

ANALYSIS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS STUDY HABITS IN COVID-19 ERA.

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Abstract

The study investigates the environmental influence on secondary school students study habits in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State in the Covid-19 era. The study employed a descriptive design. The sample comprised of 300 respondents drawn from 5 secondary schools from the understudied Local Government Area. The selection of the sample size of students was done using simple random sampling technique. Four research questions guided the study; A 20-item questionnaire was developed by the researcher to form the instrument for data collection. Based on the data collected and analyzed, the following findings were unveiled. That home environmental factors influence secondary school students' study habits in COVID-19 era as private home lessons were organized which enhance the reading habit of students amidst COVID-19 era. Students used learning platforms such as online learning and home lessons amidst COVID-19 era. Based on the above, the researcher recommends amongst others that it would be worthwhile for all stakeholders in education i.e. parents, teachers and government to encourage students in their respective areas of responsibilities, such as providing study materials, conducive place of study, recognizing excellence, appreciating students' hardwork, etc. These will help to motivate the students positively towards their study.

Keywords: Environmental influence, Study Habits, COVID-19 era.

Introduction

The world came to a standstill with the outbreak of a viral disease called COVID-19. Retrospective investigation by the Chinese authorities identified human cases with onset of early symptoms in December 2019. Some of the earliest known cases had a link to the Wholesale Food Market in Wuhan. However, Dr Li-Meng Yan a virologist from China totally disagreed with the view as she publicly claimed that (COVID 19) originated in China Military Laboratory.

The Novel Corona Virus (SARS-COV-2) is a new strain of the virus, although it was previously not identified in human, SARS-COV-2 is the virus that causes the coronavirus disease called 'COVID 19'. The impact of this disease is not in small measure as it has caused death of 3.4 % of the world's population.

After the declaration of the World Health Organisation (WHO) on 11th March 2020, that COVID- 19 is a pandemic disease, many countries were forced to lock down their borders.

Nigeria as a nation joined other nations of the world in the fight against coronavirus and sensitization of the people in order to avoid the spread of the virus. The Government set up a Presidential Task Force and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) to immediately check and curtail the spread of this virus across the nation. Thus, our nation's economy was greatly affected due to our border closure, ban on international flight, as well as closure of all schools and markets nationwide.

However, preventive measures were implemented across the country among which are:

- Washing of hands frequently with soap under running water for at least 20 seconds and the use of alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Wear a non- medical face mask
- Maintain social distance of at least 1-2 metres from others in public places.
- Avoiding crowded areas, etc.

Today's modern society expects every student to be a high achiever, and one of the key criteria to ascertain student's true potentialities and capabilities is perhaps good academic performance which has become an index of the student's future. However, a student academic performance is a function of various factors based on the environment which comprises of all the students is exposed to both within and outside the home environment.

Over the years, environmental influence has been considered as one of the major factors that affect study habits in secondary schools, hence it has more attention in education disclosure and consideration. The environment plays a major role in the life of every individual whether a student, teacher, employer or employee (Ezegbe, 2001).

Though some people are yet to believe that the environment brings about better performance or negative influence, studies have shown that environmental influence to a very large extent affects both the physical and psychological potential of an individual. Thus, student's inability to develop their study habit is due to environmental stimulation.

Hence, it is relevant to look at the environmental factors that influence students' study habit in this era due to the lockdown as well as measures that can be improved upon and make recommendations because at the very heart of our educational mission is the goal of improving study habits. In the midst of the pandemic which has made every student to stay at home, they are exposed to idleness, healthy and unhealthy peers association within their immediate environment, which led some students into cultism activities in order to feel strong, protected and united.

Nigeria as a nation has different environments in which students live, such as urban cities, slums, watersides and camps which contribute to these inappropriate acts. These are places where educational enlightenment which are both high and low; and have high percentage of rape on the female child especially during this period of lockdown where parents are sorting for means of providing for their family thereby the young females are been left at home, or sent to hawk in streets. (Eraikhuernen, 2013).

In some families in Africa, teenagers are forced to become bread winners of their families. Thus, a child seems not to have guidance of what life is all about. The female child in lieu of providing, basic needs engage in sex with anybody that can help to provide money in order to meet the needs of her immediate family, which in most cases results to an unwanted pregnancy. This puts an end to the immediate educational pursuit of such a female student.

This is not different from the male child whose parent is expecting him to give a helping hand in this lockdown period to undertake some menial jobs. By so doing, the teenager is no more under the total control and guidance of his parents, which can lead the teenager to have affairs with the opposite sex of the same age group and could lead to impregnating another young teenager. This is one of the dangerous environmental influences that affect the study habit of the male teenager as he is forced to cater for all the needs of the person he impregnated.

Another environmental influence that affects the study habits of teenagers especially within this lockdown period is that teenagers are forced to involve in alcoholism, theft, smoking, gangsterism. This definitely will bring a change in the character of the student in the pursuits of his goals and aspirations for education.

In recent time, parents/guardians are not helping their children in developing strong intimacy and great concern for academics. Parents tend to give excuses in terms of assisting in book works, guiding and counselling, and knowing the daily involvement of their children. Parents that do not provide these immediate concerns for their children such children may be forced to look elsewhere for assistance. The unfortunate ones among them become victims of wrong counselling from neighbours in their environment which in turn affects their study habit. McRobbie, Roth and Lucys (1997) assert that the nature of an environment can have a direct impact not only on their achievement but on their personal-social behaviour.

This study therefore examines the environmental factors that influence the study habits of secondary school students in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State during the COVID 19 pandemic. With the recent COVID 19 outbreak, it has become a common or daily say to hear incidents of student involvement in different manners of anti- social behaviour such as teenage parenting, child abuse, peer pressure, cultism, drug abuse, which have adverse influence on the study habit of secondary school students, especially in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

The purpose of the study was to analyse the environmental influence on study habits of secondary school students in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Specifically, the study set out to find:

- 1) The extent to which the home environment influenced the student`s study habits in COVID 19 era.
- 2) The different learning platforms provided for students to improve their study habits in COVID 19 era.
- 3) The suitable lesson materials given to students by the schools to enhance students study habit in COVID-19 era.
- 4) The extent to which the home environment influenced the students study habits based on class level

THEORETICAL REVIEW:

The environment is significant to the physical, mental, emotional and intellectual development of an individual. The home environment refers to the entire home circumstance surrounding an individual or groups of individuals. In this study, it will involve a combination of the external physical home conditions such as parents attitudes to a child, behavioral attitude of adolescence and peer group, parents socio-economic status that affects individual child`s study habits in the midst of corona virus era.

An environment is the natural surroundings of an organism and it can be land, air or water. Environment is of three parts which are; physical, social and the abstract. The physical environment are objects or materials found in the home, community or school. It also includes people like parents, peers and children. The social environment is concern with the social life, societies among others. While abstract are the feedbacks, reactions and responses received on interaction with others. (Onyehalu, 2004).

There are lots of home-related factors that have negative as well as positive consequences on students' study habit and ability. Educators and psychologists believe that the home provides the basic ingredient that propels the child for wholesome development. When children grow up to school age, the home environment still plays a significant role in the children's academic achievement (Dange & Praveen, 2009). As a result of this, educators and psychologists have always channeled their interests on home factors that have high impact on the achievements of pupils/students and it's relationship to the environment. In the same vein, adolescents see the home as a primary source of their emotional problems; some of the factors that motivate this perception may include parents attitude such as restriction, over-protection, harassment, physical abuse, inability of parents to provide their children's basic needs, etc. all of these may contribute to emotional distress among adolescents and consequently result to individual behavioural attitude towards school work. Out of the 11 most influential variables, 8 involve social-emotional influences such as classroom management, parental support, student-teacher relationship, social-behavioral attributes, motivational-effective attributes, peer group, school culture, and classroom climate (Greenberg et al., 2003).

Distant background influences (e.g., state, district, or school policies, organizational characteristics, curriculum, and instruction) were less influential. (Greenberg, et al.,2003), assert that "research linking social, emotional, and academic factors are sufficiently strong to advance the new term social, emotional, and academic learning (SEAL)".

Classroom learning is a multiplicative, diminishing-returns function of four (4) essential factors—student ability and motivation, and quality and quantity of instruction—and possibly four (4) supplementary or supportive factors—the social psychological environment of the classroom, education-stimulating conditions in the home, peer group, and exposure to mass media (Okwelle, 2007). Each of the essential factors appears to be necessary but insufficient by itself for classroom learning; that is, all four of these factors appear required at least at minimum level. It also appears that the essential factors may substitute, compensate, or trade off for one another in diminishing rates of return: for example, immense quantities of time may be required for a moderate amount of learning to occur if motivation, ability, or quality of instruction is minimal (Haertel et al., 1983).

More recently, Wang, Haertel, & Walberg (1993) organized the relevant school learning knowledge base into major construct domains (State & District, Governance/Organization, Home & Community Contexts, School Demographics, Culture, Climate, Policies/Practices, Design & Delivery of Curriculum & Instruction, Classroom Practices, Learner Characteristics) and attempted to establish the relative importance of 228 variables in predicting academic domains. Using a variety of methods, the authors concluded that psychological, instructional, and home environment characteristics ("proximal" variables) have a more significant impact on achievement than variables such as state-, district-, or school-level policy and demographics ("distal"variables). Empirical evidence reveals that student study habits are influence by environment

Thorndike's Theory of Reinforcement

This theory was propounded by an American psychologist, Edward Lee Thorndike in 1913. He carried out experiments to study how non-reflexive behaviour can be modified from experiences. He was considered by Anderson (1990) as one of the foremost educational psychologists the world has ever produced in the field of learning, genetic psychology, testing and social psychology, as well as psychology of learning and arithmetic.

Thorndike in his study considered the strengthening of connection between stimulus and response as being responsible for the formulation of habits.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Four research questions guided the study:

1. What influence do home environmental factors have on secondary school students' study habits in the COVID-19 era?
2. What learning platforms are provided for students in the COVID-19 era?
3. What are the different lesson materials given to students by the schools to enhance their study habit in the COVID-19 era?
4. What influence has home environment of secondary school students study habits based on class level?

METHODOLOGY:

A descriptive survey was used in the study. This design was chosen to meet the objectives of the study, mainly to analyse environmental influence on students' study habits in the COVID-19 era. The study was carried out in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. Junior and Senior Secondary 1-3 (JSS1 to SS3) students formed the sample of the study. The total numbers of senior secondary school students within Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State for both public and private is 39,649 according to 2018/2019 annual school census (Bayelsa State Ministry of Education). A total of 300 secondary school students from five different Secondary Schools were sampled.

The instrument for data collection was Analysis of the Environmental Influence on Secondary School Students' Study Habits in COVID-19 era Questionnaire (EISSSSHQC) with 20 specific item statements. It consists of two sections, section A and section B. Section A comprised of questions relating to demographic information of the students while Section B consisted of item statement which are derived from the research questions.

The questionnaire was structured on a four point Likert scale method used to score the responses which contained a list of statements. These statements were to be selected on the basis of item analysis process to make up the final scales. The EISSSSHQC was validated by experts in measurement and evaluation from Niger Delta University who are more experienced in research for content and face validity before its administration.

The reliability of EISSSSHQC was established using a test-retest technique. Test-retest was used to administer to the same group of individual on two occasions, within two to three week interval between the first and second administration of the instrument.

The scores of the individuals in the first and second tests were correlated to determine the coefficient of reliability of the instrument. The two set of scores were subjected to Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) to obtain a reliability index of 0.65 as its reliability

coefficient. The researcher obtained data by administering the questionnaire to the sampled students. It was done directly by the researcher with assistance from the class teacher and parents complementing questionnaire, as they do have background knowledge of the influence of school environment on the study habit level of the students

DATA ANALYSIS, RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are presented in tables according to research questions

Research Question 1:

What influence do home environmental factors have on Secondary School Students' study habits in COVID-19 era?

Table 1: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation Scores showing the influence home environmental factors have on Secondary School Students' study habits in COVID-19 era in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State

Questionnaire Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Private home lessons enhance my reading habit amidst COVID-19 era	3.5	0.72
My parents encourage me cultivate study habits during COVID-19 era	2.9	0.94
My parents provides me few numbers of novel to read for personal cognitive and vocabulary development during COVID-19 era	2.9	0.94
I was expose to more academic knowledge among my peer group in my home	3.0	0.91
Domestic work is a big hindrance to my study habits	3.5	0.85
Average Mean Score and Standard Deviation	3.16	0.87

Source: Field Study March 2021

Table 1. shows that the mean ratings obtained for the various attributes measured and the calculated average mean (3.16) were greater than the standard reference mean of 2.5. This indicates that the respondents agreed that home environmental factors influence Secondary School Students' study habits in COVID-19 era as private home lessons enhance the reading habit of students amidst COVID-19 era. And some parents encouraged their children to cultivate study habits, provide few numbers of novel for their children to read for personal cognitive and vocabulary development during COVID-19 era. Students were exposed to more academic knowledge among my peer group while at home and domestic work was a big hindrance to their study habits while at home. The average calculated (0.87) and small values of standard deviations obtained in all the attributes measured clearly indicated that the respondents agreed that home environmental factors influence Secondary School Students' study habits in COVID-19 era

Research Question 2:

What learning platforms are provided for students in COVID-19 era?

Table 2: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation Scores showing learning platforms provided for students in COVID-19 era in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Questionnaire Item	Mean	Std. Deviation
Online learning is effective to me while at home as school are shut down	3.5	0.85
My school offers online learning amidst COVID-19 to enhance my study habit	1.9	0.41
Home lesson helps me in developing study habits	3.5	0.85
Home lesson do not enhance my study habits	3.2	0.80
School library enhance my study habit	2.8	1.07
Average Mean Score and Standard Deviation	2.98	0.80

Source: Field Study March 2021

Table 2 shows that the mean ratings obtained for the various attributes measured and the calculated average mean (2.98) were greater than the standard reference mean of 2.5. This indicates that there are quiet numbers of learning platforms provided for students in COVID-19 era, these include online learning and home lesson which enhanced and developed the study habit of secondary school students in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State in COVID-19 era. The average calculated (0.80) and small values of standard deviations obtained in all the attributes measured evidently indicated that the students were homogenous in their response that there are quiet numbers of learning platforms provided for students in COVID-19 era, these include online learning and home lesson which enhanced and developed the study habit of secondary school students in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State in COVID-19 era.

Research Question 3:

What are the different lesson materials given to students by the schools to enhance their study habits in COVID-19 era.

Table 3: Summary of Mean and Standard Deviation Scores showing different lesson materials given to students by the schools to enhance their study habits in COVID-19 era in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State.

Different Lesson Materials Provided by School	Textbooks	Real objects	Charts/Pictures
	300	250	280

Source: Field Study March 2021

Table 3 shows that there were three major lesson materials used by schools in the delivery of teaching and learning activity in the classroom in secondary school students in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State, These are textbooks, real objects and charts or pictures. Both textbook and chart or pictures are commonly used by class teachers and real objects are used occasionally

The finding of this study stresses that home environmental factors influence Secondary School Students` study habits in COVID-19 era unlike crowded classroom which is not conducive for learning this is support with the findings of Boniface (2018) due to the fact that private home lessons enhance the reading habit of students amidst COVID-19 era. And some parents encouraged their children to cultivate study habits, provided few numbers of novels for their children to read for personal cognitive and vocabulary development during COVID-19 era. Students were exposed to more academic knowledge among peer groups while at home and domestic work was a big hindrance to their study habits while at home.

It also reveals that there are quiet a number of learning platforms provided for students in the COVID-19 era, these included online learning and home lessons which enhanced and developed the study habit of secondary school students in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State in the COVID-19 era. COVID-19 confinement significantly changed students learning strategies to a more continuous habit, improving their efficiency which is in line with the findings of this study (Koroye 2016).

The findings of the study have revealed what home environmental factor has on the study habits of secondary school students in Yenagoa Local Government of Bayelsa. Thus, Parents should learn more guidance and counselling skill to enable them help in educating their wards in time of pandemic and challenges.

Conclusion

According to the findings of this study, home environmental factors influence secondary school students` study habits in the COVID-19 era as private home lessons enhance the reading habit of students amidst COVID-19 era. However, some parents encourage their children to cultivate study habits as well as provide some number of novels for their children to read for personal cognitive and vocabulary development during the COVID-19 era. Students were exposed to more academic knowledge among peer group while at home, and domestic work was a big hindrance to their study habits while at home. Quiet number of learning platforms provided for students in the COVID-19 era, these include online learning and home lesson which enhance

and develop the study habit of secondary school students in Yenagoa Local Government Area of Bayelsa State during the COVID-19 era.

Recommendations

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

1. It would be worthwhile for all stake holders in education i.e. parents, teachers and government to encourage students in their respective areas of responsibilities, such as providing study materials, conducive place of study, recognizing excellence, appreciating students' hardwork as soon as possible among others. These will help to motivate the students positively towards their study.
2. It is also important for female students whose studies are negatively influenced by femininity to be encouraged to work hard as academic is not only reserved for male.
3. Students should be taught study skills so that they can cultivate good and effective study skills even at home while studying.
4. Parents should improve the level of control and care of their children, show more interest and concern in the academic work of their wards by way of providing conducive atmosphere for studies, providing materials for studies and helping students in their studies.
5. It is necessary for students and teachers as well as children and parents to maintain a warm and cordial relationship as this will enhance students' easy approach to the teacher or parents for solving of academic problems. Also, teachers and parents should endeavour to be good models to their students.
6. These recommendations can be achieved by talking to parents and teachers on the issues raised in a forum like the P.T.A i.e. Parent-Teachers'-Association. Group counselling can also be organized for students on good study habits and gender equality. School administrators i.e. the head teachers should forward the needs and problems affecting students study habits to government for intervention.

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