

# Home Environment as Correlates of Primary School Pupils' Literacy Skills Development in Ibadan Metropolis

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**Abstract:** One serious problem currently facing primary education in Nigeria is illiteracy. An alarmingly high percentage of primary school children are not learning to read, that is, they cannot use reading as a tool of learning, a problem which is also synonymous to writing. Researchers have also identified factors such as teachers' quality, school factor and availability of reading materials, foreign language usage, as factors that could be responsible for such marred development of literacy skills in children. However, most studies on the influence of home language on children's literacy skills were all foreign studies. In view of these, this study investigates home environment as correlate of literacy skills of primary pupils in Ibadan metropolis. The study adopted a correlational survey research design. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one and twenty (120) primary three pupils. Pupils reading assessment (0.92), Pupils' Home-environment and literacy Questionnaire (0.70) as well as Writing assessment scale (0.91) were the instruments used in the study. Two research question were answered using inferential statistic of Pearson product movement correlation. The findings revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between home environment and reading skills of pupils. ( $r=0.30$ ;  $p<0.05$ ), but no significant relationship between home environment and writing skills ( $r=-0.04$ ;  $p>0.05$ ). The study recommended that effort must be made on the part of the parents to ensure that their home environment is such that facilitates and stimulates the literacy skills of their children

**Key words:** Home Environments, primary education, literacy skills,

## I. INTRODUCTION

Primary education have been labelled as the most foundation for all levels of formal education. it is a very critical period for physical, social, emotional, psycho-productive as well as language development. because this is stage where permanent literacy is developed in the children. One of such stage is the primary education phase. According to Asodike and Ikpitibo (2014), Primary education is the foundation of formal education. It is an essential component in the echelon of educational system of every nation. In order to qualify for other levels of education a child must first pass-through primary schools, as such it is an institution upon which all other levels of education and educational achievements are built. Jaiyeoba (2011), is also of the opinion that primary education plays important role in the life of an

individual as well as national development. It provides young learners with the fundamentals of reading, writing, skill acquisition, information and attitudes necessary for proper adjustment into the society (Asodike & Ikpitibo, 2014).

In the National Policy on Education (2013), it was stated in item a, section C: p21 under primary education that one of the objectives of primary education is to:

*"Inculcate permanent literacy, numeracy and the ability to communicate effectively."*

In view of this it is very important to develop pupil's literacy skills while they are in primary school if the earlier stated objective will be achieved, because. Literacy skills are better achieved during the early years of life (Nyamu, 2015). The literacy levels at a young age can predict the growth of literacy skills in future development (OECD, 2012). However, literacy skills according to Department of Education and Skills (2011), includes the capacity to read, understand and critically appreciate various forms of communication including spoken language, printed text, broadcast media, and digital media. According to the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (2012), literacy includes reading, writing, communication and oral language in both print-based and digitized formats. Reading is tagged as "the ability to decode and interpret a group of words through a cognitive process" (Enamen, 2015; Ayoti, 2015). It is an important skill which would make learning easy and effective for children. It is a skill which must be developed and nurtured consciously. Infact it can also enhance one's writing skill (Otache, 2020). Writing plays a greater a pivotal role in academic settings as success in school, especially in exam situation is heavily dependent on the learners developing a satisfactory degree of proficiency and fluency in writing (Kirkwood and Donders, 2014; Cummings and Petscher, 2015).

However, as noted by Oyetunde, Ojo, Korb, and Babudoh, (2016) One serious problem currently facing primary education in Nigeria is illiteracy. An alarmingly high percentage of primary school children are not learning to read. In the same vein, a survey on educational achievement reported that over 92% of primary schools were not able to read at class level and many are not able to pin what they read clearly in writing (Uwezo, 2010; Raymond, 2019). Mahuro &

Hungi, (2016); Iroegbu & Iroegbu, (2018), also submitted that Nigerian primary school children have difficulty in reading and when this happens, it affects their general knowledge, writing abilities, vocabulary development and spellings. Iroegbu & Iroegbu, (2018) however asserted that “there is 88% chance that a child who struggles in first grade will struggle with reading in fourth grade”. The problem here is that this has affected the performance of pupils at large as the problem is also seen even at secondary school level (Iroegbu & Igweike, 2020).

Researchers have identified factors such as teachers quality, school factor and availability of reading materials, foreign language usage (Oyetunde et al, 2016; Edem et al., 2011; Okon, 2003) as factors that could be responsible for either improved or marred development of literacy skills in children. Eshiwani (1983) noted that, most schools lose many teaching/ learning hours at the beginning of the term. This wastage leads to less work being covered and syllabi not being completed on time, hence contributing to poor literacy performance. Also, the problem of inadequacy of learning resources like text books, library books, wall maps and the exercise books, makes learning very abstract to the pupils and could be a factor contributing to poor performance in literacy and national examinations.

Home environment is one of the factors that is likely to affect the children literacy skills. According to Lanter, (2006) the home environment is regarded as a setting which contains social and cultural knowledge and skills that are important for children’s growth and development in literacy skills. Children develop language and learn vital information about language through active participation and interaction with other people in and around the home environment (Gillon, 2004; Lundberg, 2009). Ngorosho, (2011) is also of the view that the home environment also provides the earliest important knowledge and skills for the development of phonological awareness and reading and writing skills. The home environment includes parental involvement, materials available at home. This is very important as many researchers seem to agree that pupils are more successful when their parents are involved in helping them read and write (Sebastian, Moon and Cunningham, 2017; Tarraga, Gracia and Reyes, 2017).

It can also be noted that a literate home environment includes parents who value reading. This gives children the impression that reading is an important action. More so, parents create a literate home environment when they give confidence to their children to write regularly (Colker, 2009). Children can further develop the ability to read and write as a result of exposure to literacy facilities and practice, especially where the environment is supportive of these abilities (Ngorosho, 2011). Thus this study investigated the home environment as correlate of primary school pupils’ literacy skills development in Ibadan Metropolis.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Ecological system theory*

This research study used Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) ecological theory as its conceptual framework because the theory emphasizes the importance of building effective relationships between parents and teachers related to children’s development. Bronfenbrenner (1979) emphasized that the school environment and the home environment are essential systems in the development of children’s academic skills. According to Bronfenbrenner, the *microsystem* refers to the environments in which children live such as the home, school, and community. This theory is especially applicable because it provides a conceptual lens for understanding home environment as the primary setting where learning is established. According to ecological systems theory a student’s home, school, and community need to work together in order for the student to develop academically. Bronfenbrenner’s theory provides the theoretical framework of empirical literature regarding building stronger parental involvement systems in ECE and increasing children’s development.

### *Home environment and primary school pupils’ literacy skills development*

The home environment is regarded as a setting which contains social and cultural knowledge and skills that are important for children’s growth and development in literacy skills (Lanter, 2006). The social knowledge and skills provide children with education and life skills that enable them to interact actively with other people in the community. The cultural knowledge and skills provide children with language, technology and strategies which enable them to participate functionally in social experiences and activities (Miller, 2002). Children develop language and learn important information about language through active participation and interaction with other people in and around the home environment. For example, children naturally learn sounds and sound structure and how to organize speech sounds according to the pattern characteristic of their native language as a predisposition to acquiring spoken language (Gillon, 2004; Lundberg, 2009).

The patterns of sound structure enable children to form words and understand how to use them. The knowledge that words are constructed from sounds facilitates the development of phonological awareness which is a pre-condition for reading acquisition in alphabetic language system (Adams, 1990; Anthony and Lonigan, 2004). Phonological awareness comprises a variety of sub-skills which reflect the access and understanding of the sound structure of a spoken language. That is, the awareness that oral language can be broken down into individual words and, in turn, the words can also be broken into individual sounds (phonemes) (Snowling, 2001). Reading in a language which is made up of alphabetic letters involves two things: first, to relate the sounds of the language to printed letters, and second, to understand the meaning of individual words and printed text (Stone et al., 2004). Just as

reading requires knowledge about sounds, so does writing (Juel, 1994; Lundberg et al., 1980).

It is important to point out that home environment provides the earliest important knowledge and skills for the development of phonological awareness and reading and writing skills. Children further develop the ability to read and write as a result of exposure to literacy facilities and practice, especially where the environment is supportive of these abilities. For example, the availability of reading materials and parental involvement in the child's reading and writing activities at home has a motivating effect on reading and writing ability (Sénéchal and LeFevre, 2002). Various studies have shown that most children who are successful in reading and writing come from families with a literacy-rich environment (Aulls and Sollars, 2003; Teale and Sulzby, 1986; Whitehurst and Lonigan, 1998). Moreover, a literate home environment also includes parents who value reading, because by so doing, children get the impression that reading is an important activity. In addition to having a home with reading materials and where parents are involved in reading, parents create a literate home environment when they encourage their children to write regularly (Colker, 2009), however, most of the studies available to the researchers were carried out in developed societies.

Studies of the child's home learning environment have shown that aspects of the home environment such as socioeconomic status and literacy environment have direct and significant effects on children's language development and acquisition of literacy skills (Aulls and Sollars, 2003; Baker, 2003; Bradley et al., 2001; Kim, 2009). Studies on parent participation in literacy activities in the form of teaching show that teaching children how to read and write words is related to development in early literacy skills (Sénéchal and LeFevre, 2002). The living and literacy environments vary between cultural contexts, and from one family to another (Foster et al., 2005). In this regard, upon entry into school, children from different home environments possess significantly different knowledge about language and print (Aulls and Sollars, 2003; Burgess, 2002) and these differences often translate into subsequent differences in reading and writing ability (Adams, 1990; Wagner et al., 1994). Based on this, it is become necessary for this type of study to be conducted in Nigeria with purpose of providing empirical evidence on the relationship between home environment and literacy skills development in Primary school pupils.

#### Research questions

1. Is there any significant relationship between home environment and reading skills of primary school pupils in Ibadan Metropolis?
2. Is there any significant relationship between home environment writing skills of primary school pupils in Ibadan Metropolis?

### III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a Correlational survey research design and the population for the study was all primary school pupils in Ibadan Metropolis. To select the sample for the study three Local Government Areas were randomly selected from the five Local Government Areas within Ibadan metropolis. The next stage involved the use of Disproportionate stratified sampling technique to select 1 public and 1 private school in each of the local government within the metropolis selected making a total of 6 schools to create equal representation. The next selection involved purposive sampling technique to select basic/primary 3 based on the following reasons:

1. Their literacy skills have been developed to an extent
2. They are mature enough to answer questions on their home environment

Total enumeration was used to select all the pupils in Basic/primary 3 class in public and private schools selected. The total sample for the study was 120 respondents. Two of the three instruments used were self-designed namely: 'Pupils' Home-environment and literacy Questionnaire (PHELQ= split-half 0.70) and Pupils Reading Assessment Rating Scale {PRARS, Kudar-Richardson 20= 0.91.} while Pupils' Writing Assessment Rating Scale (PWARS, Kudar-Richardson 20= 0.92) was adapted. To administer the questionnaire, research ethic was considered. The researchers prepared a consent letter which was sent to the parents to sough for permission to allow their child or children participate in the study. The pupils whose parents allowed to participate formed the respondents for this and the data collection lasted for two weeks. The data collected were analysed using inferential statistic of Pearson product moment correlation.

### IV. FINDINGS

**Research Question 1:** Is there any significant relationship between home environment and reading skills of pupils in Ibadan metropolis?

Table 1.0: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Showing the Relationship between Home Environment and Reading Skills of Pupils in Ibadan Metropolis

Variable	N	Mean	Std.D	R	Sig	Remark
Home Environment	120	18.992	3.185	0.299	0.001	Significant
Reading Skills		13.708	5.013			

Table 1.0 shows that there is significant positive relationship between home environment and reading skills of pupils ( $r=0.30$ ;  $P<0.05$ ). This relationship is shown the difference their mean score, which implies whenever home environment increases, the reading skills of pupils increase as well.

**Research Question 2:** Is there any significant relationship between home environment and writing skills of pupils in Ibadan metropolis?

Table 2.0: Summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing the Relationship between Home Environment and Writing Skills of Pupils in Ibadan Metropolis

Variable	N	Mean	Std.D	R	Sig	Remark
Home Environment	120	18.992	3.185	-	0.671	Not significant
Writing Skills		38.075	11.463			

Table 2.0 shows that there is no significant negative relationship between home environment and writing skills ( $r=-0.04$ ;  $P>0.05$ ). This result shown that home environment has no impact on writing skills, because writing skills increase while home environment decreases.

#### V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings from the research question 1 shows that there is a significant positive relationship between home environment and reading skills of pupils. This means that a literate home environment that is stimulating for literacy skills development has a great influence on the reading skills of children. Therefore, allowing children to engage in reading activities at home, having things like story books, text books, colourful educational chart, a visit to the library, and taking part in reading competition helps to develop their reading ability. This aligns with the research findings of Sénéchal & LeFevre (2002); Suizzo & Stapleton (2007) which confirms that, the home environment and parental involvement helps provides the earliest important knowledge and skills for the development of phonological awareness and reading and writing skills.

Also, findings from the research question 2 shows that there is no significant relationship between the home environment and writing skills. The finding shows that the home environment does to influence the writing skills of pupils. which implies that having a good writing is independent of the home environment. However, some factors might be the reasons for this, such as parent's emphasis on intellectual development than their development, early introduction to writing skills and many more. This negates a research work conducted by Adetunde 2009 in Ogbomoso Oyo state, which revealed that children growing up in a disadvantaged home environment due to low parental social economic status cannot effectively compete in writing activities like their counterparts.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

From the results above, it is clear that there is a relationship between home environment and literacy skills development of primary school pupils. This implies that parents need to make effort in ensuring that the necessary reading and writing

materials needed by their children are available especially at home.

#### VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- Parents are to ensure that the home environment is conducive for learning .it is imperative of them to make available basic necessary materials that their children need for example by making sure their children have a place to do their homework, educational charts, story books, writing materials like exercise books, ruler, pen, dictionaries and many more.
- Parents should also encourage and allow their wards to participate in reading and writing competitions that are not only organized by the schools.

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