



**SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE  
KINDERGARTEN PUPIL: THE ROLE OF ASSESSMENT  
IN THE KUMASI METROPOLIS, GHANA**

**Samuel, Oppong Frimpong<sup>1i</sup>,  
Dorigen, Osei<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>PhD, Department of Early Childhood Education,  
University of Education,  
Winneba, Ghana

<sup>2</sup>Department of Early Childhood Education,  
University of Education,  
Winneba, Ghana

**Abstract:**

Socio-emotional development which includes a broad range of mental, behavioural, and self-control skills is used in social interactions to achieve social and emotional goals and adjustment. A well assessed socio-emotional development, through social skills, empathy skills and relationship skills, could help reform and guide against pupils mental, behavioural, and self-control skills and vice versa. This prompted the researchers to examine the influence of social skills, empathy skills and relationship skills on socio-emotional development of children in selected early childhood centres in the Kumasi Metropolis. The study was nested in quantitative design using Multiple Linear Regression Model. A sample of 242 kindergarten teachers from 149 early childhood centres in the Kumasi Metropolis were selected with the help of table of random numbers. The study established a strong and positive influence of assessment in the form of social skills, empathy skills and relationship skills on the socio-emotional development of the children in the selected centres. It is recommended that effective and regular in-service should be organized for kindergarten teachers in Ghanaian early childhood centres to expose to them to the need for sound assessment practices in the development of socio emotional skills of their learners. Teachers can influence the socio emotional development of their learners. They should therefore be mindful of their behaviours in the classroom and model a good behaviour for their learners to emulate.

**Keywords:** socio-emotional development, social skills, empathy skills, relationship skills, children, assessment

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<sup>i</sup> Correspondence: email [sofrimpong@uew.edu.gh](mailto:sofrimpong@uew.edu.gh)

## 1. Introduction

Assessment is central to teaching and learning and a critical component of education in today's policy environment. Assessment information is needed to make informed decisions regarding children's learning abilities, their placement in appropriate levels and their achievement. The term assessment means different things to different people. Almond, Mislevy, Steinberg, Yan, & Williamson, (2015) cites the American Federation of Early Childhood Teachers, National Council on Measurement in Education and National Education Association, as seeing assessment as a method of obtaining information that is used to make decision about students' curriculum and programme and national policy. From this, assessment can be viewed as a means of collecting information about students in order to help in making decisions concerning the students' wellbeing in terms of the curriculum and programme and national policies on education.

Winter (2015) refers to assessment as the process of collecting, recording, interpreting, using and communicating information about a child's progress and achievement during the development of knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes. The drive of assessment is to establish pupils' performance level and provide information to the teachers on the problems that pupils might be encountering in their learning and or the social emotional development. As a result, the teacher is able to evaluate how much learning has taken place, how the learners are developing swishing emotionally and make decisions about the next instructional steps to take on the principle that the more clearly and specifically the teacher understands how pupils learn, the more effectively he/she can teach them (Sessa, & London, 2015). Research shows that classroom assessment is more than high quality evaluation of knowledge content. It requires a more thoughtful administration of assessment systems where every learner has the opportunity to demonstrate what they know in a manner that is consistent with and favourable to their learning needs (Sessa, & London, 2015).

Some of the most important progress in understanding young children's socio-emotional development is occurring at the intersection of conceptualization and measurement and assessment (Bailey, 2017). To understand the child's behaviour problem (including social empathy and relationship skills), and to help address it, requires knowledge of the child's key social contexts as well as of his or her behaviours. In this regard, studies are beginning to see measures that seek to capture and describe both the behaviour of the child and of the social context. An example is the Individualized Classroom Assessment Scoring System (Abrahams, Pancorbo, Primi, Santos, Kyllonen, John, & De Fruyt, 2019). Through assessment, early childhood teachers communicate with pupils using various assessment tools to gather meaningful information ranging from academic to social and emotional development and to make decisions concerning different aspects of their pupils. Tamakloe, Amedahe and Atta (2005) maintain that assessment occurs when a person interacts with another, gathers and interprets some information about the other person in terms of his/her knowledge and understanding, abilities, social development or attitudes.

Children's socio-emotional development during the early childhood years lays the foundation for their development through middle childhood, adolescence, and beyond (Keller, 2018; Halle, & Darling-Churchill, 2016). Consequently, policymakers and Early Childhood practitioners are placing a growing emphasis on promoting positive socio-emotional development for young children as part of state and federal initiatives (Brown, & Barry, 2019; U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2015). Initiatives that focus on young children's socio-emotional development may involve early childhood interventions, curricula, and/or professional training connecting the development of socio-emotional competencies to the foundational support of a child's development (Wilkinson, & Kao, 2019); Weissberg, Durlak, Domitrovich, & Gullotta, 2015).

Socio-emotional development is considered as an important factor in child development, especially considering its importance in child school readiness. Socio-emotional development is a child's ability to understand the feelings of others, control his/her own feelings and behaviours, get along with other children, and build relationships with adults (Alwaely, Yousif, & Mikhaylov, 2020). In order for children to develop the basic skills they need such as cooperation, following directions, demonstrating self-control and paying attention, they must have their socio-emotional skills well developed.

Socio-emotional development consists of the relationships an individual has with others, the level of self-control, and the motivation and perseverance a person has during an activity. Socio-emotional development includes the child's experience, expression, and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others (Mantur, & Itagi, 2019). It encompasses both intra- and interpersonal processes. The core features of emotional development include the ability to identify and understand one's own feelings, to accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others, to manage strong emotions and their expression in a constructive manner, to regulate one's own behavior, to develop empathy for others, and to establish and maintain relationships (McKown, 2017). It sets a foundation for children to engage in other developmental tasks (Keller, 2018). For example, in order to complete a difficult school assignment, a child may need the ability to manage his/her sense of frustration and seek out help from a peer, if need be.

Infants experience, express, and perceive emotions before they fully understand them. In learning to recognize, label, manage, and communicate their emotions and to perceive and attempt to understand the emotions of others, children build skills that connect them with family, peers, teachers, and the community. These growing capacities help them to become competent in negotiating increasingly complex social interactions, to participate effectively in relationships and group activities, and to reap the benefits of social support crucial to healthy human development and functioning.

Healthy socio-emotional development for children at the early years unfolds in an interpersonal context, namely that of positive ongoing relationships with familiar, nurturing adults. Young children are particularly attuned to social and emotional stimulation. Even newborns appear to attend more to stimuli that resemble faces (Tandel,

2019). They also prefer their mothers' voices to the voices of other women (Luhmann, Padmavati, Tharoor, & Osei, 2015). Through nurturance, adults support the infants' earliest experiences of emotion regulation (Morris, Cui, Criss, & Simmons, 2018); Garbarino, 2017). Children's social emotional development are highly determined through what they do. This includes how they relate to others, how they are able to take turns, and how they are able to consider the plight of others and put themselves in readiness to help (McKown, 2017). Socio-emotional skills children develop, and which are considered in this study are social skills, empathy skills and relationship skills.

## **2. Social Skills**

Social skills are the skills used to communicate and interact with each other, both verbally and non-verbally, through gestures, body language and personal appearance. Human beings (including kindergarten children) are sociable creatures and there are many ways to communicate our messages, thoughts and feelings with others (Haslett, & Samter, 2020).

Social skills are context of social and emotional learning. Thus, recognizing and managing one's emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically expected (Durlak, 2015). The classroom is one such contexts which requires learners to interact closely with teachers and peers. The classroom, therefore, becomes both a training ground for development of social skills and an arena in which those skills are put to use and the ability to ascertain this development is through assessment (Keller, 2018).

Assessment plays a key role in socio-emotional development of children. It enables children to identify their strengths and weakness in specific skills, knowledge and attitudes. The most important use of these assessments is identifying the individual social and emotional strengths and areas of growth opportunities for each pupil and then using this information to guide instruction to ensure that each pupil develops the full set of social and emotional skills that are needed for success in school (Hines, 2019).

Knowing that these skills are essential, and teachers have an obligation to the pupils and their parents to assess these skills and provide needed instruction. Some of the social skills learners are expected to exhibit to prove that they are developing socio emotionally are seen when a disagreement arises among the children as they engage in group activities. They should be able to suggest ideas/actions to resolve differences with or without the teacher's intervention; consider/discuss the effects of their ideas/actions in different scenarios; and show appropriate social and classroom behaviour. Through assessment, the teacher can then document progress as pupils attain these skills. Periodic assessment over the school year can provide important feedback to teachers and pupils that they are acquiring these skills. If pupils are not making the expected gains, teachers will have an opportunity to modify their strategies to achieve better success in the remainder of the year (Moss, & Brookhart, 2019).

### 3. Empathy

Empathy is the capacity to place one's self in another's position. Definitions of empathy encompass a broad range of emotional states. It is the experience of another person's thoughts and feelings from his/her point of view, rather than from one's own. Empathy facilitates prosocial or helping behaviors that come from within, rather than being forced, so that people behave in a more compassionate manner.

Jung and Lee (2019) suggest that one way to support the development of empathy in young children is to create a culture of caring in the early childhood environment. This can be done by assessing how children help and appreciate other children's feelings. This fosters the relationship among teachers, between children and teachers, and among children are fostered with warm and caring interactions (Jung, & Lee, 2019). Another important use of these assessments is identifying the empathy skills of pupils as teachers assess them. In determining how learners are developing socio emotionally as a result of their empathy skill, assessment can be done to ascertain how children to share learning materials such as crayons, pencils, erasers and textbooks as well as take turn during teaching and learning hours.

Teachers must recognize that everyone is unique in the following ways such as physical characteristics, race, ability and opinion (Moss, & Brookhart, 2019). In assessing pupils, teachers must take into consideration the aforementioned key disposition and assess the children accordingly (Herppich, Praetorius, Förster, Glogger-Frey, Karst, Leutner, & Hetmanek, 2018). For example, a teacher can perform an activity by showing the children an object. Have the children close their eyes and draw the object on the drawing paper. Get the children to open their eyes and draw the object again. The teacher can lead children to compare the differences between their drawings (with their eyes closed and eyes opened) and have children talked about their experiences. The ability of the learner to exhibit these characteristics points to the individual's empathy skills development which is a socio emotional development influencer/determinant (Moss, & Brookhart, 2019).

### 4. Relationships with Peers

Peer relationships provide a unique context in which children learn a range of critical socio-emotional skills, such as empathy, cooperation, and problem-solving strategies. Peer relationships can also contribute negatively to socio-emotional development through bullying, exclusion, and deviant peer processes. When children play or interact with their peers, they are learning more about social behavior, including how to express themselves, how to take turns and how to apply empathy when dealing with others. When children are able to control their emotions, they can make better decisions and exercise more judgment than a child with poor emotion regulation. Teaching children to think about emotions, and showing them ways to control their feelings when faced with a problem, can help them better-interact with others (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016).

Responsive caregiving supports infants in beginning to regulate their emotions and to develop a sense of predictability, safety, and responsiveness in their social environments. Early relationships are so important to developing infants that research experts have broadly concluded that, in the early years, nurturing, stable and consistent relationships are the key to healthy growth, development and learning (Hayes, O'Toole, & Halpenny, 2017; Tandel, 2019).

Children mingling with their peers during teaching and learning hours as well as extra-curricular activities show their relationship skills' development. Children's social and emotional well-being develops through their relationships with parents, teachers and the people in the community (Hines, 2019). Teachers who are warm and responsive are more likely to promote strong social and emotional skills in their children, through the use of assessment. For example, as children communicate and interact with their peers in group activities, they should show appreciation for the positive things that others say to them or do for them; demonstrate care and concern for others (e.g. notice when others are feeling sad or unwell and offer encouragement; thank others for their effort in helping); ask peers to join in during play or request to join peers in their play and ask for help to complete a task when necessary. Other include choosing different ways to establish and maintain friendships and communicating thoughts, ideas and feelings effectively with others through words, gestures and actions (Hines, 2019).

Children with social awareness are able to recognize the feelings and perspectives of others, appreciate diversity and show respect for others regardless of differences (Hines, 2019). Special events which provide opportunities for children and families to put on costumes representative of their cultures, share about ethnic food and celebrate festivals help raise children's awareness about the unique practices and values of different cultures (Hines, 2019).

Moreover, assessment is used to identify relationship skills children acquire in the classroom when engaged on a task. Children need to learn that there are many possible outcomes to a difficult situation and that they have a role to play in managing the outcomes when they are working with others (Moss, & Brookhart, 2019). Therefore, children should be given opportunities to solve problems and resolve conflicts. Children can also help to set classroom and game rules so that everyone learns to cooperate and take turns to ensure that activities and games are completed. As children experience the benefits of working well with others, they will learn socially acceptable behaviours such as taking turns and showing respect by listening to the views of others (Herppich, Praetorius, Förster et al., 2018).

The above social emotional components (social, empathy and relationship skills) are very key in determining the individual learner's general development. Thus, measuring children's socio-emotional development can provide valuable information about how children are progressing in areas such as forming close and secure relationships, regulating and expressing their emotions, and showing empathy towards others (Darling-Churchill & Lippman, 2016). The most important use of assessments is identifying the individual social and emotional strengths and areas of growth

opportunities for each pupil and then using this information to guide instruction to ensure that each learner develops the full set of socio-emotional skills that are needed for success in school. When teachers know that these skills are essential, they have the obligation to the pupils and their parents to assess these skills and provide needed instruction. Periodic assessment over the school years can provide important feedback to teachers and students that they are acquiring these skills. If students are not making the expected gains, teachers will have an opportunity to modify their strategies to achieve better success in the remaining years. This positions assessment as a key determinant of social and emotional development.

A corollary of the discussion above suggests that children's social and emotional well-being is developed and determined when they are able to interact positively with others, take turns in activities, and appreciate the challenges of their peers, among others. Teachers play a major role in ensuring these opportunities take place in the classroom particular during assessment. Besides the provision of suitable materials, teachers should also adopt appropriate strategies to promote social and emotional development. Adopting these strategies helps to ensure that children are given the opportunities to become aware, learn, practise and develop skills that will nurture them into becoming confident and socially responsible individuals.

In order to successfully assess children, there is a need for a warm and secure learning environment together with positive teacher children relationships which enable children to feel safe and secure. This increases the children's confidence and encourages them to explore, initiate their own learning and discover what they can do. Provision of thoughtfully selected resources in a well-organised learning environment will also provide opportunities for children to interact with one another build relationships and make responsible decisions (Oppong Frimpong, 2019).

Experiences with family members and teachers provide an opportunity for young children to learn about social relationships and emotions through exploration and predictable interactions. Professionals working in child care settings, including those in Ghana, can support the socio-emotional development of infants and toddlers in various ways, including interacting directly with young children, communicating with families, arranging the physical space in the care environment, and planning and implementing curriculum (Tandel, 2019).

Research has shown that there are many problems associated with teachers' assessment practices in Ghana and the world at large. These include teachers' inadequate knowledge regarding the basic assessment concepts (Abosalem, 2016), limited teacher training in assessment (Huang, & He, 2016), a school's policy on assessment standards (Amedahe, 2000), and failure of teachers to employ and adhere to assessment and measurement guidelines they learned (Adu-Mensah, 2018).

Throughout our readings, we noted that the development and promotion of socio-emotional skills in childhood and adolescence contributes to subsequent well-being and positive life outcomes. However, amidst all these roles of assessment and the influence of social, empathy and relationship skills on socio-emotional development of children on

in Ghanaian ECE centres, it appears that, locally, many studies/researchers have not really been done to explore the influence of social, empathy and relationship skills on socio-emotional development of children at the ECE centres especially, in the Kumasi metropolis. Moreover, there appears to be a methodological gap in the research is done in the area of assessment and social emotional development.

This paper, therefore, sought to accumulate empirical evidence on how social, empathy and relationship skills influence the socio-emotional development of children in selected early childhood centres in the Kumasi Metropolis, with the use of Multiple Linear Regression Model.

## 5. Research Question

The main research question which guided the study was:

- How do social skills, empathy skills and relationship skills influence socio-emotional development of children in selected early childhood centres in the Kumasi Metropolis?

## 6. Methodology

### 6.1 Research Design

Choosing an appropriate research design is of paramount importance in any study (Rahi, 2017); Creswell, & Clark, 2017). The study adopted the quantitative approach which is informed by positivism (Garner, Wagner, & Kawulich, 2016). Positivism is underpinned by the notion that there is a single reality: *“the one and only truth that is out there waiting to be discovered by objective and value-free inquiry”* (Feilzer, 2010). Positivism operates on the epistemological assumption that the social world can be studied in much the same way as we study the natural world.

The positivist paradigm was useful for this study because of the larger numbers of participants involved. It provided precision through numerical data to make data analysis relatively less time-consuming and allowed findings from the study to be generalised with the randomly selected samples of a sufficient size. The rationale for this approach was to refine and explain those statistical results by exploring participants view on the phenomenon in more depth (Yin, 2015; Creswell, & Clark, 2017).

The design for the research was descriptive because it aims at accurately and systematically describing a population, situation or phenomenon (Rahi, 2017).

### 6.2 Population of the Study

The accessible population was 672 from 298 early childhood centres (Kumasi Metro Education Directorate, 2017/2018 academic year).



### **6.3 Sample and Sampling Technique**

To specifically identify the 242 sample size from the accessible population of 672, a table of random numbers was used. Random sampling requires that each member of the sampling frame should have equal opportunity to be sampled from the accessible population (Yin, 2015; Creswell, & Clark, 2017). Given the accessible population was a three-digit number (672), a three-digit number frame was created to ensure fair representation of each respondent.

All the respondents were then given three-digit number with the first starting with 001 up to the last which was 672. A starting point was then selected from the table of random numbers and three-digit number frame was created and selected from the starting point until the 242 sample size was realized.

### **6.4 Research Instrument**

Questionnaire was the tool preferred for this study because it supplied the researchers with quantifiable data that were available for statistical analyses. Questionnaire is the most widely used technique for obtaining quantitative information from subjects. Thus, the basic objective of the questionnaire was to obtain facts and opinions about the role of assessment in socio-emotional development of children from people who were informed on this particular issue. The questionnaire was close-ended type developed using four-point Likert scale ranging from “strongly agree to strongly disagree”.

### **6.5 Data Collection Procedures**

The necessary rapport was established with the head teachers at the selected schools and permission was sought from them for the administration of the questionnaire to the participants. In order to ensure clarity of how the questionnaire was completed, the purpose of the study and the procedure for responding to the questionnaire were explained to the respondents after identifying them. The respondents were then given some time to respond to the questionnaire. This was after they have given their consent and the issues of confidentiality and anonymity and assurance of the fact that they could decide to discontinue with their participation in the study, have been clearly explained to them.

### **6.6 Data Analysis and Processing**

With the study's aim of predicting the value of a variable (socio emotional development of children) based on the value of two or more other variables (social, empathy and relationship skills), the study employed the Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) model. Thus, the data for this study was analyzed using Multiple Linear Regression (MLR).

The responses from the assessment practices (socio emotional influencers [i.e social, empathy and relationship skills]) were transformed to form single variables and were analysed using multiple linear regression model to find out which of the socio emotional predictors (social, empathy and relationship skills) predicted the socio-emotional development of the pupils. The multiple linear regression was exploited to

show the direction and magnitude of the effect and relationship between predictive variables against the criterion variable.

The Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) was also used to determine the overall fit (variance explained) of the model and the relative contribution of each of the predictors to the total variance explained in the criterion variable. This approach allowed the researchers to identify the unique contribution of each of the predictors to the outcome of the criterion variable.

## 7. Results and Discussion

**Research question:** How does assessment influence social skills, empathy skills and relationship skills of children in selected early childhood centres in the Kumasi Metropolis?

To accomplish the purpose of the study, the researchers assessed how social skills, empathy skills and relationship skills (socio-emotional influencers) influence the socio-emotional development of the children in selected early childhood centres in the Kumasi Metropolis. To achieve this, MLR was deemed appropriate for the analysis. The MLR was utilised to show the direction and magnitude of the influence of the influencers on socio-emotional development of the children.

To analyse the data on the research question, the gathered responses from respondents were converted to form single variable (using the SPSS, version. 25.0) and were analysed using the Multiple Linear Regression Model to find out how social skills, empathy skills and relationship skills influence socio-emotional development of pupils.

In conducting Multiple Linear Regression, certain assumptions had to be met. They include normality test and multicollinearity. The researchers checked for the assumptions before conducting the regression test. Figure 1 presents normality test for the test variables.

Figure 1 presents the normality of the study variables. The movement of the variables along the diagonal line shows that the variables were normal and multiple linear regression (MLR) could be performed.

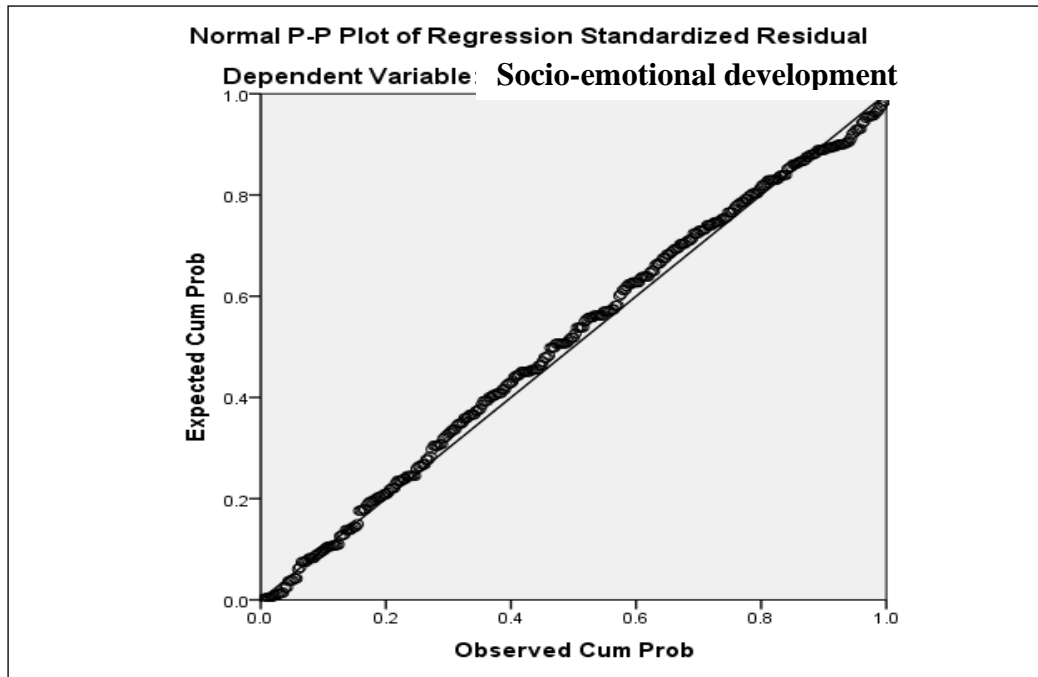


Figure 1: P-P plot for normality test

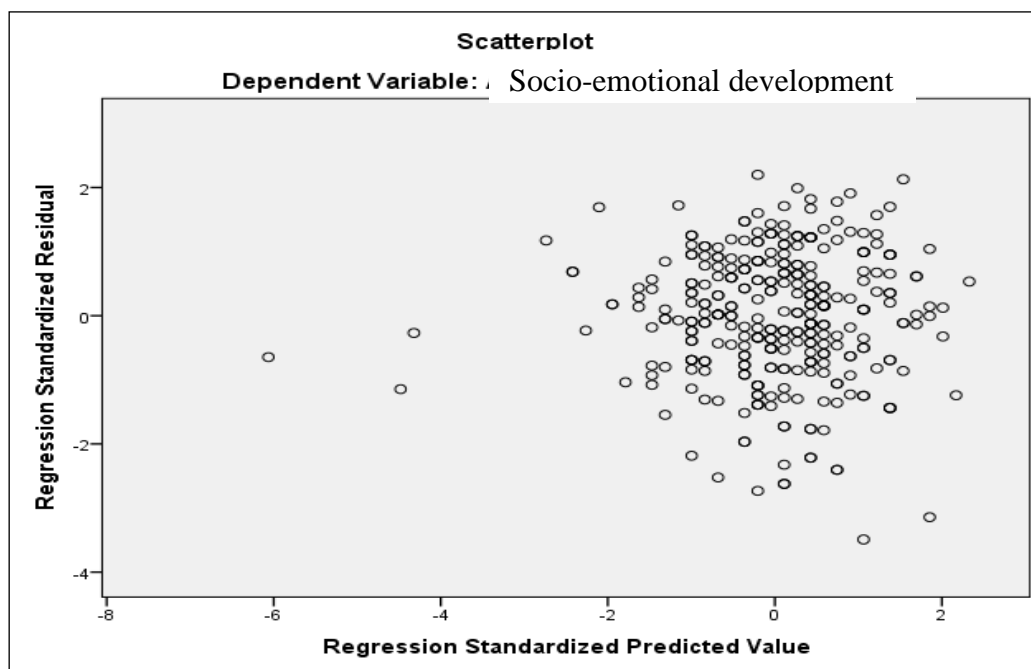


Figure 2: Scatter Plot for normality test

The scatterplot of standardised predicted values verses standardised residuals showed that the data met the assumptions of homogeneity of variance and linearity and the residuals were approximately normally distributed. Table 1 presents the results of the mean and standard deviation of the predicted variables (Assessment predictors -social, empathy and relationship skills).

**Table 1:** Descriptive Results of the Predictive Variables  
 (Social, Empathy and Relationship Skills)

No.	Socio Emotional Influencers	Mean	S.D.	N	Ranking
1	Social skills	19.07	2.019	232	1 <sup>st</sup>
3	Relationship skills	17.64	1.660	232	2 <sup>nd</sup>
2	Empathy skills	16.65	1.249	232	3 <sup>rd</sup>

Source: Field Data, (2019).

Results from the descriptive analysis show that there were differences in the mean scores of the predictors/independent variables (social, empathy and relationship skills). From Table 1, social skills recorded the highest mean and standard deviation (mean=19.07, SD=2.019, n=232). Relationship skills had a mean and standard deviation of (mean=17.64, SD=1.660, n=232). The last variable (empathy skills) relatively recorded the least mean and standard deviation (mean=16.65, SD=1.249, n=232). To establish more evidence, Table 2 shows the result of the multiple linear regression analysis between predictive variables (social, empathy and relationship skills) and criterion variable (socio-emotional development of the children).

**Table 2:** Multiple Linear Regression Analysis of the Criterion and Predictive Variables

Variables (Predictors)	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardize Coefficients ( $\beta$ )	Cal. t-value	p-value	Remarks
	B	Std. Error				
(Constant)	57.40	3.504		16.38	.000*	Predictor
**Social skills	1.221	.210	.345	5.824	.000*	Predictor
**Relationship skills	1.067	.248	.279	4.305	.000*	Predictor
**Empathy skills	.733	.171	.187	4.293	.000*	Predictor
Multiple R value	.994 <sup>a</sup>		F value	8.328		
R Square value	.250		P value	.004*		
Adjusted R Square	.220		Durbin-Watson	1.701		
Predictors: (Constant), social skills, relationship and empathy)						
Criterion Variable: Socio-emotional development of the children						

\*significant influence exists @ 0.05 level of confidence

Source: Field Survey (2019).

The result of the multiple linear regression analysis shows that the multiple correlation coefficient is 0.994. This measures the degree of relationship between the predictors and predicted value of the socio-emotional development of the children. This indicates that there is a strong and positive relationship between the predictive variables (social skills, empathy and Relationship) and the criterion variables (Socio-emotional development of the children).

From Table 2, the R<sup>2</sup> (R-square) of .250 measures the goodness-of-fit of the estimated regression model in terms of the proportion of the variation in the socio-emotional development of the children as explained by the fitted sample regression equation. Thus about 25% of the variation in socio-emotional development of the children

is explained and accounted for by the predictors (social skills, empathy and relationship) and  $R^2$  value is significant at 5 percent confidence level. The Durbin-Watson statistic is 1.701 and it tests for autocorrelation in the residuals from a statistical regression analysis, thus, it informs whether the assumption of independent errors is tenable and in this data the value is close to 2, hence the assumption has almost been met. The Durbin-Watson statistic is 1.701 and it is between the two critical values of  $1.5 < d < 2.5$ , therefore, the researchers assumed that there is no first order linear auto-correlation in the multiple linear regression data, thus, there is no autocorrelation in the sample.

From Table 2, the multiple linear regression coefficients (b-values) tell the relationship between socio-emotional development of the children and each predictor (social skills, empathy and relationship). The constant of the regression model is 57.405 which means that even when the predictive variables (social, empathy and relationship skills) are held constant or zero, still, the socio-emotional development of the children will be 57.405.

The multiple linear regression coefficient of social skills is recorded as ( $\beta=.345$ , cal. t-value =5.824, sig. 000) representing the effect that social skills as an assessment influencer has on socio-emotional development of the children, holding other predictive variables as constant. The relative effect of social skills as an assessment influencer on socio-emotional development of the children is significant at 5% confidence level because the cal. t-value is 5.824. Therefore, it could be said that social skill is making valuable and significant contribution to the socio-emotional development of the children.

With respect to relationship skills, the results were not different; however, it varied in magnitude. The multiple linear regression coefficient of relationship skill (an assessment influencer) is found to be  $\beta=.279$ , cal. t-value =4.305, sig. value= 000\*\* representing the effect that relationship skills have on socio-emotional development of the children, holding other predictive variables as constant. The relative effect of relationship skill on socio-emotional development of the children is also significant at 5% confidence level because the cal. t-value is 4.305. Therefore, it could be said that relationship skill is making appreciated and significant contribution to the socio-emotional development of the children in the Kumasi metropolis.

Finally, on empathy skills, the multiple linear regression coefficient results of  $\beta=.733$ ,  $t=4.293$ , sig. value= 000\*\* signifies the effect empathy skills (an assessment influencer) has on socio-emotional development of the children in the selected schools holding all the other predictive factors constant. The relative effect of empathy is significant at 5% confidence level because the t-value is 4.293. The results, therefore, suggest that empathy skills are making some significant contribution to socio-emotional development of the children in the Kumasi metropolis.

## 8. Discussions

The study shows that there is a strong and positive influence on the socio-emotional development of the children in selected early childhood centres in the Kumasi

Metropolis. When teachers involve children in group activities, they develop social skills, empathy, and relationship skills. As the children communicate and interact with their peers, they begin to develop relationship with their peers, they cooperate with each other and or able to take turns. This implies that when assessment is well practised and exercised by teachers, socio-emotional development of the pupils could be well developed and influences the pupils' academic, social and emotional life to be able to climb the educational ladder.

Socio-emotional skills determine how well people adjust to their environment and how much they achieve in their lives. But the development of these skills is important not only for the well-being of individuals, but also for wider communities and societies as a whole. It is imperative to note that infants experience, express, and perceive emotions before they fully understand them (Tandel, 2019). In learning to recognize, label, manage, and communicate their emotions and to perceive and attempt to understand the emotions of others, children build skills that connect them with family, peers, teachers, and the community. These growing capacities help young children to become competent in negotiating increasingly complex social interactions, to participate effectively in relationships and group activities, and to reap the benefits of social support crucial to healthy human development and functioning (Garbarino, 2017).

The results from the present study support the assertions of (McKown, 2017) which avers that the core features of emotional development include the ability to identify and understand one's own feelings, to accurately read and comprehend emotional states in others, to manage strong emotions and their expression in a constructive manner, to regulate one's own behavior, to develop empathy for others, and to establish and maintain relationships.

The results are further in line with the study of Tandel (2019) which pointed out that early relationships are so important to developing infants that research experts have broadly concluded that, in the early years, *"nurturing, stable and consistent relationships are the key to healthy growth, development and learning"* (Hayes, O'Toole, & Halpenny, 2017). In other words, high-quality relationships increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for young children. According to Tandel (2019), experiences with family members and teachers provide an opportunity for young children to learn about social relationships and emotions through exploration and predictable interactions.

## 9. Conclusion

Based on the findings from the study, it can be concluded that assessment has a great influence on the socio-emotional development of children in the selected schools arguably because the socio emotional influencers (social skills, empathy skills and relationship skills) can be determined and identified through assessment. Thus, a well-planned assessment could reform and positively influence pupils' socio-emotional development and life as they climb the educational ladder. The evidence is clear and conclusive: teachers influence their children' socio-emotional development and they can

do so directly or indirectly, intentionally or unintentionally, in positive ways or negative ones. They influence their pupils' socio-emotional development through how and what they teach, and through the way they interact with pupils as well as how they assess pupils in the classroom.

## 10. Recommendations

- 1) Following from the finding of the study, it is recommended that an effective and regular workshops, seminars and in-service training should be organized for all the kindergarten teachers on the use of sound assessment in the development of socio-emotional skills (social, empathy and relationship) among pupils.
- 2) Teachers having such a sensitive responsibility of assessing and making decision concerning children' academic progress, they are expected to be professional in the process and interpretation of assessment.
- 3) Potentiality, teachers can influence the socio emotional development of their learners. They should therefore be mindful of their behaviours in the classroom. Teachers should model good behaviour for their learners to emulate.

## Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors of the article titled "Socio-Emotional Development of the Kindergarten Pupil: The Role of Assessment in the Kumasi Metropolis, Ghana" declare no conflict of interests.

## About the Author

**Samuel, Oppong Frimpong** is an experienced university teacher with more than a decade teaching experience at a higher institution. He is a researcher interested in child growth and development, observation and assessment of the young child, interaction in Early childhood Education, and creating a developmentally appropriate environment for Early childhood Education provision. Samuel is currently a Senior Lecturer with the Department of Early Childhood Education in the University of Education, Winneba in Ghana. He holds Doctor of Philosophy (In Early Childhood Education) from University of Aberdeen in Scotland, UK. Research interests: quality early childhood education (including teacher quality assessment, pedagogy, environment, and the use of TLMs); interaction at the early childhood education centre; child safety and wellbeing at the early childhood centre; child development; adolescent development.

**Dorigen, Osei** is a young researcher with particular research interest in teacher pedagogical activities, teacher classroom management approaches, assessment of teacher instructional strategies and developmentally appropriate early childhood classroom environment. Dorigen is a trained early childhood educator. She holds Master of Philosophy in Early Childhood Education from University of Education, Winneba, Ghana. She is currently a Lecturer at Bia Lamplighter College of Education in Ghana.

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