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INFLUENCE OF FAMILY ENVIRONMENT ON THE SOCIO-COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT OF ADOLESCENTS FROM ANAMBRA STATE NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study was on the influence of family environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra State, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was used for the study. Five research questions guided the study. The population of the study was all the (SSII) senior secondary school students in mission and private schools totaling 6, 247 students during the 2022/2023 academic year in Anambra State. The sample size was 800 students selected through multi stage sampling technique. The research instrument was a researcher-developed instrument made up of five clusters consisting of 50 items to appraise the influence of the family environment (physical, economic, psychological, moral and social) on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents. Three briefed research assistants helped in the distribution and administering of the questionnaire which were all returned. The reliability of the instrument was established using split half method and it yielded a reliability coefficient (r) of 0.67. Mean scores and average total mean score were used to do the analyses and the result revealed that the adolescents rated the influence of the family physical and economic environment poor while the family psychological, moral, and social environment were rated high and among the recommendations proffered include: parents to double their efforts on parental provisions and influences, stakeholders to encourage participation and organization of conferences on family environment awareness among others.

Keywords: influence, family environnent, adolescents, socio-cognitive development, Anambra State.

Introduction:

Socio-cognitive development is a compound term derived from two strong pillars of human development domain namely; the social dimension and the cognitive dimension. Whereas the social dimension has to do with relationship between two or more persons, the cognitive dimension was derived from the Latin root "cognosere" which means to know or understand or knowledge. Hence socio-cognitive development could be seen as knowledgeable interpersonal relationship. Put in a more conventional manner it means good interpersonal relationship. A good interpersonal relationship integrates both the rational and the social life of an individual. It is also important to underscore that a good interpersonal relationship is critical to adolescent development.

The term adolescent is a house hold word among educators, counsellors and social workers because it is among the stages of development and constitutes the transitional phase between childhood and adulthood and hence it is a critical stage. Fletcher (2016), Stehlik (2018) defined adolescent biologically as the physical transition marked by the onset of puberty and termination of physical growth, cognitively as changes in the ability to think abstractly and multi dimensionally or socially as a period of preparation for adult roles.

The World Health Organization (W.H.O) views adolescents as phase of life between 10 – 19 years of age characterized by physical growth, emotional, psychological and behavioral change thus bringing transformation from childhood to adulthood. It is generally seen as a critical moment in the life of any developing young child when parental involvement is mostly needed for proper socialization, acculturation and positive adjustment. These among others are the functions carried out by the family.

According to Ifejiofor (2018) the family is a universal construct which encapsulates people living with each other. It has been defined to as the smallest and basic unit of the society. Ifejiofor also views it as the most essential primary group which plays and co-ordinate socialization roles. Supporting this view Mallika and Radha (2015) noted that it is the most personal social group comprising of the father (husband), mother (wife) and offspring (children). Okudo (2013) sees it as the cradle of learning where the self concept of the child is formed implying that the child receives the first influence from the family. These influences received by the child had been predicated to different factors. These factors are called family environment. These contribute to the positive settings obtained in the family that supports children's positive adaptations, adjustment and development.

Generally, adolescents development and adaptation can take place in the following domains namely, the physical, social, psychological (emotional), cognitive, cultural and moral domains. These also represents the different environment existing in the family thus we can refer to the following as types of family environment and they include; the physical environment, the psychological environment, the cognitive environment, the cultural as well as the moral environment.

Based on the above, the family environment refers to the quality and quantity of cognitive, emotional, and social support that has been made available to the child within the family (Mallika and Radha 2015; Ifejiofor 2018). Most scholars see the family environment as same with the home environment. This is because a good family or home environment encourages communication, demonstration of affection, appreciation, mutual respect, co-operation, working together, spending time together etc. It also accomplishes the following general functions through these aspects of environment namely; social environment (deals with friends, dialogue, recreations, stimulants), psychological and emotional environment (influences, stress, moral reasoning and empathy), economic environment (relates to class, access to basic needs etc) and finally, the physical environment (influence is experienced through housing, weather, climate and hygiene). The above mentioned are aspects of the environment which had implications for nurturance and socialization Ifejiofor (2018). Mallika and Radha (2015), Shah, et al (2012) and Deepshika and Bhanof (2011) all noted the indispensable roles played by family environmental factors towards enhancing good family setting and for the general wellbeing of the individual members of the family (socio-cognitive aspect of the well being inclusive).

Based on the above and given also the various kinds of family environment, the researcher has limited his investigation to studying the influence of the following; namely: the physical environment, social environment, psychological environment, moral and economic environment of the family. The influences of these environments on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents remain the motivation to the research work.

Statement of the problem

The society of our time has been noted to be deplorable, depraved and amoral. The effects of these are seen in value depletion rampant in the society and even worst among our young growing children. These children have lost the sense and taste of virtues and morality. They engage obstinately and with impunity on wrong doing and not remorseful over their wrong doing. Worst still some of them detest corrections. They engage in nefarious activities such as cultism, examination malpractices, drugs (weeds and hemps), rape, violence, disrespect and poor relational behaviors etc.

These have been traced to gaps created in the lives of these erring adolescents by agents of socialization among which are the family. The family remains the active and pivotal agent of the socialization concern. Okudo (2021) noted that what parents are doing and what they are not doing to contribute to the proper adaptation of these erring youngsters is topical and exigent. Hence the problem of this study is to determine how family environment (social, moral, psychological, physical and economic) influences the socio-cognitive development of the young adolescents from Anambra State Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the influence family environment has on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra State Nigeria. The study sought to specifically determine the following

(1) The influence of physical environment on the socio-cognitive development of the adolescents

(2) The influence of the economic environment on the socio-cognitive development of the adolescents
(3) The influence of the psychological environment on the socio-cognitive development of the adolescents.
(4) The influence of the moral environment on the socio-cognitive development of the adolescents
(5) The influence of the social environment on the socio-cognitive development of the adolescents.

Research questions

(1) What is the influence of the family physical environment of the socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra State?
(2) What is the influence of the family economic environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra State?
(3) What is the influence of the family psychological environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra State?
(4) What is the influence of the family moral environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra State?
(5) What is the influence of the family social environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra State?

Method

The design was evaluative survey. The area of study was Anambra State. Five research questions guided the study. The population of the study was all the (SS II) senior secondary students in mission and private owned secondary schools in Anambra State during the 2022/23 academic year totaling 6,247 students. The sample size was 800 students drawn through multi stage sampling technique from the six education zones of the state. The reliability of the instrument was established using split half method and values obtained were analyzed using parsons' product moment of correlation which yielded $\propto = 0.67$. The instrument was a researcher developed instrument which consists of five clusters. The instrument was distributed through five briefed assistants and all instruments were returned. The data collected was analyzed using mean score, grand mean and standard deviation to answer research questions 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Scores below the acceptable mean mark of 2.50 were rejected as low/poor influences. The grand mean determines the general family variable environmental influences.

Results

The data obtained were analyzed and the result of the analysis presented in a table form as follows.

Research Question 1: What is the influence of family physical environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra State?

1 **Table 1:** mean and standard deviation table on the influence of family physical environment on socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra State.

S/N	Items on the influence of physical environment on socio-cognitive development of adolescents.	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	My family lives in a comfortable environment	2.32	0.75	
2	Myself and siblings have a room to ourselves	2.42	0.69	
3	Boys and girls have different rooms to themselves	2.32	0.62	
4	Our environment is always too noisy	2.69	0.64	
5	Level of calmness	2.40	0.63	
6	Environmental tidiness	2.09	0.62	
7	Comfort of the environment at night	2.25	0.65	
8	The climate around us is always harsh	2.60	0.60	
9	During raining season everywhere is flooded	2.64	0.75	
10	The atmosphere is serene	2.38	0.69	
	Total	**21.539**	**6.64**	
	Average	**2.15**	**0.67**	

n = 800

The result from table one above reveals the mean rating and standard deviation scores of adolescents rating on the influences of their family physical environment to the same adolescents' socio-cognitive adaptation. Interestingly among all the above listed items that measure the influence of the family physical environment to the socio-cognitive adaptation of the adolescents only the harsh climate (2.60) and flood during rainy season (2.64) were rated above the mean mark all the other factors were rated below the acceptable mean mark meaning poor influence. It recorded grand mean score of 2.15.

Research Question 2: What is the influence of the family economic environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra state.

Table 2: mean and standard deviation score on the influence of family economic environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra state.

S/N	Items on the influence of family economic environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	Parental occupation	2.03	0.71	
2	Residence/location of family	2.23	0.62	
3	Easy accessibility to school	2.30	0.68	
4	Functional pipe borne water	1.80	0.72	
5	Availability of Electricity	1.96	0.74	
6	Good library facilities	2.40	0.65	
7	Payment of necessary dues and fees	2.59	0.72	
8	Provision of necessary school materials	2.63	0.74	
9	Helping you discover new skills	2.32	0.65	
10	Encouraging good feeding	2.69	0.73	
	Total	**22.95**	**6.96**	
	Average	**2.30**	**0.70**	

n = 800

Table two revealed that only payment of necessary dues and fees (2.59), provision of necessary school material (2.63) and encouraging good feeding (2.69) were rated above the mean score of (2.50). All other items were scored below the acceptable mean mark indicating poor influence.

Research Question 3: What is the influence of the family psychological environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra State?

Table 3: mean and standard deviation score on the influence of family psychological environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra State.

S/N	Items on the influence of family psychological environment on socio-cognitive development of adolescents.	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	Assisting you have high goals	2.56	0.70	
2	Giving incentives/motivation	2.60	0.65	
3	Discuss sex matters with you	2.23	0.62	
4	Praise you when you do well at school	2.75	0.61	
5	Giving constructive criticism	2.32	0.72	
6	Giving you affirmation	2.65	0.69	
7	Assisting you appreciate biology changes in your body	2.35	0.68	
8	Acceptance of your person	2.56	0.65	
9	Assists you in behavior stability	2.73	0.62	
10	Encourages independence	2.34	0.64	
	Total	**25.09**	**6.58**	
	Average	**2.51**	**0.66**	

n = 800

Table three above revealed the rating of adolescents on the influence of family psychological environment. It indicated that most of the items except for discuses sex matters with you (2.23) giving constructive criticism (2.32), assisting you appreciate biological changes going on your lives (2.35) and encourages independence (2.34) were rated above the acceptable mean score of (2.50) indicating that those other factors had significant influences in the socio-cognitive development of adolescents.

Research Question 4: What is the influence of the family moral environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra State?

Table 4: mean and standard deviation scores on the influence of family moral environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescent from Anambra State.

S/N	Items on the influence of family moral environment on socio-cognitive development of adolescents	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	Maintained strict discipline	2.68	0.61	
2	Were punitive	2.72	0.72	
3	Set limits	2.65	0.69	
4	Demands total obedience	2.63	0.59	
5	Issues treats	3.02	0.72	
6	Insists on good comportment	2.63	0.78	
7	Prays regularly at home	2.40	0.65	
8	Attends mass/religious functions	2.66	0.63	
9	Pays tithe/other religious cults	2.20	0.60	
10	Insists on proper dressing	2.39	0.72	
	Total	**25.98**	**7.31**	
	Average	**2.60**	**0.73**	

n = 800

The table four indicated that parents were found to do the following with respect to the family moral environment, they maintain strict discipline (2.68), were punitive (2.72), set limits (2.65), demands total obedience (2.63), issue threats (3.02), insists on good comportment (2.63) attend masses and religious functions (2.66) while the rest were rated below the acceptable mean score of 2.50.

Research Question 5: What is the influence of the family social environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra State.?

Table 5: mean and standard deviation scores on the influence of family social environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents from Anambra State.

S/N	Items on the influence of family social environment on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents.	$\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
1	Cherishes social and cultural values	2.40	0.71	
2	Encourages dialogue at home	2.39	0.65	
3	Encourages participation in social events	2.63	0.62	
4	Encourages you to show interest in other persons	2.65	0.63	
5	Encourages peer interaction	2.70	0.72	
6	Treats your friends nicely	2.68	0.71	
7	Encourages you to bring your friends home	2.40	0.74	
8	Attaches importance on visiting places of interest like zoo, museums, excursions etc.	2.60	0.68	
9	Assigning responsibilities to you	2.65	0.62	
10	Encourages you to organize social activities	2.09	0.63	
	Total	**25.19**	**6.71**	
	Average	**2.52**	**0.67**	

n = 800

The table five above revealed that among the items rated by the adolescents on influence of family social environment, the following were scores below the acceptable mean mark of (2.50) and they include, encourages you to organize social activities (2.09) encourages you to bring your friends home (2.40), encourages dialogue (2.39) cherishes social and cultural values (2.40) while the rest of the item were scored above the mean mark.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study was discussed based on the purpose of study which sought to determine the influence of family environment (moral, social, psychological, economic and physical) on the socio-cognitive development of adolescents, from Anambra State Nigeria.

Concerning the influence of family physical environment, research question one and table one revealed the adolescents assessment of the influence of their family physical environments on their socio-cognitive development, interestingly the adolescents rated their physical environment not supportive towards their socio-cognitive development. The table revealed that all the items measuring the influence of the physical family environment were scored below the acceptable mean mark of 2.50 except for "the climate around you is always harsh" (2.60) and during rainy season everywhere is flooded (2.64). These appeared high because they were stated in the negative context and had also negative influences. Given the above, the table also revealed that a grand mean ($\sum \overline{X}$) of 2.15 was obtained as the average total mean of the family physical environment influence therefore indicating that the adolescents were not satisfied with their family physical environment.

In a similar manner, the research question two and table two presented the adolescents rating of influence of family economic environment on their socio-cognitive development. The table revealed that the adolescents were not satisfied with the influence of their family economic environment on their socio-cognitive development. All items except for payment of necessary school fees (2.59), provision of necessary school materials (2.63) and encourages good feeding (2.69) were rated below the acceptable mean score of 2.5 and moreover the average mean score of the family economic environment was found to be 2.30 which was also below the average mean score.

Furthermore, the table 3, 4 and 5 which represented the ratings of the adolescents with respect to research questions 3, 4 and 5, which also deals with the influence of family psychological, moral and social environments were found to have positive influences in the socio-cognitive development of the adolescents. According to the table, family psychological environment had a total average mean score of 2.51, which is above the average mean score, however the students rated the following to have low influence namely, discuss sex matters (2.23) giving constructive criticism (2.32), assisting you appreciate biological changes (2.35) and encourage independence (2.34). The family moral environment was also found to have positive influence and recorded a total average mean score of 2.60 and had all other items above the mean mark of 2.50 except for, praying regularly at home (2.40), payment of tithe and religious cult (2.20), insisting on proper dressing (2.39). In a similar manner the family social environment recorded a positive influence because the adolescents rated it to have an average mean score of 2.52 which is also above the mean score however it rates items such as cherishing social and cultural values (2.40), dialogue at home (2.39), bringing friends home (2.40) and assisting you organize social activities (2.09).

Giving the above, the students rated their family physical and economic environment as having very poor influences on their socio-cognitive development while they rated family moral, psychological and social environment as having positive influence on their socio-cognitive development.

Concerning the poor influence of family physical and economic environment among adolescents from Anambra State, Obumse and Okudo (2023) noted that the primary reason which led parental provision of poor environment was bad governance and lack of attention prevalent among the Igbo speaking states of southern Nigeria. The government had failed to provide those basic things that supports the wellbeing of the citizenry (MuyiwaAdetiba, 2023), Okowa (2022).

On the other hand, the family moral, social and psychological environments were rated positive by the adolescents. This could be accounted for based on the socialization roles of parents which directly influence these aspects of the family environment and it is also independent of any other factor such as government or formal agencies. Implying that these aspects of the family environment provides the parents the opportunity of direct influencing relationship with their adolescents. In view of the above, Ifejiofor (2018), Mallika and Radha (2015), Deepshika and Bhanot (2011) noted that the family is the most personal social group where personal interaction and relationship happen among members. Ifejiofor (2018) noted the family psychological environment as one of those personal setting for personal interaction, it creates good social impact/influences in the life of the young adolescents. In a similar manner Shah, Atta, Qurechi and Shah (2012) noted that the psychological, moral and social environment is one of the major fundamentals of a well-developed family. By this, it creates a stimulating environment that encourages affection, achievement and overall performance of the adolescents.

Conclusion

The study was on influence of family environment on the socio-cognitive development of the adolescents from Anambra State, Nigeria. According to literature, socio-cognitive development refers to good interpersonal relationship which integrates both the national and social dimensions of development. Also, family environment refers to the quality and quantity of cognitive, emotional and social support provided for a child in a home. The family support consists of the following types namely, Family (Physical, Economic, Psychological, moral and social) environments. The adolescents from Anambra State in appraising the influence of their family environment were satisfied with the following, namely, the contributions of the social, moral and psychological environments to their socio-cognitive development while expressing dissatisfaction with the contributions of the physical and economic family environments.

Recommendations

(i) Government should pay more attention towards the provision of basic amenities in the community
(ii) The counsellors should step in to fill gaps created by the lack
(iii) Stakeholders to encourage participation and organization of conferences in the family environment awareness
(iv) Parents to double their efforts on parental provisions and influences.

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