating learning atmosphere at home. If this occurs, there will be no strong consciousness for education; neither will there be a strong commitment to its promotion because many of the children will not have the personal motivation to continue their education, assuming they are able to complete junior secondary school. The transition rate to senior secondary school will be poor. Also, many of the children are likely to have shallow academic knowledge because of the poor attitude to learning, which must have been developed from home. The crises at all levels of education will be on the increase since the products from the UBE are the prospective students for the other levels of education.

All these project a very grim future for the education system. There is therefore, the

need for parents to give proper or good parenting to their children who in turn will be equipped with the right type of parenting which will enable them play their roles effectively as adults.

CONCLUSION: So far, this paper examined the inspiration that could result from good parenting and the effect of poor parenting on children. Good parenting inculcates the spirit of self-reliance and personal motivation in children which in turn contributes to their cognitive development. Unfortunately, though many modern day parents, both from the illiterate and literate class seem to exhibit the quality of poor parenting; the consequence is evident in the many deviant traits children are exhibiting in the society as well as in the school system today. In other words, parents have a greater share of the blame for children's current lack of zeal for academic pursuit as well as the children's negative behavior. Parents need to examine their method of parenting along the line discussed so far. In other words, the success of the UBE programme is dependent on the school system being populated with learners who are highly committed to academic pursuits. There is the need for parents to do proper parenting in order to equip their children with the spirit of self-reliance, love for knowledge through personal study and formal education. This in turn will make management of the UBE programme a success at the school level. This is because the school level is the implemental level. Where the school is able to produce students with high personal drive for education and knowledge, the UBE shall have succeeded.

METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS: Population for this study was drawn from the public school system. Meanwhile there are many privately owned secondary schools in the state. Compared to the number of schools and students in the school system, the number sampled may not be enough to be used as inference. Also, a very high percentage of the sampled population has mothers who are traders which tend to suggest that the children of the highly educated families do not attend

public schools. This is a constraint, as the 30 percent whose mothers were either teachers, bankers or civil servants could not be used to infer how such families perform their parenting roles in the academic zeal of their children.

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