



The effectiveness of preschools in developing social-emotional well-being of children aged 4- 6 years: A comparative analysis of children staying home and those enrolled in the selected preschools in Morogoro Municipality

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ABSTRACT

Children's social-emotional development provide valuable information about how children are progressing in areas such as forming relationships, regulating and expressing their emotions, and showing empathy toward others. This study investigated the effectiveness of day care centers in imparting social-emotional skills to children aged 4-6 years as prerequisite for successful schooling later. The effectiveness was measured by comparing social-emotional development of children enrolled to daycare centers against those staying at home. In doing so, the study also assessed the role of teachers/caregivers in fostering social-emotional well-being of these children and the role environment in developing positive social-emotional well-being. The study involved 188 preschoolers in which 112 were those who have been enrolled in one of the 10 selected daycare centers and the remaining 76 were those who are still staying at home. For the purpose of triangulating the findings, the study also interviewed ten (10) conveniently selected teachers from these daycare centers. Data from children were collected using an adopted socio-emotional competence scale developed by Zhou and Ee (2012). Interviews were conducted to teachers for the purpose of assisting in the filling of the likert scale. Statistical significant p-value was calculated and used for interpretation of results in a $p \leq .05$ and confidence level of 0.95 formats. An analysis of SPSS independent samples t-test based on whether a child stays at home or enrolled in a daycare center at $(\alpha) = 0.05$ produced a p of 0.04 and a t value of 0.57, hence rejecting the null hypothesis (H_0). The $p = .04$ implied that there is statistically significant difference in socio-emotional maturity between preschoolers enrolled in daycare centres and those staying at home in favor of those enrolled in the centers. The dimension measured included self-awareness, social awareness, self- management, relationship management, and responsible decision making.

Keywords: Daycare centers, social-emotional and pre-schools.

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INTRODUCTION

Background and context of the study

Children entering primary school in Tanzania are expected to come with the prerequisite social maturity to comply with school daily routines. Socio-emotional maturity or development is the child's ability to understand the feelings of others, control their own feelings and behaviors, get along with others, and build relationships with adults. According to Damon et al. [1], social-emotional development is one of the most important dimensions of human development and it is a pre-requisite for children's mental, cognitive, and moral development. Cohen, et al. [2] described social emotional development as the child's experience, expression, and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others. This dimension of development forms a strong foundation for learning and helps children make friends, manage challenges, and resolve interpersonal problems. Terms such as non-cognitive skills, soft skills, and character education have been the terms used to describe term socio-emotional development [3]. It is a gradual process through which children acquire the capacity to understand, experience, express, and manage emotions and to develop meaningful relationships with other [4].

A number of developmental psychologists [5;6;7;8;9;3& 4] have documented the benefits of child social-emotional learning. According to Mtahabwa and Rao [8] social emotional development allows students to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors to become self-aware, manage emotions, make responsible decisions, and work effectively and ethically. Children with socio-emotional competence according to Bennet&Sani [10] are better equipped to handle stress and persevere through difficult times in their lives. Social-emotional development provides learners with a sense of who they are, how they learn, and helps them establish quality relationships with others [8]. It is the socio-emotional development which drives an individual to communicate, connect with others, and more importantly, helps resolve conflicts, gain confidence and reach goals [4].

One of the responsibilities of early childhood education (ECE) day care centres is to build socio-emotional competence of preschool children. The importance of pre-schools focusing on the development of social and emotional skills in pupils is now widely accepted [11;12;13;14]. Pre-schools or day care centres are specific places where young children aged three to six years have opportunities to explore and communicate with the world thereby developing their socio-emotional skills. The recognition that socio-emotional learning can facilitate prosocial behaviour and academic achievement has developed from the understanding that 'schools are social places and learning is a social process' [14]. This is because children spend a significant part of their day in these centres. Daycare teachers should encourage playful activities in addition to preparing children for grade 1 primary education [15]. Children who are socially and emotionally well-adjusted do better at school, have increased confidence, have good relationships, take on challenging tasks and communicate well [10]. The Tanzania preschool curricula primarily focus on building the child's cognitive skills and socio-emotional development. According to Mtahabwa & Rao [8] the general purpose of Tanzania pre-primary education is to prepare children physically, emotionally, socially and mentally to enter Grade I. It aims at the holistic development of a child's social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs in order to build a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and wellbeing [15].

In the mid 1990's the Government of Tanzania through its ministry of education and culture developed an Education and training policy of 1995 which included Early Childhood Education as one of its crucial components [16]. As a result of the policy, thousands of pre-schools, nurseries, kindergartens, and daycare centres were erected for the purpose of providing care, education and supervision to preschoolers. At its core, pre-primary schools are responsible to enhance the child's social-emotional development. Currently young children in Tanzania attend programs in childcare centers, nursery schools, Montessori and other preschools and pre-primary classes which are affiliated to primary schools [8]. The new 2014 curriculum policy emphasizes further on the importance of early childhood education services as a basic child right and made it compulsory to all children between 4-6 years.

Given increased awareness of the importance of socio-emotional development, many education practitioners have been actively engaged in the efforts to promote and assess it [17]. As a result, there has been an increased demand for assessments of socio-emotional competencies of young children [17]. This includes measuring also the socio-emotional factors and gauging the effectiveness of socio-emotional improvement efforts including the effectiveness of Day care schools as centers for developing children's social-emotional competencies. A preschool, also known as nursery school, pre-primary school, playschool or kindergarten, is an educational establishment or learning space offering early childhood education including socio-emotional skills to children before they begin compulsory education at primary school.

Problem statement

A child's early years are the foundation for his or her future development and life. Through an intersectoral approach spanning several years, the United Republic of Tanzania has developed its Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) policy, which was reviewed and approved in 2010. The Tanzania early childhood care and education policy reaffirms the Commitment of the government to provide integrated services for holistic development of all children along the continuum, from the prenatal period to six years of age. The policy stipulated that the Government should put more effort in developing the entire education spectrum which includes nursery, day-care centers and kindergartens as part of formal education system. Since then, the two years of pre-primary education has become part of the formal education system. Furthermore, the policy lays down the way forward for a comprehensive approach towards ensuring a sound foundation with focus on early learning for every Tanzanian child. The new 2014 curriculum policy reaffirms the commitment of government to early childhood education by making it one of its major components.

The curriculum for early childhood education intends among other things to develop the socio-emotional maturity of preschoolers. Development of socio-emotional abilities motivates children to learn critical skills such as the ability to communicate, connect with others, resolve conflict, self-regulate, display kindness and empathy and cope with challenges. Pre-schools or day care centres are specific places where young children aged three to six years old have opportunities to explore and communicate with the world. However, there is no clear evidence on the effectiveness of preschools such as daycare centres, nursery, and kindergartens in developing socio-emotional maturity of preschoolers. Little is known on whether or not the preschool is appropriately imparting socio-emotional competence as prescribed in the early childhood curriculum. Hence it was necessary to conduct a study to assess the effectiveness of daycare centres in developing social-emotional well-being of children aged 4- 6 years. The socio-emotional development of young children has a direct effect on their overall adult and academic development.

General objectives

The general objective of this study was to assess the effectiveness of daycare centres in developing social-emotional well-being of children aged 4- 6 years. The effectiveness was assessed by comparing socio-emotional levels of children staying at homes and those enrolled in the selected daycare centres in Morogoro Municipality.

Specific objectives

- i. Determine the socio-emotional maturity of preschoolers aged 4- 6 years enrolled in the selected daycare centres in Morogoro Municipality
- ii. Assess the level of socio-emotional skills of children aged 4- 6 years who are not enrolled in any daycare centres in Morogoro Municipality
- iii. Compare the socio-emotional maturity of children staying at homes and those enrolled in in the selected daycare centres in Morogoro Municipality.
- iv. Examine the development of socio-emotional abilities of preschoolers aged 4- 6 years enrolled in the selected daycare centres in each dimension of the socio-emotional scale.

Significance

Recent societal changes have increased the emphasis on cultivating these skills in young children. Preschool teachers are integral part to the development of socio-emotional skills and are encouraged to foster several skills. Poor socio-emotional development can lead to disruptive behavioral problems that studies have found to be extremely stable across childhood and adolescence. The findings of this study will increase teachers and parent’s awareness about the social emotional skills potentiality prevalent in children and thus helping these children to utilize such potentiality. In the same vein, the findings will awaken the government and the Ministry of Education in particular to recognize and promote the social-emotional skills potentialities prevalent among pre-primary school children for the sake of improving academic achievement.

Instruments

In assessing preschoolers’ level of socio-emotional maturity, the social-emotional competence scale developed by Zhou and Jessie[18] was used. The scale measures socio-emotional maturity in five basic dimensions which includes **i.** self-awareness, **ii.** social awareness, **iii.** self-management, **iv.** relationship management, and **v.** responsible decision making. The scale has twenty five (25) items in which each subscale is measured by 05 (five) items. This makes the total number of items of this likert scale to be 25. By the assistance from the teacher and researchers own observation to each sampled preschooler, each measured ability was rated in a point scale ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly Disagree. The maximum possible points for each item a respondent may earn is 04 (strongly agree). Therefore, the maximum points a child can earn for all 25 items if rated strongly agree all the items is 100. This scale has been chosen because most of the items identified in the scale are also manifested in the social-emotional competencies outlined in the pre-primary school curriculum of Tanzania.

Sampling and sample size

The study involved 188 preschoolers in which 112 were those who have been enrolled in one of 10 selected daycare centres and the remaining 76 were those who still stay at home. The 188 preschoolers came from the following schools Bernard Bendel Pre-Primary English Medium School, Wesley Pre and Primary School, Bethlehem Nursery School, Chief Albert Luthuli Nursary School, Carmel pre-primary school, Fransalian Pre and Primary School, Imaan English Medium Nursery School, Leena Nursery and Primary School, Al Aqabah Nursery and Primary School, and Top Stars Nursery Primary School. The remaining 76 were conveniently selected and most of them are living at Kihonda ward in the municipality of Morogoro. Out of these preschoolers, 40 (52%) were male and the remaining 36 (48%) were female. The parent or guardians of the child were consulted to provide the informed consent on behalf of their children.

Table 1: Distribution of the sampled enrolled preschoolers across the sampled schools

	Name of a preschool	No of preschoolers		Total	No of teachers involved
		Male	Female		
1	Bernard Bendel	05	05	10	1
2	Wesley	06	06	12	1
3	Bethlehem	06	06	12	1
4	Chief Albert Luthuli	06	06	12	1
5	Carmel	06	06	12	1
6	Fransalian	05	05	10	1
7	Imaan	06	06	12	1
8	Leena	05	05	10	1
9	Al-Aqabah	06	06	12	1
10	Top Stars	05	05	10	1

		56	56	112	10
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Data analysis

Descriptive statistics was used to analyze overall levels of socio-emotional maturity of both the enrolled and non-enrolled preschoolers. Descriptive statistics was also employed to analyse socio-emotional maturity of preschoolers in each dimension measured. Their scores from likert scale were converted to percentage and analyzed using SPSS version 23.0. Independent samples t-test, on the other hand was used to statistically determine whether there was difference in the socio-emotional maturity between the enrolled and non-enrolled preschoolers. It was also employed in the analysis of socio-emotional maturity of children based on their sex.

Administration of the Likert scale

After getting consent of both the school authority and parents or guardians, the likert scale was administered to all sampled preschoolers. The basis for filling the scale was researchers' observations as the child interacts with others and the information about the particular child provided by their teachers or parents. A maximum of three days were used in a single sampled school. A total number of 112 questionnaires were administered to the enrolled preschoolers. The researchers ensured equal number of male and female preschoolers in each selected daycare centers. In assistance with the teachers, they also managed to get back all questionnaires administered with a response rate of 100%.

For the preschoolers not in enrolled in daycare centres, researchers conveniently and purposefully sampled 60 households in which 16 had 2 un-enrolled preschoolers and 44 had one un-enrolled preschooler each making a total of 76 children. A team of four researchers visited the sampled sixty households to observe the way a preschooler interacts with other children and the way he/she interacts with the guardians. Each researcher visited one household per day to observe and assess socio-emotional abilities of the sampled preschooler. Researchers observation with the assistance from the parents or guardians guided the rating of each preschooler in the scale.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The socio-emotional maturity of preschoolers enrolled in daycare centres

The first objective of this study was to determine the level socio-emotional skills of preschoolers aged 4- 6 years enrolled in the selected daycare centres in Morogoro Municipality. Preschoolers came from the Bernard Bendel School, Wesley Pre and Primary School, Bethlehem Nursery School, Chief Albert Luthuli Nursery School, Carmel pre-primary school, Fransalian Pre and Primary School, Imaan English Medium Nursery School, Leena Nursery and Primary School, Al Aqabah Nursery and Primary School, and Top Stars Nursery Primary School. The social-emotional competence scale developed by Zhou and Jessie [18] was administered to 122 preschoolers enrolled in the 10 selected daycare centres in Morogoro. Fifty-six (50%) female preschoolers and 56 (50%) male preschoolers were observed as they interact socially. Their teachers were interviewed about the way they rate the maturity of each sampled child and together with the researcher they rated the child on the scale. Descriptive statistics indicates that the mean score of enrolled preschoolers was 78% with s.d of 7.0. The highest score from the scale was 92% and the lowest was 47% out of 100 possible points. The mode was 70. About 38 (34%) of enrolled preschoolers scored between 81-100 and based on the grading system of Tanzania they were described as having very satisfactory socio-emotional maturity. Fifty one enrolled preschoolers (46%) scored between 61-80 and they were classified as having satisfactory levels of socio-emotional development. As shown in table 2 below, twenty enrolled preschoolers (18%) scored between 41-60 and were classified as having average socio-emotional maturity. Lastly, there were three (02%) preschoolers in the enrolled daycare centers who scored between 21-40 to be classified as having below average socio-emotional maturity.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of enrolled preschoolers scores in the scale (n=112)

Range of scores by %	Grade	No. of students in the range	% of preschoolers in the range	Description of the level of socio-emotional maturity
0- 20	F	0	0.0%	Very unsatisfactory
21- 40	D	03	02%	Below average
41- 60	C	20	18%	Average
61 - 80	B	51	46%	Satisfactory
81 - 100	A	38	34%	Excellent

Source: Field data (2019).

As seen in table 2 above, none (00%) of the preschoolers had F grade, implying that all preschoolers scored more than 20 in the scale. Skewness of scores which is the extent to which a distribution of values deviates from symmetry around the mean was also calculated and a value of 0.066 was obtained. A value of a positive 0.066 skewness means that there were a relatively greater number of smaller values than mean [19]. It also indicates that a considerable number of preschoolers that were rated obtained low scores.

The findings that on average, Morogoro preschoolers who are enrolled in preschools have satisfactory socio-emotional maturity resembles a number of studies. According to Gross and Thompson [20] emotional maturity of preschoolers in preschools is due to the fact that most young children in the kindergartens make friends easily and quickly regardless of complexities involved in establishing good relationships. In addition, some studies have found that the shared nature of conversations at preschools supports children to become aware of others' viewpoints [21]. Everyday teacher-child conversations not only serve as a rich source of information facilitating children's appropriation of and active participation in the cultural values of their socio-cultural communities, but also serve as an active and powerful mechanism for emotional regulation [20]. Through such processes, children learn how to regulate their feelings and the expression of their feelings in a way that is consistent with their temperament, need for security, and their capacity for self-control [22].

The study also sought to determine if a significant difference in socio-emotional maturity of enrolled preschoolers based on their sex exists. Means of enrolled preschoolers based on their sex were computed and subjected to the independent samples t-test. The study involved 56 (50%) male and 56(50%) enrolled female preschoolers. As it has been summarized in table 3, the mean score for male enrolled preschoolers was 74 and the standard deviation of 7.1 while the mean for female enrolled preschoolers was 81 and the standard deviation of 7.32. Statistically significant difference was found between in the means of enrolled preschoolers based on their sex when null hypothesis was subjected to independent samples t-test. The null hypothesis stated that "there is no statistically significant difference in the socio-emotional maturity of enrolled preschoolers based on their sex. An analysis through t-test based on sex at alpha (α)=0.05 produced a p of 0.039 and a t value of 1.563, to reject the stated null hypothesis. This implies that Morogoro enrolled female preschoolers statistically outperformed their male counterparts in terms of socio-emotional maturity. Tables 4 below summarize the independent samples t-test of scores based on preschoolers' sex.

Table3: Independent samples t-test for test scores based on sex (n=112)

		Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differ	Std. Error Diff	95% Confidence Interval	
									Lower	Upper
<i>Students level</i>	Equal vari assumed	0.169	0.481	1.563	351	0.019	1.985	0.840	0.333	3.638
	Equal vari not assum			0.039	207.2	0.018	1.985	0.830	0.348	3.622

Source: Field data (2014).

The above finding that Morogoro female preschoolers statistically outperformed their male counterparts in socio-emotional stability test resembles a number of studies. For example, Eisenberg et al. [23] found that for boys, displays of low emotional intensity and the ability to seek social support. For girls, McDowell et al. [24] found that social competence with peers and adults was related to the emotional ability of effectively utilizing appropriate emotional display rules and coping strategies to manage negative feelings. Additional gender differences were also found, such that skills with emotional perception and expression indicated better social competence for only girls rather than boys [25]. Although there is a shortage of research in this area, it seems that gender is an important factor when considering the differential benefits of emotional skills. In a cross-sectional study of four-year-old children, Bierman, Torres, Domitrovich, Welsh, et al.[26] found similar relationships between behaviour and academic knowledge whereby socio-emotional skills, measured through teacher assessments, were highlighted as important predictors and the prediction was particularly strong for girls. The authors concluded that gender variations relating to academic knowledge were due to differences in socio-emotional behaviour rather than cognitive skills. Moreover, Mihic *et al.* [11] studied the possible gender differences in emotion regulation and behaviour problems. They found out that 6- to 8-year-old children with poor emotion regulation skills, assessed by their teachers, had more internalizing or externalizing behavioural problems in which boys had more problems with attention and hyperactive-impulsive behaviour than girls did. However, further research using multiple measurement methods was required to investigate such gender differences in the early years.

The socio-emotional maturity of preschoolers staying at home

The second objective of this study was to determine the level socio-emotional skills of preschoolers aged 4- 6 years old who are not enrolled in any of the daycare centre. The same socio-emotional competence scale developed by Zhou and Jessie [18] was administered to some 76 preschoolers. Out of these preschoolers, 40 (52%) were male and the remaining 36 (48%) were female. These preschoolers were also observed as they interact with peers and through asking their parents, researchers were able to rate them on the scale. Descriptive statistics indicated that the mean score of preschoolers staying at home was 64% with s.d of 9.5. The highest score was 86% and the lowest was 32% out of 100 possible points in the scale. The mode score was 60. About 18 (24%) of non-enrolled preschoolers scored between 81-

100 and were classified as having very satisfactory socio-emotional maturity. Twenty (20) preschoolers (26%) scored between 61-80 and according to the Tanzania grading system they were classified as having satisfactory levels of socio-emotional development. Some twenty-seven preschoolers (36%) scored between 41-60 and were classified as having average socio-emotional maturity. There were eleven (14%) preschoolers staying at home in the sample who scored 21-40 and were described as having below average socio-emotional maturity. As shown in Table 4 below none (00%) of the preschoolers had F grade, implying that all preschoolers scored more than 20 in the scale.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of enrolled preschoolers scores in the scale (n=76)

Range of scores by %	Grade	No. of students in the range	% of students in the range	Description of the level of socio-emotional maturity
0- 20	F	0	0.0%	Very unsatisfactory
21- 40	D	11	14%	Below average
41- 60	C	27	36%	Average
61 - 80	B	20	26%	Satisfactory
81 - 100	A	18	24%	Excellent

Source: Field data (2019).

Comparing socio-emotional maturity of enrolled preschoolers and those staying at home

Another purpose of this study was to determine if a statically significant difference in the socio-emotional maturity exists between preschoolers enrolled in daycare centers and those staying at home. Independent samples t-test involving the means of enrolled preschoolers and those staying at home was applied for analysis. Note that, the study involved 112(59.5%) preschoolers enrolled in the daycare centres and 76 (40.5%) preschoolers staying at home. As it is summarized in table 4 below the mean of scores for enrolled preschoolers was 78 with the standard deviation of 7.0 while the mean for those staying at home was 64 with the standard deviation of 9.1. A statically significant difference in the socio-emotional maturity based on whether or not the preschooler is enrolled in a daycare centre ($p < 0.05$) was found in favour of those enrolled in day care centres. As seen in table 5 below, an analysis of independent samples t-test based on enrolment at alpha (α) = 0.05 produced a p of 0.04 and a t value of 2.363, to reject the null hypothesis. This means that the mean of scores of the enrolled preschoolers was statistically higher than the mean of those staying home. Independent samples t-test rejected the null hypothesis (H_0) at 0.05.

A Table 5: Independent samples t-test for test scores-based enrollment (n=188)

	Levene's Test		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Differ	Std. Error Differ	95% Confidence	
								Lower	Upper
Equal vari assumed	2.084	0.150	0.470	351	0.638	0.3732	0.793	-1.187	1.933
Equal vari not assum			0.040	269.7	0.649	0.373	0.818	-1.237	1.984

Source: Field data (2019).

Early childhood programs strive to ensure educational and social success for young children, quality assessment measures are necessary in guiding the development of appropriate curricula and intervention strategies [27]. Other studies demonstrate that quality preschool produces long-term benefits in terms of improved classroom behavior and social adjustment and decreased future crime and delinquency. These successful programs all deliver high-quality center-based early childhood education services, but they differ in some ways, too. A small group of studies suggest that too much time in an early childhood program, particularly in a low-quality setting, may actually increase children's aggression levels slightly, but the bulk of the positive evidence for preschool is compelling and derives from a variety of studies.

Socio-emotional stability of enrolled preschoolers by specific dimensions measured

The study also examined socio-emotional levels of preschoolers in each dimension in the selected daycare centres in Morogoro municipality. The five socio-emotional dimensions measured included self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship management, and responsible decision making. Therefore, for additional analyses, the scale was broken down into five subscales. The mean score and standard deviation for each subscale were calculated and summarized in Table 6 below. The highest scores were for the subscale of self-awareness with the mean of 3.5(88%) and were lowest for the subscale of responsible decision making with the mean of 2.4(60%). The maturity in social awareness was measured by the ability of a child to recognize how people feel, by their ability to recognize facial expressions,

understand why people feel the way they do, understand if someone is sad, angry or happy and to understand why people react the way they do. The dimension of responsible decision making on the other hand was measured by the ability of children to take into account the consequences of their actions, ensuring that there are more positive outcomes when making a choice, weighing the strengths of the situation before deciding the action and their ability to consider their strengths and weaknesses. Overall, the mean score of the subtests was low, indicating that the students found the subscales more difficult than the total scale. Table 6 below is a summary of descriptive statistics for each socio-emotional dimension measured.

Table 6: Descriptive statistic for subscales (n=112)

Specific skills	socio-emotional	Total items	Minimum Score	Maximum Score	Mean Score	SD	Percent Correct
Self-awareness,		5	1	4	3.0	0.88	75
Social- awareness		5	1	4	3.5	1.43	88
Self- management		5	1	4	2.8	0.96	73
Relationship management		5	1	4	3.1	0.75	78
Responsible decision making		5	1	4	2.4	0.96	60

Source: Research survey (2019)

As shown in Table 6 above, enrolled preschoolers had a mean of 3.0 (75%) in the subscale measuring their self-awareness maturity. The self-awareness of preschoolers was measured by their ability know their thinking, understanding why they do what they do, understanding their moods and feelings and their ability to read people's faces when they are angry. On the other hand, preschoolers enrolled in the daycare centers had a mean of 2.8 (an average performance) in the subscale of self-management. The self-management was measured by the ability stay calm in stressful situations, to stay calm and overcome anxiety in new or changing situations, stay calm when things go wrong and their ability to wait and discuss the issue. Lastly, Morogoro preschoolers had a mean of 3.1 (78%) in managing relationship. This dimension was measured by preschoolers' ability to apologize when hurt friends unintentionally, comfort their friends when they are sad, by not criticizing their friends when they quarrel, their ability to become tolerant of their friend's mistakes and their ability to stand up without putting others down.

Summary of findings

Many of the problematic behaviors exhibited early life may be attributed to impaired social relationships, which are highly correlated with academic difficulties [27]. This study intended to assess the effectiveness of daycare centres in promoting social-emotional well-being of children aged 4- 6 years. The effectiveness of daycare centres was measured by comparing the socio-emotional maturity of children staying home and those enrolled in the selected daycare centres in Morogoro Municipality.

Based on the likert scale scores, it was found that the enrolled preschoolers in Morogoro Municipality had satisfactory socio-emotional maturity than those staying at homes. The mean score of the enrolled preschoolers was 78 compared to 64 for those staying at homes. For overall preschoolers, highest scores were for the subscale of self-awareness with the mean score of 3.5 (88%) and were lowest was for the subscale of responsible decision making with the mean score of 2.4 (60%). The maturity in social awareness was measured by the ability of a child to recognize how people feel, knowing people facial expressions, understand why people feel the way they do, understand why people feel the way they do, to understand if someone is sad, angry or happy and to understand why people react the way they do. The subscale of responsible decision making on the other hand was measured by asking teachers the ability of children to take into account the consequences of their actions, ensures that there are more positive outcomes when making a choice, weigh the strengths of the situation before deciding on the action and their ability to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the strategy before deciding to use it.

Due to the influence of social forces, culture and gender roles, anecdotal evidence would suggest male preschoolers to have higher levels of socio-emotional development than females. However, the findings from this study did not support that assertion. Based on the scores from the scale of 56 enrolled female preschoolers and enrolled 56 male preschoolers in the study, female had a relatively higher mean of 81 than their counterpart male who had a score mean of 75. Statistically significant differences were found to exist between male and female enrolled preschoolers in terms of their socio-emotional maturity through SPSS t test.

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