



## **PLAY AND COMPOSITION SKILLS AMONG PRESCHOOLERS IN PUBLIC PRESCHOOLS IN RIVERS EAST SENATORIAL DISTRICT.**

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### **Abstract**

*Composition skills are some of the factors that influence the image of a nation, either directly or indirectly. This paper therefore, seeks to determine the relationship between play and composition skills in public care centres in Rivers East Senatorial District. One research question and one corresponding hypothesis guided this study. The design of the study is correlational research design. The population of the study comprised of all the 3,489 Nursery three pupils in Rivers East Senatorial District. The sample of the study comprised 350 Nursery three children drawn from the population of the study, using simple random sampling method. The instrument used for the study was the “Play and Preschoolers” Composition Skills Development Checklist” (PPCSDC). It was face validated by three experts. Pearson Product Moment Coefficient (PPMC) was used to compute the reliability of the instrument, which had a reliability index of, was 0.62.*

***Keywords:*** *play, skills, composition, preschoolers.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

The ability to compose can be encouraged systematically. The children can compose a story, song, rhyme or anything if properly guided. We seek to teach children that learning is not just a formal activity they do in the classroom—it is actually a lot of fun. According to Yemi (2018) one of the goals of the care centres should be to give the children opportunities to wonder, question, work as a team, experiment and play with different

possibilities and develop skills that interest them. For example, during play, caregivers can give children the opportunity to design an object from their imagination. Then they can ask the children to explain, “Why did you make that?” “What did you make it out of? What is the purpose of that object?” The caregivers’ engagement supports children in their creativity, while also challenging them to think about why they chose to create an object had no influence on the development of composition skills and recommended that the government should encourage play for the development of composition skills among the children after primary education. It also requires them to think through the challenges they solved in creating it and helps them become more confident in their problem solving abilities (Moon, 2017). Every time a child builds and creates a structure or even an entire world, the children have to use reasoning and critical thinking skills. They also have to apply problem solving when something does not work the way they hoped it would Bukola and Oluwadahun (2015). These skills are what make children become well-rounded, independent and successful adults. Building toys allow children to create their own fantasy worlds and stories. Using the imagination boosts cognitive, academic, language and social growth. As they create structures, they also create stories which leads to greater verbal skills including their ability to tell stories.

### **Play and Composition**

Play as, “any activity that is freely chosen, meaningful, active, enjoyable, and open-ended can lead the children to composition of different things such as stories. One type of play that has an important role on a child’s power of composition is imaginative play

(Joel, 2017). Play has many positive characteristics such as freedom to explore and create. Like Egerton, (2014) said children can compose stories, songs, dances even books on how they spent their holidays, how they went on excursion or cooking patterns had no influence on the development of composition skills and recommended that the government should encourage play for the development of composition skills among the children after primary education. Suppose when a child enters his/her classroom and has various self-selection activities available, the child can become engaged in something of interest specifically to that individual child and before he realizes it, the child can compose something that an adult cannot even imagine. “Play is active and is natural process of mentally and actively doing

something (Hellson, 2017). Without knowing it, children are practicing body movements as well as mental processing through acting imaginary games out which they composed. Children use imagination and be able to be creative with their own ideas (James, 2013). Play can give children so many opportunities to grow in composition without them even knowing it. Enola (2013) said that the government should encourage play for the development of composition skills among the children after primary education.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Play, if inadequate hinders children's composition skills development. Failure in play leads to failure in adulthood creativity. Therefore the problem of this study is to establish if there is any relationship between play and children's composition skills in public care centres in Rivers East Senatorial District (RESD) in order to proffer solutions to the preschoolers' development of composition skills while allowing them enough time for play. This is to spell out the composition skills in the Preschool curriculum and encourage play in order to develop composition skills.

### **Research Question**

To what extent does play relate to preschoolers' ability to compose?

### **Research Hypothesis**

The following null hypothesis was formulated to guide the research:

**Ho:** Preschoolers' ability to compose stories does not significantly relate to play.

The Study was a correlational research design due to the fact that it seeks to ascertain the relationship between play and development of composition skills in public care centres in Rivers East Senatorial District (RESD). The area of study will be Rivers East Senatorial District of Rivers State. Rivers East Senatorial District include: Emohua, Etche, Ikwerre, Obio / Akpor, Ogu – Bolo, Okrika, Omuma and Port – Harcourt local government areas. Rivers East Senatorial District is one of the three senatorial districts in Rivers State. It houses the state capital, Port-Harcourt. Rivers East Senatorial District has a projected population of 2,670,903 in the above-mentioned local government areas. It covers 4,890 square kilometres (Zubair, 2018). The district is made up of two parts namely, upland and riverine. The upland consists of Emohua, Etche, Ikwerre, Obio / Akpor and Omuma and Port –

Harcourt local government area is largely Riverine. The Riverine part is made up of tropical rainforest; towards the coast, the typical River Delta environment features many mangrove swamps. The district was a part of the Oil Rivers Protectorate in 19<sup>th</sup> century. Rivers East Senatorial District is densely populated. This is due to the fact that it houses the capital of Rivers State, Port – Harcourt. Port – Harcourt is the nerve centre of the Nigerian Oil Industry and over ninety industrial concerns, including Shell Petroleum Development Company (Nigeria) Limited and AGIP. Due to beautiful layout and peculiar typography, Port - Harcourt christened "Garden City", is accessible by road, rail, air and sea. The main occupation of the people of Rivers East Senatorial District is Agriculture. However, it is the production of oil and gas that Rivers East Senatorial District is most famous. With enormous reserves of crude oil and natural gas, the district accounts for more than 40% of Nigeria's earnings from crude oil export. The three universities- University of Port-Harcourt, Choba, Rivers State, Rivers State University, Nkpolu-Oroworukwo, Ignatius Ajuru • University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Rivers State School of Health Information Management, Rumueme, Elechi Amadi Polytechnic, Rumuola, Port-Harcourt, Rivers State School of Nursing, Rumueme, Rivers State School of Midwifery, D-Line, and Port-Harcourt are all located within the district. The district is bounded to the south Emohua by Bayelsa State, to the North Ogwu/Bolo Akwa Ibom, Abia State by Anambra, Etche, Imo and Omuma Abia and Imo States, Obio/Akpor Abia, Okrika Abia, Phalga, Abia and Ikwerre Imo to the East by Akwa Ibom State, to the West by the Bayelsa and Delta States. The artisans in Rivers East Senatorial District are mainly the mechanics, barbers, block molders, fashion and designers, bricklayers, plumbers, electricians, drivers, shoe menders, roasted yam/ corn sellers, shoe menders, welders and goldsmith. There are civil servants and workers in private firms. The benefits of these skills have brought a lot of people into the state. Therefore, there is need for people in the state to be exposed to composition skills acquisition as early as preschool level in order to be self-employed and create more jobs in all spheres of economy to accommodate the influx of people into the district. The Preschool is the foundation of such education: that is why the Preschool caregivers at the care centres should give children enough time for play to acquire composition skills in order to become creative and self-confidence. This would help them to be their own bosses and employers of labour rather than searching and waiting for jobs in the

labour market. The population of the study will comprise all the Nursery 3 (Transitional class) pupils for the 2018 /2019 session in the eight (8) Local Government Areas of Rivers East Senatorial District. There are two hundred and forty six (246) Early Child Care Development Education (ECCDE) centres in Rivers East Senatorial District with a total enrollment of three thousand, four hundred and eight-nine (3,489) preschoolers (RSUBEB, 2018). The sample of this study will be 350preschoolers, which is 10% of the population. In order to obtain the 350 preschoolers, 25 Early Child Care Development Education (ECCDE) centres were selected covering the 8 local governments of the entire district, using simple random sampling method. The 25 Early Child Care Development Education (ECCDE) centres represented 10% of the Early Child Care Development Education (ECCDE) centres in the study area. Fourteen (14) preschoolers were used in each of the selected centres. The researcher adopted simple random sampling method of balloting and replacement to select the preschoolers. The instruments that will be used to gather data for the study is a 20 item structured checklist entitled “Play and Preschoolers’ Entrepreneurial Skills Development Checklist” (PPESDC). The checklist was scaled using 4-point scale of Regularly (4), Seldomly (3), Fairly (2) and Deficiently (1).

R	S	F	D
4	3	2	1

The rating used R, S, F, and D. The “Play and Preschoolers’ composition Skills Development Checklist” (PPCSDC) was validated by the researcher’ supervisor and two other experts in the department of Early Childhood Education (ECE)and Primary Education Studies (PES) in Ignatius Ajuru University of Education, Rumuolumeni, Rivers State. The validators were required to look at the appropriateness of items in the instrument (checklist) in measuring what it is supposed to measure. All their corrections and comments were incorporated into the final form of the instrument. The test and retest method was adopted to determine the reliability of the study. The researcher administered the checklist on the subjects in a school with similar attributes in Emohua local government area as schools which was used for the main study. After two weeks, the same instruments was administered again to the same group. The two sets of scores were calculated for correlation using Pearson Product Moment Coefficient (r) in order to determine the consistency level of the instrument at 0.05 error limit. The

reliability index of the (PPCSDC) was 0.64. Therefore, the instrument is reliable. The researcher used six careers in the centres as assistants for the administration. The subjects were given two weeks to respond to the items which they went for collection. Pearson Product Moment Coefficient (PPMC) was used to analyze the research question and testing the null hypothesis.

**Research Question:**

To what extent does play predict preschoolers’ ability to compose stories in Rivers East Senatorial District?

**Table 1: Pearson’s product moment correlation on the extent play predicts preschoolers’ ability to compose stories in Rivers East Senatorial District.**

Variable	N	ΣX	ΣY	(ΣX) <sup>2</sup>	(ΣY) <sup>2</sup>	ΣXY	r	R <sup>2</sup>
Play	350	398		158165.29		460118.8	0.65	0.417
Composition	350		416		173264.1			

Data in Table 1: Pearson’s product moment correlation on the extent play predicts preschoolers’ ability to compose stories in Rivers East Senatorial District might be described as strong and positive (r=0.31). The R-square value of 0.417 shows a 41.7% contribution of socio-dramatic play to preschoolers’ ability to compose stories in Rivers East Senatorial District.

**Research Hypothesis**

The following null hypothesis was formulated to guide the research:

**H<sub>0</sub>:** Preschoolers’ ability to compose stories does not significantly relate to play in Rivers East Senatorial District.

**Table 2: Summary of Pearson’s product moment correlation on how Preschoolers’ ability to compose stories relates to play in Rivers East Senatorial District.**

Variable	N	ΣX	ΣY	(ΣX) <sup>2</sup>	(ΣY) <sup>2</sup>	ΣXY	r	r <sub>cal</sub>	r <sub>cr</sub>	P-value
Play	350	398		158165.29		460118.8	0.65	32.41	1.96	0.00

<b>Compositio</b>	35		41		173264.					
<b>n</b>	0		6		1					

Data in Table 2 shows that the summary of Pearson’s product moment correlation on how Preschoolers’ ability to compose stories relate to play in Rivers East Senatorial District might be described as strong and positive with  $r_{cal}=32.41$  and  $r_{cri}=1.96$ . The result of the Pearson’s product moment correlation shows that Preschoolers’ ability to compose stories does significantly relate to play in Rivers East Senatorial District ( $r=0.65$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 alpha level.

### **Summary and discussion of finding**

Preschoolers’ ability to compose stories does significantly relate to play in Rivers East Senatorial District ( $r=0.65$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 alpha level. According to the result of finding, the summary of Pearson’s product moment correlation on how Preschoolers’ ability to compose stories relate to play in Rivers East Senatorial District might be described as strong and positive with  $r_{cal}=32.41$  and  $r_{cri}=1.96$ . The result of the Pearson’s product moment correlation shows that preschoolers’ ability to compose does significantly relate to play in Rivers East Senatorial District ( $r=0.65$ ,  $p<.05$ ). The null hypothesis was rejected at 0.05 alpha level. This result of finding entails that the play contributed to a very large extent to the preschoolers’ ability to compose stories. It also means that the more the children are exposed to play, the more likely they are able to compose stories. Again, the result may not be farfetched since play paves way for imagination, whereas imagination boosts cognitive, language and social growth. This leads to greater verbal skills including their ability to compose stories. The result is in agreement with that of Bukola and Oluwadahun (2015) who discovered in a study entitled, effect of on acquisition of functional skills among primary school pupils that there is a significant difference in the functional skills acquisition of the experimental group and control group.

There is however a contrasting view on the part of Enola (2013) who conducted study on play and composition skills among primary school children and found that play had no influence on the development of composition skills and recommended that the government should encourage play for the development of composition skills among the children after

primary education. This could be attributed to the fact that most preschools fail to teach children that learning is not just a formal activity they do in the classroom it is actually a lot of fun. This in turn makes the children not to develop the power of reasoning and critical thinking skills to form stories on their own.

### **Conclusion**

The following conclusion is drawn with respect to the finding of the study: Preschoolers' ability to compose stories significantly related to play. This is because children use their imaginations during play.

### **Recommendation**

Based on the finding of this study, the following recommendation was made: Caregivers and school authorities should encourage play to develop preschoolers' ability to compose stories. This will make the preschool children to realize that the world is full of ideas and they could be the people that can generate the ideas in future.

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