

Review of factors causing wastage

by : Dr. Abbad Messaoud
Lecturer at Algiers-university

1

Introduction

The failure of the algerian educational system to achieve its ends has been attributed to a wide variety of reasons. These include the following points : poor quality learning-teaching conditions, buildings and facilities. other factors not discussed so far are :

1. Family cultural level and, environmental factors.
2. Parental occupation and socio-economic status.
3. Parent child relationship.
4. Broken homes.
5. The language problem.
6. Absence of pre-school education.

It is relevant here to quote the following paragraph :

The important aspects of the problem and the relation between home background and adaptation to the classroom situation are the kind of contact between the child and parents, especially the contact with the mother. A well motivated contact in a setting of consistent and accepted rearing habits predisposes the child to adapt better at school. This is by no means a new statement. Child psychologists have stressed it for many years, but experimental findings hitherto to support this statement have been rather rare.

(Husen, T., 1955, p. 20)

Further, Lawton, D. (1968) and Craft, M. (1970) found that the whole family's behaviour pattern in which the child is growing can significantly help and/or limit the scope and ability of pupils to make progress in terms of academic achievement. Moreover, in a later study, it was observed that communication between parents and children, natural acceptance and, understanding in families, were contributing factors in this respect.

It is, therefore, clear that the effect of parental attitude and general home climate is reflected not only in children's educational and academic performance, but also in the development of personality, ability to learn, attitude, behaviour patterns and functioning of intelligence.

In a survey in the Tehran area aimed at identifying the causes of wastage in education, particularly at the primary stage, the results obtained revealed that the higher the educational status of parents, the less the incidence of wastage. With respect to parents, UNESCO studies in different parts of the world concerned with educational wastage have also observed that one of the most important factors influencing children's educational success is the literacy level of the family and their educational status. UNESCO (1967).

2 - Family cultural level and Environmental Factors.

It is now commonly accepted that the family's level of education influences the child from birth. Next to family are community and environmental factors that also shape, facilitate or, inhibit growth in many subtle ways during the early years of life as well as during schooling. These include the various kinds of experiences, attitudes and behaviour acquired or inculcated within the social contexts, of family, peers in and out of school, and the community at large, all of which can greatly affect the child's educational progress from one grade to another.

The findings established by the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales 1953; and the National Association for Mental Health,

London, 1955, support the strong relationship between parents and the pupils' school achievement and/or success. In : wall, W.D. (1962).

Similarly in India, a study supported by the asian bureau of Unesco concluded that a large number of illiterate members in the family is a positive factor in a high educational wastage ratio. A child whose parents have never been to school in very different situation from one brought up under the guidance of educated parents. Further, the home atmosphere which influences the quality of relationship between the child and another members of the family and the ability of parents to provide for their children's welfare and security, are important factors which, induce the child indirectly without parental pressure to do well at school. Wall, W. D. et al (1962).

Again, parents who are peasants and unskilled workers, whether in developed countries or in the so-called third world, tend to have less desire to motivate their children to reach a high educational level and, rather prefer them to leave school early, so as to start working to contribute to the family income. Schreiber, D. (1964).

In the case of Algeria, large numbers of children now attending school and colleges come from such less favoured family educational backgrounds which have helped to contribute to lower levels of scholastic academic performance in school and obtaining of desirable skills and knowledge for use in daily life requirements. This has helped to raise the rate of wastage as described by levy, M.B. (1971).

The wider environment comes next to the child's home, i.e. if the environment including neighbourhood where the climate is well motivated, peaceful and calm, in such a situation children are better motivated to follow such a pattern of behaviour, and thus this, in turn, encourages children to do well in school.

Further, better opportunities for the upbringing of children are usually found in specific areas of cities and towns (less densely populated areas, for example).

The amount of education received by such children and members of the family, is often greatly above that received by children living in poor areas and overcrowded cities and towns with poor health facilities and those living in remote rural areas. Mohamed, T. Khafadji (1971). children who belong to the less fortunate families tend to lag behind their counterparts in terms of scholastic performance.

3 - Parental occupational and socio-Economic status

Conventionally, individual skills and educational academic qualifications are the main criteria which determine the level of occupation, income and the fami-

ly status within the society. Thus parents' occupation certainly will determine the family socio-economic status and this, however, according to Burt, C. (1937), has a strong impact on the relationship between family members, the cultural level of the home, the overall the cohesiveness of members of the family and the educational achievement of the children.

Another study by Hollingshead (1962), in the U.S.A. INTO the impact social class on the adolescent included the condition and position of family income, style of life, the amount of father's and mother's education, the family standing and participation in community activities. The results obtained indicated that nearly all upper-class and middle class school age children were found in schools and colleges furthering their education, whilst a great proportion of the drop-out, repetition, absenteeism and wastage were found among children of working class families in : Schreiber, D. (1964). Further, a Unesco (1966) study noted that 55% of wastage among girls was mainly due to parental socio-economic status. In Iran also, a study of pupils' school failure at the primary stage showed that the higher the level of parent's occupation the lower the rate of repetition, drop-out, and absenteeism, whilst pupil failure greatly increased, the lower the parents' occupations and socio-economic status, Unesco (1967). In the same year U.N.E.S.C.O. carried out a survey of Asian countries including India, Pakistan, Iran and the Philippines. The study focused on the causes of pupil repetition, drop-out, absenteeism. It was found that the wastage rate was higher among poor families and low among families of higher income.

As the study noted that the low income of family frequently tended to lower children's school achievement level, because the children were involved in excessive domestic work to supplement the family's low income.

Simons, J. and Alexander, L.(1977-78), as result of studies into students' achievement in the developing world came to the conclusion that home background.

had radical effects on the primary and secondary educational progress of pupils attending schools? Generally speaking, middle class pupils were more to have an opportunity to understand the importance of school through the family's help and exposure to pre-school education from an early age.

In this respect, Flound and Craft (1970), have demonstrated that families with a good socio-economic status know the rewards that their children will get when they grow up, partly because they view education as a suitable path leading to profitable future careers for their children.

There is much evidence from studies that middle class families are more interested in their children's education progress at school than their counterparts coming from the working class. Equally, such school visits can be a helpful element in discovering and discussing of children's difficulties. This approach

can facilitate the teacher's task as well as helping parents to adopt appropriate ways of treating their children at home, studies in Education (1958-63). psychologically and socially, parents who frequently visit their children's schools are more likely to be regarded as responsible, conscious and concerned parents, so their children will get more attention from their teachers as compared to the pupils whose parents show no interest.

According to Douglas, J. W. B. (1969), through the regular parental school visits, pupils are greatly influenced by the will and interest of their parents in their school performance. Further, such motivated pupils are more likely to improve their educational standards as compared with children who are less conscientious about their children's education. Childs, D. (1981).

However, one factor which may inhibit parents working with school staff in their children's problems, particularly in developing nations, can be parently misunderstanding of the role they can play by cooperating with the school in terms of helping solve pupil problems.

Further, parents' educational level also plays a great role in their understanding of the relationship between school and home. Thus, many ill-educated parents think that the education of children is the school's duty alone. This idea, unfortunately, is widespread among Algerian parents.

These factors discussed above, have been also supported by the Peck Report (1977), on the matter of truancy and indiscipline, which found that truancy and indiscipline were largely associated with economically handicapped families and unstable parental employment as well as the home atmosphere.

In this matter, Mohamed Sif, A. (1971) concluded that because of economic limitation and inadequate knowledge of the rewards of effective education, the poor are in a less favoured situation and, this has led to a poor rate of success.

A survey made by the Arab League (1973) in Algeria on the problem of primary educational wastage and its causes disclosed the following factors as causing an increase in repetition, drop out; and absenteeism of pupils which was likely lead to some educational wastage.

1. Family poverty associated with occupations and low income.
2. Parents with a low educational level and unsatisfactory family income frequently wished their elder boys to leave school before they finished their primary education so as to help the parents or, to work elsewhere in order to supplement the family's income.
3. Rampant poverty most often occurred in the rural areas and in the overcrowded sectors of cities with an accompanying lack of hygiene. One can predict that such families lacked tables, adequate light, private rooms for studying, etc.

4. The situation in rural areas where most people are engaged in agriculture was worse especially before the government erected new schools. However, lighting and piped water had not yet reached the majority of rural areas and, this indirectly affected the pupils educational success.

5. Magazines, books and newspapers were largely absent in rural areas and this slowed the development of interests and abilities of pupils to pursue their education effectively.

6. Girls from families of low income and educational level were usually kept at home until they were married and this had made it more difficult to ease the problem of educational wastage. (Unesco Office of Statistics 1972).

Thus one can see that the findings of a wide variety of studies carried out in different developing countries by Unesco and Arab league, in addition to the many carried out in other countries by independent researchers closely resemble the situation found in Algeria.

4 - Parent/ Child Relationships

In the matter of the relationship between parents and children, the following has been stated :

An unsatisfactory relation between parents and child may take many forms. The child may be rejected or over-indulged without compensating love. The parents may be harsh, neglectful or erratic; the child may be hostile to his parents, afraid of them, indifferent to them, over dependent to them. A cold and friendless relation with the parents predisposes a child to many types of maladjusted behaviour, truancy is one form this can make. (Tyerman, M. J. 1968, P. 76).

- In this respect, Glueck, S (1950), wrote of parental control :

as lax if through negligence and indifference a parent, whether mother or father, lets the child do as he wishes, as over-strict if he demands unreasoning obedience through fear, as erratic if he varies strictness and laxity and is not consistent in control and as satisfactory if his control is firm and kindly and based on sound reasons which the child understands.

The adequacy and effect of disciplinary methods can, however, be interpreted only in relation to the total family situation, and discipline must be adopted to the particular child.

(In Tyerman, M.J. (1968- P. 80).

In this respect, perhaps the words of Tyerman, M.J. (1968), based on a comparative study of truancy and other factors related to educational wastage are relevant :

Few of truants had a happy and secure home influence. Most of them came from broken homes or homes where there was open disharmony. In general, parents set poor examples and were of unsatisfactory character. They neglect their children, were ineffective in their supervision, and took little interest in their welfare. The view of many writers that the truant is born in an inferior environment seemed to be confirmed.

(In Carrol, H.C.M. 1977, p. 55).

In an investigation in Britain, the effect of homes on the success or failure of children at school has been described as follows :

The child whose memories are associated with resentment cannot be respected to compete successfully with those whose memories are associated with a feeling of what we call personal satisfaction or a sense of achievement. (Douglas, J.W., 1969, p. 68).

This was also noted by Ozigi, A.O. (1978), when he emphasized that a high rate of educational wastage often occurs in families with an Unhealthy atmosphere , while in families where communication and happiness are already established, pupils are more likely to achieve good school performance. Thus, the kind of emotional climate, degree of affection, security, welfare and, in general the home atmosphere, all the child's physical and mental development and consequently, success or failure in school. Arab League (1973).

5 - Broken Homes Factors

Recent research dealing with the results of the absence of one of the parents has shown the importance of this factor which has been shown to have socio-psychological effects on children's education, future careers, and their attitude to the community at large; Mullen 1950, Douglas and ROss 1965 as reported in Tyerman, M. J.

Stott (1966) indicated in his study that one third to a half of the cases of truancy were due to the absence of one parent. Further, the factor creating the one parent situation very widely covering such situations as homes broken by death; separation; divorce; or desertion; absence in employment; or the child may be a step-child, etc; Tyerman, M. J. (1968).

• In this connection, the following important points have been made :

1. On the death of the mother or the father, the children will lose one parent's affection. Such children are more likely to encounter greater difficulties during their early years of life in their social, emotional, psychological, economic and cognitive development than their peers living with both parents, with the latter being more likely to achieve a better educational standard than those who have lost either the father or the mother.

2. If the mother and father are not happy with each other they are more likely to divorce or separate. Normally in such cases the children are left in the care of the mother, especially in muslim countries. In such cases the children again miss one parent's affection and warmth. Further, young divorced parents in Algeria often remarry and this can badly affect the children's moral development, educational achievement, and general behaviour. Such children do not always receive the satisfactory care, attention, interaction, guidance and the overall competent parental supervision and control that they need.

In Algeria a large percentage of Algerian fathers are migrant workers, working abroad, especially amongst those who have poor educational qualifications and lack professional skills. currently, more than 30% of unskilled Algerian workers are working in France and other European countries, Ammar, B. (1974). This absence, associated with illiterate mothers, poor quality accomodation and low income has caused many pupils to live in unstable home conditions which must be considered as detrimental to their educational performance.

6 - Health Provision

Recent medical findings show strong evidence that pregnant women need an adequate diet rich in the various proteins in order to maintain the body in healthy condition so as to give birth to healthy children. In developing countries where health care still suffers from acute staff shortage and equipment, this together with the poor diets associated with low family income have resulted in new-born children being more likely to be vulnerable to such diseases as anemic toxemia, whilst among expectant mothres, there is a greater likelihood of threatened or actual miscarriages, permature, and stillbirths. This situation is more associated with poorer families than the richer. Brillien, c. M. et al (1964).

- In this situation children are more likely to be.

vulnerable to illness due to inadequate hygiene. Such parents cannot be blamed because of their inadequate knowledge and educational level, spodek, B. (1973). On the other hand, children belonging to educated parents with adequate income are especialy in chilhood, partly because of better and continuing medical facilities. For example, the everage Algerian family, many of whom reside in overcrowded areas of crities and in rural areas have poor health service facilities. This situation has significantly affected children's health and lowered their educational performance in terms of school achievement.

7 - The language Problem

It is axiomatic that where the language spoken in the home and that taught to pupils in the school differ, that a learning barrier is created. In studies carried out in Thailand and Iran, it was found that this gap was a factor which directly contributed to children's repetition and drop-out, wall, W. D. et al (1962).

- The situation in Algeria has been seriously complicated by:

1. The one hundred and thirty-two years of French occupation during which time French was the official language of administration and medium of instruction in school and business.

2. The existence of a number of vernacular languages.

These are not taught in the schools, but are widely spoken as first languages in the home and general daily life.

3. The adoption of Arabic as the national language with the few local teachers initially being capable of teaching through this medium resulted in heavy reliance on expatriate teachers.

This has created a major hurdle for children in developing the skills of speaking, reading and writing, hindered the general speed of learning and adversely affected the level of school achievement. Heggay, A. A. et al (1977). Obviously, contributed to the high rate of educational wastage. Middle East Education (1981).

8 - Absence of Pre-school Education

The creation of pre-school education in European countries was in part the result of industrial development in which European women were urgently needed in the employment market so as to contribute to the country's economic growth side by side with the men.

More recently, pre-school education has come to be regarded as not only for children of the working mothers or from under-privileged homes, but as assisting in the

Preparation children for the primary stage of education. Logan, M. L. (1974) wrote that it does through promoting children's social, emotional and intellectual development by encouraging them to work with other children; stimulating their senses, curiosity and developing a wide understanding of a range of concepts and skills suitable for their age. Nasrine. A. (1978).

Further, the pre-school is an appropriate place for children to develop their language skills and strengthen their power of conversation. Pre-school education can provide experiences well beyond those that the home is capable of

offering. According to Clift, p. H., et al (1980) pre-schooling use of the body dynamically, and mental growth in terms of perception, and understanding how to meet the targets through their personal discoveries.

In developing nations there is a breaking up of traditional community life which formerly comprised a village and/or, a large family where grand-father, uncles and other close relatives lived together as an extended family.

With the emergence of the nuclear family, parents in such nations have less support in the problem of the home education of their children, particularly where the employment of women is increasing. Hence, there has arisen a widespread need to develop a pre-school provision. Mardan, N. D. (1979).

- The situation in Algeria can be summarized as follows :

- (I) The pre-independence small scale provision of pre-school education ceased shortly after independence due to the need to expand the primary school sector rapidly to meet the demands of the new education policy.

- (II) The pressure for expansion at the primary level and above has been so great as to stretch the financial and manpower resources of the country.

- (III) Increasing numbers of women are entering the modern sector of the economy at the time when the traditional extended family is being rapidly superseded by the nuclear family. The absence of pre-school provision results in an unnecessary high rate of turnover of female staff faced with the problem of child care.

- (IV) The language situation is such that all children would benefit from a carefully graded approach to the learning of Arabic.

- (V) The present stage of development is such that large numbers of children come to primary school from homes with little in the way of stimulating play/learning materials.

- (VI) Many children have grown up in overcrowded homes and presently incomplete medical services are often inadequate to detect health/minor physical handicaps at an early age.

The Algerian authorities are becoming aware of the problem and, as a part of the 1960-84 plan, decided to launch a wide and varying series of local projects including the construction of pre-school system throughout the country for both the poor and industrialized areas so as to help improve the educational background of children both from poor homes as well as those coming from

educated families of higher socio-economic status. In this, the country is following the western approach to education by encouraging healthy child development through an adequate provision of pre-school education. The main objective of the Algerian provision that the government is intending to develop, is to prepare pupils better for the primary education stage and so help reduce the high rate of pupil wastage witnessed since the country's independence in 1962.

A successful pre-school sector could greatly help to ameliorate the present large element of wastage in the early school years.



REFERENCES USED

Husem, T. (1955) Home Background and Behaviour in the Classroom situation Research Bulletin from The Institute of Education, University of Stockholm. In Wall, W.D. et al, 1962, p. 67.

Lawton, D. (1968) Social Class, Language and Education. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London. Craft, M. (ed) (1970) Family, Class and Education. Routledge and Kegan Paul, London.

Unesco (1967) The problem of Educational wastage at the First Level of Education in Asia. Unesco Regional Office for Education in Asia. Vol. 1, n° 2, Bangkok.

Wall, W. D. et al (1962) The problem of failure in School, An International Study. Unesco Institute for Education, Hamburg.

Scheiber, D. et al (1964) Guidance and the School Drop-out. National Educational Association project : School drop-outs and American personnel and Guidance Association, Washington.

Levy, M.B. (1971) Determinants of primary School Drop-outs in Developing Countries. In : Comparative Education Review, Vol. xv, n° 1, February.

Mohamed, K. Khafaji, T. (1971) A Report on the problem of Wastage in the Academic General Education, presented to the Meeting held in Algiers by the Arab League. Algiers (Arabic Version).

Burt, C. (1937) Backward Child. University of London Press Ltd., Warwick Lane, London.

National Council (1966) national

Council of Education Research and Training, Department of Education Administration. Wastage and Stagnation in primary and Middle Schools, project report, New Delhi.

Simmons, J. and Alexander, L. (1977-78) The Determinants of School Achievements of pupils in Developing Countries : A Review of the Research. Economic Development and Cultural Change. Vol. 26, n° 2, pp. 341-357.

Flowd, J. and Craft, M. (1970) Social class Factors in Educational Achievement. In Craft, M. (ed), 1970, Family, Class and Education : A Reader, Longman Group, Ltd., London.

Studies in Education (1958-63) Journal of Education, Institute of Education, The University of Hull, Vol. 3, pp. 42-48.

Douglas, J.W.B. (1969) The Home and School. A Study of Ability and Attainment in the primary school, Panther Modern Society, London.

Childs, D. (1981) Psychology and the Teacher, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, London, New York.

The peck Report (1977) Truancy and discipline. Scottish Education Department. Her Majesty's Stationery Office, Edinburgh.

Mohamed, Sif, A. (1971) Economic and Wastage. A Study Introduced to Arab League and Educational Organisation for Culture and Science, Discussed in a meeting held in Algiers. Pamphlet n° 3B, (Arabic Version).

Arab League (1973) A Survey of the problem of Educational Wastage at primary EDUCATION Level. Egypt (Arabic Version).

Unesco Office of Statistics (1972) Statistical Study of Wastage at School. Unesco International Bureau of Education, Paris, Geneva.

Tyerman, J. (1968) Truancy. University of London press, London.

Carroll, H.C.M. (1977) Absenteeism in South Wales. Faculty of Education, University of Swansea.

Ozigi, A.O. (1978) Factors Affecting pupil Success and Wastage in Nigerian Northern States Secondary School. Unpublished ph. D. Thesis. UCC, Department of Education, Wales.

Ammar, B. (1974) Immigrants Algerians in France S.N.E.D. ? Algiers. (Arabic Version).

Brillien, C.M. et al (1964) The Growth and Development of the prematurely Born Infant. Williams and Wilkins, Baltimore.

Spadek, B. (1973) Early Childhood Education. Prentice Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey.

Heggay, A.A. et al (1977) French Education in Revolutionary North Africa. International Journal Middle East Studies, 7. U.S.A. pp. 571-578.

Middle East Education (1981) Language problems Face Maghrebienes in France. University of Riyadh, Saud Arabia, Vol. 3., n° 3, p.32.

Logan, m.L. et al (1974) Educating Young Children. McGraw-Hill, Ryrrscn Ltd., New York, London.

Nasrine, A. (1978) The Many Implications of Piaget's Work for Education. The New Era Journal of World Education Fellowship, Vol. 59, n° 3., pp. 80-108.

Clift, P.H. (1980) The Aims, Role and

Development of Staff IN THE Nursery. N.H(1980) The Aims, Role and Development of Staff in the Nursery. N. F. E. R., Humanities press Inc.

Mardan, N.D. (1979) The Development of pre-school Curriculum in Iraq in Relation to the pre-school programme Development in the U.K. Unpublished ph. D. Thesis, Department of Education, Wales.