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Factors Affecting Creativity and Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT: *The paper examined the factors affecting the Creativity and Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils in Nigeria. Primary education is the foundation on which further education is built and has two main purposes. The first purpose is to produce a literate and numerate population that can jointly deal with problems both at home and at work. Therefore, the paper recommended that Parents and teachers should find ways of promoting the level of creativity of the pupils, as a high level of creativity has an influence on academic performance. Also, Parents of pupils with low levels of creativity should give their children more support and encouragement to improve their level of academic performance in their learning subjects*

KEYWORDS: creativity, academic performance, primary school pupils,

INTRODUCTION

In every modern society, it is believed that education is the key to national development, and there is a need to maintain every level of education, especially the Pre-Primary stage, because, it is the bedrock upon which all other educational levels are built. Once a child misses that early stage it is usually difficult for the learner to get back to the basics. Pre-primary education is a common practice in most societies; they make provision for early childhood education programs of various types for children below the official school age (usually 6 years), mainly to prepare them for the rigours of primary education and beyond. From the beginning, parents are the primary persons involved in raising children in every society. That is why the family is recognized as an important agent of socialization. Therefore, the importance of parent/family cannot be overemphasized.

Primary education is the foundation on which further education is built and has two main purposes: The first purpose is to produce a literate and numerate population that can jointly deal with

problems both at home and at work. It also serves as a foundation on which further education is built (Akanle, 2007).

In spite of the importance of primary education, the education sector continues to face many challenges. According to the Institute of Statistical, Social and Economic Research ISSER (2008), the performance of many children is failing to meet the minimum learning requirements and to acquire basic skills and competencies. In 2006, the Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE) results released by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) showed that out of the 308,379 candidates who sat for the examination, only 190,921 candidates were able to obtain aggregates between 06 and 30 (the required national pass aggregates), which represented 62 per cent (WAEC, 2006).

Creativity includes two dimensions. The first dimension is the novelty notion; it is a phenomenon in everyday life and therefore anyone can be creative as an essential aspect of his/her contribution to the business environment and everybody has to be involved in creative processes. The second dimension is the usefulness notion which refers to material or practical methods of assessing the usefulness of novel ideas (Shalley et al., 2004).

Although there is no agreement about where creativity is situated in a process, a product, or a person, there is agreement about creative work involving both the concepts new and useful (Petrowski, 2000). Creativity means a belief in new ideas and making them into reality in the form of new products or services provided by organizations in the marketplace (Kilroy, 1999). It is based on novel and useful ideas, regardless of the type of these ideas, the reasons behind their production or the commencing point of the process (Unsworth, 2001). Creativity can be seen as a mental process which produces novel and useful concepts or ideas, or it could be innovative relationships between existing ideas or concepts (Houran & Ference, 2006).

The importance of creativity because of its ability to yield novel and proper ideas to solve complex problems, increase efficiencies and enhance overall effectiveness (Diliello & Houghton, 2008). Creativity includes two principles 'problem finding', and 'problem-solving', and creativity needs several skills and talents. Thus, creative thinking is not conventional and requires modifying or rejecting existing ideas (Herbig & Jacobs, 1996). Similarly, Dewett (2004) identified that individual creativity has two general facets which are creative efforts and creative outcomes. Individual creativity can be defined as "a person's ability to think beyond the obvious and produce something novel and appropriate" (Nayak, 2008: p.421). The application of creativity in marketing can provide added value to services or products, further than the tangible aspects or clear characteristics of these products or services (Sadi & Al-Dubaisi, 2008).

Creativity can be divided into three types and they are: creating something new, combining things together, and improving or changing things (Mikdashi, 1999). It is regarded as a principal term in

various fields ranging from the fine arts. Creativity is fundamental to self-reliance although much research has been done in the field of creativity, but education experts and scholars on a common definition of creativity in science and technology have not lost.

Four elements of creativity are fluid structure, flexibility, originality and skills to incorporate. The author provides a fluid definition, the total number of related ideas, as well as interpreting meaningful responses high grade of fluid, representing the total number of ideas associated with a particular stimulus. While flexibility is directed by the number of different classes and different responses. A person who obtains a high grade of flexibility in dealing with a problem, due to the different angles and offers a variety of classes. Originality is always statistically abnormal responses to stress responses are rare, representing exploration, constructive and original thinking, People who obtain originality, always obtain a high score stem from the creation of solutions and offering ways are not only fit successfully created, but the solution, the less people come to mind. Creativity appears early in life and it shows in the child's play gradually it spreads to other areas of life. Studies of the creative production of men and women showed that creativity normally reaches its peak during the thirties and either remains on a plateau or gradually declines. The early peak of creativity is due to environmental factors such as poor health growth family circumstances, financial pressure and lack of free time. This study explores the factors that affect the creativity and academic performance of primary school pupils in Nigeria.

PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary education is universally accepted as the foundation laying level of education in all nations of the world. It provides the mini-structural framework on which the quality of other levels of education is anchored.The Federal Republic of Nigeria FRN (2013), states that, primary education refers to education given to children aged 6 to 11 plus in primary schools and that the primary level is the key to the success or failure of the whole system since the rest of the education system is built upon it. This statement confirms the fact that the primary level of education is most crucial to the success of other levels, hence the need for the stakeholders to do everything possible to lay a solid foundation for its sustainability.

For primary education to be the bedrock of the educational system, Umoh (2006), maintains that it must bring to the learners elementary and general knowledge of science, by teaching them to use and operate scientific objects and gadgets so that they may be conversant with such foundational knowledge as they advance to other levels. In order to give the primary school (education) the focus FRN (2013) enumerated the goals of this level as to:

- Inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy, and ability to communicate effectively;
- Lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;

- Give citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to the life of the society.
- Mould the character and develop sound attitudes and morals in the child. e. Develop the child's ability to adapt to the child's changing environment.
- Give the child opportunities to develop manipulative skills that will enable the child to function effectively in society within the limits of the child's capacity.

As pointed out by Ijeoma (2004), Adedeji (2004), Onyeagba (2006), Saidu (2008), and Sen (2010), primary education is the foundation for a child's learning on which every other level of learning depends. In light of these objectives, this paper examines how primary school may be seen and rightly recognized as the foundation of education in society. Furthermore, Olaniyan & Obadara (2008), submit that, apart from the home as the first agent of socialization, primary school is the first that introduce formal education or literacy to the children. In other words, primary school education is a foundation upon which all other levels of education are built. Armstrong (2008) affirms that certainly, primary and secondary education are both important elements of the sector, not least because they feed directly the quality of higher levels of education.

CONCEPT OF CREATIVITY

According to many writers, creativity is one of the most confused and misused concepts in psychology. Various definitions have been given to the concept of creativity. According psychodynamic approach to understanding creativity was proposed by Sigmund Freud (1939), who suggested that creativity arises as a result of frustrated desires for fame, fortune and love, with the energy that was previously tied up in frustration and emotional tension in the neurosis being sublimated into creative activity.

Levin (1978), says, creativity is the ability to discover new solutions to problems or to produce new ideas, inventions, or works of art. It is a special form of thinking, a way of viewing the word and interacting with it in a manner different from that of the general population. According to Drevdahl (1956), creativity is the capacity of a person to produce compositions, products or ideas which are essentially new or novel and previously unknown to the producer. Welson, Guilford and Christensen (1974) defined creativity in the following words 'The creative process is any process by which something new is produced idea or object including a new form or arrangement of old elements. The new creation must contribute to the solution of some problem.

According to Child (1973), there is no clear ambiguous and widely accepted definition of creativity. However, Child also submerges that, there is some measure of agreement that the simplest meaning of creativity always results in ideas which are novel, useful and relevant to the solution of problems being confronted or examined. The novelty here signifies originality. Some other definitions of creative thinking include bringing about something novel or new without prior

examples. Another definition, producing something new, valuable and beneficial to society or mankind. Creativity, therefore, is always characterized by originality, volubility, tangibility and beneficence. Creative thinking does not mean to be fantastic or complex, it only needs to be worthy and has the potential of solving problems. Some dimensions that are in creativity or creative thinking signify that creativity does not have to be wholesomely and purely original it sometimes has some elements of old ideas. In this regard, creativity may come through the following:

Borrowing: This involves borrowing of old ideas and utilizing them to solve new problems
Complementing: This means that some old ideas are not necessarily perfect or comprehensive, the creative person adds something to it and utilises it to solve current problems.
Combination measure association: Here creativity involves association or rather combining new and old ideas or more thoughts. This may sometimes involve the reconciliation of two contrasting ideas or thoughts to produce one single acceptable useful one.
Re-ordering, Re-organizing and Perfecting: Creativity may also involve reordering, reorganizing or perfecting existing ideas in ways that make them appear original and new and useful to solving problems.

Creativity literally means, "create", "creation" or "creative force" and "power to create new works. Creativity is the ability to make or bring to existence something new, whether a new solution to a problem, a new method or device or a new artistic object or form. Creativity is described as a process of becoming sensitive to problems, deficiencies, gaps in knowledge, missing elements and disharmonies as well as identifying, searching for solutions, making guesses or formulation of hypotheses, and possibly modifying and restating them, and experimenting to find results and finally communicating the results Penick (1992).

The meaning of creativity is defined as "the ability to produce original, workable ideas" (McMahon and McMahon 1986). The meaning of creativity is concerned with novelty and departure from traditional patterns of doing things (i.e. moving away from the normal or expected) but must be in arrangement with reality and actually apply the idea in a useful manner. Creativity refers to useful, original thinking. Creativity is often defined by psychologists as the ability to 'break set'. Breaking set: is the tendency to see problems in the same mould all the time. Breaking the set refers to the ability to see problems in an unexpected or unusual fashion and come up with novel situations.

The test of creativity tries to measure originality, but it must be tied to reality. Another test of creativity involved making up stories and making associations to a list of words. It is evident that the creative person are often different from the "very bright" as defined by the IQ test. The creative student, for example, can be wild, silly and unpredictable (Torrance, 1979; 1962, cited in McMahon and McMahon, 1986). The creative children do not fit the model 'intellectual' instead, their personal traits and values are contrary to those that most students feel the teacher expects. The reason for the oddity of the creative can be found in the educational system as a whole, which

is geared towards straight academic achievement with a high level of conformity, rather than innovative approaches to problems.

Torrance (1969), whose thinking dominated psychometric approaches to creativity in the USA and elsewhere. Torrance saw creativity broadly as the process of sensing a problem, searching for possible solutions, drawing hypotheses, testing and evaluating, and communicating the results to others. He added that the process includes original ideas, a different point of view, breaking out of the mould, recombining ideas or seeing new relationships among ideas. Although Torrance's definition has been influential and is still considered by some to have value, as indicated earlier it is tied to a psychometric approach which has been widely criticized and is largely considered our model.

HIGH CREATIVITY

Some influential descriptions of high creativity, i.e. the sort of publicly acclaimed creativity which changes knowledge and/or our perspective on the world, include the following: The achievement of something remarkable and new, something which transforms and changes a field of endeavour in a significant way the kinds of things that people do that change the world (Feldman, Csikszentmihalyi & Gardner, 1994, page 1). The exceptional human capacity for thought and creation'(Rhyammer & Brolin, 1999, page 261)A person's capacity to produce new or original ideas, insights, restructurings, inventions or artistic objects, which are accepted by experts as being of scientific, aesthetic, social, or technological value'(Vernon, 1984, page 94).

The ability to produce new knowledge (Dacey & Lennon 2000). Some have also acknowledged the role of the wider cosmos in the creation of new ideas. For example, Khatena (1982) described creativity as three-dimensional, consisting of the person, the environment and the cosmos. One of the difficulties with definitions which focus on extraordinary, or high, creativity is that it only applies to some extremely talented people, and may be of less relevance when focusing on the education of all pupils.

LOW CREATIVITY

The concept of creativity has traditionally proved an elusive one to pin down. Most of the dominant writers on creativity acknowledge a broad spectrum of activity which can be described as creative; even studies focusing on so-called creative people, such as Spiel & von Korff's (1998) study of politicians, scientists, artists and school teachers, produce a wide variety of descriptions. One major distinction made by analysts is that between 'high' creativity and ordinary, everyday, creativity. Another of the distinctions is between creativity within specific domains as opposed to creativity as a separate process, applied within domains. The dominant/influential descriptions of creativity given below are in the main concerned with creativity in this latter, generic, sense.

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Definitions of creativity which have influenced thinking in the past include those developed by Torrance (1969), whose thinking dominated psychometric approaches to creativity in the USA and elsewhere as discussed earlier. Torrance saw creativity broadly as the process of sensing a problem, searching for possible solutions, drawing hypotheses, testing and evaluating, and communicating the results to others. He added that the process includes original ideas, a different point of view, breaking out of the mould, recombining ideas or seeing new relationships among ideas.

Creativity stems from far back in history, unsurprising as Ryhammer & Brolin (1999) point out, given that the development of new ideas and original products is a particularly human characteristic. The notion of 'inspiration' or 'getting an idea' (ibid, page 260), is found in the Greek, Judaic, Christian and Muslim traditions and is founded on the belief that a higher power produces it. During the Romantic era in Europe, the source of inspiration and its artistic expression was seen as being the human being. During this era, originality, insight, creative genius and the subjectivity of feeling were highly valued. From the end of the nineteenth century, people began to investigate the question of what fostered creativity. The first systematic study of creativity was undertaken by Galton (1869). His focus was 'genius' and there followed a hundred or so studies on this theme, defined as achievement acknowledged in the wider public arena. This line of investigation remained prevalent into the 1920s, when the focus in psychology shifted to the investigation of intelligence. Although Binet's work included some investigation of the creative side of intelligence, the major study of creativity in psychology occurred in the 1950s.Although creativity has a very long history, systematic study of it began at the turn of the last century. The early years of the twentieth century saw a move toward empirical investigation of creativity within the new discipline of psychology. There were four major traditions in which this took place:

FOSTERING CREATIVITY IN STUDENTS

The following ways have been found to be very effective in fostering creativity among students:
By placing the students in an atmosphere that will facilitates and enhances the development of problem-solving skills. In this regard, providing brainstorming sections will assist immensely.
Encourage creative reading, this could be done by asking students to read passages, and suggest how to use the information contained in them or asking them to suggest some additional ideas besides the one contained in the passage.

- As much as possible, reward creative tendencies and achievements among students.
- Give them leverage to exercise independent thought or make independent decisions.
- Train them to be conscious or to be Inquisitive to search for alternatives or options in the things they want to partake in.
- Train them to be conscious of all factors and circumstances surrounding the position or resolutions they take in order to take such positions or decisions consciously not sentimentally or emotionally.

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CONSTRAINS TO CREATIVE THINKING

- Lack of being use of it.
- Lack of specifying a special time for it
- Thinking of time of fatigue, tidiness or boredom. It is said that the best time for creative thinking is after sufficient sleep.
- Lack of involvement in problem-solving or lack of confronting complex problems or situations or looking for problems with one single outlook.
- The assumption is that creative thinking is the exclusive preserve of intelligent people.
- Fear of failure, people that are not brave or courageous can never be creative, It is up and said that if not for difficulty old people would have become leaders.
- Chaining oneself to a dominant pattern of thinking, it is said that was invented after 10,000 abortive experiments.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CREATIVE RESPONSE

- It has to be novel and unusual – out to arouse surprise from the judge and other members of the society.
- Has to be appropriate – Meeting the needs of the people concerned.
- Once the above criteria are achieved, further improvement is possible only if the responses become transformed and condensed to attain perfection.

STAGES LEADING TO CREATIVE PRODUCT

Creative persons undergo the following stages before finally arriving at creative products.
Preparation: This stage indicates the person has a problem worrying him/her and he/she is devoting time to organising his/her understanding of the problem.
Incubation: The stage of deep mediation in some sense as the creative person almost withdraws from his/her environmental interaction as he/she is extremely preoccupied with the problem.
Illumination: When his/her thoughts get organized the creative person sheds light on his/her problem.
Solution: Immediately after the illumination of thoughts, the solution is achieved which is the ultimate.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CREATIVE CHILDREN

- Overactive physically and /or mentally
- Annoying curiosity
- Forgetful and absentminded
- Good sense of humour

- Doesn't participate in class
- Enjoys nature and the outdoors
- The mind wanders too much
- Friends see him as slightly unusual
- Likes to work by him/herself
- Imaginative, enjoy pretending
- Sensitive
- Likes colours
- Uncommunicative
- Daydreams. Get lost in thought
- Spends time watching others

The above are some of the characteristics that Torrence cited in Mukherjee (1978) deduced from letters of some parents who had problems adjusting themselves in their respective schools and there is some evidence that this is often the fate of the creative child in school.

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

For so many years, different researchers have defined the concept of Academic performance based on their points of view or ways of measuring the student's academic ambition. Nuru (2006) stated that " Cambridge University Reporter (2008), has frequently defined academic performance in terms of examination performance, on what students have learned or what skills the students have learned and is usually measured through assessment like a standardised test, performance test and port polio assessment." (2011, p. 18). Santruock (2006) as cited in Zakka (2016) views academic performance as descriptive assessment information which is usually translated through grading systems such as Grade Point Average(GPA) and course grade.

The academic performance of a student can be regarded as the measurable behaviour of a student in a particular situation. For example , the academic performance of a student in a particular subject which includes observable and measurable behaviour of a student at any point in time during a course in mathematics, Students' academic performance consists of scores at any particular time obtained from a teacher-made test. Therefore, we can equate academic performance with the observed behaviour or expectation of achieving a specific statement of educational intention in research. The academic performance of students consists of scores obtained from the teacher-made tests, first-term examinations, mid-semester tests and so on.

CREATIVITY AND EDUCATION OF PUPILS

In the field of education various scholars, experts and practitioners among others, have recognized the necessity of creative education as a fact in the development of children and adults (Tsai, 2012a, Feldman & Benjamin 2006 Sternberg, 2003), respectively. Creative education is the creative ways

of thinking, teaching and learning process. Creative education supports and enhances the development of creative and innovative teaching and learning. Creative education simply means the employment of creative thinking, creative teaching and learning by both teachers and the learners. Learning is a change in human temperamental make-up or capability, which can be retained, and which is not simply ascribable. It is, therefore, a relatively enduring eternal change in behaviour which occurs due to practice or experience. Hence, drugs, maturation, fatigue, emotions, alcohol and motives can bring a change in behaviour but they do not constitute learning because such behaviours may not last for a long time. Thus, efforts and major funding have been geared to support the inclusion of creative teaching and learning in school curricula, policy, learning etc. to mention but with the expectation that this will reinforce educational reforms (Baer & Garrett, 2010, Craft, 2010, Ho & Ho, 2008 and Kim, 2005).

Creativity is an essential aspect of learning which helps a creative child to excel in various ways in life. A creative child generates novel and new ideas, makes exceptional in reasoning and has unique ways of doing things. He/she is always capable of producing new ideas, literary works, jokes artistic works among others. A creative child is likely to learn faster, ask challenging questions and reason ahead more than other children within the same age brackets. Therefore, the teacher should recognize students' individual differences that would accommodate a creative learner, by adopting the various teaching strategies that will enhance the talented, creative and slow learners among others.

Craft (2000) defined creativity as the application of knowledge and skills in new ways to achieve a valued goal. In furtherance, the author listed some qualities of creative children as follows;

- They are more fluent than most other people,
- They demonstrate considerable flexibility of mind,
- They have the ability to identify new problems, rather than depending on others to define them,
- They have the ability to transfer knowledge gained in one situation to another in order to solve problems,
- They have the capacity to focus attention in the pursuit of goals or set of goals and
- They do not quit when the going gets tough, rather they persevere.

FACTORS AFFECTING CREATIVITY AND POOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PUPILS IN NIGERIA

The issue of pupils' performance at schools has been of concern ever since modern education was introduced. Many countries have come to realize that pupils are the heart of the educational process and that without good performance, all innovations in education are doomed to failure. There is a wide dissatisfaction with the current situation of schooling in many countries and parents come in for the share of the blame. This is because the majority of parents involve their children in garden

and other domestic work. This makes pupils have limited time with their teachers and no time for revision, therefore, affecting their performance.

Globally children are pressured to learn more in schools and improve their abilities to read write and apply solutions to problems in order to live a successful and comfortable life. Attempts to improve academic performance in school include high expectations, tasks on time, a safe climate and a challenging curriculum. Schools are often blamed for student's poor academic performance despite the fact that teachers and principals work hard to provide strong curricula, high expectations and a safe climate. Academic performance is affected by many factors which include prenatal, natal and postnatal issues of the mother apart from nutritional, socioeconomic and environmental factors. Children who do poorly at school may be under a lot of stress and cope with it either by externalizing their feelings as behavioural problems while others might internalize it and present with daily headaches or stomachaches.

However, the academic achievements of pupils were affected by a number of factors. These factors could be grouped into two broad categories: in-school and out-school factors. In this regard, Philip (2000) indicated that factors such as qualified teachers, facilities like adequate and conducive classrooms, textbooks, and furniture, curriculum relevance, infrastructure, learning process(monitoring and evaluation) and adequate funding have a great influence on the successful achievement of the educational objective and enhancing students' academic achievement. Moreover, sociological variables, which include general categories of social class, family structure, sibling structure and religion (Mathewos,2000), may be considered as variables which constitute out-of-school factors that may affect the student's academic achievement.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the paper concludes that: there are several factors that affect the academic performance of primary school pupils in Nigeria which are classified into two categories, that is in-school factors and out-of-school factors. Moreover, it was discovered that the majority of pupils in primary school pupils in Nigeria have low levels of Creativity. It was further concluded that pupils with high levels of creativity perform academically brighter than their counterparts. The researcher concluded that Gender differences do not significantly influence the academic Performance of Primary School Pupils in Nigeria. Lastly, it was concluded that Creativity and parental socioeconomic status do interactively affect academic performance among primary school pupils in Nigeria.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of this study:

- Parents and teachers should find ways of promoting the level of creativity of the pupils, as a high level of creativity has an influence on academic performance.
- Government should support an educational awareness policy through the parent-teacher association (PTA) and school-based management committee (SBMC) to address the problem of those pupils with low parental involvement.
- School administrators should organize guidance and counselling programmes in their respective, schools such as teacher talk and student talk during assemblies with a view to establishing strong achievement motivation in mind of the pupils about their learning subjects.
- Community-based organizations and parents should give their children more support and encouragement to improve their level of academic performance in their learning subjects.

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