
Predictive Influence of Indoor and Outdoor Learning Activities on Preschoolers' Entrepreneurial Skills in Niger State

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Abstract

This study investigated the predictive influence of preschoolers' involvement in indoor and outdoor learning activities on their social learning skills as enhancement of children entrepreneurial skill development in Niger state, Nigeria. Two research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. A correlational survey research design was adopted. The population consisted of 8,568 Nursery III preschoolers across the 549 preschools in the five Local Education Authorities in Niger State. A sample of 390 children was selected using multistage sampling. Data were collected using two instruments; the Preschoolers' Learning Activities Rating Scale (PLARS) and Preschoolers' Social Learning Skills Rating Scale (PSLSRS) developed by the researchers. The reliability coefficients obtained for the PLARS and PSLSRS were 0.83 and 0.82, respectively through Cronbach Alpha reliability estimate. Data collected were analyzed using simple linear regression. Results showed that 37% of preschoolers' social learning skills are predicted by their involvement in indoor learning activities, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). It also shows that 11% of preschoolers' social learning skills are predicted by their involvement in outdoor learning activities, which is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, it is recommended among others, that government and school administrators should employ qualified teachers who will stand as role models for preschoolers' social skills development and provide indoor and outdoor activities and materials for preschoolers in schools.

Keywords: indoor and outdoor activities, preschoolers, entrepreneurial skills, social learning skills

Introduction

Most countries of the world place emphasis on the education of children as they are termed the leaders of tomorrow. This is why most developed and developing countries in the world have come to recognized preschool as a

stepping stone to later successful academic progress and the general well-being of children. This is because the development of children's entrepreneurial skills in the area of emotional, and social abilities, as well as their overall personality, has been adjudged to be highly enhanced by learning experiences at preschool. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) in its National Policy on Education defined preschool as the type of education designed for children between the ages of 0-5 years in an early childhood care centre or nursery before the start of primary education. It is also viewed as a period in which children receive their most important school learning experiences (Yolero, 2014). Furthermore, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) (2017) defined preschool as the basic preparatory type of education offered to children before substantive education. From these definitions, preschool can be operationally defined as the first form of education given to children aged between 0 and 4 years in order to prepare them for further education.

The objectives of preschool according to FRN (2013) include: "to promote a smooth transition of a child from the home to the school; to prepare the child for the primary level education; to provide adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work (on the farms, in the markets, offices, among others) and to inculcate social norms in children. Others are: to inculcate in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and playing with toys and to develop in children a sense of co-operation and team spirit; to inculcate good habits, especially good health habits; and to teach the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes, forms, among others, through play."

From these objectives, it could be construed that preschool is the fulcrum upon which every other level of education rests and, above all, the type of education that shapes preschoolers' lifelong learning and general living. Preschoolers, according to Enemu, et al (2015), refer to children between the ages of 0 and 5 who are receiving formal education at a preschool. In this study, "preschoolers" therefore refers to children who are receiving their first form of formal education at various preschools. Thus, Okoh (2012) maintained that preschool is the basis upon which the entire educational experience of an individual is built, and its quality determines the degree of success to be achieved.

The advantages of preschool learning cannot be underestimated. Buttressing. Supporting this assertion, Acar (2014) observed that preschool promotes children's physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development. The European Commission (2014) stated that learning experiences gained at preschool have a great impact on the subsequent accomplishments of individuals as they lay the foundation for lifelong learning. In other words, preschool is the foundation upon which the entire education of an individual is built; thus, it can be

considered very essential to children's successful progress in later levels of education. According to Akpan (2012), the learning activities offered to preschoolers are aimed at facilitating the developmental changes in children and their successful progress in subsequent levels of education and life in general. Nevertheless, Yildirim and Akamca (2017) asserted that preschoolers can maximize learning through indoor and outdoor learning activities.

Indoor and outdoor learning activities determine the level of achievements among children. Indoor learning activities, according to Ajayi (2014), are those learning experiences offered to preschoolers inside the classroom setting. Ajayi further explained that the activities involve children's learning with various materials such as erasers, drawing paper, crayons, clay, water, and sand, among others. According to Okoh, et al (2022), children's learning through play is with the use of materials such as picture books, flannel boards, beads, meeting toys, hand mirrors, plastic bracelets, bounce chairs, green plants, and music boxes, among others, which are organized in designated corners of their classroom. From the above, it can be inferred that indoor learning activities include all of the learning experiences preschoolers have in a classroom setting.

Apart from indoor learning activities, preschoolers are also provided with a series of outdoor learning activities. Ajayi (2014), defined outdoor learning activities as those learning experiences offered to preschoolers outside of the classroom setting. According to Ajayi, the activities provide preschoolers with the opportunity and ample freedom to explore and encourage social interactions among them outside the classroom setting. This includes the provision of an open space for running, throwing, rolling, as well as equipment for climbing, jumping, sliding, and swinging, among others, to enhance the acquisition of skills that cannot be acquired in the traditional classroom setting (Okoh et al 2022). In the same vein, Yildirim and Akamca (2017) considered outdoor learning activities as the learning tasks given to learners in open spaces in the outside environment rather than inside the classroom, which allow children to actively participate and to learn how to display social skills.

At preschool, children are also expected to acquire a great number of social learning skills as entrepreneurial skills. This involves competencies that enable an individual to get along with others, such as the ability to figure out a situation, give consideration to others' viewpoints, and understand the rules of initiating, maintaining, and ending conversations, as well as the ability to show empathy, self-control, and emotional intelligence, among others (Ergin & Ergin, 2017). These skills are based on Albert Bandura's social learning theory, which suggests individuals learn through observations, imitation, and interaction with others around them (Loukatari, et al, 2019). From the views of these authors, the researchers believe that social learning skills acquired by children inform of good

observation, imitation, interaction, self-control and emotional intelligence are indices of entrepreneurial skills. This is so because when children grow up to be good in human relation, imitate good things around them and manage their emotions, they can do well in entrepreneurship.

Preschoolers' involvement in either indoor or outdoor learning activities influences their acquisition of entrepreneurial skills differently. As noted by Pellegrini (2006), during outdoor learning activities, pupils play, run, and develop social skills. As children grow older, they are more likely to observe and imitate certain skills displayed by their teacher(s) and others around them (Bolin, 2006; Lancy, 2008). Poyraz (2011) asserted that outdoor learning activities help in shaping preschoolers' social lives through the acquisition of social skills such as language skills and communication skills. While some children seem to be socially skillful from birth, others tend to struggle with the various challenges of social acceptance (Bentoe & Dias, 2017). Ergin and Ergin (2017) opined that there is a potential relationship between children's positive social skills and outdoor learning activities. This is because, during indoor and outdoor learning activities, children learn to negotiate, collaborate, and share ideas, which helps them carry out assigned tasks (Loukatari et al., 2019). This can be interpreted to mean that involvement of preschoolers in indoor and outdoor learning activities could contribute to their social learning skills.

Previous studies on preschoolers' involvement in indoor and outdoor learning activities in relation to their social learning skills, however, have conflicting findings. A strand of previous studies (Harun & Salamuddin, 2014; Yldrm & Akamca, 2017; Loukatari, Matsouka, Papadimitriou, Nani, & Grammatikopoulos, 2019) have also shown that outdoor activities are significantly more effective in improving cooperative and social skills than indoor learning activities. On the other hand, Smogorzewska and Szumski (2017) indicate that the social skills acquired by preschoolers who attended outdoor learning activities did not differ significantly from those of their counterparts in indoor learning activities. The contradictions in these reports imply that further research is needed in order to clearly justify the correlation among the above variables.

In Nigeria, especially in Niger State, as commonly observed, many preschoolers show little eagerness in entrepreneurial learning, as they exhibit uncoordinated attitudes, disobedience, defiance, and lack of cooperation, lack of empathy, selfishness, and lack of social acceptance, poor language and communication skills. If these behaviors are not given adequate attention, they will grow up to become lazy, maladjusted, and misfits in society. Considering the potential benefits of preschoolers' involvement in indoor and outdoor learning activities and the dearth of empirical literature on the contribution of such

activities to preschoolers' entrepreneurial skills, make a study in this direction an imperative. Against this background this study examined the predictive power of preschoolers' involvement in indoor and outdoor learning activities on their entrepreneurial skills in Niger State, Nigeria. P

Purpose of the study

Specifically, the study examined the predictive power of:

1. Preschoolers' involvement in indoor learning activities on their social learning skills;
2. Preschoolers' involvement in outdoor learning activities on their social learning skills.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed to guide this study:

1. What is the predictive power of preschoolers' involvement in indoor learning activities on their social learning skills?
2. What is the predictive power of preschoolers' involvement in outdoor learning activities on their social learning skills?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses are postulated for the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

H₀₁: There is no significant predictive power of preschoolers' involvement in indoor learning activities on their social learning skills.

H₀₂: There is no significant predictive power of preschoolers' involvement in outdoor learning activities on their social learning skills.

Method

This study employed a correlation survey research design. The area of study was Niger State, Nigeria. The population of this study consisted of 8,568 Nursery III preschoolers across the 549 preschools in the five Local Education Authorities in Niger State (Source: SUBEB office Minna, Niger State, November, 2021). The study sample comprised 390 preschoolers drawn through a multistage sampling procedure involving cluster, simple, and stratified random sampling techniques.

Two instruments, namely the Preschoolers' Learning Activities Rating Scale (PLARS) and Preschoolers' Social Learning Skills Rating Scale (PSLSRS), developed by the researchers, were used for data collection. The PLARS contained 20 items arranged in two clusters (I and II). Cluster I had 10 items and was used for observing and rating preschoolers' levels of involvement in indoor

learning activities, while Cluster II had 10 items and was used for observing and rating preschoolers' levels of involvement in outdoor learning activities. The rating options range from 4, 3, 2, to 1, depicting excellent (E), good (G), fair (F), and poor (P), respectively. The Preschoolers' Social Learning Skills Rating Scale (PSLSRS) had 10 items and was used for observing and rating preschoolers' social learning skills. It also had a range of 4, 3, 2, and 1 for excellent (E), good (G), fair (F), or poor (P) respectively.

The instruments were face-validated by three (3) experts; two from Childhood Education and one from Measurement and Evaluation. The experts were required to do a face validation of the instruments by examining the appropriateness of items, correctness of grammar, and suitability of the instruments in addressing the purpose of the study. The comments and suggestions of the experts were used in improving the quality of the final versions of the instruments. The reliability of the modified instruments was established after trial-testing thirty copies of the instruments on a similar sample of thirty (30) preschoolers from other preschools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT). Data gathered from the trial test was analyzed using the Cronbach Alpha method of estimating reliability. The reliability coefficients obtained for PLARS and PSLSRS were 0.82 and 0.83, respectively, indicating that the instrument was reliable for the study.

Data Analysis

Data collected were coded on SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), version 26.0 and analyzed using simple linear regression analysis. The correlation coefficients (r) and the coefficients of determination (r^2) were used to answer all the research questions while the regression ANOVA model were used for testing all the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

The results were presented in Tables in line with the research questions and the null hypotheses formulated for the study.

Research Question One: What is the predictive power of preschoolers' involvement in indoor learning activities on their social learning skills?

Table 1: Regression Analysis of the Predictive Power of Preschoolers' Involvement in Indoor Learning Activities on their Social Learning Skills

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	R	R²
Indoor Learning Activities	390	30.33	3.64	0.61	0.37
Social Learning Skills		29.32	3.72		

Result in Table 1 shows that the correlation coefficient obtained between preschoolers' involvement in indoor learning activities and their social learning skills was 0.61. This shows that there was a moderate and positive correlation between preschoolers' involvement in indoor learning activities and their social learning skills. The result further shows that the coefficient of determination (R^2) (i.e. the predictive value) associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.61 is 0.37. The R^2 indicates that 37% of preschoolers' social learning skills are predicted by their involvement in indoor learning activities. This indicates that 63% of preschoolers' social learning skills are predicted by other variables other than their involvement in indoor learning activities.

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant predictive power of Preschoolers' involvement in indoor learning activities on their social learning skills.

Table 2: Regression ANOVA test of the Predictive Power of Preschoolers' Involvement in Indoor Learning Activities on their Social Learning Skills.

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
1 Regression	2018.441	1	2018.441	233.455	0.00	S
Residual	3354.625	388	8.646			
Total	5373.067	389				

Result in Table 2 shows that an f-ratio of ($F(1, 389) = 233.455, p < 0.05$) was obtained for the predictive power of Preschoolers' involvement in indoor learning activities on their social learning skills. Since the associated probability (p) value of 0.00 is less than 0.05 level of significance set as criterion for testing the hypothesis, this implies that the null hypothesis one (H_{01}) is rejected. Hence, inference drawn is that preschoolers' involvement in indoor learning activities is a significant predictor of their social learning skills.

Research Question Two: What is the predictive power of preschoolers' involvement in outdoor learning activities on their social learning skills?

Table 3: Regression Analysis of the Predictive Power of Preschoolers' Involvement in Outdoor Learning Activities on their Social Learning Skills

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	R	R^2
Outdoor Learning Activities	390	28.84	3.93	0.33	0.11
Social Learning Skills		29.32	3.72		

Result in Table 3 shows that the correlation coefficient obtained between preschoolers' involvement in outdoor learning activities and their social learning skills was 0.33. This shows that there was a moderate and positive correlation between preschoolers' involvement in outdoor learning activities and their social learning skills. The result further shows that the coefficient of determination (R^2) (i.e. the predictive value) associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.33 is 0.11. The R^2 indicates that 11% of preschoolers, social learning skills are predicted by their involvement in outdoor learning activities. This indicates that 89% of preschoolers' social learning skills are predicted by other variables other than their involvement in outdoor learning activities.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant predictive power of Preschoolers' involvement in outdoor learning activities on their social learning skills.

Table 4: Regression ANOVA test of the Predictive Power of Preschoolers' Involvement in Outdoor Learning Activities on their Social Learning Skills.

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Decision
1 Regression	547.141	1	547.141	49.855	0.00	S
Residual	4258.203	388	10.975			
Total	4805.344	389				

Result in Table 4 shows that an f-ratio of ($F(1, 389) = 49.855, p < 0.05$) was obtained for the predictive power of Preschoolers' involvement in outdoor learning activities on their social learning skills. Since the associated probability (p) value of 0.00 is less than 0.05 level of significance set as criterion for testing the hypothesis, this implies that the null hypothesis six (H_{02}) is rejected. Hence, inference drawn is that preschoolers' involvement in outdoor learning activities is a significant predictor of their social learning skills.

Discussion

The findings showed that there was a moderately positive correlation between preschoolers' involvement in indoor learning activities and their social skills, which was statistically significant. This finding adds credence to Smogorzewska and Szumski (2017), who found that both indoor and outdoor learning activities were effective in terms of increasing preschoolers' social learning skills. The findings also affirm the basic tenets of the social constructivist theory of Vygotsky (1978), which states that children learn through interaction with the environment and through social interaction with others. Thus, it can be

construed that an increase in indoor activities will likely result in an increase in the preschoolers' social skills. This is achievable because pupils utilize their imagination to find the proper answers to questions during indoor learning activities, they demonstrate dedication when the teacher is pleased with their progress, and they discuss classroom norms with their classmates. The pupils learn how to settle peer disputes and make friends, as well as how to initiate major interpersonal interactions, participate in group physical games, and follow regulations. All of these can result in the acquisition of social learning skills which are relevant in entrepreneurship development.

The findings further showed that there was a moderate and positive correlation between preschoolers' involvement in outdoor learning activities and their social learning skills, which was statistically significant. The findings lend support to previous findings by Harun and Salamuddin (2014), who revealed that outdoor learning activities had a significant influence on the acquisition of social skills among children. Furthermore, the findings corroborate with Goodling (2016), whose study revealed that outdoor activities enhance social relationships and overall learning among children. This suggests that any positive improvement in outdoor activities will result in a proportionate positive change in the social learning skills of preschoolers and vice versa. This is possible because outdoor activities give pupils the opportunity to run around in the field, dance on the playground, and play with their peers. By so doing, children acquire skills including interaction, teamwork, cooperation, and support for one another, empathy, how to correct for wrongdoings, and how to speak politely to one another when they engage in outdoor play activities. As portrayed by this study, all of these abilities help in the development of a child's social learning as well as entrepreneurial development.

Conclusion

There is a significant predictive power of preschoolers' involvement in indoor learning activities on their social learning skills. In addition, the preschoolers' involvement in outdoor learning activities has significant predictive power on their social learning skills. This implies that involvement of preschoolers in indoor and outdoor learning activities contributes greatly to their social learning skills. The development of social learning skills in children paves way for good entrepreneurial skills development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Government and school administrators should provide indoor and outdoor activities for preschoolers in schools.

2. Government and school administrators should employ qualified teachers who will stand as role models for preschoolers' social skills development.
3. Teachers should be trained on how to integrate indoor and outdoor activities into teaching.
4. Parents should provide indoor and outdoor activities for their children at home.

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