

ASSESSMENT OF SOCIAL SKILLS OF
PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN ILE-IFE,
NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study determined the level of social skills possessed by primary school pupils in Ile-Ife. It assessed the disparity in the possession of these social skills by primary school pupils who had preschool education and those who did not. These were with the view to providing information towards the inculcation of social skills in primary school pupils. The study adopted the ethnographic research design. The study population consisted of primary school pupils in Ile-Ife. Five intact classes of Primary I pupils (One per school) from five different primary schools under different categories of proprietorship (i.e. private individuals, corporate groups, religious institutions, higher institutions of learning, government/public schools) (a minimum of 25 and maximum of 30 per class, totalling a range of 125 and 150 pupils) were purposively selected as samples for the study in Ile-Ife. The instruments used for the study were: Post-preschoolers Social Skills Observation Schedule (PSSOS) which was used to conduct participant-observation of social skills, with a view to measuring possession of social skills by Primary I pupils under study and the Social Skills Observation Report Form (SSORF) which was used to record the overall manifestation of social

skills per pupil for each skill category in frequency counts. Data were analyzed using percentages, pie chart and t-test statistics. The results showed that Ile-Ife primary school pupils' level of social skills varied: cooperation was very high (68%); assertiveness was low (7%); responsibility was low (18%); empathy was low (4%) and self-control was also low (3%). The results also showed that there was significant disparity in the possession of cooperation skills ($t = 0.56$; $p = 0.02$), responsibility skills ($t = 0.27$; $p = 0.03$), and empathy skills ($t = 0.79$; $p = 0.03$) by primary school pupils who had nursery education and those who did not; and that pupils who had no nursery education are even better in these areas than those who had it. However, there was no significant disparity in their level of possession of assertiveness skills ($t = 0.1$; $p = 0.12$) and self-control skills ($t = 1.63$; $p = 0.09$). The study concluded that although primary school pupils in Ile-Ife possess some social skills at a varying level (especially cooperation skills) they are however deficient in others (assertiveness, responsibility, empathy and self-control) and may need teachers and parents special attention in order to develop them.

Key Words: Assessment, Social Skills, Possession and Manifestation, Primary School Pupils

Introduction

Assessment is the process of gathering information from multiple and diverse sources in order to explicate and develop a deep understanding of what would be patrons know, understand, and can do with the knowledge and experiences. The process culminates when assessment results are used to improve subsequent learning (University of Oregon Teaching Effectiveness Program, 2014). By and large, the need to improve overall development (with social skills) has informed the need to assess children's social skills, so as to encourage teachers to find ways of articulating skills development among the learners. Children may not be possessing, exhibiting and

manifesting social skills as appropriate. This calls for a check into the psychosocial and emotional developmental spheres to determine their learning and relationship capacities. As children, adult and other specialists' knowledge of their social, emotional and interpersonal development levels is vital, it is linked to their cognitive, behavioural and physical development (Diperna & Elliott, 2000; McClelland & Tominey, 2009). Therefore, when such information is gathered concerning children's social skills, steps can then be taken to correct, improve or modify as ways of providing intervention to aid children development.

Intervention on social problem behaviours cannot be effectively undertaken if adequate assessment and screening is not sufficiently carried out. These assessments are usually carried out on the targeted population to which such intervention programme is proposed. It is the results from the assessment that would tell the extent of or the prevalence of these social problem behaviours and what intervention technique would be most appropriate for that particular population. Therefore, when talking of the assessment of primary school pupils social skills, social skills possession serve at equivalent levels as educational skills to primary school pupils. The reason for this is not farfetched. This is because social skills serve as academic enablers and enhance academic functioning and boost academic performance (Elliott, 2008). This makes social skills possession primarily a functional thread for children's academic success. The child's academic is linked with his/her social skills possession level. Therefore, a high academic performance is propelled by a corresponding upward shift in social skills possession. Moreover, the higher the child's level of possession of social skills, the better the strength/power of his/her abilities to academically perform well; and the higher the academic feats he/she would attain. Social skills assessment should therefore not be relegated or considered inconsequential.

In a bid to assess the possession of social skills in primary school pupils, the assessor is expected to keep an eye (look out) on children in the primary schools to find out whether in addition to participating in academic exercises, the children could wait to take their turn appropriately, share toys, sit quietly when they should, as

well as play vigorously when it is time for play (Mills, 2008). In the course of learning and even during play moments, time is taken to see whether children interact properly or have problems interacting with others. Here, relevant flashpoints are: controlling voice volume (Voice pitch), responding to questions appropriately, making eye contact during conversation or interaction, initiating a conversation, sharing in the conversation and appropriately taking turn in the conversation, using body gestures appropriately among others. All these would mean that the pupils are socially competent in area of communication.

In assessing primary school pupils possession of self-control, indicators that the assessor should look out for here are whether the children stayed calm when teased, took criticism without getting upset, used appropriate language when upset, resolved disagreement calmly, made a compromise during a conflict and stayed calm when disagreeing with others. The need for empathy cannot be overruled. Empathy means responding in an understanding manner, and caring ways to what others are feeling or would feel. These include: expressing concern for others' distress, noticing other people's feelings, being able to recognize what the other peers feeling might be in a given situation, being nice to others when they are feeling bad, feeling bad when others are sad, and forgiving others to mention but few.

Similarly, cooperation entails, completing tasks without bothering others, following directions, following classroom rules, ignoring classmates when they are distracting, paying attention to teachers instructions; and being thoughtful, (thinking ahead) about what might be. Primary school pupils who ask for help from adults when they are in need, question rules that may be unfair, stands up for herself/herself when treated unfairly, says when there is a problem, expresses feelings when wronged, also stands up for others when treated unfairly are said to possess assertiveness. Whereas, question like, is he/she well behaved when not supervised? Does he/she respect the property of others? Exhibits respect for himself/herself and others? among other questions, would provide answers to whether the primary school pupils possess "Responsibility" as a social skill.

Social skills are also critical for long term human success. In the words of Warnes, Sheridan, Geske and Warnes (2005), effective social functioning is a critical factor in child development. Good social skills are critical to successful functioning in life. These skills enable children to know what to say, how to make good choices, and how to behave in diverse situations. The extent to which primary school children possess good social skills are reported to be capable of influencing their academic performance, behaviour, social and family relationships, and involvement in co-curricular activities (Diperna & Elliott, 2000; Wentzel, 1993; Elliott, Malecki & Demaray, 2001). Generally, social skills are defined as socially acceptable learned behaviours that enable a person to interact with others in ways that elicit positive responses and assist in avoiding negative responses (Gresham & Elliot, 1984). They are behaviours that are effective in situations of social interactions and which also serve as indicators or yardsticks for measuring, gauging and explaining behaviours in terms of etiquettes and mannerisms. For instance, a child who is socially skilled would use appropriate gestures to either add humor, express or convey meaning and make himself/herself more understood by the people he/she is communicating with. Common observation sometimes suggests that children communicate in a distinctive way or manner that meets social standards; although other kids may deviate from standards.

Moreover, none-possession, or the possession of social skills at a very low level would be an indication of the presence of an abnormality in the child; may be an ailment, in some other cases disorders which may be mental, psychological, or developmental. This possession of social skills which has a very strong association with the presence of ailment and disorder in a child also tells whether the child is sociable or otherwise (Elliott & Busse, 1991; Warnes, Sheridan, Geske & Warnes, 2005).

Simply put, social skills are typically discrete, goal-oriented behaviours that allow an individual to interact effectively with others in his or her environment (Sheridan & Walker, 1999). That is, they are identifiable behaviours that are exhibited by children. For instance, exhibition of some basic specific behaviours (skills), like saying "hello, good morning sir/ma", "keeping good eye contact",

“smiling at someone while exchanging pleasantries”, “saying sorry when he/she does something wrong”, “expressing affection”, “concentrating on tasks, when given an activity or task to do”, “ability to negotiate”, “trying to or cheering up someone who is feeling sad”, “sharing toys with other kids”, “appropriately seeking for help or assistance when he/she is in need” (Grasham & Elliot, 1984), may be regarded as clear demonstration or exhibition of possession of social skills.

The absence of these skills in an individual (child) indicates that the individual is probably a socially incompetent person who is growing to become a socially incompetent adult with its attendant challenges and woes. Social skills not only enable an individual to adjust and respond appropriately to environmental cues, but also provides the person with a means (ability) of coping in social situation and avoiding interpersonal conflicts (Wilkins, 2008). Children social skills are important for early school attendance, success and school adjustment. These skills enable the child to adapt easily to the school environment, the teachers, other adult staff, and his/her peers. This is because social skills give the child the ability to navigate without difficulty in social contexts (McClelland & Tominey, 2009). Research have documented that children without social skills are at risk for difficulties including peer rejection, behaviour problems and poor academic achievement (Iad, 2000; Parker & Asher 1987; Kartz & McClelland 1997). Also, the alarming rate of attempted expulsion of children from preschools, kindergarten and primary schools is an urgent call to promote the acquisition (possession) and manifestation of social skills in the pre-secondary institutions (Gillian & Shahar, 2006 in McClelland & Tominey, 2009). These skills have been grouped into clusters to include: communication, cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy, engagement and self-control (Grasham & Elliot, 1984).

By and large, the fundamental rationale for the bedrock education (primary education) is to expedite the highest development of the child’s full potentials and lay the foundation for development and lifelong learning. For children, the aspects of development referred to are in the social domain, physical domain, intellectual domain, cognitive domain, and the emotional aspects of

development. The development of the child is most rapid at elementary phase of education (0-5years). It is hence seen to be a critical period in the child's all-round development (Erickson, 1973; Pound, 2008). Therefore, the focus of parents and teachers alike should also be whether children at early years possess and exhibit appropriately, good social skills.

Moreover, considering the limited time a child has to spend in a preschool setting and the pressure for success later on in life, some important skills children need to know have are those skills such as listening to others, following direction, following classroom rules, ignoring peer distractions, asking for help, taking turns in conversations, cooperating with others, controlling temper in conflict situations, acting responsibly with others, showing kindness to others, waiting patiently, using a quiet voice, asking politely, being helpful, being gentle, saying "please" when needful and "thank you" when necessary. Children who attended nursery schools are especially expected to have learnt and developed these skills the more because they are said to have the advantage of meeting people outside their family circle early in life with a wider range of interaction opportunities thereby helping them develop socially.

Given this first-hand experience, these children could be said to do better compared to their primary school colleagues who would not have attended the nursery school but started schooling in the elementary/primary class. In the opinion of Gelson (2010), the learning of these social skills should precede the learning of reading skills. This is because social skills are conceptualized as interpersonal skills and learning related skills. Also, social skills give children/ individuals alike the ability to navigate social and learning context appropriately. In the same vein, they are observed to be very important for learning and achievement in childhood and adolescence. Hence, the possession and manifestation of social skills remain eminent or conspicuously important in children's age and learning (McClelland & Tominey, 2009). Therefore, parents expectation that their children learn how to read first in schools during their early years is inconsistent with children developmentally appropriate learning for this level (Elliot, 2000).

Ordinarily, parents would be hoping that children will learn

how to read and write in the first few months in preschool; but rather, as mentioned above, more to it is the possession of social skills that will groom the children, assisting them to possess 'academic enablers'- which are social skills before reading and writing skills are imparted. Social skills aid pupils to participate and benefit from classroom instructions. Studies by McClellan, Acock and Morrison, (2006), Parker and Newton, (2013) and Duckworth and Seligman (2005), hold that there is a strong evidence that social skills predict academic achievement in kindergarten and throughout elementary school; and that aspects of social skills are also necessary for achievement in adolescence. This may be so because children who are socially skilled are said to spend more time on tasks which in turn influence their performance. They also pay more attention to the teacher and obey teacher's instructions (DiPerna & Elliott, 2000). These academic enablers (social skills) provides the children better chances for learning both reading and writing skills, and make the child more academically focused, which is appropriate for later life success (Elliot, 2000).

Moreover, inability to exhibit or absence of social skills in an individual within the early years is a strong indication of ailment, social, developmental or psychological disorder in form of autism spectrum disorders, asperger's syndrome, and social phobia (Scharfstein, Beidel, Sims, & Finnell, 2011). In line with this, cases of social skills assessment results are matched with intervention programs (Elliott & Gresham, 1984; Scharfstein, Beidel, Sims, & Finnell, 2011). Reiterating the above, Eaves and Ho (2008) point out that, children who lack social skills lack controls, lack proper response to social stimuli, hardly respond to prompts with few words, take longer (time) to make any response, may be ignored or rejected by peers (leading to the problem of peer rejection), and are generally rated as having limited overall social skills. It is obvious that a child who exhibits the aforementioned characters could be termed as being timid. Children who exhibit lack of strong adherence to rules, who hardly respond to prompts with few words, and who take longer time to respond to social stimulus are likewise said to be lacking assertiveness which is one of the prominent social skills expected of preschool and elementary pupils. The possession of assertiveness is

expected to be capable of enabling the child to act confidently in stating his/her position and rationally putting up a claim. It entails expressing ones thought, claim, position, and feelings firmly but rationally and reasonably standing up for oneself and others when occasion demands. A child who possesses assertiveness will ask for help from adults, question rules that maybe unfair, stands up for herself/himself when treated unfairly, says when there is a problem, expresses feelings when wronged, stands up for others who are treated unfairly, and says nice things about herself/himself without bragging. Whereas children who lack these assertiveness skills will resort to aggression in order to communicate demands and express feelings (Elliott & Gresham, 1984).

In the same vein, the possession of cooperative skills will indicate that the child exhibits character that demonstrates helping others, giving assistance to peers, and other members of the school community, adhering to classroom and playground instructions, and sharing materials with others. Self-control skills will help or tell the child's responses in conflict situation, response to corrective and punitive advances from adults and reactions when angry and upset. While the social skills for responsibility are manners and conducts that demonstrates the child's ability to communicate with adults, not showing disregards for the property of others, showing or displaying comportment and responsibility in the classroom and in the playground.

Moreover, one principal aim of primary education is to enhance/promote the social development of the child, which is as an aspect of the affective domain of learning. Children who are deficient in this aspect might be at risk for academic proficiency. To support the above statement, DiPerna and Elliott, (2000) have found out that social skills are academic enablers. This is because they constitute the skills and behaviours that contribute to academic success in the classroom. Also, in the same study, where they developed the Academic Competency Evaluation Scale (ACES), DiPerna and Elliott, noted that the skills, attitudes and behaviours that contribute to academic success in the classroom fall into groups: academic skills and academic enablers. They also stressed that academic enablers are pupils' attitudes and behaviour that facilitate pupils' participation,

help sustain their motivation to learn and benefit from academic instruction in the classroom, (Parker & Newton, 2013; McClelland & Tominey, 2009; Duckworth & Seligman, 2005; James, 2008).

Conventionally, laymen believe that some of the basic skills (social skills) are not supposed to be taught in any formal school setting. Quite opposite, Matson, Esvldt-Dawson and Kadzin (2009), assert that just placing socially unskilled pupils in a group of skilled ones and telling them to cooperate does not guarantee that they will be able to do so. Pupils need to be taught the skills required for interacting effectively with others. Besides, researchers (Reynolds, & Welberg 1991) have likewise demonstrated that prior academic skills (of which social skills is paramount) are the largest single predictors of current achievement, regardless of other pupils, classroom, or home environment variables. As a matter of intervention, they proposed/advised however, that if academic enablers promote academic achievement, there are other non-academic skills (academic enablers) that should be taught explicitly to increase the likelihood that all pupils will learn to the best of their ability. Social skills training have been reckoned with as potent panacea/therapy for emotional, psychological and behavioural disorders. Some of those disorders are enumerated in the works of Gresham, Sugai and Horner (2001) and Eaves and Ho (2008) to include mental retardation, emotional disturbance, attention deficit or hyperactivity disorder and autism spectrum disorders. Also, in preventing academic deficits, Skinner (1966) has mentioned that reinforcement and social skill training will be of help to the teacher for use on the learners to enhance improved academic performance of the learners.

Owing to the ability of children to interact effectively and successfully with peers and other adults, it has been mentioned that, this is an important aspect of their development. Assessing their affective abilities (social skills) is necessarily non-negotiable especially at this stage of pupil's education. This is because developmentally, antisocial, aggressive, oppositional and defiant behaviour begin early in life (2-3 years) and continues throughout the school years. In fact, research has discovered that these behaviours are almost as stable as measures of intelligence for boys with a high

reliability interval of ($r = 0.76$) for one year old and ($r = 0.69$) for the five year old (Gresham, 2001). Without early identification and possible intervention against these antisocial behaviour, Reid and Peterson (in Gresham, 2001) have suggested that children exhibiting antisocial social behaviour patterns before school entry will continue coercive and aggressive behaviour patterns with peers and teachers upon school entry and beyond. When children exhibit these antisocial, oppositional, aggressive and deviant behaviours, they have failed to possess and manifest social skills, and there is a great danger or the risk of manifesting these behaviours at adulthood. This agrees with the psychoanalytic explanation of human behavior according to Sigmund Freud (1856 - 1939). According to Sigmund Freud, every behaviour manifested at adulthood is a product of a person's childhood experiences (Diskell, 2009). The explanation by the psychoanalytic theorist is therefore suggesting that providers of nursery education should exert concerted efforts to make the children to develop social skills. The extent to which nursery schools Ile-Ife has achieved this in Ile-Ife therefore deserve to be investigated and this also gives direction to the need for an assessment of the social skills of primary school pupils in Ile-Ife.

By and large, there are conflicting reports on the benefits of preschool education on children's social development (Loeb, Bridges, Bassok, Fuller & Rumberger, 2007; Dewar, 2009; Mize, 1995). While some are of the view that children who have experienced preschool education are very socially competent ("friendlier" and "sociable") in their preschool years and latter in life, others say preschool attendance can increase childhood stress and retard social development as well as the possession and manifestation of social skills. These are two opposite views which would require an inquiry before it could be resolved; and Ile-Ife where a variety of schools which provide for nursery education and those without nursery classes could a green-field to investigate this. A conscientious thought on this issue may although bring to the fore other issues such as the factors of school proprietorship: that is, providing information as to whether if a child attends a school owned by one category of school owner e.g. private, corporate groups, religious institutions, institutions of higher learning and government/public

schools (with different missions, visions and philosophies) could possess certain category of social skills better than the other, that does not fall within the purview of this study. Similarly, while nursery school attendance has been observed as a factor that could positively impact on pupils' academic performance, previous studies have however been inconclusive on whether primary school children who have had nursery education and their colleagues who did not attend preschool would compare easily in terms of possessing and manifesting of social skills at the same level. This study is thus designed to attend to all these seeming obvious gaps.

Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were to

- (a) determine the level of social skills (cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy and self-control) of primary school pupils in Ile-Ife ; and
- (b) assess the disparity in the possession of social skills by primary school pupils wh had preschool education and those who did not.

Research questions

The following research questions were answered in the study

- (a) What is the level of possession of social skills (cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy and self-control) of primary school pupils in Ile-Ife?
- (b) Is there a significant disparity in the possession of social skills by primary school pupils who had preschool education and those who did not?

Method

The study adopted the ethnographic research design. The study population consisted of primary school pupils in Ile-Ife. Five intact classes of Primary I pupils (One per school) from five different primary schools under different categories of proprietorship (i.e. private individuals, corporate groups, religious institutions, higher institutions of learning, government/public schools) (a minimum

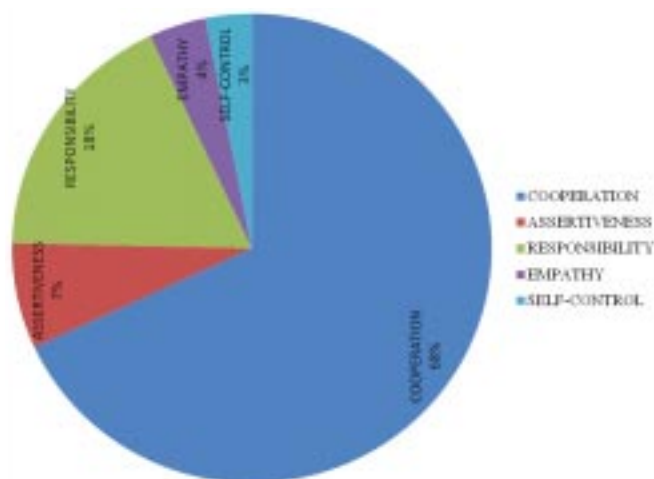
of 25 and maximum of 30 per class, totalling a range of 125 and 150 pupils) were purposively selected as samples for the study in Ile-Ife. The instruments used for the study were: Post-preschoolers Social Skills Observation Schedule (PSSOS) which was used to conduct participant-observation of social skills, with a view to measuring possession of social skills by Primary I pupils under study and the Social Skills Observation Report Form (SSORF) which was used to record the overall manifestation of social skills per pupil for each skill category in frequency counts. Data were analyzed using percentages, pie chart and t-test statistics.

Results

Research question 1: What is the level of manifestation of social skills of primary school pupils in Ile-Ife?

The answer to research question 1 is provided in Figure 1 below

Figure 1. Pie chart showing level of manifestation (expressed in percentage) of social skills by primary school pupils in Ile-Ife



The pie chart in Figure 1, explains that the level of social skills of primary school pupils in Ile-Ife vary in the following order: that primary school pupils' manifestation of cooperation skills at 78.28 mean score, is 68% (very high) of the total manifestation of social

skills and consequently the highest/largest and the most manifested social skills by primary school pupils. It was followed by responsibility skills ($\bar{x} = 20.34$) which indicates 18% (low) of the total manifestation of the observed social skills of primary school pupils. Assertiveness were observed to have be very low ($\bar{x} = 8.36$; 7%); empathy was very low ($\bar{x} = 4.41$; 4%), while self-control was equally very low ($\bar{x} = 3.57$; 3%).

Research question 2: Is there a significant disparity in the possession of social skills by primary school pupils who had preschool education and those who did not?

Table 1 provides answer to this question

Table 1: A t-test table showing the disparity in the possession of social skills by primary school children who had preschool education and those who did not.

Social Skills	Preschool Attendance	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	P
Cooperation	Attended	79	77.03	24.552	0.56	.023
	did not attend	53	80.04	37.470		
Assertiveness	Attended	79	7.72	7.310	0.1	.119
	did not attend	53	9.30	9.535		
Responsibility	Attended	79	20.05	12.213	0.27	.003
	did not attend	53	20.77	16.989		
Empathy	Attended	79	4.13	3.878	0.79	.032
	did not attend	53	4.83	5.629		
Self Control	Attended	79	3.00	3.162	1.63	0.09
	did not attend	53	4.47	6.008		

Table reports that there is a significant disparity ($t = 0.56$; $p = 0.23$) in the manifestation of cooperation skills by primary school pupils who attended the nursery school and those who did not; and the source of disparity is from those who did not attend nursery school ($\bar{x} = 80.04$) who are more cooperative than those who

attended ($x_{\square} = 77.03$). There was also a significant disparity in the manifestation of responsibility skills ($t = 0.27$; $p = 0.03$). The source of the disparity also lies with those who did not attend ($x_{\square} = 20.77$), who are more responsible than those who attended nursery school ($x_{\square} = 20.05$). Moreover, there was a significant disparity in the manifestation of empathy skills between those who attended and those who did not ($t = 0.76$; $p = 0.03$). The source of the disparity is traced to those who did not attend nursery school who manifested empathy more ($x_{\square} = 4.83$) than those who attended ($x_{\square} = 4.13$). In terms of self control, there was no significant disparity between the two groups ($t = 1.63$; $p = 0.009$). Those who did not attend also manifested higher level of self control ($x_{\square} = 4.47$) than those who did ($x_{\square} = 3.00$). However, even though those who did not attend preschool manifested assertive skills higher ($x = 9.30$) than those who attended ($x_{\square} = 7.72$), there was no significant disparity in their possession of assertiveness skills ($t = 0.1$; $p = 0.12$).

Discussion

Two findings emanated from this study. The first is that the most prominent social skills that nursery school children manifest most is the cooperation skills, followed by responsibility with a distant low value of 18%. The value of other skills (assertiveness, empathy and self-control) are very low. This is suggesting that children who learn by play and rhyme may possess social skills more than the adult. Perhaps one may be tempted to ask whether children learn more of how to do things in common at early childhood than in later life? Or is it that they have not developed the sense of ego where high self-possessive attribute that promote claiming of objects are manifested as postulated long time ago by Freud? At any rate, the result agrees with the opinion of that Akinbote (2006) the nursery school is foundation for the promotion of the ideals of the society.

The second result however suggests that nursery education is not quite essential for children to develop social skills as primary school pupils who had never attended the nursery school were better off than those who did attend in virtually all areas of social skill (cooperation, assertiveness, responsibility, empathy and self-control)

development. This is against all the conventional beliefs that nursery education is a total avenue for the total development of the child. In fact this buttresses the observation and worry of most elite parents of Nigerian children. From the experience of the researchers, pupils in the Nigerian public schools could deliver three different errands successfully without necessarily having to have a list of errands at hand. But ask a child of the elite who attended the nursery school to run a single errand, the delivery may be half-done and the remaining "message" forgotten. This is also an indication that the Nigerian nursery school as it is currently, not yet well equipped in terms of staff and material to teach social skills. By and large, there should be a limit to eulogy bequeathed on children of primary schools who had no nursery education but was excellent in the development of social skill. The kudos may not need go to the public primary school teachers, but perhaps to the parents of the children who could be very versatile in indigenous knowledge and character and who had taken time to inculcate same in their children in an informal way. Another issue to be raised in respect of this findings is the question of whether or not to attach nursery schools to public schools in Nigeria; believing that that will make the public primary children to learn how to read and write in addition to possessing social skills. But the question is, does nursery school actually stand to inculcate reading, writing and arithmetic in children so as to prepare the children for primary education, when it is should emphasize the teaching methods than the learning content? Or to what extent could social skills which are supposed to be part of the hidden curricular be taught directly when children are supposed to learn them unconsciously? The answers to all these questions could be objects of debate and empirical investigation. By and large, the result of this study has indicated that having nursery education does not prepare children to be cooperative, assertive, responsible, empathic or self-controlled), other unverified factors may.

Conclusion and recommendations

The study concluded that possession of social skills varied among primary school pupils and it was neither dependent on whether pupils had preschool education or not. It could however be reasonable if

social skills are incorporated into series of play materials that nursery school children use, may be that may put the children of the Nigerian elites on an equal pedestal when it comes to acquisition and development of social skills with their counterparts from low-income home where nursery education could not be afforded.

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