

The Impact of Learning Corners on the Social-Emotional Development of Primary Schools Children in Ekiti State

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the availability of learning corners and their impact on the social-emotional development of primary school children in Ikere Local Government Area Ekiti State. A descriptive survey research design was employed, with a sample size of 100 teachers who were selected through simple random sampling. to assess the presence, organization, and utilization of learning corners, as well as their influence on pupils' social-emotional development. Findings revealed that learning corners were generally available, well-organized, accessible, and actively used in school. Teachers reported that learning corners significantly enhanced children's social skills, emotional expression, empathy, patience, and self-regulation. Furthermore, learning corners positively influenced academic performance by improving motivation, problem-solving abilities, focus, creativity, and collaborative learning. Finally the study demonstrates that learning corners serve as effective instructional spaces that support holistic child development. The findings highlight the importance of structured, resource-rich learning environments in promoting both educational achievement and social-emotional competence among primary school pupils. The study suggested that addressing these challenges through better resources, smaller class sizes, and enhanced teacher training would improve the implementation and outcomes of learning corners in primary schools

Keywords: Learning corners, Social-emotional development, Academic performance

INTRODUCTION

Getting young children started on the right track is crucial for their future success. Research consistently shows that children are born with an inherent eagerness to learn, and the first five years of life are a period of rapid and unparalleled learning. According to Heckman (2018), an economic principle applied to early education posits that "early success begets later success." This means that children who do not experience positive and high-quality early learning opportunities are at a greater risk of facing difficulties later in life. There is substantial experimental evidence supporting the notion that high-quality early learning programs significantly contribute to children's long-term academic and developmental achievements ((Sammon, 2021; Sylva, 2021). This evidence largely comes from early childhood demonstration programs, which illustrate that effective learning experiences in the formative years can lead to lasting benefits.

Successful early learning is characterized by active engagement from both teachers and children. For teachers, the challenge is to facilitate an environment where children are encouraged to think critically, explore concepts, engage in meaningful discussions, and practice new skills. A study by Bonawitz et. Al. (2011) found that when children are allowed to explore solutions independently, they develop better problem- solving strategies. This approach goes beyond the mere transmission of factual information and focuses on fostering higher-order cognitive skills. Quality learning corners play a pivotal role in this process. They provide a structured yet flexible environment where teachers can systematically and explicitly support the development of children's conceptual knowledge. This includes helping children understand the meanings of words and concepts, rather than focusing solely on basic elements such as letters and sounds

In recent years, extensive research has illuminated the profound effects of primary schools' educational environments on children's learning and development (Ajayi, 2017; Aina & Oyetunji, 2018; Chukwu, 2019; Eze et al., 2020; Okoroafor & Onuoha, 2021). Studies have consistently highlighted how well-organized educational settings can significantly enhance children's learning experiences and outcomes (Bamidele, 2021; Olawe, 2022; Robinson & Fraser, 2021). The educational environment, often referred to as the "third teacher," plays a crucial role in shaping the quality of early educational experiences. Allen and Fraser (2022) emphasize that a thoughtfully arranged environment contributes greatly to more effective learning. When children are placed in environments where they can interact meaningfully with materials and peers, their ability to learn and absorb new information is significantly enhanced. These materials could be real object which is easy, simple and can help the teacher to teach the young learners (Odewumi 2022). Therefore, The interaction of children with surroundings supports their cognitive and social development, making the educational environment a key component in early childhood education.

Learning corners, also known as learning areas or activity corners, are essential elements within these educational environments. These corners are designed to organize classroom space and materials in ways that promote both social and academic growth (Metin, 2022; Naimoli-Ginter, 2018). They function as instructional methods that offer children the opportunity to engage in various tasks and activities at their own pace. By allowing children to explore and work independently or in small groups, learning corners facilitate a form of differentiated instruction that supports diverse learning needs and styles. This approach encourages children to build on their existing knowledge while exploring new concepts in a hands-on manner.

In primary school settings, learning corners encompass a variety of focus areas, each designed to stimulate different aspects of a child's development. For instance, corners dedicated to art foster creativity and fine motor skills, such as cutting, drawing, painting, and sculpting, which involve the precise use of hands and fingers to perform intricate tasks. Those focused on science promote curiosity and exploration through hands-on experiments. Reading and writing corners support early literacy development, and dramatic play areas enhance social and emotional skills through role-playing. Music corners offer auditory experiences and opportunities for musical expression, while computer corners introduce technology and interactive learning tools. Additionally, sand and water corners provide sensory experiences that aid in understanding basic scientific concepts. These corners collectively create a rich, engaging environment that allows children to explore their interests, make choices, and gain valuable learning experiences.

It is crucial to establish a variety of learning corners within primary schools' environments to offer children a range of stimuli and learning opportunities. The presence of a diverse array of learning corners ensures that children are exposed to different types of experiences that cater to their individual interests and developmental needs (Bamidele, 2021; Robinson & Fraser, 2021). Moreover, the quality of the materials provided within these corners plays a significant role in shaping children's learning experiences. High-quality materials can profoundly impact the effectiveness of these educational settings, influencing the social-emotional skills of children. Social-emotional development refers to the process through which children understand and manage their emotions, build and maintain relationships, and make responsible decisions (Adeyemi & Olayemi, 2019; Nwachukwu, 2020). It encompasses several key components that are crucial for a child's overall growth and success. Emotional regulation involves the ability to recognize and manage one's emotions in a constructive way, which includes self-soothing techniques and the capacity to control impulses. Social skills are essential for interacting effectively with others and include abilities such as communication, empathy, cooperation, and conflict resolution. Self-esteem reflects a child's sense of self-worth and confidence, which is developed through positive reinforcement and successful experiences. Social awareness involves understanding and empathizing with others' perspectives and feelings, while responsible decision-making is about making choices that consider the impact on oneself and others.

The development of these social-emotional skills is critical for several reasons. Children with strong social-emotional skills are better equipped to handle academic challenges. Emotional regulation and self-esteem contribute to a positive attitude towards learning, persistence in the face of difficulties, and overall academic success. Also, social skills such as cooperation and effective communication are essential for building positive relationships with peers and teachers, which can enhance classroom dynamics and support learning. Furthermore, children who possess high self-esteem and emotional regulation are more likely to exhibit positive

behavior and adapt well to various social and academic situations, reducing the likelihood of behavioral problems.

The significance of fostering social-emotional development extends beyond immediate educational outcomes. High-quality early learning environments, particularly those incorporating well-designed learning corners, play a pivotal role in this process. Learning corners are instrumental in providing children with diverse stimuli and learning opportunities that cater to various developmental needs. These corners not only support cognitive and academic growth but also contribute to the enhancement of social-emotional skills. For instance, dramatic play corners help children develop empathy and cooperation through role-playing, while art corners encourage self-expression and boost self-esteem.

Research underscores the link between the quality of primary schools learning environments and the effectiveness of social-emotional development. High-quality learning corners are associated with more enduring positive outcomes in children's cognitive, social, and behavioral development (Sammon, 2021; Sylva, 2021). These corners facilitate meaningful interactions with materials and peers, which are crucial for developing social-emotional competencies. By providing a range of well-resourced and engaging activities, learning corners help address individual learning needs, promote effective participation and collaboration, and encourage exploratory activities that contribute to social-emotional growth. Thus, the need for this study is evident as it seeks to explore how learning corners impact social-emotional development and educational outcomes.

In recent years, there has been growing recognition of the importance of early childhood education in shaping long-term developmental outcomes. The future of any country is significantly influenced by the success of its younger generations, and as such, there are increasing demands on incoming preschoolers. This has led to heightened expectations within primary schools classrooms, where the emphasis on early literacy, numeracy, and language acquisition has intensified. Early exposure to visual stimuli, oral language interactions, and repetitive activities is now recognized as crucial for brain development and preparation for future academic success. Despite this, observations across various parts of Nigeria have revealed significant issues that not all primary schools have effectively implemented learning corners, and many existing corners are inadequately organized to support children's diverse learning needs. Many learning corners are not designed to promote critical thinking, oral language skills, literacy, phonological awareness, or mathematical skills effectively. Additionally, they often fail to address behavioral issues such as aggression. This inconsistency and lack of organization in learning corners compromise their ability to foster essential skills and prepare children adequately for the academic challenges they will face in later years.

A critical challenge lies in the lack of clarity regarding how the quality and structure of learning corners influence children's social-emotional development. Despite evidence suggesting that high-quality learning corners contribute to better cognitive and social-emotional outcomes (Sammon, 2021; Sylva, 2021), there is insufficient empirical data on the specific features of these corners that effectively foster social-emotional growth in primary school settings. The disparity in the design and implementation of learning corners across different educational environments exacerbates the problem, leading to uneven educational experiences and outcomes. This study seeks to address these issues by investigating how various types and qualities of learning corners impact the social-emotional development of children in selected primary schools.

The dominant body of literature on learning environments and social-emotional development is heavily situated in urban contexts, often overlooking the socio-cultural realities of Nigerian classrooms, including resource constraints, curriculum structures, and teacher practices. This contextual imbalance limits the applicability of existing findings to Nigerian educational settings. The current study addresses this gap by grounding its investigation within the Nigerian primary school system, aligning learning corners with the Nigerian curriculum, and considering classroom realities in Ikere LGA. This contextualized approach enhances relevance for local policy, practice, and international comparative scholarship.

To achieve the study's purpose, the researcher sought:

1. Assess the availability of learning corners in the classroom of selected primary schools in Ikere Local Government Area

2. Investigate how different varieties of learning corners affect key components of social-emotional development among primary schools children in Ikere Local Government Area.
3. Determine the effect of learning corners on educational outcomes among primary schools children in Ikere Local Government Area.

The following research questions based on the provided objectives are formulated to guide the study

- i. Are learning corners available in selected primary schools?
- ii. How do different varieties of learning corners affect social-emotional development among primary schools children?
- iii. What is the effect of learning corners on the educational outcomes of primary schools children?

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Concept of Learning Corner

Every teacher's goal is to provide the best learning environment for their pupils. For the early childhood classroom, learning corner is the best developmentally appropriate practice (McLennan, 2016). Learning corners are designated areas where children enrich their learning. They work on academic skills by doing different activities during the school day that let them use items provided to create, explore, and to discover new ideas. Children choose which learning corner they would like to participate in and use the materials that are provided for them (Pyle & Danniels, 2017). Learning takes place when children are engaged and being active participates (McLennan, 2016). Learning corners lets children have hands-on opportunities.

Social-Emotional Development

Social-emotional development refers to the means by which children acquire skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, build positive relationships, and feel empathy toward others. This developmental process shapes children's emotional health, social functioning, and academic performance (Olawale & Ogundele, 2020). Emotional regulation, self-awareness, social awareness, and interpersonal skills are key components of social-emotional development.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which offer critical perspectives on understanding the social-emotional development of children in the context of learning corners. These theories are complementary in emphasizing the role of social interaction and the environment in shaping development, making them relevant for the research focus on primary school children in Ikere Local Government Area of Ekiti State.

METHODOLOGY

The descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population for this study consisted of all primary school teachers in the selected schools within Ikere LGA. A sample of 100 teachers was selected. The study adopted purposive and stratified random sampling techniques to ensure representation across different school types (public and private) and different school classes (Primary 1 to Primary 6). Ten schools (5 public and 5 private) were randomly selected. Given the focus of this study on social-emotional development and the increased likelihood of younger children using learning corners, the sample specifically targeted pre-primary classes and Primary 1-2 classes.

The instrument for data collection was a structured questionnaire designed for teachers. The questionnaire titled "the impact of Learning Corners on the Social-Emotional Development of Children in selected Schools (LCSDC)". The questionnaire was distributed in person to the teachers in the selected schools. To ensure validity, the questionnaire was reviewed by three experts from counselling, early childhood education and educational measurement. Their suggestions were incorporated into the final draft. A pilot study was conducted

with 20 teachers outside the scope of the study the reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach’s Alpha, yielding a coefficient of 0.81, which indicated high internal consistency. The data collected from the study was analyzed using frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations

RESULTS

Table 1: Availability of Learning Corners in Primary Schools

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total	Mean Score
1	My school has designated learning corners for various activities.	35 (35%)	42 (42%)	9 (9%)	4 (4%)	100	3.18
2	The learning corners in my school are well-equipped with necessary materials (e.g., books, toys, educational tools).	32 (32%)	45 (45%)	8 (8%)	5 (5%)	100	3.14
3	The learning corners in my school are organized into specific areas such as art, reading, and science.	38 (38%)	40 (40%)	7 (7%)	3 (3%)	100	3.25
4	Children are encouraged to participate in the activities available in the learning corners.	43 (43%)	45 (45%)	6 (6%)	2 (2%)	100	3.34
5	Learning corners are accessible and used frequently by the students during school hours.	38 (38%)	41 (41%)	7 (7%)	6 (6%)	100	3.23
6	The learning corners are designed to support both academic and social skills development.	40 (40%)	41 (41%)	9 (9%)	5 (5%)	100	3.26
Grand Total: 3.22							

The frequency distribution for the availability of learning corners indicates a generally positive response from the teachers. Specifically, 42% (n = 42) of respondents agree and 35% (n = 35) strongly agree that their school has designated learning corners for various activities, giving a mean score of 3.18 for this item. This suggests that a majority of the respondents believe that learning corners are present in their schools. For the item "The learning corners in my school are well-equipped with necessary materials," 45% (n = 45) agree and 32% (n = 32) strongly agree, yielding a mean score of 3.14. This suggests that while a significant portion of respondents find the learning corners adequately equipped, there may still be areas for improvement in terms of material provision. Regarding the organization of learning corners into specific areas (e.g., art, reading, science), 40% (n = 40) agree, and 38% (n = 38) strongly agree, resulting in a mean score of 3.25. This indicates that learning corners are generally organized effectively in the respondents' schools. Teachers also report a high level of participation in learning corner activities, with 45% (n = 45) agreeing and 43% (n = 43) strongly agreeing that children are encouraged to participate. The mean score for this item is 3.34, the highest among all items in this category, suggesting strong engagement with the activities in the learning corners. Accessibility of learning corners is also positively perceived, with 41% (n = 41) agreeing and 38% (n = 38) strongly agreeing that learning corners are frequently used by students during school hours. The mean score of 3.23 supports the idea that learning corners are accessible and well-utilized. Finally, the item regarding the support of both academic and social skills development through learning corners shows a favorable response, with 41% (n = 41) agreeing and 40% (n = 40) strongly agreeing, yielding a mean score of 3.26. This suggests that learning corners are viewed as valuable for supporting a broad range of developmental skills.

Table 2: Impact of Learning Corners on Social-Emotional Development

S/N	Item	SA (%)	A (%)	D (%)	SD (%)	Total	Mean Score
1	Learning corners in my school help children improve their social skills, such as cooperation and sharing.	40 (40%)	45 (45%)	10 (10%)	5 (5%)	100	3.20
2	Activities in the learning corners foster better emotional expression among children in my class.	38 (38%)	46 (46%)	9 (9%)	7 (7%)	100	3.15

3	Learning corners encourage children to resolve conflicts with their peers independently.	35 (35%)	40 (40%)	15 (15%)	10 (10%)	100	3.00
4	Children who engage with learning corners show better self-regulation, such as managing their emotions and behavior.	37 (37%)	42 (42%)	13 (13%)	8 (8%)	100	3.08
5	Learning corners promote empathy among children by encouraging them to understand others' feelings.	36 (36%)	44 (44%)	12 (12%)	8 (8%)	100	3.08
6	The structured activities within learning corners help children develop patience and the ability to take turns.	41 (41%)	43 (43%)	9 (9%)	7 (7%)	100	3.18
7	Learning corners improve children's peer interactions, especially in group work and collaborative tasks.	39 (39%)	45 (45%)	10 (10%)	6 (6%)	100	3.17
8	Children who participate in learning corners display better listening skills and attention to others.	38 (38%)	42 (42%)	12 (12%)	8 (8%)	100	3.10
Grand Total: 3.12							

On Table 4, respondents provided insights into the impact of learning corners on the social-emotional development of primary school children. For the item, "Learning corners in my school help children improve their social skills, such as cooperation and sharing," 40% (n = 40) of respondents strongly agreed, and 45% (n = 45) agreed, indicating that a significant majority recognize the role of learning corners in fostering collaboration among students. The mean score of 3.20 highlights the strong agreement regarding this positive influence. Similarly, for the item "Activities in the learning corners foster better emotional expression among children in my class," 38% (n = 38) strongly agreed, and 46% (n = 46) agreed, leading to a mean score of 3.15. These results demonstrate that teachers perceive learning corners as effective spaces for enhancing children's ability to express emotions constructively.

The role of learning corners in encouraging children to resolve conflicts independently also received notable support, with 35% (n = 35) strongly agreeing and 40% (n = 40) agreeing. However, with a mean score of 3.00, this item reflects slightly less robust agreement compared to other aspects, suggesting room for improvement in this domain. Regarding the development of self-regulation skills, such as managing emotions and behavior, 37% (n = 37) strongly agreed, and 42% (n = 42) agreed, resulting in a mean score of 3.08. A similar mean score (3.08) was recorded for the item, "Learning corners promote empathy among children by encouraging them to understand others' feelings," with 36% (n = 36) strongly agreeing and 44% (n = 44) agreeing. These findings suggest that learning corners contribute positively to critical social-emotional competencies like self-regulation and empathy.

The structured activities within learning corners were rated highly for fostering patience and turn-taking, with 41% (n = 41) strongly agreeing and 43% (n = 43) agreeing, leading to a mean score of 3.18. This score is among the highest, emphasizing the perceived importance of structured activities in nurturing social skills. Similarly, the improvement of peer interactions and collaborative abilities through learning corners received strong support, with 39% (n = 39) strongly agreeing and 45% (n = 45) agreeing, resulting in a mean score of 3.17. Also, for the item, "Children who participate in learning corners display better listening skills and attention to others," 38% (n = 38) strongly agreed, and 42% (n = 42) agreed, yielding a mean score of 3.10. This suggests that learning corners positively influence children's attentiveness and active listening, though slightly less emphatically than other areas. Overall, the findings illustrate a broadly positive perception of the impact of learning corners on the social-emotional development of primary school children. Teachers widely acknowledge these spaces as instrumental in fostering cooperation, empathy, patience, and self-regulation, with mean scores consistently reflecting agreement with these benefits. However, certain areas, such as conflict resolution, may benefit from targeted enhancements to maximize the potential of learning corners.

Table 3: Effects of Learning Corners on Academic performance

S/N	Item	SD (%)	D (%)	UN (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Total	Mean Score
1	Children who participate in learning corner activities show improved academic performance in general subjects.	10	15	20	35	20	100	3.30
2	Learning corners help enhance children's problem-solving abilities, which they apply in academic tasks.	8	12	18	40	22	100	3.48
3	Children are more motivated to learn after engaging in activities in the learning corners.	5	10	25	30	30	100	3.70
4	The skills learned in learning corners help children better manage and organize their time for academic tasks.	6	14	20	40	20	100	3.50
5	Learning corners support the development of critical thinking and creativity among pupils.	7	11	19	40	23	100	3.55
6	Children who participate in learning corners perform better in collaborative academic activities.	10	15	25	30	20	100	3.35
7	Learning corners improve children's confidence in participating in class discussions and answering questions.	8	13	22	35	22	100	3.50
8	Children apply knowledge gained from learning corners to subjects like mathematics and science.	9	12	20	40	19	100	3.48
9	Learning corners help children stay focused and attentive during academic lessons.	6	10	18	45	21	100	3.65
10	Learning corners contribute to reducing frustration during academic tasks and encourage perseverance.	7	14	20	35	24	100	3.55
Grand Total: 3.51								

The responses to the question “what is the effect of learning corners on the educational outcomes of primary school children in Ikere Local Government Area?” indicate a positive perception towards learning corners on the educational outcomes of primary school children as revealed on Table 5. Most respondents agreed or strongly agreed with statements linking learning corners to improved academic performance, enhanced problem-solving abilities, and increased motivation to learn. For example, 30% strongly agreed and 30% agreed that "Children are more motivated to learn after engaging in activities in the learning corners," with a high mean score of 3.70. Similarly, the ability of learning corners to enhance focus and attentiveness during academic lessons received a strong positive response, with 45% agreeing and 21% strongly agreeing (mean score 3.65). In addition, the development of critical thinking and creativity (mean score 3.55) and improved management of academic tasks (mean score 3.50) also highlight the benefits of learning corners. These findings suggest that learning corners are an effective educational tool, fostering not only academic but also interpersonal and organizational skills in students. The overall mean score of 3.51 underscores the positive impact of learning corners on educational outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The study found that learning corners positively impacted the academic performance of primary school children in Ikere Local Government Area. This outcome is consistent with existing literature, such as Adeyemi (2020),

who emphasizes the value of interactive and hands-on learning in increasing student engagement and knowledge retention. Learning corners are designed to encourage active participation by the learners, enabling them to explore concepts in a practical, engaging environment. This approach contrasts with traditional teaching methods, which often prioritize rote learning and passive engagement. By incorporating more dynamic and learners-centered activities into lessons, learning corners allow children to experience learning in a way that is both enjoyable and educational, which can enhance their academic performance and long-term retention of the material.

In Ikere Local Government Area, the use of learning corners provided learners with the opportunity to explore subjects in more interactive ways as revealed by the respondents. By engaging with materials such as books, educational posters, interactive models, and even digital tools, learners were able to grasp concepts more effectively than through traditional classroom methods. For example, when learning about geography or science, students could handle maps, measure distances, and interact with models that bring abstract concepts to life. This hands-on interaction helps solidify their understanding of academic content in a more tangible way, fostering deeper cognitive development. In addition, the increased children engagement that learning corners promote can lead to better academic performance as children feel more involved and connected to the content.

Teachers indicated that children demonstrated a better understanding of concepts when they actively participated in learning corner activities. This finding further supports the view that practical, interactive learning environments can foster deeper comprehension. Also practical learning methods, including those facilitated by learning corners, encourage students to think critically about the content they are learning. Instead of passively receiving information, students are encouraged to actively engage, problem-solve, and apply concepts to real-world situations. For instance, in a mathematics learning corner, children could work on solving word problems with concrete objects, making abstract mathematical concepts more accessible and understandable. This hands-on approach not only helps reinforce theoretical knowledge but also promotes the development of critical thinking skills, as children are encouraged to analyze, compare, and experiment with different ways of solving problems.

The results of this study suggest that learning corners can play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between theoretical knowledge and its real-world applications. Traditional teaching methods, while valuable, often struggle to show students how academic concepts apply outside the classroom. Learning corners, on the other hand, provide a space for learners to see the practical implications of their learning, thereby improving their understanding of how academic knowledge connects with the world around them. This is particularly important for young learners who may struggle to understand abstract concepts without seeing them in action. By offering learners opportunity to apply knowledge in a practical, engaging manner, learning corners make the learning process more relevant and enjoyable. This is consistent with the research of Adeyemi (2020), who found that hands-on, interactive learning activities enhance both comprehension and student engagement, making it easier for children to retain information and apply it in different contexts.

Another significant finding was the increase in children engagement and motivation as a result of learning corner activities. This finding is consistent with the research of Michael Olugbenga (2021) that the learner centered method should be embraced as it is the ideal method for teaching soft skills needed to navigate the environment, work well with others, perform well and achieve goals in the 21st century. Teachers observed that students who participated in learning corners displayed a greater enthusiasm for learning of subjects they previously found challenging. This is in line with the studies of Said, (2023) who opined that interactive learning not only facilitates students' access to information but also encourages active engagement in the learning process.

The results suggest that learning corners could be particularly effective in motivating students who might otherwise disengage from traditional, lecture-based instruction.

The study also revealed that learning corners fostered collaborative learning and improved social skills. This finding highlights the role of learning corners in promoting teamwork, communication, and problem-solving skills among young learners. The interactive nature of the activities, which often involved group tasks, encouraged students to collaborate, share ideas, and solve problems together. This supports the research of Mendo-Lázaro , León-del-Barco , Felipe-Castaño , Polo-del-Río and Iglesias-Gallego (2018) that found

cooperative learning in university classrooms is effective as a method for developing the social skills necessary for teamwork.

Also, teachers noted that learning corners provided a space for students to develop important social skills, such as taking turns, listening to others, and working cooperatively. This highlights the role of learning corners not only in enhancing academic achievement but also in supporting emotional and social development. The interactive environment, which often involved peer interactions and group tasks, allowed students to practice essential life skills in a non-threatening setting. For instance, activities like group storytelling, collaborative art projects, and peer teaching encouraged students to engage with one another, share ideas, and solve problems collaboratively. This is supported by Bradle. (2019), who emphasized that warm and supportive interactions and relationships significantly contribute to successful learning in early childhood both in families and in ECCE institutions such as preschools and daycare centres. In this way, learning corners provide a platform for children to build positive relationships, manage conflicts, and work together towards common goals, all of which are vital for their holistic development. Furthermore, studies such as those by Adeyemi (2020) underscore that early exposure to collaborative learning environments helps children develop a sense of responsibility, leadership, and empathy, which are key social competencies. This study adds novelty by emphasizing the dual impact of learning corners in improving both academic outcomes and social interactions in young learners. It highlights the value of these learning environments in developing a well-rounded skill set that prepares children for both academic success and effective social integration. Thus, the findings of this study not only support existing literature on the benefits of collaborative learning but also emphasize the importance of learning corners as an innovative approach to fostering social and academic skills in primary school c This outcome is consistent with existing literature, such as Adeyemi (2020), who emphasizes the value of interactive and hands-on learning in increasing student engagement and knowledge retention.hildren in Ikere. The study demonstrates that learning corners serve as an effective tool for bridging the gap between academic achievement and social development, thereby contributing to the overall growth of young learners.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that learning corners are valuable instructional resources in primary schools, significantly contributing to children's social-emotional growth and academic success. The availability and effective organization of learning corners encourage active participation, foster cooperation, empathy, and self-regulation, and enhance pupils' motivation and learning outcomes. Teachers' perceptions consistently indicated that these learning spaces improve problem-solving skills, creativity, attentiveness, and peer interaction. Although the impact on conflict resolution was slightly lower compared to other areas, the overall findings affirm that learning corners promote holistic development. Therefore, integrating well-structured learning corners into classroom practices remains a practical and impactful strategy for improving both developmental and educational outcomes in primary schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. School administrators should ensure that every classroom is equipped with properly organized and resource-rich learning corners covering areas such as reading, art, science, and play activities.
2. Teachers should be trained regularly on how to effectively utilize learning corners to promote social-emotional skills alongside academic learning.
3. Educational stakeholders and government agencies should provide funding and instructional materials to improve the quality and sustainability of learning corners in schools.
4. Structured activities should be designed within learning corners to specifically strengthen children's conflict-resolution skills and cooperative behavior.
5. Continuous monitoring and evaluation should be conducted to assess the effectiveness of learning corners and guide improvement strategies.

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