COLLABORATIVE CLASSROOM APPROACH AND SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN IN MERU MUNICIPALITY, KENYA

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DECLARATION

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

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

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research project to my husband Samwel Ragwa, my children, Dennis, Collins and Fiona; my sisters, Pauline, Christine and my mum and dad. They have been my source of comfort and strength throughout the study. To you all I say thank you.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore the relationship between collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality. Specifically, the study sought to examine if co-operative learning influenced social emotional development of pre-school children, determine whether there was a relationship between peer tutoring and social emotional development of pre-school children, determine if there was a relationship between the role of the teacher in collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children and examine whether consulting experts in collaborative classroom approach influenced social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality. This study was based on Erick Erikson's theory of psychosocial development which ascertains that we develop through dealing with crisis and how we deal with it is what makes one have high self- esteem. The study used descriptive research design. The population of the study targeted public pre-schools in Meru Municipality. Simple random sampling technique was used to obtain three pre-schools chosen for this study. Since Meru Municipality has ten public primary schools and each has a pre-school the study was done in three schools. Data was collected using observation schedule and questionnaires. The data collected was coded and entered into statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) software. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistical analysis. Study results were presented in form of tables. This study demonstrated significant relationship between collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru municipality. Study findings showed that children in pre-school who were exposed to collaborative classroom approach manifested advanced levels of social emotional skills while, children in pre-schools where collaborative classroom approach was not well utilized displayed low levels of social emotional skills consequently, negatively affecting their social emotional development. This study established that the pre-school teachers do not consult widely other teachers in school in learning of the children. The study recommends that the government through the Ministry of Education should in-service all practicing teachers especially those who lack the basic pre-school training so that they can be conversant with collaborative classroom approach which is an instructional strategy needed to develop social emotional skills in children at the early stages of life. In addition, future research should seek to understand the level and type of in-class consultation that is needed for effective collaboration to have significant positive results for the Kenyan pre-school programmes. Further, research involving other methods of teaching for example co-teaching, and differentiated instruction is recommended.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

CL   Cooperative learning

CSRP   Chicago School Readiness Project

DICECE   District Centre for Early Childhood Education

ECE   Early Childhood Education

FOL   Foundations of Learning

SPSS   Statistical Package for Social Sciences

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

WHO   World Health Organization

ZPD   Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

It is in pre-school where most striking changes in behaviours are linked to the child's growing sense of his/her own identity and increasing independence. The child delights in mastering of skills and enjoys exploring the world outside his /her home. According to Erickson (1950) it is during this time that a child develops autonomy, learns to choose and decides to accept the consequences of choice. It is in these years of life that, one's development can be guided towards the highest potential and determines what one will be. Hendrick (1980) and Hurlock (1978) reckons that one of the most frequent reasons why families send children to pre-school is for them to learn to get along well with others and teachers agree with parents that this is indeed a very important kind of competence to acquire. Erickson (1950) views personality of an individual as the product of his interactions in his social environment. The assumption of this study is that children should be able to communicate their attitudes and feelings as well as being sensitive to the feelings of others. These orientations should take place within the school where children spend most of their quality time

Children's development of social skills is affected by the nature of their family and early educational experiences (National Research Council (NRC), 2001). Once children are in a school setting, other factors affect their social development (Berk, 2001; NRC, 2000). In addition to a child's parents and family, the teacher becomes an agent of socialisation. Entrance into the school society can be difficult for young children (Seefeldt, Galper, & Denton, 1998). Leaving home, unsure of how to manage interactions with this new socialiser and with other children, preschool

children can find school a miserable experience at first. At school, they find they must share not only materials, toys, and time but also the attention of the teacher. Here they learn to cooperate, see others' viewpoints, and work together for the common welfare.

Collaborative classroom approach is about maximizing the child's performance in social emotional skills and academic skills by making use of others. It involves peer tutoring, cooperative learning and consulting experts. Brufee (1984) defined the collaborative learning environment as one that provides a particular kind of social context for conversation, a particular kind of community that of status equal or peers.

Savery and Duffy (2001) focused their research on student to student interaction; and collaboration in India, concluding that knowledge evolves through social negotiation among peers with social environment as a critical factor in the development of individual understanding and knowledge. They argued that at the individual level, other individuals are primary mechanism for testing of our understanding. Basing my argument from their work one can make the conclusion that collaborative classroom approach is therefore important both in academic and social emotional development.

According to the Johnson and Johnson model (1989) cooperative learning is instruction that involves students working in teams to accomplish a common goal under conditions that include the following elements: positive interdependence, individual accountability, face-to-face promotive interaction, appropriate use of collaborative skills and group processing, These elements are aspects of social emotional skills therefore, showing the importance of cooperative approach in

learning of children. Cooperative learning prevents and treat a wide variety of social problems such as diversity, antisocial behaviour's, lack of prosocial values and egocentrism, alienation and loneliness, psychological pathology and low self-esteem (Johnson and Maruyama, 1986: Kohn ,1992 : Slavin ,1991). From the arguments above its possible that cooperative learning may prevent and alleviate many of the social and emotional problems related to children.

Damon and Phelps (1989) define peer tutoring as an approach in which one child instructs another child in material on which the first is an expert and the second is a novice. The children take turns to be tutors and tutees. Rosewal (1995) compared the changes in self-concept and the student's likelihood to drop out of school among students who participated in a peer tutoring programme versus those students who did not participate in the programme and discovered that students who participated in a peer tutoring programme had a significant increase in self-concept and general attitude towards school over those students who did not participate in the program.

Fernandez (2008) observed that by beginning each class by presenting the main information to the entire class and then assigning tasks to be done in peer tutoring of two or three, students took a greater ownership of their learning. Walker (2007) and Fernandez (2008) found that if the students worked with a peer tutor or some form of cooperative learning, all students' participants will have a higher self-concept and satisfaction. Thus as students work with a peer tutor, their confidence will increase and when a student's confidence increase, so will his achievement (Parsons, 2009). The students acquire social emotional skills such as self-esteem, assertiveness, self-control and skills of solving conflicts through peer tutoring which increases confidence.

Spencer (2006) looked at 38 students from 1972 to 2002 where some form of peer tutoring was used for students with emotional or behavioural disorders. She discovered that peer tutoring had been demonstrated to be an effective instructional strategy. Mester (2009) paired a third grade student who had been retained with a classmate. The retained student became a tutor for the struggling peer. He and his tutee had both seen significant gain in their test scores by the end of the study. Mester found that this increased the retained student's confidence and that with the extra math practice he showed improvement. Walker (2007), Mester (2009) & Spencer (2006) observed different types of children and they all discovered that pairing students in the form of peer tutors increased the achievement of both students.

Davis and Weeden (2009), Crow (2004) & Fernandeze (2008) believe that the role of a teacher is extremely important to the learning of their students. Crow (2004) and Fernandez (2008) both feel that teachers should still play an active role in the learning by presenting the new information to the students. However, Davis and Weeden (2009) see a teacher's role as a trickster that facilitates the learning. A trickster is a person who puts barriers in the way of the students in order to promote learning. To do so is to accept and illuminate the dual responsibility of the teacher as both supporter and challenger (Davis and Weeden, 2009).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Investments in early childhood programmes are widely viewed as a promising strategy to improve the future educational achievement of young children. However, it can be difficult for teachers to maintain programme quality if children in the classroom display challenging behaviours. For example, when some children act out

aggressively or become sad and withdrawn, teachers may be diverted from instructional time to manage these behaviours. Not surprisingly, these diversions have a ripple effect on the entire classroom of children. In Meru Municipality, there has been an outcry from parents, church leaders and even the local administration that children are withdrawn and show signs of being stressed. This has been attributed to claims that children are subjected to undue pressure for academic excellence in primary schools where teachers are forced to concentrate more on academic in pre-school at the expense of social emotional development so as to prepare learners for class one entrance. This has further led to children developing a negative attitude towards school and eventually posting poor academic results in their final examinations. In extreme cases, there have been reported cases of some pupils committing suicide following release of national examination results. This could be an example of pupils who lack self-esteem, self-control and skills of solving conflicts and making good decisions in life. This could imply that pre-school children in the municipality are subjected to inadequate social emotional development. It would be necessary for a teacher to use a teaching approach which will help the children acquire both the academic skills and social emotional skills which are necessary to help them cope with life situations. This study therefore sought to establish the relationship between collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality.

1.2 The Purpose of the Study

The main objective of this study was to establish the relationship between collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality.

1.3 Research Objectives

The study sought to:

  i.   Examine if co-operative learning influences social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality.

  ii. Determine whether there is a relationship between peer tutoring and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality.

  iii. Determine if there is a relationship between the role of the teacher in collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality.

  iv. Examine whether consulting experts in collaborative classroom approach influence social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality

1.4 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

  i.   To what extent does co-operative learning in collaborative classroom approach influence social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality?

  ii. What relationship is there between peer tutoring in collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality?

  iii. To what extent does the role of the teacher in collaborative classroom approach influence social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality?

  iv. How does consulting experts in collaborative classroom approach affect social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This research study is significant in that the result may provide important insight into the relationship between teaching and social emotional development of children in pre-schools making way for early intervention. The study also addressed the importance of using collaborative classroom approach in the learning of pre-school children which could lead to better performance in academics, social emotional development and better citizens who are able to deal with crisis.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

There were limitations to this study in the sense that the descriptive research design was used. This design is unscientific and unreliable. The results of observation study cannot be repeated and reviewed.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to public pre-schools in Meru Municipality. Therefore the results cannot be generalized to all other pre-schools in Kenya.

1.8 Basic Assumptions of the Study

The study assumed that the teachers were trained on the use of collaborative classroom approach. There was also the assumption that teachers make use of this approach in teaching to help children acquire academics and social emotional skills.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

The key terms in this study are: collaborative classroom approach, cooperative learning, pre-school, consulting experts, peer-tutoring, and social emotional development.

Collaborative Classroom Approach:

Collaborative classroom approach in this study means children learning by making use of others.

Cooperative Learning:

Cooperative learning is instruction that involves students working in teams to accomplish a common goal.

Pre-school

In this study pre-school is taken to mean, a school where education is offered to children from age three to when they are enrolled in primary school.

Consulting Experts

An expert in learning is a resource person who comes in to perform a certain task relevant to the learning of the children so that the set instructional objectives can be attained.

Peer tutoring

Peer tutoring is a learning instruction whereby children are put in groups of three to four to undertake a certain learning task.

Social Emotional Development

These are developmental stages a child goes through as a result of interaction with the environment around him or her.

1.10 Organization of the Study

The research study is organized in five chapters. The first chapter details: the background to the problem, statement of the problem. Purpose of the study , research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study, basic assumption of the study, definition of the key terms and finally the organization of the study. In Chapter two, there is the literature review related to the study which is put into sub themes; co-operative learning, peer tutoring, the role of the teacher and consulting experts. There is also the theoretical framework and conceptual framework. Chapter three covers the research methods which include: research design, target population, sampling procedures, research instruments, instruments validity and reliability, data collection, data analysis, and ethical considerations. Chapter four contains findings and discussions, while Chapter five covers the summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This literature review is about children's social emotional development, co-operative learning, peer tutoring, the role of the teacher and consulting experts in children's social emotional development.

2.1 Social Emotional Development

Social emotional development includes the child's experience, expression, and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others (Cohen, 2005). It encompasses both intra- and interpersonal processes. The core features of emotional development include the ability to identify and understand one's own feelings, to accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others, to manage strong emotions and their expression in a constructive manner, to regulate one's own behaviour, to develop empathy for others, and to establish and maintain relationships (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004).

Young children who exhibit healthy social, emotional, and behavioural adjustment are more likely to have good academic performance in elementary school (Cohen, 2005). This strengthens the view that early childhood programs support later positive learning outcomes in all domains by maintaining a focus on the promotion of healthy social emotional development (National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, 2004: Raver, 2002: Shonkoff, 2004).

Social emotional skills are supported by Erick Erikson's (1903 -1994) theory of psychosocial development which ascertains that we develop through dealing with crisis and how we deal with it is what makes one have a high self-esteem. Failure to deal with crisis at a certain stage will lead to a reflection of that crisis at a later stage.

A direct correlation between childhood maltreatment and exposure to violence in the home and community has been identified as one of the risk factors that can lead to school failure (Henry, 2000; Wallach, 1994). This may prove that it is crucial to develop the child's social emotional skills right from Early Childhood, for future success in school. Piaget's stages of development (Erick 2001) demonstrate that as children develop they acquire skills that afford them the opportunity to progress through the different stages. So, social emotional skills need to be developed as early as possible.

The foundation of social competence developed in the first five years of a child's life are linked to emotional wellbeing and social skills needed later in life. (Knitzer 2002) maintains that in particular a child's emotional status affects early school performance which in turn predicts later school outcomes. Therefore it is important for a teacher to choose a teaching method which will develop the children social emotionally. Perry (1995) emphasizes that self-regulation is an essential part of healthy emotional development. He believes self-regulation contributes to preventing aggression and anti-social behaviours' in children. Bodrova and Leong (2008) further define self-regulation by describing it as having two sides; the ability to control ones impulses and stop doing something and ability to do something because it is needed. They cited research conducted by Blair (2002) and Blair and Rizal

(2007) which showed that children's self-regulation behaviour in the early years predict school achievement in teaching.

2.2 Cooperative Learning in Collaborative Classroom Approach

According to the Johnson and Johnson Model of cooperative learning (1989) cooperative learning is instruction that involves students working in teams to accomplish a common goal, under conditions that include the following elements: Positive interdependence, individual accountability, face to face promotive interaction, appropriate use of collaborative skills and group processing. Baloche (1993) added that at its best, learning cooperatively is not simple and it is not straightforward. According to Baloche (1993) students and teachers alike need to be both patient and persistent as they explore way to use the power of cooperation.

Kagan (1989) pointed out that the amount of time devoted to cooperative learning based on his work on cooperative learning resources for teachers, shows that very impressive academic and social gains can be obtained if cooperative learning is used only briefly. He also indicated that most people who train with him usually end up using cooperative learning in the majority of the time in their classroom.

A study carried out by Morgan and Keitz (2010) at the University of Texas to look at the relationship of trained teachers with social integration of students in high-use and low-use classrooms (high-use classrooms are those where cooperative learning is structured at least 30% of the time) indicated that even the low use of cooperative strategies creates a classroom environment where students feel accepted and not isolated by their peers. However, this study takes cooperative learning as one of the method of developing social emotional skills, among others.

In a classic study of traditional teaching, Adams and Biddle (1990) found that for the most part, what takes place in the classroom requires the attention of all the students. Teachers tend to stay in front of the classroom more than 85% of the time when teaching the whole class. A teacher can get the attention of all the students through cooperative learning if used since all the members would be involved in their task.

Johnson (1998) pointed out that teachers should tap into the power of social relations to promote learning. Cooperative small group activity has been shown to be an especially effective mode of school learning and solid achievement gains have been documented across the curriculum by Slavin, (1995a). Slavin (1995c) describe how 80% of students entering school feel good about themselves. By the 4th grade only 15% of the students have positive self-esteem. However, my study deals with pre-school children who fall in the 80% category.

Mills (1996) describes how cooperative learning can be used to stimulate active problem-solving and critical thinking skills. This could be the case of a 'real-life problem or dilemma which has no immediate, obvious, single or correct solution.' Mills research on cooperative learning and ability grouping which was conducted in Stamford also examines the cooperative learning studies in middle school and high school. The study suggested that cooperative learning techniques produced higher self-esteem and higher test scores among these learners. Further study reports that cooperative learning has substantial effects on math, performance, inter-ethnic relations and interpersonal interaction in class with handicapped students.

2.3 Peer Tutoring in Collaborative Classroom Approach

Pear tutoring is a learning instruction whereby children are put in groups of three to four to undertake a certain learning task (McMaster, 2006). Children then take turns to be tutors and tutees. According to Goodland and Hilts (1989) peer tutoring is a system of instruction in which learners help each other and learn (themselves) by teaching.

Recent years have seen much more emphasis upon equal opportunities involvement in peer learning, engaging all members of the educational community without exception (Greenwood, Delquadri & Hall, 1989). Interest in reciprocal tutoring has also greatly expanded (Fantuzzo, Riggro, Connelly & Dimeff 1989) since this enables all involved to function as both helper and helped, avoiding any social divisiveness according to perceived ability and status, and offering a richer apprenticeships for future involvement.

When peer tutoring is implemented with thoughtfulness about what form of organization best fits the target purpose, context and population, and with reasonably high implementation, integrity, results are typically very good (Topping, 2001a; Topping and Enly, 1998). The research evidence on peer assisted learning which was done in Cambridge is clear that peer tutoring can yield significant gains in academic achievement in the targeted curriculum area in both tutees and tutors if the organization is appropriate. Additionally, peer tutoring can yield gains in transferable social and communication skills and in affective functioning (improvements, self-esteem, liking for partner or subject area) (Cohen, Kulik & Kulik, 1982). Peer learning has also been noted to be among the most cost-effective of learning strategies (Levine, Glass & Merster, 1987).

2.4 The Role of Teachers in Collaborative Classroom Approach

The role a teacher plays within the classroom is important (Davis and Weeden,(2009). Davis and Weeden (2009), Crow (2004) & Fernandeze (2008) all believe that the role of a teacher is extremely important to the learning of their students. According to Stronge (2002) the behaviours teachers display in the classroom, whether positive or not influence in large measure their effectiveness as teachers and ultimately student achievement. Darling (2009) maintains that teaching quality is the teacher's ability to provide effective instruction for students. It incorporates curriculum goals and student needs.

A study by Kariuki, Chepchieng, Mbugua & Ngumi (2007) on effectiveness of pre-school programme in preparing pre-school children in their social emotional competencies at the entry to primary one carried in Nakuru, Nyeri and Embu districts, established that pre-school curriculum and teaching are biased toward academic skills. Therefore, the dimensions of social emotional development do not get much emphasis. The study (Kariuki, Chepchieng, Mbugua & Ngumi, 2007) was on pre-school programmes and social emotional development. However, the present study is about collaborative classroom teaching approach and social emotional development.

According to UNESCO (2004), with an approach to structured teaching that leaves space for individual discovery; good teachers can create a child-centered environment even in adverse circumstances. Since teachers are more likely to stay in schools where they feel they can succeed, research stresses the importance of professional support and re-designed schools to build learning opportunities for teachers and stronger relations between students and teachers that promote trust,

motivation, commitment, and collective efficacy (Bryk and Schneider, 2002: Darling, 1997).

According to Hatch (2006) teachers deal with large groups of students, juggle multiple tasks and have little time to reflect and implement innovations. Alexander (2000) maintains that in developing world teachers with minimal preparation and 70 to 100 or more students may find that active learning methods are difficult, if not impossible to apply. Introducing reform into such classroom context often involves teachers re-thinking existing routines, ideas, practices and theories. John Dewey (1927) provides a foundation for constructivism. He believed the teachers must balance an understanding of the means for arousing children's curiosity (Archambault, 1964). According to Dewey (1927) fostering mental growth requires teachers, who can initiate, recognize, maintain and assess children's inner engagement in subject matter and who are concerned with how the child's past and present experience can be related to the subject matter so that they may properly direct children's growth.

Vygotsky (1978) a social constructivist was thinking along similar lines as Dewey with the zone of proximal development, he describes a process whereby the teacher who understands children's development can recognize the 'buds' of conceptual or skill development as a prelude to guiding the child from a nascent to a more mature form of understanding or skill. Piaget (1964) was a constructivist who believed that teachers need to design environment and interact with children to foster inventive, creative, critical thinkers.

Kamil (1973) summarizing Piaget`s stance on active learning adds ' the task of the teacher is to figure out what the learner already knows and how he reasons in order to ask the right question at the right time so that the learner can build his own knowledge. Teachers make decisions on curriculum and instructional decisions about materials and methods used in the classroom.

Moll and Greenberg (1988) maintain that teachers' guidance of children classroom learning can be fostered by understanding how the knowledge, practices and language socialization patterns within children's families and communities contribute to children's ability to function in the classroom. So the teacher acts as a guide to students.

2.5 Consulting Experts in Collaborative Classroom Approach

Collaborative consultation is defined as a special education teacher serving in a consultative role to a core content endorsed teacher who carries the primary responsibility for instruction. The model allows a special education teacher to partner with multiple general education teachers without being physically present in the same classroom at the same time. The key characteristics of collaborative consultation are as follows; Core content endorsed teacher provides content instruction in general education class, Special education teacher is a consultant to the general education teacher in such areas as IEP accommodations, application of skills in the general education setting, goal progress and other related areas, Special education teacher provides strategy and skill instruction to students with IEPs outside of the general education class as needed and Special education teacher provides remediation, preteaching or reteaching outside of the general education classroom as needed (Kluth & Straut, 2001).

The general public in the new millennium is becoming more and more aware that teaching is not just a responsibility of professional educators within the school's walls. Community members and resource personnel beyond school walls are needed as collaborators and team members to help in planning and directing rich, authentic learning experiences for students. Also gaining prominence is an awareness of the need for collaboration among general and special education teachers that gives learners opportunities for learning. Teaming across classrooms is being utilized by many dedicated teachers as an approach that can bring students closer to achieving this (Kluth and Straut, 2001).

Teachers must therefore, have the ability to learn from other practitioners, because more traditional schooling climate where teachers isolate themselves in their classrooms and work independently of their colleagues are not conducive to teachers and no vile teachers in particular, seeking feedbacks from their peers (Darling-Hammond and Brantford, 2005).

Resource shortages and promotion of intervention at primary level are emphasized in several other developed countries for example; Mental Health of young people in Australia (2000) highlights the disparity between the number of young people with mental health problems and the limited number of clinicians available to help them which makes it unlikely that specialized programmes based in secondary and tertiary settings will forever be able to provide direct care for all those with problems in Australia (Sawyer, Arney, Bathurst, Clerk & Groet , 2000). There is therefore a need to focus on supports to respond to behavioural problems and provide assistance and support as early as possible.

According to Martin (2005), there are a wide range of community care services that deliver mental health care at primary care level in the community, particularly for children. Less intensive interventions should be offered within a primary context initially and only if children do not respond to these, should more intensive interventions be offered, or referral made to secondary or tertiary services? This means consulting an expert in the area. A teacher may require to source for an expert so that the set instructional objectives can be attained. These experts may be fellow teachers in the same institution, other people in the school, parents, other professionals such as police officers and social workers. The resource person who is an expert comes in to perform a certain task relevant to the learning of children.

Gresham and Kendell (1987) summarize most consultation research as descriptive, which is useful for identifying key variables in consultation processes and outcomes, but not for determining interactions between variables or directions of influence upon the outcomes of consultation. They stress that consultation research must assess the integrity of consultation plans, since many plans are not being implemented by consultees as designed (Witt, 1990). Fuchs, Dulan, Roberts & Fernstrom (1992) share views, that many studies on consultation are poorly conceptualized and executed. Conducting the research well requires careful planning, attention to detail, interpersonal skills, flexibility, positive relationships with school personnel, and research skills (Fuchs et al., 1992)

West and Idol (1987) point out that effort to conduct research in the complex, multidimensional field of school consultation are impeded by lack of psychometrically reliable and valid instrumentation and controls. Without question there should be more research to ascertain effects of collaborative consultation and

to understand more about the variables related to those effects. This study seeks to investigate the influence of consultation of experts on socio-emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality.

Gresham and Kendell (1987) found little empirical evidence to show that what people are calling consultation actually is consultation. They urged researchers to define the research variables more explicitly, control them more carefully, and measure them more accurately. Witt (1990) contended that research on collaboration is a dead end unless it can be shown that collaboration is related to important learner outcomes. This study seeks to show that consultation of experts has an effect on social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality.

According to findings of Slesser, Fine, & Tracy (1990), much of the research on consultation therefore, has examined behaviours specific to particular models. They proposed that further research was needed to examine specific behaviours and attitudes of more successful consultants compared with those less successful, because it was likely that many school consultants initiated their own integration of different models. This study therefore seeks to investigate the influence of consulting experts on social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality.

2.6 Theoretical Framework

This study is based on Erick Erikson's stage theory of psychosocial development, which ascertains that we develop through dealing with crisis and how we deal with it is what makes one have a high self-esteem. If the crisis is not dealt with, it is reflected throughout a person's life. The theory outlines eight developmental stages

across the whole lifespan describing the crisis one goes through in every stage. The pre-school children fall in the three stages: Stage 1 referred to as Trust versus mistrust which includes children aged 0 - 2 years. This stage is sometimes also known as infancy/oral sensory stage. Stage 2 is referred to as autonomy (independence) versus shame and doubt which usually includes children aged 2 - 3 years. Lastly Stage 3 referred to as Initiative versus guilty that normally includes children aged 3-6 years. The three stages show the important social emotional skills children develop at an early age through interacting with the significant others in their lives. The positive skills trust, autonomy and initiative are important in their lives and failure to develop them lead to mistrust, shame, doubt and guilty which may be reflected throughout a person's life.

2.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework shows the relationship between collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children. The figure also shows moderating and intervening variables. Figure 2.1 shows the presentation.

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┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Cooperative Learning    │
│   • Children in groups  │─────┐
└─────────────────────────┘     │
                                │      ┌─────────────────────────┐
┌─────────────────────────┐     │      │   • Government          │
│ Consulting Experts      │     │      │     Policies            │
│   • Colleagues          │─────┤      └─────────────────────────┘
│   • Parents             │     │                               ┌─────────────────────────┐
│   • Other Professionals │     │                               │ Social emotional        │
└─────────────────────────┘     ├───────────────────────────────│ Development             │
                                │                               │   • Solving             │
┌─────────────────────────┐     │                               │     Conflicts           │
│ Peer tutoring           │     │                               │   • Self Control        │
│   • Children in groups  │─────┤                               └─────────────────────────┘
│     of 3 to 4           │     │      ┌─────────────────────────┐
└─────────────────────────┘     │      │   • Absenteeism         │
                                │      │   • Fatigue             │
┌─────────────────────────┐     │      └─────────────────────────┘
│ The role of teachers    │     │
│   • Assisting           │─────┘
│   • Guiding             │
│   • Teaching            │
└─────────────────────────┘
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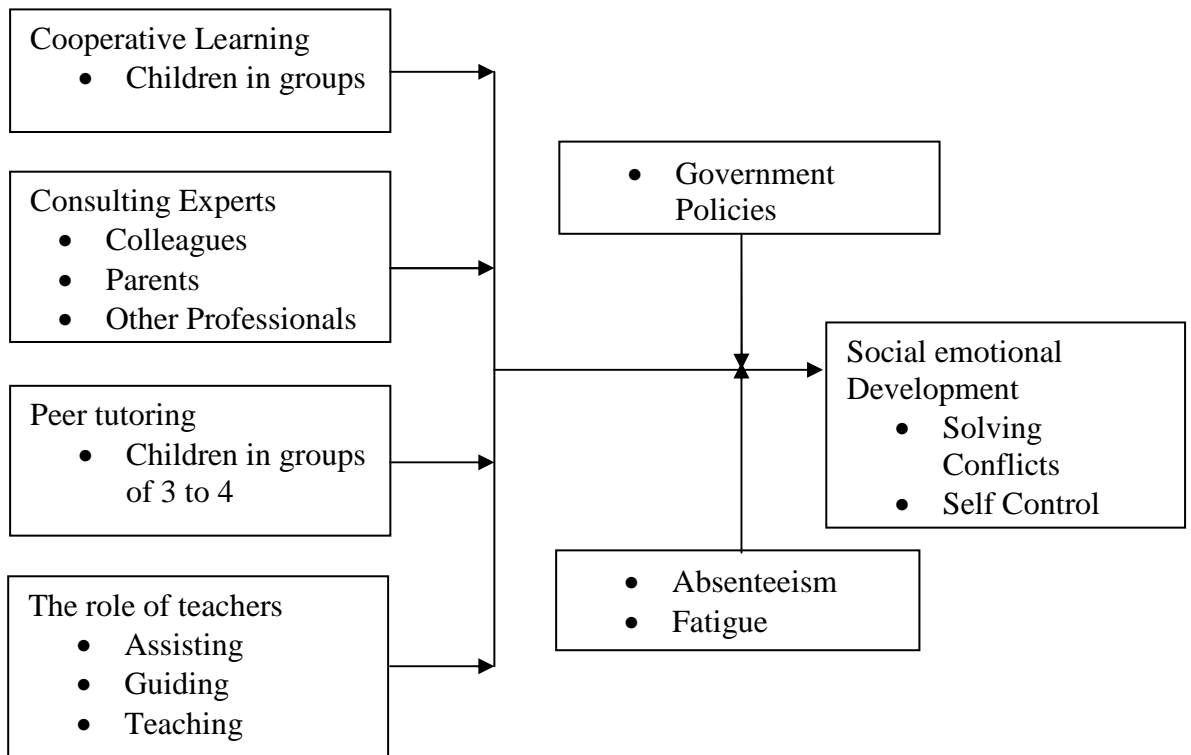
Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework showing collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children.

The model shows interrelationship between the independent variables which are cooperative learning, peer tutoring, consulting experts, the role of the teacher and social emotional development which is a dependent variable.

Moderating variables and intervening variables are also shown in the conceptual framework for they are factors which may have effects on the independent and dependant variables. The moderating variables include government policies while

the intervening variables are absenteeism and fatigue. Hence, there is need for further research on other factors such as education level of the teachers and home background; which may affect social emotional development of children.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter deals with methods which were used in carrying out the study. It contains, research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedure. It also contains, research instruments, validity and reliability of the study, procedure for data collection and data analysis and ethical standards.

3.1 Research Design

This study used descriptive research design. Descriptive design provides a description of characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. The characteristics used to describe the situation or population is usually some kind of categorical scheme also known as descriptive categories. This design was appropriate because it involved observing and describing the behaviour of the pre-school children in their classrooms and at the field without influencing them in anyway. It allowed observation without affecting normal behaviour. The study was dealing with pre-school children and the focus was on the natural setting where behaviour takes place. The independent variables that were addressed by the study included: cooperative learning, peer tutoring, the role of the teacher and consulting experts in collaborative classroom approach. The dependent variable of the study was social emotional development whose measurement indicators included: listening, working together, sharing, bargaining and negotiating, turn taking, self-control, empathy, making good decisions and solving conflict by talking.

3.2 Population

The population of this study is all public pre-schools in Meru Municipality. This involved ten public pre-schools. There were fifty pre-school teachers and one thousand two hundred pre-school children. Meru Municipality was appropriate for this study because it has children from a diverse background. The schools have children from different ethnic groups, social- economic status and religions.

3.3 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

The study used simple random sampling to obtain 30% of pre-schools in Meru Municipality. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), Kothari (1987), a researcher should ensure that the sample size is not less than 10% of the total population. They stated that a convenient sample should have a sample size of 10-30% of the population.

Meru Municipality has ten public pre-schools within public primary schools and 30% of this was interpreted to be three schools of the sample size of the intended population of study hence, three public pre-schools in Meru Municipality were involved. All pre-school teachers were purposively selected from each school as the researcher believed that they had the relevant information relating to the study at hand. The classes were nursery A, B and C while, the teachers involved in the study were fifteen. In the three schools selected only the pre-unit class was involved in the study. This class was purposively selected because it is the class which is about to be enrolled to class one and the researcher was positive that she could get much of the information from this class. The respondents were as follows: Fifteen pre-school teachers and one hundred and twenty pre-school children giving a total of one hundred and thirty five participants.

3.4 Instruments

Data was collected using observation schedules and use of questionnaires. The use of structured observation schedules allowed the researcher to collect data at the scene of action or behaviour easily and become a participant of what was going on at the scene. An observation schedule is a systematic record of what the researcher plans to focus on and it's prepared in advance. The observation schedule used comprised of social emotional skills; listening, working together, sharing, bargaining and negotiating, turn taking, self-control, empathy, making good decisions and solving conflicts (Appendix 111). These were rated as poor, fair, good and excellent. One was able to capture all the significant details at the same time.

The researcher administered the questionnaires with both closed and open ended questions to pre-school teachers in the sampled schools. The closed ended questions were posed and possible responses were given for the respondent to select. The open ended questions gave the respondents complete freedom to respond. The questions featured in the independent variables which were cooperative learning, peer tutoring, the role of the teacher and consulting experts in collaborative classroom approach in relation to social emotional development.

3.5 Reliability of the Instruments

According to Wiersma (1985), reliability is the consistency of the instrument in measuring whatever it measures. It is the degree of consistency between two instruments or more as they address the same research problem. To ensure reliability of the observation schedule and questionnaires, a test- retest technique was used to estimate the degree to which the same results could be obtained with repeated measures of accuracy of the same concept. In the test-retest technique the same

questionnaire was given and administered to the same group of teachers after a period of two weeks and the responses were scored. For the observation schedule, the same observation schedule was used on the same group of pre-school children after a period of two weeks and the responses were scored. Pearson product moment formula was used to calculate the correlation coefficient at 0.5 confidence level in order to establish the extent to which the items in the questionnaire were consistent in eliciting the same responses every time they were administered to the same group of subjects. The formula used to analyse the reliability of instruments as given below.

$$r_{xy} = \frac{\Sigma(X - \overline{X})(Y - \overline{Y})}{\sqrt{[\Sigma(X - \overline{X})^2][\Sigma Y - \overline{Y})^2]}}$$

Where in this case, X = one person's score on the first half of items, $\overline{X}$ = the mean score on the first half of items, Y = one person's score on the second half of items, $\overline{Y}$ = the mean score on the second half of items. The study obtained a correlation co-efficient (r) of 0.82 for the questionnaire. In the observation schedule, reliability was ascertained by comparing the findings of the two research assistants with that of the researcher.

3.6 Validity of the instruments

The validity of an instrument refers to whether the instrument measures what it is intended to measure. It is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999). The researcher ascertained truthfulness of the study by selecting a research sample relevant to the objectives and selecting a uniform location for all the research participants which involved the selected pre-schools in Meru municipality. To establish the validity

the researcher selected the instruments carefully. The researcher was careful when constructing the items by ensuring that they embraced all the research objectives. The researcher ascertained validity of the observation schedule by comparing the findings of the research assistants and that of the researcher during piloting. The validity of the questionnaire was further ascertained by comparing the results of test-retest during piloting.

3.7 Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher obtained consent from the District Centre for Early Childhood Education (DICECE) office in the Municipality. The next thing involved briefing two research assistants on the study objectives, ethical concerns and how to administer the research instruments which took a few hours. The researcher and the two research assistants visited sampled pre-schools for the purpose of familiarizations and delivering introductory letters to the head teachers and also book appointments with them. On the specific agreed date in each of the pre-schools, the researcher and the two research assistants visited each of the three pre- schools. On arrival in the sampled schools, the researcher introduced herself and the two research assistants to the head teachers again who handed them over to the teachers in charge of pre-school. The researcher explained the purpose of the visit to the teachers and how data was to be collected who then requested the other pre-school teachers to assist. All respondents were assured of confidentiality in their identities. The researcher administered questionnaires to the pre-school teachers personally. The filled questionnaires were collected immediately by the researcher for analysis. The researcher went further to collect more information through observation in pre-unit class using an observation schedule together with the two research assistants. Using the observation schedule, data on social emotional skills observed among the pre-

school children was collected through interaction with the children both inside and outside the classrooms. The observed data on social emotional skills was then recorded in the observation schedule.

3.8 Data Analysis

After all data was collected, the researcher conducted data cleaning to remove outliers or unfilled questionnaires and categorized data manually according to the questionnaire items and then coded the data. Likert scale coding was applied. This is the process of assigning numerals or other symbols to answers so that responses can be put into a limited number of categories or classes. The first step involved the attempt to determine the appropriate categories into which the responses were to be placed. For the open ended questions the researcher categorized the responses into themes and then each question was viewed to identify the category into which it was placed. To ensure consistency in coding, the task of coding was apportioned by variables. The data collected was analysed mainly by use of Weighted Mean. The data was coded as follows: 4- Strongly Agree, 3- Agree, 2- Disagree and 1- Strongly Disagree. The dependent variable which is social emotional development was measured using variables: listening, working together, sharing, bargaining and negotiating, turn taking, self-control, making good decision , empathy and solving conflicts by talking. To measure social emotional skills, the researcher used a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 = poor, 2=fair, 3=good and 4=excellent). The decision point was put at 2.0. A mean rating of more than 2.0 was agreed. The mean was arrived at using the formula:

$$X_i = \frac{\sum F_i R_i}{\sum F_i} \text{Computed}$$

Where F_i is Frequency

R_i is the Rank

James Frederick (2006).

The quantitative data was analysed using statistics including frequency counts, means and percentages. It consisted of counting the number of responses that fit in each category. Then the frequency was divided by the total number of responses and multiplied by 100% to obtain the percentage. Frequency distribution tables were then generated which showed the responses, frequencies and percentage. Findings were then presented using frequency tables and percentages. Qualitative data was analysed qualitatively using content analysis of meanings and implications emanating from respondents' responses.

3.9 Ethical considerations

The identities of the respondents were treated with confidentiality. Data was used only for the purpose of this study which is; collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

This section presents findings and discussions. The presentation is around key variables; co-operative learning, peer tutoring ,the role of the teacher and consulting experts in relation to social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality.

4.2 Co-operative learning and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality

This study sought to examine if co-operative learning influences social emotional development of pre-school learners in Meru Municipality. Table 4.1 presents the findings on co-operative learning and social emotional development of pre-school children.

Table 4.1: Co-operative learning and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Listening	Working together	Sharing	Bargaining and negotiating	Self-control	Empathy	Turn taking	Making good decision	Solving conflicts by talking
Strongly Agree	2	13.3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Agree	5	33.3	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2
Disagree	8	53.3	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	**15**	**100.0**									

KEY: 1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Excellent

From table 4.2, majority of the teachers 53.3% (n=8) revealed that cooperative learning was not applied in pre-school learners education, 13.3% (n=2) of the teachers strongly agreed that they applied co-operative learning in pre-school learners education while 33.3% (n=5) of the teachers agreed that cooperative learning was used. Among the learners where co-operative learning was used, acquisition of social emotional skills was fair. Pre-school children formed their groups and started playing. There was a lot of bargaining and negotiating before settling for a game. Among learners where teachers did not use co-operative learning, acquisition of social emotional skills was rated poor. Such pre-school children displayed poor social emotional development .In one instance all the leaners

were talking to the teacher telling her about a child whose books were burnt by the mother. The learners were laughing at the boy as he cried .At the field some boys started fighting over a ball and it took time to restrain them since their teacher was not around.

This study found that children exposed to co-operative learning manifested advanced levels of social emotional skills. Therefore, lack of this approach in the classroom could affect the acquisition of social emotional skills. According to Johnson and Johnson (1995), who reviewed the research on cooperative learning, within such classrooms (where cooperative learning takes place) in New York learners not only experience the excitement of learning academic material from one another, but they also develop important skills in negotiation and conflict resolution, and a peer culture for supporting academic achievement is developed. From the findings, learners in pre-school who were not exposed to co-operative learning displayed low levels of social emotional skills which consequently affected their social emotional development. Learners scored poorly in empathy and turn taking skills. In general, learners had scored "fair" on a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 = poor, 2=fair, 3=good and 4=excellent) in listening, sharing, bargaining and negotiating, self-control, making good decision and solving conflicts. This indicates that development of social emotional skills among most pre-school learners was inadequate.

From the open ended questions, study results from teachers further indicated that 40.0% (n=6) of the teachers allowed children to form groups on their own while 60.0% (n=9) of the respondents did not. This indicates that a sizeable population of the teachers did not find importance in co-operative learning as far as social emotional development of the children was concerned and therefore the social

emotional skills of the pre-school learners was poor, self-esteem inclusive. The teachers who exposed learners to group work which is co-operative learning had learners who displayed high levels of social emotional skills. This finding is in line with Mills (1996) who suggested that cooperative learning techniques produced higher self-esteem and higher test scores among learners if highly applied.

4.3 Peer tutoring and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality

This study sought to determine the relationship between peer tutoring and social emotional development of pre-school learners in Meru Municipality. Table 4.2 presents the results on relationship between peer tutoring and social emotional development of pre-school learners.

Table 4.2: Peer tutoring and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Listening	Working together	Sharing	Bargaining and negotiating	Self-control	Empathy	Turn taking	Making good decision	Solving conflicts by talking
Strongly Agree	1	6.7	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Agree	4	26.7	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2
Disagree	10	66.7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	**15**	**100.0**									

KEY: 1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Excellent

Results from table 4.3 indicate that the majority of the teachers 66.7% (n=10) in pre-school centres within the municipality did not utilize peer tutoring in their classrooms. From the study findings only a handful 26.7% (n=4) agreed that peer tutoring was used in the classroom. Further from this study findings, 6.7% (n=1) strongly agreed that peer tutoring was utilized. Among the learners where peer tutoring was used, acquisition of social emotional skills was fair. In essence, in this group of children, learners knew what to do in absence of their teacher. For example, in one of the classes where observation was done, the prefect had control over the others and so she managed to make them silent and listen to what she had to say. At the field all the learners were involved in some activity and they played games

happily. Where teachers did not use peer tutoring learners acquisition of social emotional skills was rated poor. In this category of children, learners could not organize themselves in the field. For example, in one school, it was observed that five children sat each alone in a separate position in the field while others were having their games which they would not allow some to join. Boys and girls teamed and played separately.

The finding of this study is in line with Vygotsky's (1978) who acknowledges that the greater fluidity, freedom and equality of peer relationships offers children the opportunity for a new kind of interpersonal experimentation and exploration. In particular, it stimulates a new sensitivity that forms a cornerstone for the development of social competence, a sense of social justice, and the capacity to form relationships with others outside the class. The findings of this study show significant relationship between peer tutoring in collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru municipality.

This study shows that learners did not demonstrate acquisition of adequate social emotional development skills as a result of inadequate peer tutoring. Learners scored poorly in empathy and turn taking skills. Learners had scored "fair" on a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 = poor, 2=fair, 3=good and 4=excellent) in listening, sharing, bargaining and negotiating, self-control, making good decision and solving conflicts where peer tutoring was used. This indicates that development of social emotional skills among most pre-school children was inadequate due to inadequate peer tutoring. This findings agrees with Vygotsky (1978) who believed that children's best learning takes place within their zone of proximal development (ZPD), a range of tasks too difficult for the child to do alone but possible with the help of adults and more

skilled peers hence enhancing learning.

4.4 The role of the teacher in collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality

This study sought to determine if there was a relationship between the role of the teacher in collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality. Table 4.3 presents the results on the role of the teacher in collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school learners.

Table 4.3: Role of the teacher in collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Listening	Working together	Sharing	Bargaining and negotiating	Self-control	Empathy	Turn taking	Making good decision	Solving conflicts by talking
Strongly Agree	2	13.3	1	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Agree	9	60.0	2	2	2	2	2	1	1	2	2
Disagree	4	26.7	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Total	15	100.0									

KEY: 1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Excellent

According to table 4.1, 13.3% (n=2) strongly agreed that they dominated learning in pre-school children education giving the learners little opportunity to work together and on their own, 60.0% (n=9) agreed that they dominated learning in pre-school children education giving the children little opportunity to work together and on their own while 26.7% (n=4) disagreed that they dominated pre-school children education hence, allowing the learners more opportunity to work together and on their own. From this study, it was observed that in cases where teachers did not dominate the learning activities in classrooms, pre-school children formed groups on their own. They played different games such as running, singing and hide and seek. Where teachers dominated learning, in the field, children had no initiative of organizing themselves into groups. In one of the schools studied, children had to be told what to do and when their teacher left they all rushed to the toilets. In conclusion therefore, among the learners where teachers dominated teaching and learning of pre-school children, acquisition of social emotional skills was fair while among learners where teachers did not dominate the learning process, acquisition of social emotional skills was rated good.

From these findings, learners in pre-school whose teachers dominated learning in classroom manifested low levels of social emotional skills. Learners scored poorly in empathy and turn taking skills. Learners had scored "fair" on a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 = poor, 2=fair, 3=good and 4=excellent) in listening, sharing, bargaining and negotiating, self-control, making good decision and solving conflicts. This indicates that development of social emotional skills among these pre-school learners was inadequate. Children in pre-school where teachers did not dominate learning in classroom demonstrated high levels of social emotional skills. This finding is similar to findings from a study by Kariuki, Chepchieng, Mbugua & Ngumi (2006) on

effectiveness of pre-school programme in preparing pre-school children in their social emotional competencies at the entry to primary one carried in Nakuru, Nyeri and Embu districts. The study established that pre-school curriculum and teaching are biased toward academic skills hence the dimensions of social emotional development do not get as much emphasis.

4.5 Consulting experts in collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality

This study sought to examine whether consulting experts in collaborative classroom approach influences social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality. Table 4.4 presents the results on consulting experts in collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children.

Table 4.4: Consulting experts in collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality

Response	Frequency	Percentage	Listening	Working together	Sharing	Bargaining and negotiating	Self-control	Empathy	Turn taking	Making good decision	Solving conflicts by talking
Social Emotional Skills											
Agree	1	6.7	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Disagree	4	26.7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	2
Strongly Disagree	10	66.7	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total	**15**	**100.0**									

KEY: 1=Poor, 2=Fair, 3=Good, 4=Excellent

From table 4.4, majority of the teachers 93.4% (n=14) felt that little was done regarding consulting experts in collaborative classroom approach in pre-school children in Meru Municipality. The results further reveal that only a small percentage of the teachers 6.7% (n=1) agreed that consultation was done as far as teaching pre-school children in Meru Municipality was concerned. Among the learners where consultation of experts was done, acquisition of social emotional skills was fair. In one of the school observed where consultation of experts was done, children rushed to greet me and were very friendly. The pre-school children invited me into their games and it was easy to control them'. Among learners where teachers did not use consultation, acquisition of social emotional skills was rated

poor. Generally, results show that learners did not demonstrate acquisition of adequate social emotional development skills as a result of inadequate consultations of experts. In such pre-schools children made a lot of noise when their teacher left and it was very hard to control them in class. In the field pre-school children ran into different directions, the researcher had to call their teacher to instil order.

Learners scored poorly in empathy and turn taking skills. Learners had scored "fair" on a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 = poor, 2=fair, 3=good and 4=excellent) in listening, sharing, bargaining and negotiating, self-control, making good decision and solving conflicts. This study shows significant relationship to exist between involving experts in the learning process and the social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru municipality. The finding of this study is in line with studies by Bruce and Beverly (2002) in Alexandria, on the effectiveness of classroom consultation which demonstrated positive effects on teacher practice and child outcomes over and above any effects realized from training alone.

The finding of this study is in line with the findings from the Chicago School Readiness Project (CSRP) and Foundations of Learning (FOL) (2013) studies which suggested that the level of intensity (a six- to seven-hour day, one day per week) and/or the duration of consultation (a full academic year) may not be necessary to produce change in teacher practice; despite the lower level of consultation activities directly related to the incredible years training. The CSRP and FOL studies (2013) showed that a combination of teacher training and in-classroom consultation could improve teacher classroom management practices thus enhancing learning among pre-school children.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the summary of the findings of the study, conclusions made from the study, recommendations on the study and recommendations for further research.

5.2 Summary

The study was about collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru Municipality. The dependent variable was social-emotional development of pre-school learners while the independent variables were co-operative learning, peer tutoring, the role of the teacher and consulting experts in collaborative classroom approach. The study used descriptive survey design and data collection instruments used included questionnaires and observation schedule. Findings were presented in form of frequency tables and percentages.

Regarding influence of co-operative learning on social emotional development of pre-school children, the study established that majority of the teachers 53.3% (n=8) did not use cooperative learning in majority of the pre-schools. The study further established that 13.3% (n=2) of the teachers strongly agreed that they applied co-operative learning in pre-school learners' education while 33.3% (n=5) of the teachers agreed that cooperative learning was used. Among the learners where co-operative learning was used, acquisition of social emotional skills was fair while among learners where teachers did not use co-operative learning, acquisition of social emotional skills was rated poor. The findings of this study showed that

children exposed to co-operative learning manifested advanced levels of social emotional skills while children who were not exposed to co-operative learning manifested low levels of social emotional skills.

This study sought to determine if there existed a significant relationship between peer tutoring and social emotional development. The findings of this study further demonstrated significant relationship between peer tutoring in collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru municipality. Most teachers revealed that they do not group children in class to complete a given task denying the children the opportunity to participate in peer tutoring. Study indicated that majority of the teachers 66.7% (n=10) do not utilize peer tutoring in their classrooms. Only a handful 26.7% (n=4) agreed that peer tutoring was used in the classroom with 6.7% (n=1) strongly agreeing that peer tutoring was utilized. Among the learners where peer tutoring was used, acquisition of social emotional skills was fair while among learners where teachers did not use peer tutoring; acquisition of social emotional skills was poor. The findings of this study revealed that where teachers used peer tutoring in the learning of the pre-school children, learners displayed advanced levels of social emotional skills. Consequently, where teachers did not use peer tutoring in the learning of pre-school children, learners displayed poor social emotional skills

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Regarding the role of the teacher in collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development, it was established that majority of the teachers, 86.7% (n=13) did not give their children a chance in collaborative classroom approach. Teachers played most of the roles in learning. However, their effect was never felt as far as acquisition of social emotional skills was concerned. Results showed that

learners did not demonstrate acquisition of adequate social emotional development despite teachers indicating that they played their roles. Learners scored poorly in empathy and turn taking skills. On the other hand where teachers allowed learners to play most roles in their learning, Learners had scored "fair" on a scale of 1 to 4 (where 1 = poor, 2=fair, 3=good and 4=excellent) in listening, sharing, bargaining and negotiating, self-control, making good decision and solving conflicts. This indicates that development of social emotional skills among pre-school children was adequate an indication that learners were exposed to collaborative classroom approach which consequently affected their social emotional development.

This study sought to determine whether there was any significant relationship between consulting experts in collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development. The study findings showed significant relationship exists between involving experts in the learning process and the social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru municipality. Majority of the teachers 93.4% (n=14) felt that little was done regarding consulting experts in collaborative classroom approach in pre-school children in Meru Municipality. The results revealed that only a small percentage of the teachers 6.7% (n=1) agreed that consultation was done as far as teaching pre-school learners in Meru Municipality was concerned. Among the learners where consultation was done, acquisition of social emotional skills was fair while among learners where teachers did not use consultation, acquisition of social emotional skills was rated poor. This finding revealed that where consultation of experts was used in pre-school learning, there was a significant manifestation of social emotional skills in learners. Consequently, where teachers did not use consultation of experts in learning occasionally, learners reflected low levels of social emotional skills.

5.3 Conclusions

This study demonstrated much significant relationship between collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children in Meru municipality. The study established that children in pre-schools who were exposed to collaborative classroom approach manifested advanced levels of social emotional skills and that where collaborative classroom approach was not utilized by the teachers in the learning of pre-school children, there was a negative significant effect on social emotional skills, consequently negatively affecting the social emotional development of the pre-school children in Meru Municipality. Despite the fact that collaborative classroom approach is crucial for social emotional development in pre-school children, the approach was not popular to pre-school teachers. This point to the fact that most teachers were not familiar with collaborative classroom approach and so they could not practice what they did not know about. Additionally, collaborative classroom approach is an approach that demands more involvement of the teacher in terms of planning and time and so even teachers who are aware of it may just avoid it.

5.4 Recommendations

From the conclusions in this study, various recommendations are proposed to promote the utilization of collaborative classroom approach in pre-school children learning in Meru Municipality. This study recommends that: the government of Kenya through, the Ministry of Education should in-service all practising pre-school teachers especially those who lack the basic pre-school training so that they can be conversant with collaborative classroom approach which if applied in teaching would help develop social emotional skills needed by children at the early stages of

life and throughout their lives. The Ministry of Education should also identify the most effective way of providing pre-service and in-service training of teachers based on content knowledge in collaborative classroom approach, as well as providing a system to support changes in teacher behaviour. This is critical to improving the context of classroom environments and the persistence of teachers in the profession. The government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education should work towards making social emotional learning a core element of the curriculum and promote its implementation.

5.5 Recommendations for Further Research

This study established that most teachers did not involve fellow teachers and experts in other areas of specialisation in the learning of the pre-school children, therefore, future research should seek to understand the level and type of in-class consultation that is needed for effective collaboration to have significant positive results for the Kenyan pre-school programmes. Furthermore, this study looked at relationship between collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children hence; similar studies are suggested with other methods of teaching for example co-teaching, team-teaching and differentiated instructions.

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APPENDIX I: Introductory Letter

LUCY NJERI MBAE

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL

COMMUNICATION & TECHNOLOGY

P.O BOX 30197

NAIROBI.

Pre-school Teachers

_____ Center

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST TO TAKE PART IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH.

I am a postgraduate student at the University of Nairobi, pursuing a master of education degree in early childhood education. I am conducting a study on influence of collaborative classroom approach on social emotional development of pre-school children, in Meru Municipality – Kenya. I hereby request you to respond to the questionnaire items as honestly as possible.

The research is for academic purpose only and your identity will be handled with utmost confidentiality. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Lucy N. Mbae.

APPENDIX II: Questionnaire for Pre-School Teachers

Instructions

You are kindly asked to participate in this research by completing this questionnaire which is designed to gather information about collaborative classroom approach and social emotional development of pre-school children. Your identity will remain confidential. Do not write your name on the questionnaire. Please indicate the appropriate option by ticking (√) and/or filling the blank spaces provided where applicable.

Section A

Role of teachers

1. Children in pre-school should be introduced to reading and writing.

    Strongly agree   (   )

    Agree   (   )

    Disagree   (   )

    Strongly disagree   (   )

2. Teachers concentrate more on reading and writing in pre-school.

    Strongly agree   (   )

    Agree   (   )

    Disagree   (   )

    Strongly disagree   (   )

3. Teachers demonstrate most skills in learning.

   Strongly agree   (   )

   Agree   (   )

   Disagree   (   )

   Strongly disagree   (   )

4. Teachers distribute learning materials in learning.

   Strongly agree   (   )

   Agree   (   )

   Disagree   (   )

   Strongly disagree   (   )

Cooperative learning

5. Teachers often give children work to complete as groups

   Strongly agree   (   )

   Agree   (   )

   Disagree   (   )

   Strongly disagree   (   )

6. Children share most of the learning materials.

   Strongly agree   (   )

   Agree   (   )

   Disagree   (   )

   Strongly disagree   (   )

7. Play is very important to pre-school children.

   Strongly agree   (   )

   Agree   (   )

   Disagree   (   )

   Strongly disagree   (   )

8. Children enjoy working in groups.

   Strongly agree   (   )

   Agree   (   )

   Disagree   (   )

   Strongly disagree   (   )

9. Children should work in groups most of the times.

   Strongly agree   (   )

   Agree   (   )

   Disagree   (   )

   Strongly disagree   (   )

Peer tutoring

10. Teachers usually group children in class to complete a given work.

   Strongly agree   (   )

   Agree   (   )

   Disagree   (   )

   Strongly disagree   (   )

11. Children influence the behavior of each other.

Strongly agree   (   )

Agree   (   )

Disagree   (   )

Strongly disagree   (   )

12. Learners benefit a lot in mixed group activities.

Strongly agree   (   )

Agree   (   )

Disagree   (   )

Strongly   disagree   (   )

13. Children   demonstrate most skills in learning.

Strongly agree   (   )

Agree   (   )

Disagree   (   )

Strongly disagree   (   )

14. Children distribute learning materials in learning.

Strongly agree   (   )

Agree   (   )

Disagree   (   )

Strongly disagree   (   )

Consulting Experts

15. Teachers often involve other people in learning of the children.

    Strongly agree   (   )

    Agree   (   )

    Disagree   (   )

    Strongly disagree   (   )

16. Children   usually enjoy going for education trips.

    Strongly agree   (   )

    Agree   (   )

    Disagree   (   )

    Strongly disagree   (   )

17. Teachers often involve other professionals or experts in the learning of the children.

    Strongly agree   (   )

    Agree   (   )

    Disagree   (   )

    Strongly disagree   (   )

18. The head teacher usually visits the class.

    Strongly agree   (   )

    Agree   (   )

    Disagree   (   )

    Strongly disagree   (   )

19. Teachers often involve other teachers in learning of the children.

Strongly agree　　　　　(　)

Agree　　　　　　　　(　)

Disagree　　　　　　　(　)

Strongly disagree　　　(　)

Section B

20. When do you introduce reading and writing in your class?

Give reasons: - …………………………………………………………...

21. Do you allow children to form groups on their own? Yes or No

Give reasons: - …………………………………………………………..

22. How many children do you allow in a group?

Give reasons: - …………………………………………………………...

23. How many groups do you form in your class?

Give reasons …………………………………………………………...

24. What role do you play in the groups?

………………………………………………………………………….

25. What role do children play in their groups?

………………………………………………………………………….

26. Do children enjoy learning in groups? Yes or No.

Give reasons …………………………………………………………..

Thank you very much.

APPENDIX III: Observation Schedule

This observation schedule is designed to gather information for the purpose of academic research. Your identity will be treated with a lot of confidentiality.

1. Name of the pre-school_____

2. Name of the teacher_____

3. Is the teacher trained Yes ☐   No   ☐

4. Pre-unit class, number of   children ☐

5. Enrolment of the pre-school   ☐

SOCIAL EMOTION SKILLS	POOR	FAIR	GOOD	EXCELLENT
Listening				
Working together				
Sharing				
Bargaining and negotiating				
Turn taking				
Self- control				
Empathy				
Making good decisions				
Solving conflict by talking				