
**TEXTUAL DISCOURSE OF NURSERY SCHOOL SOCIAL
SETTING ON PUPILS' SOCIAL AWARENESS IN
BAYELSA STATE**

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Abstract

This paper examined the textual discourse of nursery school social setting on pupils' social awareness in Bayelsa State. The design of the study was survey. The population of the study comprises of all the 1,340 nursery 2 pupils and 560 nursery school teachers in Bayelsa State. The sample of the study was 230 nursery school teachers and 670 nursery 2 pupils, which constitute 50% of the total population. The sample was drawn using simple random sampling technique. The instruments used for the study were nursery school social setting questionnaire (NSSSQ) which contain 25 items and Pupils Social Awareness Test (PSAT) which contains 15 items. These instruments were validated for face and content validation. The reliability of the instruments was established using Chronbach coefficient alpha and PPMC method which stood at 0.82 and 0.79 respectively. The null hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance using independent t-test. The result of the analysis showed that school environment, school facilities, school curriculum influence pupils' social awareness, while supervision does not directly influence pupils' social

awareness. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that qualified and competent teachers should be employed to teach at this level of education and non-teaching staff should be trained to fit into the system, the curriculum of nursery school should include both modern and cultural values of the society.

Keywords: Textual discourse, Nursery school, Social setting, Pupils' social awareness, Bayelsa State.

Introduction

Nursery school is the first organized level of formal education, which serves as a base for the foundation of a sound education of an individual. It is also the core part of pre-primary education. Educating children at this level of education is a task that demands much care, support and understanding. Oluwatoyin (2018) observed that parents no longer educate their children themselves as it was in the past because of their great desire to provide them with a sound educational base. Although, most parents send their children to school on time to enable them pursue their careers effectively. In our society today, there is a proliferation of nursery schools because of the patronage of parents but most of these parents including proprietors are not aware of the effect of nursery schools social setting on the development of the child.

The term 'social' refers to characteristics of the living organism (human in particular, though biologists also apply the term to population of the animals). It always refers to the interaction of organisms and to their collective co-existence, irrespective of whether they are of it or not, and irrespective of whether the interaction is voluntary or involuntary. On the other hand, setting is the state of the environment in which a situation exists. It is also defined by Hornby (2000) as asset of surroundings, the place which a situation exists. Social setting of nursery schools is therefore, all human and material resources in a nursery school that aid the teaching and learning process. These include location of school curriculum and supervision.

Learning is essentially a social activity (Doris, 2019). To be able to accomplish a task and maintain a comfortable social climate in the learning community or group, and to be able to function effectively in both working and social activities, students (pupils) need to constantly maintain a high level of 'social awareness' (Ekaterina, 2005). Social awareness has been defined by different researchers in different ways. Treasure (2018), defined social awareness as being alert about social situation of the other people, i.e. what they are doing, whether they are engaged in a conversation and can be disturbed, and who is around and what is up. This definition considers mostly events that happened at a certain moment of time. Social awareness is seen as a knowledge about people's role, position, status, responsibilities and group process (Thomas, 2016). The learning environment of pupils is a strong indication of the pupils' level of social development which can be rated as their level of academic achievement. Obinaju (2000) states that the school is a formal institution established by the society to prepare the child for effective role in the society. Hence, school serves as a centre for the social development of the child. Uche (2004) identified two forms of environments which play significant roles in academic achievement of the learner. Such environment according to Uche, comprises of all the equipment, materials, furniture, learning space and such sensory elements as lighting, colours, sound and the likes that make up the place where learners learn. On the other hand, the psychological environment of learners as a group encounters learning, which may promote or hinder the opportunities to learn. This relates to the interactional patterns within the learning environment, that is the teacher-learner and learner-teacher interactions and as it affects the nature of rules that guides behaviour and the organizational patterns of the class environment which is directly related to the location of the school. The environment can either improve or hinder students' performance.

Akololafe (2001) states that physical facilities are important in the teaching and learning situation and have resultant effect on academic performance of the students. They also contribute to the enhancement of teachers' motivation and job satisfaction. Schools' physical facilities are perceived as part of the tools designed to

facilitate and stimulate educational programmes. It has been argued by Adeyemi (2017) and Timothy (2019) that the equality of the educational systems depends on the facilities they have. Since physical facilities are important in teaching and learning in schools, it is obvious that a good school premise could have significant educational effect on students' performance. Peters (2019) found out in his research that schools that are well planned and maintained have higher students' retention and are even more effective than others.

One of the most important factors in the social setting of early childhood education is the teacher. Nursery school children are by nature active, inquisitive with short attention span. They therefore require teachers who are competent and imaginative to cope with their state of development. The general state of school is dictated by the administration in place. Invariably, the social setting of the school is as directed by the administrator (Ekanem, 2007). The administrator must keep in focus, the goals and objectives of education and so plan ahead to meet the needs of the pupils and the demands of the staff. Internal and external supervision are necessary to keep in check the goals of education. The objectives of pre-primary education like the inculcation of social norms, the ability to be creative and acquire the spirit of enquiry, the sense of co-operation, etc. has to do with the school environment, the personnel, method of teaching, facilities and supervision.

In Nigeria, nursery education still remains the exclusive of private individuals due to governments' lack of interest. Majority of the proprietors and proprietresses view nursery schools as custodian care centre, and more importantly they see them as avenues for making money. Consequently, nursery schools are set up in poor environments with few unqualified teachers and many untrained helpers. These workers neither understand the importance of childhood education nor the need for nursery schools to provide opportunities for young children to cultivate attitudes (social norms) and develop language and communication skills which help them through life.

Purpose of the Study

This study examined the textual discourse of nursery school social setting on pupils' social awareness in Bayelsa State. The specific objectives were to:

- i. determine the influence of school environment on pupils' social awareness in Bayelsa State;
- ii. examine the influence of school facilities on pupils' social awareness;
- iii. determine the influence of school personnel on pupils' social awareness;
- iv. examine the influence of school curriculum on pupils' social awareness; and
- v. determine the influence of supervision on pupils' social awareness in the study area.

Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance were formulated to guide the study.

- H₀1: There is no significant influence of school environment on pupils' social awareness in Bayelsa State.
- H₀2: There is no significant influence of school facilities on pupils' social awareness in Bayelsa State.
- H₀3: There is no significant influence of school personnel on pupils' social awareness in Bayelsa State.
- H₀4: There is no significant influence of school curriculum on pupils' social awareness in Bayelsa State.
- H₀5: There is no significant influence of supervision on pupils' social awareness in Bayelsa State.

Methods

The ex-post facto survey design was adopted for the study. This is because the cause or the independent variables involved are not manipulated. The population of the study consists of all the 1,340

nursery 2 pupils and 560 teachers of 2020/2021 academic sessions in the 66 private nursery/primary schools, and one government nursery school in the capital Bayelsa State. The sample of the study comprises 670 which are 50% of the total population of pupils. Ten nursery 2 pupils were drawn from each of the 67 selected schools using simple random techniques. On the other hand, the sample of teachers comprises of 230 which is also 50% of the total population of the teachers. Instruments used were 'Nursery Schools Social Setting Questionnaire (NSSSQ)' and 'Pupils Social Awareness Test (PSAT)'. These instruments were validated for face and content validation. The reliability value obtained were 0.82 and 0.79 using Cronback's coefficient alpha and Person's Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) technique respectively. The data collected for this study were analyzed using independent t-test.

Results

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant influence of school environment on pupils' social awareness.

Table 1: t-test Analysis of Pupils' Social Awareness based on School Environment

School Environment	N	Mean	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision at p<.05
Conducive	260	8.52	3.679	668	2.65	1.96	
Unconducive	410	7.74	3.696				

Significant at 0.05 alpha level; N = 670

The data presented in table above show that the calculated t-value of 2.65 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at P<.05 with 668 degrees of freedom. Therefore the null hypothesis stating a non-significant influence of schools environment on pupils' social awareness is rejected. This implies that school environment significantly influences pupils' social awareness.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant influence of school facilities on pupils' social awareness.

Table 2: t-test Analysis of Pupils' Social Awareness based on School Facilities

School Facilities	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision at $p < .05$
Adequate	300	9.78	4.254	668	4.76	1.96	
Inadequate	370	8.26	4.016				

Significant at 0.05 alpha level; N = 670

The data present above indicates that the calculated t-value of 4.76 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at $P < .05$ with 668 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that, there is no significant influence of school facilities on pupils' social awareness is rejected. The alternative hypothesis stating a significant influence of school facilities on pupils' social awareness is upheld. This implies that school facilities significantly influence pupils' social awareness.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant influence of school personnel on pupils' social awareness.

Table 3: t-test Analysis of Pupils' Social Awareness based on School Personnel

School Personnel	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision at $p < .05$
Qualified	380	9.55	4.212	668	2.48	1.96	
Not-qualified	290	8.74	4.187				

Significant at 0.05 alpha level; N = 670

The data presented above shows that the calculated t-value of 2.48 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at $P < .05$ with 668 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. The alternate hypothesis stating a significant influence of schools' personnel on pupils' social awareness is retained. This implies that school personnel qualification significantly influenced pupils' social awareness.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant influence of school curriculum implementation on pupils' social awareness.

Table 4: t-test Analysis of Pupils' Social Awareness based on School Personnel

School Personnel	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision at $p < .05$
Properly implemented	270	9.98	4.146	668	6.07	1.96	
Improperly Implemented	400	8.06	3.918				

Significant at 0.05 alpha level; N = 670

The data presented above shows that the calculated t-value of 6.07 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at $P < .05$ with 668 degree of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating a non-significant influence is rejected. Hence, the alternative hypothesis which states that there exists significant influence of school curriculum implementation on pupils' social awareness is retained. This implies that school curriculum implementation significantly influence pupil's social awareness.

Hypothesis 5: There is no significant influence of supervision on pupils' social awareness.

Table 5: t-test Analysis of Pupils' Social Awareness based on School Supervision

School Personnel	N	X	SD	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision at p<.05
Effective	340	10.25	4.191	668	1.08	1.96	NS
Ineffective							

NS = Not significant at 0.05 alpha level; N = 670.

The data presented in the above table indicates that the calculated t-value of 1.08 is less than the critical t-value of 1.96 at $P < .05$ with 668 degrees of freedom. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating a non-significant influence of supervision on pupils' social awareness is retained. This implies that the effectiveness of school supervision does not directly influence pupils' social awareness.

Discussions

The result indicates that there exists a significant difference between the social awareness of pupils' in schools located in conducive and unconducive environments. From Table 1 above it shows that pupils in schools located at conducive environments are better than those in unconducive environments in their social awareness. This finding implies that school environment influences pupils' social awareness. That is, the more conducive the school environment the better motivation for the pupils to study. The findings of this study are in agreement with the findings of Emperor (2002), Okeke (2005), Isa (2007) and Ahamefula (2008) that school environment plays a major role in influencing pupils' performance in schools. Isa (2008) in his study observed that a significant difference exists between urban and rural pupils' achievement in vocational aptitude test as urban pupils perform better than rural pupils' which the researchers attributed to the fact that urban pupils' were taught vocational aptitude as a subject, but it is not for the rural schools.

The findings from Table 2 above shows that there exists a significance between social awareness of pupils in schools with adequate facilities and those in school with inadequate facilities. From table 2, it shows that pupils from schools with adequate facilities

performed better than their counterparts in schools with inadequate facilities in their social awareness test. This implies that school facilities can influence pupils' social awareness. The findings of this study are in agreement with Akomolafe (2001) who found that schools that are well planned and maintained have higher students' retention and are even more effective than the others which are not well planned. He further found that physical facilities were important in the teaching/learning situation and had resultant effect on the academic performance of students. Similarly, Ogunsaju (2004) argued that students could not perform at their best in the absence of good physical infrastructure and equipment. He observed that in Nigeria, the federal government school were well equipped with buildings, laboratories, libraries, workshops and the like. He further found that this explains why the performance of such students were always better than others. As a result, this important aspect of nursery schools' social setting should not be neglected but rather, more effort should be made by the government of Bayelsa State and proprietor/proprietresses to ensure that nursery schools have well maintain and enough facilities.

Findings from the result indicate that there exists a significant difference between the social awareness of pupils in schools that had qualified school personnel and the in schools with unqualified school personnel. In table 3 above it was established that pupils in schools with qualified personnel perform better than pupils in schools with unqualified personnel in their social awareness scores. The result indicate the school personnel could influence pupils' social awareness. This is in line with Onibokun (1991), Mkpa (1994) and Osayin (1996) who agree specifically Mkpa (1994) reported that the quality of teachers at the Early Childhood level did not compare favourably with what was obtainable at other levels of the educational system. This points to the fact that till date, most nursery schools are operating with unqualified personnel and this in turn, affects the pupils' social awareness. Furthermore, Denga (2003) found that, a young child is a rational being full of curiosity and ideas of his own. To keep this eagerness alive requires favourable external conditions that will cultivate in the child a spirit of adventure; this in turn helps developing the child's social abilities.

To achieve this, he explained that the teachers have their duty to provide and present the required experiences for the child to learn. Also, Ekanem (2007), supported that there is need to train other staff involved in the education of the child to enhance the social awareness of pupils.

From the result in Table 4 above it was found that there was a significant difference between schools with properly implemented curriculum and those with improperly implemented curriculum. This implies that, school curriculum influences pupils' social awareness. This result is in agreement with Denga (2003) who found that, educational provision starts with a well-articulated curriculum for the education of the child, the parents and caregivers. He holds the view that, if the curriculum is not well planned and implemented, the education of the child will be affected because it will provide half-baked citizens for the society. To further strengthen the findings of this study, Guest and Schneider (2003) provided a criterion for a good nursery school programme which affirmed that the child should be provided with experiences that provides him direct first-hand contact with the environment within the school and the use of language.

The result of the analysis in Table 5 was insignificant due to the fact that the calculated t-value (1.08) was less than the critical t-value (1.96). also, the mean score of pupils in effectively supervised schools is slightly greater than the mean score of pupils in ineffectively supervised schools. This implies that, supervision does not directly influence pupils social awareness. In line with finding of this study in Okure, Jegede, Akinde and Fabina (2009) study on the effect of typology of supervision on primary school pupils' academic performance. Their study looked at tea,/non-team supervision and regular/irregular supervisions on pupils academic performance. Isa (1996) also discovered that there is no significant relationship between instructional supervision and primary school pupils' academic performance. To ascertain the findings of this study, Jegede (1999) opined that teachers need not to be too closely monitored before they performed their civic duty.

Conclusion

This study discovered that textual discourse of nursery school social setting have significant influence on pupils' social awareness in Bayelsa State. The present social setting of the Nigerian school children demands that they need to be educated on worthwhile traditional values of the society as well as being introduced to computer education which is fast becoming a requirement for effective living in the society.

Recommendations

On the bases of the research findings, the following recommendations are made: Nursery Schools should be located away from busy roads, industries and the like. The compound should have adequate playing spaces and natural things like a garden, a field for recreational activities, etc. In the same vein, adequate play and educational facilities should be provided. Proprietors/Proprietresses should stop going for unqualified teaching staff in order to reduce their expenses. However, they should employ at least NCE holders to teach these children so as to lay a solid foundation for them. Finally, Government of Bayelsa State should establish standard nursery schools with a high level of social setting that will stand as a model for most of the private schools in the State.

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