

# The Effect of Attachment on Preschoolers' Involvement in learning Activities

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the effect of attachment on preschoolers' involvement in learning activities. It was carried out in three nursery schools with a pre-nursery section in Buea. A survey research design was used for the study. Children of ages 2-4 (50) enrolled in pre-nursery schools and 7 teachers were involved in the study. Purposive sampling were used. Quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative methods (naturalistic observation) of data collection was used. The Preschool Behaviour Questionnaire (PBQ) developed by Behar &Stringfields, (1978) was adapted for the study. The main research question was; how does attachment affect preschoolers' adjustment in nursery school? The preschoolers were observed for three months and the PBQ was used for the teachers. The systematic process of content and narrative analysis was used in analysing responses from qualitative data, while descriptive statistics were used for quantitative data analysis. The findings showed that; i) most pre-schoolers are negatively affected at short separations, they cry, and are not easily comforted, and reject physical contact towards teachers, ii) despite their short attention span, they have a good concentration span especially when activities are of interest to them, iii) most pre-schoolers are not friendly to other peers especially those they do not consider as friends; they bully and tend to be inconsiderate of others. Iv) most pre-schoolers show either a secure or insecure attachment towards their teachers. These findings were discussed and some recommendations made; parents who desire to encourage pre-schoolers to make the most of their abilities should; interact with the child often, provide opportunities for the child to do many things independently. Educational institutions that harbour children of preschool age should provide conducive environments for them to make meaning for themselves, teachers of pre-schoolers should be responsive and show concern for each pre-schooler despite their attachment patterns.

**Keywords:** Attachment, Preschoolers, Learning Activities

## INTRODUCTION

The fact that 7 to 9 months old children everywhere begin at about the same age to become upset when they are separated from their primary caregivers, suggests that attachment is a universal feature of development (Simpson & Belsky 2008). Attachment is the strength and kind of emotional bond that exists between two people -the child and the caregiver.(Colin, 1996; Sroufe, 1996). It is important in the following ways: First, it provides security and the development of an individual's personality, second, it influences a child's social and cognitive Behaviour later in life. Again, it leads to a positive emotional health and builds the child's self-esteem and self-confidence as the child becomes socially competent and freely interacts with peers and teachers. This chapter presents the background to the study, the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, scope and delimitations of the study and operational definition of terms.

### Background to the Study

In the locality of Buea where I live, there exist schools which can accommodate children of all ages. Every morning, children move into the school premises to spend at least six hours before being taken home. The first few months at the beginning of a new school year are usually disturbing to me because of the amount of crying I hear in some nursery schools. When children are brought to school, and the caregivers leave them to return

home, some of them cry and do not want to remain in school. They cling to the caregivers. When they succeed to be left on their own and the caregivers go, leaving them in the care of teachers, who for the moment are the care providers, some stop crying while some continue crying. When comforted, some keep quiet, but others do not want to be comforted thus they keep crying and prefer to be on their own. The crying and refusal to be comforted may last for a month or more. As the school year runs through, the children get used to the school environment and may cry once in a while when in a disturbing situation. When it is time to go home, for some, there is no crying as these children wait for their caregivers impatiently and become very excited when they see them. To others, the sight of their caregivers makes them to cry instead and when they are finally held or in the presence of these home caregivers, they cease to cry. It is as a result of these behaviours that the researcher became motivated to investigate why children behave the way they do. Why some children find it difficult to separate from their caregivers and why some have no problem separating from the caregivers. The answer seems to be in the type of attachment between the child and the mother or caregivers.

### Statement of the Problem

Preschool is for those who are below school going age, 2-4 years and are found in school settings and day care centers. While going to school, these children are separated from their parents and primary caregivers and the relationship which they had started building is somehow disconnected. They face short-term separations and are faced with managing separation and stranger anxieties and staying in novel environments. The duration and difficulty of adjusting to novel environments and in interacting with new people due to separation and stranger anxiety is a call for concern.

Preschoolers exhibit either of these reactions in schools that is, some cry and not want to be comforted, some do not want to interact and play with other peers, friends and even teachers while some do not cry and freely interact with the new peers and teachers. It therefore means that, a child's reaction while in school and in new environments depends on the degree and type of attachment that the child had formed with the caregiver before being enrolled into nursery schools at that age. This difference in the children's reaction to the same situation is what motivated me to investigate the type of attachment established between children and their caregivers and how it affects their adjustment in pre-nursery schools.

### Theoretical Review

This study is influenced by theories such as Ainsworth (1978) strange situation theory, Bowlby's (1969) theory on attachment, Bandura's (1977) social learning theory.

### Mary Ainsworth's Strange Situation Theory

Ainsworth created the strange situation, an observational measure of infant attachment in which the infant experiences a series of introductions, separations and reunions with the caregiver and an adult stranger in a prescribed order. Based on the babies' responses to the strange situation, they are described as being securely or insecurely attached (she came out with three types of insecure attachment) to the caregiver.

1. Securely attached babies use the caregiver as a secure base from which to explore the environment. When in the presence of their caregiver, securely attached infants explore the room and examine toys that have been placed in it. When the caregiver departs, securely attached infants might protest and when the caregiver returns, these infants reestablish positive interaction with her, perhaps by smiling or climbing on her lap. Subsequently, they often resume playing with the toys in the room.
2. Insecure avoidant babies show insecurity by avoiding the mother. In the strange situation, these babies engage in little interaction with the caregiver, display little distress when she leaves the room, usually do not reestablish contact with her on her return, and may even turn their back on her at this point. If contact is established, the infant usually leans away or looks away.
3. Insecure resistant babies often cling to the caregiver and then resist her by fighting against closeness, perhaps by kicking or pushing away. In the strange situation, these babies often cling anxiously to the caregiver and do not explore the playroom. When the caregiver leaves, they often cry loudly and push away if she tries to comfort them on her return.

4. Insecure disorganized babies are disorganized and disoriented. In the strange situation, these babies might appear dazed, confused and fearful. Such babies show extreme fearfulness around the caregiver.
5. According to the theory, infants with secure attachments tend to develop into competent, loving children who form mutually satisfying relationships with other children and with adults. By contrast, infants with insecure attachments tend to develop into children who distrust themselves and their world. As a result, their social behavior and personality development tend to be abnormal. The concepts of secure and insecure attachments are relevant to this study, first as it will provide information about the preschoolers motivation to be near the caregiver and the degree to which the caregiver's presence provides the infant with security and confidence, second, they are useful in bringing out individual differences of preschoolers in pre-nursery school settings so that strategies will be developed on how to help the child stay and adjust in the school environment.

### **Bowlby's Ethological Theory of Attachment**

Bowlby stresses the adaptiveness of attachment and believes that attachment evolved because of its adaptive value and reciprocal nature; infants are protected when parents or caregiver's are near and species have "specie-specific" behaviours. In humans, the cry of an infant is thought to be a biologically programmed "distress call/signal" that brings caregivers running. Not only are infants said to be biologically programmed to convey their distress with loud, lusty cries, caregivers are biologically predisposed to respond to such signals. When an infant gives a distress call and is attended to promptly and properly, a relationship is formed. The degree of attendance (when, where, how) builds attachment between the infant and the caregiver as the infant learns to discriminate between various signals and the responses and even those giving the responses.

This theory is important to the study because it brings out the role played by caregivers in establishing an attachment between the preschooler and the caregiver. The responsiveness of the caregiver is therefore very vital if a preschooler needs to adjust and venture into new environments. Some caregivers are habitually inattentive or even neglectful, so that the infant's cries rarely promote any contact with them. Such an infant will probably not form strong emotional attachments to her caregiver and may remain shy or emotionally unresponsive to others for years to come (Ainsworth, 1979; Sroufe, Fox, & Pancake, 1983). What this infant has learnt from her early experiences is that close companions are unreliable and not to be trusted. Consequently, the child becomes ambivalent around caregivers and may later assume that other people (teachers, peers) are equally untrustworthy individuals who should be avoided whenever possible.

### **Bandura's Social Learning Theory**

The doctrine of tabula rasa provides the philosophical base for several models of socialization known collectively as social learning theory. By the 1960s, Bandura criticized his colleagues for failing to recognize that children are active, thinking organisms who are quite capable of self-instruction, self-reinforcement and have some degree of self-determination. Bandura (1977) concedes that the new born infant is a naïve, unknowing creature who is quite receptive to environmental influence. But he suggests that the child and the environment are in constant state of reciprocal interaction, the active, creative child is said to affect the environment, and the resulting environment then affects the child.

According to the social learning theory proposed by Bandura (1977), the vast majority of the habits we acquire during our lifetimes are learned by observing and imitating other people. For observational learning to occur, the following conditions must be present: the preschooler must pay attention to what the other person is doing and what happens to him or her, be able to reproduce the Behaviour observed when need be. A preschooler who has spent maximum time with the primary caregivers is able through imitation of desired Behaviour express them when interacting with other peers. When a child, sees a Behaviour being less hurting and more profitable, he will imitate the Behaviour. When a said Behaviour is hurtful as when beaten for an act done, the child will not want to repeat such Behaviour.

Bandura's social learning theory is of great relevance to this study in the sense that, by observing others, fears and anxieties can be replaced with new sets of associations like boldness in attempting and staying in new environments and relearning and retraining oneself by deliberately developing a new set of associations to replace the old one. Therefore, a preschooler can conveniently observe his peer or friend coming to school without crying as he moves away from the caregiver and gets involved in school activities. Thus the preschooler can model a positive Behaviour from the others and this will help the preschooler adjust in all environments especially the school.

## METHODOLOGY

### The Research Design

The design adopted for this study was the survey research design. It made use of naturalistic observation and questionnaire. Qualitative data obtained were expressed in non-numerical terms derived from a checklist via observation of participants in their real-life environments (preschool) and quantitative data obtained from questionnaires were expressed in numerical terms. Therefore, triangulation was done at the level of instrumentation, with the use of both qualitative and quantitative instruments for data collection.

### Research Area

The study was carried out in Nursery schools in the town of Buea which had preschoolers. Buea is the Regional Head Quarter of the South West Region of Cameroon and is located at the foot of Mount Cameroon. It is a developing town, touristic in nature due to its natural resources and the presence of many administrative structures. It was purposively chosen because of its urban nature and its fast-growing rate in many activities that sustain human life especially the construction of many schools at different levels.

### Population of the study

The population of the study consisted of preschoolers both boys and girls of ages between 2-4 years enrolled in a pre-nursery section in nursery schools and their teachers. Buea, like many other towns in Cameroon, shows a prevalence and increase in the number of schools constructed every year especially nursery and pre-nursery schools to cater for the needs of working parents. The accessible population was made up of preschoolers registered in the pre-nursery section in three selected nursery schools in Buea.

### Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample consisted of fifty preschoolers (26 girls and 24 boys) and seven teachers selected from three pre-nursery sections of three nursery schools. The sampling technique for the study was purposive sampling. This technique was used because not all children registered in the nursery school was involved in the study, some were below two years so the researcher purposively selected children between the ages of 2-4 years and who showed unique and extreme characteristics like hyperactivity, self-reliance and independence, dependence on the teacher, confrontational and aggressive, sociable and so on in their interaction in school. In selecting the preschoolers in each school, the children were observed for one week. An additional period of three weeks was then used to fully observe the selected preschoolers.

**Table 1: Distribution of the Sample**

School	No on roll	Boys	Girls	No of boys selected	No of girls selected	Total sample boys and girls
Learning Ladder Nursery and Primary School, Great Soppo –Buea	49	20	29	08	07	15
Government Practicing Nursery School Buea-Station	54	30	24	10	10	20

Bambino Bilingual Nursery School Great Soppo	40	17	23	06	09	15
<b>Total</b>	143	67	76	24	26	50

The following conditions were met by the preschoolers:

- The children were between 2-4 years of age.
- Registered in pre-nursery section in a nursery school.

## Instrumentation

An observation guide (cf Appendix II) was used for the preschoolers. The Preschool Behaviour Questionnaire (PBQ) developed by Behar & Stringfields (1974) was adapted for the study and used for the teachers. It is a modified version of the questionnaire from Rutter's Children's Behaviour Questionnaire standardized by Michael Rutter in England in 1967 for use with elementary school-aged boys. It was a 36-item PBQ rating sheet on each child in class. The scale was later revised and 6 questions deleted from the original 36 items making it 30. It was published in an article "A Behaviour rating scale for the preschool child", which appeared in the journal, *Developmental psychology*, Vol, 10, No 5 (September 1974), pp 601-610.

The PBQ was developed as a screening instrument for easy use by Mental Health professionals as a first step in identifying preschoolers who show symptoms of or constellations of symptoms that suggest the emergence of emotional problems. The scale was developed for a variety of purposes; some are useful in the study of normal personality development, while others represent screening tools to differentiate normal behaviour from disturbed behaviour.

The PBQ, was adopted and adapted for this study because it reflected a series of descriptions of behaviours often shown by preschoolers. It was adapted by deleting items which could not be observed in the children while other items which look similar were merged or one taken (see Appendix IV). The instrument was also adapted by inserting and modifying the Four-point Likert scale to three-point scale with (Certainly applies (CA), Applies sometimes (AS), and does not apply (DA) administered to the teachers of the sampled preschoolers. Also, it was used because it can serve as a pre- and post-measure for children to indicate areas of change or growth during a given period. The structured questionnaire for preschool teachers was made up of two sections of 25 and 30 questions each on preschooler interaction in school, among peers, teachers and preschooler behaviour depending on the type of attachment. (cf. appendix I). The first section of the questionnaire was adapted from the PBQ and the second section was developed by me, under the supervision of my supervisor.

A structured observation checklist developed by the researcher, for the preschoolers was made up of five indicators; peer attitude and interaction with teacher, ability to relate with other children, preschooler's participation in tasks and play activities, ability to listen in the classroom and preschooler's emotional state. (cf. appendix II).

## Validation and Reliability of Instruments

To check how valid and reliable the instruments were, the researcher carried out a pilot study with some preschoolers in Government Nursery school Great Soppo. The children were of ages 2 plus and above in nursery one. The aim was to know whether the questions asked in the instruments were clear. From the school, two teachers answered the questionnaire and said they had no difficulties in understanding most of the questions but for a few. For these few, some were rejected while others were modified before it was administered to the sample. The observation guide was not modified.



## Results of pilot test

The questionnaire was modified and administered with the observation guide to the sample that made up the pilot tests. A pilot test was carried out using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to check the reliability of the PBQ. From the analysis, Cronbach's alpha is 0.624, which indicates a high level of internal consistency for the scale which is acceptable to proceed with the administration of the instruments.

## Administration of the Instruments

Upon approval by my research supervisor, a letter of introduction obtained from the University of Buea, was presented to the head teachers of the selected schools for permission to be granted. Consent was given and there was no other formality after this initial contact. Observation was done for three months and I ensured that I visited the schools for one month each in total if observation days were put together. The researcher was a participant observer and did a follow up of the selected preschooler's behavior as they interacted with their peers, the teachers and task/play activities. The selected preschoolers were not isolated from the rest of the class so they remained in their usual environment with all its occupants so that they will remain neutral in their Behaviour. Questionnaires were also given to the teachers to fill concerning the selected preschoolers.

Observation was done every school day (Monday to Friday), except on public holidays. I visited the schools at three periods of the day; in the morning when they are coming to school (this was to check their reaction as they separate from the caregiver and how they feel coming to school). I also went there during their break period and during the closing period. As participant observer, I spent two hours thirty minutes each for the morning session that is from 7:30-10am, two hours from 10-12am for the period towards break and one hour for the last period towards closing time. Other times, I merged two periods to observe continuously (from morning till break time or break time to closing time). The observation followed a pattern whereby the researcher sat in the classroom and watched both teaching and non-teaching activities as these occurred at different periods. Observations were unstructured and a handwritten record of events was kept of the preschoolers' interaction in the environment. Discussions with some preschoolers were done during their play periods. This was to avoid distracting them while in an activity with the teacher.

At the beginning of the observation, the preschoolers noticed the presence of the researcher and were distracted but after three days, the presence meant nothing to them and they behaved as they would. This gave me the right atmosphere to do my observation without any distraction or pretense from the preschoolers. In order to gain better understanding and knowledge about the children concerning certain behaviours observed, the researcher asked some preschoolers to exhibit certain behaviours like forcefully taking another child's toys, pointing at those they consider friends, asking other children to play with a particular child, give instruction to be given to another peer, giving another child a chance and turn-taking. Equally, questions were posed with the intention of getting more information on their reasoning, level of understanding and language capacity.

## Methods of Data Analysis

In analyzing the data, the responses were collapsed into two categories; Certainly, Applies as a category, and

Doesn't Apply as the second category. Certainly, Applies was composed of responses from certainly Applies and Applies Sometimes. The systematic process of content analysis and narrative analysis was used in analyzing responses from qualitative data and the results presented in a standard code-quotation grounding table. Data was entered using a standard template designed in Epi data. The first stage involved deciding on the level of analysis. At this level, single words or phrases and a set of words or phrases were coded. The researcher decided on many different concepts to code. This involved developing pre-defined or interactive sets of concepts categories.

The primary documents which were registered or textual data were coded for existence and for word or phrase that appeared. Relevant categories were also added during the coding process. The introduction of this code flexibility allowed for new, important material to be incorporated into the coding process that could have

significant bearing on the results. During coding, the frequency of appearance of an idea was considered and this appearance reflected how many times a concept emerged and was a major indicator of emphasis.

Descriptive statistics were used to present the distribution of subjects between subsets using frequencies, proportions and Multiple Response Analyses (MRA) and percentages. Chi square was the method used to appreciate the association between an independent and dependent variable for categorical indicators within conceptual components, while relationship between conceptual components was appreciated using Pearson's Rho correlation test. This method was used to measure the strength of the linear relationship between two scale variables.

## FINDINGS

### Demographic data

**Table 2: Sex of Preschoolers**

Data	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	24	48.0	48.0
Female	26	52.0	52.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0

Table 2 presents the total respondents. Of the 50 children sampled 26(52%) were female and 24(58%) were male. This means that there were more female children than male children.

**Table 3: Age of Preschoolers**

Item	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
2 years	6	12.0	4.3
Greater than or equal to 2 and less than 3	9	18.0	23.9
Greater than or equal to 3 and less than 4	31	62.0	91.3
4 years	4	8.0	====
Total	50	100.0	119.5

Table 3 illustrates the age of the respondents. The majority of the preschoolers were greater than three years. Specifically, 4(8.0%) of them were exactly four year.31(62.0) of them had their age range from three years but less than four, 6 (12.0%) were two years old, 9 (18.0%) had their age from two but less than three years.

**Table 4: Behaviour Rating Scale for preschoolers**

Item	CA	DA	N
Restless.	22(47.8%)	24(52.2%)	46
Fidgets	30(63.8%)	17(36.2%)	47
Destructive	36(75%)	12(25%)	48
Fights	37(77.1%)	11(22.9%)	48

Disliked	37(75.5%)	12(24.5%)	49
Worries	40(81.6%)	9(18.4%)	49
Solitary	38(76.6%)	11(22.4%)	49
Irritable/Touchy	37(77.1%)	11(22.9%)	48
Unhappy	41(83.7%)	8(16.3%)	49
Bites nails or fingers	33(67.3%)	16(32.7%)	49
Disobedient	35(71.4%)	14(28.6%)	49
Poor concentration	23(46.9%)	26(53.1%)	49
Fearful	36(76.6%)	11(23.4%)	47
Lies	37(77.1%)	11(22.9%)	48
Stutters	40(81.6%)	9(18.4%)	49
Has other speech difficulty	39(79.6%)	10(20.4%)	49
Bullies	35(71.4%)	14(28.6%)	49
Inattentive	36(75.0%)	12(25.0%)	48
Does not share	36(75.5%)	12(25.0%)	48
Cries easily	31(64.6%)	17(35.4%)	48
Blames others	38(79.2%)	10(20.8%)	48
Gives up	34(72.3%)	13(27.7%)	47
Inconsiderate	37(77.1%)	11(22.9%)	48
Sexual problems	40(85.1%)	7(14.9%)	47
Kicks, bites	30(62.5%)	18(37.5%)	48

CA= Certainly Applies    DA= Does not Apply    N= Total Number of preschoolers

Table 4 above illustrates the behavior of the preschoolers with respect to the behavior rating scale for each preschooler sampled. The items appear in abbreviated form and according to the responses, majority of the preschoolers exhibit the Behaviour items as on the PBQ with “certainly applies” occurring for all behaviours but for an exception on “poor concentration” which indicates a 26(53.1%) for “doesn’t apply” and 23(46.9%) for “certainly applies”.

Specifically, 36(75.0%) are reported to be inattentive, 33(67.3%) were always found biting their nails or fingers, while 36(75%) destroyed their own or other children’s belongings. Also 30(63.8%) were observed to be fidgety and 24(52.2%) were seen to be running about or jumping up and down and do not keep still. Despite the situation observed, the concentration level of the preschoolers is far above expectation, specifically 26(53.1%) do not have poor concentration or attention span.

40(85.1%) of the preschoolers have sexual problems as most of them either urinate on themselves or come to school with diapers and napkins. Given their ages, they are not yet fully in control of their needs especially the need to indicate and call the teachers attention when they feel as to urinate. Therefore, most of them urinate on themselves. Only 7(14.9%) could fully indicate when they feel as to urinate or excrete.

Equally, the Behaviour Rating Scale indicates that 40 (81.6%) of the preschoolers stutter or have difficulty with speech, as they either speak slowly or have problems in communication freely. Given their ages, speech is still developing and it is a milestone when a child can adequately speak or communicate. Therefore, a majority of the preschoolers have not yet reached the stage where speech is a milestone, but rather it is a hallmark. Most



preschoolers stick to their own language rules and sometimes efforts by parents and teachers to speed up the acquisition of correct speech may not always be successful.

41(83.7%) of the preschoolers are unhappy in most part of the day. This can be attributed to the fact that the preschoolers are still suffering from the detachment or separation from the regular caregivers and the difficulty of adapting into the new environment with its occupants. They therefore spend a longer time in adapting and this comes with unhappy states.

Specifically, 40(81.6%) of the preschoolers “worry” a lot. By worrying, the preschoolers are in an imbalanced state and cannot be stable in most part of the school day. They either are fidgeting, they cry and sometimes demand that they want to go home and see their parents and caregivers. This can be attributed back to the bond they had already established with their caregivers.

Furthermore, while 22(47.8%) of the preschoolers are restless and hyperactive in their interactions, 24(52.2%) are not restless. Naturally, most preschoolers are restless and hyperactive in their interactions but the study proved contrary. This can be accountable for by the fact that the school environment is made conducive and captivating for them and their attention is captured by the type of activities that are presented to them which are interesting. Reason why they have a 26(53.1%) high level of concentration.

The behaviours on the PBQ were grouped under the following three factors for easy identification of behaviours as presented below:

**Table 5: Behaviour/factor Type**

Behaviour	Applies	Doesn't apply	Factor type
Disliked	37(75.5%)	12(24.5%)	Hostile Aggressive
Fights	37(77.1%)	11(22.9%)	
Destructive	36(75%)	12(25%)	
Irritable	37(77.1%)	11(22.4%)	
Disobedient	35(71.4%)	14(28.6%)	
Lies	37(77.1%)	11(22.9%)	
Does not share	36(75.5%)	12(25.0%)	
Blames others	38(79.2%)	10(20.8%)	
Inconsiderate	37(77.1%)	11(22.9%)	
Kicks, beats and bites	33(67.3%)	16(32.7%)	
Worries	40(81.6%)	09(18.4%)	Anxious fearful
Unhappy	41(83.7%)	08(16.3%)	
Fearful	36(76.6%)	11(23.4%)	
Other speech difficulty	39(79.6%)	10(20.4%)	
Cries easily	31(64.6%)	17(35.4%)	
Gives up	34(72.3%)	13(27.7%)	

Restless	22(47.8%)	24(52.2%)	Hyperactive Distractible
Poor concentration	23(46.9%)	26(53.1%)	
Inattentive	36(75.0%)	12(25.0%)	
Fidgets	30(63.8%)	17(36.2%)	

From table 5, most preschoolers were identified with the above behaviours (hostile aggressive, anxious fearful, hyperactive distractible by the teachers). Therefore the teachers found the behaviour of the preschoolers as normal and age appropriate.

Among the preschoolers, no specific behavior type can be said to be characteristic of them, instead, the study showed that most preschoolers showed differences in their behavior type which was dependent on the moods and states in which they get into at the start of each new day. However, looking at the continuum of behaviours, most preschoolers are hyperactive distractible as they are mostly restless, inattentive and fidgets while in school. Preschool children are extremely active. They have good control of their bodies and enjoy activity for its own sake. Despite that, they have a good concentration span which is achieved when the preschoolers attention is constantly being checked and activities are arranged in such a way that they are under the teacher's control.

Second, most preschoolers because of their inclination toward bursts of activity need frequent rest periods. They themselves often do not recognize the need to slow down. Quiet activities should be scheduled after strenuous ones and provide rest time, all in an attempt to attend to preschoolers who show anxious fearful behaviours.

Most preschoolers have one or two best friends, but these friendships may change rapidly. They tend to be quiet flexible socially and are willing and able to play with most of the other children in the class. Despite this, most show hostile aggressive behaviours towards their peers and classmates as they will hate, fight, destroy, blame others, will not want to share and become inconsiderate of the others. This behavior pattern is shown by most if not all preschoolers and therefore to help them grow and develop properly, the teacher needs to use socio-metric techniques which will reveal the type of play mate and behaviour particular preschoolers exhibit thus enabling them to come up with ways of managing the preschoolers.

Therefore, among all behavior types, the hyperactive distractible can be said to be the type that will most adapt and adjust in the school environment once their behavior is under control. Followed by Anxious fearful and lastly by the hostile aggressive behavior type.

**Table 6: Attachment identified in some preschoolers: Secure**

BEHAVIOUR	CA	DA	N
At the first reunion in the morning, the child accepts my approaching him (e.g., by touch)	20(45.5%)	24(54.5%)	44
Obeys me, can be guided	31(66%)	16(34%)	47
Kindly greets me	35(74.5%)	12(25.5%)	47
If the child is tired, sick or frightened, he/she seeks my help	31(66%)	16(34%)	47
he/she is glad that I am around	35(72.9%)	13(27.1%)	48
he likes to share things with me	34(69.4%)	15(30.6%)	49
he listens to me if I have something to say to him/her	34(69.4%)	15(30.6%)	49
he observes me as I move around	34(69.4%)	15(30.6%)	49

If I leave the playroom, he/she calmly accepts it, but wants to know where I am going and when I will be back	38(79.2%)	10(20.8%)	48
Multiple response set	292(68.2%)	136(31.8%)	428

Table 6 shows behaviours of secure attachment for preschoolers and how a preschooler behaves toward the teacher. 24(54.5%) of the preschoolers do not accept the teacher approaching him/her, 31(66%) of the preschoolers seek help from the teacher especially when they are tired, sick or frightened and 35(72.9%) feel very happy when the teacher is around. Also 38(79.2%) want to know where the teacher goes and when he will be back. Furthermore 35(74.5%) greets the teacher in the morning and 34(69.4%) would like to share things with the teacher. Summarily, 68.2% percentage of preschoolers exhibit secure attachment patterns and 31.8% exhibit other attachment pattern which does not show security in their attachment.

**Table 7: Attachment identified in some preschoolers: Resistant**

Behaviour	CA	DA	N
At the first reunion in the morning, the child angrily rejects physical contact with me	36(75.0%)	12(25.0%)	48
Responds to my greetings with anger, reluctance and resistance	36(78.3%)	10(21.7%)	46
If the child is upset, he responds with anger to my comforting him	43(87.8%)	6(12.2%)	49
He is demanding and impatient toward me	39(79.6%)	10(20.4%)	49
Multiple response sets	154(80.2%)	38(19.8%)	192

From table 7, most of the preschoolers resist their teachers and will not want the teachers to easily get in contact with them. 36(75.0%) of the preschoolers reject physical contact with their teachers at first meeting in the morning and 36(78.3%) responds to the teacher's greetings with anger and resistance. When the child is upset, 43(87.8%) rejects the teacher comforting them and 39(79.6%) is demanding and impatient toward the teacher. This therefore shows that 80.2% of the preschoolers have resistant attachment patterns.

**Table 8: Attachment identified in some preschoolers: Avoidance**

Behaviour	CA	DA	N
At the first reunion in the morning, he/she is more interested in toys than in me	37(75.5%)	12(24.5%)	49
Shows no initiative to communicate with me	39(79.6%)	10(20.4%)	49
Pretends not to hear my instructions and demands	38(77.6%)	11(22.4%)	49
Ignores my requests	40(83.3%)	8(16.7%)	48
Doesn't listen to me	39(81.3%)	9(18.8%)	48
If the child is tired, sick or frightened, he/she ignores me	37(75.5%)	12(24.5%)	49
Multiple response set	230(78.8%)	62(21.2%)	292

From table 8, majority of the preschoolers avoid the teacher in most situations. Specifically, 37(75.5%) of the preschoolers are attracted to their toys in the morning than being attracted to the teacher, 39(79.6%) show no initiative to communicate with the teacher and 40(83.3%) ignores the request of the teacher. Also 38(77.6%)

pretend not to hear the teacher's instructions and 39(81.3%) would not listen to the teacher. This therefore shows that 78.8% of the preschoolers have avoidant attachment patterns.

**Table 9: Attachment identified in some preschoolers: Dependence**

Behaviour	CA	DA	N
Demands that I always pay attention only to him	40(81.6%)	9(18.4%)	49
At the first reunion in the morning, he/she ... "sticks" to me and follows me wherever I go.	38(77.6%)	11(22.4%)	49
Is very dependent on me	36(75%)	12(25%)	48
If I leave the playroom, he becomes upset and not easily comforted.	36(78.3%)	10(21.7%)	46
Multiple Response Set	150(78.1%)	42(21.9%)	192

Table 9 shows that there is high dependability of the preschoolers to their teachers. 38 (77.6%) follows the teacher wherever he/she goes, 36(78.3%) gets upset when the teacher leaves the classroom or playground and 40(81.6%) want to be paid special attention. Also 36(75%) are very dependent on their teacher. This therefore shows that 78.1% of the preschoolers have dependent attachment pattern.

**Table 10: Attachment identified in some preschoolers: Disorganized**

Behavior	CA	DA	N
Starts to cry as soon he sees me	37(75.5%)	12(24.5%)	49
Wants to go home all the time	42(85.7%)	7(14.3%)	49
Can't wait for his parents to come and get him	37(75.5%)	12(14.3)	49
Cries because his caregiver is not there	39(79.6%)	10(20.4%)	49
Appears shy in talking to me	38(79.2%)	10(20.8%)	48
Misses his parents	38(79.2%)	10(20.8%)	48
Multiple Response Set	231(79.1%)	61(20.9%)	292

Table 10 shows that most preschoolers have some disorganization and disorientation in their behaviour. This Behaviour pattern is usually caused by the discomfort that children feel as a result of their state of mind and being at the beginning of each day. When children leave the house happy, they tend to be happy all day and show their usual preference of attachment style. Therefore 37(75.5%) will begin to cry as soon as they see the teacher, 39(79.6%) will cry once the caregiver leaves him in school, 38(79.2%) misses their parents as they keep asking of them while 42(85.7%) will prefer to go home. 37(75.5%) stay impatiently waiting for the parents to come and take them home and 38(79.2%) appear shy to talk to the teacher. Summarily 79.1% shows that the preschoolers have disorganized attachment patterns.

Therefore, while 68.2% of the preschoolers show a secure attachment pattern, 31.8% show either forms of insecure attachment patterns.

### How does attachment affect preschoolers' involvement with learning activities?

**Table 13: Preschoolers' involvement with learning activities?**

Behaviour	CA	DA	N
Inattentive	36(75.0%)	12(25.0%)	48
Ignores my requests	40(83.3%)	8(16.7%)	48
Doesn't listen to me	39(81.3%)	9(18.8%)	48

Gives up easily	34(72.3%)	13(27.7%)	47
Has poor concentration or attention span	23(46.9%)	26(53.1%)	49
Destructive	36(75%)	12(25%)	49
Solitary	38(77.6%)	11(22.4%)	49
Restless	22(47.8%)	24(52.2%)	46
Fidget	23(46.9%)	23(46.9%)	46
Worries	40(81.6%)	9(18.4%)	49
Stutters	40(81.6%)	9(18.4%)	49
Multiple Response Set	371(70.3%)	156(29.5%)	528

Table 13 shows the effect of attachment on preschoolers' involvement with learning activities. Out of 48 sampled, 36(75.0%) were very inattentive, 39(81.3%) do not listen to their teacher, 34(72.3%) give up easily when faced with a difficulty and 40(83.3%) ignore their teacher's request. 36(75%) are destructive especially in the absence of the caregiver, while 38(77.6%) are solitary, 22(47.8%) are restless, 30(63.8%) are fidgety when involved in most activities. Also 40(81.6%) worry as they are introduced in various learning activities. However, 26(53.1%) of the preschoolers have a good concentration or attention span.

## DISCUSSION

### How attachment affect preschoolers' involvement with learning activities.

The present study revealed that, some of the preschoolers are inattentive and do not listen to the teacher often nor take to instructions: they give up easily, worry and stutters. A majority of the preschoolers though having a short attention span, their degree of attention can be judged as good. They have good concentration span and this is dependent on how the tasks is being introduced and presented and their interest and what captivates them. Bandura(1977) proposed that a vast majority of the habits we acquire during our lifetimes are learned by observing and imitating other people. This is in relation with the behaviours observed in the preschoolers during various activities. Preschoolers always engaged in group-responses with the answer usually coming from one preschooler and then the whole class picks up the response. Equally, during play, they look at those they consider leaders who they think know more than the others to play with, thus during such periods, their games and activities are usually similar because they learn and play by imitating the others.

Individual attachment patterns of the preschooler have an effect on their degree of involvement with tasks. For securely attached preschoolers, because they easily depart from the caregivers and get involved in the school environment, their involvement with learning activities will not be different. They will be attentive, listen and would not disturb or refuse to partake in a task. However, preschoolers with either forms of insecure attachment would not want to listen, will worry at most times, reject the teachers instruction and directives in activities; especially when he is upset. Such insecure preschoolers will also be demanding and impatient toward the teacher and generally with learning activities.

## CONCLUSION

### How does attachment affect preschoolers' involvement with learning activities?

It was realized that out of 48 sampled, 36(75.0%) were very inattentive, 39(81.3%) do not listen to their teacher, 34(72.3%) give up easily when faced with difficulties and 40(83.3%) ignore their teacher's request. 36(75%) are destructive especially in the absence of the caregiver, while 38(77.6%) are solitary, 22(47.8%) are restless and 30(63.8%) are fidgety when involved in most activities. Also 40(81.6%) worry about many things



as they are not with their caregiver especially as they are introduced in various learning activities. However, 26(53.1%) of the preschoolers have a good concentration or attention span.

Attachment is a continuous process which is highly affected by the challenges that an individual faces and the influence of the environment and its expectation. One can therefore not say with all certainty that, an attachment formed earlier at different stages of development will have the same effect on a preschooler or child. However, because attachment is formed at different times and to different people, the availability and consent of those to whom an attachment is to be formed is very important. A child may have an insecure attachment from home and primary caregivers, but gets into the school environment and enjoys a secure attachment from the teacher. When this is done, the child reorients itself and its internal working model to fit into the present attachment pattern and better adjust in school, equally a child with a secure attachment from the primary caregivers can get to new and different environments and is influenced negatively. Therefore, the caregiver's responsiveness, the school environment, the learning activities, play, teachers and peers have a great influence on how a preschooler adjust in school. In this study, it has shown that new environments especially school are always challenging and brings different expectations from what preschoolers already had at home. Due to this difference, preschoolers will cry and feel uncomfortable until they become comfortable and adjusted in the new environment, then their right attachment patterns can be seen and developed.

The study further reveals that attachment negatively affects a greater proportion of preschoolers' interaction in the school environment. They tend to be fearful at new things and situations, cry and want to go home to the environment they know, they tend to be disobedient and destructive and most times they easily get irritable while some have poor sexual habits. A lesser number of preschoolers however interact as expected in the school environment and can be scored as having a positive influence in the environment. These preschoolers have no sexual problems, neither are they irritable, restless, fidgety, destructive or disobedient. They like the environment and want to stay in it and participate in all activities and will not cry when the caregiver leaves. Rather they depart and get involved through play with friends and attending to the teachers demand. This is in connection with Barth and Parke's (1993) study that indicated that the length of time in physical play was favorably related to social adjustment in school.

However, individual attachment patterns of the preschoolers influence them greatly. A child with a secure attachment will get involved in the school environment through play, learning and relating with the teacher while in school. A resistant preschooler will get involved in play with peers and interacting with the teacher in taking commands after they become comfortable with the absence of the caregiver and in school activities. An avoidant preschooler will want to retreat from play with peers, friends and not get involved in play and other school activities. This resistance and avoidance will certainly last for a short-time as he gets involved with interacting in the school environment and activities.

A dependent preschooler will like to be in the presence of peers and the teacher to direct him and assign him on what to do. He has no initiative of his own and will be quiet and not get involved if no one is there to guide him. A disorganized child will be indifferent as he will be found between wanting to get involved and not wanting to get involved, such preschoolers must be told what to do and what activity to get involved in. Therefore, if the environment is made conducive for the preschoolers, no matter their nature of attachment between the caregivers and present caregiver (teacher), the preschoolers will properly interact in the school environment and adjustment will not be met with any difficulties.

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