



## CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE IMPACT OF ENVIRONMENTAL DYNAMICS ON ACQUISITION OF INTELLECTUAL SKILLS ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CHILDREN IN KENYA

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### Abstract:

The purpose of this study was a critical analysis on impact of environmental dynamics on acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya. Most Early Childhood children in Kenya have been greatly affected on acquisition of intellectual skills by environmental dynamics. The study was mainly to critically analyze on impact of environmental dynamics on acquisition of intellectual skills on early childhood children, impact of play materials, impact of good healthcare, impact of balanced diet, impact of socialization, and impact of family structure on acquisition of intellectual skills on early childhood children in Kenya. This study was conducted by employing the qualitative research design to carry out the critical analysis. The study brought about recommendations on the government, Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), community, parents, and teachers, to identify the best environmental conditions that are good for children; provision of adequate play materials, proper balanced diet, positive socialization, and appropriate family structures, in order to positively develop their intellectual skills. The study also recommended all the stakeholders to improve the environmental condition that enhance acquisition of intellectual skills in Early Childhood children in Kenya.

**Keywords:** environmental dynamics, acquisition, intellectual skills

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## **1. Introduction**

Environmental conditions can greatly affect the acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children globally, regionally and locally. Most parents, teachers and other stakeholders have little knowledge about this issue of relationship between environment and acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children. According to Hyere (2007), states that, parental level of education was the major determinant of learner's enrolment in Early Childhood centers where this can greatly affect the acquisition of intellectual skills in Early Childhood children. The study is therefore very important to them as it will enlighten them and broaden their view on the best environment for children's development of intellectual skills.

As much as much many studies have been carried out to identify environmental dynamics affecting the intellectual skills acquisition on early childhood children, many children still are being affected by this environmental dynamics. As much as the government, parents and teachers and other stakeholders work hand in hand to see that environmental conditions impact positively on intellectual skills acquisition of Early Childhood children, many children are still affected by different environmental dynamics. This led the researchers to critically analyze impact of environmental dynamics on intellectual skills acquisition of early childhood children.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Environmental dynamics may affect the acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children. A number of studies have been carried out on relationship between environmental dynamics and acquisition of intellectual skills on early childhood children; however, the issue has not been fully addressed and some of the issues highlighted were parental negligence, illiteracy and poverty among others. According to Hyere (2007), states that, parental level of education is the major determinant of learner's enrolment in Early Childhood centers whereby this can greatly affect the acquisition of intellectual skills in Early Childhood children in Kenya. Other environmental aspects vary from school environment to home or family background.

## **3. Purpose of the Study**

The major purpose of this study was to critically analyze the impact of environmental dynamics on acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya.

This was in cooperation with the objectives of the study, which focused on the play materials, proper balanced diet, socialization and change in family structures.

#### **4. Research Objectives**

1. To critically analyze on the impact of play activities on acquisition of intellectual skills in Early Childhood children in Kenya.
2. To critically analyze on impact of balance diet impact on acquisition of intellectual skills on early Childhood children in Kenya.
3. To critically analyses how socialization aspect affect the acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya.
4. To critically analyze on impact of change of family structures on acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya.

#### **5. Research Questions**

1. What is the impact of play activities on acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya?
2. To what extend does balanced diet impact on acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya?
3. Childhood children in Kenya?
4. To what extend does socialization impact on acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya?
5. Childhood children in Kenya?
6. To what extent does change of family structure impact on acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya?

#### **6. Significance of the Study**

The study may be of importance to the following: parents to identify and provide a conducive environment that support and enhance positively acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya. The study will also help teachers to identify and understand the best environmental conditions in schools that will positively influence the acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya. The study will help government in formulating policies that give guidelines in establishment of a conducive environment that are necessary in acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya.

The study will also help non-governmental organization and all other stakeholders, to provide, improve and expose Early Childhood children to a favorable environmental condition that can positively impact on the acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya. The study is of great importance as Early Childhood children shall be well handled and provided with the best environment for the maximum acquisition of intellectual skills.

## **7. Research Methodology**

The study was carried out using qualitative research design, using a critical analysis to critically analyze the impact of environmental dynamics on intellectual skills acquisition on early childhood children in Kenya. This method was used to acquire meaningful ways to cope with these environmental dynamics hence proper acquisition of intellectual skills in early childhood children. According to Morse (2011), state that, the future of this research designs will be greatly affected by the way research is done and by what is reviewed and published in academic journals.

## **8. Critique Literature Review**

### **8.1 A Critical Analysis of the Impact of Play Activities on Acquisition of Intellectual Skills in Early Childhood children in Kenya**

Play activities are very essential in all aspects of development of early childhood children. Play activities have great impact on child's intellectual skill as they often stimulate acquisition of intellectual skills in children. They influence brains positively and have a greater role in children learning ability. Play enhances thinking and stimulates development of brain, that is, cerebral cortex. According to Diamond (1964), in a study conducted on rats, rats left boring, solitary and confined had thicker cerebral cortices while rats enriched with stimulating environment had bigger brains and smart. Therefore is believed that children's brain respond to play activities and exploration hence acquisition of better intellectual skills. Play activities and stimulating environment increases development and maintenance of brain cells, hence trigger acquisition of intellectual skills (Gordon et al 2003)

Pellegrin and Holmes (2006), believe that children are more attentive to academics after having a break in which children are left to play freely without a lot of directions from care givers. There is a significant importance of play to acquisition of language skills. Play activities using various materials promote creativity and innovation. In addition, Pepler and Ros (1981), states that, "*...children given various play*

*materials perform better on divergent problems in solving problems by using a high level of creativity hence this impact positively on intellectual skills in children".* Most children learn through play activities, they tend to enhance creativity, exploration and discovery where all these influence acquisition of intellectual skills in Early Childhood children.

## **8.2 Critically Analyze Impact on Balanced Diet on Acquisition of Intellectual Skills on Early Childhood Children in Kenya**

Nutrition is one of the fundamental needs in life especially in the Early Childhood children for better growth and development of a child, it is however important to provide good nutrition ,well balanced diet for holistic development of a child.

Jean Piaget (1896-1980), clearly explains on cognitive development in great depth focusing on the important aspects in cognitive development as good nutrition. A well balanced diet will stimulate growth of brains (cognitive development) which will make It is easy for a child to acquire intellectual skills as the child has developed cognitively. Poor feeding habits lack of balance diet may cause growth retardation and illness. These might affect the brain development or even causes damage in the brain and this will eventually affect negatively on child's acquisition of intellectual skills.

One of the known theoretical principles of learning in Early Childhood is that children learn best when their physical needs are met and when they psychological feel safe and secure. A well balanced meal is one of the biological needs that young children should be offered. This will help them to grow well holistically and thus acquire intellectual skills easily since the rain (cognitive development) is well developed. (Maslaw A., 1954)

Chomsky, (1968), argued that children are born with innate mental structure which guide their acquisition of language skills, nevertheless this mental structure need to be nourished by good nutrition for better performance. A child needs a balanced diet to enhance this mental structure in order to be able to acquire these skills appropriately. A well balanced meal will nourish in-born abilities to acquire intellectual skills in children. It is therefore important to provide adequate and a well-balanced meal for children to grow and develop cognitively. Lack of iron, iodine, zinc, vitamin B12 and Omega 3 poly unsaturated fatty acid may lead to poor development of brain therefore any meal should be well balanced to ensure child's cognitive development is enhanced where this will eventually help in child's easy acquisition of intellectual skills since the brains are well developed.

### **8.3 Critically Analyze on Impact of Socialization on the Acquisition Of Intellectual Skills on Early Childhood Children in Kenya**

Ezewu (1983), defines socialization as the, "...acquisition of social characteristics of a human being it is a process of how individual learns the culture of their society gradually so that they are able to live fully and function in it as a responsible adult member." Some of these characteristics or culture are retrogressive and may have more negative impact than positive impact as far as intellectual skills are concern. Tylor (1902), define that, "...culture is a body of knowledge believes and customs that a man gets from the society. "Acquisition of intellectual skills depends highly on how a child is brought up, how he/she is socialized to his/her culture, the kind of habits that the child will engage in as these will stimulate and enrich ones memory.

Reuter (1950), stated that, "...culture is about all creation that is created by man which includes what man has made inform of tools, weapon, and shelter and material goods." All these activities will stimulate and enhance creativity and innovation as the child engage in such useful activities hence trigger acquisition of intellectual skills. In addition, Brunner, S. J. (1978), argued that, interaction enhances Childs language and intellectual development. Young children are socialized according to the immediate culture values attitude and behaviors within the society that they come from. Young children if left in isolation in a certain society for many years they will definitely not be able to utter even one word. It is therefore evident that as the child gets socialized to a certain society he/she acquires a lot of skills during socialization process. In some socialization agent like schools and peer groups, pupils tend to play together and learn from one another. A child in isolation will have difficulties in acquiring skills as she/he has no one to play to, imitate or learn from. Therefore the more the child is socialized the better and easier to acquire useful intellectual skills like communication skills, problem solving skills, and creativity and imagination skills claimed that an individual's thoughts and behaviors are the product of the society hence knowledge, skills and values of all stakeholder in children should be respected. (Jurgen 1970)

### **8.4 Critical Analysis on Impact of Change of Family Structure on Acquisition of Intellectual Skills on Early Childhood Children in Kenya**

With increasing modernization, changing of lifestyle and personal mobility, have led to emergency of various family dynamic structures. All these various dynamics in the family have their advantages and their disadvantages as far as child rearing is concerned. Children from various family structures have different characteristics and behaviors depending on predisposition from the family background.

Weinreb, (2001), argued that children from poor background are preoccupied with environmental stressors within their neighborhood such as feeling of insecurity. This will eventually affect child mental development hence interfering with appropriate acquisition of intellectual skills.

Secker( 2004), stated that when groups of pupils with similar backgrounds are compared, the pupils from a low socioeconomic status on school academic achievement, its therefore seems that children from single parenthood structure may have difficulties in acquiring intellectual skills since most of such families are not stable financially compared to other financial stable families. Family background plays an important role in Childs acquisition of intellectual skills. This is evident in the kind of socialization that the child is involved in the feeding habits, i.e. nutrition, health care services all these factors will greatly affect the child's mental system either positively or negatively in a family that caters for a child needs adequately, that child tend to grow and develop holistically unlike a child that his/her basic needs are not met, that child may not grow and develop appropriately.

Philips (1998), this research shows that academic aspiration of school children is positively related to the standing of their parent and so aspires to be like them, therefore children from a well stable socioeconomic background are highly stimulated and they are positively affected in their mental development hence easily acquisition of intellectual skills since all the necessities are well provided.

## 9. Conclusion

1. Teachers, parents, government and other stakeholders should be very keen and provide a conducive environment that can positively impact acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya.
2. The government should establish adequate policies that guide other stakeholders in establishing the right environmental background that can stimulate acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya.
3. Children should be provided with adequate play time for them to interact with each other. Caregivers should make sure that children with health problems are well maintained and the child takes a well-balanced meal always.
4. Parents and other caregivers should understand the importance of socialization and allow children to socialize adequately with others

## **10. Recommendation**

1. Children should be provided with enough play materials and engage them in play activities as this will stimulate their creativity, imagination, exploration, discovery and other intellectual skills that are important in Early Childhood children in Kenya.
2. Parent, teachers, the government and other stake holders should make sure that the child health status is maintained. The child should be provided with good health services to ensure healthy growth and development that will definitely enhance effective acquisition of intellectual skills in ECD children in Kenya.
3. Care givers and other stakeholders should make sure that the child is given a well-balanced diet. For proper growth and development of Early Childhood children good nutrition enhances holistic development of the child, therefore children should be fed with a well-balanced diet to ensure effective acquisition of intellectual skills.
4. Care givers should socialize the child with the right culture, behaviors and practices that have positive impact on child growth and development. Retrogressive cultural behaviors and practices may affect child psychological and emotional where this affect child psychological and emotional where this will have an impact in development of other domains of growth and development of children. The care givers should socialize the child well making sure that the child has a good role model to emulate and imitate.
5. The care givers and other stakeholders should be very careful to make sure that the child growth and development is not affected by the nature of the family structure that the child is brought up since this may have a negative impact on child growth and development in all domains or aspect of growth.
6. The government should formulate policies that guide in establishment of a conducive environment that are necessary in acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya.
7. Teachers and other care-givers should provide a conducive environment in school that stimulates acquisition of intellectual skills on Early Childhood children in Kenya.

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