

HOME LITERACY ENVIRONMENT AND PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS' EMERGENT LITERACY ACHIEVEMENT IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NORTH- EAST SENATORIAL DISTRICT, AKWA IBOM STATE. NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study investigated home literacy environment as a correlate of pre-primary school pupils' emergent literacy achievement in public schools in Akwa Ibom State North- East Senatorial District, Nigeria. The population for this study was all pre-primary school pupils numbering 6,987 in Akwa Ibom State North-East Senatorial District. The sample for this study consisted 500 pupils. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 18 schools in nine Local Government Areas and eighteen intact classes used for the study. The researcher adapted two instruments for the study which were Home Literacy Environment Questionnaire (HLEQ) adapted from Buvanawari and Padakannaya (2017) which was used to elicit information on pre-primary school pupils' home literacy environment and Letter knowledge/phonological Awareness Test (LKPAT) adapted from Kennen (2017) which was used to test pre-primary school pupils' emergent literacy achievements. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. The research questions one was answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and research question two was answered using Point Biserial correlation. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to test hypotheses one and point biserial correlation was used to test hypotheses two. The results indicated a high positive correlation between each of the home literacy environment variables which were availability of home literacy resources at home and parents marital status and pre-primary school pupils' emergent literacy of pupils. Based on the findings, recommendations were made amongst them was that parents should ensure that age appropriate literacy materials are provided at home.

Keywords: Achievement, Environment, Literacy, Home, Emergent.

Introduction

In a society that values literacy like Nigeria, the foundation for reading and writing are laid when rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes and forms are taught through play (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Nothing is more important to parents who value literacy than having their children learn to read, write and speak well. Hence, more and more parents prefer placing their children in reading programmes that have rigorous beginning.

The first environment of every child is the home. A child first educational experience is created in the home; his ideas, attitudes and general pattern of behaviours are as a result of his childhood experiences. The home background and parental attitude to school activities and education generally are some of the strongest and most persistent in

determining the pupil's interest and their consequent attitude to education. Farrant (2011) opines that children who grow in homes where the mind is stimulated develop mentally more than those from homes where there are no incentives for mental growth exercise; and that all behaviours are responses to some stimulus in the environment. This implies that what the child learns at home and how his family motivates him towards education contributes to the child's success in school. Furthermore, literacy-related social experiences that children take with them from their homes, in part, determine their reading achievement in pre-primary school.

The home literacy environments are literacy-related social experiences that children take with them from their homes to school. Broadly defined, it is a multifarious interactive home experiences that occur across multiple contexts. It is frequently referred to as a key component in emergent literacy acquisition (Schmitt *et al.*, 2011). Van Bergen (2016) identified three types of home literacy environments: (a) rich home literacy environment in which the parents and children participate in a variety of literacy activities; (b) child-directed home literacy environment, where there are less literacy activities, but important activities like shared reading, and library visits are present; and (c) poor home literacy environment, where there is very little participation in literacy activities by either the parent or child. Home environments that offer children ample opportunities to learn through interaction with adults and age-appropriate materials lead to positive reading outcomes.

According to Akinbiyi and Taiwo (2014), common home literacy experiences include: availability of literacy resources in the home, parent-child book reading practices - the quality and the frequency of book reading interactions between parents and children, access to age-appropriate literacy materials, shared book reading, parental teaching of reading and writing, parents' personal engagement in literacy activities, parents' beliefs and attitudes toward literacy practices, family conversations, watching educational television programs, rhyming, and singing children's songs. Study reports show that it is essential that age-appropriate literacy materials are available in the home as they are important tools for facilitating children's engagement in literacy activities and parent-child interactions (Rodriguez, Tamis-LeMonda, Spellmann, Pan, Raikes, Lugo-Gil, & Luze, (2009). The authors further indicate that parents who hold positive views about reading are more likely to be actively engaged in literacy activities with their children.

Availability of age-appropriate literacy materials in the home is essential and important in facilitating children's engagement in literacy activities and parent-child interactions (Rodriguez *et al.*, 2009). Literacy materials include a sufficiently wide selection of books such as storybooks or picture books, writing materials, educational toys, computer games, television, board games, recipes, educational charts and other reading materials as newspapers, magazines, catalogues, or advertisements and tracts. Summarizing the position of researchers Gunn (2018) says, in homes where more books are present parents are increasingly likely to read and discuss books with children at a young age and use books to facilitate discussion or debate. The author further adds that homes with books allow children to watch their parents read and in such environment, children can pick up books themselves.

Rich home literacy materials effectively provide children with literacy learning opportunities. According to Evans, Kelley, Sikora, & Treiman (2010) the number of

literacy materials in the home, significantly influence children's educational successes. These materials need not only be available they must be accessible to the children. Exposing children to books, and adults' reading, help them to establish a culture of reading, in which the skills of reading are seen as valuable and desirable.

Parental status of the child has a significant influence on a child's educational performance and overall behaviour. Study reports also show that children from both-parent families have better grades and higher academic achievements than children from one-parent families. Such disparity may be due to the level of attention and cooperation the child receives from the parents as well as the child's access to the parental income and quality time. Both-parent families always tend to make for support, cooperation and democratic type of leadership; pay attention to the educational needs of the children by providing children's material needs and preparing them for academic excellence (Ntim, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

Nigeria is a multicultural, multi-ethnic and multilingual society where families speak, write, read and communicate in a wide array of languages at home. English Language is a second language and the lingua franca (Ezekwe, 2018). The importance of literacy in English language as a second language in Nigeria is immeasurable. It is the language of government and administration, it serves as the official language in Nigeria, and it cuts across all ethnic, social and regional boundaries. It is therefore the language of inter-ethnic communication and in Nigerian schools, the official language for instructions is English Language.

Unfortunately, literature is awash with issue of poor performance of primary school pupils in literacy at both internal and public examinations. This has also been of serious concern to not only parents but also the general public as most of the secondary school students who sit for Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE) each year do not have credit pass in English Language, hence, are unable to gain admission into universities. It is not an overstatement that a large number of primary school graduates from public schools in Nigeria can hardly read, speak and write well. Most researchers attribute this sordid situation to poor foundation in literacy at the pre-primary school level, leading to a recommendation that pupils should have exposure to literacy in English quite early from the pre-school years irrespective of the advantages of mother tongue. Given the crucial influence of home environment on early language and literacy achievement of young children and the children's later literacy achievement, it becomes necessary that the home and the school play active roles in the literacy achievement of children during the early childhood years. Hence, the need for parental involvement by way of providing good and rich home literacy environment and practices as a foundation and possible panacea to solving this problem of poor literacy development and subsequent poor performance in English Language in later years.

While there are many studies on relationship between home literacy environment and emergent literacy of pupils in western countries and in a few states in Nigeria, there is relatively little data on the relationship between HLE and emergent literacy of pupils in Akwa Ibom State North-East senatorial District. With variability in family socio-economic status (income, education, and occupation) and care-giving arrangements in the state, it is

important to understand the relationship between home literacy environment and emergent literacy achievements among pre-primary pupils in Akwa Ibom State North-East senatorial District. Hence, this study seeks to specifically determine the relationship between each of Availability of Home Literacy Resources and Parental marital status and emergent literacy among pre-primary pupils in Akwa Ibom State North East Senatorial District.

Purpose of the Study

1. Determine the relationship between availability of home literacy resources and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North- East Senatorial District.
2. Determine the relationship between parental marital status and emergent literacy achievement of pre-pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North- East Senatorial District.

Significance of the Study

The findings of the study between availability of home literacy resources and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils would provide valuable information for parents, teachers and school administrators on the role of home literacy environment in children's emergent literacy achievement.

The findings of this study would enable these educators to appreciate the individual differences that exist amongst children occasioned by the differences in their parents' marital status and how this affects their emergent literacy achievement.

Finally, the findings of this study would add to the existing literature in children's early literacy development. This would be of immense benefits to researcher who may be interested in conducting further studies in related area.

Scope of the Study

The study was delimited to only two selected home literacy environmental variables: availability of literacy materials and parental marital status. But other environmental variables such as social relationship, religious affiliation, cultural beliefs and gender bias are also there which can play a role in emergent literacy of pre-primary school pupils but are not considered under this study.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between availability of home literacy resources and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North- East Senatorial District?
2. What is the relationship between parental marital status and emergent literacy achievement of pre-pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North -East Senatorial District?

Null Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for testing at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant relationship between Availability of home literacy resources and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North- East Senatorial District.

2. There is no significant relationship between parent marital status and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North- East Senatorial District.

Methodology

This study adopted a correlational survey design. The Area of the study was conducted in Akwa Ibom North-East Senatorial District. There are nine local government Areas in the Senatorial District belongs to the region described to be low land with a peak altitude of 200 metres above sea level. It experiences two main seasons. The mean annual rainfall recorded for the area is 2433 mm. The area is part of equatorial rainforest vegetation belt which has been replaced in most part by oil palm vegetation due to human activities. In the area of education, the Senatorial District has tertiary institutions, pre-primary, primary and secondary schools. The population of the study comprised all the 6,987 pre-primary school pupils, aged between three and four years in all the 385 public primary schools in the senatorial district. State Universal Basic Education, Board Akwa Ibom State (SUBEB, 2019). The sample for the study comprised 500 pre-primary school pupils, aged between three and four years which were drawn from eighteen primary schools in nine Local Governments Areas in the senatorial district using simple random sampling technique by balloting. In each of the Local Government Areas, two schools were randomly selected using simple random sampling technique by balloting, and in each of the schools two intact classes were randomly selected for the study, using simple random sampling technique. Two instruments were used for data collection. These are: Home Literacy Environment Questionnaire - HLEQ (Adapted from Buvaneswari and Padakannaya, 2017) and Letter Knowledge/Phonological Awareness Test - LKPAT (Adapted from Kennen (2017). The Home Literacy Environment Questionnaire - HLEQ is a 52-item questionnaire constructed to elicit information from parents on their children's home literacy experiences (Appendix B). The Instrument has two parts, A and B. Part A elicits from the respondents' demographic data, parents' educational status, parents' marital status and the frequency of parent-child book reading. Part B consists of items which were used to elicit data on the family home literacy experiences (Availability of Home Literacy Resources, Parent literacy habits, Child Home literacy habits and Parent-child shared story book reading) on four points rating-scale. The HLEQ was used to get information about children and family home literacy environment and experiences. The Letter Knowledge/Phonological Awareness Test - LKPAT is a reading and writing test designed to measure the preschoolers' achievement in letter knowledge and writing. The drafts of both Home Literacy Environment Questionnaire - HLEQ and Letter Knowledge/Phonological Awareness Test - LKPAT were submitted to two (2) lecturers in the Department of Early Childhood and primary Education and one expert in Research and Statistics in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, and the research supervisor for face validation. All their corrections and comments were incorporated into the final instTo generate scores for reliability index determination the researcher administered the instrument to thirty (30) pre-primary school pupils in the study area who were not included in the study sample. Scores obtained from Home Literacy Environment Questionnaire (HLEQ) and Letter Knowledge and Phonological Awareness Test were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC) and Point Biserial Correlation.

The reliability coefficient of Home Literacy Environment Questionnaire (HLEQ) was .80 while that of Letter Knowledge and Phonological Awareness Test (LKPAT) was .85. Therefore the instruments were adjudged reliable for use. The Part B of Home Literacy Environment Questionnaire - HLEQ was a 4-points likert scale. The letter Knowledge/Phonological Awareness Test - LKPAT was scored 40. Data generated from availability of literacy materials were correlated with data generated from Letter Knowledge/Phonological Awareness Test using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). And data generated from parents 'marital status were correlated with data generated from Letter Knowledge/Phonological Awareness Test using Point Biserial Correlation. Point- Biserial. All the hypotheses formulated were tested at .05 alpha level.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between availability of home literacy resources and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North-East Senatorial District?

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used for answering this research question. Scores on the two variables (availability of home literacy resources and emergent literacy achievement) which are continuous in nature were correlated. The result is presented in Table 1.

Table1: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation of the Relationship between Availability of Home Literacy Resources and Emergent Literacy Achievement of primary School Pupils.

| Variables | $\sum X$ | $\sum X^2$ | $\sum XY$ | r-value |
|---------------------------|----------|------------|-----------|---------|
| | $\sum Y$ | $\sum Y^2$ | | |
| Home Literacy Resources | 12323 | 312019 | | |
| | | | 336140 | .712 |
| Pupils' Emergent Literacy | 13439 | 366975 | | |

$N = 500$; $X =$ Home Literacy Resources, $Y =$ Emergent Literacy Achievement

The result in Table 1 indicated that the calculated r-value of .712 when compared with the decision rule is a high positive relationship. This is an indication that there is a high positive relationship between availability of home literacy resources and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary schools pupils in Akwa Ibom State North-East Senatorial District. This result implies that as availability of home literacy resources increases, emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North-East Senatorial District also increases.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between parental marital status and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North-East Senatorial District?

Point biserial was used for answering the research question. Scores on the two variables (parental marital status and emergent literacy achievement) which are continuous in nature were correlated. The result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary of Point Biserial Correlation between Parental Marital Status and Emergent Literacy Achievement of Pre-Primary School Pupils

| Marital Status | N | Mean | SD | r _{pb} |
|----------------------------|-----|-------|------|-----------------|
| Married living with spouse | 326 | 28.31 | 3.40 | .576 |
| Single mother / fatherhood | 174 | 24.20 | | |

N=500; X = Parental Marital Status, Y = Emergent Literacy Achievement

The result in Table 2 indicated that the r_{pb}-value of .576 when compared with the decision rule is a high positive relationship. Therefore, there is a high positive relationship between parental marital status and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North-East Senatorial District.

Null Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between availability of home literacy resources and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North-East Senatorial District.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used in testing the research hypothesis. Scores on the two variables (availability of home literacy resources and emergent literacy achievement) which are continuous in nature were correlated. The result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Summary of Correlation between Availability of Home Literacy Resources and Emergent Literacy Achievement of Pre-Primary School Pupils

| Variables | df | r-cal | r-crit | Decision |
|--|-----|-------|--------|-------------|
| Home Literacy Resources Pupils' Emergent Literacy Achievement | 498 | .715 | 0.087 | Significant |

The result in Table 3 indicated that the calculated r-value of .715 is greater than the critical r-value of .087 at 498 degrees of freedom and .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between availability of home literacy resources and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North-East Senatorial District is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between availability of home literacy resources and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North-East Senatorial District.

Null Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between parent marital status and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North-East Senatorial District.

Point biserial was used in testing the research hypothesis. Scores on the two variables (parents' marital status and emergent literacy achievement) were correlated. The result is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Summary of Correlation between Parents' Marital Status and Emergent Literacy Achievement of Pre-Primary School Pupils

| Parents' Marital Status | r _{pb} | df | r-crit | Decision |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----|--------|-------------|
| Married and living with spouse | | | | |
| Single parent | .576 | 498 | .087 | Significant |

The result in Table 4 indicated that the calculated r-value of .576 is greater than the critical r-value of .087 at 498 degrees of freedom and .05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between parent marital status and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North-East Senatorial District is rejected. Hence, there is a significant relationship between parent marital status and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils in Akwa Ibom State North-East Senatorial District.

Discussion of Findings

Availability of home literacy environment resources and emergent literacy achievement

The result of testing hypothesis one shows that availability of home literacy environment resources significantly relates to the emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils. This finding is in agreement with Izzo and Michele (2019) who found out that literacy rich home environments contribute to successful achievement of literacy skills than home environments where there are no literacy resources. There are quite a number of reasons that can be offered to explain the present study. Firstly, children who are reared in homes where there are literacy resources like picture books, magnetic letters, pencils and enough space where children can be scribbling on the sand would develop interest in literacy faster than other children who lack such opportunities. As a result of this, late literacy achievement will be far off, hence preparing a sound foundation for literacy to emerge properly and on time.

This is in consonance with the findings of Gunn (2018) that home where more books are presents provide children with learning opportunities. Again, when literacy resources are available at home, children see readings, writing, drawing, colouring and so on as a hobby. This creates permanent interest in literacy throughout life.

This is in agreement with Arya et al (2014) who revealed that well equipped home environment with appropriate literacy materials enhance emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils. He further added that when pupils are given access to literacy materials early in life, they are bound to utilize them maximally.

Parents' Marital Status and Emergent Literacy Achievement

This finding of hypothesis two revealed that there is achievement significant relationship between parents' marital status and emergent literacy achievement of pre-primary school pupils. This finding is consistent with the finding of Amato and Brooth

(2014) who revealed that parents' marital status has a positive relationship with pupils' emergent literacy achievement. Again, Hampen-Thompson (2009) also revealed that there is a high relationship between parents' marital status and emergent literacy achievement of pupils.

Hampen-Thompson further adds that children who reside in achievement single-parent families are more likely to be at risk than their two parents' counterparts. This he explained in terms of the gap between the economic resources of the two families. There are quite achievement lot of reasons that could be offered to explain the present study. Child rearing and education is achievement very tasking that which may be difficult for a single parent to handle. This is so in confirmation of Hampen-Thompson's (2009) assertion in terms of economic resources. Two parents share responsibilities at times thereby creating time for either of the two to give assistance to a child's learning. A single parent that is taking the responsibility of both parents may not be able to create time to teach a child the basic letter knowledge which a child needs in life.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that availability of home literacy resources at home and parents marital status relate positively with pre-primary school pupils' emergent literacy.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and the conclusion drawn, the following recommendations have been made:

1. Parents should ensure that age appropriate literacy materials are provided at home for children to interact with before starting school. These literacy materials include rhymes books, picture books, alphabet books, magnetic letters, puzzles, colour books, shapes, pencils, tables and chairs, literacy videos and sand area. Based on the finding, it shows that the availability of the above literacy materials relate to emergent literacy achievement pre-primary school pupils.
2. Government and religious leaders should create awareness to couples on the dangers of broken homes. This is because study has found a strong correlation between marital status and emergent literacy of pre-primary school pupils.

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