

Home and School Environments as Determinant of Social Skills Deficit among Learners with Intellectual Disability in Lagos State

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Abstract

The study examined home and school environmental factors as determinant of social skills deficit among learners with intellectual disability in Lagos State, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research method using a sample size of fifty (50) pupils with intellectual disability who were purposively selected from five special primary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria. The instrument used for the study was a questionnaire ($r=0.902$). The findings revealed that all independent variables jointly contributed to social skill deficits among learners with intellectual disability sampled ($F(12,48)=3.141$, $p<0.05$). Furthermore, the contribution of all the independent variables is as follows, attitude to fellow student made the highest contribution to social skills deficits ($\beta = 0.583$, $p < 0.05$) which was significant. Followed by parent education qualification with coefficient ($\beta = -0.388$, $p < 0.05$) which was also significant. Teacher attitude, school library, family size, parent's employment industry, parenting styles, sport facilities, marital status, parent's income and classroom interaction did not have relative effect on the social skills deficit of learners with intellectual disability/ Based on the findings in the study, some recommendations were made which includes that school, parents and society should encourage good social skills that will compensate for social skills deficit among learners with intellectual disability and also reward good behavior.

Keywords: Social skills deficit, Intellectual disability, Home environments, School Environments

INTRODUCTION

Social skills are critical to successful functioning in life. These skills enable individuals to know what to say, to make good choices, and how to behave appropriately in different situations. Social skills are components of behaviour that help an individual understand and adapt across a variety of social settings. According to Allan, Bellack, Mueser, Susan Gingerich and Julie (2004), Social skills are the specific behaviour people use when interacting with others that enable them to be effective at achieving their personal goals. Situations such as having a casual conversation, making friends, expressing feelings, or obtaining something from others all require the use of social skills. Good social skills include both what is said during a social interaction and how it is said. When communicating with others, the verbal content of the message, that is, the person's choice of words or phrases is important. How that message is communicated can be just as important. For example, appropriate facial expressions, body language, eye contact, and a good, firm voice all help to communicate the message.

Allan et al (2004) noted that people with intellectual disability usually experience many problems in their relationship with others, including treatment providers, family members and other clients. These problems result in difficulties in community adjustment and an impoverished quality of life. For many learners with intellectual disability, poor social functioning is related to inadequate social skills. For example, many have difficulty in starting a conversation. They often speak in a low monotone voice and also fail to establish an appropriate eye contact. Helping learners with intellectual disability to improve their social skills can enhance their social functioning in the community.

Walker (1983) posited that social skills are set of competencies that allow an individual to initiate and maintain positive social relationships, contribute to peers acceptance and to satisfactory school adjustment and allow an individual to cope effectively with the larger social environment. With this understanding, researchers and educators seek to evaluate and build students' social skills within a variety of social contexts. The School is one such environment children must learn to navigate. Successful learning requires students to interact closely with teachers and peers. In addition to their general importance for daily interaction, social skills can have a big impact on a child's ability to succeed in an academic setting. The classroom becomes both a training ground for development of social skills and an arena in which those skills are put to use.

Social skills deficits can be defined as a set of behaviour that do not allow individuals to initiate and maintain positive social relationships, contribute to peer acceptance and allow for effective coping in one's environment. Social skill deficits can lead to behavioural difficulty in school, low self-esteem, academic failure, concentration difficulties, isolation from peers, and depression (Terry, 2002). A social skill deficit can also take the form of non-compliance with school procedures, physical or verbal aggression or defiance of authority figures (Lo, Loeand Cartledge, 2002). The lack of social skills can lead to behavioural difficulty in schools, delinquency, and inattentiveness, Peers rejection, emotional difficulties, bullying, difficulties in making friends, aggressiveness, problem interpersonal relationships, poor self-concept, academic failure, concentration difficulties, isolation from peers and oppression (Terry, 2002).

Generally, social skills deficits can be broken into three types: skill deficits referred to when a pupil who has never learned the required social or cognitive skill to use in a particular social situation; performance deficit, referred to when a pupil has learned a social skill but fails to perform in the appropriate situation; and self-controls deficit is when a pupil's lack of self-control results in negative behaviour, which interfere with both acquiring and performing appropriate social skills (Mangal, 2007).

In addition, research has shown that pupils with social skill deficits have difficulty expressing needs, adapting behaviours for various social settings and reading social cues (Olrneda and Kauffmann. 2003). Pupils who have problems of social skills may misunderstand a social situation and act inappropriately. Their behaviour is often interpreted as purposeful when, as a result of not knowing how to act appropriately. Problems in social skills are more debilitating than academic problems and hinder the ability to succeed in life.

Allan (2004) went on to say that there are many possible causes of social skill deficits in people with disability. The social skills deficit may be related to impulsivity, both verbal and motor, poor visual perception of facial and body language cues, poor auditory perception of vocal cues, invasion of the personal space of others, inappropriate touching, untidiness, disorganization, and a number of other such problems. Mood swings, overreaction, and depression may also pose problems for individuals with intellectual disabilities.

Looking at the contexts of home and school, the relationships formed within these settings and the interactions between them creates a more complete picture of children's development. Studies have shown that children spend most of their time at home or in the classroom, thereby making these settings their primary environments.

One of the best ways to understand and provide a context for student's outcomes and development, it is important to study children in their home environments and to observe them as they build relationships with their teachers and peers. Studies have shown that classroom relationships, especially those experienced among peers, can help children develop the social skills necessary for school adjustment and long-term academic success. Studies has also showed that engaging in peer relationships can help economically disadvantaged students improve their social skills, increase school engagement, and help them create a positive outlook about school, the relationships formed, and the learning process.

Social skills are an important component of academic achievement, however children from families with low socio-economic status and enrolled in poorly equipped and resourced schools may struggle to succeed academically as they often enter school with fewer social skills, unprepared for the social interactions that facilitate learning and that are crucial to acquire in the early years of schooling. It is against this background that the study sought to examine home and school environment as determinants of social skills deficit among learners with intellectual disability in Lagos State by providing answers to the following research questions.

Research Questions

1. Is there any relationship among the independent variable (family size, parental education qualification, parental income, parent's employment, parent's marital status, inter-parent's conflict, parenting style, school library, teacher's attitude, attitude of fellow pupils, classroom physical condition and sport facility) with the dependent variable (social skill deficits) ?
2. What is the composite contribution of the independent variable to the determination of the dependent variable?
3. What is the relative contribution of the independent variables to the determination of the dependent variable (social skill deficits) among learners with Intellectual disability in Lagos State?

Methodology

Research design

The study employed a descriptive research design of correlational type. This research design enables a researcher to obtain information from a representative sample of the population in order to describe a situation as it exists, and it also makes the evaluation of existing conditions possible.

Participants

The sample for this study was selected from the identified learners with intellectual disability in five selected special schools in Lagos State. Fifty (50) participants were purposively selected for the study.

Instruments

The instrument used for this study is a structured questionnaire that was adapted from the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS) developed by Frank M. Gresham and Stephen N. Elliot in 1990 and was reviewed by the Community University Partnership (CUP) for the study of children, youth and families in 2011, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada and Classroom Environment Instrument developed by the notable psycho-sociologists, Darrell L. Fisher and Barry J. Fraser

The questionnaire is termed “Home and School Environments as Determinants of Social Skills Deficit among Learners with Intellectual Disability (QHSESSDLID)”. The questionnaire is divided into three (3) sections. Section A contained questions on demographic information of the respondents, while B and C, sourced for information on home and school environments, social skills deficit among learners with intellectual disability.

Instrument Validation

In order to determine the validity of the research instrument, the researcher ensured that the items of the questionnaire corresponded with the objectives of the study. The content validity of the questionnaire was also ascertained by experts in the field of special education. The reliability of the instrument was derived by administering the research instrument to five (5) parents and five (5) teachers of learners with intellectual disability in Oyo State, as a pilot study. This was done prior to the final administration of questionnaire on the intended respondents. The data obtained was analysed to obtain an overall reliability coefficient of 0.92 ($r = 0.92$).

Method of Data Analysis

The data was analysed with descriptive statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression. Descriptive statistics tools were used to show the distribution of the demographic variables. Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation was employed to determine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Multiple regressions were used to find out the combine and relative contribution of the independent variables on the dependent variables.

Results and Discussion

Research Question 1: Is there any relationship among the independent variable (family size, parental education level, parental income, parent’s employment, parent’s marital status, inter-parent’s conflict, parenting style, school library, teacher’s attitude, attitude of fellow pupils, classroom interaction, sport facility, classroom physical condition, classroom size, and learning facility) with the dependent variable of social skill deficits?

Table 1: Relationship between Independent Variables and Social Skills Deficits among learners with Intellectual Disability

	X ₁	X ₂	X ₃	X ₄	X ₅	X ₆	X ₇	X ₈	X ₉	X ₁₀	X ₁₁	X ₁₂
X ₁	1											
X ₂	-.158	1										
X ₃	-.265	-.068	1									
X ₄	-.419**	.010	.514**	1								
X ₅	.254	.190	-.522**	-.397**	1							
X ₆	.113	-.099	.401**	.232	-.147	1						
X ₇	.099	.298*	-.182	.042	.122	.132	1					
X ₈	.114	.007	-.436**	-.136	.090	-.186	.036	1				
X ₉	.044	-.073	-.402**	-.314*	.161	-.292*	-.209	.633**	1			
X ₁₀	.136	.039	-.510**	-.242	.340*	-.267	-.093	.478**	.642**	1		
X ₁₁	.114	-.121	-.408**	-.217	.130	-.296*	-.203	.583**	.742**	.665**	1	
X ₁₂	.205	.011	-.405**	-.391**	.294*	-.268	.086	.536**	.329*	.452**	.417**	1

X₁= Parental income, X₂ = Marital status, X₃=Family size, X₄=Parent educational Qualification, X₅=Parent employment, X₆=Inter-parent Conflict, X₇=Parenting Style, X₈=Attitude to Fellow, X₉=Teacher Attitude, X₁₀=School Library, X₁₁=Sport facility, X₁₂=Social Skills Deficit

Table 1 above shows the inter-correlation among independent variables and between dependent and independent variables. It could be inferred that parent educational qualification ($r = -.391$, $P < 0.05$), family size ($r = -.405$, $p < 0.05$), parent employment ($r = .294^*$, $P < 0.05$), attitude to the fellow ($r = .536^*$, $P < 0.05$), teacher’s attitude ($r = .329^*$, $p < 0.05$), school library ($r = .452^{**}$, $p < 0.05$), and sport facilities ($r = .417^{**}$, $p < 0.05$), correlate significantly with social skills deficits among students with intellectual disability, this could influence social skills deficit of students to some extent.

Furthermore, the result shows that family size ($r = -.405$, $p < 0.05$), level of parent education ($r = -.391$, $P < 0.05$) and inter-parent conflict ($r = -.268$, $p < 0.05$) correlate negatively with social skill deficits among students with intellectual disability. This implies that increase in family size, improved parent education and increase in inter-parent conflict will have negative effect on social skills deficit, this implied that it will lower social skills deficits.

Research Question 2: What is the composite contribution of the independent variable to the determination of the dependent variable?

Table 2: Composite Contributions of Independent Variables to Social Skills Deficit ANOVA

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	4755.195	12	396.266	3.141	.004 ^b
	Residual	4542.193	36	126.172		
	Total	9297.388	48			

Model Summary	
Model	1
R	.715 ^a
R Square	.511
Adjusted R Square	.349
Std. Error of the Estimate	11.23263

Predictors: = Parental income, Marital status, Family size, Parent educational Qualification, Parent employment, Inter-parent Conflict, Parenting Style, Attitude to Fellow student, Teacher Attitude, School Library, Sport facility.

From the table 2, the eleven independent variables namely: Parental income, Marital status, Family size, Parent educational Qualification, Parent employment, Interpersonal Conflict, Parenting Style, Attitude to Fellow, Teacher Attitude, School Library and Sport facility taken together jointly correlate positively ($R = .715$) with social skills deficit among students with intellectual disability, This implies that the eleven independents variables have a positive multiple relationships with social skills deficits. Hence they have the potential of explaining change in social skills deficits among students with intellectual disability to a certain extent. Also the four variables could explain 51.1% of total variance in social skills deficits ($R^2 = 0.511$). This leaves the remaining 48.9% to other factors that were not considered in the study. The level of significance of the composite contribution of all independent variables was presented in the ANOVA Table, the table shows that R value of .511 is significant ($F = 3.141$, $P < 0.05$). This implies that the four variables jointly contribute to social skill deficit. Therefore there is significant composite contribution of all independent variable to social skills deficits.

Research Question 3: What is the relative contribution of the independent variables to the determination of the dependent variable (social skill deficits) among learners with Intellectual disability in Lagos State?

Table 3: Relative Contributions of Independent Variables to Social Skills Deficit Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	15.702	16.781		.936	.356
	Family size	3.019	2.354	.243	1.283	.208
	Edu. Qualification	-3.844	1.567	-.388	-2.452	.019
	Parent income	-.960	2.300	-.060	-.417	.679
	Parent employment industry	1.257	1.218	.153	1.032	.309
	Marital Status	-1.043	2.022	-.067	-.516	.609
	Inter-parent conflict	-.439	.375	-.161	-1.173	.249
	Parenting Style	.825	.891	.128	.926	.360
	School library	.847	.549	.296	1.544	.131
	Teacher Attitude	-.571	.308	-.405	-1.854	.072
	Attitude to Fellow	1.035	.299	.583	3.458	.001
	Classroom Conditions	.033	.375	.014	.088	.931
	Sport Facility	.427	.670	.132	.637	.528

a. Dependent Variable: Social Skills Deficit

The Table shows that among all the independent variables, attitude to fellow students made the highest contribution to social skills deficits ($\beta = 0.583$, $p < 0.05$) which is significant. Follow by parent education qualification with coefficient ($\beta = -0.388$, $p < 0.05$) which is also significant. Teachers' attitude ($\beta = -0.405$, $p > 0.05$) which is not significant, School library ($\beta = 0.296$, $p > 0.05$) which was not significant, Family size ($\beta = 0.243$, $p > 0.05$) which was not significant, inter-parent conflict ($\beta = -0.161$, $p > 0.05$) not significant, parent employment industry ($\beta = 0.153$, $p > 0.05$) not significant and Parenting styles, sport facilities, marital status, parent income and classroom interaction ($\beta = 0.128, 0.132, -0.067, -0.06, 0.014$, $p > 0.05$) which were not significant respectively. Hence, there is significant relative contribution of attitude to fellow students and parent

educational qualification to social skills deficits while all other independent variables were not significant. Again, attitude to fellows contributed most to social skills deficits while classroom conditions contributed the least.

Summary of Findings

The findings of the study are summarised below:

1. It was observed that there was significant relationship between seven independent variables (parent educational qualification, parent employment, attitude to the fellow, teacher's attitude, school library and sport facilities) and social skills deficit of students among learners with intellectual disability in Lagos, Nigeria.
2. The study also revealed that the independent variables (Parental income, Marital status, Family size, Parent educational Qualification, Parent employment, Interpersonal Conflict, Parenting Style, Attitude to Fellow students, Teacher's Attitude, School Library, Sport, Social Skills Deficit) have the potential of explaining change in social skills deficits among students with intellectual disability. Therefore there is significant composite contribution of all independent variable to social skills deficits among learners with intellectual disability in Lagos, Nigeria.
3. It was also revealed from the study that there is significant relative contribution of attitude to fellow students and parent educational qualification to social skills deficits among learners with intellectual disability in Lagos Nigeria, while all other independent variables were not significant.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study it was obvious that home and school environments are correlates of social skills deficit observed in learners with intellectual disability. Parents' level of education and attitude to fellow students also accounted for and predict level of social skills deficits in learners with intellectual disability to a great extent. Change in parental income, marital status, family size, parent educational qualification, parent employment, interpersonal conflict, parenting style, attitude to fellow students, teacher attitude, school library and sport facilities will also result to a corresponding change in social skills deficit of learners with intellectual disability.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that

- i. Parents and guidance should assume the responsibility of giving a sound moral education to their children with intellectual disability that will enhance positive social performance and skills.
- ii. Home, schools and society should appreciate good behaviour by giving gifts and awards to well-behaved children to reinforce social skills development.
- iii. Social skills should be taught and practiced in the schools as the school is the secondary agents of socialization for the pupils.
- iv. Government and other stakeholders in education should find a way of introducing relevant topics germane to development of social skills into the curriculum of the schools in order to compensate social skills deficit among students with intellectual disability.
- v. Teachers should deal with learners with intellectual disability who has social skill deficit differently from their peers as they may not be able to cope with learning these skills as fast as learners without this deficit.

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