

## **The Role of Early Childhood Education in Social and Emotional Development of Preschool Children**

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### **Abstract**

*The purpose of this study is to explore the role of early childhood education in social and emotional development of preschool child. For this, we conduct structured interviews of the private school teachers at Lahore city. The number of the sample was fifty school teachers who taught to preschool children. Convenient sampling technique was used to collect data from respondents and their views were measured at Likert scale. The data was analyzed using mean score and percentage of the opinions of the respondents. Most of findings explored a vital role of early childhood education in social and emotional development of the pupils at preschool. The finding of the study suggests that ECE plays key role in social and emotional development in preschool children. The study recommends that there should be preschool for the children aged from 4 to 7 at public level.*

**Key words:** Early childhood education, role, emotional development, social development, preschool children

## **Introduction**

One of the crucial aims of Education is to train individuals who have a wide world view, respect to human rights, give importance to personality, feel responsibility to the society, and are constructive, creative and productive. In this manner, besides academic achievement of individuals it is expected that their social skill should be strong. There are positive results of learning many social skills in short and long term and also using these skills frequently in suitable manner in early childhood period. Social skills that are gained in this period help children to overcome the behavioural, emotional (anxiety, self enclosure) and cognitive (school failure and school dropping) problems in early years of school. At the same time it provides children to establish positive social relationships with peers, parents and other adults. It is found that social skills which are gained in early years of childhood are related to mental health, emotional and behavioural accommodation and Academic success in following years (Akman, 2009).

The study was carried out to see the role of early childhood education in social and emotional development of preschool children. The researchers intended to show significance of the early childhood education in pupils' social skills, i.e. how to develop groups, make friendship, have sympathy and empathic relationship with their fellows and how peer interaction developed at preschool level. Along with social skills, emotional skills are also key factors in development of pupils. Emotional skills include children's level of happiness and anger along with their level of anxieties well as aggression towards their fellows. How these skills are developed in preschool children will be highlighted in the light of this research.

A good amount of research, most of which has been cited in the literature review, has been conducted in United States and United Kingdom. There seem to be no or very little literature available in local context. So it is important to highlight the significance of early childhood education in preschool children's social and emotional development.

### **Statement of the problem**

The role of early childhood education in social and emotional development of preschool children is examined in various researches of the world. This relationship in the setting of Pakistan private school is missing in the literature. The study is designed to investigate the role of early childhood education in social and emotional development of the preschool children.

### **Objectives of the study**

The main objectives of the study are;

- To analyses the level of social and emotional development of preschool children in private institution.
- To examine the role of early childhood education in the development of children's social and emotional development.

### **Significance of the study**

Education plays a vital role in the human development. The role of the early childhood has effects on social and emotional development along with cognitive development. To identify the role of early childhood education on pupils' emotional and social development is the main objective of the study, along with this, we will explore the ways in which children develop their relations with other fellows.

### **Organization of the study**

In this study, section 1 contains the introduction; section 2 entails the review of the literature; section 3 contains research methodology; section 4 consists of analysis & interpretations; section 5 comprises conclusion; section

6 consists of limitation and delimitation of the study, and section 7 entails recommendations.

### **Literature Review**

According to Zins et al (2004), learning of the individual does not occur in vacuum; rather, it is the collective result of teachers-peers interaction along with parental support. Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, and Schellinger, (2011) state that students typically do not learn alone but rather in association with their teachers, in the company of their peers, and with the help of their families. The accepted values of the norms within a society are greatly affected by parents-child interaction (Gruce, 2011), and this interaction is bidirectional.

And in this bidirectional socialization not only child is affected by their teacher and parents but also they affect the child (Gruce, 2011). Along with teachers and parents, selection of career does have effects on children's social and emotional development.

According to Aarne et al.(2013), it is not an easy task to measure socio-emotional development of the child at preschool due to the concurrent occurrence of different aspects of development. It means that along with socio-emotional development there are also different aspects of child's physical and cognitive development.

A relationship involves two people, each affecting the other and relationships are the soil in which social development grows (O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith, 2012). O'Donnell (2012) and others state that children have different history of relationship and their past and present relationships explain a lot of their subsequent relationships. Social competence of the students to make friendship and have in future has been affected by the quality of the relationship (Birch & Ladd, 1997; Hamre & Pianta, 2001). And

this quality relationship is greatly affected by both of the members (Kochanska et al., 2004).

According to Reeve (2006), attunement, relatedness, supportiveness and gentle discipline are the four assets of a high quality relationship. This attunement enables teacher to be highly responsive to students' words, behaviour, needs, preferences, and emotions (O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith, 2012). Relatedness is a sense of closeness and having special feelings and importance to other person (Furrer & Skinner, 2003). A relation based on relatedness to teacher and pupil, provides student a sense of security to himself and along with others to whom he relates (O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith, 2012). And those relations which are based on mutual understanding are a good predictor of student's engagement in the classroom activity (Furrer & Skinner, 2003).

Supportiveness is confirmation of the second person's ability for self-direction toward a goal (O'Donnell, Reeve & Smith, 2012). A sense of helping behaviours toward other fellows is evolved when a student has support from his teachers along with motivation (Grolnick, 2003). Gentle discipline is a socialization strategy that involves explaining why a particular way or thinking and behaving is right or wrong (O'Donnell, Reeve & Smith, 2012). In presence of gentle discipline, there will be two way communications between students and teacher.

A relationship will be called a low quality relationship when there is negligence, lack of support, Lack of motivation, absence of student involvement in the classroom activity, abuse and hostility (O'Donnell, Reeve & Smith, 2012). And a high quality relationship requires work and constructive contribution of the two partners. O'Donnell, Reeve and Smith (2012) argue that students benefit when teachers provide attunement, relatedness, supportiveness and gentle discipline. Culture has an impact on

pupil's achievement and work in classroom, said Doll in 1996. Classroom activity is a good source of quality relationship between teacher and students and peer-peer interaction (Doll et al., **1996**).

Joseph Campos" (2005) defines emotion as feeling that occurs when a person interacts or engages with a person or task which has due importance for his or her being. It is directly expressed in terms of personal act or personal behaviour and these feelings may be of happiness and joy or may be anger and grief. And the intensity of the emotions varies from person to person and from situation to situation.

Emotions are influenced by our cultural experiences along with our physiological grounds(Bell & Wolfe, 2007; Brownell & Kopp, 2007). And the biological foundation of emotions is related to the development of the nervous system(Buss & Goldsmith, 2007).

Emotions are closely related to the cognitive development including forebrain and midbrain (Barrett & others, 2007).

Emotional development is the individual attempt to adjust to the demand of the situation and context (Saarni& others, 2006). And to control one's emotion is a key indicator of emotional development (Brownell & Kopp, 2007). Emotional regulation consists of effectively managing arousal to adapt and reach a goal. Arousal involves a state of alertness or activation, which can reach levels that are too high for effective functioning.

Children's lives are also shaped by the broader social circumstances that have impact on their families and communities, such as access to social and health services, parents' employment and income, or their ability to balance work and family time. In particular, children's sense of social connection is often influenced by community attitudes and by cultural values, including those they encounter in the media (Brownell & Kopp, 2007).

Children's understanding of the concept of self and others is a basic goal of their social development. Cherry, K(2011) state that it takes time when children develop a sense of others' needs and take them into account. Naturally, children are self-focused and they think that ever one sees things in the same way that they do. In early primary school, children learn that others may see things differently from them. Then, as their thinking skills develop, children are more able to understand another person's point of view and, finally, to appreciate multiple ways of looking at the same event or situation.

Children's learning process in primary school facilitates to understand the social values by having care about their fellows' feelings and expectations. Children learn to make ethical judgments having practice in putting themselves into others' shoes and through being encouraged to reflect on issues that involve social and moral values. Families and schools can work together to help children understand and learn to act on values like respect, responsibility, caring for others, honesty, cooperation and acceptance of people's differences.

### **Research Methodology**

This study aimed to explore the role of early childhood education in social and emotional development of preschool children. For this purpose, the population of this study consisted of female preschool teachers of the private schools of Johar town. Fifty five preschool teachers, targeted respondents, were considered quite reasonable and representative of the private school settings. Convenience sampling was used for data collections. . An instrument was designed regarding role of early childhood education and demographic variables were also included in instrument. Respondents' response was recorded on Likert scale. In depth interviews and questionnaire for the respondents were used to collect data.

## Results

Table 1

Teachers' opinions in percentage about self-esteem of children

<b>SR.</b>	<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UN</b>	<b>DA</b>	<b>SDA</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>SHOW INTEREST IN CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>63.9</b>	<b>21.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8.1</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>4.28</b>	<b>1.21</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>CURIOSITY TO KNOW ABOUT NEW THINGS</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>18.0</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>1.22</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>FEELINGS OF ISOLATION AMONG STUDENTS</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>42.6</b>	<b>2.08</b>	<b>1.21</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>TO SEEK OUT AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE</b>	<b>36.2</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>3.83</b>	<b>1.13</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>LIKE TO ATTEND SCHOOL FUNCTIONS</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>3.96</b>	<b>1.10</b>

Table 1 shows that majority of Teachers (85.4%) agreed that children show Interest in classroom activities, while 64% of the teachers agreed that children are curious to know about new things. A number of teachers 70% disagree with the statement that children feel isolation among other fellows. A majority of the teachers 63% agree that children seek out autonomy and independence and 72 % of the teachers agree that students show interest to attend school function regarding co-curricular activities.

Table 2

Teachers' opinions about self-knowledge of the children

<b>SR.</b>	<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UN</b>	<b>DA</b>	<b>SDA</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>ACCEPT ROLES REGARDING THEIR GENDER</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>3.78</b>	<b>1.28</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>LEARN TO CONTROL AND REGULATE THEIR BEHAVIOUR</b>	<b>36.2</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3.88</b>	<b>1.09</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>DEVELOPMENT AND OPTIMISTIC VIEW OF THE WORLD AND</b>	<b>44.3</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>3.70</b>	<b>1.42</b>



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**FEEL SECURE IN IT**


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Table 2 shows that majority of the teachers (63.9%) agree with the statement that children accept role regarding their gender. A number of the teachers (62.4%) agree that children learn how to control and regulate their behaviour. Along with this (60.6%) of the respondents agree that children have optimistic view of the world and feel secure in it.

Table 3

Teachers' opinions about children's classroom behaviour

<b>SR.</b>	<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UN</b>	<b>DA</b>	<b>SDA</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>SD</b>
1	<b>CONFIDENT DURING CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>42.2</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>3.86</b>	<b>1.21</b>
2	<b>INVOLVE IN CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>16.5</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>3.98</b>	<b>1.04</b>
3	<b>BOYS ARE MORE AGGRESSIVE THAN GIRLS IN CLASSROOM</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>3.73</b>	<b>1.08</b>
4	<b>SHOW GOOD BEHAVIOUR IN THEIR CLASSROOM</b>	<b>42.8</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>4.02</b>	<b>1.04</b>

Table 3 shows that majority of the teachers (65.1%) agree that children feel confident during classroom activities and a number of teacher (72.1%) are of the view that children are involved in classroom activities. Table also shows that majority of the teachers (65.5%) agree with the statement that boys show more aggression than girls. A number of the teachers (70.6%) agree that pupils show good behavior in classroom.

Table 4

Teachers' opinions about children's helping behavior

<b>SR.</b>	<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>DA</b>	<b>SDA</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>SD</b>
1	<b>DEVELOP ABILITY TO INTERACT WITH OTHERS SOCIALLY</b>	<b>36.2</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>1.21</b>
2	<b>LIKE TO HELP CLASS</b>	<b>42.6</b>	<b>34.6</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>4.08</b>	<b>1.04</b>

	<b>FELLOWS</b>							
<b>3</b>	<b>WANT TO GET A CHANCE TO SHARE WITH CLASSMATES</b>	<b>36.2</b>	<b>32.7</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.02</b>	<b>0.90</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>COOPERATE WITH THEIR CLASSMATE IN CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>34.5</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>3.52</b>	<b>1.19</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>SHARE THINGS WITH THEIR CLASSMATES</b>	<b>39.3</b>	<b>29.6</b>	<b>19.6</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3.96</b>	<b>1.02</b>

Table 4 shows that a number of teachers (56.8%) agree that children develop ability to interact with others socially at preschool. A majority of the teachers (77.2%) agree that pupils show helping behavior and a number of teachers (68.9%) agree that students share with their classmates. Table shows that (57.4%) of the respondents agree that pupils at preschool cooperate with their classmates in classroom activities. Along with this (68.8%) of the teachers agree that students share things with their classmates.

Table 5

Teachers' opinions about children's peer group interaction

<b>SR.</b>	<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>DA</b>	<b>SDA</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>FEEL GOOD AT SCHOOL WITH THEIR FRIENDS</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>4.04</b>	<b>0.90</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>FEEL SHYNESS TO TALK WITH THEIR FRIENDS</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>27.8</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>32.9</b>	<b>2.19</b>	<b>1.09</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>SHOW SYMPATHY WITH THEIR TEACHERS AND CLASSMATES.</b>	<b>36.0</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>1.30</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>MAKE SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>45.6</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>0.76</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>SHOW ANGER TOWARDS THEIR FELLOWS WHEN YOU GAVE ATTENTION TO OTHERS</b>	<b>63.9</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>0.76</b>

<b>6</b>	<b>SHARE THEIR PROBLEMS WITH TEACHERS</b>	<b>47.5</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>0.96</b>
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A majority of the teachers (77.2%) agree that pupils feel good at school with their friends and majority of the teachers (62.3%) disagree with the statement that children feel shyness to talk with their friends. Table 5 also shows that a number of teachers (57.3%) agree with the statement that children show sympathy with their teachers and classmates. Majority of the teachers (75%) agree with the statement that children make social relationship with others at preschool. A number of teachers (88.4%) agree that children show anger towards their fellows when you gave attention to others. Table 5 also explains that 77% of the teachers agree that pupils share their problems with them.

Table 6

Teachers' opinions about children in play

<b>SR.</b>	<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>DA</b>	<b>SDA</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>INTEREST IN PLAYS' PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>50.8</b>	<b>31.3</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>1.23</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>ENGAGEMENT IN PARALLEL PLAYS</b>	<b>50.8</b>	<b>19.3</b>	<b>18.2</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>4.05</b>	<b>1.17</b>

Table 6 shows that majority of the teachers (82%) agree that students show interest in participating in play; along with this a number of (80%) teachers agree that pupils show engagement in parallel plays.

Table 7

Teachers' opinions about children's anxiety level

<b>SR.</b>	<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UN</b>	<b>DA</b>	<b>SDA</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>FEEL ANXIETY IN FAILURE</b>	<b>34.4</b>	<b>31.2</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>1.20</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>WILL BE ABLE TO ENTER DIFFERENT</b>	<b>24.6</b>	<b>32.8</b>	<b>22.9</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>3.51</b>	<b>1.20</b>

SITUATIONS IN THEIR LIFE.								
<b>3</b>	<b>DON'T FEEL STRAIN IN OVERCROWD PLACE</b>	<b>29.5</b>	<b>45.9</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>3.3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.01</b>	<b>0.78</b>

Table 7 shows that a number of the teachers (65.60%) agree with the statement that children feel anxiety in failure. A majority of the teachers (57.2%) agree that children will be able to enter into a different situation in their life after preschool and (75.4%) of the teachers agree with the statement that students don't feel strain in overcrowded place.

Table 8

Teachers' opinions about children's aggression level

<b>SR.</b>	<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UN</b>	<b>DA</b>	<b>SDA</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>CHILDREN SHOW JEALOUSY WHEN TOYS AREN'T OFFERED ANYMORE.</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>3.2</b>	<b>19.7</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>54.2</b>	<b>1.7</b>	<b>0.95</b>

Table 8 shows that a majority of the teachers (75.5%) do not agree with the statement that children show jealousy when toys aren't offered anymore.

Table 9

Teachers' opinions about children's moral development

<b>SR.</b>	<b>STATEMENT</b>	<b>SA</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>UD</b>	<b>DA</b>	<b>SDA</b>	<b>MEAN</b>	<b>SD</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>CHILDREN RESPECT THEIR TEACHER.</b>	<b>60.8</b>	<b>24.5</b>	<b>4.9</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>8.2</b>	<b>4.21</b>	<b>1.17</b>

Table 9 shows that a majority of the teachers (60.80%) strongly agree and (24.5%) of the teachers agree with the statement that children show respect to their children.

**Discussion** The findings of the study are consistent with previous researches and the objectives stated.

## **Conclusion**

Major conclusion drawn from the findings of the study indicates that 85.4% of the teachers agree that children show Interest in classroom activities, while 64% of the teachers agree that children are curious to know about new things. A number of teachers (70%) disagree with the statement that children feel isolation among other fellows. Along with this majority of the respondents agree the pupils develop sense of responsibility and have keen interest in the classroom activities. Among 77.2% of the teachers agree with the statement that students develop helping behavior along with their peers in classroom activities and a majority of the teachers (77.2%) agree that pupils feel good at school with their friends. The results of the study show that early childhood schooling plays a vital role in the social development of the child at preschool. The findings also show that a number of the teachers (65.60%) agree with the statement that children feel anxiety in failure. A majority of the teachers (57.2%) agree that children will be able to enter a different situation in their life after preschool and 75.4% of the teachers agree with the statement that students don't feel strain in overcrowded place. It is also clear that emotional development also progresses at preschool level in child along with the social and cognitive level.

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