CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

Education is seen to be an instrument that can be used by any nation to achieve a more rapid economic, social, political, cultural and technological development. Where the bedrock of the nation's education system is concerned, care should be taken that the right foundation is laid. Childhood education is at the base of Nigeria's educational system and therefore constitutes the cornerstone of the nation's new technological and scientific development. Bearing in mind that we are in the world of computerized competitiveness, the educational sector is faced with many challenges such as producing individuals who are experienced, skilful technologically wise and creative to manage the political process, economy, health and environmental degradation (which is faced with a lot of ecological problems). Regrettably, the nation's educational system has been marred by inadequate funding which has translated into poor facilities, examination frauds which have been rising unabated and poor utilization of available resources. If the current trends are not checked, the target of achieving Universal Basic Education will not be attained in Nigeria.

The recognition of Early Childhood Education in 2004 was a welcomed idea. This is because voluntary agencies and private organizations were dispensing this level of education prior to this date. By that time, there were no well spelt out curriculum and these proprietors had business motives. Besides, the Universal Basic

Education Act of 2004 and the National Inter-Sectorial Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Development (IECD) were efforts by government towards making every Nigerian child to be entitled to this level of education.

Recognizing the importance of early years of children and their education (whether delivered by parents or caregivers) for all round childhood development is still more of an ideal than a reality. Thus, Torees (2008) asserted that if people were aware of what is at stake during the first few years of life, small children would be society's treasure in all sense and together with their mothers and families, they will receive preferential treatment but this is not so. Rather child mortality, malnourishment, neglect, abuse, lack of affection and protection continues to increase at an alarming rate all over the world. Early Childhood Education as defined by Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2009, p. 11) is education given in educational institutions to children prior to their entering the primary school. This includes the crèche, the nursery and the kindergarten.

The National Policy on Education (2013, p. 7) also outlines a number of purposes and government roles to achieve the objectives of this level of education. Amongst the purposes are to effect a smooth transition from home to the school; prepare the child for the primary level of education; provide adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work (on the farms, in the markets and offices); inculcate social norms; inculcate in the child the spirit of inquiry

and creativity through exploration of the nature of the environment, art, music and playing with toys, etc; develop a sense of cooperation, learn good habits, especially good health habits and teach the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours and shapes through play (National Policy on Education, 2013).

Critical examination of these purposes clearly shows that early childhood education does not only provide adequate care and provision for children when their parents are at work but ensures the physical, emotional, social and intellectual development of children. This agrees with United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (2009) which emphasizes that early childhood education helps to build the psycho-social foundations needed for children to undertake abstract learning later in primary school. However, in the primary school setting, pupils learn social skills like interpersonal communication, independence, how to establish relationship with other children, make friends, defend oneself and become less shy. Hence, early childhood education enhances the child's all-round development as well as paves the way for a smooth primary education.

Primary education is the foundation of the child's education, it forms an integral part of the child's early education which may be formal or informal. This type of education is given in an educational institution to children aged 6 to 12 years. This level of education provides all round development for the child, for example physical, motor, health, nutritional, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional and social development. The development of children at this level is important because whatever is learnt at

this stage is transferred to future learning. That was why the Federal Government formulated in the National Policy on Primary education (2013, p. 10) the objectives of primary education as follows: to inculcate permanent literacy, numeracy and ability to communicate effectively, to lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking, to give citizenship education as basis for effective participation in contribution to the life of the society; to mould character and develop social attitude and morals in the child, to develop in the child the ability of adapt to the child's changing environment, to give the child opportunity for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society, to provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trade and craft of the locality.

Primary education has an equalizing effect on cognitive, psycho-motor and affective development, compensating for the disadvantaged backgrounds of pupils. Even if primary education services cannot entirely close the cognitive and social development gap between the rich and poor children, a lack of this service can certainly widen the gap relatively. Furthermore, most primary schools' curricula focus primarily on building the child's academic skills and this makes socio-emotional skills to receive little or no attention (Child Trends, 2012).

It is in primary schools that most striking changes in behaviours are linked to the child's growing sense of identity and increasing independence that the child delights in the mastering of new skills and enjoys exploring the world outside home.

According to Erickson (2010), it is during this time that the child develops autonomy, learns to choose and decides to accept the consequences of choice. It is in these years of life that a child's development can be guided towards the highest potential and what the child will be (Hurlock, 2007). In the author's view, one of the reasons families send their children to primary school is for them to learn to get along well with others and their teachers. Teachers are very important in the training of primary school pupils as they are caregivers and custodians of children in schools.

The focus of the teacher and counsellors is geared towards helping children acquire the ability to function successfully as part of a group, restrain their social impulses, obtain what they want in socially acceptable ways and find satisfaction in helping each other as they help their group as a whole. Understanding a child's transition to school and the quality of a child's school experience, involves moving beyond a purely academic definition of school readiness. Doherty (2011) reckoned that it is necessary to consider factors such as motivation and the quality of a child's social and emotional skills as early childhood programs are also designed to improve the cognitive and social-emotional functioning of primary school children.

Socio-emotional competencies are learning processes through which children acquire cognitive, affective and behavioural competencies that enable them to establish and maintain positive healthy relationships through social awareness, self management, relationship skills/competencies and responsible decision making (Zins,

Weissberg, Wang & Walberg, 2004). Socio-emotional competencies in children have to do with how children feel about themselves (such as confidence, always scared, eager to learn, proud of their culture, timidity, shyness, afraid of being wrong), how they behave (such as constantly fighting, easily upset, able to deal with conflict), and how they relate to others, especially people who matter to them (for example, parents, teachers, and friends). Furthermore, socio-emotional competencies can be explained as how children respond to play, their routine work and their relationship with friends, family members and teachers. Zins et al., identified four main areas of socio-emotional development and they are: social awareness competencies, relationship skills competencies, self management competencies and responsible decision-making competencies.

Social awareness competence which is part of socio-emotional development is described as how the child feels about himself and others which can be seen from facial expressions and body language. This competence helps the child to live and perform roles in the environment. Relationship skills competence deals with children's cooperative attitude and encourages positive relationship. For example, pupils moving equipment from classroom, helping to keep the classroom clean, helping their peers, being polite to their mates, teachers and parents. Self management competence is the child's ability to control his life and behaviour. For example, being able to know when to complete his homework, when to watch television and when to

study. Lastly, responsible decision-making competence deals with the ability of a child to take decision on matters concerning him. For example, when the child is the monitor of a class, he makes decision on pupils to sweep and clean the class by making class rosters for cleaning.

Teachers are very important in the training of children. They are caregivers, custodians of the children in school and as such are in a position to account and give a report on the progress or fitness of children in a learning programme. Thus, there has been conflicting research evidence on whether teacher's gender is a factor on the acquisition of socio-emotional competencies of children. Gender refers to a social construct regarding culture-bound conventions, roles and behaviours as well as relations between and among women and men, boys and girls (Nwaubani, Okafor, & Onyeanusi, 2014). Gender is the fact of being male or female which affects emotional competence. Early childhood education has been traditionally viewed as a female dominated profession with few male entrants, but recent studies show that there is an increasing influx of males into early childhood profession (Komori, 2008).

From the researcher's observations in schools, it appears that teachers pay more attention to the learning of academic skills and knowledge than socio-emotional competencies. Yet, the acquisition of socio-emotional competencies are necessary for children to succeed academically in school and outside which include self awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills. All these are distinguishing

competencies, the capabilities that set star performers apart from average ones. They teach children to control impulse and delay gratification; to regulate moods and keep distress from swamping their ability to think, to empathize and to hope. Naturally, children who attend early childhood education are exposed to these competencies early in life. From the researcher's observations in primary schools, it could be that socio-emotional competencies are lacking among pupils in primary schools. Although, primary education can help children develop holistically as well as develop or prepare them for socio-emotional competencies however, early education facilitates and enhances the competencies. Therefore, the study investigated teachers' perception of socio-emotional competencies among primary school pupils through ECE in Anambra State.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of primary education is to prepare the child for holistic development to enable the child participate in his environment as stipulated. In this light, it has been observed among primary school children that teachers concentrate more on academic skills and knowledge when research has proved that academic intelligence has little to do with emotional life. That is why in a class the brightest child can check on the shoals of unbridled passion and unruly impulses. In other words, people with high intelligence quotient can be stunningly poor pilots of their private lives. Hence, the consequence of lack of acquisition of social awareness

competence, relationship skills competence, self management competencies, and responsible decision-making competencies are evidenced in children in such behaviours like rampant fighting, bickery, not eager to learn, always scared, poor relationship with others and poor self concept.

Furthermore, acquisition of socio-emotional competencies help children to develop self awareness, self confidence, and self control, commitment and integrity, the ability to communicate and influence, to initiate and accept change. All these competencies are at a premium in today's job market. The higher up the leadership ladder one goes, the more vital these skills become, often influencing who is employed or who is not employed or promoted. Therefore, the study investigated teachers' perception of socio-emotional competencies among primary school pupils through ECE in Anambra State.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated teachers' perception of socio-emotional competencies among primary school pupils: The role of ECE. Specifically, the study investigated teachers' perception of:

1. Social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through ECE.

2. Relationship skills competencies among primary school pupils through ECE.

3. Self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE.

4. Responsible decision making competencies among primary school pupils through ECE.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be of benefit to primary school pupils, primary school teachers, school administrators, parents, government and future researchers. Primary school children will benefit from this study when they develop their relationship skills which will help them to relate better with one another. Hence, it will bring peace amongst them. It will help them to relate better with their peers, have high esteem of themselves which leads to positive peer interactions. Their early socio-emotional competency acquisition will help them in future learning and active lives.

Primary school teachers would benefit from the findings of the study because there will be high teachers' capacity to learn and become accustomed to children's social-emotional competencies that can lead to better pupils' learning and social interactions amongst children in classrooms. Also, the teachers benefit when children develop their socio-emotional competence, which will help to bring about peace, harmony and understanding among them. The findings of this study will also provide primary school teachers with workshops and seminars on ways and strategy to bring out in children their socio-emotional competencies.

The findings of this study also would be beneficial to school administrators by providing teachers with training on the value of social-emotional development and on how to engage children and prepare the environment for effective learning.

The findings of this study would also benefit parents in that it will broaden parents' understanding on how to select a quality school experience for their children and how they engage fully with the children and staff.

However, curriculum planners would benefit from the findings of this study by creating into the early childhood curriculum the intervention programs on socio-emotional learning. This is because many of these social-emotional competencies are not always directly addressed within school curriculum.

Moreso, the findings of this study would encourage government to provide primary educational facilities (such as classrooms, instructional materials, standard curriculum covering social aspects of learning not to be concentrated only on intellectual development of the child, equipment and continuing human capacity development) needed for the success of the programme. The findings of the study would also reveal to the government what must be provided to teachers for them to be able to acquire requisite skills that will aid pupils' acquisition of socio-emotional competencies.

Finally, this will also serve as a reference material to future researchers. These beneficiaries will get to know their gains through publication of the finding of this research and also through workshops, conferences, seminars, talks and literatures.

Scope of the Study

The study was delimited to determine teachers' perception of socio-emotional competency among primary school pupils through the role of ECE. For the purpose of this study, only primary five teachers in the 21 Local Government Area of Anambra State were used. The content scope of the study included: social awareness, relationship skills/competencies, self management and responsible decision-making competencies.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the perception of primary five teachers on social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through ECE?

2. What is the perception of primary five teachers on relationship skill competencies among primary school pupils through ECE?

3. What is the perception of primary five teachers on self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE?

4. What is the perception of primary five teachers on responsible decision making competencies among primary school pupils through ECE?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. Primary five male teachers' perception on social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through ECE does not significantly differ to their female teachers' counterpart.

2. Primary five male teachers' perception on relationship skill competencies among primary school pupils through ECE does not significantly differ to their female teachers' counterpart.

3. Primary five male teachers' perception on self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE does not significantly differ to their female teachers' counterpart.

4. Primary five male teachers' perception on responsible decision-making competencies among primary school pupils through ECE does not significantly differ to their female teachers' counterpart.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The related literature to this study was reviewed under the following sub-headings; conceptual framework, theoretical framework, theoretical studies, empirical studies and summary of review of related literature.

Conceptual Framework

Teacher

Perception

Early Childhood Education

Social-emotional Competencies

Primary Education

Theoretical Framework

Theory of Socio-cultural Development by Lev Vygotsky 1978

Theoretical studies

 Early Childhood Education

Social Awareness Competencies of Pre-school Children

Relationship Skills/competencies of Pre-school Children

Self Management Competencies of Pre-school Children

Responsible Decision-making among Pre-school Children

Academic Skills vs Social-emotional Skills

Empirical Studies

Social Awareness Competencies

Relationship skills/competencies

Self Management Competencies

Responsible Decision-making skills/competencies

Summary of Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Framework

This heading explains various concepts as highlighted below:

Teacher

Teachers are central to any innovation and are the people that translate policies to reality because they impact knowledge and skills to children. Akinpelu in Onwuka (2017) defines a teacher as someone who underwent a long period of socialized training and is regarded as moral instructor, moral educator and a moral model to his/her students. Similarly, Atanda and Lameed (2006) described a teacher as a professional who impacts skill, knowledge, information and attitude to learners. According to the context of this study, teacher is a person who has undergone training in a teacher education institution and has acquired skills, knowledge and attitude to impart knowledge and skills to the children committed into his or her care.

Perception

    Perception is the process by which an individual becomes aware of objects and objective facts in its environment on the basis of stimuli from the objects which affect the senses (Kupuswamy, 2009). According to Kelly (2015), perception as a scientific methods involving construct systems. Kelly further stressed that man is always constructing theories, formulating hypotheses about things and persons in his environment, testing these hypotheses and modifying them according to results. In the context of this study, perception is defined as a process by which we receive, interpret and respond to the stimulus or group of stimuli which register in the brain through one or a combination of the sense mechanism.

Early Childhood Education

    Early childhood education can be viewed from different angles. In terms of child's life, it is the period from birth to eight years of age (Miles & Browne, 2011). Grotewell and Burton (2008) also shared this definition that early childhood education is the time between zero and eight years of age.

    However, the term early childhood education was defined by Gonzalez-Mena (2008) as encompassing the overall social, physical, and intellectual development and education of children below the age of eight years. To Ejieh (2012), it is the pre-school education programmes of various sorts for children below the official school-going age (usually six years) mainly to prepare them for education in primary schools. The education given in an educational institution to children aged 3 to 5 plus prior

their entering the primary school is early childhood education (FRN, 2013). The 2004 revised edition of the NPE has a similar definition for early childhood education but specifically includes the crèche, nursery and kindergarten as other institutions for such education. It implies that younger persons are to be taught in formal settings as in the crèche from one year and six months to two years.

In the view of Ojameruaye (2010), ECE basically is that which is the care and education of children from birth to primary school age (5+ or 6years), focusing on children's survival, growth, development and learning which including health, nutrition, hygiene, as well as cognitive, social, physical and emotional development. In this study, early childhood education is a pre-primary care and education given to aid physical, social, psychological, emotional and mental growth and development of the child for proper and effective transition to work.

Primary Education

This level of education is otherwise known as the Universal Basic Education. According to Oluyomi (2011), primary education is the key to success or failure of the whole educational system. Baikie in Onwuka (2017) defined basic education as a type of education in quality and content that is given in the first level of education. The Federal Government of Nigeria in its National Policy on Education (2013) defined primary education as education given in institutions for children aged 6-11

years. The researcher defined primary education as the fundamental education that is given to a child after passing the pre-primary education stage.

Socio-emotional Competencies

Social emotional competence is described as the adaptive emotional responses that help the child reach goals, cope with challenges and engage effectively in social interactions (Sarni, 2010). In the view of Denham and Burton (2013) socio-emotional competencies is a fundamental part of children's social development and determines their ability to interact and from relationships with others. In a broader sense, social emotional competencies refer to the development of skills that promote emotion recognition and regulation, empathy for others, problem-solving, and positive social interactions" (Denham in McCabe & Altamura, 2012). Social-emotional competence are how children feel about themselves (such as confidence, always scared, eager to learn, proud of their culture, afraid of being wrong), how they behave (such as constantly fighting, easily upset, able to deal with conflict), and how they relate to others, especially people who matter to them (for example, parents, teachers, and friends).

Furthermore, Squires (2012) defined social-emotional competencies as the cooperative and pro-social behaviour, initiation and maintenance of peer friendships and adult relationships, management of aggression and conflict, development of a sense of mastery and self-worth and emotional regulation and reactivity. The researcher defined, social-emotional as the emergence of emotional self-regulation,

empathy, effective communication, positive social interaction, and social independence.

Theoretical Framework

This study was hinged on the Theory of Socio-cultural Development by Lev Vygotsky in 1978.

Socio-cultural Theory by Lev Vygotsky in 1978

This theory was propounded by Lev Vygotsky in 1978 a Russian psychologists whose ideas have influenced the field of educational psychology and the field of education as whole. One of the fundamental concepts of socio-cultural theory is its claim that the human mind is mediated. Vygotsky found a significant role for what he calls tools" in humans" understanding of the world and of themselves.

However, Vygotsky further stated in his theory that humans do not act directly on the physical world without the intermediary of tools. Whether symbolic or signs, tools according to Vygotsky are artefacts created by humans under specific cultural (culture specific) and historical conditions, and as such they carry with them the characteristics of the culture in question. They are used as aids in solving problems that cannot be solved in the same way in their absence. In turn, they also exert an influence on the individuals who use them in that they give rise to previously unknown activities and previously unknown ways of conceptualising phenomena in the world. Therefore, they are subject to modification as they are passed from one

generation to the next, and each generation re works them in order to meet the needs and aspirations of its individuals and communities.

Vygotsky advocates that the role of a psychologist should be to understand how human social and mental activity is organised through culturally constructed artefacts. Also, the socio-cultural environment presents the child with a variety of tasks and demands and engages the child in his world through the tools. In the early stages, Vygotsky claimed that a child is completely dependent on other people, usually the parents, who initiate the child's actions by instructing him/her as to what to do, how to do it, as well as what not to do. Parents, as representatives of the culture and the conduit through which the culture passes into the child, actualise these instructions primarily through language. On the question of how do children then appropriate these cultural and social heritages? Vygotsky stated that the child acquires knowledge through contacts and interactions with people as the first step (interpsychological plane), then later assimilates and internalises this knowledge adding his personal value to it (intrapsychological plane).

Vygotsky theorized that cognitive development does not occur in isolation for the child. He described three levels of learning:

1. Level 1: unable to do the task without an adult or mature learner;

2. Level 2: able to do the task but needs assistance from an adult or mature learner;

3. Level 3: able to complete the task independently

Vygotsky's "Zone of Proximal Development" theory suggested that teachers observe and are prepared to assist the child's learning experience at different levels and so he or she can become independent at that particular task or learning experience.

This theory is related to the present study because ECE is not just with theories of instruction and academic skills but rather passing into children skills and strategies to continue to learn independently as well as increasing their social emotional competence as stated by Vygotsky. Also, this theory is related to this study in that teachers help children not to merely copy their capabilities; rather they transform what teachers offer them during the processes of appropriation.

Theoretical Studies

Relevant studies were reviewed under the following sub-headings:

Early Childhood Education

Education is one of the vital factors that help in the development of a human being. The fundamental right of every child is to learn and develop to his or her full potentials through equal access to quality education regardless of their age, gender, origin ethnicity and social background. However, ECE provides the foundation of education in the pre-school education which forms an integral part of a child's early education, given formally or informally, in an educational institution to children ages two- five years prior to entering the primary school (Nakpodia, 2011). Early

Childhood is the most critical period in human development, thus comprehensive and quality early childhood education can make a significant contribution to the physical, psychomotor, cognitive, social and emotional development of the child; including the acquisition of languages and early literacy. Children are active learners from birth, and the early years are vital to their success in school and later in life. Early childhood education might be considered to be education which takes place before compulsory education. Early Childhood Education refers to education in its broadest sense, including childcare and development. This includes early childhood services provided in kindergartens, nurseries, pre-school classes, child-care centers and other similar institutions. It goes beyond what some refer to as pre-school education, as it is education in its own right, having not only the purpose of preparing children for school, but for life in the same way as all other parts of education systems contribute to this process (Hayes, 2010).

In addition, ECE has an important role in securing all children, good education, thus Childhood years are important in themselves and ECE can contribute to many positive and valuable experiences which form a solid basis for future life and learning. This is supported by the 2007 edition of the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR), which provides evidence that children's experiences in the first years create a solid foundation for subsequent learning. In addition, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development starting strong II (OECD, 2006) asserted that ECE addresses issues of child poverty and educational

disadvantage, as well as promoting women's labour market participation. In recent studies, OECD (2006), looked at the long-term impact of ECE, and its findings reveal that 15-year-olds who had attended pre-school were, on average, a year ahead of those who had no reading literacy. ―Education internationally‖, thus insists that no child should be denied the benefits of good quality early childhood education. At present various opportunities are provided and several avenues are opened that help in imparting knowledge to children all over the world (Bradford, Aguda, Bingham, Bower, Broomby & Coltman, 2006). Globally, individuals and governments invest heavily to ensure high quality and accessible early childhood education at early stage of life. The importance of the early years, in a child's physical, social, emotional, linguistic and cognitive developments cannot be over emphasized. That, future capabilities and successful educational practices are notably linked up with both knowledge and good reasoning ability acquired in the early years of life. Research studies on capabilities of young children's stages, styles of learning, social, emotional, moral developments and successful educational practices have established that children who lack knowledge and experience may not have good reasoning ability (Branford et al. 2006). Hence education provided at early childhood specifically at nursery and primary education level, will enhance children's future/later reasoning and educational needs within the formal school system which will promote their educational success and ability.

Early childhood education is an activity that takes place before formal school, in this case, preschool is a part of early childhood, and the aim is the versatile development of child's personality and also helping the child to be ready and mature for a smooth transition to school (Ajala, 2008). In other words, early childhood programme encompasses both qualitative education and care, which should not be separated but provided in a complementary fashion. Quality early childhood education will earn children a position or state of readiness to learn in a formal and non-formal setting. Disposition to learn refers to development of social skills and behaviour in formal educational environment, while readiness to learn is related to the fact that children will start schooling on a solid (footing) foundation to develop their potentials. Emphatically, early childhood education is seen as an evolving field of study, research and practice, which concerns itself with all aspect of early life experience, from separation of anxiety to early literacy development. Early childhood education sometimes called early childhood care and education or early childhood care Development Education refers to the education that children obtain during early stages of life. Learning is known to be greatly influenced by extraneous factors like the nature of educational environment: instruction material conducive environment provision facilities to which the child is exposed during the first 6 years of life, (Bowan, Donovan & Burn, 2011).

Early gains in school readiness due to early childhood education have been shown to have enormous positive economic and social impacts, lasting well into adulthood ranging from higher educational attainment and less chance of involvement in criminal activity, to higher status employment and higher earnings. Hence, Early childhood education is crucial in life in terms of a child's physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development; growth of mental and physical abilities progresses at an astonished rate and a very high proportion of learning takes place at this stage (Birth to age six). It is a time when children need high quality personal care and learning experience. That is, for any meaningful learning or acquisition of skills and knowledge to take place, the environment should be provided with adequate instructional materials in addition to quality educators; (Schweinhart, Sparling & Ramey, 2009).

Children who received quality early childhood education from qualified teachers are more likely to succeed in school and in life. Such children with richer literacy environment demonstrate higher level of reading, knowledge and skills at primary school level: Good early childhood education increases cognitive abilities, school achievement and improves classroom behaviour. Hence, there is the need for careful planning and effective implementation of early childhood education programme which will have positive impact on effective completion of school for the child; (Smith, Cowrie & Barnett, 2004). To buttress this, Mills (2007) specified that

early childhood education produces benefits that persist into early adulthood which means that children who participated in early childhood education are likely to perform better in subsequent educational, moral, and social milestone than a similar group who attended another pre-school programme.

The "former" group who participated in Early Childhood Education for one or two years will benefit in several ways viz:- Less grade repetition, lower dropout rates, improved parent-child relationship, higher intelligence scores, higher school completion rate, improved social and emotional behaviour, increased female labour force participation, lower rates of juvenile crimes and have a lower chance to committing violent crimes. These will not only benefit the child but the society as well. For effective and efficient development of a child's latent abilities and forms of behaviour of positive values in the society in which the child lives, early childhood education becomes imminent, not only to the educational development but also social interaction and good moral behaviour inclusive, (Osakwe, 2009).

No serious government takes the education of its citizens at the stage of ECE with levity. As such, the National Policy on Education revised, (2007) in line with other nations of the world specified that early childhood education should be given in an educational institution to children aged three to five plus prior to their entering the primary school." The first five years of a child's life are very crucial and important in his/her life, as whatever he/she is exposed to during this period has a serious and lasting effect on him/her in future. In France, the central government shares the largest

responsibility of the total cost of educating the children while the local authority provides the remainder. While in England, Wales and West Germany it is the local authorities that control and administer the pre-school education through nationally prepared guidelines.

However, in Nigeria ECE is controlled by both private sector and partly by the government prior to the recent introduction of ECE classes in public primary schools. As precious as the early childhood education is, it is sad to note that it received an unappreciable attention from the Nigerian government and citizens for a long time. But in recent time, with the introduction of UBE, most public schools have ECE classes which are likely to make its products different from previous year's graduates to primary school.

The National Curriculum Conference held in Lagos in September 1969, as historic as it was, failed to address any issue related to early childhood education. Rather, it focused much on primary, secondary and tertiary education, teacher education, science and technical education as well as women's education. The 6-3-3-4 system of education is silent about early childhood education as well. It was not until recently that the Federal Government of Nigeria broke its silence on it and realized the need to have a say in the conduct of nursery education and thus clearly stated the purpose and objectives of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria, in the National Policy on Education (NPE) published in 1977 and revised in 1981, 1998, 2004 and 2007. This policy stipulates that the first ladder of education would be handled and

manned by private individuals and public schools but monitored by the government. Consequently, the Nigerian Educational Research Development Council (NERDC, 2012) and National Teachers Institute (NTI) started to organize series of seminars, workshops and lectures to educate proprietors of nursery schools on how the goals of nursery education could be achieved, (NERDC, 2012), so also the state government organized such for teachers.

Importantly, Early Childhood Education is an educational programme and strategy, focused on children from birth to the age of 5 years. This period of time is widely considered the most vulnerable and crucial stage of a person's life. Early childhood education is geared towards guiding children to learn through play (Lewis, 2011). Similarly, Early Childhood Education is viewed as the organized practice of educating those who are in their early years. Notably, early childhood education is the key to building a great foundation for a child's educational success, and learning habits to form patterns of life that are not easily changed in later years. Thus, parents and Early childhood educators should endeavour to establish good habits and productive patterns of behaviour for children in their custody, to enable them achieve greater educational success, (UNICEF, 2007). Besides, Early Childhood Education is viewed as being able to cater for the present circumstances where parents are unable to give sufficient time to their children due to high demand for labour force. This further necessitates the need for Early Childhood Education.

Significantly, early intervention is crucial because skills developed in Early Childhood form the basis for future learning and labour market success, making Early Childhood a critical time for human capital accumulation, (Naudeau, Jamison, Breman, Measham, Kataoka, & Valerio, 2011). However, in cognitive and overall development, before a child enters primary school often have long lasting consequences on children, their families, and society at large, and they are more costly to remedy. Conversely, evidence from many countries shows that quality ECE can narrow the _opportunity divide and reduce poverty, ethnic and linguistic disadvantages (UNESCO, 2010). The role of Early Childhood Education in the life of a child represents the transitional ground that prepares the child mentally and psychologically for the expectation and sustainability into model primary education in nearest future.

Despite the overwhelming case for building strong foundation, early ECE remains a peripheral concern within education system virtually everywhere, characterized by insufficient resource and fragmented planning (UNESCO, 2011). Evidence strongly suggests that those who need ECE the most receive it the least. The majority of poor children in low and middle income countries do not have access to high quality ECE (Naudeau et al., 2011). Household poverty and low levels of parental education are two of the most critical barriers to Early Childhood Education (UNESCO, 2010). In spite of these barriers, accessibility and quality of programme need attention. Thus, the call for the implementation of Education For All (EFA) as

stipulated by (UNESCO 2011). Irrespective of locality, town or country the implementation of EFA will be a contributing factor to breaking poverty cycles and enhance quality foundation for subsequent education. This present study will no doubt be a pointer to the influence ECE has on academic, social and moral behaviour of pupils and its benefits to the society at large.

Emergence and Philosophical Views of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria

Early Childhood Education in Nigeria can be traced back to the colonial days, when it was the preserve of the children of colonial officials and the elites. The number of such institutions thus increased as a result of influx of children of various European and American citizens working in different parts of the country (Onibokun, 2015). Professionals were on the increase, fast emulating the European officials in sending their children to pre-school institutions. The Federal Government of Nigeria launched the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976. Though the National Policy on Education did not recognized the significance of Early Childhood Education, the provision was to be ensured by private efforts invariably denying the children of the ―poor‖ in the public schools access to it. This anomaly was however corrected by Universal Basic Education scheme (UBE 1999) which made it possible for every child to go to school prior to primary to junior secondary school without bothering about the school fees. This also highlights the need for Early Childhood Education, for Nigerian children irrespective of family background.

The establishment of Universal Basic Education (UBE) and its implementation has been a serious effort in the provision of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria with specific reference to Kano state. The UBE scheme provides for every child between ages 3-8 years the opportunity to acquire quality education, despite differences in their socio − economic status, gender, environment, moral behaviour, social status and intelligent quotient. In ensuring ECE implementation, the Kano State government, in line with the Federal Republic of Nigeria's (FRN) National Policy on Education (NPE) section 14a; established ECE section in existing Public Primary Schools within the 44 local government area in the Kano state. Teachers are mandated to be retrained at workshops and seminars during vacation and also to acquire knowledge beyond grade II teacher qualification or SSCE. That is a minimum of NCE qualification to ensure that quality teachers are employed for good knowledge delivery, good moral and positive role model at this level and provide a monitoring team who will supervise these schools.

Primary Education Objectives

The Federal Government formulated in the National Policy on Primary education (2013) the objectives of primary education as follows;

1. To inculcate permanent literacy, numeracy and ability to communicate effectively

2. To lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking; to give citizenship education as basis for effective participation in contribution to the life of the society;

3. To mould character and develop social attitude and morals in the child; to develop in the child the ability of adapt to the child's changing environment;

4. To give the child opportunity for developing manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society, the limit of the child's capability;

5. To provide the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for trade and craft of the locality.

Social Awareness Competencies of Primary School Children

There has been recent, considerable research interest in the development of social awareness in young children, particularly because of the realization that older primary school children are capable of significantly greater depth and psychological insight into their conceptions of themselves. The period of time addressed by these foundations is, therefore, an important transitional period. This period starts with the very simple, rudimentary self-awareness of the younger child, focusing on physical self-recognition (such as in a mirror image) and dispositional self-attributions and progressing to a more fully realized form of the psychological self-awareness of the early-grade-schooler (Hartar & Thompson, 2006). Social awareness is an important

component of early school success because young children's self-confidence shapes their interest, motivation, and persistence in academic work, and their success in the classroom reciprocally influences their sense of pride and accomplishment. Example of social awareness include; identifying feelings, beliefs, and values, self confidence, self esteem, appropriate emotional expression, curiosity, optimism, perceived confidence, self efficacy.

Social awareness for young children is designed to help them understand and function in the world in which they live. During their early years, children are developing their values and attitudes about themselves, other children, and their family and community, and the world. They are developing a concept of self. It is important that they have a broad range of experiences and are exposed to people and materials without gender, racial, ability, or cultural bias. People with disabilities must be portrayed accurately, including both their abilities and disabilities (Millers, Goley, Shields, Dicstein & Seifer, 2013). Social awareness, or the ability to understand and empathize with the viewpoints of others, is an important life skill and one that students in an elementary school setting are often just beginning to develop. Teachers have the unique opportunity to foster social awareness and empathy in the classroom, which in turn may promote stronger student relationships and learning outcomes both in and out of school.

Parker, Mathis and Kupersmidt (2013) highlighted three ways to promote social awareness in the elementary school classroom, particularly for older students, who are typically entering into new relationships and learning to distinguish between their own needs and the needs of others.

1. Discuss different perspectives: When discussing a book, history lesson or current event with your students, ask them to think through the perspectives of all parties involved. Encourage your students to describe what another person might be thinking or feeling without assigning blame or judgement. This exercise can be particularly helpful when applied to narratives that are typically told from one point of view, such as Little Red Riding Hood or Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

2. Incorporate social justice themes: Your students will likely hear about current events or social justice issues through the media, their families and their peers. Creating a safe, non- judgemental space to discuss topics like immigration or racial and gender equality not only gives student feelings a voice but allows students to see the validity of a variety of perspectives and opinions on a given topic.

3. Model empathetic, inclusive behavior: One of the best ways to promote empathy and social awareness in the classroom is to model it yourself. Listening to and validating the thoughts and feelings of your students and those

around you—while acknowledging that empathy does not always mean agreement—will help set a classroom precedent.

To promote a healthy emotional atmosphere in a pre-school classroom, teachers are to establish an emotional relationship with children. This task is equally important for all children whether the goal is to strengthen children's early experienced or to compensate for insecure family relationships. Teacher's strategies aiming to build children's emotional skills can contribute to create emotionally secure environments that encourage young children to understand and manage their feelings and that of others. For instance, " emotional talk", when engages in by adults, predicts competent patterns of emotional regulation (Wareham & Salmon, 2009). The empirical studies conducted by salmon and colleagues demonstrated that when parents are encouraged to engage in emotion related conversation with their preschoolers, both parents and children increase their references to emotion and consequently children's understanding of option improves significantly. Children who have difficulties learning emotion language have a hard time making connections with their own feelings and those of others. This limitation places then at increased risk for emotion regulation problems (Ciccheti, Ganiban, & Barnett, 2011).

Teachers often intuitively make use of everyday conflicts as "teachable opportunities" to increase children's regulation skills and emotion knowledge (Bodine & Crawford, 2009). Adults who give children the opportunity to symbolise their

experiences through appropriate activities, or who encourage children's feelings of efficacy and self control are sustaining and nurturing emotion focused climate and curriculums for primary school children competencies.

Relationship Skills/Competencies of Primary School Children

Relationship skills include the skills of being helpful in different chores (e.g. returning or moving equipment or to others) (Webster-Stratton & Reid, 2004), co-operating in pair and group tasks (Lane et al., 2007; Webster Stratton & Reid, 2004), being friendly toward peers (Niles et al., 2008), asking permission before taking others' property (Lane et al., 2007) and speaking to others with an appropriate tone of voice (Lane et al., 2007). Moreso, relationship skills involve the ability to develop positive relationships with teachers, parents, and peers. Language is especially important here. For example, research shows that teacher language skills in a English-speaking child's home language improve the child's social skills and relationship with the teacher.

Relationships are the soil in which children's socio-emotional learning (SEL) skills grow. Parent-child relationships are the first and arguably most important context for the development of these skills, but relationships in schools—with both teachers and peers—are also important because they help develop self-regulation, a basic skill that is fundamental to multiple SEL domains (Eisenberg, Valiente, & Eggum, 2010; Sameroff, 2010; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2010). Self-regulation, the ability

to manage one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors in the service of goals (Smith-Donald, Raver, Hayes, & Richardson, 2007), is developed in relationships, initially through a process of "other-regulation." In other-regulation, adults and peers help children learn appropriate social rules and self-management strategies and gradually enable them to engage in self-regulation. Other-regulation is particularly salient in infancy and early childhood and becomes less salient over time (Sameroff, 2010), but can also be seen during the preschool and adolescent years when children and teenagers learn about acceptable behavior from their peers. Because of the importance of relationships to the development of SEL skills, intervention efforts must be attuned to the importance of relationships between students and staff and among students.

Peer interactions have long been a focus in SEL efforts, but the quality of children-teacher relationships also have a large impact. Teachers make the classroom to be warm by being friendly to the children, listening to them, caring, being fair to all and attending to the children. The teachers actions will help the children build trust and bring about less conflict (Baker, 2006; Baker, Clark, Maier, & Viger, 2008; Rimm-Kaufman & Hamre, 2010).

Teachers who interact with students in these positive ways validate their students' emotional experiences and foster a sense of security that supports active engagement in the classroom (Pianta, La Paro, Payne, Cox, & Bradley, 2012). On the contrary, teachers who are unfriendly, harsh, unfair to children make the children not

to develop positive socio-emotional competencies. In furtherance, negative or conflict-filled relationships between teachers and students predict poor academic outcomes and social behavior, including school avoidance, disliking school, lower classroom participation and cooperation, declines in prosocial behavior, more peer-directed aggression, and other problem behaviors (Ladd et al., 2009). In fact, for students at risk of behavioral and academic problems, students who experience high levels of conflict with or dependency on teachers have poorer long-term adjustment than their peers (Ladd & Burgess, 2012; Pianta, Steinberg & Rollins, 2015). Of course, the association between teacher-student relationships and children's SEL skills is bidirectional, and students influence teachers as well as the reverse.

Teachers report closer relationships with prosocial students who are able to work independently and exhibit high levels of self-regulation and students who are close to their teachers receive more support from them (Birch & Ladd, 2008). As a result, these students likely have more opportunities for positive social processes and skill development and may also have more incentives to behave in socially and emotionally appropriate ways. For example, students who experience positive relationships with their teachers may be more motivated to comply with adult requests in order to maintain the quality of that relationship (Thompson & Raikes, 2007).

Given their importance, teacher-student relationships are an important area for intervention. Furthermore, because teachers' own SEL skills influence their

relationships with and teaching of students, they are an important focus in their own right—and are discussed later in this paper (Brackett, Palomera, Mojsa, Reyes, & Salovey, 2010; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009).

According to Howes, Hamilton and Philipsen (2008), normatively, first friendships are established during the pre-school years. The acquisition of prosocial friendship skills (such as helping, sharing, and taking turns) during pre-school predict kindergarten and later elementary school engagement and academic success (Howes et al., 2008). Also, pro-social behavior may foster positive relationships with teachers and peers, thereby motivating school bonding and creating feelings of social-emotional security and comfort in the classroom that support exploration and thereby enhance learn- ing (Coolahan et al., 2010; Konold & Pianta, 2015).

Self Management Competencies of Primary School Children

Self management is another important socio-emotional competence required by children. This will enable them to resolve conflict with their peers, manage their anger nd be able to work as a team (cooperate) with others. In view of this, self management is defined by Heward (2007) as the individual or systematic application of behavioral modification techniques that ensure an individual's behaviors to conclude with the desired alterations. The importance of socialization is mentioned in an individual's acquisition of self-management behavior (Çağdaş & Seçer, 2002). Additionally, researchers argued that self-management strategies may help children gain more

control on their lives and more behavioral management. They stated that, in this way, these will ensure an increase in behaviors such as independence, sufficiency, and self-acceptance in the following years of these individuals' lives (Agran, Blanchard, Wehmeyer & Hughes, 2001).

Self management, which includes the skills of controlling temper in conflict situations by reacting calmly to disagreements (Lane, StantonChapman, Jamison, & Phillips, 2007; Niles, Reynolds, & RoeSepowitz, 2008) waiting one's turn (Lane et al., 2007) listening to instructions or others' opinion (WebsterStratton & Reid, 2004). Self-management is considered pivotal to the development of other skills (Koegel & Koegel, 2006). It is a highly generalizable, foundational skill that can be used in many contexts to teach a number of other cascading skills. In other words, Koegel and Koegel further encapsulated that once an individual learns the process of self-management, any skill in any domain for which a viable self-management system can be conceived can be targeted. Hence, it is never too late or too soon (aside from developmental constraints) to learn how to self-manage.

Self-management meets the criteria for being an evidence-based practice within early childhood, elementary, middle, and high school age groups. Self-management interventions can be used across ages starting in early childhood through high school to help learners with ASD acquire key skills related to interacting with others, initiating and maintaining conversations, developing self-help skills, and reducing

interfering behaviors (e.g., stereotypic, disruptive). Furthermore, child trends highlighted four essential self management skills - self-control, persistence, mastery orientation, and academic self-efficacy —that increase children's capacity to benefit from school and boost their academic outcomes, thereby putting them on a solid path out of poverty (Child Trends, 2012).

These self-management skills are important in both the short- and long-term. In some cases, the skill contributes to a childhood outcome that predicts later success. Teachers in schools have long recognized the importance of these skills, the extent to which they have been a focus of effort in the classroom varies. Research indicates that a significant minority of low-income children are not ready for school when they enter Kindergarten, lacking such skills as self-control, which poses challenges for educators and takes valuable time away from teaching (Child Trends, 2012).

Self control

Similarly, self-control is another socio-emotional competence which is sometimes called self-regulation. It refers to the ability to manage one's emotions and behaviors, inhibit negative responses and delay gratification (Bandy & Moore, 2010), in ways considered socially appropriate for any given situation. For children, this means being aware of their feelings and, when necessary, adjusting their responses and actions, in order to cope with varying circumstances. One aspect of self-control

that is particularly important for children's success in school, especially in the preschool and elementary school years, is impulse control.

Impulse control is the ability to manage one's desire for immediate gratification, control urges (yelling out in class, for example), and instead find socially acceptable ways to have one's needs and wants met (raising a hand and waiting to be called on). Children who can exercise impulse control are able to follow simple rules, accept not having a need/want met immediately, and use adult support to cope with not having those needs/wants met immediately. Research demonstrates that children with good impulse control get along better with others and have more social confidence. Conversely, poor self-control is associated with aggression, antisocial behavior and higher rates of juvenile delinquency. The ability to self- regulate is what enables children to stay on task during academic work and to persevere in the face of frustration. Its importance emerges early in children's education; Kindergarten children with greater self-control show faster gains in math and reading skills, which puts them on track for academic success. Cultural differences can alter what is considered socially acceptable, for example, whether children are expected to stay seated in a group setting. Therefore, part of helping children develop impulse control is teaching them about the expectations of different social situations. Self control is associated with higher scores and faster growth on assessments of math and reading; higher academic achievement in general; higher ratings of social competence and fewer behavior problems, as rated by teachers.

Persistence: Sometimes called "grit" or "stick-to-it-iveness," persistence is the capacity to maintain concentration on a task, question, set of directions or interactions, despite distractions and interruptions. Children who show persistence have the ability not only to stay focused on a task, but also to overcome setbacks and keep trying. They are able to perform a task or set of tasks with care and effort from start to finish.

In the past, researchers have often examined persistence as an end in itself, under the assumption that it is a good characteristic to have. More recently, however, they have begun to examine how it contributes to achievement. Persistence is associated with faster growth in reading from kindergarten through third grade, faster growth in both reading and math from kindergarten to fifth grade, less anxiety and less likely to blame others while trying to solve difficult problems.

Mastery Orientation: Children with a mastery orientation want to increase their competence and abilities while mastering new tasks over time. They demonstrate a desire to learn and are not afraid of new and challenging experiences. These children are not primarily motivated by external assessments or rewards, but rather value learning for its own sake. They typically view "failure" as a learning experience. The overall goal of mastery orientation is to increase knowledge (rather than simply "showcasing" that knowledge). Connected strongly with this orientation is the belief that intelligence is not fixed but can be nurtured and developed. The outcome includes

higher science grades, higher grades and achievement test scores at end of school year than children who believe intelligence is fixed.

Academic Self-Efficacy: An individual's sense of self-efficacy influences the level of effort they put forth in activities Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to accomplish a task and the understanding that actions one takes will influence this task's outcome. Academic self-efficacy— the belief in one's ability to perform an academic task—is particularly important for success in school. An individual's sense of self-efficacy influences the level of effort they put forth in activities. It is closely connected with persistence (described more below) and influences a child's perseverance when confronted with challenges and their resilience in the face of obstacles. Research finds that children's sense of self efficacy can differ across subjects and even across specific tasks within subjects. Children who have strong self-efficacy believe that they can successfully complete their work, based on their abilities and prior experience. Academic self-efficacy is associated with higher literacy/reading and math achievement, higher math and science achievement, higher homework completion and better classroom conduct, leading to higher grades.

Responsible Decision-making Competencies of Primary School Children

Decision-making competence is used every day by children and teachers. Most times children take the decisions on which toy(s) to play with, with whom to play with etc. To support this further decision-making competence means having capacity to

make a decision and competence is described as the ability to perform a task (Beauchamp & Childress, 2011). Competence is relative to decision, but is not a matter of degree; it is about reaching a level of understanding to make a decision. Weithorn and Campbell (2012) studied developmental differences regarding competence in making informed treatment decisions. One result was that children at the age of nine were able to participate in decision making concerning socio-emotional competencies.

The study used adults as the gold standard for competent decision making since adults are considered competent because of age. Alderson (2012) argues that the social context will contribute to children's ability to consent. Informed consent includes competence, voluntariness, information, recommendation, understanding, decision and authorization (Beauchamp & Childress 2011). Children have to have relevant information and subsequently have the right to participate in decision making, as well as assent to or dissent from treatment, assuming they are competent (Alderson & Montgomery 2009). Children are presumed competent from the age of five and their incompetence has to be proved rather than the child having to demonstrate competence (Alderson & Montgomery 2009). Halpern-Felsher and Cauffman (2001) studied differences between decision-making competence in adolescents and in adults and the results showed that adolescents did not consider risks and benefits associated with the decision as much as the adults did. However, Pretzlaff (2005) implies that, for example, motivation and the will to do good are

other characteristics for determining decision-making competence; age is not a suuficient parameter. Responsible decision-making becomes important as the everyday social interactions of pre-schoolers increase in frequency and complexity.

Young children must learn to solve social problems,   to analyse social situations, identify problems, set prosocial goals and determine effective ways to solve differences that arise within their peer group. Responsible decision-making increasingly includes the ability to make appropriate ethical decisions that consider and respect others and promote the well-being of the school and community. At the ages considered here, complying with classroom rules, resisting peer pressure and controlling aggression or other disruptive behavior also reflect such responsibility (Denham, 2006)

Furthermore, responsible decision making means to accurately identify and evaluate problems; make decisions based on ethical and social norms; consider context in decisions; contribute to well-being on school and community. Determining that a child has decision making capacity does not mean that the child's wishes are congruent with the attorney's; rather, an attorney should examine the child's decision making process. In exploring the child's decision making process the determination of capacity should be based upon the child's ability to understand the nature and consequence of his or her decision; retain information regarding the task long enough to make the decision; use or weigh the information as part of arriving at a decision; and communicate his or her decision in some way It should be noted that determining

a child's decision making capacity takes time. It is not something that can be done adequately (or fairly) in ten minutes, before a hearing in the hallway.

It is equally important to keep in mind that, although the following suggestions may take time, they will also allow the attorney to make an informed decision of the child's decision making capacity. The additional time spent with the child will also allow the attorney to better know his or her client, which will facilitate a better working relationship with the child; therefore allowing the attorney to better advocate for the child and increasing the likelihood of better outcomes in court.

Academic skills vs social-emotional skills

Social, Emotional and Academic Skills Are Interdependent

Although there has been much debate about the relative importance of academic versus social and emotional skills (Zigler et al., 2006), this is actually a false dichotomy; decades of research show that social, emotional and academic skills are inter connected. Social and emotional skills are associated with academic outcomes through multiple pathways that vary according to types of skills. Some researchers have distinguished between "work-related" and "interpersonal" skills (Cooper & Farran, 2008; McClelland, Acock, & Morrison, 2006).

Work-related skills include those that help students participate in and engage in school, such as listening and following directions, participating co operatively in groups, working independently, and engaging in mastery behaviours such as the

ability to plan, organise and complete tasks (Center on the Developing Child, 2011; McClelland et al., 2006). Interpersonal skills include aspects of self-regulation and social competence that are needed for compliance, cooperation, and positive, effective relationships. Students who struggle to understand their emotions and those of others, who have social skills deficits, or who have other interpersonal skill challenges may have more difficulty navigating the classroom environment and may perceive the classroom setting more negatively (Raver, Garner, & Smith-Donald, 2007).

These students may also frustrate peers (therefore losing opportunities to learn from them) and teachers (Ladd, Birch, & Buhs, 2009). Because teachers provide disruptive students with less positive feedback and instruction (Arnold, McWilliams, & Arnold, 2008), this creates a feedback loop in which dysregulated students receive less support and in turn grow to like school less and avoid school more often (Birch & Ladd, 2007). Both work-related and interpersonal skills can hinder a teacher's efforts to manage the classroom effectively, thereby affecting learning opportunities and outcomes (Raver et al., 2007). Because academic and SEL skills develop and operate together, efforts to promote them should be designed to promote both at the same time. Programs are beginning to emerge that embed the teaching of SEL skills into literacy, for example grounding SEL lessons in high-quality children's literature, civics and social studies lessons, and current events. As we describe later in this paper, these approaches encourage students to use both sets of skills simultaneously, and they also help to address tensions about devoting class time to SEL skills.

The current emphasis on children's academic preparedness continues to overshadow the importance of children's social and emotional development for school readiness (Raver & Zigler, 2007). Over the past 20 years, researches have demonstrated that children's emotional and social skills are linked to their early academic standing. Children with difficulties paying attention, following directions, getting along with others, and controlling negative emotions of anger and distress do less well in school (McClelland et al., 2010). For many children, academic achievement in their first few years of schooling appears to be built on a firm foundation of children's emotional and social skills (Ladd, Kochenderfer, & Coleman, 2007). Science has established a compelling link between social-emotional development and behavior and school success. Young children cannot learn to read if they have problems that distract them from educational activities, problems following directions, problems getting along with others and controlling negative emotions, and problems that interfere with relationships with peers, teachers, and parents.

Furthermore, research suggests several pathways through which adults' SEL skills positively influence students' skills, including modeling the use of these skills, managing stress and modulating emotional responses in order to respond to situations effectively, remaining aware in the present moment and intentional in working with students, creating positive interactions with students, using executive functioning skills like focusing and planning, and implementing SEL programs with fidelity and

quality. According to a theoretical model proposed by Jennings and Greenberg (2009), teachers' SEL skills establish a cyclical process or feedback loop that, when positive, results in better outcomes for all but, when negative, results in a teacher "burnout cascade." Jennings and Greenberg propose that teachers with stronger SEL skills (which they refer to as social and emotional competence) have more positive relationships with students, engage in more skilful and effective classroom management, and implement SEL curricula more effectively. These three factors contribute to a positive and healthy classroom climate, which contributes to positive student outcomes, which then feed back into teachers' social and emotional competence and relationships with students. In contrast, when teacher SEL skills are low, all phases of the cycle are more negative, resulting in teacher burnout and less effectiveness.

Like students, adults come into educational settings with varying degrees of SEL skills and need ongoing support in order to develop and effectively deploy those skills. Approaches to such support range from SEL program training that includes similar content for educators and students to stress management and self regulation programs specifically designed for educators. Examples of the latter include CARE (Jennings, Snowberg, Coccia, & Greenberg, 2011) both of which include mindfulness training and support to alleviate burnout. A randomized field trial of SMART found increases in teachers' mindfulness (including awareness and responding intentionally

instead of on "autopilot"), more positive feelings about their jobs and students, more forgiving attitudes, and increased efficacy for regulating emotions.

In addition to such programs, educators need ways to build their SEL skills in daily practice. This can be facilitated by organizational cultures that encourage ongoing discussion and reflection (e.g., about issues such as burnout and how to react calmly to student behavioral challenges), emphasize teacher growth, and acknowledge mistakes as part of the learning process. Providing opportunities for teachers to collaborate in developing these skills is important because collaboration and networking among teachers are associated with greater self-efficacy, implementation of reforms, and improvements in classroom practice and quality (Penuel & Riel, 2007).

Approaches to Strengthening Children's Socio-emotional Competencies

The prevalence of aggressive behavior problems in preschool and early school age children is about 10% and maybe as high as 25% for socio-economically disadvantaged children (Webster-Stratton, 2008). Evidence suggests that without early intervention, emotional, social, and behavioural problems (particularly, aggression and oppositional behaviour) in young children are key risk factors or "red flags" that mark the beginning of escalating academic problems, grade retention, school days, and antisocial behavior (Tremblay, Mass, Pagani & Vitaro, 2006). Preventing, reducing and halting aggressive behaviour at school entry, when children's behaviour

is most malleable, is a beneficial and cost-effective means of interrupting the progression from early conduct problems to later delinquency and academic failure.

Moreover, strengthening young children's capacity to manage their emotions and behaviour and to make meaningful friendships, particularly if they are exposed to multiple life-stressors may serve an important protective function for school success. Research has indicated that children's emotional, social, and behavioral adjustment is as important for school successes cognitive and academic preparedness (Raver & Zigler, 2007). Children who have difficulty paying attention, following teacher directions, getting along with others, and controlling negative emotions, do less well in school (Ladd, Kochenderfer & Coleman, 2007). They are more likely to be rejected by classmates and to get less positive feedback from teachers which, in turn, contributes to off task behaviour and less instruction time (Shores & Wehby, 2009).

Parent Education Programmes

How, then, do we assure that children who are struggling with a range of emotional and social problems receive the teaching and support they need to succeed in school? One way is to work with parents to provide them with positive parenting strategies that will build their preschool children's social competencies and academic readiness.

Research shows that children with lower emotional and social competencies are more frequently found in families where parents express more hostile parenting,

engage in more conflict, and give more attention to children's negative than positive behaviours (Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 2009). Children whose parents are emotionally positive and attend to pro social behaviour are more likely to be able to self-regulate and respond in non aggressive ways to conflict situations. Indeed, parent training programs have been the single most successful treatment approach to date for reducing externalizing behaviour problems (oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) and conduct disorder (CD) in young children. A variety of parenting programs have resulted in clinically significant and sustained reductions in externalizing behaviour problems for at least two-third of young children treated. The intervention goals of these programs are to reduce harsh and inconsistent parenting while promoting home-school relationships. These experimental studies provide support for social learning theories that highlight the crucial role that parenting style and discipline effectiveness play in determining children's social competence and reducing externalizing behaviour problems at home and in the classroom. More recently, efforts have been made to implement adaptations of these treatments for use as school-based pre-school and early school prevention programs. A review of the literature regarding these parenting prevention programs for early school age children indicates that this approach is very promising (Webster-Stratton & Taylor, 2001).While there is less available research with preschool children, the preliminary studies are also quite promising.

In our own work, we targeted all parents who enrolled in Head Start(children ages 3–5years). In 2 randomized trials of 500 parents, we reported that the Incredible Years parenting program was effective in strengthening parenting skills for a multi ethnic group of parents of pre-schoolers (Webster-Stratton, 2008). Externalizing behaviours were significantly reduced for children who were showing above average rates of these behaviours at baseline. Mothers with mental health risk factors, such as high depressive symptomatology, reported physical abuse as children, reported substance abuse, and high levels of anger were able to engage in the parenting program and to benefit from it at levels comparable to parents without these mental health risk factors. Similar results were obtained in an independent trial in Chicago with primarily African-American mothers who enrolled their toddlers in low-income day care centers (Gross, Fogg, Webster-Stratton, Garvey & Grady, 2003).

Child Social Skills and Problem-solving Training

A third approach to strengthening children's social and emotional competence is to directly train them in social, cognitive and emotional management skills such as friendly communication, problem-solving and anger management. The theory underlying this approach is the substantial body of research indicating that children with behaviour problems show social, cognitive and behavioural deficits (Coie & Dodge, 2008). Children's emotional dysregulation problems have been associated with distinct patterns of responding on a variety of psycho-physiological measures

compared to typically developing children (Beauchaine, 2001; McBurnett etal., 2003). There is also evidence that some of these bio-behavioral systems are responsive to environmental input (Raine, etal., 2001).

Moreover, children with a more difficult temperament (e.g, hyperactivity, impulsivity and in attention) are at higher risk for particular difficulties with conflict management, social skills, emotional regulation and making friends. Teaching social and emotional skills to young children who are at risk either because of biological and temperament factors or because of family disadvantage and stressful life factors can result in fewer aggressive responses, inclusion with prosocial, peer-groups and more academic success. Because development of these social skills is not automatic, particularly for these higher risk children, more explicit and intentional teaching is needed (Bredekamp & Copple, 2007). The pre-school and early school-age period would seem to be a strategic time to intervene directly with children and an optimal time to facilitate social-competence and reduce their aggressive behaviours before these behaviours and reputations develop into permanent patterns

This article describes a classroom-based prevention program designed to increase children's social and emotional competence, decrease problem behaviours and increase academic competence. The Incredible Years Dinosaur Social Skills and Problem-Solving Child Training Program first published in 1989 (Webster-Stratton,2000) was originally designed as a treatment program for children with diagnosed ODD/CD and has established efficacy with that population (Webster-

Stratton & Hammond, 2007; Webster-Stratton, Reid & Hammond, 2001b; Webster-Stratton etal., inpress). In 2 randomized control group studies,4–8-year-old children with externalizing behaviour problems (ODD/CD) who participated in a weekly, 2-hour, 20 to 22-week treatment program showed reductions in aggressive and disruptive behaviour according to independent observed interactions of these children with teachers and peers. These children also demonstrated increases in prosocial behaviour and positive conflict management skills, compared to an untreated control group (Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 2007; Webster-Stratton et al., inpress). These improvements in children's behaviour were maintained 1 and 2years later.

Moreover, treatment was effective not only for children with externalizing behaviour problems but also for children with comorbid hyperactivity, impulsivity and attentional difficulties (Webster-Stratton, Reid & Hammond, 2001b). Additionally, adding the child program to the Incredible Years parent program was shown to enhance long-term outcomes for children who are exhibiting pervasive behaviour problems across settings (home and school) by reducing behaviour problems in both settings and improving children's social interactions and conflict management skills with peers (Webster-Stratton & Hammond, 2007). Currently, we are undergoing an evaluation of the classroom-based prevention version of this program designed to strengthen social competence for all children.

HeadStart and kindergarten classrooms from low-income schools (defined as having 60% or more Children receiving free lunch) were randomly assigned to the intervention or usual school services conditions. Intervention consisted of 4 days of teacher training workshops (offered once per month) in which teachers were trained in the classroom management curriculum as well as in how to deliver the classroom version of the Dinosaur School Curriculum. Teachers also participated in weekly planning meetings to review lesson plans and individual behaviour plans for higher risk students. Teachers and research staff cotaught 30 to 34 lessons in each classroom (twice weekly) according to the methods and processes described below.

The integrity and fidelity of the intervention were assured by the ongoing mentoring and co-teaching with our trained leaders, weekly planning meetings and supervision, on-going live and video tape observations and review of actual lessons delivered, completion of standard integrity checklists by supervisors, and submission of unit protocols for every unit completed. Teachers and parents provided report data, and independent observations were conducted in the classroom at the beginning and end of the school year. Preliminary analysis with over 628 students suggests the program is promising. Independent observations of children in the classrooms show significant differences between control and intervention students on variables such as authority acceptance (e.g, compliance to teacher requests and cooperation), social contact and aggressive behaviour. Intervention classrooms had significantly greater

positive classroom atmosphere than did control classrooms and intervention students had significantly higher school readiness scores as measured by behaviors such as being focused and on-task during academic activities, complying during academic time and showing cognitive concentration (Webster-Stratton & Reid, inpress).

Moreover, individual testing of children's cognitive social problem-solving indicated that intervention children had significantly more prosocial responses in response to conflict situations than control children. In addition, teachers reported high levels of satisfaction with both the teacher training and the Dinosaur School classroom curriculum. Recently, the classroom-based intervention has been used by 2 other research teams in combination with the Incredible Years parent program and while the independent contribution of the child training program cannot be determined from their research designs, positive outcomes have been reported in regard to improvements in children's social and academic variables (August, Realmuto, Hektner & Bloomquist, 2001; Barreraetal., 2002).

Empirical Studies

Many researchers have carried out studies on the social-emotional competencies.

Social Awareness Competencies

A study conducted by Bius (2014) on the perspectives of primary educators on Early Childhood Education's impact and role of school readiness and the social awareness competencies on children in Bulgaria. This study examined the factors that

contribute to the construct of school readiness and the social awareness competencies of primary education from the perspectives of early childhood educators. A non-probability, purposive sample was used to select the sample. The sample consisted of 34 primary educators. Questionnaire was used as data collection tool. The arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions in the study while inferential statistics of linear regression was used to test the null hypotheses. The correlational survey research design was used in this study. The respondents were asked to indicate their conceptions of school readiness and its perceived impact on a continuum of academic and social awareness paradigms.

The findings indicate that in addition to the importance of preparing children for academic work, the study participants perceive the construct of school readiness to include an emphasis on the development of "the whole child." The impact of preschool education is perceived by the respondents to be a continually unfolding process of outcomes extending into adulthood. The findings also identified a further need to clearly define the goals and objectives of preschool education with a focus on retaining a conception of the preschool environment, with developmentally appropriate practices and instruction creating that structure for social awareness competencies among children. Statistically significant moderate correlations were noted [r (34) .456, p < .01] between the importance of social awareness competencies development as a contributor to life outcomes and the importance of appropriate expression of emotions for successful task management. Mean difference in score on

approach to preschool education between the two groups "traditional academic" and "whole child" was noticed. Recommendations from the study include the need for preschool curriculum to maintain an equitable balance between assessments oriented academic milestones and enriching social awareness development based activities.

This study has similarities to this present study in terms of social awareness of children from the perspective of early childhood educators. Another similarity lies in the area of instrument for data collection (questionnaire), and method of data analysis (mean and standard deviation). On the contrary, Bius' study covered school readiness of pre-school children which the present study failed to cover. Also, both studies differ in terms of research design, population, sample size and geographical location.

In another study Carolyn and Jamila (2014) carried out an investigation on Strengthening Social and Emotional Competence in Young Children—The Foundation for Early School Readiness and Success in Washington. The ability of young children to manage their emotions and behaviors and to make meaningful friendships is an important prerequisite for school readiness and academic success. Socially competent children are also more academically successful and poor social skills are a strong predictor of academic failure. This study describes The Incredible Years Dinosaur Social Skills and Problem Solving Child Training Program, which teaches skills such as emotional literacy, empathy or perspective taking, friendship and communication skills, anger management, interpersonal problem solving, and how to be successful at school.

A descriptive survey research method was used for the design. However, 120 randomly selected respondents which comprised of teachers and head of the twelve pre-schools selected in Washington. The selection of the school was by stratified random sampling and criteria for selection include size of the school and approval by government. The instrument tagged "Strengthening Social and Emotional Competence in Young Children Questionnaire"(SSECYCQ) was used to collect data for the study. Frequencies and percentages were used to answer the research questions of the study while ANOVA was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The program was first evaluated as a small group treatment program for young children who were diagnosed with oppositional defiant and conduct disorders. More recently the program has been adapted for use by pre-school and elementary teachers as a prevention curriculum designed to increase the social, emotional, and academic competence, and decrease problem behaviours of all children in the classroom. The content, methods, and teaching processes of this classroom curriculum are discussed.

Carolyn and Jamila's study is similar to the present study in eliciting social competencies (as one of socio-emotional competencies/skills) and also another similarity was on the basis that socially competent children are also more academically successful and poor social skills are a strong predictor of academic failure. On the contrary, Carolyn and Jamila's study covered other variables in their study which the present study did not cover. In furtherance, both studies differ in

terms of population size, respondents, method of data analysis. Also, Jamila's study was conducted in Washington while the present study was conducted in Anambra State, Nigeria.

In a study conducted by Krishnan (2011) on Teachers' Assessment of Preschoolers' Social and Emotional Competence: Does Sex of Children Matter in social awareness developmental outcome? This study used the Wave 1 (2009) Early Development Instrument (EDI) data of 7938 primary children in a Canadian province to examine gender-specific determinants of social awareness and emotional maturity. The sample size was reduced to 6500 after the following restrictions were applied to the data: only those children who were in class more than one month, had no special needs, and had scores missing in no more than one domain were included. Questionnaires with no parental consent were excluded prior to applying these restrictions by the Oxford Centre for Child Studies who did the initial cleaning of the data. The study includes five waves of data collection, the last being 2013. Therefore, Wave 1 data consisted of children who were disproportionately city dwellers (84 percent versus 16 percent). The correlationaal survey research design was used. Mean and standard deviation answered the research questions while the regression analysis was used to test the null hypotheses The teachers' assessment of children's behavior on developmental areas, such as physical health and wellbeing, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, anxiety and fearfulness,

communication skills, independence and attentiveness, and special skills were examined for both sexes, within a multivariate framework.

The findings of the study revealed that female primary school teachers scored pupils consistently lower in critical thinking skills to improve performance compared their male counterpart. This findings buttressed further that opinion of male and female primary school teachers varied significantly that higher rates of independent and attentiveness predicted higher rates of social awareness and emotional competence among boys and girls. Non parental care before entry into kindergarten was predictive of lower levels of social awareness and emotional development. It was recommended that educators need to be aware of the fact that children model their behaviour from their teachers as well as the differential nature of maturation, adaptive skills, and the coping mechanisms of boys and girls so that they can provide gender-specific strategies to minimize behavioral problems in children. A better understanding of children's socio-emotional well-being will help educators, parents, and policymakers in providing assistance and support to those in need so that children can overcome their developmental and academic challenges.

Similarities lie in both study in the area of social awareness competencies (as one of socio-emotional competencies/skills). Also, the respondents of both studies were similar because it cover primary school teachers. Contrarily, the present study did not cover the significant mean difference between performances of boys and girls

in children's behaviour on developmental areas. However, Krishnan's study was conducted in Canada which is different from where the present study was conducted in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Relationship skills/competencies of Primary School Pupils

This study was conducted by Brittany, Heather, Celene and Mark (2011) on "Examining the link between primary school relationship skills and their first grade academic achievement in the United States". Recently, research has begun to identify relationship skills as correlates of early academic achievement. Yet few studies have examined the mechanisms by which children's relationship skills are associated with later academic success. The survey research design was used. The data for the present study came from an economically disadvantaged sample of children (n= 341) in a public primary school program in an urban school district in the North-eastern United States across three years. The descriptive statistics used to answer research questions are the mean and standard deviation while chi-square goodness-of-fit test was used to test the hypotheses. The present study examines the associations between primary school pupils' emotion knowledge, kindergarten relationship skills, and first grade academic competence in a sample of mostly disadvantaged.

The findings of this study indicated that teachers perceive pupils' relationship skills when they start building trust among one other, engaging in active listening of peers

talking during class activities. It was recommended among others that proper support need to be given for the implementation of preventive curricula that focus on social and relationship development as well as attentional development as one strategy for improving future academic success in young children.

Similarity in both studies lies in the area of relationship skills/competencies of pre-school children but Brittany studied further on emotional knowledge and academic achievement of pre-school children. Also, both studies shared some part of literature review on relationship skills. Both studies were also similar in terms of research design and method of data analysis (mean and standard deviation). Contrarily, both studies differ in terms of population and sample size, respondents, and method of data analysis (chi-square). Also, this study was conducted in the United States while the present study was conducted in Anambra State, Nigeria.

Similarly, Nafiu (2011) carried out a study on comparison of personality and relationship skills adjustment of Islamic and secular primary school Pupils in Kano, Kano State Nigeria. The sample of the study was 400 (pupils) which were selected using systematic random sampling 200 secular and 200 Islamic nursery schools. The design this study adopted was descriptive research design. A structured questionnaire developed by the researcher was used for data collection. Mean and standard deviation answered the research questions and the z-test was used to test the null

hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. A pilot study was conducted using 2 schools that is secular and Islamic nursery school to test reliability of the instrument.

The finding of this study revealed that there is no statistical significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female primary school teachers on pupils' relationship skill adjustment= 1.01 < 1.960, df 258. Also, personality skill adjustment revealed $x2 = 0.568 < 3.84$, df = 2.58 df 380 secular and Islamic primary school pupils. Recommendations were made as follows; it is essential to expose pupils to Early Childhood Education to enhance relationship skills, religious and Academic Achievement. Academic achievement taught side by side with habit formation, relationship skills and attitude.

The study is similar to the present study in view of emphasizing on the ways relationship skills adjustment promotes students' Socio-emotional competencies in primary school. Both studies were also similar in research design and method of data analysis (mean and standard deviation). Contrarily, both studies differ in terms of population and sample size. Also, the respondents of this study were pupils while the respondents of the present study were primary school teachers. However, the study of Nafiu was conducted in Kano State while the present study was conducted in Anambra State.

Self Management of Primary School Pupils

In a study conducted by Yovanka and Adam (2009) on the effects of a creative dance and movement program on the self management of HeadStart Primary school children in USA. The effects of an eight-week instructional program in creative dance/movement on the self management competence of low-income primary school children were assessed in this study utilizing a scientifically rigorous design. 40 primary school children from a large Head Start program were randomly assigned to participate in either an experimental dance program or an attention control group. Teachers and parents, blind to the children's group membership, rated children's self management competencies both before and after the program, using English and Spanish versions of the Self management Competence Behaviour Evaluation: Primary school Edition. Teacher questionnaires were administered only in English because all teachers were fluent in English. Also, data were collected through telephone call. ANCOVA was used to test the initial group difference.

The findings revealed significantly greater positive gains over time in the children's self management competence and both internalizing and externalizing behavior problems for the experimental group compared with the control group. Small-group creative dance instruction for at-risk preschoolers appears to be an excellent mechanism for enhancing self management competencies and improving behavior. The implications for Early Childhood Education and intervention are discussed. It was recommended that teachers should ensure constant and effective

utilization of creative dance and movement program on social competence of primary school children in USA. The similarities in both studies lie in the specific objective as they both cover self management competencies of pre-schoolers. But this Yovanka and Adam's study went further to find the significant effect of a Creative Dance and Movement Program on the Social Competence of low income and high income background Preschoolers. However, the two studies differ in terms of design, population and sample and findings.

Responsible Decision-making competencies of Primary School Children

A study was conducted by Mary, Rosa and Michealene (2008) titled "Preparing Early Childhood Educators to Address Young Children's Social-Emotional Development and Challenging Behaviour" in Denmark. This article presents results from a survey of faculty members from 2- and 4-year higher education programs in nine states that prepare teachers to work with primary school children. The purpose of the study was to determine how professors address content related to decision making development and challenging behaviours, how well prepared they believe graduates are to address these issues and resources that might be useful to better prepare graduates to work with children with decision making and challenging behaviour. Of the 225 surveys that were mailed, 70% were returned. Faculty members reported their graduates were prepared on topics such as working with families, preventive practices and supporting social emotional development but less prepared to work with children with decision making challenge as well as challenging behaviours.

Survey findings revealed that there was no significant difference in the ratings of male and female graduates who work with children in addressing decision-making and challenging behaviour. Recommendations for personnel preparation and future research are discussed. This study is related to the present study as it elicit specifically decision making of primary school education of children. On the contrary, the study of Mary et al. collected data through mails while the present study collected data through a structured questionnaire.

Miles and Stipek, (2012) examined the importance of attending schools for decision making skills of pupils in early childhood (elementary school) in Holland. Contemporaneous and Longitudinal studies for assessing both decision making skills and literacy achievement of 400 pupils (boys and girls) in urban and rural as sample for collection of data and the assessment were conducted in these sequences; 1) Beginning of Early Childhood; 2) Primary level of education. Drafts of questionnaires were administered by class teachers to assess children's 1) solving problem skills; 2) respecting others decision of different pupils. The study employed a descriptive survey method and the teachers were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation and the t-test of independence were used to answer research questions and test the hypotheses respectively.

The findings revealed that children who were rated relatively aggressive in the early years were rated as relatively aggressive in the later years. Similarly, poor reading in early years also predicted poor reading in higher class (primary school). Likewise, relatively low literacy achievement predicted relatively high aggressive behaviour in later years and good skills were associated with good reading scores. It is recommended amongst others that teachers should promote social well-being of children and also make decisions based on ethical and social norms. However, Miles and Stipek concluded that decision making development and academic performance are inextricably connected. In relation, both studies attended to the importance of attending to primary school decision making skills as it has a correlate to aggressive behaviours of children at primary school.

Summary of Review of Related Literature

This study was aimed at determining teachers' perception of socio-emotional competencies among primary school pupils through ECE in Anambra State. It was discussed under the following sub-heading: conceptual framework, theoretical framework, theoretical studies and empirical studies. Literatures related to this study were reviewed which revealed that these socio-emotional competencies include; social awareness competencies, relationship competencies, self-management competencies and responsible decision-making.

The theoretical framework of this study hinged on Lev Vygotsky sociocultural theory. He also recognized that social interaction, like the environment and materials, provide impetus to learn. The sociocultural theory according to Vygotsky stated that all children be educated in group settings. Social interaction and discourse with peers have powerful effect on a child's development, and mixed age groups provide learners with additional resources beside the teacher and environment. Educational pioneers shared a belief that the child constructs knowledge through interactions with the physical and social environments. Also, Vygotsky finally stressed that educators should focus on the strengths and capabilities of children.

Theoretical and empirical studies of literature relevant to the present study were reviewed taking cognizance of the tenets of research. The literatures reviewed above were related to the present study. No researcher seems to have carried out a research on teachers' perception of socio-emotional competencies among primary school pupils through ECE. In other to cover this gap, the researcher deemed it necessary to carry out a research on teachers' perception of socio-emotional competencies among primary school pupils through ECE in Anambra State.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

This study was carried out through the adoption of a number of procedures that constitute the methodology. These procedures include design of the study, area of the study, population of the study, sample and sampling technique, instrument for data collection, validation of the instrument, reliability of the instrument, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

Design of the Study

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. According to Nworgu (2015), a descriptive survey design involves the collection of extensive data from the population for the purpose of describing and interpreting an existing situation under study using a questionnaire. In view of the foregoing, it is important to point out that the descriptive design has been found to be apt and useful in carrying out educational investigations. The design is considered appropriate for the study because the study aims at finding out the opinions of teachers regarding how early childhood education enhances the acquisition of socio-emotional competencies among primary school pupils in Anambra State.

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Anambra State. Anambra State is one of the states in South-East, Nigeria. Anambra State is made up of 21 Local Government Education

Authorities. Anambra State is bounded to the East by Enugu State, in the West by Delta State. The state also shares boundaries with Imo State to the South, Abia State to the South-East and Kogi State to the North. The predominant occupations of the people of the area are commercial and industrial activities. The people are also engaged in service occupations like barbing, teaching and entertainment, among others. The main language of the people is Igbo language. The choice of this area was informed by the large number of public primary schools in the State.

Anambra State is made up of one thousand and sixty (1060) public primary schools (source: Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board, 2018). The state has education as one of the greatest industries, hence this study will help to enhance the knowledge of teachers about pupils' acquisition of socio-emotional competencies.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised 10,369 public primary school teachers in the 21 Local Government Education Authorities, (LGEA) under the management of Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board. (Source: Anambra State Universal Basic Education Board (ASUBEB) 2018 statistics).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample size for this study was 630 primary school teachers. The sampling technique used in this research is the multi-stage sampling technique. Stage one, simple random sampling technique was used to draw ten (10) primary schools from

each of the 21 Local Government Education Authorities, making a total of two hundred and ten (210) schools. Stage two, simple random sampling technique was also used to select three (3) primary five teachers each from the two hundred and ten (210) primary schools. This gave a total of 630 (260 males; 370 females) primary five teachers.

Instrument for Data Collection

Data for the study was collected by means of questionnaire developed by the researcher. The instrument is titled "Questionnaire on Teachers' Perception of Socio-emotional Competencies among Primary School Pupils" (QTPSCPSP). The instrument has two sections, A and B. Section A contained information on personal data of the respondents while section B contained forty items built in four (4) clusters, A, B, C and D.

Cluster A of the questionnaire centred on teachers' perception of social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through ECE. Cluster B of the questionnaire addressed teachers' perception of relationship skill competencies among primary school pupils through ECE. Cluster C of the questionnaire hinged on teachers' perception of self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE. Finally, cluster D of the questionnaire centers on teachers' perception of responsible decision-making competencies among primary school pupils through ECE.

The response format for clusters A to D was based on a four point rating scale of Strongly Agreed (SA), Agreed (A), Disagreed (D), and Strongly Disagreed (SD) with values of 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively.

Validation of the Instrument

Face validity of the instrument was established using the opinions of three experts. Two experts from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and an expert on Measurement and Evaluation Unit in the Department of Educational Foundations all from the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. Draft copies of the questionnaire together with the research topic, purpose of the study, research questions and hypotheses were given to the three experts. They were requested to examine and scrutinize the items in terms of contents, relevance, suitability, and clarity of the dimensions of the study. They made suggestions such as reducing the number of hypotheses from 8 to 4 and introduction of leading statement in the questionnaire. The inputs of the experts were reflected on the final draft of the instrument.

Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was established using a pilot study of twenty (20) primary five school teachers in Oji- River Local Government Education Authority in Enugu State which is outside the study area but have similar features with the study area. Data collected were analyzed using Cronbach alpha to determine the internal

consistency of the instrument. The data obtained from the pilot study were subjected to statistical analysis using SPSS to determine the reliability of each of the four clusters of the instrument. The reliability co-efficient obtained for the clusters were B1=0.79, B2=0.77, B3=0.76 and B4=0.83 respectively. In summary, the overall reliability value of the instrument was 0.78 which indicates a high reliability coefficient of the instrument (See Appendix B, pg 122-124). This was considered high enough for the instrument to be reliable.

Method of Data Collection

The data was collected using a structured questionnaire developed by the researcher for the study. Six hundred and thirty (630) copies of the questionnaires were administered personally by the researcher and three research assistants who were briefed and guided on the modalities for the administration and collection of the questionnaire. These teachers helped in reaching their colleagues in the administration and collection of the questionnaire. The researcher visited some of the schools in person while the practicing teachers who serve as the research assistants were used for the remaining schools. A period of four weeks was used for the distribution and collection of the instrument. Out of the 630 copies of the questionnaire distributed, 554 copies were returned. This represent 92.3% return rate.

Method of Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used for data analysis. Arithmetic mean was used to analyze data related to the four (4) research questions posed and

standard deviation was used to determine the homogeneity or otherwise of the respondents' mean scores. The mean scores were interpreted using the real limit of numbers of the scale values as stated below:

Response	Rating Scale	Real Limit of Numbers
Strongly Agree	4	3.50 – 4.00
Agree	3	2.50 – 3.49
Disagree	2	1.50 – 2.49
Strongly Disagree	1	0.50 – 1.49

Inferential statistics of t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. In testing the null hypotheses, when p-value is less than or equal to 0.05 alpha level ($P \leq 0.05$), the null hypothesis was rejected otherwise, the null hypothesis was not rejected. The analysis was done with the application of a computer software programme: Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

In this chapter, the data collected from the field for this study were analyzed and the summaries were presented in tables to highlight the findings. The presentation was sequentially done starting with the answers to the research questions and then testing of the hypotheses.

Research Question 1: What is the perception of primary five teachers on social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through ECE?

Table 1: Respondents' mean and standard deviation scores of teachers' perception of social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

S/N	Teachers perceive social awareness competence of primary school pupils through:	N	Mean	SD	Remark
1	Pupils understanding their strengths and weaknesses	554	3.22	1.01	Agree
2	Pupils recognising errors in schoolwork and make changes	554	3.18	.66	Agree
3	Pupils understanding and talking about their feelings	554	2.39	.95	Disagree
4	Pupils recognising other people's needs and feelings	554	2.38	.66	Disagree
5	Pupils having an awareness of how their behaviour impacts others	554	3.15	.84	Agree
6	Pupils identifying what they must learn in order to complete a task successfully	554	3.11	.71	Agree
7	Pupils using their thinking skills to improve their performance	554	3.42	.82	Agree
8	Pupils showing their ability to adjust to new situations	554	3.26	1.13	Agree

Data in Table 1 shows the item by item mean score of primary school teachers'
perception of social awareness competencies among primary school pupils. The
results indicated that item 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, and 8 with mean scores of 3.22, 3.18, 3.15,
3.11, 3.42, and 3.26 respectively were responded agreed, while the remaining items 3
and 4 with mean scores of 2.39 and 2.38 shows disagreed. Primary school teachers'
perception on social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through
ECE agreed to the item on social awareness as regards understanding their strengths
and weaknesses, recognising errors in schoolwork and make changes, having an
awareness of how their behaviour impacts others, identifying what they must learn in
order to complete a task successfully, using their thinking skills to improve their
performance and showing their ability to adjust to new situations. However, primary
school teachers' perception on social awareness competencies among primary school
pupils through ECE disagreed with the item on social awareness as regards pupils'
understanding and talking about their feelings and recognising other people's needs
and feelings. The standard deviation scores ranged from 0.66 − 1.13, means that the
difference between the standard deviation scores were not much, therefore this shows
that the items are homogeneous.

Research Question 2: What is the perception of primary five teachers on relationship skill competencies among primary school pupils through ECE?

Table 2: Respondents' mean and standard deviation scores of teachers' perception of relationship skill competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

S/N	Teachers perceive relationship skill competence of primary school pupils through:	N	Mean	SD	Remark
9	Pupils shaping their classroom behaviour and emotional knowledge	554	2.21	1.03	Disagree
10	Pupils exhibiting higher engagement in classroom activities	554	3.14	.83	Agree
11	Pupils respecting the rights of others	554	3.45	1.11	Agree
12	Pupils seeking comfort and security from significant adults	554	3.18	.91	Agree
13	Pupils developing friendship	554	3.77	.59	Strongly Agree
14	Pupils using courteous words and actions	554	3.15	.81	Agree
15	Pupils using thinking skills to resolve conflicts	554	3.25	.88	Agree
16	Pupils addressing others' needs through negotiation	554	1.26	1.05	Strongly Disagree
17	Pupils using effective communication and listening skills	554	2.30	.91	Disagree
18	Pupils offering help and resources to others	554	3.02	.83	Agree

Data presented in Table 2 reveal item by item mean scores of primary school teachers' perception of relationship skill competencies among primary school pupils through ECE. Result shows that item 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, and 18 with mean scores of 3.14, 3.45, 3.18, 3.15, 3.25, and 3.02 were responded agreed. Also, item 9 and 17 with

mean scores of 2.21 and 2.30 showed disagreed. However, item 13 and 16 with mean scores of 3.77 and 1.26 were responded Strongly Agreed and Strongly Disagreed respectively. Primary school teachers' perception on relationship skills/competencies among primary school pupils through ECE agreed that relationship skill competencies exhibit higher engagement in classroom activities, respect the rights of others, seek comfort and security from significant adults, develop friendship, use courteous words and actions, use thinking skills to resolve conflicts and offer help and resources to others. However, primary school teachers' perception on relationship skill competencies among primary school pupils through ECE disagreed that relationship skill competencies shape pupils' classroom behaviour and emotional knowledge, address others' needs through negotiation and use effective communication and listening skills. The standard deviation scores of all items in the cluster are within the same range of 0.59 – 1.11. This shows that the respondents were homogeneous in their responses.

Research Question 3: What is the perception of primary five teachers on self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE?

Table 3: Respondents' mean and standard deviation scores of teachers' perception of self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

S/N	Teachers perceive self management competence of primary school pupils through:	N	Mean	SD	Remark
19	Pupils gaining more control on behavioural management such as self acceptance, independence	554	3.44	.56	Agree
20	Pupils exhibiting skills of controlling temper in conflict situations	554	2.37	.94	Disagree
21	Pupils exhibiting skills of listening to instructions or others' opinion	554	3.33	.59	Agree
22	Pupils acquiring and developing self-help skills	554	3.04	.82	Agree
23	Pupils exhibiting skills of initiating and maintaining conversation	554	3.53	.49	Agree
24	Pupils acquiring and developing self control skills	554	3.16	.77	Agree
25	Pupils inhibiting negative responses and social gratification	554	3.11	.79	Agree
26	Pupils staying on task during academic work and to persevere in the face of frustration	554	3.22	.66	Agree

Data presented in Table 3 shows item by item mean scores of primary school teachers' perception of self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE. Result shows that item 19, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, and 26 with mean scores of 3.44, 3.33, 3.04, 3.53, 3.16, 3.11 and 3.22 were agreed. Also, item 20 with mean score of 2.37 disagreed with the response. Primary school teachers' perception on self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE agreed to some

items as regards self management that pupils gain more control on behavioural management such as self acceptance and independence, exhibit skills of listening to instructions or others' opinion, acquire and develop self-help skills, exhibit skills of initiating and maintaining conversation, acquire and develop self control skills, inhibit negative responses and social gratification and staying on task during academic work and to persevere in the face of frustration. However, primary school teachers' perception on self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE disagreed with pupils exhibiting skills of controlling temper in conflict situations. The standard deviation scores ranging from 0.59 – 0.94 shows that the respondents' scores of the items cluster around the mean value means that the items are homogenous.

Research Question 4: What is the perception of primary five teachers on responsible decision-making competencies among primary school pupils through ECE?

Table 4: Respondents' mean and standard deviation scores of teachers' perception of responsible decision-making competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

S/N	Teachers perceive self management competence of primary school pupils through:	N	Mean	SD	Remark
27	Pupils solving social problems	554	3.05	.85	Agree
28	Pupils respecting others' decision	554	3.11	.68	Agree
29	Pupils promoting their social well-being as well as that of others	554	3.13	.66	Agree
30	Pupils making decisions based on ethical and social norms	554	3.30	.55	Agree
31	Pupils retaining an information regarding a task long enough to make decision	554	3.01	.89	Agree
32	Pupils weighing the information as part of arriving at a decision	554	2.44	.99	Disagree
33	Pupils communicating his/her decision in some way	554	3.27	.59	Agree

Data presented in Table 4 reveals item by item mean scores of primary school teachers' perception of decision-making skills/competencies through ECE. Result shows that item 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 33 with mean scores of 3.05, 3.11, 3.13, 3.30, 3.01, and 3.27 were agreed. Only item 32 with mean score 3.94 were disagreed on. Primary school teachers' perception on responsible decision-making skills/competencies among primary school pupils through ECE agreed that it help pupils in solving social problems, respecting others' decision, promoting their social well-being as well as that of others, making decisions based on ethical and social

norms, retaining an information regarding a task long enough to make decision and communicating his decision in some way. However, primary school teachers' perception on responsible decision-making among primary school pupils through ECE disagreed with pupils weighing the information as part of arriving at a decision. The standard deviation ranging from 0.55 – 0.99 is an indication that the individual score from the responses are not widely dispersed.

Hypothesis 1

Primary five male teachers' perception on social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through ECE does not significantly differ to their female teacher counterpart.

The null hypothesis was analyzed and the results presented in Table 5.

Table 5: The t-test summary of the difference between the mean scores of male and female primary five teachers' perception on social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

Sources of Variation	Gender	N	X	SD	Df	p-value	Alpha level	Decision
	Male	250	30.87	2.64				
Pupils' social awareness competencies					552	0.91	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	304	30.8	3.29				

The result of data in Table 5 shows p-value of 0.91 with 552 degree of freedom and alpha level of 0.05. Since the p-value of 0.91 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05,

the null hypothesis showed no significant difference in mean sores of male and female primary school teachers' perception on social awareness competencies among primary school pupils. Therefore the hypothesis is not rejected. Thus, primary five male teachers' perception on social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through ECE did not significantly differ to their female teacher counterpart.

Hypothesis 2

Primary five male teachers' perception on relationship skill competencies among primary school pupils through ECE does not significantly differ to their female teacher counterpart.

The null hypothesis was analyzed and the results presented in Table 6.

Table 6: The t-test summary of the difference between the mean scores of male and female primary five teachers' perception on relationship skills competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

Sources of Variation	Gender	N	X	SD	Df	p-value	Alpha level	Decision
	Male	250	37.23	4.98				
Pupils' relationship skills competencies					552	0.99	0.05	Not Significant
	Female	304	38.23	6.16				

The result of data in Table 6 shows p-value of 0.99 with 552 degree of freedom and a p-value of 0.05. Since the p-value of 0.99 is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in mean ratings of male and female

primary school teachers' perception on relationship skills competencies among primary school pupils through ECE is not rejected. Thus, there is no significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female primary five teachers' perception on relationship skills/competencies among primary school pupils through ECE.

Hypothesis 3

Primary five male teachers' perception on self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE does not significantly differ to their female teacher counterpart.

The null hypothesis was analyzed and the results presented in Table 7.

Table 7: The t-test summary of the difference between the mean scores of male and female primary five teachers' perception on self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

Sources of Variation	Gender	N	X	SD	Df	p-value	Alpha level	Decision
	Male	250	31	5.51				
Pupils' self management competencies					552	0.01	0.05	Significant
	Female	304	29.35	3.66				

The result of data in Table 7 shows p-value of 0.01 with 552 degree of freedom and alpha level of 0.05. Since the p-value of 0.01 is less than the alpha level of 0.05, the null hypothesis of no significant difference in mean scores of male and female primary school teachers' perception on self management competencies among

primary school pupils is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the mean scores of male and female primary five teachers' perception on self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE.

Hypothesis 4

Primary five male teachers' perception on responsible decision-making competencies among primary school pupils through ECE does not significantly differ to their female teacher counterpart.

The null hypothesis was analyzed and the results presented in Table 8.

Table 8: The t-test summary of the difference between the mean scores of male and female primary school teachers' perception on responsible decision-making skills/competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

Sources of Variation	Gender	N	X	SD	Df	p-value	Alpha level	Remark
	Male	250	27.48	3.11				
Pupils' responsible decision-making competencies					552	0.01	0.05	Significant
	Female	304	27.52	2.91				

The result of data in Table 8 shows p-value of 0.01 with 552 degree of freedom and a p-value of 0.05. Since the p-value of 0.01 is less than the alpha value of 0.05, the null hypothesis showed no significant difference in mean scores of male and female primary five teachers' perception on responsible decision-making competencies

among primary school pupils is rejected. Thus, there is a significant difference in the mean scores of male and female primary school teachers' perception on responsible decision-making competencies among primary school pupils through ECE.

Summary of Findings

From the analysis of data presented, the following findings were made:

1. Primary school teachers' perception on social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through ECE agreed with understanding their strengths and weaknesses, recognising errors in schoolwork and make changes, having an awareness of how their behaviour impacts others, identifying what they must learn in order to complete a task successfully, using their thinking skills to improve their performance and showing their ability to adjust to new situations.

2. Primary five teachers' perception on relationship skills/competencies among primary school pupils through ECE agreed with exhibiting higher engagement in classroom activities, respecting the rights of others, seeking comfort and security from significant adults, developing friendship, using courteous words and actions, using thinking skills to resolve conflicts and offering help and resources to others.

3. Primary five school teachers' perception on self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE agreed with gaining more control on behavioural management such as self acceptance and independence,

exhibiting skills of listening to instructions or others' opinion, acquiring and developing self-help skills, exhibiting skills of initiating and maintaining conversation, acquiring and developing self control skills, inhibiting negative responses and social gratification and staying on task during academic work and to persevere in the face of frustration.

4. Primary five school teachers' perception on responsible decision-making competencies among primary school pupils through ECE agreed with solving social problems, respecting others' decision, promoting their social well-being as well as that of others, making decisions based on ethical and social norms, retaining an information regarding a task long enough to make decision and communicating his decision in some way.

5. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female primary five teachers' perception on social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through ECE.

6. There is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female primary five teachers' perception on relationship skill competencies among primary school pupils through ECE.

7. There is a significant difference in the mean scores of male and female primary five teachers' perception on self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE.

8. There is a significant difference in the mean scores of male and female primary five teachers' perception on responsible decision-making competencies among primary school pupils through ECE.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter discusses the findings of the study, draws conclusions, implications, limitations of the study, and makes recommendations and suggestions for further studies.

Discussions of Findings

Findings of the study were discussed as follows:

Primary five teachers' perception on social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

The findings on Table 1 showed that primary school teachers' perception on social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through ECE agreed with understanding their strengths and weaknesses, recognising errors in schoolwork and make changes, having an awareness of how their behaviour impacts others, identifying what they must learn in order to complete a task successfully, using their thinking skills to improve their performance and showing their ability to adjust to new situations. This finding is supported by Bius (2014) who revealed that there is a need to clearly define the goals and objectives of preschool education with a focus on retaining a conception of the preschool environment, creating structure for self awareness competencies among children. From the findings, the researcher notes that

ECE has been an advantage to pupils' self awareness competencies except that pupils do not recognize other people's needs and feelings.

The result analysis in Table 5 which indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female primary five teachers' perception on social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through ECE. This finding disagreed with Krishnan (2011) who revealed that female primary school teachers scored pupils consistently lower in critical thinking skills to improve performance compared their male counterpart. Krishnan further buttressed that opinion of male and female primary school teachers varied significantly that higher rates of independent and attentiveness predicted higher rates of self awareness and emotional competence among boys and girls. This variation in teachers' rating could be as a result of teachers' perception about self awareness competencies possessed by different pupils.

Primary five teachers' perception on relationship skill competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

The finding on Table 2 revealed that primary five teachers' perception on relationship skills/competencies among primary school pupils through ECE agreed on exhibiting higher engagement in classroom activities, respecting the rights of others, seeking comfort and security from significant adults, developing friendship, using courteous words and actions, using thinking skills to resolve conflicts and offering help and resources to others.

This findings was in accordance with the findings of Brittany, Celene and Mark (2011) who contends that teachers perceive pupils' relationship skills when they start building trust among one other, engaging in active listening of peers talking during class activities. From these findings, it is indicated that teachers' perception on relationship skills competencies exerted by pupils are more effective through ECE.

However, the result analysis in Table 6 indicated that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of male and female primary five teachers' perception on relationship skill competencies among primary school pupils through ECE. This finding conforms to the finding of Nafiu (2011) who revealed there is no statistical significant difference in the mean ratings of male and female primary school teachers on pupils' relationship skill adjustment. This indicates that male and female primary five teachers did not differ in their ratings concerning the effectiveness of ECE in enhancing relationship skills competencies among primary school children.

Primary five teachers' perception on self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

The finding of Table 3 revealed that primary five school teachers' perception on self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE agreed with gaining more control on behavioural management such as self acceptance and independence, exhibiting skills of listening to instructions or others' opinion, acquiring and developing self-help skills, exhibiting skills of initiating and maintaining conversation, acquiring and developing self control skills, inhibiting

negative responses and social gratification and staying on task during academic work and to persevere in the face of frustration. This finding was in line with the findings of Yovanka and Adam (2009) who revealed significantly greater positive gains over time in the children's self management competence and both internalizing and externalizing behaviour problems for the experimental group compared with the control group. Small-group creative dance instruction for at-risk preschoolers appears to be an excellent mechanism for enhancing self management competencies and improving behaviour. Teachers' ratings on self management skills of pupils reveal how they agree to the effectiveness of ECE in enhancing self management skills except that pupils could not control their temper during conflict situations.

However, result analysis in Table 7 indicated that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of male and female primary five teachers' perception on self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE. This supported the study of Yovanka and Adam (2009) who revealed that there was a significantly greater positive gains over time in the children's self management competencies.

Primary five teachers' perception on responsible decision-making competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

The finding in Table 4 showed that primary five school teachers' perception on responsible decision-making competencies among primary school pupils through ECE agreed on solving social problems, respecting others' decision, promoting their social

well-being as well as that of others, making decisions based on ethical and social norms, retaining an information regarding a task long enough to make decision and communicating his decision in some way. This findings is in agreement with Miles and Stipek (2012) who revealed that children who were rated relatively aggressive as a result of poor exposure to responsible decision-making in the early years were rated as relatively aggressive in the later years. Similarly, poor reading in early years also predicted poor reading in higher class.

Results in Table 8 showed that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of male and female primary five teachers' perception on responsible decision-making competencies among primary school pupils through ECE. This finding is in line with the study of Mary, Rosa and Michealene (2008) who revealed that there was no significant difference in the ratings of male and female graduates who work with children in addressing decision-making and challenging behaviour of pupils.

Conclusion

The aim of the study was to find teachers' perception on socio-emotional competencies among primary school pupils through ECE. Based on the result of the study, it was concluded that primary school teachers perceive that some items on social awareness competencies, relationship skill competencies, self management competencies, and responsible decision-making competencies were agreed on.

Implications of the Study

Based on the findings of the study, the following implications of the study were noted:

The findings of this study provided empirical evidence that primary school teachers in Anambra State perceive that social awareness competencies, relationship competencies, self management competencies and responsible decision-making competencies among primary school pupils are agreed on through ECE. This implies that ECE is effective in enhancing some socio-emotional competencies among pupils in primary schools. However, to further promote socio-emotional competencies among primary school pupils, the implication is that schools should make adequate efforts to emphasize the acquisition of socio—emotional skills in children by providing and promoting activities that encourages relationships.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Since Early Childhood Education enhances social awareness competencies, ECE should be encouraged by the Anambra State Ministry of Education and the importance of social awareness competencies should be emphasized.

2. Teachers should intentionally shape children's peer relations in their primary classrooms through increasing their attainment to peer group affiliations,

using classroom management strategies that foster intended classroom norms.

3. Teachers should give children simple responsibilities such as class monitor, chalk keeper, provision of list of classroom sweepers to enable them organize and manage themselves as they perform these responsibilities.

4. The State government and the primary school administrators should organize sensitization and seminar programmes for primary school teachers on the need to promote responsible decision-making competencies among pupils. This will help the teachers to learn methods of encouraging pupils to develop responsible decision-making competencies.

Limitations of the Study

As with the survey research, there were some limitations to the study. The study relied on the response of teachers who might have different experiences and attitude towards ECE enhancing the acquisition of socio-emotional competencies among primary school pupils which might have influenced their responses. However, within the whims of this study as interpreted statistically, the findings are valid.

Suggestions for Further Study

The researcher suggests the following area for further study:

1. Effectiveness of Early Childhood Education in preparing preschool children in their socio-emotional competencies could be replicated in other states of the federation.

2. Promoting academic and social-emotional school readiness among primary school pupils could also be investigated.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE ON TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF SOCIO-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCIES AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS (QTPSECPSP)

Section A: Personal Data of the Respondents

Instruction: Please provide the following information by ticking (√) in the appropriate box as it appears to you

1. Sex: Male ( )   Female ( )

Section B

Instruction: As a primary five teacher, please tick (√) in the column for all items in section B1 – B4 on your perception of socio-emotional competencies among primary school pupils through Early Childhood Education using the key codes:

Strongly Agree   SA

 Agree   A

 Disagree   D

Strongly Disagree   SD

Section B1: Teachers' perception of social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

S/N	Teachers perceive social awareness competencies among primary school pupils through:	SA	A	D	SD
1	Pupils understanding their strengths and weaknesses				

2	Pupils recognising errors in schoolwork and making changes				
3	Pupils understanding and talking about their feelings				
4	Pupils recognising other people's needs and feelings				
5	Pupils having an awareness of how their behaviour impacts others				
6	Pupils identifying what they must learn in order to complete a task successfully				
7	Pupils using their thinking skills to improve their performance				
8	Pupils showing their ability to adjust to new situations				

Section B2: Teachers' perception of relationship skill competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

S/N	Teachers perceive relationship skill competencies among primary school pupils through:	SA	A	D	SD
9	Pupils shaping their classroom behaviour and emotional knowledge				
10	Pupils exhibiting higher engagement in classroom activities				
11	Pupils respecting the rights of others				
12	Pupils seeking comfort and security from significant adults				
13	Pupils developing friendship				
14	Pupils using courteous words and actions				
15	Pupils using thinking skills to resolve conflicts				

16	Pupils addressing others' needs through negotiation				
17	Pupils using effective communication and listening skills				
18	Pupils offering help and resources to others				

Section B3: Teachers' perception of self management competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

S/N	Teachers perceive self management competencies among primary school pupils through:	SA	A	D	SD
19	Pupils gaining more control on behavioural management such as self acceptance, independence				
20	Pupils exhibiting skills of controlling temper in conflict situations				
21	Pupils exhibiting skills of listening to instructions or others' opinion				
22	Pupils acquiring and developing self-help skills				
23	Pupils exhibiting skills of initiating and maintaining conversation				
24	Pupils acquiring and developing self control skills				
25	Pupils inhibiting negative responses and social gratification				
26	Pupils staying on task during academic work and to persevere in the face of frustration				

Section B4: Teachers' perception of responsible decision-making competencies among primary school pupils through ECE

S/N	Teachers perceive self management competence among primary school pupils through:	SA	A	D	SD
27	Pupils solving social problems				

28	Pupils respecting others' decision				
29	Pupils promoting their social well-being as well as that of others				
30	Pupils making decisions based on ethical and social norms				
31	Pupils retaining an information regarding a task long enough to make decision				
32	Pupils weighing the information as part of arriving at a decision				
33	Pupils communicating his/her decision in some way				

APPENDIX B

CALCULATION OF RELIABILITY USING CRONBACH ALPHA BY SPSS

SECTION B1: Reliability

Scale: Social Awareness Competencies

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.847	8

SECTION B2: Reliability

Scale: Relationship Competencies

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.770	10

SECTION B3: Reliability

Scale: Self Management Competencies

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.762	8

SECTION B4: Reliability

Scale: Responsible decision-making Competencies/skills

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items

.850	7

Reliability

Scale: Overall Reliability

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	20	100.0
	Excluded[a]	0	.0
	Total	20	100.0

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.79	33

DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS

USING SPSS VERSION 23

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
understanding their strengths and weaknesses	554	1.00	4.00	3.2200	1.01881
recognising errors in schoolwork and makes edits/changes	554	3.00	4.00	3.1800	.66636
understanding and talking about their feelings	554	1.00	4.00	3.7900	.95658
recognising other people's needs and feelings	554	2.00	4.00	2.9800	.66636
having an awareness of how their behaviour impacts others	554	2.00	4.00	2.8500	.84537
identifying what they must learn in order to complete a task successfully	554	3.00	4.00	3.1100	.71038
using their thinking skills to improve their performance	554	2.00	4.00	3.4200	.82487
showing their ability to adjust to new situations	554	1.00	4.00	3.2600	1.13262
shaping their classroom behaviour and emotional knowledge	554	1.00	4.00	2.8100	1.03177
Exhibiting higher engagement in classroom activities	554	1.00	4.00	3.1400	.83750
respecting the rights of others	554	1.00	4.00	3.1800	1.09521

seeking comfort and security from significant adults	554	1.00	4.00	3.1800	.90543
developing friendship	554	1.00	4.00	3.7700	.90849
using courteous words and actions	554	1.00	4.00	3.1500	3.80689
using thinking skills to resolve conflicts	554	2.00	4.00	3.2500	.88048
addressing others' needs through negotiation	554	1.00	4.00	1.8600	.85304
Using effective communication and listening skills	554	1.00	4.00	1.8000	.91010
offering help and resources to others	554	1.00	4.00	2.8200	.83339
Helping them to gain more control on behavioural management such as self acceptance, independence	554	1.00	4.00	3.4400	1.11482
Exhibing skills of controlling temper in conflict situations	554	2.00	4.00	2.8700	2.13511
Exhibing skills of listening to instructions or others' opinion	554	1.00	4.00	3.3300	.88597
Acquiring and developing self-help skills	554	2.00	4.00	3.0400	.73195
Exhibiting skills of initiating and maintaining conversation	554	2.00	4.00	3.5300	.82211
Acquiring and developing self control skills	554	1.00	4.00	3.1600	.86713
Inhibiting negative responses and social gratification	554	1.00	4.00	3.1100	.97499
Staying on task during academic work and to persevere in the face of frustration	554	1.00	4.00	3.2200	.79035
Solving social problems	554	1.00	4.00	3.0500	.98857

Respecting others' decision	554	3.00	4.00	3.1100	.58422
Promoting their social well-being as well as that of others	554	1.00	4.00	3.1300	.89052
Making decisions based on ethical and social norms	554	1.00	4.00	3.3000	.74536
Retaining an information regarding a task long enough to make decision	554	1.00	4.00	3.0100	.89324
Weighing the information as part of arriving at a decision	554	1.00	4.00	2.9400	.82658
Communicating his/her decision in some way	554	1.00	4.00	3.2700	1.08110
Valid N (listwise)	554				

Cluster by Cluster Analysis of Mean and Standard Deviation

Cluster One: Enhancing the Acquisition of Social Awareness Competencies through ECE

Statistics

		understanding their strengths and weaknesses	recognising errors in schoolwork and makes edits/changes	understanding and talking about their feelings	recognising other people's needs and feelings	having an awareness of how their behaviour impacts others	identifying what they must learn in order to complete a task successfully	using their thinking skills to improve their performance
N	Valid	554	554	554	554	554	554	554
	Missing	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Mean		3.2200	3.1800	2.7900	2.9800	2.8500	3.1100	3.4200
Std. Deviation		1.01881	.66636	.95658	.66636	.84537	.71038	.82487
Minimum		1.00	3.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	3.00	2.00
Maximum		4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

Cluster Two: Enhancing the acquisition of relationship skills/competencies through ECE.

Statistics

	shaping their classroom behaviour and emotional knowledge	Exhibiting higher engagement in classroom activities	respecting the rights of others	seeking comfort and security from significant adults	developing friendship	using courteous words and actions	using thinking skills to resolve conflicts	addressing others' needs through negotiation	Using effective communication and listening skills	offering help and resources to others
N Valid	554	554	554	554	554	554	554	554	554	554
Missing	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Mean	2.8100	3.1400	3.4500	3.1800	3.7700	3.1500	3.250	1.8600	2.8000	2.8200
Std. Deviation	1.03177	.83750	1.09521	.90543	.90849	3.80689	.88048	.85304	.91010	.83339
Minimum	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

Cluster Three: Enhancing the acquisition of self management competencies through ECE.

Statistics

	Helping them to gain more control on behavioural management such as self acceptance, independence	Exhibing skills of controlling temper in conflict situations	Exhibing skills of listening to instructions or others' opinion	Acquiring and developing self-help skills	Exhibiting skills of initiating and maintaining conversation	Acquiring and developing self control skills	Inhibiting negative responses and social gratification	Staying on task during academic work and to persevere in the face of frustration
N Valid	554	554	554	554	554	554	554	554
Missing	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Mean	3.4400	2.8700	3.3300	3.0400	3.5300	3.1600	3.1100	3.2200
Std. Deviation	1.11482	2.13511	.88597	.73195	.82211	.86713	.97499	.79035
Minimum	1.00	2.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

Cluster Four: Enhancing the acquisition of responsible decision making skills through ECE.

Statistics

	Solving social problems	Respecting others' decision	Promoting their social well-being as well as that of others	Making decisions based on ethical and social norms	Retaining an information regarding a task long enough to make decision	Weighing the information as part of arriving at a decision	Communicating his/her decision in some way
N Valid	554	554	554	554	554	554	554
Missing	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Mean	3.0500	3.1100	3.1300	3.3000	3.0100	2.9400	3.2700
Std. Deviation	.98857	.58422	.89052	.74536	.89324	.82658	1.08110
Minimum	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Maximum	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00

Hypotheses Testing

Cluster one: There is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female primary school teachers on how ECE enhances social awareness competencies in primary school children.

```
T-TEST GROUPS=Gender(1 2)
  /MISSING=ANALYSIS
  /VARIABLES=ECE_enhancing_social_awareness_competencies
  /CRITERIA=CI(.95).
```

Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ECE_enhancing_social_awareness_competencies	Male	250	30.8710	2.64250	.47461
	female	304	30.7971	3.29250	.39637

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Upper
ECE_enhancing_social_awareness_competencies	Equal variances assumed	.585	.446	.110	551	.913	.07387	.67201	-1.25971	1.40745
	Equal variances not assumed			.119	471.169	.905	.07387	.61835	-1.15905	1.30678

Cluster Two: There is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female primary school teachers on how ECE enhances relationship skills competencies in primary school children.

```
SAVE OUTFILE='C:\Users\DELL\Documents\amie analysis.sav'
  /COMPRESSED.
T-TEST GROUPS=Gender(1 2)
  /MISSING=ANALYSIS
  /VARIABLES=ECE_enhancing_relationship_skills_competencies
  /CRITERIA=CI(.95).
```

Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ECE_enhancing_relationshi p_skills_competencies	Male	250	37.2258	4.97802	.89408
	female	304	38.2319	6.16237	.74186

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
ECE_enhancing_relationship_skills_co mpetencies	Equal variances assumed	.096	.758	-.005	551	.996	-.00608	1.25957	-2.50566	2.49351
	Equal variances not assumed			-.005	470.737	.996	-.00608	1.16178	-2.32275	2.31060

Cluster Three: There is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female primary school teachers on how ECE enhances self management competencies in primary school children.

```
T-TEST GROUPS=Gender(1 2)
  /MISSING=ANALYSIS
  /VARIABLES=ECE_enhancing_self_management_competencies
  /CRITERIA=CI(.95).
```

Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ECE_enhancing_self_mana gement_competencies	Male	250	31.0000	5.50757	.98919
	female	304	29.3478	3.65749	.44031

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
ECE_enhancing_self_management_co mpetencies	Equal variances assumed	1.821	.180	1.773	551	.014	1.65217	.93170	-.19675	3.50110
	Equal variances not assumed			1.526	442.333	.021	1.65217	1.08276	-.53241	3.83676

Cluster Four: There is no significant difference in the mean score of male and female primary school teachers on how ECE enhances responsible decision making skills competencies in primary school children.

```
T-TEST GROUPS=Gender(1 2)
  /MISSING=ANALYSIS
  /VARIABLES=ECE_enhancing_responsible_decision_making_competencies
  /CRITERIA=CI(.95).
```

Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
ECE_enhancing_responsibl e_decision_making_compet encies	Male	250	27.4839	3.11845	.56009
	female	304	27.5217	2.91350	.35074

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
ECE_enhancing_responsible_decision_making_competencies	Equal variances assumed	.966	.328	-.059	551	.015	-.03787	.64384	-1.31556	1.23982

Equal varian ces not assum ed			-.0 57	454.4 49	.09 5	-.03787	.66085	-1.362 54	1.286 81