

**EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT ON
ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF PRESCHOOL CHILDREN IN
GEM SUB-COUNTY, SIAYA COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Socio-emotional development of preschool children has been established to contribute to academic performance. In Gem Sub-county, academic performance of preschool children has been on a downward trend and has thus been a concern for different education stakeholders. Thus, the main objective of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of socio-emotional development on academic performance reflected through cooperation, interpersonal relationships and communication. The literature was reviewed to establish the effectiveness the mentioned objectives on preschool children's academic performance. This study applied quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study applied explanatory sequential design which involved collecting, analyzing both quantitative and qualitative research. The target population for this study comprised 110 preschool managers, 220 preschool teachers and 1170 preschool children all totaling to 1500. Using The Central Limit Theorem, the researcher sampled 300 respondents, that is, 20% of 1500. The study applied stratified random sampling to create 10 different strata based on the number of zones each consisting of 11 preschools in Gem Sub-county. From each stratum, 30 respondents were sampled with 2 preschool managers, 4 preschool teachers and 24 preschool children were sampled using simple random sampling. Analysis of data obtained was conducted by identifying common themes from the respondents' description of their experiences. The relevant information was broken into phrases or sentences, which reflected a single, specific thought. Data collected was analyzed qualitatively along the objectives and the basic quantitative data was analyzed using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) Test Analysis in Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS Version 21). The findings of the study were presented using tables and percentages. The study established that socio-emotional development contributes immensely to children's academic performance, that is, acquisition of problem solving, creativity, language and basic numeracy skills. It established that cooperation, interpersonal relationships and communication amongst preschool children contributes immensely towards their acquisition of problem solving, creativity, language and basic numeracy skills. It thus recommends that early childhood professionals are encouraged to develop respectful relationships and engage responsively with children and families. They are advised to develop a culture of cooperation and sharing to be emulated by the preschool children for their holistic growth and development. Parents should develop a culture of teamwork and collaboration to help their children develop effective problem solving and creativity skills in mitigating academic challenges. Curriculum planners should design and formulate policies which promote cooperation and positive interpersonal relationships amongst preschool children during their classwork and outdoor academic activities. The government should develop a policy to formally make preschools and early childhood development and education centers comfortable for preschool children by appealing to their socio-emotional development.