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## SOCIO-DRAMATIC PLAY AND PRESCHOOLERS' ACQUISITION OF ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS IN PUBLIC CARE CENTRES IN RIVERS STATE.

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### Introduction

Socio-dramatic play is the type of play which occurs when a child uses an object to stand for another object during play. It could be called a symbolic play, a make belief play, or a pretend play. Symbolic play marks the beginning of representational thoughts through the use of substitute objects or actions. This could be demonstrated when a child stands before a baby doll and uses cane to flog the doll while commanding it as if it were a soldier under a marching prompt. In that case, the baby doll

### Abstract

*Creativity is required for a people to live a fulfilled life and attain set goals. This paper, addresses socio-dramatic play and public care centre preschoolers' acquisition of entrepreneurial skills in Rivers State. Two research questions and two corresponding hypotheses guided this study. The design of the study is correlational research design. The population of the study comprised of all the 3,489 Nursery three pupils in Rivers State. The sample of the study comprised 350 Nursery three drawn from the population of the study, using simple sampling method. The instrument used for the study is the "Socio-Dramatic Play and Preschoolers' Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition Checklist" (SDPPESAC). It was face validated by three experts. Pearson Product Moment Coefficient (PPMC) was used*

*t*o compute the reliability of the instrument which had a reliability index of 0.68.

**Keywords:** *Socio-Dramatic, Preschoolers' Acquisition, Entrepreneurial, Public, Care.*

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represents a soldier and the child is the commander. Oduolowu (2014) opined that socio-dramatic is a dramatic play in which several individuals act out assigned roles for the purpose of studying and remedying problems in a group or collective relationship. As a pretend play, it is a thinking skill. While the children pretend, they try out new roles, cope with uncomfortable emotions, gain understanding of other peoples' viewpoints, construct an image of the social world, build relationship, solve problems and enjoy creativity. In fact, to pretend in play, children need to understand the meaning of what is happening. Socio-dramatic play helps children solve diverse range of problems that they might face in the future. It also helps children develop their skills as leaders and followers. The skills that it allows a child to develop support a child when it comes to entrepreneurship. It is thorough and processes much of the information that they have learned. Pre-school children often engage in the enactment of scenes pretending to be a mother, father, child or superhero. This means that the children can be prepared for entrepreneurship through socio-dramatic play.

Socio-dramatic play is not just simple play and enjoy activities. It is a loose form of play that generally includes role-play, object substitution and nonliteral behavior. It provides the children with a self-setting to express fear and desires (Duke, 2015). Socio-dramatic play also occurs when two or more children adopt roles and attempt to recreate a real life situation. For example, several children may take on the roles of family members and pretend to eat dinner or they may adopt roles as fire fighters and battle a make-belief fire. Socio-dramatic play is classified as the most highly developed form of symbolic play. It involves using symbols to represent objects that are not present. It requires that children adopt roles as other people and plan a storyline or plot that is related to the chosen roles (Christopher, 2018). Socio-dramatic (pretend) play usually involves everyday realistic activities and

events. In socio-dramatic play, children have an opportunity to express themselves, assume different roles and interact with their peers. With this, there would be room enough in this type of play for the identification and development of the children's entrepreneurial skills.

Entrepreneurial skills help an individual start, develop, finance and succeed in his own enterprise. Entrepreneurial skills challenge children to create unique solutions and become leaders at an early age. These are skills that suggest to the children at their tender age the concept of economic independence. These skills could be in different areas such as, photography, plaiting, modelling, football playing, colouring, fashion and design. They are skills needed for success in business, most especially in economic freedom. It shows that the children are business tycoons in the making. The process could enlist the children in world's richest people in the nearest future. The children develop passions for something, turn it into a business and before you know it, they are supporting themselves, the family and gain financial freedom during their adulthood. The idea for the business should be theirs, not the caregivers'. Nothing shuts a kid down faster than being told what to do, so let the children come up with their own ideas. Then support and encourage them, being the voice of reason when necessary. This would give rise to diverse entrepreneurial skills.

Entrepreneurship skills however, also provide benefits regardless of whether the people see their future as starting a business or not. They can be used across people's personal and work lives as they encompass creativity, initiative, tenacity, teamwork and understanding of risks and a sense of responsibility. Every preschool child is supposed to be imparted entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance. This same child is also a potential entrepreneur after all an entrepreneur gains people's interest if he must succeed. *An entrepreneur is someone who conceives an idea, creates a path to success, does whatever it takes to succeed and tries to dominate the market* (Mark, 2015). *What differentiates entrepreneurs from everybody else is a vision of something that does not exist (either at all or in the form they envision) and the willingness to do what other people are unwilling to do to make that vision a reality.* This suggests that an entrepreneur is skilled. It becomes necessary for the child to acquire skills. *Skill acquisition* is a key, which opens all doors. *Skill acquisition* is the ability to be trained on a particular task or function and become expert in it. It is a pity that there is "huge" parading of unemployment

in many parts of the world today including Nigeria especially in Rivers State. It is time for the preschool children to be equipped with new skills other than cognitive skills. No wonder Kelly (2016) opined that skill acquisition is the ability to create new skills, refine them through practice and apply them in new contexts. The preschool child viewed as being capable of acquiring cognitive skills for his present and future survival can equally be guided to acquire skills that will make him a boss of his own in future without making him walk round the streets in search of white-collar job. It involves a gradual change from less effective behaviour to extremely proficient one. It is of great importance.

### Importance of Skill Acquisition

The following are some of the importance of skill acquisition.

1. **Acquisition of functional literacy by all:** This means preschool will serve a definite purpose of job creation. The idea of a child becoming a house help or a hawker because of the sudden death of the family's bread winner would be reduced if not ousted. Teaching children about money when they are young will provide a financial foundation that is often overlooked in school. Help them learn to save and invest money that they earn through their services, chores, or gifts from grandparents and significant others.
2. **Self-employment:** A child who acquires skills would be a self-employed man in the future. The work you are reading right now is written as a result of the skill acquired by the writer. There are so many self-employed writers today who do not bother themselves with the problem of searching for jobs. Their skill is freelance writing and they make great money from it. A preschool child can be paid through story telling or painting.
3. **Provision of various rewarding means of livelihood:** Provision of various rewarding means of livelihood such as, Fashion- designing is the most appealing, glamorous, wanted and exciting career option in today's world. If the child is creative, imaginative and stylish then fashion designing is the best career option for that child. The children could equally be taught art and craft. Creativity is really a talent. It does not only make the child creative and smart but also gives him a memorable childhood. Art and Craft hobby classes teach life skills and

give stronger academic base with an active brain. Photographs always brings smiles and reminiscence, so are the skills in order to adept with the technologies. The exposure does not just introduce how to click a picture but the camera positioning, lighting and rules all that initiates creativity and excellent sense of art.

4. **Crime rate reduction:** Skills acquisition would reduce the crime rate in the country. People with skills often think about how to make money and not how to steal. They are engaged with something rather than being idle. When someone has a skill to trade, he misses the chances of engaging in anti-social behaviors. Remember the English adage that says “the idle mind is the Devil’s work shop”.
5. **Employment Opportunities:** Many governments are still finding it difficult to provide jobs for the citizens because the citizens are lacking important skills they need. Anyone with a skill is able to employ and provide job opportunities for others.
6. **It facilitates the process of nation-building and development:** The strength of a nation relies on the skills of its citizenry. When every child who passes through preschool becomes equipped with entrepreneurial skills, it reflects on the nation and development is bound to radiate.
7. **Reduction of the level of unemployment in the country:** The essence of skills acquisition is to be self-employed and wealth creation. *Skills acquisition* results in in creation of various job opportunities.
8. **Improved quality of life:**
  - a. People become increasingly aware of practices that help to improve life expectancy.
  - b. People learn how to obtain help and information quickly
  - c. Easy and convenient communication through phone calls, e-mails and money transfer.
  - d. The feat performed by the computer and related items help man to appreciate the immense potential of the human capacity.

No preschool child should be left without a skill.

A skill is the ability to do something well, a certain competence or proficiency skill. In fact, skill stands for some action that:

- a) Is generated over time;
- b) Is brought to automatism.



Do not be afraid of difficulty. The process of acquiring skills may seem complicated because anything new is always difficult to start. Actions at the beginning may be imperfect. If the child exercises and practices on a daily basis, the acquisition of skills does not seem difficult. Actions become more dexterous. It all starts to run faster and better. That is all the secrets of how to develop a skill. Everybody can acquire useful and necessary skills including the child. According to Walter (2014) a skill is a type of work or activity which requires special training and knowledge. Skill is the knowledge and ability that enables children to do something well:

1. Great ability or proficiency; expertness that comes from training, practice, etc.
2. An art, craft, or science, especially one involving the use of the hands or body.

Skills are typically acquired or developed through direct experiences and training and they can require sustained effort. They are the characters possessed by successful entrepreneurs such as, creativity.

Creativity is embedded in children's play. A young child has an inborn ability to express himself creatively. He is capable of creating something new in play, perhaps through the use of paints and crayons or through the use of modelling clay. When he sees the caregiver's approval at his creative productions, he feels pleased with himself. Play has been referred to as the "work" of children and the importance of play in the cognitive development of children has frequently been acknowledged. In particular, children's tendency towards play, or playfulness, has been linked to creative thinking skills and tends to indicate a disposition towards later life creativity.

Creativity is most often defined as the ability to produce solutions which are both appropriate and original. Creativity has been defined as a process which involves the production of remote associations ('thinking outside the box') and divergent or unusual, if not original, ideas. Creativity is hallmarked by originality and practicality. The creative person does, or the creative act is, something brand new and technologically or aesthetically useful in a society. Originality means it is not habitual and not routine; creative implies unconventional and intrinsically motivated, intentional actions—not actions governed by conventions or extrinsic rewards or blind luck. The creativity complex or syndrome, then, is comprised of intrinsic motivation, intentionality, adaptive and originality to help distinguish genuine creativity

from creativity-related processes such as discovering, inventing, and innovating and pseudo-creative processes such as fantasizing, daydreaming, being contrary and being disinhibited and impulsive (Runco, 2017). Children are indeed associated with creativity.

Creativity is one of the most important characteristics of being human. It is one of the main traits that makes us successful as individuals and as a species. Creativity plays an essential role in entrepreneurship. Creativity is all about taking challenges. A creative child has the ability to create something unique and new. This is in consonance with the opinion of Anerio (2014) who said that during play children show-case their ingenuity and creativity. Creativity indeed plays a crucial role in children at all levels. Following the same old techniques might not yield results every time. Remember, change is inevitable. Creativity is reaching to innovative solutions, new ideas and unique concepts through brainstorming. In the real sense of it, children are more creative than adults. Individuals who are creative love to do things differently. They seldom blindly follow what others have done in the past but believe in creating their own concepts and ideas. This is the time to stir up creativity development in preschool children so that we can be original like in phone making, building accessible indigenous cars and airplanes among others. Creativity is the essence of entrepreneurship. Products and services do not fall from the sky like manna, they are created. This means the one person that must bear the burden to create is none other than one equipped with the right skills. This can be spiced with Self-confidence.

Self-confidence is a key entrepreneurial skill for success. Self-confidence is concerned with how a person feels about his ability. A self-confident child believes in his abilities. He is not scared to explore his environment, take risk and take difficult decisions. This could manifest during drama, rhythmic dance, delivering a message from his parents to the caregiver or even leading others during school's morning devotions. A child who would be a future successful entrepreneur starts to exhibit the traits of self-confidence, believing in his abilities early enough. Self-confidence is the biggest entrepreneurial asset. It is a feeling of trust in one's abilities, qualities and judgement. This is not far-fetched from what (Romeo, 2017) who opined that self-confidence is an individual's trust in his or her own abilities, capacities and judgments, or belief that he or she can successfully face day to day challenges and demands. A child who possesses self-confidence seems to be

happier. Typically, when children are confident in their abilities, they become happier due to their successes. Also, when they are feeling better about their capabilities, the more energized and motivated they are to take action and achieve their goals. This agrees with Reuben (2015) who submitted that self-confidence is a good feeling about a person, it simply means that he feels good about who he is and his ability to achieve things he wants to achieve. Achieving what the child wants can trigger off a deeper thought. When one digs a little deeper, he can think of self-confidence as being a good feeling about himself and his capabilities that:

- Comes from the way he thinks about himself and his capabilities
- Naturally makes him happier and more successful in life
- Can remain in any situation or circumstance, even without supports from others or without material possessions. Every child should be encouraged to develop self-confidence.

Self-confidence is something that benefits a child in a powerful way, because not only is it a good feeling that naturally makes the child happier and more successful, it is also something that the child can develop and maintain in any situation or circumstance. More specifically, self-confidence comes from three powerful abilities that the child, like every other human being, possesses:

- One's ability to think positively about himself and his capabilities (rather than negatively)
- An individual's ability to be certain that he is someone of positive value and have powerful capabilities (regardless of whether others doubt him or disagree with him)

An individual's ability to continue thinking positively about himself and his capabilities, in any situation or circumstance, no matter what. Self-confidence is required in entrepreneurship. It makes for comfortability in taking calculated risks later in life, children need to believe in themselves from a young age. It calls for motivating the children and supplying them with enough assurance instead of making them feel guilty when they fail. According to Woolfson (2016) a child will not grow in self-confidence by mere mastering new abilities but through play from the earliest days. Play is very important to the development of a child's self-confidence. The proud



feeling of achievement that a three-year-old gets from something as simple as moving one step further up the climbing frame gives him great pleasure and a sense of self-satisfaction. True, a child's enthusiasm for play stems from pleasure rather than an interest in boosting his self-confidence, but the two are intertwined. The more he plays, the more he strengthens his conviction in his own abilities and this in turn makes him want to play with more challenging toys the next time. The experience of successful play boosts confidence and vice versa. As explained by Russell (2017) self-confidence has routes and until the routes are discovered, nothing happens. In fact, it is better to identify and develop self-confidence at the age of preschool.

Preschool is a planned educational programme for children in the years before a child commences school. Preschool children are usually aged between 3 and 5 years. Pre-school is used to describe things relating to the care and education of children before they reach the age when they have to go to primary school. Preschool may take place in a range of settings including a purpose built building, community setting, a school, as part of a long daycare centre or a mobile or visiting service. The system of preschool education varies widely with different approaches, theories and practices within school jurisdictions (Charles, 2014). The term preschool education includes such programmes as nursery school, day care, or kindergarten, which are occasionally used interchangeably yet are distinct entities. While pedagogies may differ, there is the general agreement that preschool is responsible for providing education before the commencement of statutory education. Preschool thrives in play and role playing from young age in order to develop the children's potentials such as entrepreneurial skills, as well as the needs of working mothers to provide a good environment for their young children during working hours. Therefore preschool environments vary depending on whether their main focus is care of the children such as in a daycare programme, which nonetheless acts as a socialization experience that extends beyond the family and prepares the children for school and those which are specifically designed to provide early educational experience for young children such as the kindergarten. Early childhood centre can be any acceptable place to the community (a home, community buildings such as civic centres, churches, mosques and existing schools or a purpose built structure, etc) within walking distance from home (maximum of 2

kilometers). It has to be safe and secure environment (free from chemical and other hazards) and free from excessive noise.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The government keeps spending money immensely on youth empowerment in order to curb unemployment and restiveness. Sometimes the Federal government gives amnesty as a measure to curb vices culminating from unemployment without realizing that it is better to catch them young during the preschool. The truth is that any training done when the child is old instead of starting early enough at the Preschool age is "medicine after death ". After all the bible says "train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it". All the attempts made by the governments through the youths have failed. Parents spend and suffer so much in sending their children to school with the hope of the children taking care of them after graduation, unfortunately due to the type of education given to the children, which does not imbibe entrepreneurial skills acquisition, the parents end up feeding the children even after graduation. There have been several studies on entrepreneurial skills but none focused on preschool children - it has been all affairs of the youths and university graduates, neglecting the preschool level which was supposed to be the starting point. It does not occur to the caregivers that acquisition of appropriate skills should be extended to acquisition of entrepreneurial skills. In the first place, they make the children to rest their heads on the desks during break periods most of the times. Once the examination is over, instead of allowing the children to still come to school for play, they ask them to remain at home, only to come for collection of results on the closing day which often times, the parents come alone without the children for the results. In the real sense of it, this would have been the time for socio-dramatic play for the children's acquisition of entrepreneurial skills to enable the children survive and thrive in later years. The caregivers do not realize that children possess talents that could be turned into engines of success in entrepreneurship through play.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' acquisition of entrepreneurial skills in public care centres in Rivers State. Specifically, the objectives of the study were to:

- i. Determine the relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' creativity.
- ii. Determine the relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' self-confidence.

### Research Questions

The following questions will be answered in this study:

- i. What is the relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' creativity?
- ii. What is the relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' self-confidence?

### Research Hypotheses

Ho<sub>1</sub>. There is no significant relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' creativity.

Ho<sub>2</sub>. There is no significant relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' self-confidence.

### Method

The study was a correlational study due to the fact that it sought to determine the relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' acquisition of entrepreneurial skills in Rivers State. Geographically, the area of study was Rivers State, whereas content wise, the study was restricted to socio-dramatic play as independent variable while creativity and self-confidence independent variables. The population of the study comprised all the Nursery 3 (Transitional class) pupils for the 2018 /2019 session in the eight (8) Local Government Areas of Rivers State. There are two hundred and forty six (246) Early Child Care Development Education (ECCDE) centres in the selected schools of Rivers State with a total enrollment of three thousand, four hundred and eight-nine (3,489) preschoolers (RSUBEB, 2018). The sample of this study comprised 350 preschoolers, about 10% of the population. In order to sample the 350 preschoolers, 25 Early Child Care Development Education (ECCDE) centres were selected, using purposive sampling method. The 25 Early Child Care Development Education (ECCDE) centres represented 10% of the Early Child Care Development Education (ECCDE) centres in the study area. Fourteen (14) preschoolers were used in each of the selected centres.

The researcher adopted simple random sampling method of balloting and replacement to select the preschoolers. In the balloting, numbers were written on papers, enfolded, scuffled and placed in a dish.

### Instrumentation

The instruments used to gather data for the study is a 20 item structured checklist entitled “Play and Preschoolers’ Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition Checklist” (SDPESAC). The Checklist was scaled using 4-point scale of Very Correct (4), Correct (3), Sometimes Correct (2) and Correct (1). VC C SC NC 4 3 2 1

The rating used VC, C, SC, and NC. The “Socio-dramatic Play and Preschoolers’ Entrepreneurial Skills Acquisition Checklist” (SDPESAC) was validated by three experts in the department of Early Childhood Education (ECE) and Primary Education Studies (PES) in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Rivers State. The reliability index of the (SDPESAC) was 0.68. The test and retest method was adopted to determine the reliability of the study. The researcher administered the checklist on the subjects in a school with similar attributes as schools which were used for the main study. After two weeks, the same instrument was administered again to the same group. The two sets of scores were calculated for correlation using Pearson Product Moment Coefficient (r) in order to determine the consistency level of the instrument at 0.05 error limit. When the reliability index is above 0.50 then the instrument is reliable but when the index is below 0.50, then the instrument is unreliable. Therefore, the instruments is reliable. The researcher went to the designated centres with six research assistants for the administration. The subjects were given two weeks to respond to the items after which they went for collection. Pearson Product Moment Coefficient (PPMC) was used to analyse the research questions and testing the null hypotheses.

Summary of PPMC test of relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers’ creativity.

Variables	$\Sigma x$	$\Sigma y$	$\Sigma x^2$	$\Sigma y^2$	$\Sigma xy$	r-cal	r-crit	Dec
Socio-dramatic play	1669		8786					Sig.

					6249	0.8024		
<b>preschoolers' creativity</b>		1714		9248				

The result of table 1 showed an r- value of 0.8024. This indicated that there was a significant relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' creativity.

**Research Question 2:** What is the relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' self-confidence?

**Table 2:** Summary of PPMC test of relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' self - confidence.

Variables	$\Sigma x$	$\Sigma y$	$\Sigma x^2$	$\Sigma y^2$	$\Sigma xy$	r-cal	r-crit	Dec
<b>Socio-dramatic play</b>	1465		6331					Sig.
					6427	0.934		
<b>preschoolers' self - confidence</b>		1714		8346				

The result of table 2 showed an r- value of 0.934. This indicated that there was a significant relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' self - confidence.

## Discussion

The study discovered a significant relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' creativity. The result of the study could be attributed to the fact that children originate story line for themselves. This result agrees with the study of (Romeo, 2017) who opined that play is prominent for high entrepreneurial skills acquisition such as creativity. Also, it is in line with the study of Reuben (2015) who asserted that classroom engagement should be reduced for the children to have time for creativity through play whereas it is



not in agreement with the study of Woolfson (2016) who explained that Creativity not does arise without collaboration with team work.

Again, the study discovered a significant relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' self-confidence. This could be attributed to the fact that self-confidence is something that benefits a child in a powerful way, because not only is it a good feeling that naturally makes the child happier and more successful, it is also something that the child can develop and maintain in any situation or circumstance. This agrees with Reuben (2015) who submitted that self-confidence is a good feeling about a person, it simply means that he feels good about who he is and his ability to achieve things he wants to discover. However, the result is not in consonance with the study of Russell (2017) who stated that self-confidence has routes and until the routes are discovered, nothing happens.

### **Summary of major findings**

Major findings were made from the analyses of the data collated for the study as follows:

- i. Socio-dramatic play has a correlation with preschoolers' creativity.
- ii. Socio-dramatic play has a correlation with preschoolers' self – confidence.

### **Conclusion**

There was a significant relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' creativity.

There was a significant relationship between socio-dramatic play and preschoolers' self – confidence.

### **Educational Implications**

Based on the recommendations above, the following educational implications were identified:

- Caregivers have to allow pupils engage in socio-dramatic play to help them think creatively for future economic independence.
- Caregivers should encourage socio-dramatic play to make the children self-confident in every ramification of life which will be of a great benefit to them and even the society at large.

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