

**Influence of Socio-Emotional Skills Development on the Academic
Performance of Pre-School Children in Ilorin South Local Government Area
of Kwara State**

BY

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed the influence of social and emotional development skills of Pre-basic school children in Ilorin south, Kwara State. Specifically, the study ascertained the emotional development skills among Pre-Basic school children; determined the social development skills; analyzed differences between the social and emotional development on the basis of gender and school type. Descriptive survey design was adopted for this study. The target population comprised Pre-Basic Schools children. Stratified random sampling technique was employed to select a total of 60 respondents. The research instrument used was an adapted observation checklist. Its reliability co-efficient was 0.79. Descriptive statistics were employed to answer the research questions raised, while t-test was employed to analyze the null hypotheses generated at 0.05 levels of significance. Findings showed that children developed the social and emotional skills of controlling, sharing feelings with others, responding to others with care, being sensitive to how others react to situations, recognizing feelings of others, and empathizing with them. The development of these social-emotional skills enhances their academic performance. There was a significant difference in the level of social and emotional development skills in Pre-Basic School, based on school type. Similarly, there was a significant difference in the social and emotional development skills based on gender. Based on the findings, it was recommended that more social-emotional skills should be developed among the children in Pre-Basic schools so as to further enhance their academic performance. This could be done by developing activities that could sustain them socially and emotionally such as creativity and play way method.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Social and emotional development begins early in life when children start to understand who they are, what they are feeling and what to expect when interacting with others in the environment. It encompasses the period when they learn how to form and sustain positive relationship, experience, manage and express emotions. Pre-basic school years as observed by Khoironddin (2018), seems to be the best time to accomplish the social and emotional developmental skills and tasks such as controlling emotional states, learning to delay gratification, building relationships with other people, and modulating other functions essential

for healthy development. The global quest for educational excellence and equity, as framed by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2020), has brought an increasing emphasis on social and emotional learning in schools. This quest, recently, stressed the integration of 21st-century competence right from the very beginning. Wati (2020) argued that kindergarten child, when guided develop positive attitude such as cooperative attitudes, tolerance, self-emotional expressions, manners and politeness.

Curricula across the world, has resulted in a push for a long-term strategy for international comparative assessments of social and emotional skills, (Mondi,.Giovaneli, & Rynold, 2021). Studies have found such skills to be helpful in preventing problem behaviours such as disobedience, interpersonal violence, bullying, and neglect for goal oriented games. Salsabila (2021) posit that, human development comprises four domains namely, intellectual, physical, social and emotional developments. Social and emotional development in children is a different aspect, which cannot be separated. The reason is that, when discussing social aspect of children, it must intersect with the emotional aspect, and vice versa. Hence the two aspects of the child development are better discussed together. Social and emotional development consists of child's experience, comprehension, expressing and managing of the emotions and feelings and the capability to form and develop positive, effective and rewarding relations with others in both intrapersonal and interpersonal processes.

Marco, et al (2021) opined that social and emotional development means talking about knowing how to listen, knowing and assisting others without judgment and with total willingness to accept difference. In addition, it has to do with the way children feel and demonstrate their emotions, their jobs and therefore, the experiences they have passed through in the aspect of socialization and interaction with peers as well as adults.

Ferreira, et al (2020) posit that, there are so many simple activities that teachers or care givers can use in the classroom and outdoor activities where children can control themselves, understand the perspective of others, make wise decisions and choices where options are available. They can also show persistence and empathy so as to decrease emotional stress and increase a greater commitment with the school activities. Research by Denham (2016) demonstrated that the inclusion of social and emotional learning in pre-school curricula can foster positive attitude towards academic activities and subsequently academic achievements. In addition Tatiminingshi, (2019) observed that, less attention has been paid to research and practice of interventions geared towards internalizing behaviours presumably, because they are not disruptive.

Studies by Marvin (2023) have also found these skills to be effective in promoting well-being and the academic achievement of learners across socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds. The author noted that children who are equipped with socio-emotional skills perform better in academics than their counterpart who do not possess such skills. Similarly, Guo et al (2021) observed that socio-emotional skills enable the child to exercise self-discipline, persistence and dedication towards completing tasks which is geared towards the achievement of educational goals. Hence, socio-emotional skill can promote academic performance if managed properly by the care givers or the teacher. Socio-emotional skills development affect positively the academic performance of children with varying intensity depending on the school type (rural or urban) or gender (male or female) Discussions on social and emotional development are not new in the Nigerian context, but what is lacking is poor or inadequate implementation.

The Nigerian school system has a long tradition of emphasizing social goals and developing communities where learners can both acquire academic knowledge and learn social

skills. Social and emotional competence was described as ‘a person’s attitudes, behaviours, emotions, social skills and relations (Mara 2018). The concept consists of an individual’s ‘self-perception, motivation, ability to cooperate and manage their own emotions. Learners’ social and emotional development is seen as a central part of the broad mandate of schools. The curriculum further emphasizes that social learning occurs both during instruction and in all other activities organized by the school and that such learning cannot be separated from subject learning.

The term ‘social competence’ is not used in the core curriculum, instead it includes social skills among a broad range of general skills, such as motor skills, practical skills, and creative skills, to be developed in schools. The need for socio-emotional skills development is needed across the gender of all the children, (male or female), in addition there any difference in the social development skills of Pre-Basic School children on academic performance in Ilorin South LGA of Kwara State.

Statement of the Problem

There has been substantial evidence proving that social and emotional skills can help individuals excel through life transitions starting from school to college and later into the working world. Social-emotional developments of pre-school learners, was observed by, Marco et al (2021) on the aspect of social and emotional learning in Pre-school education of qualitative study with Pre-school teachers. Similarly Marvins (2023) observed the link between social and emotional skill and academic performance of children.

In addition, Ferreira et al (2020) researched on promoting sustainable social emotional learning at School through relationship-centred learning environment teaching methods and formative assessment. Sharma, et al (2016) wrote on social skills and their impact on academic achievement and other aspects of life, their research revealed that, school type and school

environments plays significant role in the learning process that can enhance socio-emotional developments in pre-school learners. Mondy, et al (2021) researched on fostering socio-emotional learning through early childhood intervention.

Goldschmidt and Pedro, (2019) studied early childhood socio-emotional development indicators and Pre-School teachers perceptions. Mara, (2018) wrote on socio-emotional development of Pre-School child as an essential component of schooling abilities. The researcher noted that little emphasis has been laid on the influence of socio-emotional skills development on the academic performance of pre-school children based on school type and gender most especially in Ilorin south, Kwara State.

Research Questions

- a) What are the emotional skills developed by Pre-Basic school children in Ilorin South LGA?
- b) What are the social skills developed by Pre-Basic school children in Ilorin South LGA?
- c) Is there any difference in the social development skills of Pre-Basic school children academic performance in Ilorin metropolis based on gender?
- d) Is there any difference in the social development skills of Pre-Basic School children on academic performance in Ilorin South LGA. based on school type?

Research Hypotheses

The following research hypotheses were formulated by the researcher to guide the conduct of the study:

H₀₁: There is no significant difference in the social development skills of Pre-Basic School children in Ilorin South LGA based on gender.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference in the social development skills of Pre-Basic School children in Ilorin South LGA based on school type.

H₀₃: There is no significant difference in the emotional development skills of Pre-Basic School children in Ilorin South LGA based on gender.

H₀₄: There is no significant difference in the emotional development skills of Pre-Basic School children in Ilorin South LGA based on school type.

Method

The researcher used descriptive survey method which is appropriate for the study. The total number of basic schools in Ilorin South LGA is 440 for both public and private with total population of about 11,274 pupils (Open Education Data, 2020). The target population comprised all Pre-Basic School children in Ilorin South LGA. Stratified random sampling technique was used to select 40 public and 20 private Pre-Basic School children from 3 Basic schools in the Local Government Area.

The instrument used for this study was an observational checklist adapted from the Ministry of Education, Republic of Vanuatu (2013) and it was validated to suit Nigeria system of education. The observational checklist used in this study consisted of two sections. Section A (Demographic Background) required participants to provide background information such as gender, age, and school type. Section B attempted to measure pupils' social and emotional skills development.

. A split half reliability approach was adopted to determine the reliability of the instrument. The observational list form was administered on 20 respondents outside the study area. The result of the administered observational list was analyzed using PPMC coefficient to find the correlation

between the two scores. A reliability coefficient of 0.79 was obtained, and the instrument was adjudged reliable. The researchers solicited the assistance of some class teachers that helped in the administration of the instrument to the respondents. Three Pre-Basic schools were involved in the study area and the observation took 12weeks in the second term of the session.

The data obtained were analyzed using percentage, mean and standard deviation and ranking order for the descriptive data and research questions while t-test statistical analysis was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULT

Demographic profile of the respondents that were involved in the study is presented using frequency counts and percentages. Research questions raised were answered through the use of mean rating and standard deviation, while the research hypotheses formulated were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Finally, findings of the study from the analyses were discussed.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	22	36.7
Female	38	63.3
Total	60	100.0
Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
3-4 years	30	50.0
4-5 years	30	50.0
Total	60	100.0
School Type	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Public	40	66.67
Private	20	33.33
Total	60	100.0

Field Survey (2022)

The demographic profile in Table 1 shows that 22 (36.7%) of the respondents were male pupils and 38 (63.3%) were female pupils. Also, 30 (50.0%) of the respondents are within age 3-

4 years and 4-5 years respectively. Similarly, majority of the respondents 40 (66.67%) were from public schools while 20 (33.33.0%) of the respondents were from private schools.

Answers to the Research Questions

Research Question One: *What are the emotional skills developed by Pre-basic school children in Ilorin south?*

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics of Emotional Development Skills by Pre-Basic Schools children in Ilorin South

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D
Emotional skills	60	10.00	15.00	11.700	1.499
3-4 years	30			11.40	1.22
4-5 years	30			12.00	1.70

The results above show the emotional skills of Pre-basic school children in Ilorin South. The highest possible score for the 5 items is 15 (5 x 3) and the lowest possible score is 5 (5 x 1). The range is 10 and the average mark is 5 ($\frac{10}{2} = 5.0$). If the respondent's score is in the range of 10-15, it shows high emotional development skills. While any score of 9 and below indicates low emotional development skills. As shown above, the children developed high emotional skills with mean score of 11.70. This implies that the pre-basic school children developed emotional skills of controlling and expressing their feelings as well as empathy. They expressed their anger and sadness appropriately, express fear and concern to teachers, calm down their emotions, share feelings with others, respond to others with care, persist through difficult task, recognize feeling of others and so on.

Research Question Two: *What are the social skills possessed by the Pre-Basic school children in Ilorin South?*

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of Social Development Skills Possessed by the children

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	S.D
Social skills	60	22.00	31.00	25.7667	2.024
3-4 years	30			25.7333	2.690
4-5 years	30			25.8000	1.627

The results above show the social skills possessed by the Pre-basic school children in Ilorin South. The highest possible score for the 5 items is 33 (11 x 3) and the lowest possible score is 11 (11 x 1). The range is 22 and the average mark is 11 ($\frac{22}{2} = 11.0$). If the respondent's score is in the range of 33-22, it shows high social development skills. While any score of 21 and below indicates low social development skills. As shown above, the children developed high social skills with mean score of 25.77. This implies that the pre-basic school children developed social skills of relating with others, understanding individual differences, building self-esteem and recognizing roles of others in a team work. This means that the children make friends in several places, show loyalty to friends, share information about themselves with others, and so on.

Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses formulated in this study were tested using t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: *There is no significant difference in the social development skills of Pre-Basic School children in Ilorin South based on gender.*

Table 4: T-test Summary of Social Development Skills of Pre-Basic School children in Ilorin South Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	Sig
Female	38	25.42	1.93	58	-1.168	0.111
Male	22	26.36	2.56			

P>0.05

The result of table 4 shows the significant difference in the social development skills of Pre-basic school children in Ilorin South LGA. based on gender. The calculated significance value of 0.111 is greater than the chosen alpha value of 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in the social development skills of pre-basic school children based on gender. This means that male and female respondents developed the same social skills in school.

H₀₂: *There is no significant difference in the social development skills of Pre- Basic School children in Ilorin South based on school type.*

Table 5: T-test Summary of Social Development Skills of Pre-Basic School children in Ilorin South based on School Type

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	Sig
Public	40	25.68	2.22	58	-0.452	0.653
Private	20	25.95	2.21			

P>0.05

The result of table 5 shows the significant difference in the social development skills of pre-basic school children in Ilorin South based on school type. As shown above, the calculated

significance value of 0.653 is greater than the chosen alpha value of 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in the social development skills of pre-basic school children based on school type. This means that the respondents developed the same social skills irrespective of their schools.

H₀₃: *There is no significant difference in the emotional development skills of Pre-Basic School children in Ilorin South based on gender.*

Table 6: Summary of T-test of Emotional Development Skills of Pre-Basic School children in Ilorin South Based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	Sig
Female	38	11.63	1.48	58	-0.462	0.646
Male	22	11.82	1.56			

P>0.05

The result of table 6 shows the significant difference in the emotional development skills of pre-basic school children in Ilorin South based on gender. As shown above, the calculated significance value of 0.646 is greater than the chosen alpha value of 0.05, hence the null hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in the emotional development skills of pre-basic school children based on gender. This means that male and female respondents developed the same emotional skills in school.

H₀₄: *There is no significant difference in the emotional development skills of Pre-Basic School children in Ilorin South based on school type.*

Table 7: T-test Summary of Emotional Development Skills of Pre-Basic School children in Ilorin South based on School Type

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	Sig
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Public	40	11.83	1.52	58	0.912	0.365
Private	20	11.45	1.49			
P>0.05						

The result of table 7 shows the significant difference in the emotional development skills of Pre-basic school children in Ilorin South based on school type. As shown above, the calculated significance value of 0.365 is greater than the chosen alpha value of 0.05; hence the null hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in the emotional development skills of pre-basic school children based on school type. This means that the respondents developed the same emotional skills irrespective of their schools.

Summary of the Findings

- (1) The outcome of this study revealed that the children developed high emotional development skills of controlling and expressing their feelings and developing empathy.
- (2) The findings of the study also revealed that the children developed high social development skills of relating with others, understanding individual differences, building self-esteem and recognizing roles of others in a team work.
- (3) There was no significant difference in the social development skills of pre-basic school children in Ilorin South based on gender.
- (4) There was no significant difference in the social development skills of Pre-basic school children based on school type.
- (5) There was no significant difference in the emotional development skills of Pre-basic school children in Ilorin South based on gender.
- (6) There was no significant difference in the emotional development skills of Pre-basic school pupils based on school type.

Discussion of the Findings

The researchers that wrote and emphasis on child social and emotional developments that either agreed or deviate from the findings of this report includes but not limited to, Salsabila (2021), the researcher wrote on socio-emotional development of an early child, lay emphasis on the theory of Jean Piaget, on child development, which stressed that, children have a great egocentric sense that they want to win, because, they do not understand other people's perspective. So the parents and or care givers need to guide them closely. Marwaha et al (2017) wrote on theory among 4-7-year-old children's development, and noted that, the social and emotional intelligence which usually reflect in the performance normally increase with age. This finding is in congruence with this report. Abdullah (2019) who also wrote on socio-emotional development of a child in the family, stressed that, parents in educating their children must really chose the right method. Healthy socio-emotional development for children is most effectively carried out with affection and some moderate control. This finding also agreed with this report.

Nakajima, Pradhan, Amer, Kinnel, & Sally, (2019). Researched into gender gaps in cognitive and social emotional skills in early primary grades, and noted that the extent of gender gap in cognitive and social-emotional skills and explained by gender difference in early schooling and parenting practices, they further stressed that, gender gap in cognitive skills were mostly explained by the duration of enrolment in preschool and primary schools. Bharadwaji, De Grongi, Hansen, & Nelson, (2015) the gender gap in Mathematics. Evidence from a middle income country. Their report showed that, socio-emotional skills development is greatly

influence by parenting practices. however, no significant difference in academic performance between boy and girl child, was noticed in this research, unlike the report of Bharadwaji (2015).

.Conclusion

In conclusion, the curriculum planners and all the stakeholders in the education sector should design a curriculum coupled with provision of the necessary teaching material as well as organising frequent workshops and seminars for the teachers and administrators in order to ensure maximum utilization of human and material resources for the younger generation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, it is recommended that:

1. More social and emotional skills should be developed among the children in Pre-Basic schools. This could be done by developing the emotional and social skills of the children through activities that could sustain them emotionally and socially. The Pre-Basic school children are in their formative years and their emotions could be worked on to make them stable emotionally.
2. Also, the schools should organize seminars and symposia for the care giver teachers and children that will help to develop the social and emotional skills in order to enhance their academic performance in school.
3. Similarly, parents should help their children or wards to develop social and emotional skills that will promote academic performance. Proper upbringing inculcate sense of belonging in them. Since social skills development is independent of school type, parents should allow and guide children to relate and play together, share ideas so as to help them adapt to any environment.

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