



# Influence of Social Interaction Interventions Used by Teachers on School Readiness among Pre-Primary Learners in Konoin Sub-County, Bomet County. Kenya

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**Abstract:** Transitioning to school is a significant developmental milestone for young children, and it is seen as a crucial "sensitive period" for future academic success. Despite the potential for such programs to have broad effects, little is known about the effects of intervention tactics in early childhood education programs on school preparation. This paper aimed at finding out the influence of social interaction interventions used by teachers on school readiness among pre-primary learners in Konoin Sub-County, Kenya. The study used descriptive survey design and targeted 312 pre-primary school teachers and 5 Ward Education Coordinators. A sample size of 172 teachers and 5 Ward Education Coordinators was used. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data. Expert judgement was used to ascertain the validity while reliability was ascertained through piloting and use of Cronbach Alpha Coefficient. Quantitative data was analysed using frequencies, percentages and Pearson Correlation analysis. Qualitative data were thematically analyzed. The analyzed information was presented in tables and Figures. The study found out that there was a significant correlation between social interaction interventions ( $r = .278$ ;  $p = .000$ ), and school readiness. The study concluded that social interaction interventions influenced learners' school readiness. For effective pre-school readiness, instructional support needs to be tailored to the needs of each child by the teachers, considering their strengths, interests, and learning styles. The study findings would enable early childhood education teachers to learn how to introduce learners to the school learning process by assisting them to adjust to a different environment from home.

**Keywords:** Influence, Social Interaction Interventions, Teachers, School Readiness, Pre-Primary

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## 1. Introduction

Transition is the procedure where there is occurrence of changes when children move from one place like home to another place like pre-school and their function in the community structure changes (Harper, 2016). It is a time-based interactive process that encompasses all of the measures and actions that may take place during the

transition from a particular situation to a different environment (Bell-Booth, Staton & Thorpe, 2014). The time between becoming aware that a transition is coming, settling into the new environment and the youngster becoming firmly recognized as a member of the new setting is referred to as transition (Harper, 2016).

In the United States, preschool or kindergarten is a common experience for young children, although it is not

uniform (Scanlan & Stebletsova, 2019). Learners' educational backgrounds and levels of school readiness, as well as their pre-transition experiences, are different and distinct. Furthermore, the concept, curriculum, organization, and practice of the programs in which children participate differ significantly. Early childhood education programs, notably public-school kindergarten and first-grade programs have become increasingly academic in focus as a result of legislation and common core state standards that establish higher curricular expectations among educators (Bezrukavny, 2018). The transition to public school is tough for both families and children due to the increasing academic emphasis (Harper, 2016).

Transitioning to school is a significant developmental milestone for young children and it is seen as a critical sensitive period for future academic success (Boyle, Grieshaber & Petriwskyj, 2018). During progression, children build fundamental talents and understandings that serve as the framework for future learning. The first interaction a kid has with the public educational system shapes how they regard school in the future as a place of learning and social growth (Griebing & Gilbert, 2020).

In various nations, the minimum age for children entering elementary school varies. The majority of European countries set a minimum age of six years for entry to primary school, though some nations including Malta, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom start at a juvenile age of five years, four years in Northern Ireland while other countries like Finland, and Bulgaria have set a higher age of seven years (DfE, 2016). In the United States, children who have reached the age of five must begin elementary school which includes a one-year pre-school program (NCES, 2016).

Booth *et al.*, (2019) define readiness as the ability of families, communities and schools to enable young children to begin elementary school. The notion of school readiness is utilized to create and shape early childhood education through achievement criteria and measures rates of graduation and thresholds (Wood, 2019). Progression of learners can be aided in the early years of school by conditioning classroom systems and organizations, as well as implementing game-based learning methodologies (Putranta & Wilujeng, 2019).

Early childhood education, sometimes known as pre-school education, is one technique for preparing children for formal schooling. The purpose of pre-school education is to assist children in maturing and becoming self-sufficient through the use of appropriate systems and infrastructure (Amerijckx & Humblet, 2015). Cultural shock, as defined by Broström (2005), occurs frequently

during the transition phase of attending schools and different learning systems, when the problems they experience on a daily basis tend to obstruct rather than promote their learning. The challenges that frequently occur are not only changes in location and culture, but also the separation from old friends and the transfer into new communities, which youngsters perceive as a major issue in transition (Ackesjö, 2015).

Many Australian families and educators are familiar with assessing individual children's preparedness for school enrollment. Like adults, children prefer to focus on what they need to know or be able to do in order to start school (Perry & Dockett, 2020). It is undoubtedly possible to acquire a set of skills and knowledge that can be considered the foundation for a successful school start. It's also possible to assess children based on their various skills and knowledge. Many families and educators in Australia regularly assess individual children's preparedness for school enrollment. Children, like adults, prefer to focus on what they need to know or do in order to start school (Perry & Dockett, 2020). It is undoubtedly possible to acquire a set of skills and knowledge that can serve as the foundation for a successful start in school. It is also possible to assess youngsters based on their various skills and knowledge.

Despite the challenges that the Early Childhood sub-sector faces in many parts of the world, the early years are often regarded as the most crucial years for a person's long-term development (Kang'ethe, Wakahiu, & Michael, 2015). There is evidence that a child's early childhood environment, nurturing, learning and future holistic development, as well as scholarly works in subsequent grades in primary, secondary, and college settings, are all linked in a positive way (Bradbury, 2019). In actuality, most of the founders of early childhood education, such as Pestalozzi, Froebel and Dewey, have consistently proved that the early years are a critical stage in the development of mental and physical abilities, moving at a breakneck pace (Murunga, 2015).

Educators ought to have school readiness programmes in place to ensure learners transiting from home to school settle faster in school. There is therefore need for teachers to work closely with parents to teach children how to interact with strangers in different environments. Also, they should endeavour to provide stimulating instructional experiences that attract and engage the new learners. Furthermore, they should create an environment that learners feel safe and relaxed. When done well these programmes have potential to make children communicate better with new peers and teachers, dress independently, eat on their own, handle their emotions better and benefit from the instruction programs. However; there are indicators that these learners could be transiting from home

to school without receiving proper training that prepares them for school work. There are indications that in many sub-Saharan countries including Kenya, little efforts have been undertaken to improve abilities to support children to transition and adjust successfully and learn effectively. The 2020 statistics from Bomet county directorate of Early Childhood indicates that absenteeism is rampant among PP1 learners which could be an indicator of poor school engagement by the new learners. Konoin Sub-County in particular is noted as having high rates of PP1 learners failing to engage fully with the school. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to find out the influence of social interaction interventions used by teachers on school readiness among pre-primary learners in Konoin Sub-County, Kenya

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 The Concept of School Readiness

According to Hamerslag *et al.*, (2018), the idea of school readiness is widely recognized at both the theoretical and practical levels in pre-school instructor education and early childhood education. As a structured type of preparation for enrollment into primary school, pre-school education is more focused on needs than caring. Bennett (2013) questioned this, claiming that it did not respect children's potential and was counterproductive, similar to institutions that solely promote early childhood academics (Van Laere & Vandebroek, 2017). The notion of school readiness among learners in pre-schools raises additional challenges, such as inequality for needy families who do not have access to it or families who do not assist their children in starting recognized education at a young age (Brooks & Murray, 2018). According to studies conducted in poor areas of Dublin, Ireland, children see schools as requiring them to regulate their emotional, cognitive, and behavioral behaviors (Booth *et al.*, 2019).

Another concern is how to cope with gifted kids who begin school earlier than typical peers. Gifted children generally thrive in academics, but as a whole person, they must also develop other abilities in order to operate as a balanced person (Hellblom-Thibblin *et al.*, 2017). According to Wellisch's (2019) findings, early childhood educators are baffled by gifted children's academic, social, and emotional needs, which are not understood or provided by their parents. The physical health of children influences the development of talents essential for effective progressions and initial experience in formal schooling (Kull & Coley, 2015). Self-care routines, healthy lifestyles, and personal safety are all health issues that affect school preparation, according to Nguyen *et al.*, (2019). Meanwhile, gross and fine motor skill development, balance and object control

abilities can be used to assess school readiness (Setiawati *et al.*, 2017; Miller-Bains *et al.*, 2017; Tortella *et al.*, 2016).

Children who are ready for school can distinguish between items and abstract forms, as well as recognize distinguishable forms of things and figures. On the other hand, learning mathematics at a young age is a classic executive function issue (Blair & Raver, 2015). However, according to Quirk *et al.*, (2017), if expectations for reading fluency at a young age become the major point of school preparedness, there is a danger of vulnerability.

More significant characteristics of early academic aptitude include the ability to recognize letters and the ability to count (Niklas, *et al.*, 2018). In the meantime, Han and Neuharth-Pritchett (2017) claimed that preschool children's letter recognition is a good predictor of future literacy success. Early mastery of arithmetic skills was the most significant predictor of numeracy and literacy skills in school. Children who display early academic proficiency and persistent attention, according to Niklas *et al.*, (2018), are better positioned to benefit from learning chances when they join school. The utilization of first language as a medium of education, as well as the study of a second language, has benefited in the growth of vocabulary (Limlingan *et al.*, 2019). In many researches, the language and literacy dimensions are combined to produce a single dimension (Harris, *et al.*, 2018; Holmes, 2019). Language aspects in speech, writing concepts, phonology, and letter and word knowledge are all part of the language dimension (Nguyen *et al.*, 2019). On the other hand, Zubaidah (2004) says that youngsters aged 5 to 6 years have proper sentence structure and grammar. Each sentence is between 6 and 8 words long, with a vocabulary spanning from 2500 to 6000 words.

Being in a position to understand instruction, information, problem-solving and color recognition enables learners to add retention and acquaintance, inquisitiveness and creativity, involvement and perseverance to the list of cognitive abilities that influence school readiness (Nguyen *et al.*, 2019; Setiawati *et al.*, 2017). Many teachers overlook the social and emotional dimensions of giftedness in favor of focusing solely on cognitive and academic ability. Emotional and social maturity are crucial factors to consider when preparing for school (Wellisch, 2019). The social-emotional dimension comprises self-regulation, relating with other children, inspiration, individuality, collaboration and class adaptation (An & Xie, 2018; Raikes *et al.*, 2019).

Children who are not prepared for school might exhibit challenging behaviors, which can disrupt the learning environment and impede their own academic progress (Arnold, Zeljo, Doctoroff, & Ortiz, 2008). Poor school

readiness can contribute to behavioral problems in the classroom. Children who feel overwhelmed or unable to keep up with their peers may act out or exhibit disruptive behaviors as a way to cope with their struggles. Further, school readiness encompasses social and emotional skills necessary for interacting with peers and teachers. Children who lack these skills may have difficulty making friends, resolving conflicts, or understanding social cues, leading to isolation and feelings of social exclusion. Without early intervention and support, children with poor school readiness may be at a higher risk of developing learning disabilities that can persist throughout their academic journey. Children who start school with poor readiness may experience a widening achievement gap compared to their peers who were better prepared. This gap can be challenging to close without targeted interventions and support.

## 2.2 Social Interaction Interventions and School Readiness

The foundation of a child's social and emotional preparation is their attitude toward school and their ability to engage well with others at school. Children's ability to control their own behavior, as well as recognize and respond appropriately to the sentiments and viewpoints of others, are also crucial elements (Ladd, *et al.*, 2006). The information that social and academic performance are commonly linked and that connections and exchanges occur within contexts imply that preparation is, at least in part, about children's interactions with individuals in a given environment. Associations become increasingly crucial when youngsters enter school. Learners' interactions with other children and their instructors as well as family and school relationships, are all included in this category.

Positive social behavior in preschoolers is characterized by three behavioral qualities (Grady *et al.*, 2012). For starters, they employ a wide range of social abilities in a variety of situations. Actions that promote positive connections with others and the environment are referred to as social skills (Lynch & Simpson, 2010). Furthermore, these children demonstrate their repertoire of social skills without extensive prompting and/or reinforcement from their instructors, peers, or environmental support. These skills include smiling, giving or receiving compliments, requesting for assistance, negotiating roles during play activities, sharing with others, collaborating, turn taking during play, making of eye contact during conversations, problem-solving, actively participating in lessons, and asking or answering queries. According to research, both instructors and parents agree that preschoolers need social skills, the most important of which are collaboration and accountability (Frey *et al.*, 2014).

Further, preschoolers who exhibit positive social conduct participate in suitable and appealing social connections with their instructors and peers. They frequently engage in cooperative play and use kindergarten equipment, objects, toys materials and lessons as intended. These learners, for instance, remain dynamically involved in the art lesson offered within the allocated time while sharing painting resources with other peers (Kim *et al.*, 2011). Preschoolers that display excellent social behavior are also thought to have high levels of social competence, according to teachers. The instructors grade these attribute behaviors based on their observations of the children's social behaviors both inside the preschool classroom, such as free play, and outside, such as on the playground and during field trips. Furthermore, social competence refers to a child's ability to form long-term friendships and be in a position to be acceptable to other peers, acting appropriately in social associations, and joining social organizations (Barnett, 2018).

The most beneficial time to implement social behavioral intervention programs is during the preschool years. For pre-school learners who need extra constructive communal behavioral support such as those with language delays, delays in social wellbeing or developmental incapacities, teachers in preschool settings may play a critical role (Stormont, Reinke & Herman, 2011). Preschool teachers, on the other hand, say that their children's social behavior issues, particularly disruptive behaviors, are the most important hindrance to learning (Lane *et al.*, 2017). Furthermore, Frey *et al.*, (2013) clearly stated that this challenge is more likely to increase with pre-school instructors acknowledging the need to address this behavior in 10% to 15% of their learners.

Children's capacity to learn social skills early in childhood influences their ability to adapt into society and contribute to their culture. They look to have firmly developed social abilities that will benefit them for the rest of their lives as they make their way through the school day. Learners are able to communicate constructively with their peers despite the intellectual, emotional, social and structural limitations of their new setting. Pre-school children are in a position to develop a sense of trust in their surroundings, a sense of competence in their own talents, a beginning sense of self, a sense of personal initiative, and a sense of autonomy as a result of their ability to behave appropriately (Plank & Stipek, 2019).

The benefit of social skills programs is that they may be provided "universally" to all children in a classroom at a cheap cost, and the classroom climate can become much less chaotic and more conducive to learning. Furthermore, some experts believe that children with behavioral issues can learn by observing more socially adept youngsters utilize the skills in a methodical way. A socially interacting child is able to sustain relationship and develop trust.

Through these components the learners will be able to gain knowledge from their environment. Therefore, they are required to be taken through the steps of being socially ready during preschool period in order for them to be able to fit in. The current paper aimed at determining the influence of social interaction interventions used by teachers on school readiness among pre-primary learners in Konoin Sub-County, Kenya.

### 3. Methodology

This study used descriptive survey design. Surveys collect data at a specific point in time with the goal of characterizing the nature of actual situations (Chieng & Tan, 2021). In addition, the study used convergent mixed approach, which is a combination of more than two strategies in a study thus generating both qualitative and quantitative information.

This study was carried out in Konoin Sub County which is one of the sub-counties in the Bomet County. The sub county has five wards which doubles up as educational zones namely: Chepchabas, Kimulot, Boito, Mogogosiek and Embomos. The sub county has a multicultural outlook owing to presence of several tea farms which have attracted people from different parts of Kenya who come looking for jobs. Most locals here engage in animal husbandry, small scale tea growing and subsistence farming. Most inhabitants are affected by high prices of farm inputs and low prices for their agricultural produce. The implication of this is that most learners within the study area are from humble backgrounds.

The target population for this study was all the pre-primary one teachers and ward education coordinators in Konoin Sub County. There were 312 pre-primary school teachers and 5 Ward Education Coordinators in the study area who formed the target population as presented in Table 1.

**Table 1: Target Population**

Ward	Ward Education Coordinators	Teachers		Total
		Male	Female	
Chepchabas	1	1	34	35
Boito	1	2	79	81
Mogogosiek	1	1	69	70
Embomos	1	0	62	62
Kimulot	1	2	62	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>306</b>	<b>312</b>

The sample size for this study was based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination formula as cited by Kasomo (2001). The formula is given as:

$$n = \frac{X^2 * N * P(1 - P)}{(ME^2 * (N - 1)) + (X^2 * P * (1 - P))}$$

Where;

- n=Sample size
- X<sup>2</sup>=Chi Square for the specified confidence level at 1 degree of freedom= (3.841) from tables
- N=Population size

P=Population proportion (.50 in the table)

$$\begin{aligned} ME &= \text{Desired margin of error (expressed as a proportion)=0.05} \\ &= 3.841 \times 312 \times 0.5 (1-0.5) / 0.05 \times 0.05 (312-1) \\ &+ 3.841 \times 0.5 (1-0.5) \\ &= 299.598 / 1.73775 \\ &= 172 \end{aligned}$$

Using the formula, 172 teachers were selected to take part in the study. The sample size for teachers as per each Ward is presented in Table 2. In addition, 5 WEC officers participated in the study giving a sample size of 177 respondents.

**Table 2: Sample Size**

Ward	Target Population	Calculation	Sample Size
Chepchabas	35	$35/312*172$	19
Boito	81	$81/312*172$	45
Mogogosiek	70	$70/312*172$	39
Embomos	62	$62/312*172$	34
Kimulot	64	$64/312*172$	35
<b>Total</b>	<b>312</b>		<b>172</b>

Stratified proportionate sampling methods were used in the study to ensure that each ward (education zone) had the same sampling proportion. To obtain the actual participants from each of the five educational zones, simple random sampling was used. This ensured that the final sample reflected the relative numbers in the population as a whole. However, purposive sampling was used to select all the five (5) Ward Education Coordinators. A well-designed questionnaire with closed ended questions was used to collect quantitative data from the 172 teachers from the study area while interviews were used to collect qualitative data from ward education coordinators.

The researcher sought for professional advice on construct and content validity. The researcher pilot tested the research instruments using 18 respondents in the nearby Ndaraweta ward of Bomet County, which has similar features to the study location, to assess their dependability. Following that, the Cronbach Alpha Coefficient was established to determine the research equipment' dependability. A Cronbach Alpha Coefficient of 0.74 was obtained on all items showing that the instruments were reliable.

The quantitative data from the questionnaire were first subjected to preliminary processing through validation, coding and tabulation in readiness for analysis with the help of the statistical package for social science (SPSS) computer package (Version 26). Frequencies and percentages were used to analyze quantitative data. Pearson Correlation analysis was employed to determine relationship that exists between the independent and dependent variables. Qualitative data from interview schedules were thematically classified and arranged before they were reported in narrations and quotations as per the research objectives. The analyzed data was presented using

tables and charts. In addition, the quantitative analysis was supplemented by qualitative descriptions to explore and expand on the quantitative finding in order to provide in-depth explanations of the findings and validation. The research was grounded on several ethical principles. The researcher first sought for research permit to conduct the study from the relevant authorities. In addition, the researcher ensured the principle of informed consent was adhered to during the research process. Participation in research was voluntary and no form of coercion was used. The researcher also ensured confidentiality of information by not disclosing the confidential information which were provided by the respondents. Moreover, the security of the collected data was maintained and the respondents were assured that the data obtained from them were only intended for academic purposes. Anonymity of respondents was upheld as no respondent was required to reveal his/her name. Finally, integrity in reporting findings was maintained.

## 4. Results and Discussion

The aim of this study was to find out the influence of social interaction interventions used by teachers on school readiness among pre-primary learners in Konoin Sub-County. To achieve this objective, the study participants were requested to indicate their level of agreement/disagreement on statements which covered the influence of social interaction interventions used by teachers on school readiness among pre-primary learners. The participants rated their response on a five-point Likert scale questions as; on a scale of 1-5, as Strongly Disagree (SD=1) Disagree(D=2) Neutral (N=3) Agree (A=4) and Strongly Agree (SA=5). Their responses were tabulated and the results are presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Responses on Influence of Social Interaction Interventions on School Readiness among Pre-Primary Learners**

Statement	SD		D		UD		A		SA		Mean	Std Dev
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%		
Our school work with parents and families in order to support and empower pre-school learners	3	1.9	18	11.4	8	5.1	59	37.3	70	44.3	4.10	1.06
As a teacher I emphasize learners to share learning materials	9	5.7	15	9.5	11	7.0	56	35.4	67	42.4	3.99	1.18
We teach learners to negotiate play roles during play activities	17	10.8	29	18.4	7	4.4	59	37.3	46	29.1	3.56	1.36
Our learners are taught to offer and respond to compliments	11	7.0	25	15.8	4	2.5	71	44.9	47	29.7	3.75	1.24
Pre-school learners are always asked to remember to ask for assistance in activities which they are unable to undertake	15	9.5	18	11.4	5	3.2	81	51.3	39	24.7	3.70	1.23
I encourage learners to participate in collaborative play on daily basis	18	11.4	23	14.6	5	3.2	66	41.8	46	29.1	3.63	1.34
I usually teach coping skills that encourage children's development of social-behavioral skills and self-regulation	14	8.9	15	9.5	7	4.4	84	53.2	38	24.1	3.74	1.18

**Source: Field Data, 2023**

Table 3 shows that 70(44.3%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement that their schools work with parents and families in order to support and empower pre-school learners, 59(37.3%) teachers agreed with the statement, 18(11.4%) disagreed with the assertion and 8(5.1%) respondents were neutral on the statement while 3(1.9%) teachers strongly disagreed with the statement. The study found a mean of 4.10 with a standard deviation of 1.06 showing that 81.6% of the pre-school teachers acknowledged that their schools worked with parents and families in order to support and empower pre-school learners. Research has consistently shown that school-parent support plays a crucial role in promoting learners' school readiness. Fan and Chen (2020) noted that parental involvement, such as engaging in educational activities at home and communicating with teachers, is positively associated with academic achievement while a study by Marchand-Martella *et al.*, (2020) found that parental involvement in preschool, including reading activities and support for learning at home, positively predicted children's literacy and math skills. Moreover, parental support is linked to positive social-emotional development, including self-regulation skills and social competence (Morrissey & Gennetian, 2020). In addition, a strong home-school partnerships are associated with increased school readiness, academic engagement, and positive behavior (Niklas *et al.*, 2018).

In addition, 67(42.4%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement that as teachers they emphasize to learners to share learning materials, 56(35.4%) teachers agreed with

the statement, 15(9.5%) respondents disagreed with the statement and 11(7.0%) teachers were undecided on the statement while 9(5.7%) teachers strongly disagreed with the statement. From the responses, a mean of 3.99 with a standard deviation of 1.18 was obtained implying that 77.8% of the teachers in public pre-schools in Konoin sub-County reported that they usually emphasized to learners to share teaching/learning materials. The sharing of teaching and learning materials can have a significant impact on learners' preschool readiness. By providing access to high-quality educational resources, it supports their cognitive, social, and emotional development, enhancing their preparedness for formal schooling. According to Ezmeci, and Akman, (2023), teaching and learning materials that promote cooperative play, group work, and emotional exploration can support social and emotional development in preschoolers. Materials such as puppets, dolls, and board games encourage role-playing and empathy-building. Additionally, sharing materials in a classroom setting fosters social interactions, communication, and the development of interpersonal skills promoting learners' school readiness.

Further, 59(37.3%) teachers agreed with the statement that they usually teach learners negotiate play roles during play activities, 46(29.1%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement, 29(18.4%) teachers disagreed with the statement and 17(10.8%) teachers were strongly in disagreement with the statement while 7(4.4%) teachers were undecided on the statement. From the responses, a mean of 3.56 with a standard deviation of 1.36 was obtained indicating that

66.4% of the pre-school teachers in Konoin sub-county teach learners to negotiate play roles during play activities enhancing their school readiness. According to Muir, Howard and Kervin, (2023), engaging in pretend play and negotiating play roles during play activities can have a positive impact on children's social and emotional development. It helps them develop important skills such as cooperation, empathy, perspective-taking, and conflict resolution. Through negotiating roles, children learn to consider others' viewpoints, communicate their ideas effectively, and develop a sense of fairness and compromise.

Moreover, 71(44.9%) teachers agreed with the statement that their pre-school learners were taught to offer and respond to compliments, 47(29.7%) respondents strongly agreed with the statement, 25(15.8%) teachers were in disagreement with the statement and 11(7.0%) strongly disagreed while only 4(2.5%) teachers were undecided on the statement. From the responses, a mean of 3.75 with a standard deviation of 1.24 was obtained showing that 74.6% of the pre-school teachers acknowledged that their learners were taught to offer and respond to compliments. Learning to offer and respond to compliments helps preschoolers develop social and emotional skills (Goldschmidt & Pedro, 2019). It promotes positive interactions, builds self-esteem, and enhances their ability to express gratitude and appreciation. Engaging in this practice fosters empathy, kindness, and the development of positive relationships with peers and teachers. When preschoolers receive compliments, it can boost their self-confidence and self-esteem. It helps them develop a positive self-image, recognize their strengths, and acknowledge their accomplishments. Likewise, offering compliments to others reinforces a sense of self-worth and encourages positive self-perception (Colagrossi, *et al.*, 2023). These factors contribute to overall self-awareness and confidence, which are essential for school readiness.

Additionally, 81(51.3%) teachers agreed with the statement that pre-school learners in their schools were always asked to remember to ask for assistance in activities which they were unable to undertake, 39(24.7%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement, 18(11.4%) teachers disagreed with the assertion and 15(9.5%) teachers strongly disagreed while 5(3.2%) teachers were undecided on the statement. The study found out a mean of 3.70 with a standard deviation of 1.23 showing that 76.0% of the teachers in public pre-schools in Konoin sub-county acknowledged that pre-school learners in their schools were always asked to remember to ask for assistance in activities which they were unable to undertake. According to Aladé, Aley, Rhodes and Ewoldsen, (2023) engaging pre-school learners in activities that promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and decision-making skills can

enhance cognitive development. These activities may include puzzles, matching games, sorting activities, and simple experiments. By aiding and guidance during these activities, educators and caregivers can support children's cognitive growth and readiness for formal schooling. In addition, Sia, Yew, and Low, (2023), noted that assisting preschool learners in engaging in cooperative play, group activities, and social interactions can promote their social and emotional development. By guiding them through sharing, taking turns, resolving conflicts, and expressing emotions, caregivers and educators help children develop important skills for successful interactions with peers and adults. This support can positively impact their readiness for preschool.

Similarly, 66(41.8%) teachers agreed with the statement that they encouraged pre-school learners to participate in collaborative play on daily basis, 48(29.1%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement, 23(14.6%) teachers were in disagreement and 18(11.4%) teachers strongly disagreed with the statement while 5(3.2%) teachers were neutral on the statement. The study found a mean of 3.74 with a standard deviation of 1.18 showing that 70.9% of the pre-school teachers acknowledged that they encouraged their learners to participate in collaborative play on daily basis. Encouraging preschool learners to participate in collaborative play can have several positive effects on their development and school readiness. Collaborative play provides opportunities for preschoolers to develop social skills such as cooperation, communication, sharing, and empathy (Beazidou & Botsoglou, 2023; MacCormack, & Kilmer, 2023). Engaging in play activities with peers encourages them to understand and respect others' perspectives, negotiate, and solve problems together. These social interactions contribute to the development of positive relationships and emotional well-being, which are important for school readiness.

In this study an overall mean of 3.78 was obtained in all the statements on social interaction interventions influencing school readiness among pre-primary learners. This implies that in all the statements, majority of the respondents strongly agreed suggesting that social interaction interventions put in place in pre-primary schools positively influenced learners' pre-school readiness. Social interactions need to provide opportunities for children to engage in conversations, practice language skills, and develop vocabulary. However, interviews conducted with WEC officers were on the contrary. One of the interviewee noted that;

*“Children who actively participate in social interactions in pre-schools tend to have better language development,*



*which is essential for school readiness. But in most cases in our schools majority of the learners are not meeting expectations in languages showing that teachers need to put more efforts in making learners to be ready for school”.* (48 year old lady WEC).

This shows that teachers in pre-schools in the study area need to encourage learners to participate in social interactions thus preparing them to be ready for school. According to Trifonova (2023), encouraging and supporting positive social interactions in pre-school settings can significantly impact a child's readiness for formal education and lay a foundation for successful academic and social development. In an ideal environment, social interactions within the classroom environment allow children to develop social skills such as sharing, taking turns, and resolving conflicts. However, one of the ward education coordinators noted that most learners lacked positive social interactions and thus exhibited low emotional regulation, self-control, and empathy, which showed that overall, they were not ready for school.

During the interviews one WEC officer noted that;  
*“Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating positive social interactions*

*within the classroom. By creating a safe and inclusive environment, encouraging pro-social behaviors, and providing guidance during conflicts, educators can effectively promote the development of these important social skills among their pupils. However, children in most pre-schools here are ill-equipped to navigate social situations both within the classroom and beyond, contributing to low overall social and emotional development.”* (39 year old WEC officer)

## 4.1 Correlation between Social Interaction Interventions used by Teachers and School Readiness

The hypothesis of this study stated that;  
**H0<sub>1</sub>**: There is no significant relationship between social interaction interventions used by teachers and school readiness among pre-primary learners in Konoin Sub-County

The hypothesis was tested using Pearson correlation at 95% confidence level. The results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4: Correlation Coefficient between social interaction interventions and school readiness**

		School Readiness
Social Interaction Interventions	Pearson Correlation	.278**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	158

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 4. shows that there was a significant correlation between social interaction interventions used by teachers and school readiness among pre-primary learners ( $r = .278$ ;  $p = .000$ ). This means that at 95% confidence level the  $r$  value for social interactions interventions used by teachers was .278 showing a weak correlation with school readiness. Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant relationship between social interaction interventions used by teachers and school readiness among pre-primary learners in Konoin Sub-County was rejected and the alternate accepted. This implies that there was a significant but weak positive correction between social interaction interventions used by teachers and school readiness among pre-primary learners in Konoin Sub-County. Social interaction interventions implemented by teachers can play a vital role in promoting school readiness among pre-primary learners. This agreed with the findings of Natalia *et al.*, (2023) who found that children who positively engaged with teachers, peers, and tasks were

positively associated with their receptive and expressive vocabulary, phonological awareness, and print knowledge skills.

## 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

### 5.1 Conclusion

The study concluded that there was significant relationship between social interaction interventions used by teachers and school readiness among pre-primary learners. Social interaction interventions implemented by teachers can play a vital role in promoting school readiness among pre-primary learners.

## 5.2 Recommendations of the study

The effectiveness of social interaction interventions can vary based on individual and contextual factors. It is important for teachers to adapt strategies to meet the diverse needs of their pupils and create a positive and inclusive learning environment.

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