

**IMPACT OF PLAY MATERIALS ON SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT
OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN NGEWA ZONE, KIAMBU COUNTY.**

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**A RESEARCH PROJECT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE
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EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN THE DEPARTMENT
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UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI**

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

Date..... Sign.....

WAWERU JOYCE WANGUI

This project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the University supervisor.

Date..... Sign.....

DR. AGNES KIBUI

DEDICATION

This document is dedicated to my husband, George W. Kimani, and my daughter, Ivy Wambui Waweru.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

NACECE	:	National Centre for Early Childhood Education
K.I.E	:	Kenya Institute of Education
UNICEF	:	United Nations Children Funds
ECE	:	Early Childhood Education
MDGs	:	Millennium Development Goals
UNESCO	:	United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNDP	:	United Nation Development Programme
EFA	:	Education For All

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find out the Impact of play materials on social emotional development of preschool children in Ngewa Zone, Kiambu County. The objectives included identifying the types of play materials given to preschool children in order to enhance social emotional development, establishing the availability of play materials in preschools used to enhance social emotional development and to investigate the safety measures put in place on play materials to enhance social emotional development of preschool children. The study used qualitative research which was descriptive and details were given in words. The accessible population was ten preschools, ten teachers and three hundred learners whereby simple random sampling technique was employed to identify respondents. Research instruments used included questionnaires, interviews and an observation schedule. Presentations of research findings was done using data analysis charts, tables, bar graphs, percentages, and frequencies which reveals that play materials have a net positive effect on social emotional development of preschool children. The study recommended that head teachers of respective preschools should have adequate play materials for children. Furthermore, the Ministry of Education should formulate adequate policies that would ensure all public and private preschools are funded enough to purchase, install and ensure availability of play materials in preschools. .

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Education is the process through which knowledge; skills, attitudes and values are imparted for the purpose of integrating the individual in a given society. Knowledge is based upon experience and therefore using play materials is the main path to learning Froebe (1887) had this in mind when he asserted that: “play is the first means of development of the human mind, its first effort to make acquaintance with the outward world, to correct original experiences from things and facts and to exercise the powers of body and mind” (Rueben 2006:1).

Some preschools do not provide the learners with play materials and sometimes they are inadequate. In a research done on play activities among zero to eight years old Kipsigis children by Sarah Chepkemboi Mutai (2003:2), the researcher found out that play activities were not adequate in preschools and play materials were few. In a research on participation of preschool children in guided play in Magumoni Education Zone by Ndere, 2003 as cited by Reuben (2006:1), the school had play materials which were very old and worn out which could cause harm to preschool children. The researcher intends to investigate whether Ngewa zone, Kiambu County has any problems of inadequate play materials in preschools.

The convention on the Rights of the Child 1989; Article 28, recognised the child's right to education. The state parties were advised to provide basic, compulsory and free education to all. This would provide equal opportunity to all people in the world. The convention further recommended children's right to play and recreation activities which mostly use play materials that enhance social-emotional development. World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien, 1990) supported the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the convention on the right of the child also emphasizes education as a right.

The forum emphasized that all children, young people and adults should benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs. African charter on the rights and welfare of the child (1999), Article 11, stated that every child in Africa has a right to education in order to promote and develop the child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities to their fullest potential. Africa was really committed to provide universal education in their states.

Dakar Framework for Action (2000) was organized in Senegal to deliberate issues of education. It went ahead to re-affirm the vision of the World Declaration on Education for All (Jomtien 1990). All the 193 member states of the United Nations agreed to achieve universal primary education as part of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) targeting the year 2015. The concerned of the international communities on education issues is a clear indication that there is a gap in achieving universal education to all globally.

The Kenya Vision 2030 is the nation's new development blue print from 2008 to 2030 which aims at making Kenya a middle income country providing high quality life for all its citizens by year 2030. The education goals of the 2030 vision are to provide globally competitive quality education, training and research for development. This is to be achieved through reducing illiteracy by increasing access to education and increasing enrolment in all levels of education. In the vision 2030 project, the Kenyan government has specified the implementation strategies which include integrating early childhood into primary education. Kenya, like many Africa countries, has not been able to provide universal education to its population.

According to the National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE, 2000:1), early childhood education enhances holistic development in children. The growth process includes physical, social, emotional, spiritual and mental development. Children join preschool with a wealth of ideas and experiences from home which the teacher should build upon to guarantee a well-coordinated link between the home and the school. (NACECE 2000) stated that in order to stimulate learning and health growth development, children should be provided with suitable materials, guidance, motivation and care by teachers and the community. The materials used for play enhance learning and total growth for the child especially on social-emotional development skills. The preschool children learn through observation and manipulation of materials. Play materials are fundamental in learning of pre-schoolers but the government has not yet allocated funds to purchase or develop play materials in Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres. The issues of the ECE centres are left to parents and members of the

community. Parents who are financially low economically might not be able to provide or cannot afford play materials for their children, yet they are necessary for their learning. According to Mood (1999), an important aspect of education is providing a program of activities using play materials to help in socialization of an individual. As we are living in the age of social conflict, it is highly important that teachers use every means possible to instil positive social habit in children through physical activities. The Kamunge report on the Presidential Working Party on Education and Manpower Training for the Next Decade and beyond (1988), states that the government of Kenya recognises the importance of preschool education. The Working Party considers preschool education to be important in the growth and development of children, especially in laying a foundation of the child's life in education and socialization process. According to Kamunge (1988), the commission recommended expansion of preschool education, training of preschool teachers, management and curriculum development through NACECE in partnership with Kenya Institute of Education, now Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development.

According to Gichuba, Opatsa and Nguchu (2009:94), the importance of play materials includes promoting social emotional skills and language development. Total growth and development is enhanced by use of play materials. They also enhance learning and creativity in children through manipulation. According to NACECE (2000), children pay a lot of attention to materials that look attractive and appealing. This increases their attention span, hence promoting concept acquisition and social emotional skills.

According to Mwangi and Shigali (2009), the joy of children is to see different play materials as they get the freedom to choose what they want. A variety of play materials cater for children's different interests and also for individual differences. Mwangi and Shigali (2009), explains the importance of various centres of learning which includes home and market corners. The assorted materials including utensils, shoes, clothes, furniture models and some foods as children interact with them to enhance role play.

According to Gichuba, Opatsa and Nguchu (2009:85) play materials have profound effects on early childhood education. Froebel emphasized on play using play materials together with occupational activities. Preschool children should be engaged in productive and creative activities.

Froebel (1782-1827) believed that relationships and interaction using play material develops intelligence, character and harmony among children. He allowed children to use wooden blocks and gifts (balls). This enhanced social learning. However, to many Froebel critics, the activities seem more like play than school work. According to Kamen (2005) relationships and interactions between preschool children and play materials enhances warmth, friendliness and caring attitudes among children. The play materials also promote and develop positive behaviours, communication and social skills among themselves.

The researcher found it necessary for children to use play materials during play in developing social learning skills. The ECE centres are not funded by the government. This creates a gap in provision of play materials in ECE centres. The funding of ECE

centres by different sponsors creates the gap. They includes parents, communities, non-governmental organization, faith based organisation and private individuals. This disparity in funding causes inequity in provision of play materials. The researcher intended to investigate the effect of play materials on social emotion development of preschool children. The researcher wished to identify the types of play materials given to preschool children to enhance social emotional development. The researcher also will establish availability and safety measures put in place on play materials. Due to disparities in play materials provision of social emotional development is highly affected. According to the Kenya constitution and the children's Act 2001, both documents support international laws on children's right to education, play and recreation. After the research findings in Ngewa zone, Kiambu County, the researcher will forward the findings to relevant authorities in the Ministry of Education and advice how to enhance social emotional development in preschool children using play materials in Ngewa zone.

1.2 Statement of the problem

According to Mwangi and Shigali (2009), children construct their own knowledge through individual interaction with play materials. The children need to socially interact with play materials. In Ngewa zone, Kiambu County, the sponsors determine the provision of play materials in each preschool depending on the funds allocated to them. Due to these disparities, the effect of play materials on social emotional development of preschool children is adversely affected. They don't receive uniform provision of play materials. According to National Centre for Early Childhood Education (NACECE, 2000) children's exposure to various play materials in the classroom and outdoor

activities help them develop social emotional skills. Those schools with poor funding from their sponsors remain disadvantaged.

In a research on the impact of play materials on the cognitive development of preschool children: Case study of St. Joseph preschool, Nairobi by Faith Waithera (Reuben 2006), play materials used in preschool were inadequate. The preschools don't receive the same types of play materials, availability of play materials is irregular and safety measure put in place do no guarantee safety of pre-school children. Therefore, the researcher found a gap in the effect of play materials on social emotional development of preschool children, in Ngewa zone, Kiambu County.

1.3 Purpose of the study

Preschool children learn better when they handle and play with a variety of play materials as stated by NACECE (2000). Play materials are a source of social interaction among pre-schoolers. The purpose of this study was to investigate effects of play materials on social emotional development of preschool children in Ngewa zone, Kiambu County.

1.4 Research Objectives

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

- i. To identify the types of play materials given to preschool children in order to enhance social emotional development.
- ii. To establish the availability of play materials in preschools used to enhance social emotional development.

- iii. To investigate the safety measures put in place on play materials to enhance social emotional development of preschool children.

1.5 Research questions

This study sought to answer the following questions:

- i. What effect do the types of play materials have on social emotional development of preschool children?
- ii. How does the availability of play materials affect social emotional development of preschool children?
- iii. How do the safety measures put in place on play materials does enhances social emotional development of preschool children?

1.6 Significance of the study

The findings are expected to benefit the preschool children, teachers, parents, education planners and policy makers. The allocation of sufficient play materials in preschools insight be improved. The stakeholders insight increase sensitization and create awareness on importance of play materials on social emotional development of preschool children.

The parents and guardians are also expected to acquire knowledge on the importance of providing play materials both at home and in preschools. The education planners and policy makers are expected to allocate more funds in play materials from the central government to enhance social emotional development of preschool children.

1.7 Limitations

The limitations of my study include sample size which is ten out of thirty one preschools in the zone and different categories of preschools both public and private which are not fund equally. Therefore the finding could not be generalized for the entire Ngewa Zone, Kiambu County.

1.8 Delimitation of the study

The targeted population were thirty one preschools, nine hundred pupils and twenty four teachers in Ngewa Zone. The study focused on impact of play materials on social emotional development to preschool children.

1.9 Assumption of the study

The study assumed all preschools use play materials, all the preschool teachers are trained and use recommended methodology to teach preschool children. The study assumed that every preschool child uses play materials and the preschools have playgrounds. The researcher assumed that tools used to collect data will give accurate and reliable information, which may not be the case.

1.10 Definition of significant terms

Learner

A learner is a school going child between the ages of three to six years

Preschool

This is a formal learning institution of children between age three and six years.

Play

Play is a pure and natural mode of learning through which children achieve harmony through activities

Play materials

These are items and equipment used during play by both teacher and learners in order to enhance child's holistic development which includes toys, balls, ropes, swings, tyres and dolls.

Social emotional development

Skills children develop that allow them to interact with others (e.g. playing, responding to adults and other children) and to express their feelings, ideas, empathy. The skills also enable them to manage their frustrations and disappointments easily. They enable children nurture positive relationship among others as they use play materials. The research will identify the types of play materials given to preschools to enhance social emotional development.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the review of literature relating to the research problem. This study reviews social learning theory by Albert Bandura, effects of play materials on social emotional development, types of play materials, creative art play materials, language play materials, mathematical play materials, music and drama, dance play materials, science play materials, outdoor play materials, indoor play materials, safety measures on play materials, availability of play materials in preschool, theoretical framework and conceptual framework.

2.2 Social learning theory by Albert Bandura

The theory states that children learn through observation and imitation as they observe their model. According to Bandura (1969), social behaviour displayed is learned primarily by observing and imitating the actions of others. The social behaviour is also influenced by being rewarded or punished for actions following also a response, the reinforcement by observation will greatly influence occurrence of behaviour in the future, as Kiruki (2011:10) concur with Bandura (1969).

2.3 Effects of play materials on social emotional development

According to the Kenya Institute of Education (2008:13), play materials are used by both the teacher and learner in order to enhance child's holistic development. According to the National Centre for Early Childhood Education (2000:135), social development refers

to different behaviours and characters which include kindness, cooperation, happiness, withdrawal and sadness. (Kamen 2000:135) also describes emotional development as different ways of mental reactions and adjustment, these include what is heard, seen, felt, tasted or touched. Emotional behaviours include joy, anger, fear and shame.

The study was used to find out the effectiveness of play materials in enhancing social emotional development.

2.4 Social emotional development

Effects of play materials on social emotional of preschool children help in acquiring life skills. According to Kamen (2005:57) play materials when used by preschool children in play enhances social development which includes social skills, behaviour patterns, self-control, discipline, independence awareness of self in relation to other positive relationship by understanding needs and rights of others. The children moral concept in making decision based on individual maturity is enhanced.

According to Gichuba, Opatsa and Nguchu (2009:40), play materials enable the preschool children learn turn taking when sharing play materials like slides or swings. The preschool children learn to cooperate with other children. Through interaction with play materials, learners learn rules required in using them. Self-confidence is raised when the preschool children use play materials correctly and are cheered by others. They also raise their self-esteem when they win a game using puzzles. The study will investigate the claim through observation as preschool children interact with play materials.

According to Kamen (2005) play materials enable preschool children to make joint decisions and have a sense of belonging and are able to control their temperament. Kiruki (2011:12) states that preschool children develop and satisfy their needs, desires, and feelings as they interact with their environments. As preschool children interact with play materials, they become less egocentric as they understand feelings, needs and rights of others. Play materials increases their awareness in issues relating to fairness and justice.

According to Kenya Institute of Education (2008), play materials enhance social interaction and leadership skills in preschool children, makes play enjoyable, sustains preschool children's interest and builds self-esteem. The research suggests provision of play materials should be consistent and change the different varieties often to avoid boredom. The play materials make the class to be pupil or Learner centred, independent and participate in group work. The play materials motivate learners because they arouse, direct and maintain behaviour of a child towards a goal. The preschool children are able to solve problems by themselves when stuck as stated by Gichuba, Opatsa and Nguchu (2009:16). Emotionally, the children acquire feelings for others; an example is whereby a learner accidentally kicks another child and says sorry, showing that he minds the welfare of others. Children also learn to forgive when wronged, as observed by the researcher.

2.5 Types of play materials

According to Gichuba, Opatsa and Nguchu (2009:89) types of play materials include audio – visual, which produce sound and pictures like a television, audio and tactile.

Audio are materials that produce sound for example, radio. Visual materials need the sense of sight to be utilized only for example flash cards and tactile materials can be manipulated like toys, dolls, clay and blocks of wood.

2.5.1 Creative art play materials

According to Gichuba, Opatsa, and Nguchu (2009:39), creativity in preschool children is enhanced through manipulation of materials. According to Kenya Institute of Education (2008), activities that need play materials include modelling, painting, printing, colouring, tracing, drawing, pasting and sticking, construction and tearing apart different materials. The play materials that are used include clay, brushes, paint, crayons, coins, glue, pieces of paper and blocks. NACECE (2000) states that play materials enable preschool children to appreciate their own and other people's cultures. They display their social emotional skills. According to Kiruki (2011:17), sand can be used by children in wet and dry form to create an imaginary environment which includes roads, rivers, mountains, hills and valleys. Sand tray enables children to learn how to play actively together and share their imaginative experiences. The collage pictures can be made using sand and sound can be made using shakers. Water usage enhances creativity. It can be transformed into ice, colouring and bubbles. Strips of papers can be used in weaving. Potato print can be used to make patterns on pieces of papers. Clay and modelling dough are used for modelling while a blunt pair of scissors is used to cut papers and fabrics. Painting and drawing is done using pencils, felt pens, wax and crayon. This enables children to appreciate others' work.

2.5.2 Language play materials

According to NACECE (2008:60) language is a tool of communication through which one is able to express his or her feelings, emotions, desires and ideas. Children learn well with a lot of enjoyment when provided with sufficient toys and materials. They develop their vocabulary, social interaction skills and appreciate other people's cultural activities. According to Kamen (2005), the language play material includes toy phones, puppets, play costumes, pictures, flash cards, storybooks, pictures, movable book cases, round table, chairs, magazines, flannel board accessories, letters and numbers. Play materials enable preschool children to acquire vocabularies in language which are used to display social emotional skills.

2.5.3 Mathematics playing materials.

According to Kiruki (2011), maths involves activities of classification, numbers and measurement. The play materials are used to develop the skills involved.

According to NACECE (2000:134) the play materials are used for sorting, grouping, construction, counting, threading, colouring, and enjoyment. The preschool children develop social emotional skills as they learn to share play materials. They also learn to appreciate each other's work and enjoy working together. The study established the above having interacted with learners. Some of the play materials used in mathematics are solid blocks, cylinders, triangles, board, signs, animals and figures of people.

2.5.4 Music playing materials

According to Kiruki (2011) music and dance involves body movement and rhythm. NACECE (2000:1) grouped play materials in several categories which include percussions, wind, and string instruments, drums and costumes. The percussions, wind, and string instruments include shakers, strikers and grinders. The preschool children develop social, interaction and leadership skills. According to Gichuba Opatsa and Nguchu (2009:95) teamwork skills are developed as these different instruments are played together to produce sweet melody and harmony. NACECE (2000) states that children are able to appreciate their culture and other people's culture for the instruments are from diversified communities. As they play the instruments, they enjoy, express themselves and soothe their emotions. The costumes enable preschool children to appreciate cultural heritage, enjoy music as they dance, build confidence as they sing and dance together as a team. Others include piano, record player, tape recorder and autoharp.

2.5.5 Science play materials

According to Kenya Institute of Education (2008:22), science involves experimentation, observation, classifying and recording. Kamen (2005) states that playing material include sand, water, dishpans, containers, measuring cups, spoons, aprons, glass aquariums, pet cages, insect cages, magnifying glasses, butterfly net, thermometer, electrical board, compass, pulleys, levers, rocks, shells, prisms and other measuring tools. According to NACECE (2000), play materials enable preschool children to practice role play, cooking, and service activities which include blowing, floating, sinking, filling, emptying and cooking. The preschool children learn cooperation, sharing, turn taking,

and responsibilities in division of labour, leadership, recording and observation skills. The play materials enhance social emotional skills.

2.5.6 Outdoor play materials

According to Gichuba, Opatsa and, Nguchu (2009), these play materials used outside the classroom. These materials can be put into two groups: mobile materials and fixed play equipment. Gichuba, Opatsa and, Nguchu (2009) state that movable materials can be moved from one position to another in a bid to use them. They include ropes, balls, rings, tyres, toy cars and hoops. Fixed play materials or equipments are not movable from their position. They include swings, slides, climbing frames and sea-saws. NACECE (2000) states that outdoor play materials enhance preschool children to develop sharing and turn taking skills. They create a spirit of adventure. The study will identify the types of outdoor play materials in preschools.

2.5.7 Indoor play materials

According to Kiruki (2011) indoor play materials are teaching and learning materials used by both the teacher and preschool children inside the classroom. Gichuba, Opatsa and Nguchu (2009:95), describe these play materials as they comprise of small coloured blocks, books, cards, dolls, charts, drums, dresses utensils, and packet cut outs. Preschool children enjoy carrying them to their convenient positions. As children manipulate these play materials they reinforce the skills and concepts learned. They enhance social emotional development. Researcher opinion is that considering types of play materials prevent giving children irrelevant materials which might be boring.

2.6 Safety measures put in place on play materials

Safety is being free from harm. According to Kamen (2005:95) safety is a state of not being in danger. He further explains that it is essential to provide preschool children with play materials that have weight and height appropriate for their age and level of development. Kamen (2005) explains that the serviceable play materials should be inspected regularly to facilitate replacement of the faulty ones, to mend or repair the broken so as to prevent accidents. Floors should be appropriate to avoid slips and falls. Sharp objects should be moved away. Kamen also recommends that any spilt play materials like paint, water or glue should be wiped immediately to prevent falls.

According to Gichuba, Opatsa, and Nguchu (2009:37), free movement of teachers and children between the equipment can be enhanced by leaving adequate space in between. Sharp, projecting parts and peeling points should be repaired or replaced to ensure safety. Swings and sea-saws should be oiled regularly. Gichuba, Opats,a and Nguchu (2009) further recommends that stuffed play materials like bean bags should be well finished to avoid spilling and finding their ways into the children's eyes, mouth or ears.

According to NACECE (2000:44), climbing structures like frames should not be above two metres. The caretaker or teacher must be around when the preschool children are climbing the frames. The children should avoid overcrowding and staying under them. The ropes used on swings must be firmly tied to ensure safety. NACECE (2000), further recommends that children should hold firmly when balancing the see saw and merry go round equipment. The tunnels equipment materials should be strong with a well finished surface. The preschool children should not play under culvert where cars are passing

because it is dangerous. According to Gilled (1975), the teacher should avoid play materials or equipment with small pieces that can be swallowed. The storage area should be kept tidy and clean to avoid diseases. Safety measures should be put in place to avoid accidents. The learner should be allowed to interact and relate well with play materials. This gives him or her opportunity to learn and experience various skills.

The researcher's view is that play materials should be provided to pre-school children because material provision helps in stimulating young children's physical, mental, social emotional, moral and spiritual development. Froebel as cited by Kiruki (2011) emphasised the role of spontaneous use of toys in play as they help the child to learn. He explained that the best way to ensure the preschool children enjoy their learning is to allow them to use toys as they play. The preschool children are able to bring out their inner feelings and develop their potential. The preschool children also discover and explore while using play materials provided by the teacher or caretaker.

2.7 Availability of play materials in pre-school

Availability of play materials refers to supply of needed materials in pre-school. According to NACECE (2000) the teacher can improvise materials which are readily available locally. The availability of play materials stimulates imagination, creativity and self-reliance in a child. According to Gichuba, Opatsa, and Nguchu (2009) materials that are locally available are highly recommended as opposed to those which are bought. Locally available resources are simple and can be replaced faster. The researcher's view

is that if most of the play materials are produced locally it can be cheaper and available in most preschools in Ngewa Zone, Kiambu County.

2.8 Theoretical framework

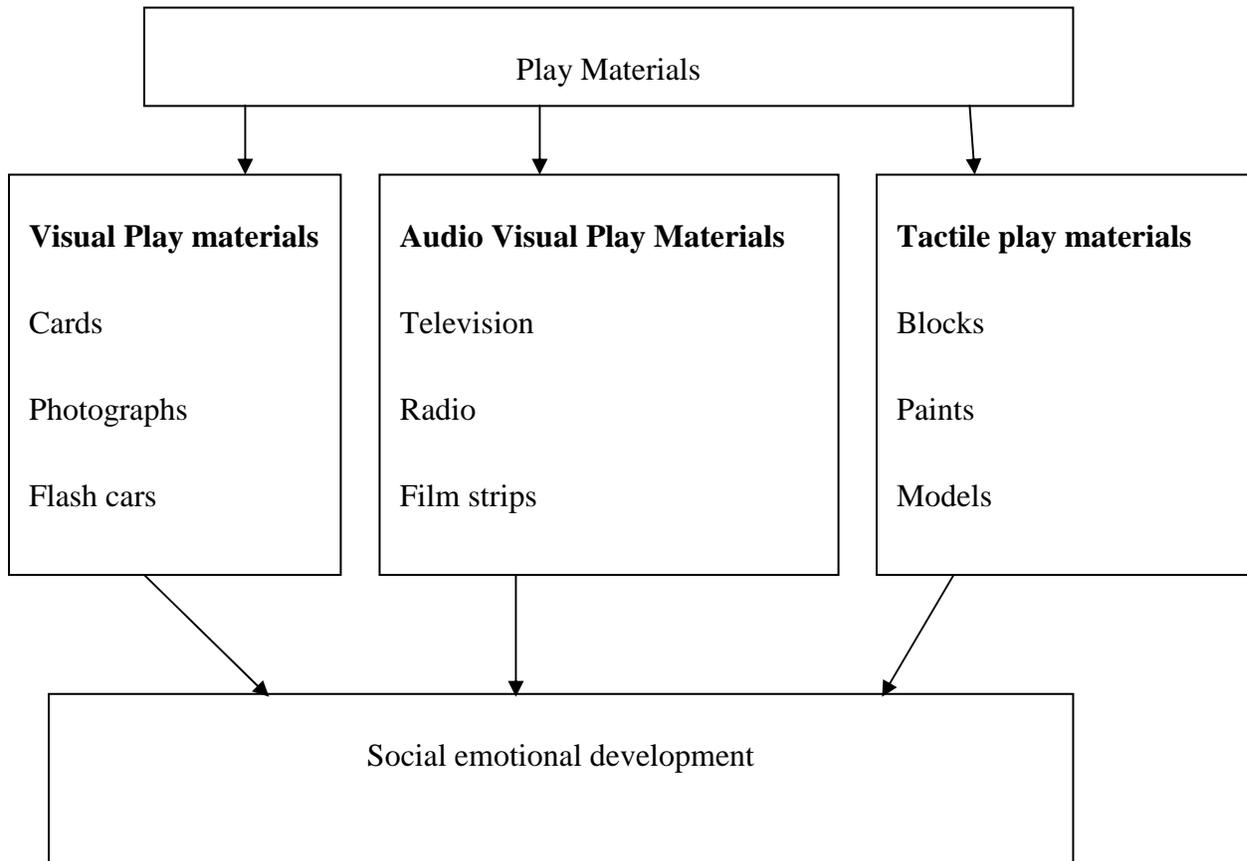
The theory that implies on play materials and social emotional developments is social learning theory by Albert Bandura (1969). It states that children learn through observation and imitating their model. The children develop positive or negative behaviour in society after they observe their models. A child who observes aggression will be hostile while one watching people sharing will share.

Froebel (1885) also emphasised on social learning through construction using wood blocks and gifts (balls, toys). He emphasised that children had to manipulate objects like blocks in order to learn. As children manipulate and interact with play materials, they gain new experiences and share with others. They also construct and learn new skills and knowledge within themselves which enhances their social skills. The observed and learned behaviour by children can be seen in how children treat their dolls or toys. A kind child treat it dolls with kindness while rough children bang and destroy play materials. The children who observe violence in their lives tend to pass the same to their play materials by violently destroying them. Therefore, play materials are important in social emotional development of preschool children because they can be used to shape behaviour of the children as they can be trained to exhibit acceptable behaviours to their play materials and others.

2.9 Conceptual framework

Relationship and interaction between play materials on social emotional development of preschool children.

Figure 2.10: Summary of Literature Review



2.10 Summary of literature Review

According to (Albert Bandura 1969) on social learning theory, children imitate their models. Froebel (1885) stated social learning through construction using blocks and other gifts (balls and toy) enhances social emotional development. The opinion of the research is that socialization in life of a child is very important. As children interact freely with play materials, their experiences mould their character. It is important for all

preschool children to be provided with play materials because the main business of the child is to play using playing materials. The emotional development of minding about the others' feelings enhances harmony among the children as they share, take turns and assist those who are hurt. The researcher feels play materials should be provided in all preschools. The safety measures put on play materials is paramount. Availability of play materials is a must in a pre-school class. Types of play materials should be carefully selected. Relevant play materials interest and enhance pre-school children's social emotional development. Effects of play materials are important in child holistic development.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with research design, target population, sample, sampling techniques, research instruments, questionnaires, interviews schedule, observation, instrument validity, instrument reliability, data collection and procedure and data analysis techniques.

3.2 Research design

The researcher used qualitative research design. The research was conducted in its natural setting. The questionnaires were issued on respondents in their preschools. The researcher conducted the interviews and observations in the same environment where both teachers and children were working from. The researcher was able to observe children as they interacted with play materials. The researcher collected data in the respondents' natural settings where the behaviour was taking place. The survey research design was used as a methodology because the sample was from several preschools. It was a cross sectional survey where research data was collected at the same time.

3.3 Target population of the study

The researcher used simple random sampling technique to the selected population. The teachers and learners involved in the study were randomly selected from the preschools identified. The population involves thirty one preschools, twenty four teachers and three hundred and thirty learners.

3.4 Sample

The research sample involved a total of ten preschools. Ten teachers participated in the study whereby each preschool had one teacher involved from their preschool. A total of three hundred children participated in the study.

3.5 Sampling technique

The researcher used simple random sampling technique in this study. This is a technique in which the researcher ensured that each and every member of the target population had an equal and independent chance of being selected and population is represented. However, the results were not generalised on population because of sample size and diversity in public and private preschools categories. It is time consuming and expensive.

3.6 Research instruments

This study was conducted by the researcher using prepared questionnaires whereby respondents were preschool teachers. The researcher also used interview schedules which were also carried out on preschool teachers. This instrument helped the researcher to observe the respondents in their natural environment. It was face to face communication where feedbacks were given immediately. The researcher also used naturalistic observation as she interacted with respondents who were preschool children and noted in her checklist book observation. The instruments answered the research questions as follows. Objective one was covered by numbers 10, in the questionnaire, question ii in the interview schedule and question ii in the observational schedule. Objective two was covered in question 6 in the questionnaire, question iv in the interview schedule and

question i in the observational schedule. Objective three was covered in question 9 in the questionnaire, question vii in interview schedule and question iii in observational schedule.

Questionnaire

The researcher prepared a questionnaire for the teachers. They were required to give their opinions on the questions written on questionnaire. They ticked the desired response or gave a brief explanation or both. The questionnaire was testing the impact of play materials on social emotional development of preschool children, types of play materials given to preschool children to enhance social emotional development, to establish the availability of play materials and safety measures put in place on play materials.

The respondents were not required to write their names on the questionnaire. The teachers answered question on professionalism, the types of play materials they use, the effect of play material on social emotional development of preschool children, the safety measures put in place on play materials and also the availability of play material in preschools. The researcher collected the questionnaires to analyse. The responses enabled the researcher to find out whether play materials enhance social emotional development.

Interview schedule

The researcher prepared interview schedule questions. The researcher orally asked the teacher questions on professionalism and the type of play materials used in preschool. The researcher asked the safety measures put in place to enhance security of the children and the hindrance to the availability of play materials.

Observation

In this study, the researcher made structural observation checklist. Observation took place as children related and interacted with play materials during play. The researcher found out play materials help children develop social emotional skills. The observation took place in the natural setting of selected preschools as the researcher used a checklist. The researcher observed how children treated their play materials displaying kindness, sympathy, and willingness to share them.

3.7 Instruments validity

In the study, the researcher gave research instruments which included questionnaires, interviews and observation to subjects involved in the study in selected preschools. They included preschool teachers and children. The instrument validity was measured through research objectives of the study. The researcher repeated the same objective questions in questions, interviews and observation schedules.

3.8 Instruments reliability

The researchers made sure the research instruments are reliable and the measurements can be repeated by other researchers and get the same results. The objectives were made very specific, measurable and achievable.

3.9 Data collection and procedure

The researcher obtained a permit from the National Commission for Science Technology & Innovation permitting to conduct the study. The granted permit for research was also

forwarded to Githunguri District Commissioner because Ngewa Zone falls under this jurisdiction. The researcher visited the preschools to collect the data from and introduced herself to the head teachers. The questionnaires were personally administered to the teachers by the researcher and recorded responses. The interview schedule was also conducted by the researcher on a face to face manner and recorded the responses. The teachers and children concerned were assured of confidentiality. The researcher observed the children as they interacted with play materials during indoor and outdoor play activities in their natural settings and ticked her checklists to document the issues she wanted to find out. As for the questionnaire, the researcher picked them from respondents personally to ensure there is confidentiality in the information given.

3.10 Data Analysis Techniques

The researcher analyzed the data using descriptive statistics. The details are in form of words. The data analysis was acquired through questionnaires, interviews and observation. The researcher went to the field and gathered all the significant information. The data analysis was presented in form of charts, tables and bar graphs. The interpretation of the data analysis was also presented using frequencies and percentages.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis, findings, presentation and interpretation of findings. The purpose of the study was to investigate the effects of play materials on social emotional development of preschool children in Ngewa zone, Kiambu County. The chapter was organized into sections mainly based on the research objectives and which included the types of play materials given to preschool children, availability of play materials in preschools and the safety measures put in place on play materials to enhance social emotional development of preschool children.

4.2 Questionnaire return rate

This study targeted both the pre-school teachers and learners as respondents. All the targeted 10 teachers were able to fill and return their filled forms making the response rate 100%. On the other hand, 278 learners participated in the study out of the targeted 300 making the response for learners to be 92.7% as elaborated in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Questionnaire return rate

Target respondents	Sample size	Responses	Return rate (%)
Preschool teachers	10	10	100.0
Preschool learners	300	278	92.7

The information presented in Table 4.1 shows that the return rate was good for all the targeted respondents at more than 80 percent (that is, return rate for all instruments was close 100 percent). According to Edwards, Roberts, Clarke, DiGuisseppi, Pratap, Wentz, and Kwan (2002), a questionnaire return rate of 80 percent and above is absolutely satisfactory, while 60 percent – 80 percent return rate is quite satisfactory. A return rate below 60 percent is ‘barely acceptable’.

4.2 Demographic information based on Gender

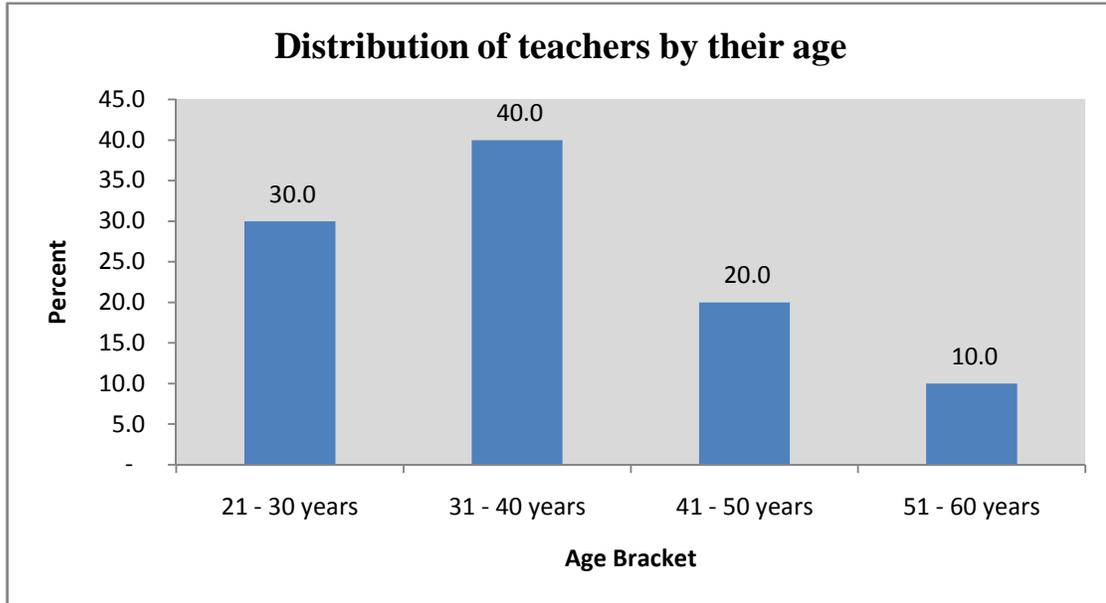
Demographic information was based on the teachers’ gender, their age brackets, marital status as well as their academic qualifications. This is presented in table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Distribution of teachers by their gender

	Frequency	Percent
Male	1	10.0
Female	9	90.0
Total	10	100.0

The data contained in Table 4.2 reveals that 90% of the pre-school teachers in Ngewa zone, Kiambu County are female while only 10% are male. This implies that there are immensely more female than male preschool teachers indicating that there is a possibility of stereotyping the preschool teaching with certain gender where females are favoured more than their male counterparts particularly in handling play materials for social emotional development of preschool children

Figure 4.1: Distribution of teachers by their age



As indicated in Figure 4.1, 40% of teachers were aged between 31 and 40 years with 30% being 30 years and below. Others (30%) were over 40 years. This implies that majority of preschool teachers in Ngewa Zone, Kiambu County fall within the age bracket of over 30 years. It can be argued that, the older the teacher, the more experienced they are in enhancing social emotional development of preschool children through play materials.

Table 4.3: Distribution of teachers by their marital status

	Frequency	Percent
Married	6	60.0
Single	4	40.0
Total	10	100.0

Regarding the marital status of the teachers, majority (60%) of the teachers interviewed were found to be married while the remaining 40% were single. Marital status of a pre-

school teacher may imply their level of experience in enhancing social emotional development of preschool children since there is a possibility that married teachers have children giving them adequate experience in the process of bring them up. This can be transferred to pre-school children particularly through the play materials.

Table 4.4: Distribution of teachers by their highest academic qualification

	Frequency	Percent
Certificate	5	50.0
Diploma	2	20.0
Degree	3	30.0
Total	10	100.0

Teachers were also required to mention their level of academic qualification where it was found that, half (50%) of them had certificates with 20% holding diploma. The remaining 30% were holders of at least a first degree. This shows adequacy in the level of knowledge especially on enhancing the social emotional development of preschool children through play materials.

4.4 Availability of play materials in preschools

Objective two of the study required establishment of availability of play materials in preschools. This section was based on the frequency at which teachers use play materials. Teachers use play materials in learning activities. Frequencies at which learners interact

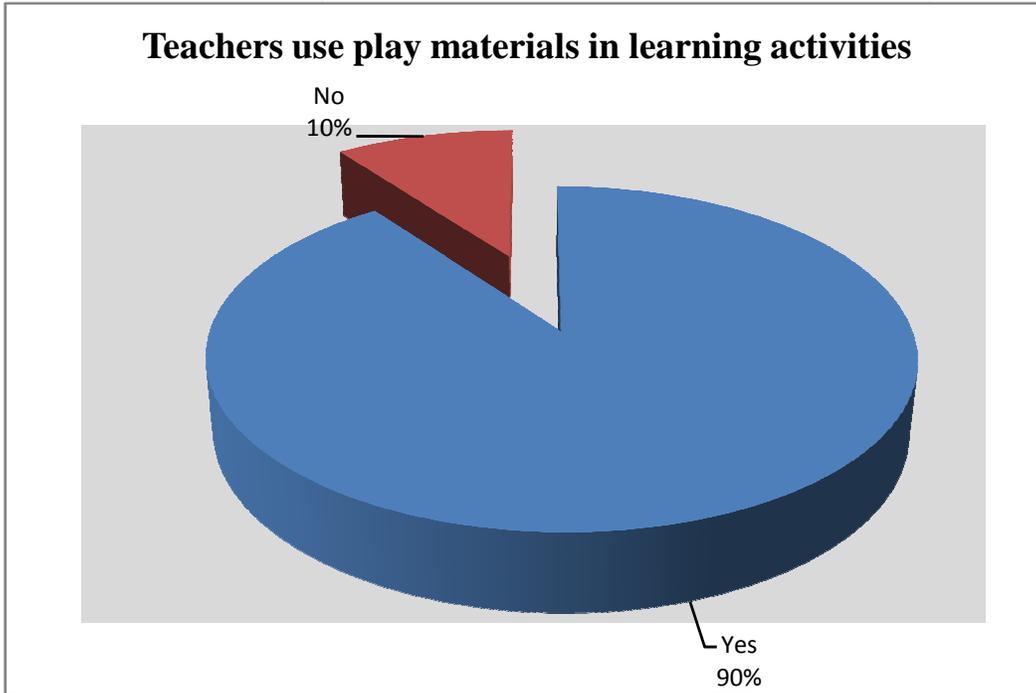
with play materials and the teachers agree that play materials are very important in preschools.

Table 4.5: Frequency at which teachers use play materials

	Frequency	Percent
Frequently	7	70.0
Not Frequently	2	20.0
Sometimes	1	10.0
Total	10	100.0

The findings indicated in Table 4.5 indicate that majority (70%) of teachers disclosed that they frequently used play materials. This implies that play materials are important for pre-school children. As emphasized by Noam (2008), children/people need a wide range of social emotional development to face the complex challenges of today's world, but it would be of little practical value to produce a long list of all the play materials they may need in various contexts and at various times in their lives. A better choice is to consider only the play materials that are most helpful to children/people in managing situations in an age appropriate way. At the same time, these core play materials can be considered a loosely coupled system of different aspects of specific abilities. Their underlying unity is represented by a structural continuity of developmental changes. This framework implies that in any given individual, some play materials are well developed and others poorly developed in addition to contextual variables.

Figure 4.2: Teachers' use of play materials in learning activities



The data presented in Figure 4.2 indicates whether teachers use play materials in learning activities. According to the findings, a vast majority (90%) contended that they use play materials in learning activities with only 10% not using the same. This is in line with the contention that the learners' understanding might be reduced if play materials are not incorporated in the learning process as Patel (1996) argues that play materials enhance learning and understanding of the concept learnt. Our observation noted that teachers in schools with adequate resources had a higher productivity in terms of imparting relevant knowledge as compared with those from schools with fewer resources.

Table 4.6: Frequency at which learners interact with play materials

	Frequency	Percent
Very often	4	40.0
Often	4	40.0
Hardly	2	20.0
Total	10	100.0

Regarding the frequency at which learners interact with play materials, 40% of teachers said very often, 40% said often while only 20% said learners hardly interact with play materials. This implies that the majority of preschool learners in Ngewa Zone in Kiambu County frequently interact with play materials. The frequency at which children interact with play materials affects their social emotional development. Teachers require skills and confidence to facilitate experiential learning activities through the use of play materials UNICEF (2008). A study in Malawi by Maclachlan (1997) on usage of play materials in preschools found out that the activities were unlikely to cause any significant behavioural change if there was lack of appropriate teaching and learning methodologies. They felt the approaches were effective though in varying degrees.

Table 4.7: Teachers responses on the importance of play materials in preschools.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	9	90.0
No	1	10.0
Total	10	100.0

As indicated in Table 4.7, a vast majority (90%) of preschool teachers agree that play materials are very important in preschools while only 10% disagreed. Teachers' opinion based on various dimensions revealed that play materials had impacted positively on the children. Learners expressed that dimensions of enhancing social emotional development included skills to relate with others, learn to be responsible, self-awareness, personal hygiene, social values, self-expression, feeding self, independence, complementing academic work; and overcoming life's challenges. Arguably, the general objectives according to K.I.E (2008) are to develop an awareness of oneself and need to be assertive in society, communicate effectively with other children, parents or guardians and other people on issues and concerns that affect self, develop skills that promote personal hygiene and make informed, appropriate and healthy choices on issues affecting him/herself and others.

4.3 Types of play materials given to preschool children

This section was based on the teachers' response on the indoor play materials available in their respective schools and the teachers' response on the outdoor play materials available in their respective schools.

Figure 4.3: Teachers response on the indoor play materials available in their respective schools

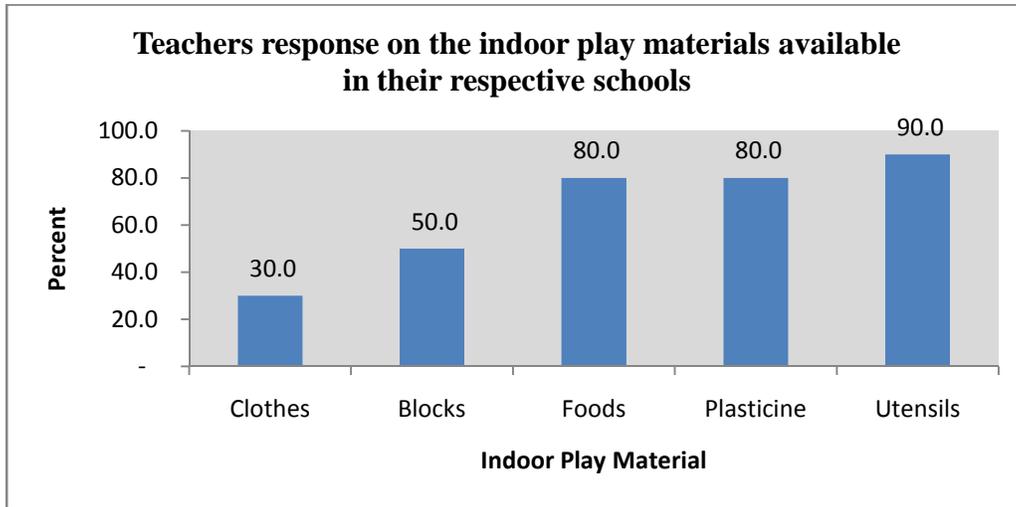
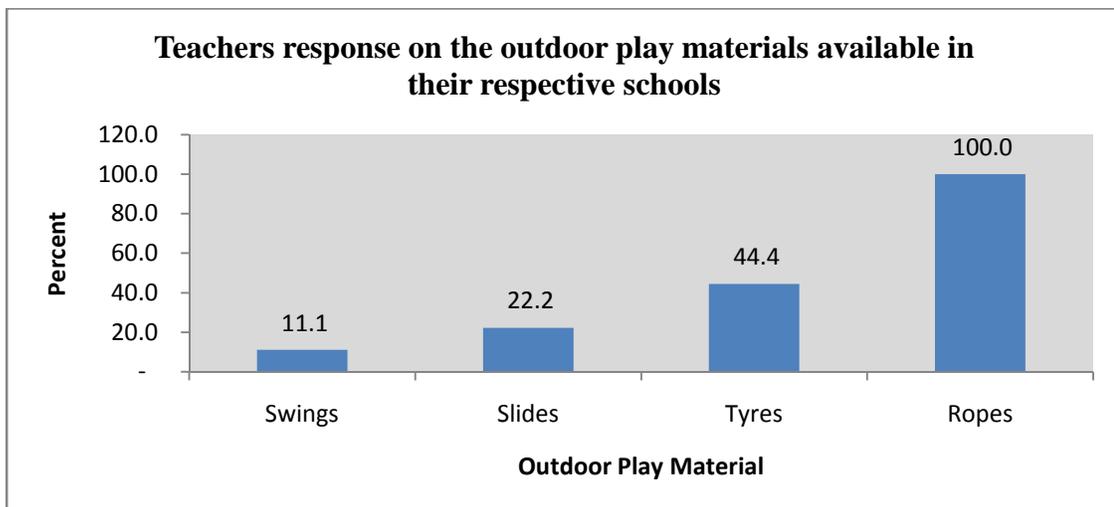


Figure 4.4 illustrates the teachers' response on the indoor play materials available in their respective schools. The study found that the most frequently used play materials are the utensils (90%); plasticine (80%) and food (80%). Other less frequently used indoor play materials are the blocks (50%) as well as clothes (30%). This implies that utensils are the most frequently used indoor play materials by the preschool learners.

Figure 4.4: Teachers response on the outdoor play materials available in their respective schools



Regarding teachers' response on the outdoor play materials available in their respective schools as presented in Figure 4.4, ropes were found to be used in all preschools (100%) while tyres, slides and swings were used by 44.4%, 22.2% and 11.1% of preschools respectively.

4.5 Safety measures put in place on play materials

This section was based on teachers' response on whether their classrooms are lockable as well as the safety and security measures put in place to enhance social.

Table 4.8: Teachers' response on whether their classrooms are lockable

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	9	90.0
No	1	10.0
Total	10	100.0

Regarding teachers' response on whether their classrooms are lockable, an overwhelming majority (90%) said that the classrooms are lockable while only 10% said that the classrooms are not lockable. This indicates that there is adequate safety of play materials for preschool children in Ngewa Zone, Kiambu County.

Teachers also expressed that although play materials are handled under supervision from the teachers, the materials should be clean and not have sharp edges for safety purpose. There should also be the teaching and cautioning of the children on proper use of the play

materials. Other safety measures include prohibiting pre-schoolers from riding tyres on the road, and ensuring mending or repairing broken play materials was done on time as well as using the appropriate materials as guided by the ability, gender, and age of the preschooler.

4.6 Findings from observations

The preschoolers were observed indulging in various activities such as kicking, throwing running, racing, climbing, sliding, and skipping using ropes. The purpose of the observation was to identify the types of play materials given to preschool children to enhance social emotional development. They were doing so looking at each other as they played and they kicked balls. Despite the fact that the play materials were inadequate, preschool learners were able to encourage each other as they took turns where group leaders gave a chance to each other. For example, a preschooler says 'throw here' while another one shouts 'throw here' with proper coordination of the group leaders. Another example is where the children are cooking and feeding their dolls. A study by Elias and Kess (1994) stated that play materials allow pre-schoolers to respond to situations they experience in life and are applicable in more than one setting. The benefit that accrue to children as a result of both indoor and outdoor play activities far outweigh any challenges that may be experienced more so social emotional development. It also supports a study by Scheer and Lafontaine (1999) that provided a general sense that adults associated with the programmes of life skills believed it was beneficial to young children. The study further indicates that the play activities were spiral as stated by K.I.E (2008) since the acquired skills were transited from preschool to primary one.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the study, draws conclusions, and makes recommendations as well as suggestions for further research. The main focus of the study was to investigate the effects of play materials on social emotional development of pre-schools within Ngewa Zone, Kiambu County.

5.2 Summary of the study

The researcher used qualitative research design while survey design was used as a methodology where the research structure included intensive and in-depth investigation on an issue at hand in a relatively small sample. Teachers and learners involved in the study were randomly selected from participating preschools. The researcher used simple random sampling technique with ten teachers participating in the study whereby each preschool had one teacher involved from their preschools. A total of three hundred children participated in the study. This study was conducted by the researcher using prepared questionnaires whereby respondents were preschool teachers. The researcher also used interview schedules which were carried out on preschool teachers. The instrument validity was measured through research objectives of the study.

The researcher visited the preschool she intends to collect the data from and introduce herself to the head teacher. The questionnaires were personally administered to the

teachers by the researcher and response recorded. The researcher analysed each questionnaire according to the opinion of respondents. The interview schedules on preschool teachers were analysed qualitatively as per each response. The researcher used an observation checklist to analyse the play materials children were interacting with. The responses were counted, the frequencies calculated, percentages and mean score obtained.

5.3 Findings of the study

From the findings majority (70%) of teachers disclosed that they frequently use play materials. A vast majority (90%) contended that they use play materials in learning activities with only 10% not using the same. Regarding the frequency at which learners interact with play materials, 40% of teachers said very often, 40% said often while only 20% said learners hardly interact with play materials.

A vast majority (90%) of preschool teachers agree that play materials are very important in preschools while only 10% disagreed. Teachers' opinion based on various dimensions revealed that play materials had impacted positively on the children. The study found that the most frequently used play materials are the utensils (90%); plasticine (80%) and food (80%). Other less frequently used indoor play materials are the blocks (50%) as well as clothes (30%).

Regarding teachers response on the outdoor play materials available in their respective schools ropes were found to be used in all preschools (100%) while tyres, slides and

swings were used by 44.4%, 22.2% and 11.1% of preschools respectively. On teachers' response on whether their classrooms are lockable, an overwhelming majority (90%) said that the classrooms are lockable while only 10% said that the classrooms are not lockable.

The preschoolers were observed indulging in various activities such as kicking, throwing running, racing, climbing, sliding, and skipping using ropes. The purpose of the observation was to identify the types of play materials given to preschool children to enhance social emotional development.

5.4 Conclusion

The study reveals that play materials have a net positive effect on social emotional development of preschoolers through development of self-expression, learning to share and take turns as well as getting a lot of enjoyment and relaxation. Play materials also enhance the spirit of teamwork, interaction and socialization, making learning real, and creating friendliness among children besides heightened coexistence. Therefore it is clear that play materials are essential in preparing children for adult life. The presence of play activities in most pre-schools is enhancing learners' good manners, communication, self-awareness, hygiene and communication all of which are relevant at preschool level.

The type of play materials used by the preschoolers ranges from kicking, throwing running, racing, climbing, sliding and skipping using ropes, dolls, plasticine, tyres, swings, climbing frames, blocks, beanbags, and see-saws. Although these materials are not present in adequacy, they impact positively on the preschoolers since the latter learn

to be responsible; self-aware; physically fit; social values; self-expression; feeding self; independence; complementing academic work; and overcoming life's challenges. In addition, play materials allow individuals to respond to situations they experience in life and are applicable in more than one setting. The benefit that accrue to children as a result of using play materials far outweigh any challenges that may be experienced.

The study also reveals that, even though safety measures may not be sufficient for children while using play materials, teachers have endeavoured to ensure replacement or repair of worn-out as well as avoidance of sharp edged materials that may cause harm to the children. Therefore, the study findings confirmed that there is impact of play materials on social emotional development of preschool children.

5.5 Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

- i. Head teachers should move to ensure that their respective preschools have adequate play materials for children. This should be complimented by developing a working plan that gives preschoolers a balanced timetable for both academic and play activities.
- ii. The Ministry of Education and Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development should formulate adequate policies that would ensure all public and private preschools are funded enough to purchase, install and ensure availability of play materials as well as replacing the worn-out and dangerous materials. At the same time safety of play materials should be observed

- iii. The government to create awareness programmes among school to enable them know and appreciate play materials. That can be done by organizing community meetings through local leaders, showing films or videos among other measures to enhance programme sustainability.
- iv. The government in conjunction with parents to provide materials. The government to allocate more funds for purchase of learning materials while parents can organize fundraisings to subsidize what the government provides.

Based on findings and the scope of this study, the researcher recommends further studies to be carried out in the following areas:

- i. A replica of the study should be carried out within the primary school context to investigate whether differences in age brackets of children affect the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact as well as sustainability of the play materials.
- ii. A study on the effects of play materials on social emotional development should be carried out within the context of private schools for comparative purpose

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE TEACHERS

Introduction

This questionnaire is designed for a study on the effect of play materials on social emotional development of preschool children in Ngewa zone, Kiambu County.

Respond to each question by providing appropriate responses.

The researcher wants to know your honestly opinion on various issue on effects of play materials on social emotional development of preschool children. The information you give will be treated as confidential information between you and researcher only.

Instructions

Indicate your choice by tick and explain where necessary.

Section A

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Age

20 – 30

31 – 40

41 – 50

51 – 60

3. Marital status

Married

Single

4. Academic qualification

KCPE

KCSE

CERTIFICATE

DIPLOMA

DEGREE

MASTERS

5. How frequent do you use the play materials?

Frequently

Not frequently

Sometimes

6. Do you use the available play materials in learning activities:

Yes

No

7. How do play materials assist you?

Explain_____

8. How often do learners interact with play materials?

Very often

Often

Hardly

9. Are your classrooms lockable?

Yes

No

10. Tick the following play materials available in your school

Indoor

Outdoor

Utensils

Swings

Clothes

Tyres

Foods

Slides

Plasticine

Swings

Blocks

Ropes

11. Do you agree that play materials are very important in preschool?

Yes

No

If yes, explain_____

If No, explain_____

APPENDIX II

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE TEACHER

- i. What do you think is the effect of play materials on preschool children social emotional development?
- ii. In your opinion, what other types of play materials should be introduced to supplement the ones already in existence?
- iii. Is the playground, play materials and equipment for your preschool children inadequate?
- iv. List some play materials which you think are not necessary but not available in your school
- v. What has been the main hindrance to availing the play materials you have named above?
- vi. What do you think is the effect of play materials on child's social emotional development?
- vii. What safety measure have you put in place on play materials to enhance social emotional development in your preschool?

APPENDIX III

OBSERVATIONAL SCHEDULE FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN USING PLAY

MATERIALS

- i. What do preschool children play with?
- ii. What type of play materials are in use?
- iii. What is the safety measures put in place for play materials and environment?
- iv. Who do the children speak to?
- v. Who answer them?
- vi. Are the children enjoying play using play materials?

Observation record sheet (Adapted from Lancaster and Broadbent, 2003)

The Observer _____

Venue of observation _____

Who is being observed _____

Purpose of observation _____

Time	Who is present?	What is happening?	Who are the children looking at?	What is being said and who is saying it?

APPENDIX VI

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Joyce W. Waweru,
University of Nairobi,
P.O. Box 30197,
NAIROBI

Dear Participant,

I am a student at the University of Nairobi undertaking a Masters Degree Education, Early Childhood Education currently; I am carrying out a research to establish the effects of play materials on social emotional development of preschool children in Ngewa Zone, Kiambu County. I would greatly appreciate your assistance in answering the following questions.

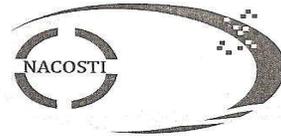
Your contribution will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will be used solely for the purpose of this study.

Thank you for your cooperation

Yours faithfully,

Joyce W. Waweru
Postgraduate Student.

APPENDIX VII: PERMIT LETTER



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

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P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

When replying please quote

Date:

Our Ref: **NCST/RCD/14/013/1589**

18th September, 2013

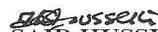
Joyce Wangui Waweru
University of Nairobi
P.O Box 92-0902
Kikuyu.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application dated *29th August, 2013* for authority to carry out research on *“Effect of play materials on social emotional development of pre-school children in Ngewa Zone, Kiambu County.”* I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kiambu County** for a period ending **31st December, 2013**.

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner and County Director of Education, Kiambu County** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit **two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf** of the research report/thesis to our office.


SAID HUSSEIN
FOR: SECRETARY/CEO
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
The County Director of Education
Kiambu County.

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation is ISO 2008: 9001 Certified