



## GENDER AND SCHOOL TYPE AS PREDICTORS OF SOCIAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT OF LEARNERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IN IBADAN

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### Abstract

This study explored gender and school type as predictors of social skills development of learners with Intellectual Disability (ID). Researches on Influence of Gender and School type on specific social skills development of learners with ID have been scarce in literature. Data on gender and school type as they influence the social skill development of learners with ID were collected using validated instruments. Forty (40) pupils with ID that scored below the border line of IQ score in Slosson Intelligent Screening test and have deficits in social skills development were purposively selected in four schools within Ibadan. Two public and two special schools to be specific. Two research questions were raised and answered. The instrument used were Slosson Intelligent Test ( $r=0.73$ ) and Pupils Social Development Checklist ( $r=0.80$ ). Data were analyzed using independent t-test at 0.05 level of significance. There is a significant difference between the social skills development of male and female pupils (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal.t = -1.975, DF = 38,  $p(0.45) < .05$  level of significance). Female pupils ( $\bar{x} = 46.04$ ) had a better social skills development compared to their male counterparts ( $\bar{x} = 43.94$ ). There is also a significant difference between the social skills development of pupils from public and private schools (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal.t = 2.172, DF = 38,  $p(0.036) < .05$  level of significance). Pupils from private school ( $\bar{x} = 48.95$ ) had better social skills development compared to their counterparts from public school ( $\bar{x} = 41.15$ ). Female pupils ( $\bar{x} = 46.04$ ) had a better social skills development compared to their male counterparts ( $\bar{x} = 43.94$ ). Conclusions and recommendation were made accordingly.

**Keywords:** Gender, school type, social skill development, learners with intellectual disability.

### INTRODUCTION

Persons with disabilities are the most vulnerable and marginalized, they are group of individuals with various characteristics, challenges and needs that have negatively impacted and hindered their development of appropriate social skills. Most of them suffer from co morbid mental health issues and problems that lead to their inability or difficulties socializing. Some of these problems are difficulty in intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviour, slow or late development of self-help and communication skills and many more. Some also have problem performing day to day activities that are expected of people of their similar age. They have problems initiating social interactions and find it difficult responding to such. This inappropriate development of, or deficit in social skills is also associated with various challenging behaviours. This has made the development of appropriate social skills an essential need among learners with intellectual disability as it forms the bases for the development of every other skill, be it academic, vocational or functional life skills. Development of appropriate social skills provides structured interventions that can enhance social participation and competence of persons with disabilities.



Social skills play a pivotal role in building strong relationship, fostering connections, and bringing about a significant and successful academic achievement among persons with disabilities. Development of appropriate social skills has been found to be of necessity among learners with intellectual disability in that, it helps in overcoming the sedentary lifestyle that is a common phenomenon among them. Social skills development is generally believed to have a very strong connection with successful social interactions; it also has strong affiliation with healthy social relationships (Garrote, 2017). Most persons with intellectual disability are happy when they have reasons to participate in social gathering, community programs or when they go out for sight seen where they can have opportunity to meet with many people and to personally interact with people. This often has positive outcomes upon their health and overall well-being.

Social skills are complex set of skills that concerns issues like communication, decision-making, peer and group interactions, self-management and problem-solving (Kolb & Hanley-Maxwell, 2003). Many skills are embedded in social skill that learners with ID will need to learn how to perform for their effective navigation and daily interactions with their immediate environment, for instance, taking turns, looking neat, greetings, allowing others, participation in community discussion without creating scene, saying sorry as at when due, taking permission, ability to take responsibility for mistakes made and saying sorry when you have offended a person and ability to say thank you for rendering you an assistance (Kane, 2004).

Social skills are healthy ways of relating with every one we come in contact with such that positive interactions and outcomes can be maintained. It builds a kind of relationship that becomes difficult to fathom depending on how people concern go about it. Social skills help people to relate well, use language appropriately, endure pressure, respond adequately, make request politely, and even intervene when the need arises. This may have to do with being choosy in the use of words, adequate use of gesture and body language, making eye contact and being a good communicator. Development of an appropriate social skill will help an individual to interact and relate with others at any social function or gathering. It helps an individual to be an effective communicator at home, school, work, and at the community at large.

The concept of inclusion advocate for equal opportunity among every individuals with disabilities. However, it is quite unfortunate that discrimination is persistent and enduring among people with disabilities which had negatively impacted the prompt development of appropriate social skills. It is therefore necessary for all and sundry to rise up to the task of helping individuals with disabilities especially learners with intellectual disability develop the needed social skills that will easily lunch them to the part of fulfillment of their individual potential. Every child can learn if provided with an enabling environment and if exposed to series of active social situations. Social skills development is central and generic way of easy developing of every other life skills among persons with disabilities.

Gender is a strong construct which determines a lot about the development of appropriate social skills. Gender has played a pivotal role in the development of appropriate social skills among learners with intellectual disabilities. It has been reported and discovered through various researches that there have been gender imbalance in social relationships which can positively enhance the development of appropriate social skills among these group of learners. There have been serious gender gaps in education and skills development among learners with ID. Role differentiation is another cause of the gender gap in the educational pursuit among male and female learners with ID. Actually there are no general consensuses as related to the effect of gender on the development of appropriate social skills among learners with ID.



Females are not often allowed access to formal education in Nigeria like their male counterparts. In the past they were meant to believe that their places are in the kitchen and also in their husband's houses and therefore, they were prevented from going to school where they can learn a lot by interactions with peers and friends, whereas their male counterparts are often given opportunity to go to school and mix with different types of people. This has actually caused a serious gender gap and form the bases for gender differences not in the development of social skills alone, but as it has to do with development of other skill area among students. However, Aydin & Konyalioglu (2011) maintained that it has not been established through literature that there is an effect of gender on social skills development and behaviour modification among learners with intellectual disability. Researchers have also confirmed that female students have tendencies to develop higher levels of social skills than the male students (Huaqing & Kaiser 2003), whereas some other literatures affirms that male student have higher level of social skills development than the female students (Yildirim 2012).

School type is an important construct in this study. There are several preconceived notions about public and private schools. One of them is whether the type of school can possibly influence either positively or negatively the development of skills especially social skills among learners with intellectual disability. It is good to know and to take note that private schools are autonomous and so they have a soul responsibility to run the school in such a way that will promote the business of the owner, whereas, public schools are hundred percent controlled by the government and the students barely attend freely or support with very little amount of money. The private schools have many ways of raising money to run the school and this is majorly through the fees being paid by the parents. They will want to give their best so that the parents can have something to show for the money being paid.

Children who are educated at private schools benefit a lot as the private schools incorporate so many things into school system and the school curriculum such that can facilitate learning among students, therefore students that attend private schools are likely to develop greater self-esteem, locus of control (that is the ability to take charge of their lives, decisions and actions and reactions as it may), have high valued network and professional aspirations than their counterparts who attend public or state owned schools (Green et al 2017). More positive social emotional behaviours are observed in children who attend private schools than those who attend public schools. Those who attend private schools report higher-well-being, fewer behaviour problems and less peer victimization and bullying than those who attend state owned schools. Students who attend private schools tend to have overall positive development than those attend state owned or public schools. Lazarus, (2020) opined that private owned schools provide learners with opportunities for an improved learning outcomes and that teachers in the private schools have access to community navigation than their counterparts in public schools.

## Statement of Problem

Social skills development of learners with intellectual disability has not been given adequate consideration by stakeholders and this has actually made the development of appropriate social skills a difficult task among learners with Intellectual disability. One of the best way through which learners with ID learn is through social skills. It is therefore necessary for teachers, parents and all the professionals working with learners with ID to give adequate attention to teaching social skills to learners with intellectual disability.

There have been various researches on social skill development among learners with intellectual disability, but few have considered the combined effect of gender and the school type on the development of social skills among learners with intellectual disability. Many factors can enhance the development of social skills among learners with ID, there is need to research into the relationship between gender and the school type a child is exposed to as they both influence the development of appropriate social skills development among learners with intellectual disability.



Learners with intellectual disability have unique characteristics that makes the development of appropriate social skills central to the acquisition of every other skills be it academic, vocational, daily living skills, and community navigation skills. This study therefore investigated gender and school type as correlate of social skills development among learners with intellectual disability in Ibadan.

## Research Questions

In order to achieve the objectives of this study, the following research questions were raised and answered:

- 1) Is there any significant difference between the social skills development of male and female of pupils with intellectual disability in Ibadan?
- 2) Is there any significant difference between the social skills development of pupils with intellectual disability in Ibadan from public schools and private schools?

## METHOD

### Research Design

Descriptive research design of correlation type was adopted in this study to investigate into the relationship between gender and school type and social skills development among learners with intellectual disability. Data were collected from the respondent based on the construct investigated as no variable was manipulated. Mean, standard deviation and t-test analysis were used to analyze the data collected.

### Population

The target populations for this study were all learners with intellectual disability in Ibadan Forty learners with ID (male 19 and female 21) were the respondent for this study. Twenty (20) of them were from public schools and the rest twenty (20) from private schools.

### Sample and Sampling Techniques

Forty learners with Intellectual Disability that score below the border line in slosson intelligence test were purposively selected for this study. Both male and female were included in the study to ascertain the gender influence in the development of appropriate social skills among learners with intellectual disability. Random sampling techniques were used to select two private and two public schools with learners with intellectual disability. Simple random sampling techniques were used to select ten (10) learners each from each of the school to give us forty (40) respondents for the purpose of this study.

### Instrument

A well-structured questionnaire that reflect the gender and the school type of the respondent and pupil social development checklist screening for social skills development 0.73 respectively were used to elicit responses from the respondent.

### Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analyzed using the descriptive research design of independent t-test.

### Research Question Testing

**Research question one:** Is there any significant difference between the social skills development of male and female of pupils with intellectual disability in Ibadan?



**Table 1.** Independent t-test showing the difference in the social skills development of male and female pupils.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t.	DF	p value
Male	19	43.9474	11.80148	1.96	-1.975	38	.045
Female	21	46.0476	12.15926				

Table 1 above showed that there is a significant difference between the social skills development of male and female pupils (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal.t = -1.975, DF = 38,  $p(0.45) < .05$  level of significance). Hence, female pupils ( $\bar{x} = 46.04$ ) reported a better social skills development compared to their male counterparts ( $\bar{x} = 43.94$ ) in the study.

**Research question two:** Is there any significant difference between the social skills development of pupils with intellectual disability in Ibadan from public schools and private schools?

**Table 2.** Independent t-test showing the difference in the social skills development of pupils from public and private school.

School type	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Crit-t	Cal-t.	DF	p value
Private school	20	48.9500	11.87866	1.96	2.172	38	.036
Public school	20	41.1500	10.80582				

Table 2 above showed that there is a significant difference between the social skills development of pupils from public and private schools (Crit-t = 1.96, Cal.t = 2.172, DF = 38,  $p(0.036) < .05$  level of significance). Hence, Pupils from private school ( $\bar{x} = 48.95$ ) had a better social skills development compared to their counterparts from public school ( $\bar{x} = 41.15$ ) in the study.

## DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, and RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this study was to discover the relationship between gender and school type of learners with intellectual disability and their social skill development. Several authors have discussed about the influence of gender on social skills development of learners with intellectual disability. Aydin & Konyalioglu (2011) disclosed that it has not been established through research that gender has a significant effect on social skills development and behaviour problem among learners with intellectual disability.

The first research question says, is there any significant difference between the social skills development of male and female of pupils with intellectual disability in Ibadan? The result shows there is a significant difference between the social skills development of male and female pupils. Female learners with intellectual disability reported a better social skills development compared to their male counterparts with intellectual disability. This result is consistent with Gresham & Elliot (1990) findings, where it was ascertained that female score higher in development of social skills than their male counterparts. This result agrees with the findings of Taylor et al (2002) which states that female are more likely to have superior social and academic skills. The result is also in tandem with findings of Cartledge, Adedapo & Johnson (1998) which states that participants in his study agreed that boys had more social skills compared to their male counterparts. This result negates the findings of some previous studies that maintained that male students have higher development of social skills than their female counterparts (Amin, 2005, Luftig & Nichols, 1991, Yildirim, 2012). The findings also contradicts that of Rashid, Shehzadi & Yousaf (2021) which maintains that male students are higher in social skills of accepting criticism compared with their female counterpart.





The second research question says is there any significant difference between the social skills development of pupils with intellectual disability in Ibadan from public schools and private schools? The result shows that there is a significant difference between the social skills development of pupils from public and private schools. Pupils from private school reported a better social skills development compared to their counterparts from public school in the study. This result is in tandem with the findings of Furrer, (2003) which states that school type exerts a kind of substantial influences on academic achievement and social behaviour of students. The result is consistent with the findings of Smith-Woolley et al (2018) which maintain that the children who attend private schools achieve or perform better than children who went to public schools. The result also corroborates the findings of Reeves, Friedman, Rahal & Flemmen (2017) which states that Students who attend private schools can easily access key characteristics like classical academic curriculum, different and solid extra-curricular activities and a boarding school structures which makes development of skills like social skills and community navigation easy for me.

## Conclusion

This study was carried out to investigate the relationships that exist between gender, school type and social skills development of learners with disability in Ibadan. Findings have shown that social skills development is crucial and germane to overall development of all learners especially learners with intellectual development. It has also been discovered through the findings of this study that gender can possibly affect the development of skills among learners with intellectual disability. Also the type of schools that a child has opportunity to attend also affects the development of social skills among these groups of learners. Students who attend private schools report easy and higher development of social skills while those that attend public school might struggles while developing necessary social skills.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following were recommended

- 1) Parents should expose their children to appropriate social skills they will need for the rest of their lives irrespective of the fact whether they are male or female, every child can learn.
- 2) Teachers both at the public or private schools should endeavor to expose students to appropriate social skills. Students can learn if an enabling environment is provided irrespective of the type of school attended.
- 3) Social skills training should be incorporated into the curriculum of learners with intellectual disability worldwide.

## Ethics and Conflict of Interest

Throughout the study, all ethical guidelines were followed. The authors claim that they followed ethical guidelines during all phases of the study. There is no potential conflict of interest between the authors.

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