

# Psycho-Social and Physical Factors Influencing Teaching and Learning of Secondary School Students in Nigeria

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## Abstract

The primary objective of the school as an organization is to effect learning in the learners which they can demonstrate both in attitude and in their mental and adjustment behaviours. In Education, emphasis is laid on three domains of the educational objectives. These are cognitive (mental) domain, affective (behavioural) domain, and psychomotor (hand) domain. However, to achieve these three essential domains, the learner should respond to the three objectives under certain conditions. These conditions affect how the learner learns and also his willingness to learn. This paper therefore, examines the effects of the factors that affect the learner's desire to learn and also proffers solution to the problems inhibiting the positive effects in teaching and learning under psycho-socio-physical parameters.

**Keywords:** Psycho-socio, physical, teaching and learning, learners.

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## INTRODUCTION

Secondary school education is the education after the primary school education. In Nigeria, it is categorized under junior secondary school (JSS) and senior secondary schools (SSS) system of education. According to National policy on education (2014), junior secondary stops after three years, while senior secondary has a period of three years. Both levels of education have certificates awarded at the end of the programme. Junior secondary awards Basic Education Certificate (BEC); senior secondary awards either senior school certificate or West African School Certificate (WASC).

Performance of students in both junior secondary and senior secondary depends upon certain factors that could enhance learning in the school. Students learn under certain conditions but their desire to learn under these conditions determines the extent he can learn (Onwuegbu, 1979). Anusliem (2000) opines that the school as an organization cannot operate in isolation of certain factors that encourage the student to learn. That is to say that the school cannot operate without the immediate environment that could help to determine the curriculum and the caliber of teaching and learning (Anusliem, 2000).

Researches (Nnachi, 2013; Nwachukwu, 2012; have pointed out various factors (social, physical and psychological) that influences teaching and learning of secondary school students. Investigating these factors in relation to how teachers and learners' interaction can be harmonize and harness for effective teaching and learning especially for secondary school education becomes sacrosanct and necessary. Understanding these factors that can improve learning is necessary to reposition the educational platforms of Nigeria and other developing nations for greater efficiency and development

### Psychological Factors that influence teaching and learning

According to Nnachi (2013), the age of the learner plays a vital role in the process of learning since the learner is the key factor in teaching and learning. Learners who are under aged may not meet up with the class work. The Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget in Nwachukwu (2012) is of the view that learning proceeds in stages which oftentimes coincides with the level of maturity and development of the individual learner. Jean piaget in Nnachi (2013) points out that it is pointless teaching children certain ideas when they are not psychologically ready to profit from such teaching. For instance, it has been shown that before the age of six (6years) children learn mainly through play and

engaging in the kinds of activities which encourage the exploration of the environment. The younger a child is, the more difficult it is for him to solve a problem which involves words alone. For instance, a three-year-old child will draw a man easily than offer a verbal description of the same person.

Also, the learner is a psychological organism influenced by human and other environmental factors. His emotional state determines significantly his reasonability and thus the ability to form concepts. The more stable the emotional state of the learner, the more the person learns. The learner's willingness and readiness to learn is important. Learning does not take place when the learner is not willing and ready. Children who are forced to learn against their readiness ends up not achieving any result.

Anusiem (2000) and Nnachi (2013) agreed that there are individual differences in the learner. In the classroom for instance, there are children with learning disabilities, while some are slow learners some are fast learners and gifted. Individual differences are seen in their age, sex, intelligence, in their socio-economic status of their parents, and differences in their height to mention but few. All these area of differences affects the child's learning ability.

The gender of the learner affects what the child learns in school. Male students show competence in certain subjects while their female counterparts also demonstrate interest in certain subjects. For instance, female students show likeness for subjects such as Home Economics, secretarial studies to mention but few. According to Teman and Tyller (1954) female students are better in English than their male counterparts. Nevertheless, no learning takes place unless it is motivated purposeless is no learning at all. Every child is propelled by some motive to learn new things. In the absence of motivation, the learner may not feel interested in the act of learning. A child's behaviour in learning is energized by motive, selected by motive, and directed by motives. There are lots of functions performed by motivation in the teaching and learning of a child such as:

- Motivation energizes behaviour since reward induces further success while punishment or failure induces action for achievement.
- Motivation select behaviour: only those acts of learning that are selected are supported by some motives.
- Motivation direct behaviour: motive activates the individual, induce him and impel him to do the desired action. All these direct his energies to reach the desired goal.

Rewards of all sorts are powerful incentive to learn. Most learners depend on reward in order to learn, they refuse to work without incentive or reward. All learning should not be and cannot be rewarded

immediately. Punishments, arousing fear in anticipation, may influence the learner to work and learn, but not in all cases. Experimental studies show that punishment interfere with complex learning activities, when punishment becomes frequent. Absence of punishment becomes a basis of low activity on the part of the learner. In the absence of fear, they disobey and waste time. Experimental evidence shows that praise stimulates small children to work and learn, although it does not produce much effect on superior and elder children most learners depend on.

### **Physiological Factors that influence teaching and learning**

Shivangi (2021) outlined some physiological factors that influence teaching and learning to include sense perception, health of the learner, time of learning and nutrition:

- ❖ **Sense perception:** This has to do with cognitive learning, the weaker the power of perception the lesser the amount of learning. For a blind man learns far less than a normal person. Impairment of sense organs is a handicap in the process of learning
- ❖ **Health:** Health hampers learning there is this saying that a sound mind is only in a sound body. Sound health gives vigour and vitality to pursue learning activities for a longer education. A sick person is handicapped by the normal physical strength necessary for any mental activity.
- ❖ **Time of learning:** The time a child learns is of great importance, for morning and evening hours are the best period of study. Morning hours is said to be the best time to learn especially those difficult subjects like mathematics and English language are best taught in the morning period. Experiment on children has shown that there are great variations in learning efficiency during the different hours of the day.
- ❖ **Nutrition:** Nutrition plays a great role in the efficient mental activity of a learner. Also, the type of food the child eats has its own effect on the learner. Poor nutrition affects learning, a child that feeds well will learn very well in the class, but a child who cannot feed well finds it difficult to concentrate during teaching and learning.

### **Social Factors that influence teaching and learning**

Social/environmental factors are such factors other than psychological factors which are outside the control of the learner. They are extraneous influence which affects the way the learner learns in the school. Factors which fall under social/ environmental factors are: the teacher, the society, the family, parental motivation, the peer influence.

The teacher is a very important key factor that plays an active role in the teaching and learning process in the school. It facilitates learning. It can equally mar learning in the school. The teacher's abilities, capacities

and qualification are critical to whether learning will take place or not. Learners learn very well when the teacher demonstrates complete mastery of the subject matter. No teacher could impact knowledge beyond his academic qualification to the learner. Onwuegbu (1979) is of the view that teacher's emotional disposition is a key factor in learning. A female teacher who was beaten by her husband in the morning and she dresses and come to school will surely transfer the aggression to the learner, and this could jeopardize the learner's ability to learn properly.

The society's perception about teaching and learning will generally affects the learner's ability to learn. That is to say that the values and perception of the society directly affects learner's behaviour in the school. In a society where the product of the school come out and are gainfully employed or honoured by the society or held in high esteem, a large size of the children and youths will develop positive interest and attitude towards school and learning. On the other hand, a society that does not regard the product of school or treats them with disdain, looked at the product with scorn, where illiterate youths make money and the society worship them and honours them; there is likely to be negative attitude by the learner towards learning and school.

Salawu (2010) and Anusiem (2000) are of the view that there is a limit to the tolerable number of learners a teacher could effectively manage in a particular classroom. A classroom with sixty learners could hardly guarantee learning that is learning cannot take place, on the other hand a university hall with two hundred (200) students could hardly guarantee effective teaching and learning. When such class is bloated with more than forty learners', there is problem of teaching and learning, discipline, management, honest work etc. in such occasion, educational crimes such as truancy, pretense, cheating in the examinations will be the order of the day.

The way teacher relates to the learner has direct effects in learning. If cordial relationship exists between the teacher and the learner, the learner will learn in a free atmosphere and achieve academic results (Anyaocha, 2016). On the other hand, if the teacher is autocratic in nature, the learner will be scared to learn very well, such autocratic relationship kills the learner's initiative and curiosity to learn. It hampers creativity and creates fear and anxiety on the learner. Equally, a teacher who has laissez-faire attitude to teaching is likely to produce indiscipled learners. This relationship also kills creativity to learning. Anyaocha (2016) maintained that a teacher who is democratic in his teaching is likely to encourage learners to express themselves. This type of freedom will develop self-esteem and personal interest to learn more.

The family plays a big role in the learning ability of the child. Some of these could facilitate or inhibit the child's learning abilities. Parents who provide the necessary educational resources for their children encourage and motivates such children to learn. Such resources like school bag, books, school fees, school uniform to mention but few should be provided to learner for positive learning. Socio-economic status of the child's parents has a significant effect on his/her learning. It also affects the child's attitude towards his perception of the school. The parent's status affects the child's diet, his general care and the type of education the child receives. The parent's income affects the child's performance and also his acquiring higher education (Salawu, 2010; Nnachi, 2013). The number of siblings is also a social determinant to the quality of learning and teaching a child gets. A child who has ten other siblings and the parents are of low-income earners, will have difficulty in his education, level of medical care and general welfare will be affected (Nnachi, 2013).

According to Shivangi (2021) learning is hampered by bad learning conditions such as distraction, noise, poor illumination, bad ventilation, overcrowded classroom, and bad seating arrangement. The location of the school, the internal set-up, the accommodation, decoration, health and sanitary conditions are very important for effective learning. The organization of the school also influence learning in many ways such as, the time must be drawn in accordance with the psychological principles. Difficult subject must be taught in the morning, there should be interval after some periods, and it should promote a healthy atmosphere for learning. Participation on the part of the learner should be active the learner should not be a passive learner. There should be guidance in the selection of subjects and activities in accordance with age, ability, and aptitude of the learner, all these should be provided.

#### **Physical/ Environmental Factors that influences teaching and learning**

Physical factor could be referred to as those factors in the school environment that enhances learning which include: size and shape of the classroom, provision for ventilation, lighting, location of the school and learning facilities.

- **Size and shape of the classroom:** Size and shape of the classroom may facilitate or hinder learning in the classroom. Chairs and tables should be arranged in such manner as to allow for free movement in the classroom without hindrance.
- **Provision of ventilation:** There should be adequate ventilation in the classroom the windows and doors should be adequately fixed as to allow for free flow of air in the classroom.
- **Lighting:** The classroom should be well lit. Enough light should be installed in the classroom so that learner will be able to see and write. The

absence of light could jeopardize learning especially when the learner could not see well.

- **Location of the school:** The school should be located in an atmosphere of serenity. It should be in an environment that guarantees learning. Schools should not be located near market, church, or near the road, all these areas generate noise and could impair learning.
- **Learning facilities:** There should be learning facilities such as science laboratories, libraries, recreation facilities, sporting facilities, clinics, hygienic hostels with facilities to mention but a few for the child to learn very well.

## CONCLUSION

Learners learning abilities are being influenced by a number of factors. Those factors were referred as psychological-social- physical factors which could make or mar teaching and learning in our schools. The factors could induce learning if positively managed; on the other hand, they could also induce lack of learning if negatively managed. The parents are at the center of the child's learning. Their economic power determines the type of education a child shall acquire. The school environment and its facilities are another determinant. The availability of such necessary learning facilities also determines the learning ability of the child. Also, the readiness of the child to learn is important. Children do not learn when they are not ready or induced.

Therefore, to produce an all-round educated child that the society could be proud of; there is the need for psychological-social-physical factors that need to be addressed as highlighted in this paper.

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