

Parental Exposure of Children to New Experiences and Learning Outcome: A Perspective of Home Factor in Productive Child Education

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Received January 2015

Abstract

Survey data collected from 1000 primary school children in Calabar metropolis, Nigeria were analysed to determine the extent of parental exposure of children to new experiences and its influence on their learning outcome. One research question and one hypothesis were formulated to guide the study. The instrument for data collection was captioned Pupils Opinion and Achievement Test Questionnaire (POATQ). Descriptive statistics was used in answering the research question while the independent t-test was used in testing the hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The result showed low parental exposure of children to new experiences. The result also revealed that there is a significant influence of parental exposure of children to new experiences on their learning outcomes. Based on the findings it is recommended that for productive learning outcome, parents are encouraged to fully be involved in every aspect of the child's education for all round development of the child.

Keywords

Child, Parents, New Experiences, Exposure

1. Introduction

It is a fact that many schools in Nigeria are struggling under intense pressures to deliver high standard of education under the existing circumstances characterized by broad curriculum and limited resources. Hence, school administrators and teachers have to positively adapt to the external pressures and find strategies to provide quality education. There is no doubt that parents are a major component of any educational progress and the burden of responsibility increasingly falls on them. Unfortunately, some parents do not programme their day to day activities to allow for enough time in interacting with their children nor even providing their daily needs. These days, most parents are out there struggling for money under the current hard economic conditions without pro-

How to cite this paper: Egodi, A.U. and Jamabo, T. (2015) Parental Exposure of Children to New Experiences and Learning Outcome: A Perspective of Home Factor in Productive Child Education. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 3, 28-33.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.4236/jss.2015.36007>

viding the basic needs and experiences that ought to enhance the foundation for the development of perception abilities which is usually aided by the home.

Children have needs which emerge from situational variables; they also have those that are universal. One of the universal needs of children is the need to explore, inquire, and to experiment. This is because children are bundles of energy. The tremendous amount of energy they possess need to be expended. They would be bored if there are no activities to occupy them.

Observation shows that most parents in Nigeria do not provide the basic needs of their wards. African parents are prone to restricting their children's activities. A child who is brought up in a home where their daily provisions of needs are met, rich in educational toys, where rich verbal communication prevails is in a better position to develop intellectually than one who grows up in less endowed settings. Many countries have developed strategies aimed at promoting parental involvement in education. The School Based Management (SBM) emphasizes collaborative efforts among, teachers, parents and other stake holders for improving the quality of learning outcome and education [1]. The World Declaration on Education for all convention held in Jomtien, Thailand, 1990 (Article Seven) also explored ways of enhancing partnerships among key stakeholders. Still yet, there has been disturbing signals from examination bodies and other education stakeholders that secondary school students are not performing up to expectation in externally administered examinations like School Certificate Examinations administered by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and that administered by the National Examinations Council (NECO). The release of the May/June 2014 WAEC School Certificate Examination 2014, revealed that about 31.28% of the candidate obtained credit passes in five subjects including English and Mathematics as against 38.81% and 36.57% recorded in 2012 and 2013 respectively [2]. The results serve to expressly define the status of the candidates learning outcomes in their twelve year sojourn in the school system (primary through secondary school level).

This study seek to determine if parental exposure of children to new experiences can be used to explain poor learning outcome among primary school children, with Calabar Municipality as the locale of the study. Specifically, the study sort to determine: The extent of parental exposure of children to new experiences and its influence on their learning outcome:

Research Question:

1) To what extent do parents expose their children to new experiences?

Research Hypothesis:

2) There is no significant influence of parental exposure of children to new experiences and learning outcome.

2. Literature Review

Looking at provision of new experiences, the most known of these studies was a longitudinal investigation of High cope play-based preschool curriculum. Children who were involved in play-based activities were found to have higher levels of academic and social competence in later childhood and adolescence than those without play based activities [3] [4].

Numerous studies have explored the impact of new experiences such as play on specific academic competencies. Some studies have shown that play improves thinking and social interaction that lead directly on academic learning. For example, the frequency and complexity of block play in preschool was found to be associated with mathematical performance in high school, including higher scores on the math subset. They observed that early play with blocks, which includes concrete experience with Euclidean space directly enhances later mathematical thinking [5]. Researchers report that other kinds of play, particularly make believe-include rich opportunities to use language and literacy. Several studies have demonstrated that introduction of children to new experiences inspires children to use more frequent and complex oral language [6] [7]. Studies have found that children with development and language delays, perceptual impairments and even autism speak more often and in more complex utterance when playing [8]-[10]. Later studies have shown that introduction of children to new experiences enhances children's competence in reading and writing. One researcher found that pet end play experiences lead to increase in childrens' phonemic awareness—an ability to differentiate speech sound [11] [12].

Studies have also linked games in preschool play to academic achievement [13]. Games and problem-solving experiences on the computer have also been linked to later mathematical abilities [14]. There is also research evidence that new experiences has indirect effect on child's later academic achievement by fostering several critical underlying cognitive processes that support learning. Play enhances symbolic thought which aids academic learning. Research confirms these relationships: the ability to perform symbolic play transformation is

related to both measures of basic symbolic thinking and later achievement in reading and mathematics in the elementary years [15].

According to Carlson, Mandell & Williams [16], play promotes self regulation and help children learn how their mind works. The ability to understand internal mental processes is called a theory of the mind. Knowledge of thinking, attention, and remembering helps children guide these processes in learning situations. Researches shows that children’s play interactions with peers help them acquire a theory of the mind [17]. Other researchers suggest that sensitive, experienced and educated parents naturally interact with their children at play in ways that enhance various aspects of learning outcome (Schuler & Wolfberg, 2000).

3. Methodology

The Subjects and Data Collection:

A total of 1000 primary six pupils selected from primary schools in Calabar municipality Nigeria using the stratified random sampling technique were used in the study. The children (506 males and 494 females) ranged in age between 9 and 11 years.

An instrument captioned Pupils Opinion and Achievement Test questionnaire (POATQ) was used for the data collection. The research instrument had three sections A-C. Section A elicited from respondents demographic information such as age, sex, school and class. Section B was an 8-item three point Likert-type scale that measured different dimension of parental exposure of children to new experiences. Section C of the questionnaire was a 25 item English Language achievement test that measured children learning outcome. The test was constructed based on primary six English Language syllabus. The test items were constructed after due consultation with the children’s teachers. This was to ensure that it covered only areas already treated by the teachers in their respective schools.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Data generated were collated, coded and analysed to provide an answer to the research question posed and the test hypothesis formed. For the research question, simple percentage was used in finding out the proportion of the pupils who reported that their parents always, sometimes or never exposed them to new experiences. For the hypotheses, the t-test statistics was used in testing at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question 1.

To what extent do parents expose their children to new experiences?

As it is presented in **Table 1**, the result shows the extent to which parents expose their children to new experiences.

The results showed that 2.2% of the respondents reported that within the last six months, they always had new toys to play with, while 30% reported that sometimes, they had new toys and 67.8 % reported that they were never provided with toys to play with. In enquiring into the frequency with which their parents exposed them to new experiences in various dimensions, the responses were very revealing; as is shown in **Table 1**, **Figure 1** and

Table 1. Frequency and simple percentages showing the extent of parental exposure of children to new experience.

	Parental exposure in the past six months	Always	Sometimes	Never
1	Have new toys to play with	22 (2.2%)	300 (30%)	678(67.8%)
2	Have opportunity to try new things	101 (10.1%)	239 (23.9%)	660(66.0%)
3	Are free to play with other children	90(9.0%)	424(42.4%)	486(48.6%)
4	Are free to operate television at home	76(7.6%)	640(64.0%)	284 (28.4%)
5	Can freely go out with other children	32(3.2%)	404(40.4%)	564(56.4%)
6.	Handle different game equipments	12 (1.2%)	230 (23.0%)	758 (78.5%)
7.	Wash your cloths your self	20(2.0%)	309(30.9%)	671 (67.1%)
8	Handle ironing of your own cloths	10(1.0%)	179 (17.9%)	811 (81.1%)

Figure 2.

The Bar charts and line graphs in **Figure 1** and **Figure 2** are pictorial illustrations of the results shown in **Table 1**.

Hypothesis 1.

There is no significant influence of parental exposure of children to new experiences and learning outcome.

As presented in **Table 2**, the result of the independent t-test analysis revealed that the mean score of respondents with high parental exposure to new experience ($x = 12.72$) was significantly higher than the mean score of 11.53 made by those whose parents afforded them low exposure to new experience. The result shows that parental exposure of the child to new experience has a significant influence on learning outcome of the child with a t-value of -3.55 , which produced a p-value of 0.000 less than 0.05 level of significance with 998 degree of freedom.

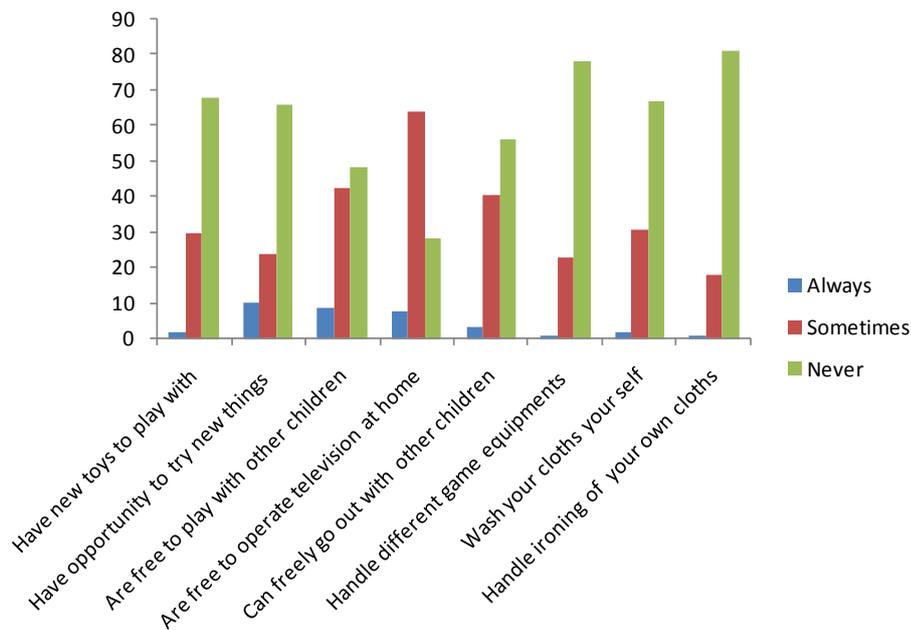


Figure 1. Bar charts of parental exposure of children to new experiences.

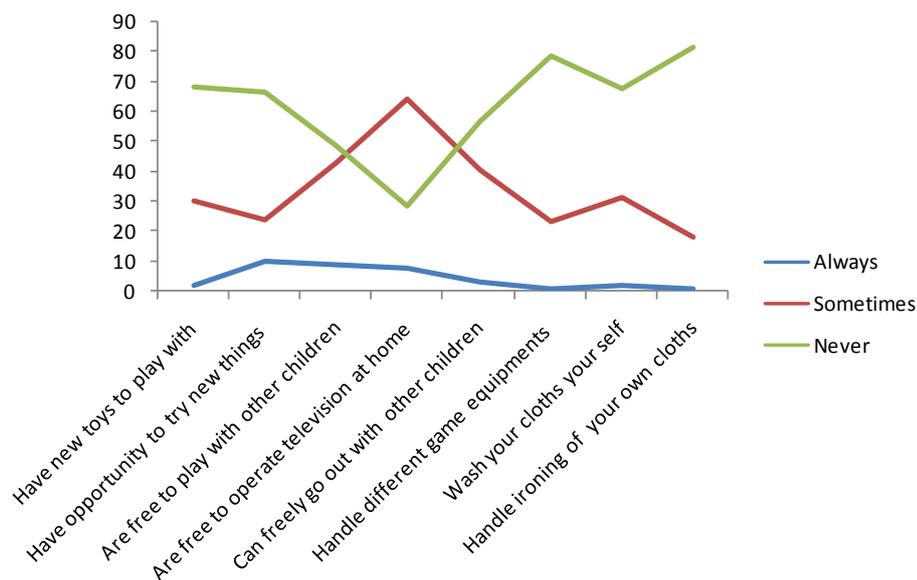


Figure 2. Line graph of parental exposure of children to new experiences.

Table 2. Summary of Independent t-test analysis of parental exposure of children to new experiences and the child's learning outcome.

Variable	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Low Exposure	718	11.53	4.88	-3.55	0.000*
High Exposure	282	12.72	4.44		

p < 0.05, df = 998, *Significant.

Discussion

The study revealed that parental exposure of the children to new experiences was cumulatively low. This has resulted in the poor performance in the academic achievement test which was an index of learning outcome. The restriction from parents hinders critical thinking and poor social interaction between their wards and their peers. The reason for this poor exposure to new experience is that some parents do not program their day to day activities to allow for enough time in interacting with their children. Most Nigerian parents restrict their children from activities outside the school. Also, some parents are out there struggling for money under the current hard economic condition. This was supported by the following studies ([5] [12] [13]; Schulaer & Wolfberg 2000). These studies linked games, parental interaction with their children at play, provision of toys and exposure to new experiences enhances various aspects of learning outcome.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

These findings have provided evidence for the potency of parental exposure of children to new experiences in facilitating the learning outcome of the children. However, a high proportion of respondents never had new toys to play with, nor had opportunity to try new things. It is also unfortunate that most parents never gave freedom to their wards to play with other children or even operate television at home, never washed or iron their own clothes. One could deduce from the result that since there is no enforced law binding parents as regards the extent of exposure, hence the poor level of exposure of their wards.

It is a matter of serious concern that there was generally poor performance in their learning outcome which could be attributed to the lack of exposure to new experiences. Furthermore, the findings reveal that exposure of children to new experience has the potential of speeding up students learning outcome. Therefore, for productive learning outcome, parents are encouraged to be fully involved in every area of their children's education. This dimension of involvement includes total exposure of their children in every facet of new experiences. The Nigerian government should also formulate policies that will enhance the implementation in these various exposures. This will enable all round development and in turn equip the child to meet up with today's global competitiveness and challenges in this 21st century.

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