Effects Of Communication Involved In Play In Developing Interpersonal Skills: A Case Of Selected Standard Seven Pupils In Six Primary Schools In Lang’Ata Constituency, Nairobi County

by

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In accordance with Daystar University policies, this thesis is accepted in partial fulfillment of requirements for the Master of Arts degree.

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EFFECTS OF COMMUNICATION INVOLVED IN PLAY IN DEVELOPING INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: A CASE OF SELECTED STANDARD SEVEN PUPILS IN SIX PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN LANG’ATA CONSTITUENCY, NAIROBI COUNTY.

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AGR  Association of Graduate Recruiters
ECD  Early Childhood Development
ISESE Innovation Secondary Education for Skills Enhancement
MoEST Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
NACOST National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation
I R4D Results for Development
SPSS Statistical Package for Social Sciences
US United States
WEF World Economic Forum
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of the communication involved in play on standard seven children’s interpersonal communication skills development in six selected primary schools in Lang’ata Constituency in Nairobi County. The study utilized a descriptive research design and was guided by two-way theory of communication. The target population comprised 6 head teachers, 44 teachers and 690 children in six selected primary schools in Lang’ata Constituency. The head teachers were purposively sampled making number remain at six, whole representation of teachers was used leaving the sample size at 44 but 10% was used on the children making sample size 69. Questionnaires containing open and close-ended questions were administered to the head teachers and teachers of the schools while interview guide and observation were used to collect data from the children which was later analyzed and presented with the aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20. The major findings of the study were that 94% of the children agreed that they played in school making play an effective tool for this study. Various forms of communication were evident in play including verbal, aural, non-verbal written and visual. Key interpersonal communication skills including negotiation, problem solving, leadership, listening, verbal communication, decision making, assertiveness and non-verbal skills were very apparent during the communication that was taking place as children played. The study also found out that the interpersonal communication skills that children developed as they played were very relevant in their professional and personal relationships thereby presenting a solution to the problem of most people lacking interpersonal communication skills by showing how play can help children learn these skills at a young age. Schools should find other ways that children could gain interpersonal skills other than play.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Introduction

Interpersonal communication skills are important to everyone. They are what we require to send and receive information and express our ideas and opinions with those around us. It is important to develop a diversity of skills for both communicating to others and learning how to interpret the information received from others (Wood, 2013). The importance of skills is even more pronounced in a dynamic, globalized world. Building interpersonal communication skills early on, by broadening and improving the quality of early childhood, is essential (World Economic Forum, 2014).

Regrettably, there is growing evidence that suggests that interpersonal communications skills are in short supply and might be part of why many people cannot maintain professional and personal relationships (Feffer, 2016; Hirsch, 2012). This is seen to be as a result of interpersonal communication skills having not been learnt from an early age. There is therefore a need to show how these interpersonal communication skills can be developed early so that once children grow older; it is just a matter of improving on them.

The study focused on standard seven children in six selected primary schools in Lang’ata Constituency in Nairobi County based on the researcher’s strong conviction that interpersonal communication skills missing in adults should have been instilled right from childhood. The selected schools comprised three mixed public schools and three mixed private schools in the constituency. The public primary schools were Lang’ata Barracks Primary School, Uhuru
Gardens Primary School and Madaraka Primary School. The private schools were All Saints Cathedral Primary School, Jonathan Gloag School and Moi Educational Center.

Play as a tool was used in this study because it is through play that children refine their social communication strategies, learn to negotiate and compromise, resolve conflicts, build trust and other foundations of social skills (Forlin & Lian, 2008). Play was also selected for the study because, from a report on how school-age children could develop a broad range of skills from the research feedback collected from four countries: Mexico, South Africa, Kenya, and the Philippines on *Skills for a Changing World Project*, parents and Early Childhood Development (ECD) teachers from Kenya emphasized play as the primary method (Care, Kim, Anderson, & Gustafsson-Wright, 2017).

School environment was selected for this study because this is where primary school children spend most of their time. For instance, children are in school for around eight to nine hours a day. This means that children attend school for a minimum of 40 hours per week, and as such, school may provide good data but may not necessarily be the best. The researcher also selected primary schools because according to a research by the Association of Graduate Recruiters (2017), school was seen as the best place to learn interpersonal skills. According to this report, leaving it just to universities and employers is too late a time to ensure that they gain communication skills.

This first chapter will give an overview of what the whole research is about. It will explain the purpose, the scope of the study, the limitations and delimitations, the objectives of the research and the rationale behind the study. It will also explain the significance of the study and define the terms used.
Background to the Study

The topic of play is certainly no longer beyond the mainstream of scholarly investigations as is evident by the growing number of published articles and volumes on the topic. Play is now also studied as both a context and a vehicle for social development (Wolfberg & Schuler, 2006). Since 1930’s, theories and research have explored the significance of play in children’s development (Tassoni, Beith, & Eldridge 2002). There is however scant studies looking at the role of communication involved in play in building interpersonal communication skills in children.

Looking at a background showing the need to have children develop interpersonal communication skills early in life; In Kenya, the attitudes and perceptions regarding the development of a broad range of skills including good communication skills, reflect the overall country’s priorities, including promoting sustainable development and the importance of contributing to the society as a whole (Wamahiu, 2015). The skills cited as critical in school, life, and the workplace include but are not limited to life skills, interpersonal communication skills, communication, problem solving and critical thinking (Care et al., 2017). In other words, a broad range of skills is recognized as necessary for adapting to the changing needs and challenges of the world.

According to the Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST). To thrive in the 21st century, children will need skills such as communication, critical thinking, social and interpersonal skills and listening skills (MoEST, 2015). The Ministry intends to equip citizens
with 21st century skills befitting the modern economy as well as the relevant knowledge, national values, and social competence values to contribute to Kenyan society.

Similarly, in January 2014 in Nairobi, Kenya, major stakeholders including educators, policy makers, employers and trainers, met at a conference to chart out modalities that will link education to employment. The conference, “Innovation Secondary Education for Skills Enhancement (ISESE)” which was organized by Washington-based Results for Development Institute (R4D) and sponsored by the Rockefeller Foundation, aimed at identifying skills required in the 21st century economies of Africa and Asia.

The reports by ISESE showed that employers were concerned with communication skills, as they are about analytical or job-specific skills but emphasized that these communication skills which are critical in today”的 workplace are either lacking or poorly taught at the secondary level in these regions (Results for Development, 2013). It is also anticipated in the report that there will be 3.5 billion people in the global workforce by 2030, but one billion of them will lack the relevant skills for employment if this problem remains unresolved. This conference clearly showed the need to have children learn communication skills from as early as possible.

Similarly, according to a report by the United Kingdom Association of Graduate Recruiters AGR (2017), half of employers do not think that graduates generally have the workplace skills they need when they are first hired. The report suggested that many university leavers are lacking essential interpersonal communication skills like problem solving and teamwork when they enter the workplace. Overall, 49 per cent of the 174 AGR members surveyed said that “graduates generally do not have the communication skills expected of them at the point of hiring”, while on
average, one in four graduates (25 percent) do not have them from the start of employment. The report resolved that, by the time that children reach university and employment, critical employability skills should be deep-rooted so that it is just a matter of fine-tuning. This report followed an earlier report *Skills for Graduates in the 21st Century* by AGR (1995) where emphasis had already been put towards generic analytical and personal skills relating to the rise of graduate employment. These generic skills at the time looked at negotiation and gathering and managing information which could translate to interpersonal skills.

In addition, world economic forum conducted a research on *Matching Skills and Labour Market Needs Building Social Partnerships for Better Skills and Better Jobs* around the world. From their findings, many employers complain about their inability to fill job vacancies due to poor interpersonal communication skills from the potential students and workers. In Europe, roughly four out of 10 establishments report difficulties in finding workers with the required skills. In another regular survey by the consultancy Manpower Group, recruitment bottlenecks ranged from 3% in Ireland and Spain to 85% in Japan in 2013. No clear differences exist between advanced and developing countries. Only about 6% of South African employers reported difficulties in filling jobs, compared to around 30% in Peru, Colombia, Guatemala and the People”’s Republic of China, approximately 40% in Panama, Mexico, Costa Rica and Argentina, about 60% in India and nearly 70% in Brazil (World Economic Forum, 2014).

However, employers in France, Greece and Italy reported recruitment difficulties in 2013, despite historically high unemployment rates. Some assert that the seemingly high number of employers experiencing such difficulties is due to young people and workers ill-prepared for work. Across countries participating in the survey, an average 34% of employers cite a lack of
technical competencies, while 19% believe that candidates (also) lack workplace competencies (i.e. “interpersonal skills”). A similar magnitude of skill deficits is identified in a recent European Barometer survey of companies that are “active recruiters”. About 33% of the surveyed employers identified the primary challenge they face in filling vacancies as the “shortage of applicants with the right skills and capabilities.” Other countries (e.g. Belarus, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Romania, Baltic States) were particularly affected by skill deficits. Skill gaps usually reported by employers around the globe included a lack of generic or soft skills, namely team work, interpersonal skills, leadership, problem solving and listening skills.

Based on the numerous studies conducted that have shown lack of interpersonal communication skills to being a hindrance to professional and personal relationships, there is a need to find solutions that could assist in solving it. The study therefore selected primary school children and showed that the communication involved during play was effective in helping children develop interpersonal communication skills from an early age which would be of great use later in life.

Statement of the Problem

Interpersonal communication skills have been defined by Hewes (2006), as life skills that are needed to effectively communicate with other people both individually and in groups. They include negotiation, leadership, problem-solving, decision making, listening, verbal and non-verbal communication. Lack of interpersonal communication skills is becoming a serious 21st century problem affecting academic, social and economic development (MoEST, 2015; World Economic Forum, 2014). It is also negatively affecting personal and professional relationships (Hargie, 2017).
This problem arises due to the fact that people are not learning these skills at the required time which is during childhood. Dunne and Alberson (2003) and AGR (2017) stated that development of these interpersonal communication skills must begin early in life or rather, learnt from childhood as inadequacy in these interpersonal communication skills poses a big challenge later in life and as a result affects professional and personal relationships. A report from the International Association of Administrative Professionals in America (2016) stated that interpersonal communication skills needed to excel in today’s workplace are the hardest to teach and, increasingly, the hardest to find adding that lack of communication skills was the biggest proficiency gap they saw in the United States (US) workforce (Feffer, 2016).

Unfortunately, despite the emphasis on the need to have these skills learnt early in life, Hirsch (2012) found out that, despite the high level of knowledge, employers have found that graduates are lacking, and lacking in some very crucial areas, namely interpersonal skills. Instead of being prepared to take a career, graduates need extensive on-the-job training and being hired into entry level positions. However, as these skills cannot necessarily be taught or trained, some graduates end up having very steep learning curve before they will be ready to take up a career since they did not learn these skills at an early age.

Dune and Alberson (2003) also stated that we should be very concerned about interpersonal communication skills because it plays a major role in forming good relationships within family, with friends, colleagues and business partners or customers at work. They added that it should be learnt from childhood through the influence of friends, family and the environment, because as people become adults, it becomes their own responsibility to initiate any changes in interpersonal skills and influence them to work in their favor. This is near impossible if they are not developed at an early age.
There is consequently a need for interpersonal communication skills to be learnt earlier during childhood as understanding how to employ these skills effectively relates directly to getting a job and helps in building both professional and personal relationships (DuBrin, 2007). This study attempted to fill this gap by finding out what communication involved in children’s play does in as far as interpersonal skills development is concerned from class seven children of select primary schools in Lang’ata Constituency Kenya.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of the communication involved in play on standard seven children’s interpersonal communication skills in six selected primary schools in Lang’ata Constituency in Nairobi County.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out whether children are exposed to and engaged in play activities.
2. To identify various forms of communication evident in play.
3. To identify the types of interpersonal communication skills apparent during communication involved in play.

Research Questions

1. To what level were these children engaged in play activities?
2. What forms of communication were evident during play?
3. What types of interpersonal communication skills could be identified from the communication that took place during play?

Rationale of the Study

Many studies conducted (MoEST, 2015; Hirsch, 2012; World Economic Forum, 2014; and Hargie, 2017) have shed light on lack of interpersonal communication skills being a hindrance to successful career growth for many children later in life and a hindrance to developing lasting relationships due to the fact that interpersonal communication skills which ought to have been learnt during childhood are missing in adults (AGR, 2017; Dunne & Alberson, 2003). But as far as the researcher is aware, very little has been done to curb this problem. There is need to show how these interpersonal communication skills can be developed at an early age to help come up a solution to this problem and therefore this study serves as a gap by showing how the communication involved in children’s play, is effective in helping them develop interpersonal communication skills which they will require later in life. Play provided an environment conducive to an interpersonal engagement which made communication necessary and developing interpersonal skills apparent.

Significance of the Study

Having good interpersonal skills could mean the difference between happiness and unhappiness, or success and failure in multiple arenas or life contexts such as job and school and relationships (Gamble & Gamble, 2014). The findings of this research would greatly benefit members of the society in understanding the importance of play for children.
This study would also contribute to the body of literature on children’s own understanding of the active role of play in their lives and specifically in the development of interpersonal communication skills.

Other parties that could benefit from this study may include:

1. Government institutions, especially Ministry of Education. The findings of this research could be used in the formulation of policies regarding the place of play in building interpersonal communication skills in the school curricula.

2. Curriculum developers could use the findings to develop syllabi intended for the school system in Kenya.

3. Teachers could use the findings to develop knowledge on the important role that play has on the development of children and would also serve as inspiration to school administrations when they are undertaking school planning.

4. Parents and guardians could integrate the findings of the study in the process of bringing up children.

5. Children’s rights activists could use the findings to advocate for the addition of time for play in the primary school curriculum.

Assumptions of the Study

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), assumptions are conditions or events that the investigator takes for granted although they might affect outcome of the research.

The following assumptions were made by the researcher:

1. The target population would cooperate in giving fair, true and honest information.
2. Teachers would be willing to give all assistance needed.

3. The researcher would be able to conduct the study in the suggested time and observe internationally accepted codes of conduct.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study covered standard seven children in six selected schools in Lang’ata Constituency in Nairobi County. The study gathered data from children, teachers and head teachers from these schools which were used to assess teachers’ knowledge on the effect of play in interpersonal skills development and find out what interpersonal communication skills children gained as they played and its relation to the interpersonal communication skills which are important everyday skills.

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

The research only covered six schools in Lang’ata Constituency in Nairobi County. This was considered as a limitation since there are also children in Nairobi or nationwide upcountry who did not contribute to this research. The researcher, however, ensured that the schools chosen were representative of Lang’ata Constituency and that the selection of both private and public schools removed possible bias and ensured that the study was somewhat representative of schools in Nairobi County and in the country as a whole.

The teachers in the selected primary schools might not feel comfortable to allow the children engage in the research. To obviate this, the researcher assured them that the results of the research would enlighten them on the importance of play in the lives of the children.
Children in these primary schools also fell in the category of vulnerable populations and in order not to compromise the ethics surrounding vulnerable populations, consent was sought from the head teachers of the schools who were informed in advance about the nature of the research and its significance to the promotion of the welfare of children in schools.

Definition of Terms

To facilitate understanding and avoid misinterpretations of the terms used in this study, operational definitions are provided for the key terms. The terms that are defined in the context of this study are play, communication, skills, development and child.

The term play in this study refers to an interactive, pleasurable activity or exercise for amusement and recreation through which children can develop and refine their social communication strategies and learn interpersonal communication skills as defined by Ray (2011).

Communication as defined simply by Wandberg (2011) is sending and receiving of messages involving both listening and speaking through a medium to receive feedback. In this study, communication has been taken to mean the exchanges that take place as children engage in play, this includes, giving instructions, telling stories, selecting teams etc.

Interpersonal communication defined as the ongoing ever-changing process that occurs when you interact with another person (Cleary et al., 2009), is used in this study to mean the conversation that takes place as children engage with each other during play.

Development: This is the act or process of creating something over a period of time to be bigger and more advanced (Peet & Hartwick, 2015). In this study, development is used to show how
children become better at skills like negotiation, leadership and problem solving as they communicate with each other.

An effect is simply defined by Bromberg and Gale (1998) as a result or a consequence. It is used in this study to show the outcome of the interaction that takes place as children play together. These outcomes include the interpersonal communication skills that are apparent in communication involved in play.

A pupil, according to Merriam Webster dictionary, is an old-fashioned word for a young person attending school. In this study, it is simply taken to mean children who attend school.

A primary school as used in this study by the researcher is a school in which children receive elementary education from the age of about five to twelve, coming after nursery and before secondary school.

Summary

This chapter given overview of what the whole research is about. It explained the purpose, the scope of the study, the limitations and delimitations, the objectives of the research and the rationale behind the study. It also explained the significance of the study and defined the terms used. The next chapter presents a review of the literature that was used to give more insight on the role of play in developing children’s interpersonal skills.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter reviews past studies on the overall significance of communication involved in play on children’s development, it also focuses on different works on communication, interpersonal skills and compared and contrasted different views held by various authors and theorists on this topic. The review also covers the theoretical framework used in understanding the study more.

Theoretical Framework

According to Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff (2003, p. 14), “Theories are statements that summarize our understanding of the way the world works”. They can therefore be defined as a set of systematically related generalizations suggesting new observations for empirical testing. In developing theories, we are often trying to explain something that is difficult to understand.

Two-Way Theory of Communication

This study will employ the use of the two-way theory of communication. This is because the study seeks to show the effect that communication involved in play has on children’s interpersonal communication skills development. There are several elements in interpersonal communication: the communicators, the message, noise, feedback, context, and channel (Hargie, 2017). The communicators are the actual individuals, who are engaged in mutually sending and receiving messages. It is an interactive process, a two-way exchange and therefore helps in understanding the entire process of communication. Communication is a two-way process. It has to be sent and received- and received so that it means the same thing to both parties, and can be
acted upon. Smith (1992) stated that communication is a transaction in which there is simultaneous giving and receiving. There is joint responsibility for effective communication; the listener and speaker share in the process of developing understanding. Effective interpersonal communication creates a forum for two-way communication and provides an opportunity for children to share their views freely (Trenholm & Jensen 2008). In order to effectively communicate, you need to ask, what needs to be communicated, who needs the information and why is it needed?

Communication however was not always seen as a two-way process. It was later conceptualizations of the communication process that looked at communication as a two-way process where a group of people are involved to complete the cycle of communication in which the receiver also acts as the sender of the feedback to transmitter (sender). Thus, both the sender and the receiver play reciprocal and reversible roles. It considers communication essentially to be a reciprocal process and a mutual exchange of messages. It makes no sharp distinction between the roles of the sender (source) and receiver, because the same person plays both roles, often simultaneously.

The earlier linear view of communication process treated the sender as the determiner of message and its meaning (Wood, 2013). Communication was considered as one-way process marked by the flow of information from a sender to a receiver. A receiver passively receives a message and acts as directed or desired by the sender. Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver were the first to point out that in actual practice; messages can be changed or blocked. Shannon’s model was first based on mathematical view of communication process in which the basic
problem is that the message received is not equal to the message sent (Shannon, 1949). He attributed the loss to the noise. It was later brought out in 1966, where Defleur introduced feedback as a corrective to noise (Winnet, 2010). In a way, feedback corrects the distortions and tends to complete the cycle of communication.

Shannon-Weaver Mathematical Model 1949

Two-way concept involves receiver as an active agent in the construction of meaning of the message. The message is as the receiver perceives it in light of his/her experiences, beliefs and feelings (Narula, 2006). The intended and received meanings have common interpretations of situations, ideas, schemes, and events to the extent people have lived and worked together and have developed common attitudes and viewpoints with regards to where they live.

The various elements of communication involved in the two-way theory include the message, sender, encoding, channel, receiver, decoding, acting and feedback (Chaturvedi & Chaturvedi, 2009). The message is information written or spoken, which is to be sent from one person to another. The word person stands for two ends of a system and may represent an individual or a group of individuals. The sender is the person who transmits or communicates a message with
the purpose of persuading, informing, influencing, changing the attitude, opinion, behavior of the receiver or listener. He decodes the communication channel, symbols and the time for sending after carefully considering the total situation in which communication takes place. Encoding is changing the message from its mental form into symbols or patterns of words, gestures of a specific visual or aural language. The communication symbols selected by the sender, keeping in mind the receiver’s ability to understand and interpret them correctly. Channel is the medium that facilitates the sender to convey the message to the receiver. The medium could be oral, in the form of a dialogue, or even visuals.

The receiver is the targeted audience of the message. He gets the message, understands, interprets and tries to perceive the total meaning of the message as transmitted by the sender. Decoding is translating symbols of communication onto their intended meanings. This could include words together with tone and attitude of the sender as reflected by structure of message and choice of words used.

In acting, communication manipulates receiver to act in a desired manner. A receiver’s response action shows that he has understood the message. Finally the receiver completes the chain of communication by responding to the message. Feedback is the loop that connects the receiver in the communication process with the sender who in turn, acts as a feedback receiver and thus, gets to know that communication has been accomplished. In communication, feedback plays an important role of ensuring that receiver got the message and understood it as intended.
This study will employ the two-way theory of communication that is evident in the context of play. In play, child A speaks to child B generating messages and feedback in many ways. This is through body postures, facial expressions, eye movements, hand gestures, spatial distance from child A, and verbal language use. Both children A and B are participating simultaneously in the communication situation. Both sender and receiver are making adjustments to the messages exchange and are both engaged in the process of creating meaning in the relationship. This communication gives birth to interpersonal communication skills including leadership, negotiation, verbal communication, listening, problem solving. This is displayed in the following example:

(During break time in school playground)

Child A:  
We need to select members for our teams before we engage in football.

Child B:  
Fine, I start by choosing Rachel.

Child A:  
I pick Stella.

Child B:  
I pick Julie and Cate

Child A:  
You cannot have Rachel, Julie and Cate all in your team, they are all good players and there wouldn’t be a balance. It’s just not fair.

Child B:  
What do you suggest we do?

Child A:  
Let me have one person between Julie and Cate so that we can both have two good players.

Child B:  
That’s fine, take Julie. Let’s select the rest of the team members and start the game. Please inform your team members of the rules of the game before we begin to avoid confusion. We don’t have much time and both teams need to play.
Child A: That is fine. We however do not have a good ball. Why don’t we begin by repairing it first? I will go bring some papers so that we can fix it.

Child B: That’s fine. Meanwhile, I will put out stones to mark our goal boarders.

From the above scenario, Child A is the sender while Child B is the receiver. As communication continues, we see these roles changing simultaneously. There are messages that are sent from one child to the other. The channel that has been used in this example is verbal communication and through the ongoing conversation it is clear that there is feedback and shared meaning between both children.

It is also obvious that communication is taking place between child A and B. In this communication, five interpersonal communication skills can also be seen clearly. There is evident of verbal communication, listening, problem solving, negotiation and leadership skills. These are all skills that children would require later on in the future as they begin to pursue their careers and as they build on their relationships with friends, families and fellow employees at their work places. Two-way theory of communication is very important in showing how communication involved in play is significant in developing interpersonal communication skills for children and therefore served this study very well.
General Literature Review

The word "communication" is derived from “communis” (Latin), meaning “common”. It stands for a natural activity of all human beings to convey opinions, feelings, information, and ideas to others through words (written or spoken), body language, or signs (Chaturvedi & Chaturvedi, 2009). Communication in this study is used as defined by Wandberg (2011) as sending and receiving of messages involving both listening and speaking. It involves words, gestures and facial expressions. It can also be defined as the process by which an individual (the communicator) transmits stimuli (usually verbal) to modify the behaviors of other individuals (the audience). It is dynamic, constantly changing and shifting in response (Miller, 2005).

Communication comes in many forms: verbal (sounds, language, and tone of voice), aural (listening and hearing), non-verbal (facial expressions, body language, and posture), written (journals, emails, blogs, and text messages), visual (signs, symbols, and pictures). We distinguish one type from others based on the number of persons involved, the formality of the interaction, and the opportunity to give and receive feedback (Shakir, 2012).

When people communicate, relationships are built and one such relationship is interpersonal communication relationship. Without interpersonal communication, it is often more difficult to develop other important life skills. This is because, Interpersonal communication is unavoidable- You cannot, not communicate (Watzlawick & Bavelas, 1967); it is irreversible, you cannot take back what you said, it is symbolic-where it occurs because symbols are mutually agreed upon by the participants in the process, it is rule governed- we must decide whether or not we wish to use a rule in our interpersonal exchanges, it is learned-we all need to refine and cultivate our skills to communicate with a wide assortment of people and it has both content and relationship levels-
content refers to information in message and relationship is how you want the receiver of the message to interpret your message (West & Turner, 2009).

In relation to helping children professionally later in life, Sethi and Seth (2009) stated that:

Communication is inseparable, essential and continuous process just like the circulatory system in the human body. As a result, communication effectiveness becomes a very vital factor in determining the efficiency in which an organization performs as a whole. The existence of an organization depends upon a number of things like unity of command, delegation of authority and responsibility, teamwork and leadership, each one of which entails a strong support of interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication therefore becomes the life blood of an organization.

From the above observation, interpersonal communication skills are vital in the workplace. One cannot be part of the organization that he or she works for with poor interpersonal skills and hope to work effectively in their organization or workplace. It is very important to be effective in interpersonal communication. Mulunda (2013, p.3) in his story in Business Daily Online Kenyan newspaper titled, Work Skills Shortage Worry Employers and Keeps More Youths Out of Jobs further raised concern that, within the Kenyan context, lack of communication skills will keep young people out of jobs. Nicholas Bunnett, the Results for Development (R4D) Managing Director when interviewed for the paper stated that, “as much as there is unemployment in the world, there is, ironically, unfilled vacancies because employers cannot find the relevant talent.” Interpersonal skill is a talent that is employed when interacting with other people (Hargie & Dickson, 2007).
Through interpersonal communication interaction, one is able to gain interpersonal skills which are life skills that are needed to effectively communicate with other people both individually and in groups (Hewes, 2006). These skills may include (1) verbal communication - what we say, and how we say it, and also includes language development, (2) non-verbal communication- what we communicate without words or language, (3) listening skills- how we interpret verbal and non-verbal messages by others, (4) negotiation- working with others to find an agreeable outcome, (5) problem solving- working with others to work or problems or issues. (6) assertiveness- communicating our values, ideas, beliefs, opinions, needs and wants, (7) decision making- analyzing options to make sound decisions and, (8) Leadership-ability to manage a team of people and direct them in various roles or duties. Knapp and Dally (2002) argued that interpersonal skills are the fulcrums through which all human relationships are initiated and developed. Lack of effective interpersonal skills affects social relationships negatively.

Interpersonal communication, when distinguished from communication in general, is said to involve fewer people, often just two. But perhaps the best way to define interpersonal communication, according to Wood (2013), is by focusing on what happens between people, not where they are, or how many are present. It is a distinct type of interaction between people. Interpersonal communication is also defined as the ongoing ever-changing process that occurs when you interact with another person, forming a dyad which is defined as two people communicating with each other. Individuals in a dyad have the responsibility for determining the nature of the relationship, by creating meaning from the interaction (Cleary et al., 2009). Thus anytime we communicate with another person, we are communicating interpersonally.

The fact that interpersonal communication takes two means that it is indivisible. Without the second person, interpersonal communication is impossible. From an interpersonal perspective,
even groups of three or more individuals are viewed as composites of dyads effectively serving as the foundation for separate pairings and potential coalitions. Without a dyad, a relationship does not exist, and without a relationship, there is no interpersonal communication (Cleary et al., 2009).

Interpersonal communication events include more informal, everyday exchanges than they do any other type of communication. They include most of the communication activities we engage in from the time we get up until we go to bed. An activity is interpersonal communication if it meets three criteria: (1) all parties must be in close proximity, (2) all parties send and receive messages, and (3) these messages include both verbal and non-verbal stimuli (Wandberg, 2011).

Interpersonal communication can be thought of as a skill. Hargie (1997, p. 12; as cited in Berry, 2007), defined interpersonal communication as the “process whereby the individual implements a sets of goal directed, interrelated, situationally appropriate social behaviors which are learned and controlled”. As outlined by Hargie and Dickson (2007), these encompass several components of a skill which is a process, is goal oriented and learned and developed through a number of stages.

The key emphasis in interpersonal communication is communication itself. Without it, one cannot gain interpersonal communication skills. Communication is a process that involves giving and receiving feedback. It is through this giving and receiving feedback that interaction takes place. Johnson (2012) said that human beings are active living organisms. Social interaction is an ongoing process that shapes human conduct as actors fit their action with one another and form a continuous flow of interaction. Communication undoubtedly „comes naturally” to human
beings since we are social beings; we seek the company of other human beings. Communication is so central to social life that Paul Watzlawick and his colleagues famously declared:

„One cannot not communicate” they reach this conclusion by way of the following argument: behavior has no opposite...one cannot not behave. Now, if it is accepted that all behavior in an interactional situation has message value i.e communication, it follows that no matter how one may try, one cannot not communicate (Watzlawick et al., 1967 pp. 48-49).

Many other communication scholars agree with Robinson (1978; as cited in Nalova, 2001), who stated that so many of the problems we face in the world today are communication related. Many of these scholars view effective communication as a stepping stone to solving most problems that we have in society. Robinson (1978, p. 20) noted that in a world like the one in which we live, communication has become the glue that binds people together making effective communication an increasingly important issue. “Never before in the history of the world has mankind hung so precariously on accurate and swift communication as it does today”

In addition, of all major skill sets employers consider most important when hiring in all industries, communications skills top the list (Rapacon, 2015). Further, According to Rapacon, the National Association of Colleges and Employers (2005) reported that interpersonal skills rank in the top three skills employers look for in new hires in virtually all professions. From this observation, it is clear that interpersonal communication skills play a crucial role in helping children face many communication problems that we have in the world today.

In this sense, communication just is, and is happening all the time when people are together. Every social situation entails communication and therefore calls up communication skills. Even
when trying to avoid communication with someone, we are still communicating something (Koprowska, 2010). The ultimate goal of any good communicator/communication should be to create understanding between communication and his/her audience. It is only when this understanding has been created that we can say that communication has taken place (Smith, 1992).

When looking at the characteristics of communication, West and Turner (2009) first defined communication as interactive and always take place within a relationship. The quality of a relationship and the quality of communication are deeply connected to each other. Secondly, communication is context related. It does not happen solely within the confines of a relationship, but in a larger world which affects both the nature of the relationship and the nature of the communication that properly takes place within it. In addition, Kathleen and Ruddoph (1986; as cited in Shakir, 2012), argued that communication has five major functions: people communicate to meet physiological needs because human beings are social by nature, people communicate to meet social obligations, people communicate to build relationships, people communicate to understand themselves and finally, people communicate to manage conflicts and solve problems, hence importance of interpersonal communication.

This interaction portrayed in communication lies at the center of any learning experience. Play is interactive and therefore helps children to socialize and in turn develop interpersonal communication skills. When children are allowed time for play, they are able to interact and it is through this interaction that they are able to gain interpersonal skills such as verbal and non-verbal communication, negotiation, listening, leadership and decision making which will also be essential in their adult life interactions.
In addition to this, according to Plummer (2011), as they play, children are also able to gain core communication abilities such as:

1. Self-control: This refers to a child’s ability to have some control over his or her feelings and thought and the way in which he or she expresses them; ability to tolerate waiting and managing impulsivity.

2. Effective listening: This is ability to really hear what others are saying and to reflect on what is heard.

3. Effective observation: This means ability to observe and reflect on non-verbal aspects of interactions.

4. Imagination: It is the ability to imagine, which helps in creativity and empathy, which is seeing from another person’s point of view and being aware of their needs.

5. Mutuality: Maturity is the ability to understand that sharing is involved in communication; the ability to cooperate and negotiate effectively.

6. Perseverance: It is the ability to keep going with difficult communication task and to overcome obstacles.

7. Adaptability: This means the ability to adapt to new situations and changes in communication contexts, and being able to monitor and adjust actions, feeling and thoughts to realistic assessments of personal progress.

From the foregoing, it has emerged that play is fundamental to the attainment and development of interpersonal communication skills in children due to the interaction that takes pace as children play. It involves interaction with people and objects in the surrounding environment.
Through play, a child can feel relaxed and confident to socialize easily with others and make new friends. Play offers opportunities for children to learn to communicate, share, understand and accept others (Ray, 2011). Play is thus a driving force rather than just a mirror of development. It is through active participation in play that children construct shared meanings and transform their understanding of the skills, values and knowledge inherent in society and culture as a whole (Luongo-Orlando, 2010). It is through play that children develop interpersonal communication skills which are required for successful career growth.

Looking at the interpersonal communication skills that can be developed as children interact during play, it can be concluded that these skills are necessary in assisting children learn the interpersonal skills that they would require to join the workplace and jumpstart their careers either as employees or as employers. These skills studied more in context, are significant as discussed:

*Verbal Communication*

It means communicating with words, written or spoken. This includes what we say, and how we say it, and also includes language development. This interaction by word of mouth helps children to learn how to use tone, construct sentences and give direct feedback during an interaction.

*Non Verbal Communication*

Non verbal communication has been noted to perform different functions on social interactions but mainly to replace verbal communication in situations where it may be impossible or inappropriate to talk (Berry, 2007). It includes using gestures and facial expressions to communicate. Meanings shared could be hidden or open depending on the context.
Negotiation

Negotiations are best carried out face to face. They help to build a relationship and judge the sincerity of the other person, which can make all the difference in the success of a deal. Expect conflict to arise in negotiations (Spencer, 2013). It is also a dialogue intended to resolve disputes, to produce an agreement upon the course of an action, to bargain for individual or collective advantage, or to craft outcomes to satisfy various interests (Dhungel, 2008).

Problem Solving

Problem solving involves coming up with a solution which would improve a situation and give effective results. It involves many stages but the first stage of problem solving which is the most important and is quite evident in play, helps in brainstorming solutions to the problem, gathering information, developing a work plan, identifying the problem, sensing if something is wrong. (Taylor & Lashman, 1994)

Assertiveness

Assertiveness helps a child feel naturally confident, enjoy the respect of others and easily establish productive working relationships even with “awkward” people. It involves understanding a person’s behavior, understanding other people better, keeping emotions under control, preventing other bullying, flattering or manipulating you against your will, acquiring easy to learn techniques (Gillen, 2003). It involves communicating clearly, honestly, and directly without avoidance or resorting to manipulative or aggressive behavior (Phillips, 2002).
Listening

The importance of listening has been recognized by many professionals, organizations and influential individuals. Wolvin and Coakley (1995) cited no less than 12 major research studies by organizations which found listening to be one of the most important skills for employees at every level of the organization. Another study (cited in Borisoff, 1997) by Wolvin and Coakley and conducted by the Speech Communication Association, surveyed 194 Community College Advisory Board Members’ perceptions as to the relative importance of forty nine selected communication skills for the performance of career duties. Survey results showed that listening skills were consistently ranked as the most important communication skills for career competence cited in (Purdy & Borisoff, 1997, p. 28).

Leadership

In today’s workplace, you need to develop leadership skills to build and direct teams and get work done. Many skills necessary for good leadership can be learned. Cultivating leadership skills early is a great way to pave way for success (Ferguson Career Skills Library, 2004). A leader must trust his/her teammate’s ability to pursue a goal and they must believe in the leader’s ability to provide needed support and guidance.

Decision Making

In its simplest sense, decision-making is the logical act of choosing between two or more courses of action from the available options. It involves choosing between possible solutions to a problem. Decisions can be made through either an intuitive or reasoned process, or a combination of the two. When trying to make a good decision, a person must weigh the positives and negatives of each option, and consider all the alternatives. For effective decision making, a
person must be able to forecast the outcome of each option as well, and based on all these items, determine which option is the best for that particular situation (Nutt & Wilson, 2010). The decision making process is greatly helped by receiving feedback in a communication process.

Empirical Literature Review

From observations and studies conducted on play in relation to children, Play is vital to children’s social development (Wood & Attfiel, 2005). It enables children to do the following:

1. practice both verbal and communications skills by negotiating roles and appreciating the feelings of play,
2. respond to other peers’ feelings while waiting for their turn and sharing materials and experiences,
3. experiment with roles of the people in their homes and schools as a result of contact with the needs and wishes of others,
4. experience others’ points of view by working positively through conflicts about space, materials and rules.

The interpersonal processes of play have been divided into three categories (Russ, 2004)

1. Empathy- the expression of concern for and caring for others.
2. Interpersonal schema/self-other representation- the level of development of self-other differentiation and capacity for trusting others.
3. Communication- the ability to communicate with others, to express ideas and emotions to others.

This is because it is assumed that play during childhood can stimulate a playful approach later in life including the ability to bring humor and fun to relationships and to see life’s difficulties as challenges rather than insurmountable obstacles. Communication involved during play helps children to develop social awareness and conscience and creates opportunities to explore
concepts of fairness and equality. Children also use play to solve problems as well as to express themselves (Franklin, 2000; as cited in Gaunt, 2006).

Play is and should be the right of every child in the society because it expands self-expression, self-knowledge, self-actualization and self-efficacy which can enhance self-esteem and interpersonal relationships (Boyd & Bee, 2006). In addition, play helps children to learn to respect each other and to solve problems. Their language is also enriched through constant communication, planning and negotiation of roles during play which in turn causes them to gain skills on how to handle and solve issues. They are also able to learn group norms and values and understand what their peers love. This enhances learning and growth in communication since they provide each other with opportunities to practice and receive feedback.

Interpersonal communication, as we understood earlier, is not only about the self but also about others. Effectiveness of interpersonal communication is determined by the way messages are designed, the channels used and the adequacy of information transmitted and use of right channel to generate relevant feedback. Effective interpersonal communication creates a forum for two-way communication and provides an opportunity for children to share their views freely. Play serves this purpose as it performs a large role in helping children in understanding the joys and challenges of relationships, learning to trust and cooperate with others; being able to see things from other people’s perspectives (empathy) and developing an understanding and tolerance for other people’s views (Spitzberg & Cupach, 2007).

In addition, play allows children to adjust easily to new situations. It is a medium through which a child can learn to gain confidence to accommodate anxieties and conflicts in different situations in life and later on in the life of adulthood cope with various social challenges (Peet &
Hartwick, 2015). It also helps children to feel less threatened and to express their feelings in the context of play than in the usual course of life. It is through play that a child learns how to take turns, that he/she realizes the need of co-operating with others and is able to form relationships with peers and to appropriately interact with adults and around him or her and can acquire values such as sharing, forgiveness, tolerance, respect and acceptance towards others.

For instance, children’s bodily movements allow them to move from place to place in order to relate to others, to touch, explore and discover different things that constitute their environment. Luongo-Orlando (2010) suggested that a child’s motor achievements have much impact on social relationships and that new skills learned such as pointing or touching to different things allows the child to grow more social skills necessary for effective communication.

Plummer (2011) observed that engagement of children in play is key as it: (1) engages children’s interest in reading and writing through play-based and teacher directed activity, (2) empowers them to make choices and decisions (3) encourages them to be creative and imaginative, (4) enables them to use a wide variety of skills (physical, emotional, cognitive and social, and (5) helps them to make connections across a range of curriculum subjects.

Children’s knowledge construction is greatly contributed by their social interaction by peers at play (Etisi, 2008). Their language is also enriched through constant communication, planning and negotiation of roles during play which in turn causes them to gain skills on how to handle and solve issues. They are also able to learn group norms and values and understand what their peers love. This could enhance learning since the children provide each other with opportunities to practice and receive feedback.
Hurlock (1978; as cited in Shapiro, 2003) suggested that play should be encouraged as a way of children to express their anger, jealousy and grief and for them to learn to cope with stressful situations. Shapiro (2003) also proposed that play needs to be encouraged for children to gain control over fearful feelings and uncertainty. Through play, different situations can be worked out and reduced to a manageable size. It can also be a means through which a child learns to follow rules in different life situations to accept winning or losing a game in a possible manner. Spitzberg and Cupach (2007) noted that symbolic play (play that transforms reality by assimilation to the needs of the self) needs to be considered as therapy; it helps a child deal with unconscious conflicts and allows for free expression of life experience that cannot be communicated through the means of language alone.

Vygotsky (1978) recognized pretend play as a primary social activity through which children acquire symbolic capacities, interpersonal skills and social knowledge. Play with objects and play with people is a primary driving force behind the development of other capacities in symbolic thinking, interpersonal skills and social knowledge. Santrock (2009) stated that imaginative play coupled with socio dramatic play causes children to explore and rehearse the social roles they see enacted around them. It helps them to test their own ability to explain and convince others of their ideas, to regulate their emotions through imagination as they pretend to be angry or afraid and develop a self-concept in a non-threatening context by taking part in different roles.

But separation between the sexes in children also has its advantages. According to West and Turner (2009), sex segregation in play can lead to girls learning negotiation and cooperation and boys learning assertive communication behaviors. A major study of sex differences in the play of school-age children, for example, by sociologist Jane Lever (1976; as cited in Conquergood,
2012) observed the following six differences between play of boys and girls: (1) Girls more often play indoors, (2) Boys tend to play in larger groups, (3) Boys play groups tend to include a wider range of participants, (4) Girls play in predominantly male games more often than vice versa. (5) Boys more often play competitive games, (6) Girls’ games tend to last a shorter period of time than boys games.

The differences between boys and girls help argue male-female differences in patterns of language communication use. Basically, girls tend to learn to do three things with words, to create and maintain relationships of closeness and equality with others, to criticize others in acceptable ways and to interpret accurately the speech of others girls. In the world of boys, speech is used to assert ones position of dominance, to attract and maintain an audience and to assert one-self when others have the floor. There are different stereotypes that are related to different kinds of play in which boys and girls are encouraged to build their personality (Driscoll & Nagel, 2008). The boy’s games include use of muscles and sometimes weighty matters. This encourages boys to be able to think critically and solve the tough issues of life since they choose such roles as doctors, soldiers and mechanics while girls choose to be nurses and teachers.

Teachers Involvement in Play

States parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and age-appropriate recreational activities and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts. Children have the right to play and allowing them to have time and space for leisure and play helps their health, education and well-being (Commonwealth, 2009). It is important for teachers to understand that school time is the best available time for children to engage in play. At this age
in their lives, children are very energetic and can use the muscles for different kind of play and games. As they develop, they make more meaning since they are more coordinated. They are able to make more friends, communicate more effectively and make rational decisions. Providing adequate time for them in school will help the child gain cognitive development, language development, intelligence thought and ideas. This development aids their imaginary and creative thought which raises their levels of intellectual functioning. Vygotsky (1978, p. 24) stated that, “knowledge construction of children is greatly contributed by their social interaction by peers at play”. It is therefore important for them to be given ample time for playing. Play involves exploration, imagination and motivation and provides medium for the development of decision making, communication, and socialization skills (Feist & Feist, 2002).

According to Boyd and Bee (2006), teachers should understand the importance that play has on children’s communication skills and should emphasize it as it enables children to utilize the following skills: (1) initiating and ending an interaction, (2) asking/answering questions, (3) making requests, (4) taking turns in conversations, (5) giving personal communication, (6) explaining / giving instruction, (7) using strategies for following complex instructions, (8) encouraging and reinforcing others, (9) keeping an interaction going, (10) acknowledging actions of others and giving/receiving feedback, (11) being appropriate and timely in interactions, and (12) showing awareness of appropriate personal space (proximity to others).

From the foregoing, it is clear that play is an important part of any teaching program involving young children because play activities encourage children to practice their social communication skills. Teachers should therefore embrace it because it will help the children be able to learn to make their own choices, socialize with their peers, share and take turns with others and communicate their ideas and feelings both verbally and non-verbally (Plummer, 2011).
One such supportive measures that teachers can employ is to assist children in the choice of playmates thus influencing their social relations and promoting pro-social behaviors. When children play with others, they learn from them and learn social skills and develop confidence. This is especially important during school since at this stage children find it difficult to establish relationships with peers (Franklin, 2000; as cited in Gaunt, 2006). It has further been noted that the involvement of teachers in children’s education has a positive effect on their learning as grown-ups have a wealth of skills that can be easily shared with children through play.

Summary

The chapter reviewed different research literature from previous studies and gave a general overview of the topic of Effects of children’s play in developing interpersonal communication skills. It also gave theoretical framework upon which the study was based. The next chapter will discuss the methodology that will be employed in the study and where and how the study will be carried out.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Methodology explains the methods used in a research. It is the reference point of checking the suitability of ideas and issues for empirical investigation (Flick, 2007). This chapter discusses the methodology that was employed in the study; study tools, where the study will was carried out, types of data, sources of data, the sampling method, data collection techniques and data analysis techniques that were employed.

Research Design

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006), research design is the conceptual framework within which research is conducted. Descriptive research design has been found as the most appropriate for studying social phenomena due to its ability to describe a situation or portray an event, or a situation (Chandran, 2004; Kothari, 2008). It involves gathering data of events, organizing the data, tabulating the data and describing the collected data. Descriptive research design help to answer the questions of who, what, when, where and how regarding a particular research problem (Oladipo, Ikamari, Kiplang’at, & Barasa, 2015). It was therefore used in this study based on the need to explain relationship between play and interpersonal communication skills, how the data was collected and the impact that this whole research will have on the target population and the respondents.

The researcher used mixed methods where researcher combined both qualitative and quantitative methods of collecting data in a single research study. Johnson and Onwegbuzie (2007) defined quantitative research as the process of designing a study in a manner that can produce
measurable, systematic and standardized results. Conversely, a qualitative process focuses on the understanding of a social problem using narrative data, rather than generalizing the results to the target population (Singleton & Straits, 2005).

Population

A population also referred to as the Universe, is an entire group of persons, objects or events that have an observable common characteristics (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Lang’ata Constituency, according to a report on Private and Public primary schools in Constituencies by the Ministry of Education (2015), had 159 schools. These included mixed, day, boarding, girls” schools and boys. Lang’ata had only 15 public schools and had a total of 144 private schools.

Target Population

The researcher used simple random sampling to select six mixed primary schools from the list of Private and public Primary Schools by Ministry of Education (2015). It included three private primary schools and three public primary schools. The target population for this study therefore was teachers, head teachers and standard seven pupils in the six selected schools within Lang’ata Constituency. The schools comprised Lang’ata Barracks Primary School, Uhuru Gardens Primary School, Madaraka Primary School, All Saints Cathedral School, Jonathan Gloag School and Moi Educational Center.

The researcher selected the six schools sample out of the 159 schools; 14 public and 144 private schools because she wanted a balanced number in the schools selected from either side. Knowing also that public schools were under the government, the data collected from the schools were assumed to be somewhat similar. For the private schools, Jonathan Gloag Academy is owned by an individual, All Saints Cathedral is church based while Moi Educational Center is owned by an
entity. This therefore meant that the way these private schools were run may be different and thus may make the study more diverse and representative.

**Table 3.1: Target Population under Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head Teachers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>740</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 shows the total population under study to be 740. The total population of Head teachers from the six schools was 6 since each school had only one head teacher. The researcher carried out the census of the teachers bringing the total sample population to 44. Total population of children in the schools was 690 making the 10% sample to be 69. This eventually gave a total population of 119 of head teachers, teachers and children.

The researcher chose standard seven pupils from these six schools based on the fact that they have stayed in school long enough and have been engaging in play and therefore would be able to respond to information on play. Seeing also that they are not in class eight which is the final year, they can create time to respond to questions and they can give quick and easy feedback on parental consent or may only really need consent from their head teacher. The choice of having a study sample from both mixed and public primary schools ensured that the study was representative of both category of private and private thus reducing bias. The data collected from the schools shed more light on the topic of play’s effects on children’s interpersonal skills.

In addition, Lang’ata Constituency was chosen because it is one of the largest constituencies in Nairobi ensuring that there is a probability of having mixed characteristics within the sample. It
is also divided into Lang’ata, Madaraka, Nairobi West and Karen areas which further justify its representation of overall Lang’ata Constituency and Nairobi County in general.

Sample Size

A sample size, which is the percentage of the portion of the population under study, (Oladipo et al., 2015) is usually derived from a sample frame which is a list of elements in the population (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). According to Kasomo (2007), 10% of the accessible population is enough. Purposive sample sizes are not necessarily fixed prior to data collection and depend on the resources and time available and the objects of the study (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In this study the sample sizes were derived from the total population of teachers, children and head teachers in the schools according to each school’s admission records between (September-December, 2016) during third term.

This study borrowed from Kasomo’s guideline of 10% sample size and therefore took 10% sample of the 690 standard seven children from the schools. The 10% sample was initially also applied to the teachers in the primary schools since they interchange teaching of various subjects; but the researcher ended up carrying out a census of the teachers. The head teachers that were interviewed were only six since six schools were used in the study.

Table 3.2: Sample Size of Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the School</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moi Educational Center</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madaraka Primary School</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints Cathedral</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uhuru Gardens Primary</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Gloag Academy</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lang’ata Barracks Primary</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.2 shows the total population and sample population to be 44. This is because the researcher decided to take the whole representation of standard seven teachers as she could not take 10% as they were very few. Thus, the population for the teachers was censored.

Table 3.3: Sample Size of Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the School</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moi Educational Center</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madaraka Primary School</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints Cathedral</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uhuru Gardens Primary</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Gloag Academy</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lang”ata Barracks Primary</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>690</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In Table 3.3, 10% was used according to Kasomo’s guidelines. Each school had three streams apart from Moi Educational Center which had four and Jonathan Gloag Academy which had 2.

Table 3.4: Sample Size of Head Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of the School</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Moi Educational Center</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Madaraka Primary School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All Saints Cathedral</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uhuru Gardens Primary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Gloag Academy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lang”ata Barracks Primary</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4 shows the total population and sample population to be six. This is because, every school had only one head teacher according to the records in each school listed. The selection of head teachers was purposive.
Sampling Technique

Sampling refers to the procedures used to obtain a sample (Kothari, 2008). There are two basic approaches to sampling: Probability and non-probability sampling (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). In probability sampling, every unit in the universe has a chance of being selected in the sample and the results accurately generalized to a population. However, in non-probability sampling respondents are selected for practical reasons such as possession of characteristics relevant to the research questions (Patton, 2002) or budgetary constraints (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

Since the nature of this study touched on standard seven pupils in six selected primary schools in Lang’ata and teachers, the researcher adopted non-probability and probability sampling. In purposive sampling, the researcher selected Lang’ata Constituency to represent all other Constituencies/divisions within Nairobi City (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003) and head teachers to represent each school.

In the second stage, the researcher used simple random sampling to select the six schools that were used in the study. It was applied in selecting three out of all public primary schools found within Lang’ata Constituency and in selecting the remaining three schools out of all private primary schools found within Lang’ata Constituency. However, due to challenges of permission and time constraints, the researcher ended up selecting other schools to use in the study. Stratified random sampling was used for children who formed the sample unit. This ensured appropriate proportion of representation of children in the six schools of study. The researcher then used systematic sampling to get specific children to represent their classes in the study. The researcher achieved this by using registers of the classes where she select the fourth, eighth, twelfth etc. child.
For the teachers, the researcher had planned to use simple random sampling method to select them where she planned to write their names on pieces of paper fold them, put them in a box mix them and randomly select the number of teachers to be sampled according to the school. However, the researcher had to carry out a census of the teachers in all schools since their numbers were too small to give a 10% sample. All teachers teaching standard seven subjects were therefore selected to participate in the study.

Data Collection Instruments

According to Cooper and Schindler (2003), a good research instrument must be accurate, simple to use, efficient and capable of answering the research questions. Descriptive survey typically uses questionnaires or interviews to collect information (Singleton & Straits, 2005). Therefore, this study used interviews, questionnaires and observation method.

The questionnaires were administered to the teachers and head teachers and they consisted of close-ended, open ended and Likert-scale questions. Close-ended questions limits the list of responses to choose from and therefore open ended questions were also used to obtain data from qualitative aspects in the respondents own words and to examine the salience of opinions. Likert scale questions facilitated measurements of respondents’ attitudes, beliefs and opinions towards playing as a way of developing interpersonal skills.

For the interviews, the researcher used semi-structured interview schedule to interview the children because they are personal and provide more details than questionnaires. This was also used because it ensured that the interviewer could adjust, reframe or clarify questions where necessary. The researcher was also able to observe non-verbal messages which were important since they added meaning.
An observation checklist was also used to record observations during data collection. It was filled with everything that was noted by the researcher and her assistants. Each item on the checklist was checked off as the observation took place. The observation checklist that was used consisted of items that sought information on playing materials, availability of time and children’s involvement in play.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection refers to the gathering of information to serve or prove same facts (Orodho & Kombo, 2006). In this study, three research instruments were used which included, observation, questionnaires and interviews. According to Kothari (2008), a researcher needs to collect instruments with which to collect the necessary information. Copies of the questionnaire that were used in this study were administered to the teachers and head teachers as it was the appropriate way of accessing people’s perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and constructions of reality (Cooper & Schindler, 2003).

Interviews were used where the children were asked questions tailored towards the achievement of the objectives of the study. This was done face to face by the researcher. Interview method was preferred since in depth information could be gathered from questions asked. Also, since observation was used in the study, the researcher used the observational instrument to observe the standard seven children on their behaviors and activities as they played in the schools and also to answer the question on whether the children engaged in play.

To help in data collection, the researcher also hired and trained two assistants whom she worked with. To ensure that the assistants understood well the content and format, the researcher explained the purpose of the study and went through the questionnaires with them. The
researcher together with the research assistants then administered questionnaires to teachers and Head teachers in respective schools. The researcher with the help of one research assistant administered questionnaires at Moi Educational Center, Madaraka Primary School and Lang’ata Barracks Primary School. The two research assistants together presented the questionnaires at Jonathan Gloag Academy, Uhuru Gardens Primary School and at All Saints Cathedral School. The same applied to conducting interviews and in the observation procedure to ensure harmony in the findings.

Pretesting

Pretesting involved the use of a small number of respondents to test the appropriateness of the questions and their comprehension. The researcher with the help of one research assistant tried out draft questionnaires on a group that was selected conveniently and which was similar in make-up to the ones that were ultimately sampled. The main purpose of pretesting was to identify potential problems with the methods, logistics, and questionnaire (Hennink, Hutter, & Bailey, 2011).

These questionnaires were distributed by the research assistants to teachers in a selected school in Lang’ata Constituency in Nairobi who were not to be included in the selected samples. The researcher then interviewed 6 children who formed a 10% sample of the 60 children in the two streams in the school. The school that was used for the sample was New Hope Outreach Ministry Primary School. The researcher selected this school because, though it is a private school, it is registered under Public Schools system to allow them certification to operate the school. The curriculum used is therefore forwarded under the Ministry of Education but they come up with
their own timetable. Pretesting enabled the researcher to maximize the reliability and validity of data collected (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

The pretesting of the questions and the interviews also helped the researcher to assess the reaction of the respondents, the acceptability and clarity of the questions, the time required and the willingness of the respondents to co-operate. The researcher was able to determine the extent to which instructions given would be followed and to locate problems in carrying out those instructions. She altered some questions and simplified others while also adding other questions that ultimately helped to arrive to the objectives of the study.

It was noted during pilot testing that children gave similar answers to specific questions and that most questions required simple yes or no and therefore it was easy to measure the data numerically as the researcher was able to frame some questions with choices. Children were given the interview guides as they were being asked the questions. This way, they were more comfortable and were able to write down the answers as they responded which helped the researcher when it came to analyzing data.

Data Analysis Plan

Data is a collection of facts and figures relating to a particular activity under study (Mingala, 2002). Data analysis refers to examining what has been collected in a survey or experiment and making deductions and inferences. It involves uncovering underlying structures, extracting important variables, deducting any anomalies and testing any underlying assumption (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).
The researcher collected the questionnaires and had the data imputed to a spreadsheet by a data clerk. The data was then transferred to SPSS (Statistical package for Social Sciences) version 20 software for analysis. This program was used because of its ability and capacity of sorting and providing relationship between variables. Qualitative data from the interviews was then analyzed by summarizing and interpreting the main key findings that were identified and final conclusions was made based on the data.

**Ethical Considerations**

According to Creswell and Clarc (2011), getting access to people and sites requires obtaining permission from individuals in charge of the sites. The researcher followed due process in getting institutional approval, informed consent from parents of the children and head teachers and also assured confidentiality. Respondents were protected by keeping the information given confidential since the confidentiality was promised (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

The children are a vulnerable group that should be respected and as such they were made to understand that they have a right to participate voluntarily and the right to withdraw any time so that they are not coerced into participation. The researcher explained to the children the purpose of the study so as to understand the nature of the research and its likely impact on them. All of this was included in the informed consent form that was available for them before they engaged in the research. The research assistant then issued the questions on a paper and as children answered the questions, we encouraged them to write down the answers on the paper which assisted us to have a complete record of all children’s answers.

Consent was also required from the head teachers of the schools to ensure that they were informed in advance about the nature of research and its significance to the promotion of the
welfare of institutions. Parents’ approval for Madaraka Primary and All Saints Cathedral was sought for children to participate in the research. The researcher made copies of letters addressed to parents for consent of their randomly selected children to participate in the research with clearly outlined objectives and benefits of the study to overall development of their child.

The researcher also requested a letter from the office of the School of Communication, Languages and Performing arts of Daystar University to show permission from the University towards conducting this research and an additional letter from National Commission for Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) for permit in carrying out research in the schools with a stamped date and signature from the Ministry of Education and Nairobi County Commissioner since the study was carried in Nairobi County. Both letters from Daystar University and NACOSTI were well received in all schools used in the study.

Summary

The chapter served to describe the research methodology this study used in order to achieve the relevant objectives. It described the procedures that were used in designing the instruments and collecting data, and also provided an explanation of the statistical procedures used for analyzing data. Sampling section and the importance of maintaining ethics during collection of data was also explained in this chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings based on the objectives of the study. The chapter provides descriptive statistics based on the responses from the questionnaires that were distributed by the researcher which include: means, standard deviations, frequencies and percentages. Data was analyzed and presented with the aid of SPSS (version 20). Presentations have been done in the form of tables, bar graphs and pie charts. Reliability was measured using Cronbach”s Alpha generated from SPSS (version 20). Cronbach's alpha is a function of the number of items in a test, the average covariance between item-pairs, and the variance of the total score. According to Kothari (2008), testing goodness of data by testing the reliability and validity of the measure is a pre-requisite for data analysis. Based on the pilot study conducted prior to data collection, the instrument had a value of 0.873 which lies within the acceptable range of 0.7 to 1.0 and therefore this shows that the instrument was reliable.

Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

This section presents the sample characteristics of the respondents: gender, age group of respondents, academic qualifications of the respondents; respondents” understanding of interpersonal communications skills and respondents” view on whether play was important.
Figure 4.1 shows that the majority of the teachers were female representing 62.2% while the male constituted 35.5%. Figure 4.2 shows that a majority of the children were male representing 54% while the female constituted 46%. In table 4.1, out of the six head teachers who represented the six schools, only one was male. In as much as the ratio was not equal and despite the
percentage difference depicted in the teachers, children’s and head teachers outputs, the views of both genders were represented.

![Bar chart showing age distribution of teachers]

*Figure 4.3: Age of Teachers*

![Bar chart showing age distribution of head teachers]

*Figure 4.4: Age of the Head Teachers*

Figure 4.3 shows that the majority of the teachers’ ages fell between 31 and 45 years. In figure 4.4, the ages of the teachers ranged between 41-45 years. These results indicate that the respondents were normally distributed across age and were in good age bracket to make informed decisions and to answer all the questions relating to communication, interpersonal communication skills and play.
With regard to academic qualifications, Figure 4.5 show that 54.6% of the respondents had at least a bachelor’s level in education, 6.8% had postgraduate diploma qualification, 9.1% had diploma qualifications and P1 holders represented 29.5% of the respondents. This indicates that the respondents were well educated and therefore expected to understand the importance of play and further the topic of communication and interpersonal communication. This is further captured in Figure 4.6 which shows that 100% of the head teachers had all attended school; 83% of the head teachers had a postgraduate diploma while 17% had diploma in teaching. This meant
that they were in a good position to define interpersonal communication and tell the relevance of play towards helping children develop interpersonal communication skills which were important for successful futures.

![Pie chart showing responses to whether children engage in play at school.](image)

*Figure 4.7: Whether Children Engage in Play at School*

Figure 4.7 shows that 94% of children said that they played in school while 4% stated that they did not play at all. Response on this question was not 100% as 2% of the children were not specific. They did not give a direct yes or no answer. However, despite the 6% that did not respond yes to this question, it is important to note that children did engage in play as play in this study was used as a tool to show how children could gain interpersonal communication skills. If they did not play at all, the research would have been insignificant. Play is seen a driving force rather than just a mirror of development. It is through active participation in play that children construct shared meanings and transform their understanding of the skills, values and knowledge inherent in society and culture as a whole (Luongo-Orlando, 2010). Thus using play as a tool in this study was effective in helping the researcher achieve the set out objectives.
Table 4.2: Time Allocated for Play in Timetable by Head Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45 minutes</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One hour</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2 shows that, when it comes to the amount of time that was allocated for children to engage in play, most time selected was 30 minutes as compared to 45 minutes and one hour that were selected by the remaining head teachers. This shows that play is really considered important and is given time irrespective of how small and therefore was a good tool to show how children developed interpersonal skills as they engaged in play at this time.

Table 4.3: The Numbers of Hours in a Day Teachers Leave for Play/Interaction Activities for Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hours of Play</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When teachers were asked about the number of hours in a day they left for play/interaction activities for children, Table 4.3 shows that the majority (at least 93.2%) of teachers said that children were given between one and two hours for play. This shows that the children were exposed to play to a greater extent. This is very relevant to the research because it goes to prove that children did indeed engage in play and to a great extent, as research shows that interpersonal communication can be thought of as a skill. Hargie (1997; as cited in Berry, 2007), defined interpersonal communication as the "process whereby the individual implements a sets of goal"
directed, interrelated, situationally appropriate social behaviors which are learned and controlled”. If interpersonal communication skills are to be learned, time factor must be considered. Knowing that children are given enough time to play shows further that they have time to gain interpersonal skills which are learned. West and Turner (2009) further stated that interpersonal communication is learned and we all need to refine and cultivate our skills to communicate with a wide assortment of people. Play as seen gives children enough time to be able to learn these skills as they communicate.

Table 4.4: Whether Teachers Think Play is Important for Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 shows that 100% of the teachers all agreed that play is important for children. In Table 4.5, teachers were further asked to give reasons as to why they thought children should engage in play in an open question. This question aimed to find out whether teachers thought that play’s significance bordered on other skills separate from developing communication skills. From their responses, it was observed that without play, the children were likely to get dull in class. It was also established that play provided an avenue for children to pass information and their feelings verbally or non-verbally; it was a way to tap talent and finally, play enabled the students to know how to negotiate and reach compromises amongst each other. The latter reasons for play have been summarised in Table 4.5.
Table 4.5: Reasons Why Children Should Engage in Play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Without play, children get dull in class</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play is one way through which people pass information, feelings</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To tap talents and balance the curriculum and co-curriculum</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negotiate and reach compromises amongst each other</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>81.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mulunda (2013) reported that it was anticipated that there will be 3.5 billion people in the global workforce by 2030, but one billion of them will lack the relevant skills for employment if graduates were still found to lack interpersonal skills. The AGR report (2017) resolved that, by the time those children reach university and employment, critical employability skills should be deep-rooted so that it’s just a matter of fine-tuning and stated that this problem should be looked at from as early as childhood. Seeing then that teachers understand the importance of play in helping children develop interpersonal communication skills is a good indication that there is at least a possible solution to this problem.

Table 4.6: Significance of Play According to Head Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether respondents think play is important for children</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Whether head teachers think play is important for children</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If yes, reasons provided</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>It builds self-esteem of children</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plays helps in reducing stress</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of play makes children dull</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For physical fitness</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A table 4.6 further showed that all the head teachers agreed that play was important for children and gave the reasons why they thought so. The benefits of play stated showed play to be significant in exercise for the children and in building their self-esteem and reducing stress. In as much as their feedback does not directly relate to development of interpersonal communication skills, this feedback brings another important aspect of dealing with relationships. High self-esteem, high spirits, reduction in stress and being physically fit are good contributors towards relating well with others. West and Turner, (2009) stated that interpersonal communication has both content and relationship levels which are significant.

Table 4.7: Importance of Play in Building Interpersonal Communication Skills According to Head Teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How important respondents think play is in building interpersonal communication skills for children</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.7 shows that 100% of head teachers thought that play is important in building interpersonal communication skills.

Table 4.8: Acquired Interpersonal Communication Skills during Play According to Head Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The skills respondents think children could acquire from engaging in play in school</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above (Negotiation, non-verbal, problem solving and listening)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>33.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.8 shows that 66.7% of teachers believed that listening skills was the main skill that children could acquire through play, 33.3% agreed that negotiation, non-verbal communication, problem solving and listening skills were the main skills that could be acquired through play. From this response, it is clear that play is indeed effective in helping children develop interpersonal communication skills which are transferrable to the interpersonal skills that students require for their career growth. Hewes, (2006) stated that interpersonal skills are life skills which we need to effectively communicate with other people and they include, (1) verbal communication - what we say, and how we say it, and also includes language development, (2) non-verbal communication- what we communicate without words or language, (3) listening skills- how we interpret verbal and non-verbal messages by others, (4) negotiation- working with others to find an agreeable outcome, (5) problem solving- working with others to work or problems or issues. (6) assertiveness- communicating our values, ideas, beliefs, opinions, needs and wants, (7) decision making- analyzing options to make sound decisions and, (8) Leadership- ability to manage a team of people and direct them in various roles or duties.

The feedback from the head teachers showed listening, negotiation, non-verbal and problem solving to be among the interpersonal skills that children acquire during play which are key skills. The 2017 AGR report suggested that many university leavers were lacking essential interpersonal communication skills like problem solving and team work when they enter the workplace and as a result cannot maintain their jobs. Knowing then that these skills can be gained in the context of play as children communicate goes a long way in solving this problem.
Table 4.9: Head Teachers Understanding of the Word Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What respondents understand from the word communication</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>It is self-expression in verbal or non-verbal</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 shows that 100% of the respondents had an understanding of the word communication. Different responses were given but they were all summarized into self-expression in verbal and non-verbal. Head teachers feedback on the open-ended question on the definition of communication, were as follows: “It is a way of passing information” “Communication is the act of transferring information from one place to another.” “To pass information or message from one person to another” “Engaging by verbal and related accepted words” “This is self-expression in both verbal or non-verbal” “it is listening and speaking”.

The head teachers understanding of what communication is, showed further understanding of interpersonal communication skills as the key emphasis in interpersonal communication is communication itself (Wood, 2013). Without it, one cannot gain interpersonal communication skills. Communication is a process that involves giving and receiving feedback (Hewes, 2006). It is through this giving and receiving feedback that interaction takes place. This interaction (communication) portrayed in communication lies at the center of any learning experience and as such, interpersonal communication skills are learned as communication takes place.

Table 4.10: Teachers Understanding of Interpersonal Communication Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ability to socialize, express and interact with others</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>79.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills that enable children to behave well</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General behavior and relation among people</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building the bond between the pupils and teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In relation to Table 4.10, respondents were asked about their understanding of the role of play in developing interpersonal communication skills. This was a qualitative question but the responses have been summarized in Table 4.10. It can be observed that 79.5% of the respondents acknowledged that play enabled children to socialize, express and interact with others, while 11.4% said that play helped the children to get skills that enable them to behave well. The rest of the respondents said that play enabled the children to build better bonds between themselves and teachers.

A selected response of 10% of the teachers on their understanding of Interpersonal communication skills further showed teachers general understanding play in relation to Interpersonal communication skills. “self delivered/internal passing of information and interpretation” “The way pupils should be able to communicate comfortably and effectively with other people” “The ability to socialize, express and interact with others” “This is the exchange of information in terms of feelings be it verbal or non-verbal messages” “The ability to socialize and interact with others” Interpersonal communication events include more informal, everyday exchanges than they do any other type of communication. They include most of the communication activities we engage in from the time we get up until we go to bed.

An activity is interpersonal communication if it meets three criteria: (1) all parties must be in close proximity, (2) all parties send and receive messages, and (3) these messages include both verbal and non-verbal stimuli (Wandberg, 2011). From these responses, it shows that teachers did understand the meaning of interpersonal communication skills and could therefore be able to tell whether or not they were significant in helping children have successful futures.
The respondents were also asked how important they thought play was in building interpersonal communication skills in children. Figure 4.8 summarizes the findings of the responses of this question.

![Figure 4.8: Teachers View of Play in Building Interpersonal Communication Skills in Children](image)

Figure 4.8 shows that responses were skewed to the right meaning that most of the respondents (72.7%) were in agreement that play was very important in building interpersonal communication skills among children.

Table 4.11: Effectiveness of Play on Children’s Interpersonal Communication Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How respondents rate the effectiveness of play on</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Minimum</th>
<th>Maximum</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std. Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>improving children's verbal and non-verbal communication</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.5909</td>
<td>.54210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching problem solving</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.5227</td>
<td>.50526</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>developing relationships</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.7045</td>
<td>.46152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>acquiring leadership skills and roles</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.7273</td>
<td>.45051</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relaxation and leisure</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.7045</td>
<td>.50942</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.11 shows that a majority of the respondents agreed that play was important in improving children's verbal and non-verbal communication by a likert scale of 3.5909 out of a possible 5.00 where higher scores represent more agreement. The majority of the respondents further accepted that play was effective in impacting problem solving skills, on developing relationships, in acquiring leadership skills and roles, in enhancing relaxation skills, boosting children’s creativity and in helping to build stamina of the children through continuous exercise. The latter observations were based on the observed mean likert values which were above 3.50 above the neutral point of 3.00. From these observations, it was generally construed that play was generally effective in imparting interpersonal communication skills.

Different types of interpersonal communication skills the children have acquired through playing in relation to the children’s play activities

From Table 4.11, it can be observed that play was effective in imparting the following interpersonal skills: children's verbal and non-verbal communication, problem solving, leadership skills and roles, decision making, boosting children's creativity and physical exercise skills. This can also be observed in Table 4.10 where respondents in the majority of 79.5% said that play enabled the children to socialize, express and interact with others. Further feedback showed that 11.4% of the respondents were of the opinions that play enabled children to behave well and 9.1% of the respondents were of the opinion that play enabled the children to build bonds between themselves and teachers.
Figure 4.9: Children’s Usual Play Activities

Figure 4.9 shows that the children did engage in play activities. Games like Football, volleyball, hide and seek and Acrobatics were the most commonly played games across all schools. Other mentioned games in the interviews included: rugby, basketball, running, tennis, hockey, X and O paper game, swimming, skating, kati, three sticks, netball, stuck in the mud, jump rope, badminton, karate. Further observation of the children’s play activities showed running, shoulder taping games and ball throwing games as top of the list in the games that the children engage in.

This response shows that skills were needed for children to engage in play like negotiation in balancing good team players in different teams, verbal communication and leadership skills for them to effectively divide roles before engaging in play.

Looking at this play activities or games that children engaged in, we can further see that two-way theory of communication is needed for communication to take place efficiently. All these games are played between two people or more. For these games to be played effectively, messages must be relayed and feedback returned for understanding to take place. Smith (1992) stated that communication is a transaction in which there is simultaneous giving and receiving. There is
joint responsibility for effective communication; the listener and speaker share in the process of developing understanding. These messages come in the form of rules, or directions that are needed to be followed, who the team members will be, how long the game is supposed to take place and what entails winning. Effective interpersonal communication creates a forum for two-way communication and provides an opportunity for these children to share their views freely and adequately engage in play activities (Trenholm & Jensen 2008).

![Play Mates Chart](image)

**Figure 4.10: Play Mates**

Figure 4.10 shows that children mostly played with their friends (72.9%) followed by the classmates (21.4%). This showed that there was a lot of interaction as children played, leading to friendships. Teachers were rated at 4.3% showing that they rarely engaged the children in play but at least they did engage with children. Only 1.4% of the children said that they had no idea whether teachers engaged them in play since the fact that they were present in the field did not necessarily mean they were part of the games. From this response, it is obvious that play builds
on interpersonal relationships. The fact that interpersonal communication takes two means that it is indivisible. Without the second person, interpersonal communication is impossible. From an interpersonal perspective, even groups of three or more individuals are viewed as composites of dyads effectively serving as the foundation for separate pairings and potential coalitions. Without a dyad, a relationship does not exist, and without a relationship, there is no interpersonal communication (Cleary et al., 2009). The fact that children stated that they mostly play with friends shows that there is a relationship. When people communicate, interpersonal relationships are built and interpersonal skills are developed as a result. Seeing then that lack of interpersonal communication skills negatively affects personal relationships and knowing that children form friendships as they play further proves that learning these skills from an early age would assist greatly in solving the problem that most adults are facing due to lack of interpersonal communication skills.

Table 4.12: Children’s Communication during Play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Children’s communication during play</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Daily life activities</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer games</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School work</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What they would like to be</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About footballers</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future career</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>About the house they would build</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Their talents</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Games</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills/tactics on the game</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Life skills</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studies</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EPL games</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends and places visited</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social media news/pages</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.12 shows that communication took place during play. Children talked about a variety of things touching on life, school, aspirations and the games itself. Most children when asked this question stated that they talked about everything as topics varied from day to day depending on nature of game, moods and people involved in the games. Other listed discussions include: exams, new technology, encouragements, plans to change the world, life’s struggles and blessings, day’s lessons, school work, what they would like to be, future career, their talents, friends and places visited, social media and skills and tactics to use during the games.

These additions were summarized in children’s communication during play in Table 4.12 as they circulate around the same points. From this feedback, it is obvious that communication takes place in play. Robinson (1978; as cited in Nalova, 2001), stated that so many of the problems we face in the world today are communication related. Many of these scholars view effective communication as a stepping stone to solving most problems that we have in society. Robinson (1978, p. 20) noted that in a world like the one in which we live, communication has become the glue that binds people together thus making effective communication an increasingly important issue. “Never before in the history of the world has mankind hung so precariously on accurate and swift communication as it does today.”

In this sense, communication just is, and is happening all the time when people are together. Every social situation entails communication and therefore calls up communication skills. Communication skills are ranked first among a job candidate’s “must have” skills and qualities, according to a 2010 survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers in America. The fact that it is very evident during play shows how effective it is in helping children develop interpersonal communication skills which they undoubtedly need for career growth.
Table 4.13: Extra Time for Play

The time apart from PE lessons is assumed as extra time that children can engage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Break time</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lunch time</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13 shows that 83.3% stated that break time was assumed as extra time apart from P.E when the children would engage in play whereas, 16.7% agreed that lunch time offered children extra time for play. Knowing now that children are allocated extra time for play shows that play is very effective in helping children gain interpersonal communication skills as they interact together. It therefore is the best platform for interpersonal skills development and should be embraced not only as an object of fun but as a platform of development.

Table 4.14: Head Teacher’s Intention to Support Children’s Play

What respondents do to promote children’s play in their school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What respondents do</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accommodating timetable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the above</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Provision of play materials, Enough space to engage in Play)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.16 shows that 83.3% of the head teachers supported play by providing toys and enough play time for the children, 16.7% stated that they provided accommodating timetable that allowed enough time for children’s play. This shows that teachers viewed play as significant to the children and intend to support play in school. If head teachers could ensure that children engage in play activities and that they have enough time for play, then children would develop skills that they would need in career development.
Participant Observation Findings

The researcher with the help of the research assistants observed children play during break time and P.E time in the six schools. The observations took place for duration of 6 weeks since one school was observed twice in one week during break time and Physical Exercise class time. Break time in these schools took place between 10.15-11am. At Uhuru Gardens Primary and Lang’ata Barracks Primary, break time was between 11 am-11.30 am. P.E time in the public schools started from 3.30 to 4.30 on Fridays. In the public schools, it was given 40 minutes (class period) across the week.

An observation checklist was also used to record observations during data collection. The researcher observed play during break time in the six schools whereas the research assistants observed play during P.E time as it varied in time across the six schools. The observation checklist was filled with everything that was noted by the researcher and her assistants. Each item on the checklist was checked off as the observation took place. The observation checklist that was used consisted of items that sought information on playing materials, types of games, who the children played with and the skills that were required for the children to actively engage in play. It was also used to observe availability of time the children had to engage in play, the attitudes that children had towards play and whether or not all children participated in play. The findings from this observation were reported in themes.

*Playing Materials*

A combination of all schools showed that children played mainly with balls, sticks, stones. Most games did not require play materials, they involved singing, tapping on the shoulder, question and answer, hide and seek, role playing and story-telling.
Types of Games

Games observed in the schools included football, volleyball, acrobatics, hide and seek, three sticks, “kati” (ball throwing and hitting game), and basketball. Other games mentioned during interviews were not observed during break time or Physical Exercise (P.E) time when observation took place.

Who the children played with

Teachers from these schools were mostly involved during P.E but in all schools observed, there was no teacher who was seen to engage children in play during break time. They sat in their staff room waiting for the next lessons. Children mostly played with their classmates/ friends and seemed very happy as they played. Other children, who opted not to play, used the time to chat or finish homework before the next classes began.

Skills required to Engage in Play:

Verbal Communication:

During play, as noted during observation, children engaged in verbal communication. Children would discuss about the type of game to play, the team members from both sides, the team that would play first, the kind of play materials that they would use to play, what constitutes winning, the rules of the game and where to get the play materials. Verbal communication was observed in all schools.

Listening:

Listening was very active since children had to listen to instructions and the rules of the games, in singing games; children had to listen so that they could respond as required. This was very
evident in skipping rope games and tap-on-the-shoulder games. Madaraka Primary School Children were fond of playing the tap-on-the-shoulder games where they would tie a sweater over the eyes of the “seeker” and tap him/her on the shoulder and run before they are caught.

Non-Verbal Communication

It was used a lot in all schools observed. Facial expressions were used between team members when they wanted to win over the other team. In „kati” children signified to each other whether they should hit the ball on the ground or continue playing. During hide and seek, Jonathan Gloag children communicated through hand gestures when it was safe to come out.

Leadership and Team work

The researcher observed that children would always form groups before they started playing. They would divide themselves in groups of twos and decide which group would play first either by flipping a coin, writing the groups names on a piece of paper and selecting randomly or by coming to an agreement to let one group begin then the other follow. In all six schools under study, this observation was the same. The leader would also give instructions to the team members and divide roles for engaging in the game.

Decision making:

The researcher noted from observing during break time, that In Lang”ata Barracks and Uhuru Gardens Primary for example, that a team leader would make a decision to keep a team member completely out of the game when conflict would arise during play. The first person to start it would be asked to apologize and if they persisted, they would be told to stay out of the game completely.
Negotiation and Leadership:

For the children that used the time for play, they would first come together and assign numbers; then assign roles and divide themselves in two groups. There was a lot of negotiation that took place as they had to ensure that the teams were balanced in terms of strength and expertise in the specific games. From there, they would engage in their games. This was particularly noted for football and a ball throwing game famously referred to as „kati. Also, during selection of team members team leaders would negotiate on which members to go to what team. There was also a lot of compromising when conflict would arise as children played. They had to be resolved for play to continue.

Summary

This chapter presented data analysis and interpretation of the qualitative and quantitative data obtained from the field. The general demographics of respondents was given, research findings presented, the data analysis and interpretation that were consistent with the purpose and objectives of the study were discussed.

The next chapter discusses the findings in light of the objectives and theoretical framework and draws conclusions and gives recommendations on more ways to ensure that interpersonal communication skills are learnt to curb the problem of graduates lacking jobs due to lack of interpersonal communication skills.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, the study discusses key findings, conclusion drawn and recommendations. The conclusions and recommendations drawn were focused on addressing the purpose of the study. The study objectives were:

1. To find out whether children are exposed to and engaged in play activities.
2. To identify various forms of communication evident in play.
3. To identify the types of interpersonal communication skills apparent during communication involved in play.

The researcher with the help of the research assistants interviewed 69 children and gave questionnaires to a total of 44 teachers and 6 head teachers as shown below

i. 69 Children - 37 boys, 32 girls
ii. 44 Teachers - 27 female 17 male
iii. 6 Head teachers - 1 male, 5 female

Discussion of Key Findings

Discussions of the key findings were based on the objectives of the study. Data gathered was compared against literature review and theory covered and sought to address the statement of the problem as discussed in first chapter of the study.
1. To establish the extent to which the standard seven children in the selected schools in Lang’ata Constituency within Nairobi were exposed to and engaged in play.

The study conducted found out that children did engage in play as 94% of the children agreed that they played in school. Teachers also agreed that they set aside time for children to engage in play with 93.2% of teachers said that the children were given between one and two hours of play. Four head teachers stated that play time was between 30 minutes as compared to 45 minutes and one hour that were selected by the remaining head teachers. This shows that the children were exposed to play to a greater extent. This involvement in play is very significant since, according to Wood and Attfield (2005), play enables children to do the following: (1) practice both verbal and communications skills by negotiating roles and appreciating the feelings of play, (2) respond to other peers’ feelings while waiting for their turn and sharing materials and experiences, (3) experiment with roles of the people in their homes and schools as a result of contact with the needs and wishes of others, (4) experience others’ points of view by working positively through conflicts about space, materials and rules. The exposure of children to play also showed its effectiveness as a tool to be used to find out how children could develop interpersonal communication skills which research has shown will greatly help them later in life in their professional and personal relationships.

2. To identify various forms of communication evident in play.

Communication comes in many forms: verbal (sounds, language, and tone of voice), aural (listening and hearing), non-verbal (facial expressions, body language, and posture), written (journals, emails, blogs, and text messages), visual (signs, symbols, and pictures). We distinguish one type from others based on the number of persons involved, the formality of the interaction, and the opportunity to give and receive feedback (Shakir, 2012).
During play, as noted during observation, children engaged in verbal communication. Children would discuss about the type of game to play, the team members for either side, the team that would play first, the kind of play materials that they would use to play, what constitutes winning, the rules of the game and where to get the play materials. Verbal communication was observed in all schools.

Aural communication was also evident. Listening was very active since children had to listen to instructions and the rules of the games, in singing games; children had to listen so that they could respond as required. This was very evident in skipping rope games and tap-on-the-shoulder games. Madaraka Primary School children were fond of playing the tap-on-the-shoulder games where they would tie a sweater over the eyes of the “seeker” and tap him/her on the shoulder and run before they are caught. Instructions would also be shared before the commencement of any game thus messages were shared and feedback required between the sender and the receiver. This showed two-way theory of communication in practice.

Written communication was also evident in play. In games like X and O, children wrote down on a piece of paper and played while crossing out numbers or adding their own. During selection of team members, other children did it verbally for it to be fair, others preferred writing names of children and either team would randomly chose their team mates. Children from Moi Educational Center preferred this method of writing down names in selecting other children to engage in play.

Visual communication took place during a game called “Kati.” This was only observed in All Saints Cathedral and Lang’ata Barracks Primary School. In Lang’ata Barracks, stones that were put in squares were used as stopping places where children would run and stop as they count.
The game would continue the same way until someone gave out the wrong number. At All Saints Cathedral, symbols were used during a game called “three sticks”. Sticks signified how far a person had to jump which translated to how fit one was physically.

Non-verbal communication was used a lot in all schools observed. Facial expressions were used between team members when they wanted to win over the other team. In “kati” children signified to each other whether they should hit the ball on the ground or continue playing. During hide and seek, Jonathan Gloag children communicated through hand gestures when it was safe to come out.

Communication obviously took place in play in all its various forms and especially verbally. As children stated, they talked about a variety of things touching on life, school, aspirations and the games itself. Most children when asked this question stated that they talked about everything as topics varied from day to day depending on nature of game, moods and people involved in the games. Other listed discussions include: exams, new technology, encouragements, plans to change the world, life’s struggles and blessings, day’s lessons, school work, what they would like to be, future career, their talents, friends and places visited, social media and skills and tactics to use during the games. From this feedback from children, communication was very evident in play. Presence of communication in play showed interpersonal communication interaction through which children were able to gain interpersonal communication skills. The back and forth communication also displayed two-way theory of communication as there was simultaneous exchange of messages, instructions, division of roles, turn taking, listening, acting on instructions from one child to the other and evidence of feedback thus completing the communication cycle.
3. To identify the types of interpersonal communication skills apparent during communication involved in play.

There is no interpersonal communication without communication taking place between people. Communication requires for there to be a sender, a receiver, feedback of the messages and acting on the messages which shows two-way communication theory. Children talk about many different subjects as they play thereby building on their verbal communication and listening skills. This is possible because of communication exchange between the children. Other interpersonal skills like leadership, negotiation and problem solving also become apparent as they continue to engage with each other through the platform of play which allows for interactivity.

From the results of the study, 88.6% of the teachers agreed that play is vital in helping children develop interpersonal communication skills. 100% of teachers agreed that play is important in helping children improving children's verbal and non-verbal communication, in teaching them problem solving, in developing relationships, in acquiring leadership skills, in relaxation and leisure and in boosting children’s self-esteem. In addition, all six head teachers used in the sample agreed that play is useful in helping children develop interpersonal communication skills.

Head teachers feedback on the definition of communication can be summarized as follows: “It is a way of passing information” “Communication is the act of transferring information from one place to another.” “To pass information or message from one person to another” “Engaging by verbal and related accepted words” “This is self expression in both verbal or non-verbal” Head teachers understanding of what communication showed further understanding of interpersonal communication skills.
A selected response of 10% of the teachers on their understanding of Interpersonal communication skills further showed teachers general understanding play in relation to Interpersonal communication skills. “self delivered/internal passing of information and interpretation” “The way pupils should be able to communicate comfortably and effectively with other people” “The ability to socialize, express and interact with others” “This is the exchange of information in terms of feelings be it verbal or non-verbal messages” “The ability to socialize and interact with others” From these responses, it shows that teachers did understand the meaning of interpersonal communication skills and could therefore be able to tell whether or not play is a contributor.

When teachers were asked to give reasons why children should engage in play, the summary from the answers of the teachers were that without play children get dull in class; play is one way through which people pass information and feelings either verbally or non-verbally, plat taps talents and balances the curriculum, and through play, children negotiate and reach compromises amongst each other. From this feedback, teachers are aware of what interpersonal communication is all about. According to Hewes (2006) interpersonal communication skills may include (1) verbal communication - what we say and how we say it. Also includes language development (2) Non-verbal communication- what we communicate without words or language. (3) Listening skills- how we interpret verbal and non-verbal messages by others, (4) Negotiation- Working with others to find an agreeable outcome, (5) Problem solving- working with others to work or problems or issues. (6) Assertiveness- Communicating our values, ideas, beliefs, opinions, needs and wants and (7) Decision making- analyzing options to make sound decisions. In addition, 66.7% of teachers believe that listening skills is the main skill that children could acquire through play. 33.3% of teachers agreed that negotiation, non-verbal communication,
problem solving and listening skills are the main skills that could be acquired. From the discussions that take place during play, it is obvious that verbal communication skills are evident; negotiation also takes place in selecting team players for each side. Children are able to make decisions on the types of games to engage in and are able to solve any problems that arise as they play along. Children can further develop leadership skills as they take charge of the games and can engage in role playing which helps them reflect on the future and what they would like to be eventually.

These skills should not be assumed. They are learnt and developed over time. Looking at the interpersonal communication skills that can be developed as children interact during play, it can be concluded that these skills are necessary in assisting children learn the interpersonal skills that they would require in their personal relationships with friends, family and colleagues. These skills studied more in context, are significant as discussed:

Verbal Communication

In play, verbal communication takes place as children tell each other stories, as they decide on games to play and team members. Verbal communication is important as it determines how one relates with other people in their surroundings. It could help build or destroys relationships as communication with words is the main aspect of verbal communication.

Non Verbal Communication

It includes using gestures and facial expressions to communicate. During play, non-verbal communication mostly takes place between team members when they are aiming towards the same goal. In hide and seek, facial expressions can be used to show others whether or not it is safe to come out. However, wrong use of non-verbal communication when speaking to others
could lead to misunderstandings between children or even with the teachers. It is important to know when to use non-verbal communication while in the context of play for engagement and effective communication of signals between team members.

**Negotiation**

Negotiations are best carried out face to face. During play, children negotiate on the team members to have on either team; they have to ensure that members are divided fairly. It is also used in deciding which team should play first and why. Looking further ahead to professional life, negotiations are very important during interviews. In relationships, there is a lot of compromising to avoid conflicts and thus this skill is very significant.

**Problem Solving**

Problem solving involves coming up with a solution which would improve a situation and give effective results. A good problem solver is an asset during play. During play, if a ball gets torn, it is not the end of playing. Children look for a sock or a piece of paper to mend the ball and they continue playing. At the work place, graduates need to learn to solve problems. If they cannot do it alone, then they should brainstorm on the solutions with other employees.

**Assertiveness**

Assertiveness helps a child feel naturally confident, enjoy the respect of others and easily establish productive working relationships even with “awkward” people. In play it involves understanding a person’s behavior, understanding other people better, keeping emotions under control, preventing other bullying, flattering or manipulating you against your will, acquiring easy to learn techniques (Gillen, 2003).
Listening

Listening is very important that in the two-way theory of communication, it is one of the elements. If there is a sender and there is no receiver otherwise known as the listener, then the cycle of communication would be incomplete. In play, rules are there. All players need to be effective listeners to win in the games or to be of assistance to other team members. Listening is a skill that is also required for the workplace and in fostering good relationships with others around you. It is therefore a very important skill that children acquired as they played.

Leadership

In play, children need to develop leadership skills to build and direct teams and get work done. Many skills necessary for good leadership can be learned. A leader must trust his/her teammate’s ability to pursue a goal and they must believe in the leader’s ability to provide needed support and guidance. This is also very evident in play; in order to win in a game, i.e football, you need to effectively lead your team and guide them through the entire process.

Decision Making

During play, children decide which team they will play on based on whether they believe that team to be strong or not. Two teams also have to make a decision on which team should play first if it is a turn taking game and how much time each team should take. As a professional in the work place, you need make decisions on whether you will report fraud or keep quiet, whether you will apply for a promotion or not, whether you will confront a fellow employee or not.
The decision making process is greatly helped by receiving feedback in a communication process. This further shows how two-way theory of communication is effective in play since it introduced the whole concept of feedback.

Conclusion

The results accruing from this study show that 66.7% of head teachers believed that listening skills was the main skill that children could acquire through play, 33.3% agreed that negotiation, non-verbal communication, problem solving and listening skills were the main skills that could be acquired through play. In addition, 79.5% of the teachers acknowledged that play enabled children to socialize, express and interact with others, thereby gaining verbal communication, negotiation, leadership and decision making skills. The skills identified in this study include problem solving, decision making, listening, verbal communication, and negotiation and leadership skills. Children were able to learn and develop these skills as they communicated to each other verbally, non-verbally and through use of symbols and written communication.

Chapter five presented the conclusion of the study based on the objectives of the study which were; to find out whether children are exposed to and engaged in play activities, to identify various forms of communication evident in play, to identify the types of interpersonal communication skills apparent during communication involved in play, to discuss the significance of interpersonal communication skills for successful career growth. The chapter has also discussed key findings and has given recommendations for further research.
Recommendations

After discussing the findings derived from this study, the researcher came up with the following recommendations

1. Educators and policy makers need to understand the significance of play in helping children develop interpersonal communication skills. They need to ensure that at all levels of primary and secondary schools, that play time is given the attention it deserves for children to learn and develop interpersonal skills. This way, they will be able to polish them as they head to college and university and they will reflect in the workplace. An attempt should also be made by the researcher to share the study findings with the selected schools to ensure that play time and other platforms of interaction are given time in schools.

2. Teachers have a great role in the development of children; they are a role model and can greatly influence their children by availing themselves and facilitating children to take advantages of various learning opportunities that could contribute to development of interpersonal skills that children would require as they pursue their careers.

3. Children need to understand the significance of communicating and engaging together whether through the context of play or in the classroom. Understanding the importance of communication will help them understand its significance in building relationships and other skills that they may require in life.
Recommendations for Further Research

Three important areas are suggested for further research. The researcher feels that if these areas were researched on, the results would make a contribution towards ensuring that children get enough time for play which would increase their level of Interpersonal communication skills that would in turn help them form friendships and have successful futures. This is because the researcher acknowledges that play alone cannot solve the problem of lack of interpersonal communication skills.

1. An investigation could be carried out on the effectiveness of public speaking and group communication courses in universities towards solving the problem of lack of interpersonal communication skills among adults.

2. Creating awareness to parents on the significance of relationships towards helping children develop interpersonal communication skills. This is because; in as much as most time is spent in school, children spend holidays and more time at home. This means that parents, who are made aware of the significant of nurturing relationships and friendships with their children and other family members, will ensure that their children learn how to relate well with others and as a result develop interpersonal skills.

3. From the background of the problem, outlined at the “Innovation Secondary Education for Skills Enhancement (ISESE)” conference aimed at identifying skills required in the 21st century economies of Africa and Asia, employers emphasized that communication skills which are critical in today’s workplace are either lacking or poorly taught at the secondary level in these regions (Results for Development, 2014). This conference clearly showed the need to introduce ways that could lead to development or nurturing of
interpersonal communication skills earlier for the children and preferably at primary level

so that they could reflect at this level of secondary education.
REFERENCES


Mulunda, L. (2013, August 16). Work skills shortage worry employers and keeps more youths out of jobs. *Business daily*.


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APPENDICES

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

My name is Redempta Oburu. I am an MA Communication student at Daystar University conducting a study for my thesis on, effects of Communication involved in play in developing Interpersonal Skills: A case of selected standard seven pupils in six primary schools in Lang’ata Constituency, Nairobi County.

The purpose of this research study is to find out the effect of communication involved in play in developing interpersonal communication skills for career growth. Your participation in the study will greatly assist me in my research.

Risks/Benefits/Confidentiality of Data

There are no known risks for participating in this research. There will be no costs for participating either. Information given will also be treated with confidence.

Participation or Withdrawal

Your participation in this study is also voluntary. You may decline to answer any question and you have the right to withdraw from participation at any time.

Kindly fill in this questionnaire.

Thank you.
A. General Information

1. Name of respondent (optional):

2. Name of school (optional): ____________________________

3. Indicate your gender; (Please tick one)
   Male
   Female

4. Please indicate your age bracket.
   - Below 30
   - 31-35
   - 36-40
   - 41-45
   - 46-50
   - 51 years and above

5. Which is your highest professional qualification?
   - PI
   - Diploma
   - PGDE
   - BED
   - Other (please specify)

6. What is your understanding of interpersonal communication skills?

7. Do you think play is important for children?
   - Yes
   - No

   (a) If yes to Q7 above, do you think your school should engage students more in play activities?
       Yes ☐ No ☐

   (b) If No to Q7 above, Give your reasons.
B. Perceived Effectiveness

8. How would you rate the effectiveness of play in each of the following areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Extremely Effective</th>
<th>Effective</th>
<th>Ineffective</th>
<th>Extremely Ineffective</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improving Children’s verbal and non-verbal communication.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Problem Solving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing relationships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring leadership skills and roles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In relaxation and leisure (fun)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In boosting children’s creativity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping children exercise</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Perceived Efficiency

9. How important do you think play is in building interpersonal communication skills in for children?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Importance</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not at All</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moderately</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neutral</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very Important</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. How many hours in a day do you leave for play or interaction activities for children?

- [ ] None
- [ ] One
- [ ] Two
- [ ] Three
- [ ] Four

16. In regard to play and interpersonal skills, how much do you agree with the statements below?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neutral</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More play time should be incorporated in school timetable.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play is a waste of time in schools.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Play is purely for fun with no greater impact.

Interaction and play time should be allowed more during class time.

Play activities and games must be organized for children.

Play materials should be provided for all children.

Teachers should be involved in play with the children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C. Sustainability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17 As a teacher, will you personally engage your pupils in play to help them develop interpersonal communication skills?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 If No, please give a reason ________________________________________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*****The End, Thank You for your Cooperation****
Appendix B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR CHILDREN

Dear pupil, my name is Redempta Oburu. I would like to ask you about play in school to know how that is helping you in your growth. All of the answers you give are very important. Remember, there is no right or wrong answer. Thank you.

Name of respondent (optional)

Age of respondent:

Gender of respondent:

1. Do you play in school?

2. What are your usual play activities or games?

3. What time do you mostly play in school? (break time, lunch time, during P.E, class time)

4. Where do you get toy/playing materials?

5. Who do you play with at school in most of your play activities?

6. What do you talk about as you play?

7. What time do you play in School?

8. Do you believe that play is important for you?

9. What are the greatest hindrances for you to enjoy play?

   (Lack of toys, lack of enough time, lack of playground, lack of play mate)

10. Would you like to be given more time for play?
Appendix C

QUESTIONNAIRE- HEADTEACHERS

Topic: Effects of Communication involved in play in developing Interpersonal Skills: A case of selected standard seven pupils in six primary schools in Lang’ata Constituency, Nairobi County.

GENERAL INFORMATION

How are you today? My name is Redempta Oburu. I am a student at Daystar University interested in finding out the effect of play in developing Interpersonal Communication skills for children in schools. I have come to learn about the time schedule you have in terms of play interaction and what you generally feel about children’s play.

The information I am gathering will be of great benefit to the children, teachers and even the government where it can be used to improve the quality of education. Kindly fill the questionnaire for the next few minutes. The information you provide will be kept confidential. No name will be mentioned in the information we are gathering.

Thank you.

1. What is your gender?
   Male: [ ]    Female: [ ]

2. What is your age? (Indicate where your category is (optional).)
   15-25 [ ]    36-45 [ ]
   26-35 [ ]    46-55 [ ]    56 and above [ ]

3. Level of education
   Primary [ ]    secondary [ ]    university [ ]    post-university [ ]
4. Do children in your school engage in play?

   Yes [ ]   No [ ]

5. Do you agree that play is important for children?

   Yes [ ]   No [ ]

   a) If yes to above question, what is your reason?

   b) If no, please explain.

6. What amount of time have you allocated in your school timetable daily purely for play?

   10 minutes [ ]
   20 minutes [ ]
   30 minutes [ ]
   45 minutes [ ]
   One hour [ ]
   Other (please specify)

7. What other time apart from P.E lessons is assumed as extra time that children can engage in play.

   Break time [ ]
   Lunch time [ ]
   Home time [ ]
   Strictly during P.E [ ]

8. How often in a week do your teachers take time to engage children in play or interactive games?

   Very often [ ]
   Sometimes [ ]
9. What do you understand from the word communication?

10. What skills do you think children could acquire from engaging in play in school?

Listening [ ]
Non-verbal [ ]
Negotiation [ ]
Problem solving [ ]
Leadership skills [ ]
All of the above [ ]

11. How important do you think play is in building interpersonal communication skills for children?

Very Important [ ]
Important [ ]
Neutral [ ]
Not Important [ ]

12. What do you do to promote children’s play in your school?

Accommodating timetable [ ]
Provision of play materials [ ]
Enough space to engage in play [ ]
All of the above [ ]

13. Do you think children get enough time to play in your school?

Yes [ ]
No [ ]
No idea [ ]

If no, do you intend to provide more time for play?

 
Appendix D

OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Sample check list in which the researcher could record frequencies of the observations made of children private study behaviour in the specific times.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Time 1</th>
<th>Time 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Break time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of play materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of Games or play activities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who the children are playing with</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills required for engagement in play</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PERMISSION LETTER

National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation
PO Box 30623 – 00100
NAIROBI

15th Sep, 2016

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: Redempta Oburu (Student No.11-1111)

The above-named is a fully registered student in the School of Communication, Language and Performing Arts at Daystar University. She has completed her course work towards a Master’s degree in communication. She is now in the process of working on her thesis. Ms. Oburu’s thesis title is: ‘Effects of communication in play in developing interpersonal communication skills: a case of selected standard seven pupils in six primary schools within Lang’ata Constituency, Nairobi County.

The purpose of this letter is to request that you accord Ms. Oburu any necessary assistance to enable her to complete this important academic exercise. We assure you that any information collected will be used strictly for academic purposes and will remain absolutely confidential. Upon completion of the research, Ms. Oburu’s thesis will be available at our library and she will submit two copies of her completed work to your department.

We appreciate your support for our student towards the successful completion of her research. Should you require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned.

Yours Faithfully,

Leah Komen (PhD), Thesis Co-ordinator
School of Communication, Language and Performing Arts
lkomen@daystar.ac.ke
Dear Parent,

My name is Redempta Oburu. I am a student at Daystar University conducting research on the effects of communication involved in play on primary school children’s interpersonal communication skills: a case of selected standard seven pupils in Lang’ata, Nairobi.

Your child was randomly selected from the class to participate in this research and I am kindly requesting your permission to interview your child for this study. I assure you that the information gathered will be used strictly for academic purposes and will remain absolutely confidential. I have already provided the school administration with all the permits and letters given to me as permission to conduct research in the schools within Lang’ata constituency.

I humbly request that you support me towards the completion of my research. If you need any clarifications on my research, you can email me at redemptanoburu@daystar.ac.ke and I will be glad to answer any questions that you may have.

Thank you in advance for your understanding.

Yours faithfully,

Redempta Oburu