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CONDUCTIVE HOME ENVIRONMENT: A PANACEA FOR EFFECTIVE LEARNING

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Abstract

Learning can only take place in a conducive environment, therefore the child needs a conducive home environment for effective learning: Environment has been viewed as the conditions or circumstances affecting a person's life. An unhappy home environment can affect a child's behavior. The paper looks at the various types of environment to includes: Pre-natal environment, physical environment, emotional environment, social environment, rich environment and depressed environment. Also discussed are the home factors which include: family structure, socio-economic status of parents, nutrition of the home, discipline in home, opportunity for rest healthy environment among others. The paper also looked into the influences of the home environment on learning, which includes poor feeding, psychological problems, poor inheritance, poor health, socio-economic status of parents and parents educational qualifications. The paper among others recommends that parents should provide a healthy environment for their children, Educational facilities should be provided at home for learning, large family size should be discouraged and the culture prohibiting girl child education should be abolished.

Introduction

The process of education incorporate the concepts of teaching and learning. These concepts are made effective in a conducive environment. Education is viewed as the totality of the experience that man acquires by his interaction, mentally and physically, with the environment to enable him cope with and get satisfaction from the environment in the world he lives. The focus of education is in the three (3) H's in which is the development of the individuals head-cognitive, heart-Affective and hand-psychomotor and these will enable the individuals fulfill and achieves his objectives in life.

Yoloye (1980) sees education as a weapon for combating ignorance,



poverty and disease, as a bridge between confusion and comprehension, as a dam for conserving man's store of civilization and for generating the power to move to greater civilization, as a rocket for transporting man from a state of intellectual subservience to a state of intellectual Sovereignty.

In the opinion of Nweke and Ughamadu (1997), education is a systematic training and instruction designed to transmit knowledge and develop skills in individual. There are three forms of education, they are informal, non-formal and formal education. The environment in which the child lives has impact in the actualization and attainment of the goals of these various forms of education. Thus Plato, an Athenian educational thinker and a philosopher, was the first to appreciate the importance of environment for learning. He was aware that the need of the child is impressionable, and therefore, the child must be exposed to morally wholesome experiences. He must be surrounded by the right type of environment which will build him to be a moral individual. As stated by Akpotu and Nwaham (2008), the learners environment play very important role in his life. The environment include the home and the academic environment. These environments must be made conducive for effective learning.

Concept of Environment

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary sees environment as the conditions, circumstances, etc affecting a persons life. An unhappy home environment can affect a child's behaviour. Ochoma (2006) views environment anything outside of an individual that has effect on him. This could be physical or social. The physical environment comprises the people, houses, classroom conditions etc while the social environment is the relationship that exists between the individual and his physical environment. He further stated that the environment, be it physical or social, wherein a learner finds himself can make or mar the entire learning process. Therefore it is necessary that every learner gets a conducive environment for leaning to avoid boredom, depression, dejection and unwillingness to learn.

In the view of Okoye (1998) environment is the total stimulation the individual has from birth to death. The environment influences individuals development throughout his whole life because the fertilized cell responds to its environment throughout all the stages of its existence from conception to death. After birth, the child is subjected to a much more complicated environment. The environment of the learner at this period include the classroom, the home background, the particular society or



community in which the child finds himself. For instance, if the child comes from a background where academics is not promoted, the child may not be motivated well enough to do well in school. In most of our villages farming or trading is the major occupation, it will not be out of place to find the children not attending school because of a fishing expedition or a trip to the market on some market days. The school and class environment may either promote or hinder meaningful learning. If the classroom atmosphere is not conducive, then the quality of learning will be low. In areas where there are other materials that promote indirect learning or enables the child to learn at his own rate it becomes possible for the child to learn even when the teacher is not around.

Okoye (1998) further listed the various types of environment to include: Pre-natal environment, physical environment, emotional or psychological environment, social forces environment, rich or normal environment, depressed environment,

- (a) **Pre-natal Environment:** This is the environment of the child after conception. Here the child as a foetus reacts to the sum total of the intra cellular interaction within the environment of the mother womb. The environment subjects the foetus to a very delicate conditions as any exposure to adverse condition in the pre-natal environment may cause an abortion or damage resulting in abnormalities and death. In most cases, a rich pre-natal environment lays a solid foundation for the normal and healthy development of the foetus and eventually serves as the initial catalyst for the proper development of the cognitive structures.
- (b) **Physical Environment:** Immediately after birth, the child is subjected to the environment. This environment results from the individuals exposure to the physical world around him. The physical environment of a child can be found in his home, the market, the village square, the schools, the town where the child stays and other places where he visits or goes to stay. It varies from one person to the other even in the same family and amongst towns. Differences in development may be due to a host of causes all of which are environmental. Exposure to different physical environment result in different experiences amongst pupils in the same class. These differences classroom. will generate different reactions from the pupils when exposed to the teaching process in the
- (c) **Emotional or Psychological Environment:** This is the environment that affects the emotional perception of an individual. Its seat of



reaction is in the central nervous system and is manifested in such areas as anger, fear, happiness, uneasiness etc. The emotional environment of an individual child affects his behavioral dispositions in the classroom and thus his ability to profit from the teaching process and also his relationship with his mates and the teacher. Poor emotional environment impedes learning.

- (d) **Social Forces Environment:** This is the environment created by people associating with an individual. Such an environment can be found in the parents, peers, siblings, classmates, teachers etc. These set of people actively participate in the socialization of an individual and in such a way provide indices that may hinder or promote the learning ability of a child.
- (e) **Rich or Normal Environment:** This is an imaginary concept used in psychology to mean an environment that helps the normal individual growth and development of a child. This environment has factors, conditions and elements that promote teaching and learning when looked at from the point of classroom situation. This type of environment is what every teacher should aim at so as to enhance the effectiveness of his efforts.
- (f) **Depressed Environment:** This is an environment that lacks the basic factors, conditions and elements that promote effective teaching and learning process. It retards the intellectual growth of the child.

The Influence of Social Environment on the Child

There is no gain saying that social environment affects and shapes individuals' behaviours, character and degree of socialization. The influence encompasses enculturation, acculturation, acquiring of new knowledge and skills, learning of trades and advancement of science and technology. The social institutions make up the social environment and these include the home, the school, the church, the state, mass media and the peer group.

The influence of the family (home) on the child

The family (Home) is the first and primary environment, which influences the lives and activities of most people on earth. It is argued that the family remains the main unit of economic production, economic consumption and child's education despite the effect of mobility of family members and urbanization which to some extent have resulted to loss of some of its functions. The family still provides the first social experience,



which the child gets. Swift (1967) in Odor and Nwaham (2005) states that the child will learn some patterns of behavior, perceptions of reality and habits of thinking which are features of wider social environment and some of which are special to his family.

These early experiences are intimate and personal and therefore they tend to influence the child throughout his life. Havighurst and Neugarten (1976) in Odor and Nwaham (2005), states that "The family as the major socialization agency in the society, acts to teach the child the culture and subculture. The child not only learns the overt behaviours, he also learns the social, moral and economic value; how children relate to adults, and how man relate to woman; how to curb his aggressiveness and yet cultivate his competitiveness, how to develop loyalty and how to seek for self achievement".

In specific terms, some of the functions of the family includes provision of security and affection. Teaching of social relationship, the teaching of Basic attitudes and the teaching of basic habits.

Home/Environmental Factors

Numerous environmental factors have impact on the growth and performance of children in the school, some of these factors as enumerated by Igbiwu and Nwaham (2008) are:

- (a) **The Family Structure/Size:** Family size refers to the number of people in a family, it includes the father, mother, biological children and extended family such as nephew, cousin, uncle etc. The size of the family has influence on the development and performance of children. The influence may be positive or negative. Large family size creates a lot of problems for the parents in the up bringing of their children. These problems include insufficient food, malnutrition, poor clothing, inadequate facilities, insufficient fund and disciplinary problem. All these problems affect the performance of children in the school.
- (b) **Socio-Economic Status of the Home:** Socio-economic status of parents has great effect on the life of children. Students whose parents have attained high socio-economic status tend to show a high level of educational performance. The poor performance of the children of lower status parents have been attributed to cognitive and linguistics inadequacies, value orientation, and self-image that constitute major handicap to educational achievement. Adequate



educational facilities are provided in the home of children whose parents are rich and this has great impact on the performance of children (Igbiwu and Nwaham 2008).

- (c) **Nutrition of the Home:** Children need balanced and adequate diet for their growth and development. Children from poor home who do not eat balance diet, are less active than those from rich home, who are opportune to feed on rich diets. Therefore children feeding affects their learning abilities.
- (d) **Discipline in Home:** Children are good emulators and imitators. They learn their standards of right and wrong, good and bad initially from the home. The children like to find out limits for their behaviours, thus, the clear establishment of responsibilities, regulations and yardsticks for behavior assist the child to know how to behave. There is no doubt that children from discipline homes perform better than those from home with crisis.
- (e) **Opportunity for Rest, Work and Play:** There is a saying that all work no play make Jack a dull boy. So for children to be active in school, there is need to create opportunity for rest and play. Resting also help to cool the brain and protect it from stress.
- (f) **Academic Qualification Of Parents:** Educated parents have been known to have the firmer grip on their children than their illiterate counterparts and this is so because of the knowledge they have of the workings in the school system, their appreciation of the virtues of education and most importantly the ability to monitor their children's progress in school. Also the literate parents are likely to appreciate education more than the illiterate and provide the child with the basic educational needs whereas the illiterate even if he has millions might not do same and as such the child might resort to truancy and this will affect the child academic work (Oko, 2001) highly educated mothers, have greater success in providing their children with the cognitive and language skills that contribute to early success in school. Moreover, well educated parents are likely to provide both financial and material support to ensure their children's progress.
- (g) **Health Environment:** Cleanliness is next to godliness. A healthy person is a wealthy person, therefore the need to maintain clean environment cannot be over-emphasized. Clean and healthy



environment reduce the occurrence of ill-health and infections diseases. The home and school environment must be free from dangerous objects that can endanger the lives of the children. There is no doubt that clean and healthy environments enhance children performance

(h) **Home Background:** Home background of the child affects his performance, children from troubled home with many crisis cannot perform well. Examples of these crisis are bulling, divorce, death, incessant quarrels, and all these affect the child's learning ability.

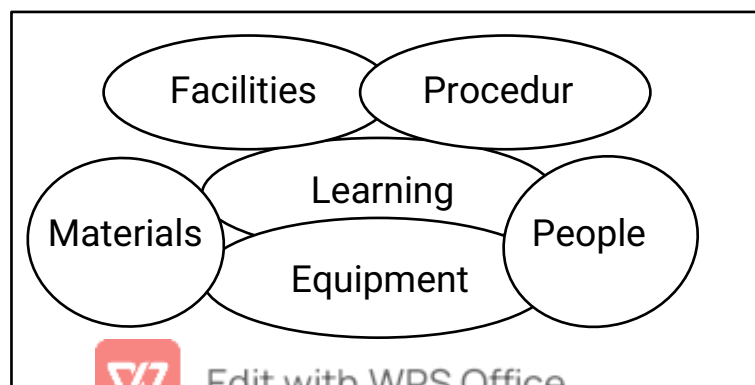
Concept of Learning

The concept of learning has been investigated by numerous psychologists and educators. They agreed that the primary function of the teacher is the facilitation of learning by various means possible. Onwuka (1981) in Nweke and Ughamadu (1997); sees learning as a process that involves the acquiring of new knowledge, ideas, skills, values and experiences which enables the individual to modify or alter his actions or realize his goals. The acquisition of information alone is not learning, even though content is the vehicle through which ones' desired intellectual behavior is mastered. There is no gain saying that learning is a self-active/personal choice-making process, a person learns what he wants to learn; successful learning is that which brings about growth in the learner and helps him to realize his potential.

Nweke (1996) views learning as a process by which people acquire changes in their behaviours and improve their performance by re-organizing their thinking or discover new concepts or way of behaviour.

Igbiwu (2004) sees learning as the acquisition of knowledge, habits and attitudes involving ways of doing things. Learning takes place when the performance of the organism is changed through stimulating contacts with the environment. All the basic elements of curriculum are designed around the learner and all these interact to achieve all round development of the learners.

Davis, Alexander and Yelon (1974); in Opute-Imala simplifies learning system thus:



Source: Opute-imola (1998)
Fig 1.1 Learning System-Opute-Imala (1998)

Learning is an on-going process that is complementary to other processes like motivation and perception. It is a basic process in human behavior at a particular time and place and it is from cradle to death (grave).

Eight types of learning have been identified by psychologists they are: signal, stimulus response, chaining, verbal association, discrimination, concept learning, rule and problem solving. Some conditions that affect learning are learner factor, internal factor and external factor.

The principles/laws of learning include:

- (i) Law of readiness (ii) Law of maturation (iii) Law of purpose
- (iv) Law of exercise (v) Law of satisfaction (vi) Law of selection
- (vii) Law of association (viii) Law of regency (ix) Law of transistories
- (xi) Law of multiple learning



Social Factors Affecting Learning

Some of the social factors affecting learning as stated by Ireyefoju (2009) are:

- (a) Socio-economic-background (family)
- (b) Language
- (c) School building, furniture equipment and other physical property
- (d) Over population in schools
- (e) Nature and location of the community
- (f) Natural disasters and (g) Some aspects of culture.

Socio-Economic Background (Home) of the child:

During the formative years of the child, he is exposed to some many experiences that are the product of the existing interpersonal relationship and social interaction in the family such experiences go a long way to determine the early days if not subsequent year of the child in school.

Language

Language as a social system is the symbol of expressing interpersonal relationships and social interactions at home, in school and in other public places. Morris (1978) in Ireyefoju (2009) states that thought, ideas, understanding and organization of perception are done by means of language. Our vocabulary, understating of words and their meaning and the way we express ourselves grammatically or linguistically are indication of our understanding of a particular language spoken and written language are used in the teaching/learning process. Thus, English language is used for communication as well as for social identity.

Educational Facilities: Educational facilities affect the learning process. Thus learning can only take place in a conducive environment. An environment devoid of learning facilities will militate against effective teaching and learning.

Over Population in School: Over population of students/learners will make the available scarce resources to be over stretched beyond their limits. Over population encourages poor teaching techniques and strategies, which leads to poor learning in the classroom situation in all level of education.

Nature and Location of the Community: Learning is also influenced by the nature and location of the community. Most Nigerian communities are



agrarian and subsistent. People depend on what they can make out of their environment, children and women are cheap source of labour, children go to school as a matter of necessity. Infact they are there to mark time particularly the girl child who is denied to opportunity of being educated. Non availability of social facilities in the rural areas, also make teachers to drift to the urban areas. This also negatively affects the learners in rural schools.

Natural Disasters: Natural disasters like flood, drought and invasion by locust, civil war and communal dashes affect the child's learning. Where natural disasters occur the people there are displaced and during this time, schools are closed down. Civil wars and communal wars also displace the people, in a given community. Learning cannot take place in such an environment.

Culture of the People: learning is affected by some aspects of the culture of people. Some cultures de-emphasize formal education. Also girls are more affected, as they are deprived the opportunity of going to school. They are trained to be dependent on man and at the mercy of the community. Due to the neglect and ignorance, on the part of parents and community, the potential and ability of the girl child remains untapped. In order words, poor self-image leads to poor learning habits and attitudes among children who grow up in a culture where little or no consideration is given to independence, originality, self-reliance and so on.

Impact of Home Environment on Learning

The nature of the environment determines to a large extend the success or otherwise teaching/learning process. Learning takes place in a conducive environment. Therefore all the necessary facilities must be in adequate number to facilitate learning.

There are numerous factors that influence the child's learning capability. They include: (1) Poor feeding, (2) Psychological problems (3) Poor inheritance (4) Poor health (Whawo, 2002).

Poor Feeding: Numerous children suffer from malnutrition which occurs as a result of poor feeding. Children are given inadequate diet due to poor socio-economic background and ignorance. Most often children are fed on carbohydrate throughout the day, leaving other relevant, components of food. Such children may not be interested in school, even when they manage to go, they will fall asleep when the teacher will be teaching.



Psychological problems: Some students have emotional problems. Emotional instability may result from family problems. The level of anxiety driven into children by their parents and teachers may produce psychological problems in children. As anxiety increases, the level of performance reduces. Even though some level of anxiety is believed to stimulate people to learn. Over anxiety has been identified by most psychologists as a cause of school failure among children. Instead of frightening pupils by regular beating for failing at school, they should be assisted by parents and teachers to work hard to improve on their academic performance.

Poor Performance: One of the greatest inhibition to learning is poor inheritance from parents. By passing a gene of dullness to a child, the child is given the worst gift from his parents to inherent. The intelligent quotient (I:Q) of an individual is determined mainly by what a child inherited from parents it is unfair for parent who never passed any examination for the short time they attended formal schools to scold their children for failure in their examinations.

Socio-economic Background: Socio-economic background of the parents can also influence the child's learning. Children from parents with high socio-economic background will have greater opportunity of enjoying more educational facilities which will always be provided. On the other hand, poor parents cannot afford these facilities and this will eventually affect the academic performance of the children at school.

Poor Health: Illness may also inhibit a child's learning at school. A child who has sickle-cell problem or some other deadly diseases like epilepsy may spend more time in the hospital than at school. Parents are advised to pay special attention to the health of their children and wards.

Furthermore, the family structure, also has impact on the child's learning. Most often children from large family size suffer from inadequacy in finance and other necessary resources. Most affected is the girl child, who is bluntly denied education since she will eventually become another man's property.

Moreover, academic qualifications of parents affect the child's learning capability. The literate parents will appreciate education better than the illiterate parents, consequently, the educated parents will provide a conducive environment for the children. Even encouragement to read will

come more from the educated parents.

Conclusion

Education has been viewed as a weapon for combating ignorance, poverty and diseases as well brings about economical, physical, political and technological development of individuals in the society. These can only be attained in a conducive environment, be it at home or school.

Environment is seen as those social and physical environments which affect the life of man. The various types of environment as listed by Okoye (1998) including: pre-natal environment, physical environment, emotional or psychological environment, emotional or psychological environment, social forces environment, rich or normal environment and depressed environment.

Learning takes place when one is physically and mentally matured. It is the acquisition of knowledge, habits and attitudes which brings about the transformation of individuals. Many home/environmental factors have been adduced to have influence on the child's learning. These include: poor feeding, psychological problems, poor inheritance, poor health, family structure, social-economic background of parents, qualification of parents and so on.

Recommendations

Having x-rayed the influence of the conducive Home environment on learning, the following recommendations are made:

- Parents should provide a healthy environment for their children.
- Educated facilities necessary at home should be provided by parents.
- Parents should always feed their children with adequate diet.
- Large family size should be avoided since it has negative effects on the upbringing and education of the children.
- Illiterate parents should be encouraged to be involve in adult education. This is necessary, because educated parents will appreciate the education of the children
- The culture preventing the girl child education should be abolished. Equal opportunity should be given to children irrespective of their sex.

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