

## **PARENTS AND TEACHERS' INFLUENCE ON SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN OYO STATE**



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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study investigated the Parents and Teachers' Influence on Social and Emotional Development of Children with Special Needs in North East and North West Local Government Area of Oyo State. Studies on different areas of development of special needs children abound but on social and emotional development of children with special needs, few have been researched. Social and emotional development of children with special needs was well captured. The influence of parents and teachers on social and emotional development of children with special needs was also explained while contribution of parents and teachers towards the social and emotional development of children with special needs was also explored. Four research questions were raised and answered. Multi-stage sampling procedure was used to select the participants. Four public schools were purposively selected for the study. A total of 200 respondents (teachers and parents) participated. One hundred parents and a hundred teachers were investigated with a structured questionnaire administered to collect data. Descriptive Statistics of Pearson Product Moment Correlation PPMC and regression analysis were used to analyze the data collected. The result revealed that parents and teachers are instrumental in social and emotional development of children with special needs. However, social and emotional development of children with special needs depend largely on the parents' influence more than the teachers. This therefore, suggests that parents need to display positive attitude towards the social and emotional development of children with special needs. It was therefore recommended that parents and teachers should stand up to the task of helping children with special needs improve on their social and emotional development.*

**Keywords:** *Parents, Teachers, Influence, Social, Emotional, Development, Children with Special Needs.*

## **Introduction**

Children spend most of their time with their parents at home and a great deal of time at school which makes the impact of parents and teachers a key factor in their development. Children learn naturally from their parents at home especially the mother and from significant others, more importantly the siblings. Children also learn a lot during the time spent at school as they make serious improvement in their academic and cognitive development, their social and emotional development are not left out. Fazel, Hoagwood, Stephan and Ford, (2014) maintained that time spent in school impact not just on academic and cognitive progress, but also on social interactions, peer relationships, emotional regulation and behaviour, and that all these areas affect their mental health also.

The highly essential and foremost agents of socialisation in the life of a child are undoubtedly the parents. As such, they are conceivably able to positively or negatively influence every aspect of the lives and decision of their children. Parents provide children their very first opportunity to learn how to interact, communicate and make choices. Parents have the highest and the strongest means of influencing their children. Researchers have also confirmed that parents are the first and the most enduring educators in their children's lives. Parents are highly essential and influential in children's life. Kasapi and Gjylymsere (2013) maintained that most children adopt and uphold their parent's values and behaviour, hence, the need for the parent to be extra careful of how they live and what they consciously or otherwise pass across to their children. Parents of children with special needs are faced with numerous social, emotional and likewise psychological traumas as it relates to performance of their roles as care givers to these children. Makgopa and Mokhele (2013) averred that parents of children with special needs are often confronted with various and distinctive challenges in performing their roles as care givers to their children.

Social emotional development does not exist in a vacuum but it is substantially affected by a child's environment, parents nurturing styles and the type of interactions between parents and children. The truth is that there is a detrimental effect of assertive techniques of discipline on children's social emotional development and competence. Eisenberg and Morris (2002) maintained that the authoritative parents have more positive outcomes on social emotional development of children than those with authoritarian patterns of parenting. The emotion-related parenting practices also support the social emotional competence and development in children (Morris, Silk, Steinberg, Myers & Robinson 2007).

Parenting styles often go a long way to influence the development of social and emotional skills in children. Whether a parent is an authoritative parent who set a high standard with clear expectations or an authoritarian parent, who is a disciplinarian by means of a strict discipline parenting style, with some degree of flexibility and less consideration for the child's' freedom, Permissive parent, who is an indulgent parent who typically allows the children do as they like and decide for themselves, act more

like friends rather than parents, or the neglectful parents who are uninvolved and often stay clear of their children's way without a particular discipline style for their children. Each of these parenting styles has a way of either positively or negatively influencing the social emotional development of children. The truth is that warm and responsive parenting style that is characterised by appropriate rules and structure are key factors for the development of several skills especially the social and emotional development in children. Spinrad, Eisenberg, Gaertner, Popp, Smith and Kupper (2007) posited that more responsive mothers produce children who are able to control their behaviours.

Studies on social and emotional development of children had shown that parental involvement is of great importance in the development of various skills in children. Parents that are concerned and have time to fully involve themselves in every stage of development of their children will have positive learning outcome in virtually every area of development in such children. Several studies have confirmed the impact of parents of children with special needs for instance, Ferrara (2009), Gibson and Jefferson (2006) indicate the significant roles of engaging parents of children with special needs in promoting learning outcomes and that children learn substantially from parents efforts. Desforges and Abouchaar (2003), Harris and Chrispeels (2006), also maintained that parents have tremendous impacts on their children's well-being and achievement without consideration of other variables.

Parents react to children's negative emotions in diverse ways. Fabes, Poulin, Eisenberg, and Madden-Derdich (2002), maintained that there are two categories of parental reactions namely supportive and non-supportive. It is worthy to note that culture has a serious effect on parent's reactions to children's emotion. Peoples' culture may define and brings out the consequences of supportive versus non-supportive parental emotion socialization strategies (Wang, 2016). Studies with European American families indicate that parent's non supportive reactions to their children's negative emotions may contribute to adjustment problems among children (Liu, Yang, Fang, Snidman & Tronick 2013). Previous studies have also indicated that warm and supportive parental reactions facilitate children's emotion expression, emotion regulation and social competence while harsh and non-supportive reactions are dangerous to children's socio-emotional development (Fabes et al 2002). A study of Chinese families in China and European American families also confirm that non-supportive reactions were found to negatively impact children's psychological adjustment (Tao, Zhou, & Wang 2010) Studies with U.S families also related parents minimizing and punitive reactions to lower social competence among children and it was found concurrently associated with lower level of social cognition and peer acceptance in children (Jones, Eisenberge, Fabes & Mackinnon 2002). There are recent research evidence found in the longitudinal studies conducted by Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford and Taggart (2004) which emphasises the relationship between parental engagement in children's learning and an improved

cognitive achievement. Parents that devote time to their children's all-round development will always have a positive outcome.

As important as parents are in the social and emotional development of children, and especially children with special needs, teachers are much more indispensable in all round development of every child. Teachers play numerous and critical roles in the development of their students especially those with mental health problems like children with special needs. For instance, teachers can help to identify the areas of problem of each pupil in his/her class, he or she is in the position to identify the particular aspect of mental health in their students and then refer them to appropriate quarters where their mental health needs can be promptly handled. It was reported by Parvi and Hegwer-DiVita (2006) that a research conducted by a group of authors revealed that the ability of teachers to effectively impact the social emotional development of their students will have a positive effect on their academic and social competency.

Critically considering the tight schedule of teachers, one would say that the primary concern of a classroom teacher is to teach and make sure that knowledge is impacted in their students. Teachers epitomize so numerous things to their students, for instance, a mentor, doctor, coach, counsellor, and so on. Fazel et al (2014) posited that if teachers are given the right support, necessary materials and subjected to needed training and also given sufficient time to act their real self out, they can effectively work with mental health specialist, in order to support the well-being of their students and bring the best out of them.

Teachers' social emotional wellbeing is also highly instrumental and an influencing factor in the development of social emotional competence of their students. Kimberly Schonert-Reichl (2017) posited that classrooms with warm teacher-child relationship support deep learning and positive social emotional development among students. This simply means that for students to have an improved social and emotional development, teachers social and emotional wellbeing should be taken care of. Teachers' social and emotional wellbeing have to be improved in order for students to have an improved social emotional development.

Teachers are very instrumental in their students' lives and in the development of different skills that will be useful for them in various areas of life. They help student identify their areas of strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are the engine that drives social emotional development in their students based on various programs and practices they embark on in the classrooms and the school in general (Kimberly, 2017). Teachers that are known as carers who provides encouragements and make concerted effort to show that their student are valued and offer them emotional support, have tendency of positively influencing their social and emotional development (Hallinan, 2008). Teachers determine the attitude and performance of students in the classroom activities and generally the interpersonal relationship among



the entire students in the class. A student that is often shouted down may end up keeping quiet all through in the class.

Teachers can positively influence students' self-confidence and at the same time negatively infringe on a student's self-confidence. Teacher-student relationship plays an important role in social and emotional development and adjustment to various classroom activities. However, most teachers lack the understanding of classroom management skills and practices that can easily impact and improve on social and emotional development of their students.

### **Social Emotional Development**

Social emotional development of every child is as important as the academic performance cum achievement of such a child. It is also known as non-cognitive life skills which are dependent on the context of operations. It is therefore important to take the development of social and emotional aspect of every child serious. It represents the set of behaviours, values and attitude that enables individuals to approach interpersonal relationships and social situations appropriately (Guerra, Nancy, Kathryn Modecki & Cunningham, 2014). Elias and Arnold (2006) maintained that the training of social and emotional aspect of development in children is related to the students' high academic achievement, motivation and the display of socially acceptable behaviour. Adequate social emotional skills and the development of same do not only improve, but result in successful academic performance in students and also brings about overall life success which make student feel good and happier about their performance (Borghans, Lex, & Ron, 2014).

### **Statement of the Problems**

Several researches on different areas of development in persons with special needs abound, but few have delved into the aspect of social and emotional development of persons with special needs together. The development of several skills is paramount to fulfilment of life and destiny of children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SENDS). However, the wrong impression that those persons with special needs are not to be accorded same treatment like their counterparts without any disability had longed limited the spread of several researches on their social and emotional development. This study therefore, investigated the influence of parents and teachers on social and emotional development of persons with special needs.

### **Research Questions**

In order to achieve the objectives of the study, the following research questions were answered **RQ1:** What are the relationships between Parents' influence and Teachers' influence on the Social and Emotional development of children with Special needs in Oyo State?

**RQ2:** What are the composite contributions of Parents' influence and Teachers' influence on the Social and Emotional development of children with Special needs in Oyo State?

**RQ3:** What are the relative contributions of Parents' influence and Teachers' influence on the Social and Emotional development of children with Special needs in Oyo State?

### **Research Design**

The study adopted the descriptive research statistics that investigated the influence of parents and teachers on social and emotional development of persons with SENDs. Data were collected from the respondents (parents and teachers) based on the constructs investigated, no variable was manipulated. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and regression analysis were used to analyze the data collected.

### **Population**

The target populations for this study were all the parents of persons with special needs and the special teachers. Two hundred parents and teachers were respondents for this study. One hundred parents and a hundred teachers to be specific, parents of children with special needs and special teachers were included, the parenting style of each parent differs, so also the teaching styles and socio emotional status of each teacher in order to have the right perspective of the study.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

Two hundred respondents were purposively selected for the purpose of this study. One hundred parents of children with special needs and one hundred teachers who had been certified and had been practicing in the classroom. There are several schools both public and privates but not all schools have qualified teachers. Five public government special schools with qualified teachers were selected using random sampling technique. The parents were also contacted through the teachers and their children. Simple random sampling technique was used to select twenty respondents (parents) from each school with the help of the teachers who help to distribute the questionnaire to the parents of students with special needs in their classes having been told the purpose of the study. Simple random sampling technique was also used to select twenty respondents (certified and experienced teachers) from each of the schools making two hundred respondents.

### **Instruments**

Structured questionnaires tagged parents and teacher's influence on social emotional development of persons with special needs  $r = 0.73$  designed by the researchers were used for the purpose of this study. The questionnaire is a four point

scale structured to investigate the influence of parents and teachers on social and emotional aspects of development of their children and students respectively.

### **Research Procedure**

The study was conducted in five schools in Ibadan. The researchers distributed the questionnaires to both the parents and the teachers in the selected schools to elicit responses from them. The researchers were able to contact the selected parents through the assistance of the teachers in the selected schools who have been consulted about the primary aim of the study. Parents of children with special needs were included in the study and likewise qualified and certified teachers were also included in the study.

### **Methodology**

The descriptive research design was used for this study; the researchers have no control over the variables of interest and therefore were not manipulated. The population for this study consist 200 parents and teachers of children with special needs in Oyo State. A self-developed questionnaire tagged Parents and Teachers' Influence on Social and Emotional Development Questionnaire (PTSEDQ) was used for the study. It is divided into two sections namely Sections A & B. Section A contained 15 items measuring the parents' influence on social and emotional development of children with special needs while Section B contained 15 items measuring the teachers' influence on social and emotional development of children with special needs. The validity of the instrument was determined by ensuring that items are closely related to the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was pre-tested outside the scope to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. Data obtained from the pilot study were subjected to appropriate reliability statistics analysis (Cronbach Alpha reliability methods) and reliability co-efficient was obtained as parents' influence ( $r=0.78$ ), teachers' influence ( $r=0.88$ ) which indicates that the instrument used were reliable. The statistical test of frequency counts and simple percentage was used to analyse the respondents characteristics, while Mean and standard deviation, frequency, percentage Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression was used to analyse the three research questions.

### **Results**

The result of the research carried out on the Parents' and Teachers' influence on Social and Emotional development of children with special needs in Oyo State goes thus. Three research questions were formulated and used. The data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Regression Analysis. The summary of data analysis is discussed below

**Research Questions**

**RQ1:** What are the relationships among Parents influence and Teachers' influence on the Social and Emotional development of children with Special needs in Oyo State?

**Table 1: Inter-correlation Matrix of independents and dependent variables**

Variable	Social Emotional development	Parents influence	Teachers influence
Social Emotional development	1		
Parents influence (P value )	.365** .000	1	
Teachers' influence (p value)	.720** .000	.362** .000	1
<b>Mean</b>	<b>48.04</b>	<b>40.72</b>	<b>41.24</b>
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>11.50</b>	<b>7.67</b>	<b>7.75</b>

\*\* Significant at  $p < 0.05$ , \* significant at  $p < 0.01$

Table 1 showed that there was a significant relationship among parents' influence and teachers' influence on the social and emotional development of children with special needs in Oyo State. Parental Influence ( $r = .365$ ,  $N = 200$ ,  $p < .05$ ), and Teachers' influence ( $r = .720$ ,  $N = 200$ ,  $p < .05$ ) has significant relationship with the social and emotional development of children with special needs. It implies that, there was a significant relationship among parents' influence and teachers' influence on the social and emotional development of children with special needs in Oyo State.

**RQ2:** What are the composite contributions of Parents influence and Teachers' influence on the Social and Emotional development of children with Special needs in Oyo State?

**Table 2: Summary of Regression Analysis of prediction of the Parents influence and Teachers' influence on the Social and Emotional development of children with Special needs in Oyo State**

.R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate			
0.728	0.531	0.526	7.919			
SUMMARY REGRESSION ANOVA						
	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	P	Remark
Regression	122.844	2	6981.667	111.33	0.000	P<0.05 Sig.
Residual	12353.422	197	62.708			
Total	26316.500	199				

Table 2 showed that there are composite contributions of the independent variable (Parents influence and Teachers' influence) and the dependent variable (Social and Emotional development) of children with special needs in Oyo State. The table shows coefficient of multiple correlations (R) of 0.728 a multiple R square of 0.531. This means that 52.6% (Adj. R<sup>2</sup>=0.526) of the variance in the (Social and Emotional development) of children with special needs in Oyo State is accounted for by the independent variables, when taken together. The significance of the joint contribution was tested at p<0.05 using the F-ratio at the degree of freedom (df-2/197). The table also showed that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded F-ratio of 111.337. The above is significant at 0.05 levels. It implies that there is a composite contribution of Parents influence and Teachers' influence on the Social and Emotional development of children with special needs in Oyo State.

**RQ3:** What are the relative contributions of Parents influence and Teachers' influence on the Social and Emotional development of children with Special needs in Oyo State?

**Table 3: Relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variables (Test of significance of the regression coefficients)**

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Remark
	(B)	Std. Error	Beta			
Model	(B)	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Remark
Constant	.651	3.657	-	.178	.859	-
Parents' influence	.181	.079	.120	2.300	.023	P<0.05(Sig.)
Teachers' influence	1.002	.078	.676	12.915	.000	P<0.05(Sig.)



Table 3 revealed that there a significant relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights. There is relative coefficient of Parents influence and Teachers' influence on the Social and Emotional development of children with special needs. Using the standardized regression coefficient to determine the relative contributions of the independent variables, Teachers' influence ( $\beta = 0.676$ ,  $t= 12.915$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) indicates most potent contributor to the prediction, follow by Parents' influence ( $\beta =0.120$ ,  $t= 2.300$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) which has relative contribution to the social and emotional development of children special needs. This implies that there is a significant relative contribution of the independent variable (Parents' influence and Teachers' influence) and the dependent variable (Social and Emotional development) of children with special needs.

### **Conclusion**

Social and emotional development plays a more significant role in all round development of every child, and more importantly in aspect of learning and academic performance of all children especially children with special needs. From the findings of this paper, it can be concluded that parents and teachers are the main agents of influence in social emotional development of every child, therefore, parents are to rise up to their responsibilities of helping their children by being directly involved in affairs that concerns their children such that an appropriate social and emotional skills could be developed on which platform a stable lifestyle could be formed. For children to be quite pensive in decision making, handling relationships, and performing wonderfully well academically budes on the result of what they have learnt either from the home or from the classroom or possibly by being sapient which cannot be developed by staying aloof. Possessing a great level of wisdom and great academic performance is possibly as a result of being well nurtured by parent or passing through great teachers of repute. Teachers are therefore, encouraged to be mindful of what they teach, how they teach and more importantly their interactions, words and attitudes towards their students.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Parents are to rise up to their responsibilities of being fully involved in matters that affect the development of various skills in their children. They are to be intentional in development and promotion of various skills in their children especially children with special needs.
2. Parents are to be mindful of their parenting style, in as much as it is not good enough to be a kind of neglectful parent, it is not also rewarding to be too harsh on children they can withdraw to their shell and have problem with social competency and eventually become emotionally unstable.

3. Teachers are also encouraged to be mindful of their classroom management, work on their own social emotional skills and be more friendly with their students, this will afford them the opportunity of having the right perspective of how to handle each child with his/her peculiarity'
4. Teachers are to be careful of what and how they teach, their teaching styles, their utterances to the weak ones especially children with special needs in their classroom should be guided. The classroom environment should be arranged and made placid such that every child will love, and be ready to learn.

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