INFLUENCE OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION QUALITY ON CHILDREN'S SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL SKILL IN DUTSIN-MA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

By

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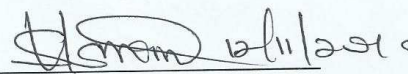P.O. Box 1346
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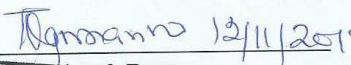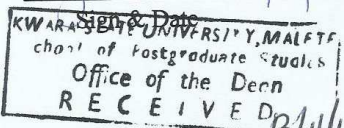
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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved parents MalamAbdullahi Usman JikanGogaSaura and MalamaA'ishaMuhammedDanmilaDutsin-Ma, Katsina State Nigeria.

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Thanks to Almighty Allah, the master of all creatures, the most gracious the most merciful, You alone we worship and You alone we ask for help. I thank You for the care, protection and guidance throughout the period of my Masters Degree Programme, I pray for more of your guidance throughout my stay in this world. Amen.

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ABSTRACT

Children's socio-emotional developmental skill is increasingly recognised as one of the most significant areas of early learning and development. The holistic development of children generally is knotted to the kind of care and education made available to them in their early years. Also, the issue of quality on which pre-school education relies is greatly dictated by the learning environment and teachers' characteristics. Hence, this study investigated the influence of pre-school education quality on children's socio-emotional developmental skill in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area, Katsina State Nigeria. The design employed for the study is descriptive survey research design. The population comprised all pre-schoolers and pre-school teachers in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area, Katsina State, Nigeria. The sample size consisted of 250 pre-school children and 50 preschool teachers who were selected through simple random sampling technique from 25 pre-primary and primary schools in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area, Katsina State Nigeria

A 40 item instrument titled 'Pre-School Education Quality Rating Scale' (PEQRS) and Children's Socio-Emotional Developmental Skill Rating Scale (CSDSRS) with 25 items were designed by the researcher. The reliability of PEQRS and CSDSRS was confirmed through test-re-test and Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). PEQRS and CSDSRS yielded reliability coefficients of 0.74 and 0.77 respectively. The data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Research questions were answered using mean and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The formulated research hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics of linear regression, Analysis of Variance and independent samples t-test.

The result of the findings revealed that pre-school education quality in relation to observed environment, teachers' area of specialization and working experience was low while their qualification was high. The children's socio-emotional developmental skill was on the average in Dutsin-Ma Local government Area. The result also indicated significant influence of teachers' area of specialization($F_{(3, 246)}$ = 53.354; $P < 0.05$), working experience($F_{(2, 247)}$ = 7.597; $P < 0.05$), qualification($F_{(2, 247)}$ = 101.783; $P < 0.05$), school type(t = 8.373; df = 248; $P < 0.05$) and observed pre-school education environment($F_{(1,248)}$ = 93.926, $P < 0.05$) on socio-emotional developmental skill of the children. However, there was no significant difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of gender (t = .294; df = 248; $P > 0.05$).

On the basis of these findings, the study concluded that it can be established that pre-school environments and teachers characteristics were critical to development of children particularly, their socio-emotional developmental skill. The study therefore, recommends that government and school proprietors should ensure that observed pre-school environment is equipped with all the necessary learning materials/facilities in a child-friendly environment. Government and school proprietors should employ the services of professional early childhood education teachers to manage and control the education of pre-school children in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area and Katsina State at large. Teachers should create an enabling environment that supports pre-school children to acquire socio-emotional developmental skill at the grass root level.

Keywords: Pre-school education, Pre-school education quality, Teachers characteristics, Observed pre-school education environment, Socio-emotional developmental skill

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Pre-school years are a crucial period of development of mental function in children. This development includes emergence of abilities and skills in areas such as language, intellectual, motor skills, psychosocial, creativity and cognitive. The development of a child at this critical age can be greatly influenced by exogenous factors including the nature of educational environment to which the child is exposed during the first 0-8 years of life. The experience children have at these stages of life has a lasting effect on their lives and career development.Researchers like Lewis (2011); Goodman, Joshi, Nasim and Tyler (2015); Adedigba (2015); Barbara, Jannaand Katherine (2016) and a host of others submitted that the first five years of a child's life are very crucial in his/her life. Whatever a child is exposed to during this period has a serious and lasting effect on the future. They identified that this period is widely considered the most critical stage of a child's life. Significantly, the quality of services and early intervention given to children are fundamental because the skills developed from birth to age eight form the basis for future learning and labour market success; and it is a critical time for human capital accumulation.

Literature has confirmed that pre-school education has enormous positive economic and social impact lasting well into adulthood (Bowman, Donovan & Burns, 2001; Clements & Samara, 2004; Schweihart, 2007; Sparling, Ramey & Ramey, 2007). Experiences children gain during pre-school period make up the basis of more complex concept of learning that would be acquired in the future and also play an important role in children's success. This is also

buttressed by Adedigba and Agarry (2013) who viewed the experiences and learning children acquire in early years as capable of giving them thoroughgoing support they need to develop and be successful in their entire life. The pre-school education in the life of a child represents the transitional ground that prepares the child mentally and psychologically for the expectation and sustainability into primary education in the nearest future.

Importance of pre-school education has been recognized in Nigeria but the issue of its quality remains a problem. A quick reflection on history of nursery, pre-primary education or pre-school education in Nigeria from independence in 1960 to 2003 shows that pre-school education was left in the hands of private operators, parents and community (Situ, Utim, &Aliyu, 2009). The Federal Government of Nigeria recognizes the importance of early childhood education in Nigeria and as a result it was given prominence in the National Policy of Education (FRN, 2013) as one of the programmes in the Nigerian educational system. As a result of this, government declared that every primary school must have a pre-primary class. This resulted into the establishment of the one year kindergarten class. The directive for primary schools to start pre-primary classes was however not preceded by sufficient arrangements to cater for the teaching and learning needs of children (Florence, 2009). Since pre-primary classes exist in a variety of settings, it is crucial to focus on their quality based on children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

An appraisal based line study conducted by Florence (2009) in Nigeria to assess the challenges and prospects in nursery school education in Nigeria revealed that pre-school education programmes were in place but lacked quality as classes were overcrowded, teachers lacked training, support and monitoring. The results also indicated that learning materials were

inadequate, there was little active experiential activity in the classes and the classroom activities were not developmentally appropriate to the age groups.

However, this study was based on the quality of classroom activities (process quality) and not on the quality of pre-school education in general. Several studies have reported correlations between variables of process, structural and global quality (Burchinal, Clifford, &Howes, 2002). Structural quality and process quality have each a component of global quality, provide unique and essential information to understand the early childhood classrooms; yet these terms are often defined differently in research and policy reports (Layzer& Goodson, 2006).

The most important concern in pre-school education is the provision of quality services to young children because of its undeniable benefits to their development (Adedigba, 2015). Researchers have long documented the positive outcomes of high-quality pre-school education to include readiness for school, greater academic achievement, higher rates of school completion, lower rates of incarceration and higher incomes (Bowman, Donovan & Burns, 2001). Judi, Steven, Elena, Debora and Deanna (2005) also submitted that a significant part of the long-term economic pay-off to public investments in high-quality pre-school education programmes can come from their social outcomes, including the prevention of crime and delinquency. Mitchell, Wylie and Carr (2008) further opined that quality pre-school education is the key to achieving gains on all outcomes measured in children's development. As a matter of emphasis, high quality pre-school education can support early development in ways that yield long-term social and emotional benefits.

Research has demonstrated consistent association between various aspects of classroom quality and improved social and academic outcomes for young children. Pre-school education

programmes that maintain high standards of quality provide children with skills that would assist them in their social and academic adjustment to elementary school. It allows children to form close, sustained relationships with teachers and encourages positive interactions with peers. Also, it permits small group sizes and high adult-child ratios, competitive staff compensation, benefits and professional development (Belsky, 2007; Howes, 2008 &Mashburn, 2008).

Literature has revealed that quality is ascertained by observing teaching and the actual experiences of children in the classroom; documenting structural characteristics such as child-adult ratios, group size and teacher education; and assessing the health and safety provisions of centers and family child care homes (Bowman, Donovan &Burns, 2001; McCabe & Altamura, 2011). Karen (2012) identified the components of a high-quality pre-school education programme to include, developmentally appropriate curriculum; adequate teacher training; safe environment; small group size and low adult to child ratios; and parent-teacher relation (family engagement). Children have been observed to be happier and more cognitively engaged in settings with lower child-adult ratios (Vandell& Wolfe, 2000).

Finding from the studies of Bowman, Donovan and Burns (2001); Sylva and Sammons (2004); Howes, KagannandYazejian(2007)have shown that children educated by more highly educated teachers with specialized training in child development and early education are more sociable, exhibit more sophisticated use of language, demonstrate greater perseverance and perform at higher levels on cognitive tasks than those cared for by less-qualified adults. All these components of high quality pre-school education have been associated with positive social and emotional outcomes for children, including greater compliance, sociability, attention, self-regulation and peer relations as well as lower rates of negative affect and behavior problems (Coley & Chase-Lansdale, 2004).

Literature hasalso confirmed that aprogramme's quality may also be determined by the qualifications required of the teachers and staff (Votruba-Drzal& Hamilton, 2005; Howes, Kagan&Yazejian, 2007; Kamau, 2016). Teachers with degrees and specialization in early childhood are better prepared to develop meaningful relationships with their children and create safe, nurturing climates that support children's emotional wellbeing. Howes, KaganandYazejian (2007) also found that children cared for by teachers who are highly involved during their pre-school years have been found to be less likely to display behaviour problems in kindergarten and demonstrate increased social skills through elementary school. High teacher-student ratios allow for the development of these relationships, which provide stability in transitions to new classrooms, contribute to increased social skills and improve emotional stability (Votruba-Drzal& Hamilton, 2005).

The development of children's socio-emotional skill is of key importance in early years. Social emotional development represents a specific domain of child development. It is a gradual integrative process through which children acquire the capacity to understand, experience, express and manage emotions and to develop meaningful relationships with others (Cohen Jacob, Elias, Weissberg, Wang& Walberg, 2005). Social emotional development sets a foundation for children to engage in other developmental tasks. Socio-emotional development describes how children develop skills that allow them to interact with other people and to express and control their emotions.

However, Jacob, Weissberg, Wang and Walberg (2005) identified that social-emotional development encompasses both intra and interpersonal processes which includes the child's experience, expression, management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others. This is not different from what the National Scientific

Council of Developing Child (2004) submitted as the main features of socio-emotional development which include the ability to identify and understand one's own feelings, to accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others, to manage strong emotions and their expression in a constructive manner, to regulate one's own behaviour, to develop empathy for others, and to establish and maintain relationships. The qualities that will be developed and demonstrated in a child with balanced socio-emotional skills include abilities like waiting patiently, making friends, sharing toys, taking care of others, having self-esteem, sense of responsibility, self-management, self-awareness, developing capacity to control impulses, adapting to social situations and following rules.

Several authors submitted that children with effective socio-emotional skills have chances for better development. For example, Raver (2002) linked social-emotional development to early academic success for young children while Denham, Blair, Demulder, Levitas, Sawyer and Auerbach-Major (2003) submitted that children who have effective socio–emotional skill experience immediate benefits, noticeably the abilities to get along with others and actively engage in learning. Young children who exhibit healthy social, emotional and behavioural adjustment are more likely to have good academic performance in elementary school. Also, children who obtain peer acceptance at school indirectly experience other positive benefits such as increased likelihood of positive self-perception and increased academic performance (Cohen et al 2005; Goodman et al (2015).Kristine and Paula (2007) further observed that children who are socially and emotionally well-adjusted do better at school, have increased confidence, have good relationships, take on and persist at challenging tasks and communicate well. Goodman, et al(2015) submitted that when young children are socially and emotionally competent, they are

more likely to grow into adults with positive life outcomes and higher levels of wellbeing than children with poor socio-emotional skill.

Subsequently, Tara, Karyn and Linda(2017) explained furtherthat emotional and social developmental skills go hand in hand, as both involve skill sets that help to express, define, and interpret emotions. Emotional and social competencies also allow children to relate and respond appropriately. Social skills are the foundation upon which expectation for future interaction is built; and upon which individuals develop perceptions of their own behaviour. Social-emotional developmental skill learning is the processes through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationshipand make responsible decisions.

Emotional and social skill allows children to build healthy and positive relationship, as well as help children manage their moods and behaviours. Generally, according to McCabe and Altamura (2011), children who are emotionally and socially competent do better in school, build stronger relationship and experience immediate benefits. This is more noticeable on the abilities to get along with others and actively engage in learning (Denham, et al, 2003). Goodman et al (2015) stated that when children are socially and emotionally competent, they are more likely to grow into adults with positive life outcomes and higher levels of wellbeing than children with poor social and emotional skills. Also, children with effective socio-emotional skills are able to form and maintain friendship, have positive attitudes to learning and social experiences, are easily accepted by their peers, more adaptable, confident and are more likely to be academically successful (Denham, 2003; National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004).

In the provision of quality pre-school education, teachers occupy a critical and sensitive place. They are the backbone of the entire educational system as rightly stated in the National Policy on Education that no education can rise above the quality of its teachers. The teachers' characteristics are the most important factors affecting the future development of educational process. Okeke (2005) noted that teachers are the most effective agents of change because they function as administrators, curriculum developers, instructors and career guidance counselors and mediators in all educational matters. Ukeje (2007) also noted that if a child is the centre of educational system, the teacher is the pivot of the educational process.

Teacher characteristics as one of the variables in this study support pre-school children to learn and acquire socio-emotional skills from the grass root level. These characteristics include teacher competence, experience, qualification and content knowledge (Kamau, 2016). This study is limited to teachers' level of education, area of specialization and working experience (years of service)

Pre-school education environment is another variable in this study. Pre-school education environment plays a significant role in determining the quality of pre-school education. Pre-school education environment should meet basic care and safety needs, provides developmentally appropriate materials, personalized care and have good materials for children's use. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2009) describes a high quality pre-school education programme as providing a safe nurturing environment that promotes the social, emotional, physical and cognitive development of children while responding to the needs of families. Such programme depends greatly on the interaction between the child and teacher.

According to Schuyler Centre for Analysis and Advocacy (2012), the measures of quality in pre-school education environment comprises space and furnishing; basic care routines; language development; social interaction; learning activities, programme structure, parents and staff relationship. This study covers space and furnishing, learning activities and curriculum, interaction with the child, parents and teacher relationship.

Previous studies by Muganda (2003), Thill (2004), Kamau (2016) and Taiwo (2018) revealed that pre-school education quality has a lasting impact on children's cognitive, physical, and social development. Study done in United State of America for instance indicates that pre-school education centres which children attended possess high quality in terms of teacher characteristics, facility, space and safety; as such affects socio-emotional development of children (Thill, 2004). A study conducted by Mbise (2008) on mapping early childhood service delivery revealed that pre-school education related services experienced poor funding, lack of good facilities, poor supply of materials and poor environments

A study conducted in Nairobi by Kamau (2016) on the influence of teachers' characteristics on academic achievement of pre-school children revealed that teachers with professionalism in early childcare education easily influenced pre-school children's language and cognitive development. They were found to encourage the children in the reading activities. Another study conducted in Kenya by Muganda (2003) revealed that there is strong association of pre-school education quality and childrens' cognitive competence. However, the above studies were done in foreign countries and many of them in developed countries and therefore, their findings cannot be generalised for countries like Nigeria due to differences in social, cultural and economic situations. Hence the need for arelated study to be conducted in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State.

Studies of gender differences in constructs such as self-esteem and self-concept have produced mixed results. It is generally believed that gender differences across various dimensions of self-concept (e.g., academic competence) become more apparent over time and that there is a decline in the self-esteem and self-confidence of girls. Natalie, Karalyn, Kathryn, Katherine and Kenneth (2010) established gender differences with externalizing behaviour problems with boys exceeding girls in rates of externalizing problems throughout childhood and adolescence. To add to the available literature, this study is also interested in finding out the differences that may exist in the preschoolers' socio-emotional developmental skill based on their gender.

Adedigba (2015) submitted that it is likely the features of physical environment of ECE differ based on the type of school. This she posited can be as a result of funding which is, most times made available in private proprietorship unlike public schools where most facilities needed at this level of education are not adequately provided. In her survey of the physical and social climate of early childhood education learning environment in Kwara State, she found that the quality of physical learning environment of pre-schools in private and public schools in Kwara State was below average but in private school, it was found to be better than the public. As a result, differences in the quality of pre-school education based on school type will be examined to further confirm what has been done by previous related research.

Despite the poor provision of pre-school education as portrayed by the various studies, for example (Florence 2009, Adedigba 2015, Kamau 2016)teachers report that many of their students are not socially or emotionally prepared for the challenges of the new environment. The result is a growing number of children who are hard to manage in the classroom. Such children cannot get along with each other, follow school rule and regulation. They show belligerence and

aggression in the classroom and on the playground. If these problems are not addressed, the result can be growing aggression, behavioural problems and for some, delinquency and crime through the school years into adolescence and adulthood. This situation prompted the need to conduct anotherstudy to establish the determinants of the influence of pre-school education quality on children's socio-emotional developmental skill. The present study explores the influence of pre-school education quality (i.e teachers' characteristics and ECE environment) on children's socio-emotional developmental skill in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State.

Statement of the Problem

Literature has confirmed that socio-emotional developmental skill is crucial to a pre-schooler's academic and social successes as well as their future mental health as they progress throughout school and lifetime. Thisdenotes that a child who struggles with social and emotional developmental skill can face the risk of academic failure and overall developmental deficit. As observed by the researchers, most pupils in their early years of primary school do find it very difficult to form close, secure relationships; engage in positive interactions with others, understand, identify, express and regulate their emotions as well as resolve peer conflict. Literature also indicated various teachers' report that many of their children are not socially or emotionally prepared for the challenges of the new environment. Numerous factors from their pre-school experiences may be attributed to these deficiencies and incompetence. If these problems are not addressed, it can result to serious behavioural problems from school years into adolescence and adulthood.

Previous research also established that when basic needs of children are met in a safe, clean, friendly environment with high quality early experiences; children thrive in their learning and overall development of which socio-emotional development is a major gain. Although, importance of pre-school education has been recognized in Nigeria as stipulated in the National Policy of Education but the issue of its quality remains a problem.Many researchers have worked on the influence of teacher characteristics on the cognitive development of pre-schoolers, availability and influence of indoor and outdoor learning facilities on children's social skill, development of social skills while some investigated psychosocial development of children with particular interest on a characteristic. None of the available previous researches covered the influence of pre-school education quality on children's socio-emotional developmental skill in Dutsin-Ma Local Government as a geographical area. This created the existing gap which this study sought to fill. This was done by investigating the influence of pre-school education quality on children's socio-emotional developmental skill in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out the influence of pre-school education quality on children's socio-emotional developmental skill in Dutsin-Ma Local Government of Katsina State. Specifically, the purpose of the study is to:

1. investigate the level of pre-school education quality in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State with regards to:

    (a) theobserved pre-school education environment.

(b) theteachers' level of education(qualifications).

(c) theteachers' working experience(years of service)

(d) theteachers' area of specialization (professionalism)

2. find out the level of children's socio-emotional developmental skill in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area.

3. Investigate the influence of observed pre-school education environment on children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

4. investigate the influence of teachers' area of specialization on children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

5. investigate the influence of teachers' working experience on children's socio-emotional developmental skill

6. investigate the influence of teachers' level of education on children's socio-emotional developmental skill

7. find out the measures of pre-school education quality associated with children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

8. find out the difference in the children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of gender.

9. Investigate the difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skillon the basis of school type.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the level of pre-school education quality in Dutsin-Ma Local Government in relation to:

    (a) theobserved pre-school education environment.

    (b) the teachers' area of specialization(professionalism)

    (c) the teachers' working experience(years of service)

    (d) the teachers' level of education(qualifications)

2. What is the level of children's socio-emotional developmental skill in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area, Katsina State?

3. Which of the measures of pre-school education quality is mostly associated with children's socio-emotional developmental skill?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance in the study:

H_01 There is no significant influence of observed pre-school education environment on children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

H_02 There is no significant influence of teachers' area of specialization on children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

H_03 There is no significant influence of teachers' working experience on children's socio-emotional developmental skill

H_04 There is no significant influence of teachers' qualification on children's socio-emotional developmental skill

H_05 There is no significant difference in the children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of gender.

H_06 There is no significant difference in the children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of type of school.

Significance of the Study

Findings of this research generated useful information that would enable policy makers to understand the level ofpre-school education quality provided to preschoolers and how well the pre-school environments are equipped with age appropriate learning facilities on ground. Universal Basic Education Board would also benefit from the study as findings it would help them to monitor the quality of pre-school education given to children in Dutsin-Ma local Government Area, Katsina State. It would help curriculum agencies, the Ministry of Education, future researchers, private school proprietors and other stakeholders in early childhood education to institute policies, plan and resources that would engender the wellbeing of children in pre-school settings. Future researchers may refer to the study to find out researchable areas or use it as a literature sources. These would provide a roadmap for policymakers and curriculum planners as they develop solutions to the current child care crisis, which can also serve as a guide for parents seeking to make the best and most informed choice for their children.

Furthermore, the outcomes of this study would also assist school proprietors in the sense that it would guide them in the recruitment and retention of professional early childhood educators in their schools and equip the school environment with the necessary learning materials that would support child learning. Knowledge about pre-school education quality would assist textbook writers to pinpoint the areas where high quality pre-school education is lacking and what can be done to address the issues.

Scope of the Study

The study examined the influence of pre-school education quality on children's socio-emotional developmental skill in public and private pre-school education centresinDutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State. The choices of Dutsin-Ma local Government Area was because it was among the old (7) local government created in Kaduna State which ranked second to the highest number of public and private pre-school education centreof the 34 local Government Area in Katsina state. The variables considered in this study are pre-school education quality (teachers' characteristics and preschool environment) as independent variable and children's socio-emotional developmental skill as dependent variable. The study examined the influence of teachers' characteristics such as teachers' qualification, area of specialization, as well as working experience and preschool environment with regard to space and furnishing, learning activities and curriculum, interaction with the child, parents and teacher relationship as they influence children's socio-emotional competency. The study was limited to public and private pre-school education centres and Kindergarten two children (KG 2) and pre-school education teachers in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State.

Operational Definition of Terms

The following terms and key words were operationally defined in the context in which they were used in this study:

Pre-school education: This embraces the care, education and services given to children aged 5 years plus before primary school education in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State. This includes pupils in Kindergarten two in private and one year pre-primary in public schools.

Pre-school education quality: This refers to pre-school teachers' characteristics and observed early childhood education environment that meet up with standard of pre-primary education in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State.

Teachers' characteristics: This refers to pre-school teachers' level of education, area of specialization/professionalism and teachers' working experience in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State.

Observed pre-school environment: This comprises outdoor facilities, health and safety, indoor facilities, relationship, social climate and teacher-pupil activities observable in preschool environment in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State.

Socio-emotional developmental skill: These refer to preschool children's ability in the area of self-management, relationship, social and self-awareness and responsibilities and decision making in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State.

KG 2: Kindergartens children that are 5years plus in pre-primaryschools in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter reviews related literature on pre-school Education concepts, measures of quality of pre-school education, socio-emotional developmental skills under the following sub-headings:

Theoretical Review

Socio-cultural Theory

Conceptual Review

Pre-school Education in Traditional AfricanSocieties

Concept of Pre-School Education

Concept and Measures of Pre-School Education Quality

Observed Pre-School Education Environment

Teachers' Characteristics

Children's Socio-Emotional Developmental Skill

Empirical Review

Pre-school education quality and socio-emotional developmental skill

Gender and Children's Socio-Emotional Developmental Skill

School Type and the Quality of Pre-School Education Environment

Appraisal of Literature Reviewed

Theoretical Review

Socio-cultural Theory of Lev Vygotsky(1978)

Socio-cultural theory was developed by Vygotsky in 1978. Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory assent that "infants and toddlers are engulfed in families and cultureby whichtheir intelligence results from a combination of social experience and maturation" (Estes, 2004). To Vygotsky, "learning awakens a variety of developmental processes that are able to operate only when child is interacting with people in his environment and in collaboration with peers. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent development"(Marrison, 2009).Vygotsky believed that supporting children's development and learning is a socially mediated process. Children's learning is based on their interactions with other members of the society(Darragh, 2010).

Vygotsky, considered the child to be primarily an apprentice who learns the acceptable behaviors directly from social interaction with more knowledgeable peers. In addition to parents, these can also be a carreralongside other adults and older children who provide essential support within a cultural environment. According to Vygotsky, children have zones of proximal development representing all the skills and knowledge children alone cannot presently understand, but are potentially capable of learning through some form of support and guided social interactions.

Vygotsky has developed a socio-cultural approach to cognitive development. While social and emotional development is important because it facilitates cognitive development. Children with effective socio-emotional skills do better with getting along with others, understanding directions and focusing on a task; skills that enhance learning and school

success(Posner &Rothbart, 2000). Individual development cannot be understood without reference to the social and cultural context within which it is embedded. Higher mental processes in the individual have their origin in social processes.

Vygotsky believes that young children are curious and actively involved in their own learning and the discovery and development of new understandings. However, according to Vsygotsky (1978), much important learning by the child occurs through social interaction with a skillful tutor. The tutor may model behaviors and/or provide verbal instructions for the child. Vygotsky refers to this as cooperative or collaborative dialogue. The child seeks to understand the actions or instructions provided by the tutor (often the teacher, parent or peers) then internalize the information, using it to guide or regulate their own performance (McLeod, 2018).In order to gain an understanding of Vygotsky's theories on socio-emotional developmental skills, one must understand two of the main principles of Vygotsky's work: The More Knowledgeable Other (MKO) and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

The more knowledgeable other (MKO) refers to someone who has a better understanding than the learner, with respect to a particular task, concept, or process. Although the implication is that the MKO is a teacher or an older adult. Many times, a child's peers or an adult's children may be the individuals with more knowledge or experience(McLeod, 2018).The concept of the More Knowledgeable Other is related to the second important principle of Vygotsky's work, the Zone of Proximal Development.

Vygotsky (1978) sees the Zone of Proximal Development as the area where the most sensitive instruction or guidance should be given allowing the child to develop skills they would then use on their own developing higher mental functions. Vygotsky also views interaction with

peers as an effective way of developing skills and strategies. He suggests that teachers use cooperative learning exercises where less competent children develop with help from more skillful peers within the zone of proximal development. The conclusion being that guided learning within the ZPD led to greater understanding/performance than working alone (discovery learning).

The educational application of Vygotsky's theories is relevant to instructional concepts such as "scaffolding" and "apprenticeship," in which a teacher or more advanced peer helps to structure or arrange a task, so that children can acquire socio-emotional developmental skill through social interactions successfully. Any child rose with parents, peers and cared for in a conducive environment are able to respond with love, understandingand clear common-sense guidance. Such child also has a chance of learning how to relate with other people. First the child discovers other people can create happiness, are fun to be with and they will look after you. Then later, the child learns others have needs and rights of their own and that by studying the feelings of these others, it is possible to make them happy too. So, being the child's pathway to being at ease with himself and with others, this generally leads to the development of a confident and articulate adult who can be independent and yet also respect other people. Vygotsky's theories also feed into the current interest in collaborative/team work learning by suggesting that group members should have different levels of ability.So, more advanced peers can help less advanced members to operate within their Zone of Proximal Development thereby supporting children to relate well and interacts peacefully with their peers.

Conceptual Review

Pre-school Education in Traditional African Societies

Pre-school education in the traditional African societies framework is a strength-based approach that acknowledges and seeks to incorporate the knowledge, skills, values and timeless wisdom of early child care and education that originated in Africa and are still usefully relevant for rapidly globalizing requirements for early childhood development (Patience, Esther, &Bame, 2013). In fact, without preserving indigenous values and other aspects of cultural background, African children would soon lose their cultural identity, a right enshrined in the Child Right Convention. However, pre-school education in traditional African societies is designed to address the perceived lack of resources for conventional and elitist models by encouraging the creative use of local resources and positive cultural capital. Appropriate indigenous models involve the participation of knowledgeable indigenous individuals and make use of available resources in the indigenous setting for providing early stimulation and education for the African child (Akinbote, 2006).

This makes access to pre-school education in traditional African society's services easier and systemic because of the involvement of local communities as owners and primary stakeholders. An important feature in this approach, which is consistent with longstanding African family-based early years' education, is that the adults within the households and extended families can fully identify with the learning to which their children are exposed. The quality of teaching and learning can be improved with the availability and use of produced and adapted materials to the local culture of the indigenous child; which employ the child's mother tongue or local language as a tool for effective teaching and learning. Importantly, indigenous children are to be educated within their cultural context (Fleer, 2006). Evidence abounds that the

type of pre-school education programmes currently being operated in many African settings are neglecting the cultural values and practices that are capable of adding values to the lives of the children to make them functional members of their society. Therefore, learning materials are being produced as living documents to build on the capacity of parents, older relations in households and extended family members. Others are elders in the neighbourhood, older siblings, including helpers and interested stakeholders who can read and write in the local language. The learning therefore can be home-based, community based or institutional based. In addition, Patience, Esther and Bame (2013) maintain that children are also better psychologically developed when learning is associated with their cultural identity because cultural knowledge is embodied in native language. The rate of cultural and linguistic endangerment or loss could be reversed or reduced with the use of pre-school education in traditional African society in preparing children for formal education.

Subsequently, the world's repository oflanguage and culture is steadily depleted by language in educational policies that impose dominant languages on children's learningjourney. This limits the possibilities of a smooth transmissionbetween home and school. On the contrary, when children aretaught in their local languages, it has been discovered that itenhances emotional and consequently, cognitive stability foreffective learning(Fleer, 2006). A lot of learning is disseminated through thelanguage spoken in their original forms, which do not havedirect translation in existing languages. With the loss of theseminority or local languages, a repository of knowledge and culture is also lost to pre-school education programmes and education curricula in traditional African societies. The content of teaching and learning is also limited because children are forced to learn at an early age, in a language that they know little or nothing about(Derbyshire, 2011).

Pre-school education programmes in traditional African societies provide support to parents and other adults involved in the lives of young children to participate actively in nurturing their children. It promotes social adjustments and improves communication skills that children require so that it is not left to the school or centresalone(Fleer, 2006). The fact remains that children can acquire additional languages in their early years since languages do not seem to compete for 'mental space' nor is bilingualism confusing to children in reality if they receive adequate inputs and opportunities for interaction. Children are known to be able to acquire multi-lingual proficiency and proficiency in two or more languages (UNESCO, 2010).

Further to the acquisition of language skills, there are cultural practices and values as well that provide cost effective dimensions to the provision of pre-school education in the traditional African societies. The traditional family unit (whether nuclear or extended) still demonstrates more intimate psycho-social surveillance of the growing child. This includes a lot of child to child practices, as in the role of elder siblings in early childhood care. Given the fact that the immediate environment is the locale for education, socialisation within the child's realistic environment should take precedence over everything else(Patience, Esther, &Bame, 2013).

This implies that there are different pre-school education programmes in traditional African societies viz:

Child-to-Child Practices: In African societies, child-to-child practice is where older siblings help in the upbringing of the younger ones. In other words, the older siblings contribute in raising the younger ones within the culture in child-to-child play activities, helpfulness and stimulation. For example, the older children assist in providing custodian care for younger ones while the parents

are away in thefarm or to the market. The younger children could be from the same parents or other parents of the same extended family or in families in the same compound(Fleer, 2006).

Psychosocial Surveillance:Psychosocial surveillance is one of the African child upbringing practices where adults within a family or community closely observe children to monitor and ensure acceptableinteractions with others and encourage positive behaviours of the children. For example, it involves a situation whereby adults in the environment of children serve as care-givers facilitators, teachers and parents in all respects. Whenever any adult has the opportunity to be with children, the adult will use the opportunity to teach the children one skill or the other, correct children's wrong doings and tell them stories about their ancestors, riddles and jokes that help to promote logical and critical thinking of children(Akinbote, 2006). Psychosocial surveillance is importantbecause it serves as a vital means of transmitting indigenous knowledge and values to children. However, as Africa becomes increasingly urbanised with internet connection, global communication becomes more and more accessible, with impact of increasingly additional prevailing philosophies(Fleer, 2006).

Concepts of Pre-School Education

Pre-school education is conceptualized to encompass the care, development and education of children below the age of 6 (NERDC, 1996). It is generally accepted as the education given to children aged 5 plus. This education precedes the start of formal primary schooling or before the age at which children are generally expected to attend schools (Maduewesi&Agusiobo, 2005). It also refers to the provision of basic needs, such as nutrition, warmth, health, security, affection, interaction and stimulation for social, emotional psychological, physical and cognitive development. This care is very essential for survival, development and later education. This level of education comes under Early Childhood

Education (birth to age eight) and has been regarded as a context for children to engage with and explore their world, without pressure to engage in formal learning or instruction (Sabuola, 2017).

Early childhood education refers to educational programmes serving children from birth to age 8 and their families. It is also a field of study designed to prepare professionals for working directly or indirectly with children and their families in that age group(Darragh, 2010).However, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) encompasses both "Care" (which includes health, nutrition and hygiene in a secure and nurturing environment) and "Education" (which includesstimulation, socialization, guidance, participation, and learning and developmental activities). In order to ensure a complete development of a child, both "Care" and "Education" must be seen as inseparable and reinforcing each other(Patience, Esther &Bame, 2013). This education set the foundation for the growth and future development of all children. This implies that there are different programmes in ECE viz:

Crech'(Daycare) from birth-2years

Nursery from 2-4years plus

Pre-primary 5years plus

Junior primary classes (Primary i-iii) 6-8years plus

The National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) defined pre-school education as the One Year Education given to children at the age of 5 plus prior to their entering primary school. In addition, National Institute for Early Childhood Education Research (NIEER, 2012) defined pre-school education as centre based programmes that provide educational experiences for children during the year or years preceding kindergarten. They can be located in a child-care centre,

kindergarten, or Nursery school. This type of education instills in the children critical inquiry mind, basic communication skills, social skills and physical ability needed to guide them to become very useful adults. Pre-school Education is the foundation on which Education For All (EFA) is built (Nyamwange, 2012). Pre-school education is the education given to younger ones before the age of entering primary education (Obiweluozor, 2015). Furthermore, Thaibat (2016) is of the view that pre-school education is the key to a full and productive life for a child and to the progress of a nation. National Policy on Education (FRN, 2014) specification is in tandem with other nations of the world that early childhood education should be given in educational institutions to children aged three to five plus prior to their entering the primary school.

Early childhood education programmes include any type of educational programme that serves children in the pre-school years which is designed to improve later school performance and ability to cope with life by possessing important survival skills. The pre-school years are important for the development of many skills used later in life but some of the most valuable lifelong skills children acquire during this time are skills like social, emotional, language, writing, numeracy and physical (Wilson, Gottfredson, &Najak, 2001). Children's holistic approach involves the intricately interweaving domains of social, emotional, personal, physical (sensory and motor), cognitive, linguistic, creative, aesthetic, moral and spiritual development. The whole system of learning processes, which influence each other in highly complex and sophisticated ways (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004). Connections are also stronger when children have daily opportunities to develop both large- and small-muscle skills, have the chance to practice developing social skills and interact directly with their environment (Wisconsin Council on Children & Families, 2007). Experiences gained during pre-school period make up the basis of more complex concept learning that would be acquired in the future. This

also plays an important role in children's success (Clements & Samara, 2004 cited in Aslan, 2004). The fundamental right of every child is to learn and develop to his or her full potentials through equal access to quality education irrespective of their age, gender, religion, ethnicity and social background. However, pre-school education provides the foundation of education at the grass root which forms an integral part of a child's early education given educational institutions to children ages two- five years prior to entering the primary school (Thaibat, 2016).

Early Childhood is the most critical stage in child development. Thus, the quality of pre-school education can make a significant contribution to the social, emotional, physical, psychomotor and cognitive development of the child. Children are active learners from birth, and in the early years: a period vital to their success in school and later in life. The term refers to education in its broadest sense including childcare and development. It goes beyond what some refer to as pre-school education. It is education in its own right, having not only the purpose of preparing children for school but for life in the same way just as all other parts of education system contribute to this process (Hayes, 2010).

Subsequently, early years are important in child's life and contribute many positive and valuable experiences which form a solid basis for future learning. This is supported by the 2007 edition of the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR), which provides evidence that children 's experiences in the first five years create a solid foundation for subsequent learning. In recent studies, Organization forEconomic Cooperation Development (2006) looks at the long term impact of pre-school education and its findings reveal that 15-year-olds who had attended pre-school were on average of a year ahead of those who had no reading literacy. There is a global awareness that no child should be denied the benefits of good quality early childhood education. At present, various opportunities are provided and several avenues are

opened that help in imparting knowledge to children all over the world. Globally, individuals and governments invest heavily to ensure high quality and accessible early childhood education at early stage of life. The importance of early years in a child's physical, social, emotional, linguistic and cognitive developments cannot be over emphasized (Obiweluozu, 2015). The future capabilities and successful educational practices are notably linked up with both knowledge and good reasoning ability acquired in the early years of life.

Children who have access to qualitative pre-school education from qualified teachers are more likely to succeed in school and later in life. Such children with richer literacy environment demonstrate higher level of reading knowledge and skills at primary school level. Effective early childhood education increases cognitive abilities, school achievement and improves classroom behaviour. Hence, there is the need for careful planning and effective implementation of early childhood education programme which would have positive impact on effective completion of school for the child; (Smith & Barnett, 2004). To buttress this, Mills (2007) specified that early childhood education produces benefits that persist into early adulthood which means that children who participated in early childhood education are likely to perform better in subsequent educational, moral, and social milestone than their counterpart who were not exposed to such experience. For effective and efficient development of a child's latent abilities and forms of positive values in the society in which the child lives.

Pre-school education becomes imminent, not only to the educational development but also social interaction and good moral behavior (Osanyin, 2002). Pre-school education emphasize on education given to children around the age of three to five plus. It has been shown to bring critical gains to children's social, emotional and cognitive development. Ajayi (2008) stated that the first five years is a critical period for the child's overall development and later life

chances. It's a period of rapid learning. Obiweluozu (2015) maintain that the years between birth and age five are the foundation upon which successful or otherwise lives are built. Pre-school education is targeted at developing the cognitive, affective, psychomotor and emotional skills needed for a smooth transition of children from the Pre-school classes to the primary school level.

Concept and Measures of Pre-School Education Quality

The study of quality in pre-school education is becoming increasingly relevant because research has continued to demonstrate consistent associations between various aspects of pre-school education quality and improved socio-emotional outcomes for young children (Belsky et al., 2007; Howes, 2008; Mashburn et al., 2008). Although, quality continues to be a major focus of research in early childhood education but defining quality as a construct and measuring it continued to challenge the field both methodologically in research and practically in quality enhancement initiatives aimed at ensuring optimal experiences for children in early childhood education.

Many definitions of quality exist which testify to the complexity and multifaceted nature of the concept (UNICEF, 2000). Therefore, defining quality in education must focus on all the dimensions of system quality including the perspectives of learners, learning environments, content, process and outcomes. Sylva, et al, (2004) and Burchinal et al (2000) argue that the process aspect comprises children's day-to-day experience in Early Childhood Education settings, while the structural aspect comprises physical inputs to children's experiences. The outcome is the output that comes from a combination of process and structural components. At face value, quality is described as a measure of excellence or a state of being free from defects, deficiency and significant variations (Howes, 2008). It is sometimes informed by consistent commitment to

certain standards. According to Reeves and Bednar (1994), quality is sometimes described by terms relating to excellence, value, conformity to specifications and or meeting customer expectations. Greenman (2007) perceives quality as being connected to either fundamental philosophical and ethical issues or as complete compliance to a set of technical specifications designed for evaluation.

Britto and Ezeanwu (2011) describe quality as a dynamic, flexible and adaptable construct contouring itself across cultures, settings, time and types of intervention. This definition is of particular relevance to ECE given the range of programmes and interventions that are involved. The authors assert that though quality is the critical ingredient of programmes linked with child outcomes, yet it resists a simple and universally applicable definition. Studies suggest that quality of ECE services is indicated by multiple dimensions such as their cultural appropriateness, intensity and duration of theprogramme, the skills of staff and features of the physical, social and learning environment (Greenman, 2007). The complex interplay of these dimensions makes it impossible to have a uniform definition. There seems to be wide global variations in the types of ECE programmes, ownership structure, actors and target populations.

These provisions are consequently influenced by institutional environment within which quality needs to be understood. For instance, most of the children services in the Global North incorporate parenting programmes, home visiting programmes, nutrition intervention, early stimulation and learning, while programmes in the Global South remain fragmented and private-sector led. It may not be possible to develop a single uniform definition of quality that applies across even one nation, let alone across the globe.

Although qualit*y* continues to be a major focus of research in ECE. Defining the construct and measurement of quality in ECE continue to be a challenge in methodology of research and the practical enhancement initiatives aimed at ensuring optimal experiences for children in early childhood education programmes. However, the definition of quality in pre-school education have included multiple proximal (e.g., curriculum and classroom interactions) and distal that are features of classrooms that promote children's development in various domains (Dunn, 1993). However, because of the multitude of perspectives regarding what indicators of either proximal or distal features are most important, the resulting definitions of quality are often broad or nonspecific (Layzer& Goodson, 2006).

In response to such broad definitions, some researchers have conceptualized pre-school education quality in terms of global quality with two primary components that is structural and process quality (Vandell& Wolfe, 2000). Examples of indicators of structural quality include classroom materials, curriculum, teacher education and teacher-child ratio. These indicators are often the regulated aspects of classrooms and programmes. Indicators of process quality focus on the more dynamic aspects of the actual experiences that occur in educational settings such as child-teacher interactions and the types of activities in which children are engaged. Process measures can also include health and safety provisions as well as materials available and relationships with parents (Hamre&Pianta, 2004; Vandell& Wolfe, 2000). Furthermore, these benefits in cognitive and social development last well into the elementary years. Several studies have reported correlations between variables of process, structural and global quality (Burchinal, Margaret, Cryer, Clifford, &Howes, 2002). Structural and process quality provide a unique and essential information to understanding early childhood classrooms, yet these terms are often defined differently in research and policy reports (Layzer& Goodson, 2006).

Mitchell, Wylie and Carr (2008) opined that quality pre-school education is the key to achieving gains on all outcomes measured in child development. Aspects of adult–child interaction and opportunities afforded by the environment are associated with greater gains for children cognitive outcomes and learning dispositions and with lower levels of antisocial/worried behaviour. Furthermore, Karen (2012) coined the other components of a high-quality pre-school education programme to include: developmentally appropriate curriculum; adequate teacher training; safe environment; small group size and low adult to child ratios; and parents-teacher relationship.

According to Lockheed and Vespoor (2010), providing quality education for children is a prerequisite for developing the human resources base required to the changing technological demands of the twenty first century. However, Nwagbara (2001) notes that improvement should actually start at pre- primary level where children are expected to develop their basic social skills, emotional skills and cognitive skills. Furthermore, Heckman and Masterov (2007) were of the opinion that participation in high-quality early education programmes can have significant and lasting positive impacts on children's social and academic activities. When children are exposed to qualitative early childhood education, they develop superior communication skills, social and emotional skills needed in adult life. Most importantly, the acquisition of these skills is achieved through a well implemented pre-school education curriculum. Examples of indicators of structural quality include classroom materials, curriculum, teacher education, and teacher-child ratio. Indicators of process quality focus on the more dynamic aspects of early childhood education, including human interactions occurring in the classrooms such as teacher-child and peer-to-peer interactions (Hamre&Pianta, 2007; Vandell& Wolfe, 2000).

Researchers have consistently found that these two sets of indicators i.e. process and structures are related and they influence the quality of the educational experiences for children. For example, when groups are smaller, teachers tend to have more positive supportive and stimulating interactions with children. Warm and nurturing interactions are directly linked to children's social l skills and future academic success and such interactions are essential to high quality (Vandell& Wolf, 2002). Pre-school education teachers who are more qualified and have smaller groups can be more effective to provide individualized responsive learning opportunities. Finally, higher teacher wages have consistently been linked to higher process quality (Howes, Phillips, &Whitebook, 1992).

Teachers' Characteristics

Teachers are the most critical component of quality in pre-school education. The quality of the teachers determines the strength of any educational system and the value of the learners (Jibril, 2007). Teachers who have specific preparation, knowledge, and skills in child development and early childhood education are more likely to provide positive interactions, richer language experiences, and quality learning environments (NAEYC, 2009). All teachers need to have a foundational knowledge of child development and be able to lead activities that promote children's learning at various ages.

Teachers' qualification/Level of education: Teacher's qualification in ECE refers to the level and type of education that pre-school teachers pursue to acquire such knowledge, skills and competencies to work in the sector. The qualifications, education and training of ECEC staff are an important policy issue (OECD, 2006). There is strong evidence that improved training and qualification levels raise the quality of interaction and pedagogy in pre-school education services

(OECD, 2006). Staff qualifications can have serious negative effect on pre-school education quality, and invariably child development outcome. Often there is a difference between the qualifications required to work with very young children (up to three or four years of age) and the qualifications needed to be a teacher for children age four to primary school age.

Teachers with higher level of education are associated with higher pedagogic quality in pre-school education settings. In support of this view, Howes, James and Ritchie (2003) maintain that pre-school teachers with bachelor's degrees were the most effective practitioners. Their effectiveness was measured within the classroom based on stimulation, responsiveness and engagement of the children in learning activities. The results of the Effective Provision of Pre-school Education (EPPE) study from England (United Kingdom) have also shown that key explanatory factors for high-quality ECEC were related to staff with higher qualifications. Staff with leadership skills and long-serving staff; trained staff working alongside and supporting less qualified staff; staff with a good understanding of child development and learning (Siraj-Blatchford, 2010). Higher proportions of staff with low-level qualifications are related with less favourable child outcomes in the socio-emotional domain (social relationship with their peers and co-operation).

However, higher education of pre-school education teachers leads to higher pedagogical quality and better child outcomes. Early et al. (2007) emphasize that teacher quality is a very complex issue and raising the effectiveness of early childhood education would likely require a wide range of professional development and support for teacher's interactions with children. An area that can improve pedagogical practices of ECE teachers includes supporting teacher's competence to communicate and interact with children in a shared and sustainable manner (Sheridan et al., 2009).

Teachers' important role requires that teachers have formal education and training in early childhood education (Andrew, 2008). Moreover, the early childhood workforce needs compensation that reflects the importance of their work and the expertise necessary to educate the nation's youngest children. Subsequently, Robert, Pianta and Megan (2004) are of the opinion that providing professional training, compensation and benefits, comparable to pre-school education teachers helps recruit and retain effective and educated teachers and promotes a stable healthy learning environment for children. As pointed out by the OECD teachers' review (OECD, 2005), education systems need to invest in intensive teacher education and training if teachers are to deliver high-quality outcomes. Specific knowledge, skills and competencies are expected of pre-school education practitioners. There is a general consensus, supported by research that well educated, well-trained professionals are the key factor in providing high-quality pre-school education with the most favourable cognitive and social outcomes for children.

In the Nigerian context, the minimum requirement for teaching at this level of education (pre-primary) as stated by FGN (2013) in its National Policy on Education is the National Certificate in Education (NCE). Hence, it is expected that any teacher in preschool classrooms in Nigeria should not hold less than NCE. Qualifications can matter in terms of which skill sets and what knowledge are recognised as important for working with young children.

All childhood practitioners have to meet the minimum requirements in terms of education and training. The main importance of teachers lies in their effect on the process and content of the quality of pre-school (Sheridan, 2009; Pramling&Pramling Samuelsson, 2011). The training and education of pre-school teachers affects the quality of services and outcomes through the knowledge, skills and competencies that are transmitted and encouraged by practitioners. It is

also considered important that teachers believe in their ability to organise and execute the courses of action necessary to bring about desired results (Fives, 2003).

Teachers' Professionalism: Not only the level of education but the content of the teacher's educational training is important for the level of quality in pre-school education centres.Therefore, professionalism of teachers working with both younger and older children matters (Shonkoff& Philips, 2000). Adedigba and Olofintoye (2019) stressed that in the nation's effort to secure a quality crop of teachers for preschool and primary education, the NPE recommended that teachers for early childhood and primary education be specially trained. This brought an upsurge in the number of institutions that offer early childhood education at federal, state and private universities and colleges of education.

Specialized education is associated with better child outcomes and improved teachers' ability to provide suitable pedagogical learning opportunities. Specialisation can refer to any education or training focusing on early childhood education,or child development(Sommer, 2010). Teachers should be able to create a high-quality learning environment that makes the difference (Elliott, 2006). There is strong evidence that enriched stimulating environments and high-quality pedagogy are fostered by qualified teachers and high quality pedagogy leads to better learning outcomes (Litjens&Taguma, 2010). Key elements of teachers' quality are the way staff involve children and stimulate interaction with and between children as well as teacher's scaffolding strategies such as modeling, guiding and questioning. More specialized teacher education and training on pre-school education are strongly associated with stable and stimulating interactions (Shonkoff& Philips, 2000). Other elements of high teachers' quality include teacher's knowledge content (curriculum) and their ability to create a multidisciplinary learning environment (Pramling&Pramling-Samuelsson, 2011).

However, specialised education and training does not guarantee greater effectiveness (Hyson et al., 2009). The quality of the education or training is a more critical factor in teacher's ability to stimulate children's socio-emotional development and learning. There is a strong need for strong teachers' preparation and a call for greater consistency across professional preparation to enhance quality (Elliot, 2006). Staff skills that research identifies as important in facilitating high-quality services and outcomes are: good understanding of child development and learning; ability to develop children's perspectives; ability to praise, comfort and question and to be responsive to children; leadership skills, problem solving and development of targeted lesson plans; including good vocabulary and ability to elicit children's ideas.

Professional development provides opportunities for teachers who are already working in the sector to update or enhance their practices; it is often referred to as in-service training, continuous education or professional training. Teachers have to, at a minimum, undergo specific training in early childhood education. This was to enable them have a deep understanding of child development, teaching methods and curriculum. It would allow them to skillfully promote children's social and cognitive development (NIEER, 2002). Initial education and training in areas such as early child development and early education increase the likelihood that teachers are effective in promoting the educational, socio-emotional and healthy development of children (NIEER, 2004). Teachers' ability to create rich, stimulating environments in pre-school education is jeopardized when they have inadequate content and pedagogical knowledge, development and care, they can better develop a child's perspective which are better able to integrate playing and learning into practice (Pramling Samuelsson &AsplundCarlsson, 2008; Johansson&Pramling-Samuelsson, 2009). Others include having increased ability to solve problems and develop targeted lesson plans; aids learn improved vocabulary. These combined to

stimulate early literacy development (NIEER, 2004). Additionally, teachers with higher educational qualification and specialised training engage in more positive teacher-child interactions including praising, comforting, questioning and being responsive to children (Howes et al., 2003).

In-service (ongoing) education and training can be conducted on the job or can be provided by an external source such as training institutes or colleges. It can be provided through, for instance, staff meetings, workshops, conferences, subject training group, field-based consultation training, supervised practices and mentoring. The key to effective professional development is identifying the right training strategies to help pre-school education teachers stay updated on scientifically based methods and subject curriculum knowledge so as to be able to apply this knowledge in their work (Litjens&Taguma, 2010). It should also be pointed out that re-training should continue over a longer period of time and teachers should have long-term or regular opportunities for training (Sheridan, 2001). Only when learning experiences are targeted to the needs of teachers and children that it can facilitate true learning experiences; and professional development would have favourable outcomes (Mitchell &Cubey, 2003).

An effective way of improving knowledge and skills in teachers is found to be subject-based training. Field-based consultation can also be very effective as it provides pre-school teachers with the possibility to receive feedback on their practices. Furthermore, teachers who do not hold a University degree but who attend ECE-relevant professional workshops are found to provide quality care than colleagues who do not attend (Burchinal et al., 2002). However, in general, there is little clarity about what forms of professional development are most effective. One of the reasons is that staff has different needs: practitioners have very different backgrounds, as such effective training methods should suit these differences (Elliott, 2006).

Highly qualified pre-school teachers often provide better quality pre-school education. This can yield better child outcomes both socially and academically. This is not only in the short term but also in the long term. Ongoing professional development can lead to higher quality pre-school education services and outcomes. Attending a workshop may be an easy way to realise means of professional development; however, high-quality subject training, field-based consultation training or supervised practices may be more effective and professional development should be tailored to teacher's needs (Sheridan, 2001). Ongoing professional development should not only be available but it should be a requirement to stay and grow in the profession.

Teachers' Years of Working Experience: Working experience of each teacher differs from one another.Some teachers have the skills and motivation to teach and they can work with children of all age levels. It gives teachers the opportunity to observe teaching and get a wide range of methods to be used in teaching. Teaching experience allows a teacher to know how to employ effective teaching and learning strategies to enable children to make progress and to be able to access their understanding and what they can do and then use this assessment to plan for future teaching and learning activities. Teacher experience in classroom instruction has been a significant determinant of learning outcomes among learners in schools. The importance of experienced teachers in schools has been highlighted by many researchers (Akinleye, 2001; Ogundare 2001; Commeyras, 2003; Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor, 2007). Researchers have also given different opinions about teaching experience and pupils' learning outcomes in schools (Ijaiya, 2000). Their arguments were centred on the fact that experience improves teaching skills while pupils learn better at the hands of teachers who have taught them continuously over a period of years (Ijaiya, 2000). However, Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor (2007) suggested that while

inexperienced teachers were less effective than senior teachers, the benefits of experience levelled off after a few years.

The importance of experienced teachers in schools has been argued as being necessary for school's effectiveness. Notwithstanding, Tahir (2003) reported poor teaching process exhibited by inexperienced teachers as among the many problems of educational development in Nigeria. In Kenya, studies agree that teaching experience is positively correlated with higher students' achievement even though findings about them vary (Yara&Wanjohi, 2011; Kosgei, 2013). Mukhwana, Chelagat and Jepkorir (2013) observed that teacher experience had significant effects on pupils' learning outcome. Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain (2005) on the other hand found differences among teachers in terms of their value added impact on learners achievement and went on to note that the variation was not readily explained by experience after the first few years in the profession.

Observed Early Childhood Education Environment

School plays a vital role in the provision of training and qualitative pre-school education to young ones to acquire skills required for successful living and integration into larger society as useful members. Therefore**,** Children learning environment should be designed to teach them and develop their skills (Donald, 2010)**.** The convention on the right of the child of 1989 spells out the obligation of governments in facilitating children right to learn in a safe and secured environment. Safety is needed whether one is in conventional school or a designated learning space (Katniyo&Atumba, 2016). The physical environment is one of the features of a quality childcare. It plays an important role in helping to shape the behavior and development of children.

The quality of the learning environment determines the level of involvement of the children and interaction between adults and children. Ignatus-IhejirkaandOsinowo (2016) described the physical environment as the child's learning environment; a place that provides essential information, experiences, time and opportunities for children to respond creatively to their world. Therefore, there should be indoor areas that have good ventilation, lighting, free from noisy, spacious, space properly utilized facilities for staff and maintenance of furnishing and equipment. And outdoor learning areas that promote socialization, gives room for children to exercise their muscle, creative expression, cognitive and language development, sensory exploration and appreciation of nature (Ignatius-Ihejirika, et al. 2016)

Outdoor and Indoor Facilities

Learning environment in pre-school education should be a safe and healthful environment that provides appropriate and well-maintained indoor and outdoor facilities for children to interact, assimilate, and play in the school environments. National Minimum Standard for Early Childhood Care and Educationcentre in Nigeria (FRN, 2007) stated that the physical learning environment of an effective ECCE centre should be characterized by the following; a playground, fencing facility, office accommodation and classroom. Such supportive environments send children a variety of positive messages about their learning (Greenman, 2007).

The Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood education recognizes the tremendous impact of the environment by referring to it as the third teacher (with parents and teachers as children's first and second teachers, respectively). This approach states children are powerful learners and their interests should guide adults' decisions surrounding learning, including how the environment is arranged and materials provided. The Reggio Emilia approach believes the learning environment plays a critical role and that intentionality (thoughtful planning and action)

on behalf of teachers in the design of spaces, selection and arrangement of materials significantly influences children's level of engagement and learning (Edwards, 2002). Furthermore, there should be safe secured office space to provide safety for school records and materials. The office accommodations should be solid structures that would not pose danger to children. Classroom should have enough space, well ventilated and designed in such a way that would allow free movement

Pre-school children learn best in environments where they can have secure relationships with caring and responsive adults, where they feel safe and feel free to explore and learn. Childrenlearning environment should be designed to teach them and develop their skills (Donald, 2010). Learning activities are organized by teachers so that children do not just move around the area without acquiring any knowledge and essential skills (Osanyin, 2002).

Also, as a measure of quality of pre-school environment, the indoor environment for learning of pre-schoolers should have well designed learning centres. Learning centres are spaces set aside in the classroom that can be easily accessed for a variety of learning activities in an interesting and productive manner.There should be learning areas that contain facilities, equipment, and materials to facilitate child learning and development. An organized, properly equipped and well-maintained pre-school education learning areas facilitates learning, comfort, health and safety of the children (Active Living Research, 2011). It is designed to offer a variety of materials and media through which pupils can work by themselves and with others to make uses of the information learned in the classroom.

Thesecentres help to pinpoint the specific areas where children can engage in meaningful discoveries that match their individual interest. Learning centres can be an exciting addition to a

classroom. They make it possible to offer a variety of activities that can be completed by children in teams or individually (Strong-Wilson, 2000; Miller & Cunningham, 2003; Jalongo& Isenberg, 2010).Teachers need to create an intellectually engaging responsive environment to promote each child's learning and development (National Association for Education of Young Children, 2005). Learning centres are used by the teacher to support the whole child so that enhanced growth, development and meaningful learning can occur.

There are various types of learning centresthat are typically found in the pres-school classrooms. This ranges from art, literacy, scientific and discovery, role play, maths, manipulation, computer and technology, library, block, home economics, listening centres and etc. Creation and availability of learning centres in preschool classrooms encourage relationship, increase pre-schoolers' confidence, boost their creativity and offer many experiences that facilitate growth and enhance skills in all areas of development particularly socio-emotional development of a child (Whitebook, 2003; Jalongo& Isenberg, 2010).

Health and Safety: Safety and health in learning environment is very important. A safe and healthy learning environment enables pupils to learn and grow to learn in a powerful ways. Safe and healthy environment promotes innovation, inquiry and risk taking. Such an environment reinforces and enhances the leadership capacity in the school because competent, excellent and dedicated educators want to work under such conditions. The safe and secure environments built by positive relationships help children thrive physically, emotionally and socially; they benefit from such learning experiences and get along with others (NAEYC, 2009). A safe and healthy learning environment includes an environment that is spacious, well equipped and developmentally appropriate with furniture, materials and a competent teacher (NAEYC,2009; Bullard, 2010). When a school environment is safe and healthy it makes children eager to learn

and promote school readiness in them. Emergency prepared for is another dimension of ensuring health and safety in learning environment. The school should always be prepared for any risks and always be at alert to find possible solutions to these risks, since children health and safety is one of the primary concern of the school. It is important to take extra care in preventing illness as children in early childhood programmes are more susceptible to illness than children who are not exposed to group, especially during the child's initial group exposure. Although at any age group settings increase in risk of illness for children at this stage is greater (Belsky, Brezausek&Schwebel, 2006).

Learning Activities and Curriculum: All early childhood educational programmes should adopt a research-based curriculum that is developmental, cultural and linguistically relevant to the learning needs of all children. Stacie (2000) stated that Curriculum can provide a guiding philosophy for pre-school education activities including teacher interactions, design of the physical indoor and outdoor environment. Curriculum also help teachers effectively structure and sequence classroom activities, target particular activities to build skills or meet development milestones and build on prior learning and experiences. Curricula provide varying levels of flexibility to individual teachers some provide highly structured models for teachers to implement while others offer guiding principles and expect teachers to determine the best way to implement (NAEYC, 2015).

Furthermore, a child's social-emotional and cognitive development is very dependent upon play activities, which depend, in part, on the environment (Hart &Sheenan, 2006). Play is the primary engine of human growth; it's universal as much as walking and talking. Play is the way children build ideas and how they make sense of their experience and feel safe (Hart &Sheenan, 2006). Different environments, such as classrooms, playgrounds and gyms, can also

influence child socio-emotional behavior in different ways (Shim, Herwig, & Shelley, 2001). Social interactions and peer relations are significantly influenced by the activities, situation and the environment in which they occur. For example, certain toys and play equipment can result in more independent and isolated activities, whereas others can result in the likelihood of more social interactions with playgrounds are among the places where children are the most physically active. Children also typically have more freedom of movement in outdoor spaces, which allows for a variety of activities (Active Living Research, 2011).

Teaching children skills such as how to play with other children, recognizing and expressing feelings, exercising self-control and negotiating conflict situations may result in fewer displays of inappropriate behaviour. Specifically, early educators may want to incorporate lessons that: (a) teach feelings directly through pairing pictures of emotional expressions with a feeling word; (b) provide practice in recognizing emotions through games (e.g., Feeling Face Bingo) and (c) engage in instruction that allows children to observe a model and then role play specific skills related to social problem-solving (e.g., making coping statements, exploring solutions to problems) and friendship making skills (e.g., sharing, turn taking, giving compliments). As it is the case with all instruction, effective teaching at the second tier requires careful planning and the adoption of specified curricula. Most importantly, early educators should be attentive and offer praise/reinforcement to children when they are engaged in socially competent behavior such as following directions, helping friends and sharing (Joseph & Strain, 2003).

Furthermore, in a high-quality pre-school education, teachers engage children with learning activities that are tailored to the age of the child and use an appropriate curriculum to structure the learning experience. Research has found a significant influence on early

achievement scores and socio-emotional behaviour when classroom activities intentionally apply a curriculum that is supported by professional development, training, coaching and sufficient resources (Andrew, 2008). Pre-school education should adopt a curriculum that best fits their programmes philosophy and ensure teachers receive professional trainig and ongoing support to adequately incorporate the curriculum into their practice.

Parent-Teacher Relationship and Social Climate: A high-quality pre-school education recognizes that families are essential to children's educational success and has policies in place to engage families in children's learning. Qualitative early childhood education must value and support the role of parents. Parents are the primary educators of the child and have a pre-eminent role in promoting her/his wellbeing, learning and development. Open, honest and respectful partnership with parents is essential in promoting the best interests of the child. Pre-school needs to develop family engagement strategies that encourage families to participate in their children learning and promote two-way communication and enable parents to share with teachers the unique strengths and talents of their child (Linda, 2009). Such strategies must also be responsive to family needs, recognize the increasing diversity of the child population and the specific needs that arise as a result. Engaging with families in an inclusive and reciprocal way can help providers understand a family's culture and values, which can inform the development of culturally responsive learning experiences (Charles, 2015).

Parents play the lead role in supporting their children's early development and school readiness. When parents are able to provide nurturing and strategic support for learning, they foster child brain development in ways that increase capacity for learning, building early socio-emotional and problem-solving skills. The quality of early parental care also shapes the development of child skills for making friends, getting along with others and managing emotions

and behaviour. This is because these core school readiness skills grow rapidly during the pre-school years. It is a developmental period when parental engagement can have particularly strong impact on child school readiness and future school success (NAEYC, 2009).

In addition, positive parent-teacher partnerships established when children are just beginning school set the stage for on-going parental engagement and home learning support in the school years that follow. Schools, child-care programmes and communities can support parent practices and enhance child outcomes by providing parents with support and guidance in the use of home learning materials, support warm and responsive parenting, while also providing opportunities for parents to get involved at school, using conferences and/or home visits to support parent-teacher communication and collaboration.

Family engagement often involves providing feedback on children's progress and discussing how parents can sustain learning activities at home. This can take many forms, including regular parent-teacher conferences, daily communication between teachers and families, like through daily report sheets and emails; monthly newsletters; parent-in-classroom events; family open nights; and other events intended to build a community that includes children, families, teachers and leaders. Robert and Mega (2004) submit that high-quality family engagement activities can help build trust and positive relationship between pre-school teachers and families which can help address any concerns such as behavior problems or developmental delays and better coordinate a response before issues become significant and affect children's learning.

Concept of Socio-Emotional Developmental Skill

The development of socio-emotional developmental skill is of key importance during early childhood, particularly during the pre-school years. People believe that early childhood education should focus on the promotion of academic skill to increase intelligence, therefore, neglect the importance of social and emotional learning. Children who are socially and emotionally well-adjusted do better at school, have increased confidence, have good inter-personal relationship, take on and persist at challenging tasks and communicate well (Kristine & Paula, 2017). The inclusion of socio-emotional skills in early childhood curriculum has been identified as a characteristic of high-quality early childhood education (NAEYC, 2009).

Socially competent children possess the ability to develop peer and adult relationships that are necessary to succeed in academic and nonacademic settings (Maduewesi, 2005). Academic achievement is best fostered in an environment that supports the child across multiple contexts. However, Zins, Weissberg, Wang and Wallberg, (2007) believed we should expand beyond academic focus to acknowledge the importance of educating knowledgeable, responsible and caring citizens, which requires systematic attention to children's social and emotional competence. Socio–emotional competence influences academic growth and progress as children who feel competent, autonomous and happy generally make good students (Harmre, Bridget, Pianta& Robert, 2004).

However, socio-emotional developmental skills can also be defined as cooperative and pro-social behaviour initiation and maintenance of peer friendship and adult relationship; management of aggression and conflict; development of sense of mastery and self-worth and emotional regulation and reactivity (Squires, 2002). Children who are socially and emotionally

well-adjusted do better at school, have increased confidence, have good relationship, take on and persist at challenging tasks and communicate well (National Research Council and Institutes of Medicine, 2000). A shift in thought showed attention been paid to the contribution of social and emotional readiness to children's school success. Research documents the negative influence of social regulatory and emotional problems on children's early school experiences (Karen, 2012; Raver, 2002).

Furthermore, National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 2009) emphasizes the need for socialization and the development of socio-emotional skills as part of early childhood education. Social development is complex and closely intertwined with other areas of development, cognitive, physical, emotional, linguistic and aesthetic. Adedigba (2015) posit that children's social skills are important for early school success and later adjustment and those children without adequate social skills are at the risk of being backward socially at their later age. The children who lack social skills at early age have behavioral problems, peer rejection, poor academic achievement and children with good social skills resolve issues in a manner that benefit them and are acceptable to others (Dunifon, 2013). In addition, socio-emotional skills are ways of dealing with others that create healthy and positive interactions. Children who have socio-emotional skills can communicate clearly, calmly and respectively.

These children show consideration for the feelings and interests of their colleagues. They take responsibility for their actions, are able to control themselves and are able to assert themselves when needed. Children learn social skills through instructions from their parents, interaction with peers, and sometimes with adults (Lynne, 2013). Social skills include resolving conflicts, communication, cooperation, friendship, participation, turn taking, respect for self and others. Subsequently, child needs care, love and emotional support. When these are lacking, they

grow up exhibiting negative traits such as hostility, aggression, cruelty, open defiance and acts of violence. Children need good childhood socialization to grow up and develop as proper human beings. The hope for a healthy, happy, friendly, peaceful and socially competent generation therefore lies in the place of the child in the society's scheme of activities and the provision of qualitative pre-school education in the environment that surround the child in early years (Osayin, 2002).

Pre-school children who exhibit challenges in these areas are more likely to experience difficulties within the classroom that affect their ability to develop normal peer relationships and to behave in ways conducive to learning (Vaughn et al., 1992). As a consequence, these children are less likely to be socially and academically prepared for school (Huffman, Mehlinger, &Kerivan, 2000). Young children require healthy socio-emotional skills in order to be prepared and ready to learn once they enter school (Klein, 2002). Children who have limitations in their socio-emotional development often demonstrate poor social, emotional and academic success. Furthermore, Patterson and Stoolmiller (1991) state that early emotional and behavioural problems have significant implications for young children as these problems may interfere with the acquisition of age-appropriate skills adversely affect developmental trajectories and may place children at risk of future problems

There is no one specific definition of the socially-emotionally competent child; rather, there is a broad set of skills that children learn to use effectively and appropriately, depending on their identity, culture, context and circumstance ((Tara, Karyn, & Linda, 2017). These socio–emotional skills include but not limited to skills to form close and secure relationship, engage in positive interactions with others, persist in problem solving, understand, identify, express and

regulate emotions; and resolve peer conflicts as well as developing capacity to summon strength in adverse situations (Denham, 2003; Goodman, 2015; Hyson, 2004).

Children use their socio-emotional skills in everyday interactions and activities, especially in the socially rich contexts of pre-school education settings where socio-emotional skills enable children to engage with and alongside others. Children with effective socio-emotional skills are able to form and maintain friendship, have positive attitudes to learning and social experiences, are easily accepted by their peers, are more adaptable and confident, and are more likely to be academically successful (Denham et al., 2003). In the long term, young children with good social–emotional skills are likely to grow up with the abilities to develop and maintain lasting friendship and intimate relationship, to be effective parents, hold a job, work well with others, make positive contributions to their communities and experience good physical and mental health and life satisfaction (Goodman et al., 2015). The socio–emotional skill learnt in the very early years of life have the greatest impact on lifelong outcomes as found relevant to early childhood teachers in emerging research (Shonkoff& Phillips, 2000).

When teachers establish responsive and supportive relationships with children, colleagues and people in the community, they create an environment that brings people together and engenders feelings of belonging, security, and efficacy (Hamre&Pianta, 2001). This environment of relationship provides the platform for intentional teaching in which teachers help children to extend their ideas and actions through sensitive, informed, well-judged interventions and support (Rosenthal &Gatt, 2010).However, stable and responsive relationship are not sufficient to teach children socio-emotional skills; teachers also need to use well-informed and intentional strategies (Epstein, 2014; McLaughlin, Aspden& Snyder, 2016).

Furthermore, consideration must be given to different beliefs about what might be considered appropriate behaviours for young children and how socio-emotional developmental skills looks in different contexts (Rosenthal &Gatt, 2010). Socio-emotional developmental skill is made up of a combination of skills, knowledge, opportunity and motivation. To promote children' socio–emotional skills, teachers need to be cognizant of key skills they can teach children. In addition, children need meaningful opportunities, motivation and the inclination to practice their developing skills. Teachers can support children in each aspect of this process. A large body of researchers have identified how teachers can support and teach young children's social–emotional skills and knowledge in ways that are intentional, create motivating opportunities to learn and practice, and honour children's rights for appropriate and meaningful learning experiences (Hyson, 2004; Webster-Stratton, 2012). The most effective learning is not contrived, nor is it left to chance, it occurs when teachers utilise the naturalistic moment-to-moment experiential opportunities for learning (Salau, 2001).

Researchers have identified different key areas of socio–emotional developments (Merrell &Gueldner, 2010; Lantieri&Nambiar, 2012; Bourke &Loveridge, 2013;) identified key areas to be emotional literacy, social problem solving, relationship skills, social skills and friendship; and prevention or address challenging behavior; self-management, etc. For the purpose of this study, the various key areas of socio-emotional development identified by several authors are harmonized and discussed as follows:

Relationships/Friendship Skills: A well-developed child is expected to be able toestablish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships on the basis of cooperation and resistance to inappropriate social pressure. Also, children should be able to prevent, manage and constructively resolve interpersonal conflict; and seek help when needed (Lantieri, &Nambiar,

2012). For example, children who have secure relationship with their parents develop greater social skills with adults and peers and greater social and emotional understanding of others, show more advanced moral development and have a more positive self-concept. Securely attached children also have been found to be more advanced in cognitive and language development and to show greater achievement in school.

Some research findings have looked at attachments between children and educators as with their parents and other caregivers. Some found children who receive strong emotional and instructional support from their educators as capable of approaching learning opportunities more positively and confidently, and the quality of those relationships has a significant and potentially enduring influence on their classroom success (NASEM, 2016). In one study, preschoolers identified as academically at risk based on demographic characteristics and reports of problems by their kindergarten teachers were followed to the end of first grade. The children with first-grade teachers who provided high amounts of instructional and emotional support had achievement scores comparable to their low-risk peers (Merrell &Gueldner, 2010).

It may be presumed that friendship impact on quality of pre-school, even though; there is a range of increasingly sophisticated social skills that are required in order to develop and sustain peer relationship. Teachers are able to take intentional roles in helping and facilitating friendship, helping children to understand the value of peer relationship, as well as identifying modeling and highlighting the skills needed to enact positive social interactions with peers (Thompson, 2009). Teaching social and friendship skills involves a range of strategies including using puppets, books and stories. Others are creating activities in which children work together, supporting children who do not independently engage with peers and commenting on or giving feedback when children show positive social skills (Duley, 2017).

Self-management: A child's ability to regulate his or her emotions, thoughts and behaviours in different situations, managing stress, controlling impulses and working towards goals that can affect learning and relationships with adults and peers. Regulating one's emotions to handle stress, control impulses and motivateone to persevere in overcoming obstacles setting and monitoring progress toward the achievement of personal and academic goal. It also involves expressing emotions appropriately that are evidences of being able to manage self. Children who lack effective self-regulation do not participate in a productive way in learning activities. They may act disruptively and aggressively; they then receive less support from their peers, which in turn may undermine their learning (Lantieri, &Nambiar, 2012). Furthermore, Merrell and Gueldner (2010) maintain that children are better able to exercise self-regulation in the company of educators who have developmentally appropriate expectations for their self-control. They can as well provide predictable routines and offer guidance that scaffolds their developing skills of self-management especially in the context of carefully designed daily practices in a well-organized setting.

Social awareness: This is childrenability to understand the perspective of and empathize with others, recognize and appreciate individual and group similarities and differences. Individuals understand with a straightforward awareness that people act intentionally and are goal directed, have positive and negative feelings in response to things around them. This awareness includes different feelings and goals. Young children develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the mental experiences that cause people to act as they do (CESAL, 2008). They realize, for example, that people's beliefs about reality can be accurate or may be mistaken, and this leads to the understanding that people can be deceived and that not everybody can be believed. They also

begin to appreciate how personality differences among people can cause different individuals to act in the same situation in very different ways.

However, Merrell and Gueldner (2010) stated that children learn how people think and feel from directly observing, asking questions and conversing about people's mental states with parents and other trusted informants. These advances are also fostered by children's classroom experiences. Educators can use children's experiences as forums for developing social and emotional understanding. Example for this can be when they explain why peers are feeling the way they do suggest strategies for resolving conflict over resources or a point of view, or engage children in collective decision making that involves different opinions.

Self-awareness: The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, recognizing and appreciating individual and group similarities and differences (NASEM, 2016). It includeslearning what one feels, accurately assessing one's interests and strengths and maintaining a well-grounded sense of self-confidence. How children think of themselves as learners influences their academic success. Young children become increasingly sensitive to positive and negative evaluations of their behavior. This serves as the basis for their self-evaluations. Research has revealed how parents and educators' performance feedback affect children's self-concept and motivation to succeed (CESAL, 2008).

Empirical Review

Quality in Early Childhood Education

Many educators have researched about the connection between quality early child care and children socio-emotional developmental skills. Taiwo (2018) conducted a survey on the assessment of quality in early childhood care and education in Nigeria. He explored early

childhood care and education (ECCE) stakeholders' accounts of quality assessment in the Nigerian context from an educational perspective including sociological perspective. The study unfolds the diverse socio-cultural meanings of the notion of quality in relation to teacher-child relationship, pedagogical instruction, learning environment and learning outcomes. The thesis demonstrates the need to locate current policy initiatives and quality measures (including the notion and development of quality care and learning) within the social, cultural, economic and political contexts that surround its provision. It is argued that understanding contextual complexity is germane to quality assessment of ECCE institutions. The study was carried out in Lagos state, Nigeria. The study employed a qualitative interpretive approach using semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, observations and policy analysis.

The study involved a number of stakeholders: teachers, parents, policymakers and schools inspectors from the Ministry of Education. The study reveals that quality assessment of children's services reflects economic, cultural and socio-political contexts that shape the welfare support services for children and how the aims of early childhood services are perceived by the stakeholders. The study suggests that the contribution of poverty on early childhood provision and management through public and private sectors' involvement constitutes a problematic notion of quality education for children. The study suggests that there is a need to follow up on colonial educational policy and practices by documenting existing childrearing traditional practices and negotiating on the essential aspects that meet the notion of quality care and learning for children.

Similarly, Mildred (2017) conducted a research on the influence of learning facilities on provision of quality Education in early childhood centres in Kenya. The study used mixed method research methodology to collect qualitative and quantitative data. The respondents for

the research consisted of ECDE officers, head teachers and teachers. The research instruments used were questionnaire, Rating Scales and interview guide. Data collected was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The research found that there was significant relationship (p<0.01) between learning facilities and provision of quality ECDE. Majority of public ECDE centres were found not to have enough classes, desks, water, kitchen stores among others. The lack of adequate learning facilities influenced negatively provision of quality education.

Furthermore, Victoria and Joanna (2016) examined the availability and qualities of early childhood education facilities in pre-schools in Ile-Ife. The study adopted the descriptive survey design. One hundred and five centres (105) were sampled from the population to participate in the study. The instrument used for data collection was a Rating Scale/rating scale tagged "pre-school facilities observation schedule" (PFOS, r=0.76). The quality of the facilities was ranked "Very Good, Good, or Fair". The data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The finding showed that the facilities were not sufficiently available and the quality of the available ones was generally good.

Kamau (2016) studied the influence of teachers' characteristics on pre-school children'ssocial skill in Langata District, Nairobi County. Four objectives guided the study and these were; to establish the influence teachers' experience on skill of pre-school children, to determine the influence of teachers' qualification on performance of pre-school children social, to establish the influence of teachers' salary level on performance of pre-school children's social skill and to determine teachers' content knowledge on performance of pre-school children's social in LangataDistrict of Nairobi County. The study adopted a descriptive survey design that employed quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study was anchored on Vygotsky's Social Constructivist theory of cognitive development. This theory focuses on social interactions that

play a fundamental role in the development of cognition. Questionnaires and interviews were used to collect data from head teachers and teachers, while observation was used to collect data from pre-school children respectively.

Findings of the study revealed that teachers who have been in the profession for a long time easily influenced pre-school children more than those who are fresh from colleges. They were found to encourage the children in the acquisition of social skill. However, the study found that teachers who are certificate holders have poor concept of content knowledge and do not spare time for reflection which incidentally lowers the performance of children's social skill. The study concluded that there is a need to have regular in service training for the pre-school teachers in order to equip them with new teaching methodology and content. It suggested that government should also provide teaching and learning materials instead of teachers and parents providing the same. Also teachers' salary should be enhanced.

Socio-Emotional Developmental Skill

Young children experience their world through an environment of relationships. Beginnings at birth, nurturing, secure and stable relationship with caring adults are essential for the development of feelings of trust, safety and confidence. During the infant stage, developing strong attachment relationships with parents/caregivers and other significant adults in their life is very important to children. Researchers at the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2004) found that quality of early relationship between children and the significant adults in their lives sets the foundation for later developmental outcomes and affects virtually all aspects of their social-emotional, physical and cognitive development. The significant adults around children are the most important contributors to their social and

emotional development. Early relationships lay the foundation for social competency and later relationships with peers. Parental support greatly increases the likelihood that children would develop early emotional competence (Boyd, Barnett, Leong, Bodrova, &Gomby, 2005). Children who feel safe in a supportive environment are more likely to take risks in problem-solving and inquiry as their self-confidence and competency grow.

The foundations of social skills developed in the first five years of a child's life are linked to emotional well-being and social skills needed later in life (Reis, Collins, &Berscheid, 2000). While social and emotional development is important in its own right because it facilitates cognitive development. Children with effective social and emotional skills do better with getting along with others, understanding directions and focusing on a task; including skills that enhance learning in school success and lifelong learning. The brain circuits that regulate emotions in the early years are ultimately associated with the development of problem-solving.

Research has shown that during the elementary school years, social and emotional skills are related to positive academic, social, and mental health outcomes. Stephanie, Sophie, Rebecca and Emily (2017) correlational studies show that classrooms function more effectively and students learning increases when children can focus their attention, manage negative emotions, navigate relationships with peers and adults; and persist in the face of difficulty. Children who effectively manage their thinking, attention, and behavior are also more likely to have better grades and higher standardized test scores. Children with strong social skills are more likely to make and sustain friendships, initiate positive relationships with teachers, participate in classroom activities, and be positively engaged in learning. Indeed, social and emotional skills in childhood have been tied to important life outcomes 20 to 30 years later, including job and financial security, as well as physical and mental health.

This compelling evidence suggests that there's a strong case for making such non-academic skills and competencies a central feature of schooling, both because of their intrinsic value to society and from a pragmatic standpoint. This is because they may help to reduce achievement and behavior gaps and mitigate exposure to stress.

The quality of parent and teachers to child attachment seems to be important in acquiring social skills and emotion regulation skills. For example, Contreras, Kerns, Weimer, Gentzler and Tomich (2000) studied emotion regulation as a mediator between mother child attachment and peer competence in a sample of 77 fifth graders. Constructive coping, which was a dimension of emotion regulation mediated the relations between attachment and peer competence. Negative emotionality was correlated with peer competence but it was not correlated with attachment quality. More secure attachment was associated with constructive coping strategies and higher peer competence.

Additional research supports the view that teachers' emotion socialization practices seem to have implications for the development of emotion understanding and emotion regulation, which in turn affect child adjustment. For example, in a short-term longitudinal study with 69 low-income 9-13 year olds and their mothers, Curtis and Carter (2003) found that mother emotion socialization practices on their awareness and acceptance of their own and their child's emotions; and their coaching on emotions affected children's emotional understanding and emotional regulation. Emotion understanding and regulation in turn were associated with changes in grades, depression and anxiety; aggression and delinquency; and social skills. Emotional understanding mediated the relationship between mothers' emotional socialization and boys' internalizing behaviours and between mothers' emotional socialization and girls'

social skills. In addition, emotion regulation mediated the relationships between emotional socialization and all four outcomes for boys.

Gender and Children's Socio-Emotional Developmental Skill

Gender differences with externalizing behavior problems have been well established with that boys exceeding girls in rates of externalizing problems throughout childhood and adolescence (Natalie, Karalyn, Kathryn, Katherine, & Kenneth, 2010). Studies of gender differences in constructs such as self-esteem and self-concept have produced mixed results. It is generally believed that gender differences across various dimensions of self-concept (e.g., academic competence) become more apparent over time. And there is decline in the self-esteem and self-confidence of girls as they move from childhood into early adolescence.

Gender differences in social and emotional strengths may provide valuable insight to why girls earn higher grades than boys across subject areas and grade levels. Yet, despite the academic success of girls relative to boys, girls tend to experience more internal distress (Pomerantz, Altermatt, & Saxon, 2002). However, boys appear to demonstrate fewer social and emotional skills and exhibit more behavior problems, which often impacts academic performance. Furthermore, this meta-analysis did not support the popular notion that girl's self-esteem plummets as they move into the middle school and high school years. Conversely, a study by Avison and McAlpine (1992) revealed that variations in self-esteem were strongly associated with observed differences in depression between males and females.

Gender differences have been identified in both individual and environmental variables associated with resilience. Hartman (2009) reported that among individual protective factors self-esteem has been shown to be a significant factor in protecting girls from delinquency, but

not boys. Environmental variables such as religiosity and a positive school environment were also found to significantly increase resiliency among females (Hartman, 2009). Overall, girls also tend to exhibit greater ability in self-regulation than boys (Raffaelli, Crocket&Shen, 2005).Further explorations of perceived strengths that have been linked to resiliency could provide valuable insight into the social and emotional development of boys and girls and lead to more effective interventions. The exploration of gender differences from a complete mental health perspective may paint a more complete picture of how girls and boys function. This would involve conceptualizing gender differences based on symptoms of internalizing problems, as well as indicators of general wellbeing and resilience.

School Type and the Quality of Pre-School Education Environment

Children need a safe school environment for effective social interactions. The physical environment is one of the features of a quality childcare (Adedigba, 2015; Ignatus-Ihejirika&Osinowo, 2016). It plays a very crucial role in helping to shape the behaviour of children. However, Katniyon and Atumba (2016) finds safe school environment as one that protects children and staff against immediate injury, diseases and promote prevention activities against known risk factors that might lead to future diseases or disability. A supportive pre-school learning environment promotes the development of children's socio-emotional developmental skills and supports enthusiasm and engagement as the cornerstones of approaches to learning.

According to the New Jersey Department of Education (2014), it states that physical environment must nurture children's capacity to engage deeply in individual and group activities. Such an environment is created through interactions with indoor and outdoor

environment that offer opportunities for children to set goals and persist in problem-solving through team work while acquiring new knowledge and skills through purposeful interaction. Carefully planned instruction, materials, furnishings and daily routines must be complemented by an extensive range of interpersonal relationships (children with adults and children with children). In this setting, each child's optimal development across every domain will be supported, sustained, extended and enhanced. While the adults in the pre-school environment provide the conditions and materials that influence how children play, interact and scaffold learning so that more sophisticated levels of interaction and expression are realized.

Subsequently, Oduolowu (2011) viewed physical environment as the child's learning environment and describe it as a place that provides essential information, time, experiences and opportunities for children to respond creatively to the world. She further maintained that, the characteristic of young children learning environment are healthy and safety, comfort, space, aesthetics, child-friendly, functional and purposeful. Others are organized and having storage facility among other things. Therefore, the quality of the environment determines the level of the involvement of the children and interaction between adults and children. A well planned environment promotes socialization, cognitive and language development, sensory exploration, creative expression and appreciation of nature.

Appraisal of Literature Reviewed

The appraisal done here centred on reviewed literature for this research concerning the variables of the study such asteachers' characteristics, ECE environment and its influence on children's socio-emotional developmental skill. The problems associated with them and

researchers' attempt or efforts in solving them. The gaps in literature in the area of study reviewed i.e. the area left uncovered by the various studies cited in the study.

The literature reviewed starts with a holistic look at various views and opinions on socio-cultural theory of learning which serves as the theoretical review that guided this study. This is followed by a critical review of the concept of pre-school education, preschool education quality, teacher's characteristics, ECE environment and socio-emotional developmental skills. It is established that children develop and learn socio-emotional developmental skills better when they are nurtured by more experience person and conducive learning environment. As children learn through purposeful, critical thinking and sharing experience, they build critical basic skills for academic performance. The review of literature however could not establish how the variable of pre-school education quality could influence children's socio-emotional developmental skills. This seeming neglect was what necessitated this study.

On the independent variable of socio-emotional developmental skills, the literature reviewed is able to situate the review according to authors view on their conceptual meanings, procedures for teaching and possible drawback of each of the socio-emotional skills. However, to give review a broader focus, empirical studies is done so as to determine the extent to which previous finding could be evaluated in relation to the problem of the study stated in chapter one. Several empirical studies conducted in and outside Nigeria educational settings and in other areas such as on cognitive and physical development respectively. The researcher discovered that during extensive literature review in pre-school education quality and socio-emotional kills, most of the researchers found link between pre-school education quality in improving children's socio-emotional developmental skills. Teachers characteristics and observed ECE environment have been found to support the opportunity for children to develop socio-emotional skills such as

problem-solving, sharing, cooperation, peer interaction, turn-taking, resolving social conflicts and understanding societal rules.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter discusses the method and procedure used by the researcher to carry out the study. It comprises of the research design; population; sample and sampling techniques; research instrument (i) Validity (ii) Reliability; Procedure for Data Collection; and Method of data Analysis

Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. A descriptive survey according to Osuola (2006), is that which is basically designed to find the existing situation of a particular phenomenon of concern. Ojelade (2009) also states that descriptive survey involves collecting numerical data to test hypothesis or answer question concerning current status. This can be conducted through self-report, interviews (one to one or on phone) or through observation. This design enabled the researcher to collect existing and factual information about the influence of pre-school education quality on children's socio-emotional developmental skill in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State.

Population of the Study

The population for this study comprised of all public and private pre-schools, teachers and kindergarten children(KG 2) in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State. There are 42 pre-primaries (26 publics and 16 privates) schools in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Education Authority with a population of 1869 KG2 children and 140 teachers across all schools.

The choice of the pre-school (public) and (private) KG2 children was based on the fact that these children have spent at least one year in play group, first and second term in kindergarten classes.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample for the study was drawn from all public and private pre-school education centres in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Education Authority in Katsina State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the schools observed across the seven zonal education areas. There are seven zonal education areas in the Local Government, these are: Dutsin-Ma Zonal Education Area, Makera Area, Karofi Area, Bugagadi Area, Dabawa Area, Kuki Area and Kutawa Area. Dutsin-Ma Local Government has (26) public and (16) private pre-school education centres with a population of 1869 KG2 children in both public and private pre-schools; and 140 teachers: 95 in public and 45 in private schools(L.G.E.A.Dutsin-Ma, 2019).

Awotunde and Ugodunluwa (2004) assert that in sampling, all elements in the population should be given equal chance of being selected. Therefore, a simple random sampling technique was used to select 15 out of 26 public schools and 10 out of 16 private schools. The selection yielded a total of 25 schools that were sampled. The pre-school education environment, teachers and pre-school children of each selected school were observed in the study. However, 2 teachers and 10 children from each centre were randomly sampled in a class. Therefore, a total of 250 children and 50 teachers were randomly selected through simple random sampling technique. The sample size was determined using research table advisor (Krejcie& Morgan, 1970).

Instrumentation

Two self-constructed sets of instruments were used in the study. These were tagged Pre-school Education Quality Rating Scale (PEQRS) and Children' Socio-Emotional Developmental Skill Rating Scale (CSEDSRC).

Pre-school Education Quality Rating Scale (PEQRS): This instrument was constructed by the researcher to obtain information on the quality of pre-school education. It has sections A and B. Section A contains items on demographic information of the teachers in the observed pre-school environment that generated information on teachers' characteristics. Section B is made up of some items to elicit information on the observed quality of pre-school environment, particularly covering space and furniture, learning activities and curriculum. It also covers interaction with the child, parents and teacher relationship which were generated from the literature reviewed. PEQRS consisted of 40 items categorized into (five) outdoor facilities, health and safety, indoor facilities, relationship and social climate and teacher-pupils' activities. The items were structured in four Likert type scale of Very good, Good, Fair and poor (4,3,2,1), which was generated from theliterature reviewed.

Validity of the Instrument

Validity of the instrument is the extent to which the instrument measures what it seek to measure. Roberta and Alison (2015) describe validity as the extent to which a concept is accurately measured in a quantitative study. Copies of the PEQRS were given to lecturers in the field of Early Childhood and Primary Education and Business Education in Kwara State University, Malete for face and content validity. Thereafter, the instrument was given to the

project's supervisors for final scrutiny. Their suggestions and comments were used to amend the instruments.

Children' Socio-Emotional Developmental Skill Rating Scale (CSEDSRS): CSEDSRS was designed to collect data on socio-emotional developmental skill of pre-school children. The items of the instruments are 25 grouped into the major areas of socio-emotional developmental skill covering self-management, relationship, social awareness, responsibilities/decision making and self-awareness. The items which were also generated from the literature reviewed were structured in threeLikerttype scale of All the time, Sometimes and Never (3,2,1).

Validity of the Instrument

Validity of an instrument refers to the extent to which it measures what it claims to measure (Mugenda 2003). The face and content validity ofCSEDSRS was confirmed by the researchers' supervisors and other lecturers in the field of early childhood education and Business Education, Kwara State University, Malete. Their corrections, observations and comments were incorporated into the final copy before the instrument was administered for data collection.

Reliability of the Instruments

Reliability of the instrument is to determine its degree of consistency. It refers to the extent to which the instrument gives a consistent result over repeated trials (Creswell, 2014). Reliability means the degree of consistency of responses to an instrument. In order to ensure the consistency of the two instruments, test retest method was used. Pre-school Education Quality Rating Scale (PEQRS) was administered twice in 25 schools that were not part of the sample for

the study, in an interval of two weeks. The two ratings were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and the reliability score was 0.74. Similarly, test retest method was also used to determine the reliability of Children Socio-Emotional developmental Skill Rating Scale (CSEDSRS). The instrument (CSEDSRS) was administered twice in an interval of two weeks. The two ratings were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC), CSEDSRS yielded the reliability coefficient of 0.77

Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher collected introduction letter from the Head of Department, Early Childhood and Primary Education of the Kwara State University,Malete to get formal access to the schools. This facilitates the smooth administration of research instruments.The pre-school education teachers were used as the research assistants. The researcher trained the research assistants (pre-school teachers) in their respective schools prior to the administration period so as to prepare and make them familiar with the instruments. Researcher administered the instrument tagged "Pre-school Education Quality Rating Scale" in the 25 sampled public and private pre-school centres and 50 teachers. The pre-school teachers(research Assistants) administered the instrument tagged "Children's Socio-Emotional Developmental Skill Rating Scale" to 250 KG2 children in 15 public (150 children) and 10 private (100 children) pre-school centres in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area. The reason why researcher selected Dutsin-Ma local government area was because it is the second Local Government with the highest number of private and public pre-school education centres out of 34 Local Government Areas inKatsina State

The data collection lasted for a period of four weeks. The first week was the training of the research assistants. The second, third and fourth week were for observation in the selected

schools using the two instruments for assessing the quality of pre-school education and children's socio-emotional developmental skills. Researcher monitored the research assistants properly to ensure smooth and effective data collection in the field (sampled school for the research).

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Research questions were answered using mean and Pearson Product Moment Correlation(PPMC). The formulated research hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics of linear regression, Analysis of Variance and independent samples t-test. The hypotheses were all tested at 0.05 level of significance.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

This chapter is concerned with data analysis and the result of study. Demographic profile of the respondents was presented using frequency count and simple percentage. Research questions were answered using mean and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The formulated research hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics of linear regression, Analysis of Variance and independent samples t-test. The hypotheses were all tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Table 1: Summary offrequency and percentage showing the Distribution of Children based on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	112	44.8
Female	138	55.2
Total	250	100.0

Table 1 shows the distribution of children based on gender. 112 of the children representing 44.8% were male while 138 of the children were female representing 55.2%. From the analysis above, it is apparent that female children were found to be more in number than male children.

Research Question 1a: What is the level of preschool education quality in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to observed pre-school education environment?

Table 2: Table showing the level of preschool education quality in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to observed pre-school education environment

S/N	Items	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor	Mean
1	Playground with play resources	20(8.0)	19(7.6)	90(36.0)	121(48.4)	1.75
2	Equipment for physical activities	20(8.0)	11(4.4)	70(28.0)	149(59.6)	1.61
3	Enough space for physical activities	20(8.0)	41(16.4)	139(55.6)	50(20.0)	2.12
4	Shades in the environment	20(8.0)	19(7.6)	89(35.6)	122(48.8)	1.75
5	Play areas have fences/natural barriers that prevent access to animals, unauthorized people and other hazards	10(4.0)	61(24.4)	140(56.0)	39(15.6)	2.17
7	Potable water accessible to children for drinking	10(4.0)	39(15.6)	71(28.4)	130(52.0)	1.72
8	Water available for children for hand washing	20(8.0)		91(36.4)	139(55.6)	1.60
9	First aid kits	20(8.0)		70(28.0)	160(64.0)	1.52
10	Fire extinguisher and other safety equipment	20(8.0)	10(4.0)	19(7.6)	201(80.4)	1.40
11	Weighing scale	10(4.0)	24(9.6)	100(40.0)	116(46.4)	1.71
12	Toilet facilities with segregated female toilets	6(2.4)	21(8.4)	62(24.8)	161(64.4)	1.49
14	Classrooms have enough space for children		47(18.8)	132(52.8)	71(28.4)	1.90
15	Rooms not overcrowded with furniture	7(2.8)	31(12.4)	101(40.4)	111(44.4)	1.74
16	Waste bin accessible for children to dispose waste		10(4.0)	98(39.2)	142(56.8)	1.47
17	Child-size chairs and tables available	10(4.0)	25(10.0)	76(30.4)	139(55.6)	1.62
18	Electric wires and outlets covered		20(8.0)	89(35.6)	141(56.4)	1.52
19	Glass jars/sharp objects/other breakable items put away	6(2.4)	40(16.0)	180(72.0)	24(9.6)	2.11
20	Math Area	28(11.2)		30(12.0)	192(76.8)	1.46
21	Literacy Area		10(4.0)	80(32.0)	160(64.0)	1.40
22	Arts and drawing area	16(6.4)	19(7.6)	43(17.2)	172(68.8)	1.52
23	Science Area	4(1.6)	27(10.8)	60(24.0)	159(63.6)	1.50
24	Role playing Area	17(6.8)	19(7.6)	41(16.4)	173(69.2)	1.52
25	Manipulation Area	11(4.4)	20(8.0)	40(16.0)	179(71.6)	1.45
26	Music Area	7(2.8)	30(12.0)	13(5.2)	200(80.0)	1.38
27	Block play area		38(15.2)	39(15.6)	173(69.2)	1.46
28	Regular interactive visits by parents to the centre	18(7.2)	19(7.6)	151(60.4)	62(24.8)	1.97

29	Newsletter with ideas for educational trips, such as local museums and libraries	7(2.8)	20(8.0)	60(24.0)	163(65.2)	1.48
30	Participation at PTA		26(10.4)	90(36.0)	134(53.6)	1.57
31	Follow up on children performance		17(6.8)	43(17.2)	190(76.0)	1.38
32	Materials/monetary resource contributions	2(.8)	10(4.0)	56(22.4)	182(72.8)	1.33
33	Family members who are encouraged volunteer during special events	10(4.0)		59(23.6)	181(72.4)	1.36
34	Teachers recite rhyme and encourage children to recite rhyme in relation to the topic.	2(.8)	15(6.0)	161(64.4)	72(28.8)	1.79
35	Teachers provide materials for and encourage individual child to draw and paint.	6(2.4)	20(8.0)	68(27.2)	156(62.4)	1.50
36	Teachers mould object and encourages individual child to mould object	17(6.8)	9(3.6)	51(20.4)	173(69.2)	1.48
37	Teachers tell and pupils listen to stories.	5(2.0)	2(.8)	141(56.4)	102(40.8)	1.64
38	Teachers and children sing and dance to music in the classroom	3(1.2)	21(8.4)	137(54.8)	89(35.6)	1.75
39	Children are encouraged to learn through playing games	2(.8)	24(9.6)	101(40.4)	123(49.2)	1.62
40	Children are allowed to play games, manipulate blocks and other play materials	13(5.2)	4(1.6)	52(20.8)	181(72.4)	1.40
	Weighted Mean					**1.53**

Decision Rule: 0.00 – 2.49 = Low   2.50 -5.00 = High

Table 2 shows the level of preschool education quality in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to observed pre-school education environment. The following items were rated fair in the observed schools: Playground with play resources (Mean = 1.75); equipment for physical activities (Mean = 1.61), enough space for physical activities (Mean = 2.12) andshades in the environment (Mean = 1.75). Others are play areas have fences/natural barriers that prevent access to animals, unauthorized people and other hazards (Mean = 2.17);potable water accessible to children for drinking (Mean = 1.72);water available for children for hand washing (1.60); first aid kits availability (Mean = 1.52);weighing scale (Mean = 1.71); and rooms not overcrowded with furniture (Mean = 1.74). It alsoincludes classrooms have enough space for children (Mean = 1.90); child-size chairs and tables available (Mean = 1.62); Electric wires and outlets covered

(Mean = 1.52); glass jars/sharp objects/other breakable items put away (Mean = 2.11); arts and drawing area (Mean = 1.52); and science area (Mean = 1.50); role playing area (Mean = 1.52). Others areregular interactive visits by parents to the centre (Mean = 1.97); teachers recite rhyme and encourage children to recite rhyme in relation to the topic (Mean = 1.79); teachers provide materials for and encourage individual child to draw and paint (Mean = 1.50); teachers tell and pupils listen to stories (Mean = 1.64); teachers and children sing and dance to music in the classroom (Mean = 1.75); children are encouraged to learn through playing games (Mean = 1.62). However, the following items were rated as been poor: Fire extinguisher and other safety equipment (Mean = 1.40);toilet facilities with segregated female toilets (Mean = 1.49); waste bin accessible for children to dispose waste (Mean = 1.47); Math area (Mean = 1.46); literacy area (Mean = 1.40); manipulation area (Mean = 1.45); music area (Mean = 1.38); block play area (Mean = 1.46). It also includesnewsletter with ideas for educational trips, such as local museums and libraries (Mean = 1.48); participation at PTA (Mean = 1.57); follow up on children performance (Mean = 1.38); materials/monetary resource contributions (Mean = 1.33); family members who are encouraged volunteer during special events (Mean = 1.36); teachers mould object and encourages individual child to mould object (Mean = 1.48); children are allowed to play games, manipulate blocks and other play materials (Mean = 1.40). The weighted mean is 1.53 which is a numeric indicator that the level of preschool education quality in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to observed pre-school education environment is low.

Research Question 1b: What is the level of pre-school education quality in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards teachers' area of specialization?

Table 3: Summary of frequency and percentage showing the level of pre-school education quality in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to teachers' area of specialization

S/N	Specialization	Frequency	Percentage
1	NCE in ECE	6	12.0
2	NCE in Other Areas	38	76.0
3	B.Ed/B.A. (Ed)/B.Sc.(Ed) in other areas	2	4.0
4	B.A/B.Sc/HND in other areas	4	8.0

Table 3 shows the level of pre-school education teachers' quality in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to teachers' area of specialization. Six (6) of the teachers representing 12.0% specialized in Early Childhood Education with NCE; 38 of the teachers representing 76.0% specialized in other areas with NCE and 2 of the teachers representing 4.0 specialized in other areas with Bachelor degree in Education while 4 of the teachers representing 8.0% specialized in other areas with Bachelor degree in Science. From the analysis above, it is apparent that majority of the teachers do not specialize in Early Childhood Education. Hence, the quality of was low.

Research Question 1c: What is the level of pre-school education quality in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to teachers' working experience?

Table 4: Summary of frequency and percentage showing the quality of pre-school education in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to teachers' working experience

S/N	Experience	Frequency	Percentage
1	Below 5 years	36	72.0
2	5 – 10 years	12	24.0
3	11 – 20 years	2	4.0

Table 4 shows the level of pre-school education quality in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to teachers' working experience. 36 teachers representing 72.0% had a working experience that was below 5 years; 12 teachers representing 24.0 had a working experience that was 5 – 10 years while 2 teachers representing 4.0% had a working experience that was 11- 20 years. From the analysis above, it is apparent that majority of the teachers had experience that was below 5 years. Therefore, the level of pre-school education quality in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to teachers' working experience is low.

Research Question 1d: What is the level of pre-school education quality in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to teachers' qualification?

Table 5:   Summaryof frequency and percentage showing the level of pre-school education quality in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to teachers' qualification

S/N	Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
1	NCE	44	88.0
2	B.Ed/B.A. (Ed)/B.Sc.(Ed)	2	4.0
3	B.A/B.Sc/HND	4	8.0

Table 5 shows the level of pre-school education quality in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to teachers' qualification. 44 teachers representing 88.0% had NCE; two (2) teachers representing 4.0% had B.Ed/B.A. (Ed)/B.Sc.(Ed) while four (4) teachers representing 8.0% had B.A/B.Sc/HND. From the analysis above, it is apparent that the majority of the teachers had NCE which is the required qualification. Hence, the level of pre-school education quality in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to teachers' qualification was high.

Research Question 2:   What is the level of children's socio-emotional developmental skill in dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State?

Table 6: Summary of frequency, mean and percentage showing the level of children's socio-emotional developmental skill inDutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State

S/N	Items	All the time	Sometimes	Never	Mean
1	manages stress	45(18.0)	123(49.2)	82(32.8)	1.85
2	controls impulses	36(14.4)	127(50.8)	87(34.8)	1.80
3	display aggressive behavior	27(10.8)	145(58.0)	78(31.2)	1.80
4	compete with other peers	32(12.8)	109(43.6)	109(43.6)	1.69
5	work toward achieving personal goals	32(12.8)	95(38.0)	123(49.2)	1.64
6	communicate clearly	50(20.0)	138(55.2)	62(24.8)	1.95
7	listen to others when they talk	41(16.4)	84(33.6)	125(50.0)	1.66
8	cooperate with other children	45(18.0)	70(28.0)	135(54.0)	1.64
9	negotiate conflict constructively	45(18.0)	43(17.2)	162(64.8)	1.53
10	seek help when needed.	50(20.0)	111(44.4)	89(35.6)	1.84
11	share materials with other children	30(12.0)	150(60.0)	70(28.0)	1.84
12	make friends	57(22.8)	116(46.4)	77(30.8)	1.92
13	recognize family	72(28.8)	136(54.4)	42(16.8)	2.12
14	recognize school	59(23.6)	130(52.0)	61(24.4)	1.99
15	display empathy towards others	23(9.2)	100(40.0)	127(50.8)	1.58
16	relate well with others from different cultures	27(10.8)	57(22.8)	166(66.4)	1.44
17	Recognize teacher	59(23.6)	102(40.8)	89(35.6)	1.88
18	take turns	84(33.6)	71(28.4)	95(38.0)	1.96
19	make choice independently	36(14.4)	111(44.4)	103(41.2)	1.73
20	interact based on consideration of guidelines	33(13.2)	72(28.8)	145(58.0)	1.55
21	consider the well-being of self	50(20.0)	71(28.4)	129(51.6)	1.68

22	consider the well-being of others	27(10.8)	94(37.6)	129(51.6)	1.59
23	demonstrate self-confidence	36(14.4)	103(41.2)	111(44.4)	1.70
24	engage in role play activities	54(21.6)	87(34.8)	109(43.6)	1.78
25	obey class rules	45(18.0)	106(42.4)	99(39.6)	1.78
	Weighted Mean				1.76

Decision: 0.00 – 1.49 = Low   1.50 – 2.49 = Average   2.50 – 3.00 = High

Table 6 shows the level of children's socio-emotional developmental skill in dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State. The children sometimes do the following: manages stress (Mean = 1.85);controls impulses (Mean = 1.80); display aggressive behavior (Mean = 1.80); compete with other peers (Mean = 1.69); work toward achieving personal goals (Mean = 1.64); communicate clearly (Mean = 1.95); listen to others when they talk (Mean = 1.66); cooperate with other children (Mean = 1.64); and negotiate conflict constructively (Mean = 1.53). It also include seek help when needed (Mean = 1.84); share materials with other children (Mean = 1.84); make friends (Mean = 1.92); recognize family (Mean = 2.12); recognize school (Mean = 1.99); display empathy towards others (Mean = 1.58);Recognize teacher (Mean = 1.88); take turns (Mean = 1.96); make choice independently (Mean = 1.73); interact based on consideration of guidelines (Mean = 1.55); consider the well-being of self (Mean = 1.68); consider the well-being of others (Mean = 1.59); demonstrate self-confidence (Mean = 1.70); engage in role play activities (Mean = 1.78); and obey class rules (Mean = 1.78). However, the children never relate well with others from different cultures (Mean = 1.44). The weighted mean is 1.76 which is a numeric indicator that the level of children's socio-emotional developmental skill in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State is on the average.

Research Question 3:   Which of the measure of pre-school education quality is mostly associated with children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

Table 7: Summary showing the measure of pre-school education quality mostly associated with children's socio-emotional developmental skill

Variable	Socio-emotional skill	Environment	Experience	Specialization	Qualification
Socio-emotional skill	1	.524	.008	.358	.343
Environment	.524	1	.011	.238	.242
Experience	.008	.011	1	-.007	-.081
Specialization	.358	.238	-.007	1	-.118
Qualification	.343	.242	-.081	-.118	1

Table 7 shows the measure of pre-school education quality is mostly associated with children socio-emotional developmental skill. It is apparent from the table above that pre-school education environment (Mean = .524) has the highest correlation coefficient. Hence, pre-school education environment was the measure of preschool education quality mostly associated with children's socio-emotional developmental skill

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant influence of observed pre-school education environment on children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

Table 8: Summary of linear regression showing the influence of observed pre-school education environment on children's socio-emotional developmental skill

Variable	Mean	SD	N	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	F	Sig.
Environment	100.15	28.67						
Socio-emotional skill	51.40	12.48	250	.524	.275	.272	93.926	.000

Table 8 shows the regression Analysis of the influence of observed pre-school education environment on children's socio-emotional developmental skill. The result indicates that there is positive relationship between observed pre-school education environment and children's socio-emotional developmental skill (R = .524) while the R-Square is .275 which means that the independent variable (observed pre-school education environment) explain 27.5% variation of the dependent variable (children's socio-emotional developmental skill). This indicates a good fit of the regression equation. Thus, this is a reflection that observed pre-school education environment significantly influenced children's socio-emotional developmental skill (F $_{(1,248)}$ = 93.926, P < 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is less than 0.05. This implies that observed pre-school education environment have significant influence on children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significant influence of teachers' area of specialization on children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

Table 9: Summary of ANOVA showing the influence of teachers' area of specialization on children's socio-emotional developmental skill

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	15298.116[a]	3	5099.372	53.354	.000
Intercept	214128.628	1	214128.628	2240.384	.000
Speci	15298.116	3	5099.372	53.354	.000
Error	23511.884	246	95.577		
Total	699300.000	250			
Corrected Total	38810.000	249			

Table 9 shows the influence of teachers' area of specialization on children's socio-emotional developmental skill. There is significant influence of teachers' area of specialization on children's socio-emotional developmental skill (F $_{(3, 246)}$ = 53.354; P < 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is less than 0.05. This

implies that teachers' area of specialization had significant influence on children's socio-emotional developmental skill. Table 10 below revealed the source of the difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

Table 10: Summary of Bonferroni's Post Hoc pairwise Comparison of the socio-emotional developmental skill of children based on their teachers' area of specialization

Specialization	Mean Score	NCE in ECE	NCE in other areas	B.Ed/B.A. (Ed)/B.Sc.(Ed) in other areas	B.Sc
NCE in ECE	62.92		*	*	*
NCE in other areas	46.54	*		*	*
B.Ed/B.A. (Ed)/B.Sc.(Ed) in other areas	48.13	*	*		*
B.Sc	43.26	*	*	*	

Table 10 revealed that the significant main effect exposed by table 8 is as a result of the significant difference among the following specializations:

i.   NCE in ECE

ii.   NCE in other areas

iii.   B.Ed in other areas

iv.   B.Sc

This implies that those that the socio-emotional developmental skills of children whose teachers specialized Early Childhood Education (Mean = 62.92) were significantly better than the children whose teachers specialized in other areas.

Research Hypothesis Three: There is no significant influence of teachers' working experience on children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

Table 11: Summaryof ANOVA showing the influence of teachers' working experience on children's socio-emotional developmental skill

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	1969.532[a]	2	984.766	7.597	.001
Intercept	170024.925	1	170024.925	1311.595	.000
Experience	1969.532	2	984.766	7.597	.001
Error	32019.144	247	129.632		
Total	517197.000	250			
Corrected Total	33988.676	249			

Table 11 shows the influence of teachers' working experience on children's socio-emotional developmental skill. There was significant influence of teachers' working experience on children's socio-emotional developmental skill (F $_{(2, 247)}$ = 7.597; P < 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is less than 0.05. This implies that teachers' working experience had significant influence on children's socio-emotional developmental skill. Table 12 below revealed the source of the difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill based on their teachers' working experience

Table 12: Summary of Bonferroni's Post Hoc pairwise Comparison of the socio-emotional developmental skill of children based on their teachers' working experience

Specialization	Mean Score	Below 5 years	5 – 10 years	11 – 20 years
Below 5 years	42.56		*	*
5 – 10 years	46.30	*		*
11 – 20 years	55.30	*	*	

Table 12 revealed that the significant main effect exposed by table 10 is as a result of the significant difference among the following teachers' working experience:

i. Below 5 years

ii.   5 – 10 years

iii.   11 – 20 years

This implies that the socio-emotional developmental skill of children whose teachers' working experience was 11 – 20 years (Mean = 55.30) is significantly better than the children of teachers with other years of working experience.

Research Hypothesis Four: There is no significant influence of teachers' qualification on

children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

Table 13:   Summary of ANOVA showing the influence of teachers' qualification on children's socio-emotional developmental skill

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	15356.116[a]	2	7678.058	101.783	.000
Intercept	215084.942	1	215084.942	2851.244	.000
Qualification	15356.116	2	7678.058	101.783	.000
Error	18632.560	247	75.435		
Total	517197.000	250			
Corrected Total	33988.676	249			

Table 13 shows the influence of teachers' qualification on children's socio-emotional developmental skill. There is significant influence of teachers' qualification on children's socio-emotional developmental skill ($F_{(2, 247)}$ = 101.783; $P < 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is less than 0.05. This implies that teachers' qualification had significant influence on children's socio-emotional developmental skill. Table 14 below revealed the source of the difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill based on their teachers' qualification

Table 14: Summary of Bonferroni's Post Hoc pairwise Comparison of the socio-emotional developmental skill of children based on their teachers' qualification

Specialization	Mean Score	NCE	B.A. Ed./B.Sc. Ed	B.A/B.Sc/HND
NCE	42.08		*	*
B.Ed/B.A. (Ed)/B.Sc.(Ed)	69.43	*		*
B.A/B.Sc/HND	36.90	*	*	

Table 14 revealed that the significant main effect exposed in table 10 is as a result of the significant difference among the following teachers' working experience:

i.   NCE

ii.   B.Ed/B.A. (Ed)/B.Sc.(Ed)
iii.   B.A/B.Sc/HND

This implies that the socio-emotional developmental skills of children whose teachers' qualification was B.Ed/B.A. (Ed)/B.Sc.(Ed) (Mean = 69.43) were significantly better than the children of teachers with other qualifications.

Research Hypothesis Five: There is no significant difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of gender.

Table 15: Summary of t-test showing the difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.	Remark
Male	112	44.21	11.74				
				.294	248	.769	Not Significant
Female	138	43.77	11.68				

Table 15 shows the difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of gender. There was no significant difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of gender (t = .294; df = 248; .P > 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is greater than 0.05. This implies that gender had no significant influence children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

Research Hypothesis Six: There is no significant difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of school type

Table 16: Summaryof t-test showing the difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of school type

School type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig.	Remark
Public	150	48.43	12.30				
				8.373	248	.00	Significant
Private	100	37.26	6.33				

Table 16 shows the difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of school type. There was significant difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of school type (t = 8.373; df = 248; P < 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is less than 0.05. The socio-emotional developmental skill of children in public schools (Mean = 48.43) is better than that of the private school children (Mean = 37.26). This implies that school type has significant influence on children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

Summary of the Findings

1   The quality of pre-school education in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to observed pre-school education environment is low.

2   The quality of pre-school education in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to teachers' area of specialization is low.

3   The quality of pre-school education in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to teachers' working experience is low.

4   The quality of pre-school education in Dutsin-ma Local Government as regards to teachers' qualification is high.

5   The level of children's socio-emotional developmental skill in dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State is on the average.

6   Pre-school education environment is the measure of preschool education quality that is mostly associated with children socio-emotional developmental skill

7   Observed pre-school education environment have significant influence on children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

8   There is significant influence of teachers' area of specialization on children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

9   There is significant influence of teachers' working experience on children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

10   There is significant influence of teachers' qualification on children's socio-emotional developmental skill.

11   There is no significant difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of gender.

12 There is significant difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of school type.

CHAPTERFIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter focuses on discussions, conclusion and recommendations. The purpose of this study was to investigate the influence of pre-school education quality on children's socio-emotional developmental skill in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State. Based on the discussions, conclusions were drawn and recommendations were also made with suggestions for further studies.

Discussions of the Findings

The finding of the study revealed that the quality of pre-school education in Dutsin-Ma Local Government as regards observed pre-school education environment was low. This finding is not in agreement with Victoria and Joanna (2016) who examined the availability and quality of early childhood education facilities in pre-schools in Ile-Ife and found that the facilities were not sufficiently available and the quality of the available ones were generally good (high). The result of this study confirmed the finding of Mwoma, Begi and Murungi(2018) who found that pre-schools experienced a myriad of challenges related to children's safety and security including poor school environment; unfenced compounds; and children going to school unaccompanied by adults thus exposing them to the dangers of being bullied by older children.

Another finding of the study showed that the quality of pre-school education in Dutsin-Ma Local Government as regards teachers' area of specialization was low. This corroborated the 2017 Status Report on Early Childhood Care and Education in Pacific Island Countries organized by United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) 2017 where it was reported thatECCE teachers require specialized training because the minimum requirements for ECCE teachers that existed were not well-regulated and few training opportunities were available to nurture teacher competencies. However, contrary to this, Kamau (2016) reported from his study with pre-school teachers that most teachers were academically qualified to teach pre-schoolers.

In addition, one of the findings of the study is that the quality of pre-school education in Dutsin-Ma Local Government as regards teachers' working experience was low. This finding was contrary to Kamau (2016) that teachers have average number of years in the profession which falls between 6 and 15 years of experience. This is in line with finding of Bell (1978) who reported that teaching experience can be useful in teaching by ensuring that the teachers select appropriate models of instructions.

Furthermore, the finding showed that the quality of pre-school education in Dutsin-Ma Local Government as regards teachers' qualification was high. This finding supported the 2017 Status Report on Early Childhood Care and Education in Pacific Island Countries which reported that Pacific Guidelines indicated that the delivery of quality ECCE services requires suitably trained staff who can respond to the needs of children, families, and communities. Furthermore, ECCE systems must ensure that ECCE professionals are qualified and have suitable competencies to perform their responsibilities. It reported that Pacific Island Countries face serious difficulties in recruiting and maintaining a high-caliber ECCE workforce

This study found that the level of children's socio-emotional developmental skill in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State was on the average. This is against the finding of a study by Sridhar and Malliga (2015)whoreported very low socio-emotional development of the pre-school children in a study on the impact of motor, cognitive, language and socio-emotional development of pre-school children. Another finding revealed that pre-school education environment was the measure of pre-school education quality that is mostly associated with children socio-emotional developmental skill.

The finding of this study showed that observed pre-school education environment have significant influence on children's socio-emotional developmental skill. This result was similarto the finding of Mildred (2017) who conducted a research on the influence of learning facilities on provision of quality education in early childhood development centres in Kenya. The research found out that there was significant relationship between learning facilities and provision of quality ECDE. Majority of public ECDE centres were found not to have enough classes, desks, water, kitchen stores among others. The lack of adequate learning facilities influenced negatively provision of quality education.Also, previous studies before that of Mildred, like Belsky, et al(2007); Howes (2008) and Mashburn, et al (2008) found consistent associations between various aspects of pre-school education quality and improved socio-emotional developmental outcomes for young children.

Furthermore, another finding of this study is that there was significant influence of teachers' area of specialization on children's socio-emotional developmental skill. This is in line with the finding of Bowman, Donovan, and Burns (2001) that children educated by more highly educated teachers with specialized training in child development and early education are more sociable, exhibit more sophisticated use of language, demonstrate greater perseverance and

perform at higher levels on cognitive tasks than those cared for by less-qualified adults. The finding is also in line with Thaibat (2016)who found positive influence of teacher area of specialization on children's socio-emotional and cognitive developmental skills.

Furthermore, this finding showed that there was significant influence of teachers' working experience on children's socio-emotional developmental skill. This is supported byKamau (2016) who studied the influence of teachers' characteristics on pre-school children in learning social skill in Langata District, Nairobi County. The finding of the study revealed that teachers who have been in the profession for a long time easily influenced pre-school children more than those who are fresh from colleges. This may result in helping teachers to develop a close relationship with the children due to their long teaching experience which draws on positive relationship between the teacher and the child.

In addition, the study finds that there is significant influence of teachers' qualification on children's socio-emotional developmental skill. The finding is in consonance with that of Clarke-Stewart (2002) in a non-experimental research and reported that pre-school children under the care of adults with better education and training in child development obtain better results on standardized cognitive tests, concentrate more easily on tasks, and communicate better with adults and among themselves. Subsequently, National Scientific Council on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2004) established that the quality of early relationships between children and the educated teachers in their lives sets the foundation for later developmental outcomes and affects virtually all aspects of their social-emotional, physical, and cognitive developmental skills. The educated teachers and adults around children are the most important contributors to their socio-emotional developmental skill

Another finding of the study is that no significant difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of gender. This finding negate the finding of Natalie, Karalyn, Kathryn and Kenneth (2010) on gender differences in positive social emotional functioning with significant differences between the social and emotional strengths of boys and girls. The effect size suggests that these differences may actually be quite small. They further establish gender differences with externalizing behaviour problems with boys exceeding girls in rates of externalizing problems throughout childhood and adolescence.

Finally, this study foundthere is significant difference in children's socio-emotional developmental skill on the basis of school type. This outcome confirms the finding of Adedigba (2015) in her survey of the physical and social climate of early childhood education learning environment in Kwara State. She found that children's socio-emotional developmental skill was significantly different. Thechildren in private were found to be better than the public. She explained that it could be as a result of the features of physical environment of ECE which differ based on the type of school. She said this can be as a result of funding which is most times is more available in private proprietorship unlike public schools where most facilities needed at this level of education are not adequately provided.

Conclusion

This study examined the influence of pre-school education quality on children's socio-emotional developmental skill in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State. Based on the findings of this study, it can be established that early childhood education environments and teachers characteristics were critical to provision of quality education in pre-primary schools. The study concluded that pre-school environments and teachers characteristics were critical to development of children particularly, on their socio-emotional developmental skill. However, it

can also be concluded that the quality of pre-school education in Dutsin-Ma Local Government as regards the observed pre-school education environment, teachers' area of specialization, teachers' working experience were low and teacher's qualification was higher. Children's socio-emotional developmental skill in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State was on the average and observed pre-school education environment was the measure of pre-school education quality mostly associated with children socio-emotional developmental skill. In addition to that, the observed pre-school education environment, teachers' area of specialization, teachers' working experience and teachers' qualification are all found to have significant influence on children's socio-emotional developmental skill in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State. Therefore, teachers with working experience should be trained in early childhood care and education by attending in-service training, seminars and workshops. This would help to improve the quality of pre-school education in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area of Katsina State.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study the following recommendations are suggested:

1. To reduce the challenges of pre-school education, it is imperative that Federal, State or Local government and communities have a critical role to ensure that observed pre-school education environments are equipped with all the necessary learning materials/facilities and a conducive physical and social climate that can encourage a child-friendly environment in the pre-primary schools in Dutsin-Ma Local Government. This will ensure that children learning in pre-schools are safe and secure while encouraging self-discovery and teamwork in the school.

2. Teachers teaching in pre-schools should be trained in early childhood care and education before being posted to teach in pre-school centres in Dutsin-Ma Local Government

3. There should be training and retraining of teachers in early childhood education through in-service training, seminars and workshops for them to update their knowledge on childhood education.

4. Government and school proprietors should employthe services of professional early childhood education teachers to manage and control the education of pre-primary school children in Dutsin-Ma Local Government Area and Katsina State at large.

5. Teachers should create an enabling environment that supports pre-school children to acquire socio-emotional developmental skill at the early years. This would enable children to relate, interact, communicate and express themselves clearly.

6. Federal government should therefore come up with guidelines requiring pre-schools proprietors to adopt and implement measures to ensure that children are learning in a high quality pre-school environment to encourage developmentally appropriate practice and optimal development among pre-school children.

Limitation of the Study

Although this research was carefully prepared, the researcher is still aware of its limitations and shortcomings. First of all, the time limit only allowed the researcher to work on a single Local Government Area instead of the entire Katsina Central Zone. The data gathered would have been more robust and factual if the entire pre-school education centres in Katsina State were incorporated into the study population.

Secondly, only socio-emotional developmental skill was examined, it would have been more comprehensive if all the aspects of development was looked into. It would have been better if socio-emotional skill of children was observed beyond that. In addition to that, teachers' characteristics such as teachers' salary and training were not captured in the research work.

Suggestions for Further Research

The following suggestions for further research are offered:

a. Similar study should be carried out in other local Government ofKatsina State to enrich the existing literature in the topic.

b. However, as this study centred on public and private pre-school education centres in Katsina State, it is suggests that future researchers should conduct similar study that will cover the entire pre-school centres inKatsina State with a view to obtaining a comprehensive data that covers the whole areas.

c. Other areas of children development like physical, cognitive and language development can also be studied in future researches.

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KWARA STATE UNIVERSITY, MALETE
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

CHILDREN'S SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL SKILL RATING SCALE

(CSEDSRS)

This observational rating scale is designed to elicit information on children's socio-emotional developmental skill. Your sincere rating of the items will help to provide useful guide for this research work. All information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality.
Thank you

Instruction: Please tick (✓) the options that are present as being indicated below.

1. **Pupil's Gender** : **Male ( ) Female ( )**
2. **School type: Public ( ) private ( )**

CHILDREN'S SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENTAL SKILL RATING SCALE (CSDSRC)

S/N	Children Socio-Emotional Developmental Skill	All The Time	Sometimes	Never
	Self-Management. The child is able to:			
1	manages stress			
2	controls impulses			
3	display aggressive behavior			

4	compete with other peers			
5	work toward achieving personal goals			
	Relationship Skills. The child is able to :			
6	communicate clearly			
7	listen to others when they talk			
8	cooperate with other children			
9	negotiate conflict constructively			
10	seek help when needed.			
11	share materials with other children			
12	make friends			
	Social Awareness. The child is able to :			
13	recognize family			
14	recognize school			
15	display empathy towards others			
16	relate well with others from different cultures			
17	Recognize teacher			
	Responsibility/Decision Making. The child is able to :			
18	take turns			
19	make choice independently			
20	interact based on consideration of guidelines			
21	consider the well-being of self			
22	consider the well-being of others			
	Self-Awareness. The child is able to :			
23	demostrate self-confidence			
24	engage in role play activities			
25	obey class rules			

APPENDIX II
KWARA STATE UNIVERSITY, MALETE
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION QUALITY RATING SCALE (PEQRS)

Dear Respondent,

This Rating Scale is designed to elicit information on Observed Pre-school Education Environment (ECE environment). Your response will help to provide useful guide for this research work. All information given will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thank you

Instruction: Please tick (✓) the options that are present as being indicated below.

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION (Teacher's Characteristics)

1. **Teacher Area of specialization**:
   NCE in Early Childhood Education or related area ( )
   NCE in other areas ( ) Arts ( ) Science ( ) Social Sciences
   B.Ed. Early Childhood and Primary ( )
   B.Ed others (specify……………………….), B.A. ( ) B.Sc ( )

2. **Working experience**:   Below 5years ( ) 5-10years ( ) 11-20years ( ) 21-above ( )

3. **Qualification**: SSCE and below ( )   NCE ( ) OND ( )   B.A. Ed/B Sc. Ed ( ) B.A/ B.Sc/HND ( )
   Others ( ) Specify……………………….
4. **Gender: Male ( )   Female ( )**
5. **School type: Public ( ) private ( )**

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION QUALITY RATING SCALE (PEQRS)

Please tick according to the quality of the following in the preschool environment

S/N	ITEMS	Very good	Good	Fair	Poor
	Observed Preschool Environment: There are (is):				
	Outdoor Facilities				
1	Playground with play resources				
2	Equipment for physical activities				
3	Enough space for physical activities				
4	Shades in the environment				
	Health and Safety				
5	Play areas have fences/natural barriers that prevent access to animals, unauthorized people and other hazards				
7	Potable water accessible to children for drinking				
8	Water available for children for hand washing				
9	First aid kits				
10	Fire extinguisher and other safety equipment				
11	Weighing scale				
12	Toilet facilities with segregated female toilets				
14	Classrooms have enough space for children				
15	Rooms not overcrowded with furniture				
16	Waste bin accessible for children to dispose waste				
17	Child-size chairs and tables available				
18	Electric wires and outlets covered				
19	Glass jars/sharp objects/other breakable items put away				

	Indoor Facilities for Learning				
20	Math Area				
21	Literacy Area				
22	Arts and drawing area				
23	Science Area				
24	Role playing Area				
25	Manipulation Area				
26	Music Area				
27	Block play area				
	Parent-teacher Relationship and Social Climate.				
28	Regular interactive visits by parents to the centre				
29	Newsletter with ideas for educational trips, such as local museums and libraries				
30	Participation at PTA				
31	Follow up on children performance				
32	Materials/monetary resource contributions				
33	Family members who are encouraged volunteer during special events				
	Teacher's and Pupils' Activities. In the classroom:				
34	Teachers recite rhyme and encourage children to recite rhyme in relation to the topic.				
35	Teachers provide materials for and encourage individual child to draw and paint.				
36	Teachers mould object and encourages individual child to mould object				
37	Teachers tell and pupils listen to stories.				
38	Teachers and children sing and dance to music in the classroom				
39	Children are encouraged to learn through playing				

	games				
40	Children are allowed to play games, manipulate blocks and other play materials				