

Perception and Attitude of Teachers Towards Risky Play Among Pupils in Lower- Based Primary Schools in Oke-Ero Local Government Area of Kwara State.

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Abstract- *The study is an investigation into the perceptions and attitudes of teachers towards risky play among lower-based primary School pupils in Oke-Ero local Government area of Kwara State. The holistic development in children may not complete without risky play. Risky play among children has been attested to by Scholars to enhance among other developmental yardsticks, physical, socio-emotional, resilience, problem solving skills and learning among children. However, teachers alike discourage risky play among children which they see as dangerous, irrespective of the acclaimed benefits to the developing children. Descriptive survey research design method was adopted for the study. The population of the study comprised all teachers of lower-based primary School pupils in Oke-Ero Local Government area of Kwara State. Using random sampling method, 20 primary Schools were selected with 6 teachers randomly selected respectively as the target population, making a total of one hundred twenty (120) respondents. It is observed that despite the benefits to the children, parents, are pessimistic at encouraging children at partaking in risky play at Schools. It is therefore recommended that risky outdoor play should be encouraged among children, considering the benefits.*

Keywords: *Teachers' Perceptions, teachers' attitudes, Play, Risky play, Lower-based Primary School Pupils.*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the process of playing, children engage in different forms of play. Some are forceless while others are forceful. The forceless forms of play are the types where children are not engaging in seemingly too serious play activities. For instance, children sitting still with toy falls in this category. The forceful, otherwise known as risky play are the types that involve the children getting engaged in dangerous activities as climbing of heights, somer saluting on top of a climbing frame, standing on other's shoulder

or pushing others off slide or swing. According to Sandseter et al. (2020), risky play is a thrilling and exciting form of play that involves a risky of physical injury. According to the authors, it is primarily outdoor and challenging adventurous physical activity where children attempt something they have not done before. In most cases, it occurs in children's free play as opposed to organized one. Describing risky play from the psychological point of view, Little, (2025) stresses that risk taking is usually interpreted negatively, looking at risk and hazard as synonymous. The author Opines that risk should not be seen in its negativity but as a situation in which people make choices among alternative course of action where the outcome is not known. Hence, risk is seen as not something to avoid but to manage. Hazard is something that a child does not foresee while risk is an uncertainty of outcome, and requires a child's choice whether to take it or not. Risk is positive and thrilling while hazard is negative (Little, 2025). In agreement with the afore mentioned scholars, risky play is a voluntary choice of action in children's play that involves some sort of risk of being injured in the course of the action. It is amusing and thrilling but fearful, and children only consider the thrill involved and not the danger. It is neither supervised nor coerced by the adults. It is freely chosen by the children. In his highlight Sandsetter (2022) categories risky ply to include: Play with great height, play with high speed, play with harmful tools, play near dangerous elements, Rough-and tumble play, play where the children can disappear/get lost.

Using qualitative approach, Sandsetter et.al. (2022), stresses that there are differences in the perception of educators to risky play among children, stating that the personality of the practitioner affects their perception and attitudes to risky play, that male practitioners have

a more liberal attitude towards children's risky play, and allow children engage in greater risky play than female. This however varies in different countries. Little (2025) also agree that as much as there is a difference in children's risk-taking behavior, it would be sensible to expect differences in the behaviours of adults towards risky play. The author also believes that educators who value risk-taking in their own live would be more willing to encourage risk-taking in children.

From the pedagogical perspective, Kate et.al. (2023) encourage how risky play can be deliberately incorporated into childhood education settings thereby emphasizing professional development and children risk competence. It is the opinion of these authors that risky play should be structured within the children's school policies.

In the same vein, Fatima et.al. (2023) stress that risky play is a risk worth taking in elementary schools. The authors emphasize that there should be balance between safety and development. Exploring toddlers' rituals of belongings, Little et.al (2023) opine that child establish a sense of belonging in the outdoor risky play, considering the social and emotional benefits of such play to the development of the child. According to the authors, risky play contributes to nuanced understanding of risky play, thereby encouraging cultural educational and developmental tendencies. From the interrelationship of risky play and resilience. Akolawole, et.al. (2025) analyze the role of risky play and its influence on children's resilience in handling life activities including academic performance of children in elementary school. The authors emphase that risky play is an impetus of resilience with which children can handle the various developmental activities of life.

Zeroing on implementing structured risky play in elementary school, Ogunyemi(2015) comparatively, using Nigeria and south Africa early childhood Education, stress that the challenges associated with implementing play learning are the factors of curriculum constraints and safety concerns. The authors therefore advocate constructive approach to early childhood education which values the use of play in fostering holistic development in children. In his assessment of pre-schools educational qualities and emphasizing the influence of play on learning

outcomes, Babajide, et.al. (2020) extensively advocate for play-based learning in order to enhance holistic development in children. Weighing the use and value of risky play, Niekerk et.al (2022) considering the continent of Africa, stress the role of play in human development and learning. The authors stress that indoor play as taken over the outdoor play as a result of the concern for safety, pointing out that children prefer outdoor activities and that outdoor play is preferred by adult in teaching children work-related skills.

Still emphasizing the role of risky play in children mental and physical development, Øyvind et.al. (2023) described how increased adult supervision and focus on the danger of risky play limits children's opportunities for and benefits from risky play. However, considering the fun in risky play, Little (2025) describes risky play as "thrilling and exciting" pointing out that risky play, plays a critical developmental role in the health, wellbeing and developmental trajectories such as physical, mental, social-emotional and cognitive development.

From the hazard perspective, Beaulieu et.al. (2024) opine that there is difference between injury and hazard, stressing that risky play balances between promoting development and injury prevention Professionally, Megan,et.al. (2018) opine those professional teachers and educator should incorporate risky play into outdoor education. The authors also provide contemporary insights into risky play and its benefits in the holistic development of children while at elementary school. According to Staples (2021) Risk taking is something the children want and need. Risky taking is advantageous while all children do not take risk equally, some element of risk is necessary for children's development and survival even when it is viewed by some people even teachers as negative rather than positive as a result of the danger inherent in such play. "A child who does not take risk is risky" According to the author, teachers are important gatekeepers of children's physical activities. Hence, children's active free plays are restricted by teachers as a result of safety concern from unsuitable playgrounds. Sandsetter et.al. (2023) opine that adult help to ensure safety in children while on outdoor play, stressing that, adults constitute a great hindrance to children's opportunities to experience risks and challenges.

Risky play is fast fading away among Children in schools as a result of the over-concern of teachers at the primary school's environment. Teachers play very crucial role in the development of the children. Hence, determine the extent of the kind of the play activities the children are involved. The fear of injuries in most cases influences the perceptions and attitudes of teachers to risky play among School children. While some adults support risky play, some see it as dangerous. Teachers (adults) play a critical role in shapping what happens in the school environment. Hence, the teachers have a great influence on the various kinds of play the children engage in, and these determine the perceptions and attitudes of the teachers on the activities of the children whether it is beneficial or hazardous to the development of the children. This study therefore examined the perception and attitudes of teachers to risky play among children in lower-based primary schools in Oke-Ero Local Government area of Kwara State, Nigeria.

Statement of the problem

In-spite of the acclaimed benefits of risky play to the development of children, teachers often discourage children's engagement in risky play as a result of the fear of injuries and discipline. According to Tovey (2010) this creates tension between children's developmental needs and teacher (adults) imposed restrictions which may suppress self-confidence, creativity, emotional growth and natural coping skills. The role of the teachers in the holistic development of the children especially at the lower- based primary schools. Cannot be treated with levity. Teachers are described by maria Montessori as the role model for children who should pilot the development of children.

As if risky play does not exist in Africa much study has not been carried out by African scholars except for Euro-African countries such as south African universities. Research works on risky play have been scanty. Hence, risky play among children may go into oblivion. Moreover, most studies on risky play have been concentrated on pre-schoolers rather than lower-based level or upper- based primary schools. Irrespective of this age group in the development at stage of children. Hence, the study to examine the perceptions and attitudes of teachers towards risky play among lower-based primary schools in Oke-Ero Local Government of Kwara State.

Purpose of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:

- Investigate the prevalence of risky play among children in lower-based primary Schools in Oke-Ero Local Government area of Kwara State
- examine the perception of risky play by teachers in the primary schools.
- to investigate the attitudes of the teachers on Children risky play in the study area.
- find out the influence of demographic factors of the teachers on their perceptions and attitudes on risky play.

Research Questions

- what are the perceptions and attitudes of teachers towards risky play among ppils in lower- based primary school in Oke-Ero Local Government area of Kwara State, Nigeria?
- What are the attitudes of teachers on risky play?
- Is there any difference in the perceptions and attitudes of teachers on risky play?
- Will demographic factors of teachers influence the perception and attitudes towards risky play among children?

Research Hypothesis

There is no significant difference in the perceptions and attitudes of teachers towards risky play among pupils in lower- based primary school in Oke-Ero Local Government area of Kwara State,Nigeria.

Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The population for the study was all lowerbased primary schools in Oke-Ero local government area of Kwara State. One hundred and Twenty(120) lower based primary school teachers were the target population selected using purposive sampling. Twenty (20) primary schools were selected using simple random sampling technique. A researcher- designed questionnaire titled: Perception and Attitudes of Teachers towards Risky play among Lowerbased primary schools (PATRP) was used for data collection. Section A of the questionnaire consisted of demographic data of the respondents. Section B and C consisted the subject matter of the research I.e. perception and attitudes of the teachers respectively using a four(4) items likert scale system:4-strongly

Agree (SA), 3-Agree (A), - 2-disagree(D) and 1-Strongly Disagree (SD)

The instrument was validated by lecturers in the department of adult and primary education studies University of Ilorin, Nigeria. to test the construct, content and face validity. For reliability of the instrument, a pilot test was conducted with six (6) lower- based primary school teachers of Kwara State college of education Oro, that confirmed the consistence of the instrument.

Research questions were analyse using descriptive statistics frequencies percentages, mean and standard deviations) the research hypotheses were tested using inferential statistics of independent- samples-t-tests at 0.05 of significance to determine the statistical relevance.

Results Demographical data of samples

This section showed the analysis of the demographic data collected from the study in terms of their frequencies and percentages. These data were presented in tables in order to give a vivid picture of the information

Table1: Distribution of respondents by Gender and Role.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	30	25%
Female	90	75%
Total	120	100%
Distribution of respondents by Age		
Age	Frequency	Percentage
Under 25	30	25%
26-25	25	20.83%
36-45	40	33.3%
46-55	15	12.5%
Over	10	8.3%
Total	120	100%

Distribution of respondents by educational qualification		
Qualifications	Frequency	Percentage
School cert/GCE	10	8.3%
Diploma/certificate	20	16.7%
Bachelor's Degree	70	58.3%
Post graduate	20	16.7%
Total	120	100%
Years of Service	frequency	percentage
Less than 1 year	10	8.3%
1-5 years	30	25%
6-10 years	65	54.16%
More than 10 years	15	12.5%
Total	120	100%

The above show that 30(25%) of the respondents were male and female while 90(75%) were female. It indicates that female respondents were more than the male.

The table above shows that 30(25%) of the total respondents is under 25years of age, where 26-25 years age 25 (20.83%), 30-45 years of age were 40(33.3%) were 46-55 15 (12.5%) while over 55 10 (8.3%).

The table also shows that 10(8.3%) respondents posses ordinary level school certificates while 20 (16.7%), 70 (58.3%), 20(16.7%) own diploma, Bachelor's degree and post graduate certificate respectively, meaning, they were averagely educated. The table above shows the work experiences of the teachers which ranges from 10 to 65 years of working experience.

Answers to Research Question

Research Question 1: What is the perception of teachers about risky play?

Table 2

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	S	Mean	Std. D.
1	Awareness of what risky play involves	50 (41.7%)	51 (42.5%)	17 (14.2%)	2 (1.7%)	3.24	0.76
2	Risky play is a normal part of childhood development	34 (28.3%)	41 (34.2%)	32 (26.7%)	13 (10.8%)	2.80	0.98
3	Risky play helps children build confidence and independence	32 (26.7%)	30 (25.0%)	39 (32.5%)	19 (15.8%)	2.63	1.05
4	Risky play is often misunderstood as dangerous or reckless	43 (35.8%)	32 (26.7%)	32 (26.7%)	13 (10.8%)	2.88	1.03
5	Supervised risky play is safer and more beneficial than total avoidance	42 (35.0%)	35 (29.2%)	30 (25.0%)	13 (10.8%)	2.88	1.01
6	Most schools do not encourage risky play enough	42 (35.0%)	41 (34.2%)	23 (19.2%)	14 (11.7%)	2.93	1.01
	Weighted Mean					2.89	

Mean and Standard deviation showing the perception of teachers about risky play

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Decision Value for Remark: 0.00 - 2.49 = *Negative*, 2.50 - 4.00 = *Positive*

Table 2 highlights the perception of teachers about risky play. The teachers agreed to the following items: I am aware of what risky play involves (\bar{x} = 3.24), Risky play is a normal part of childhood development (\bar{x} = 2.80), Risky play helps children build confidence and independence (\bar{x} = 2.63), Risky play is often

misunderstood as dangerous or reckless (\bar{x} = 2.88), Supervised risky play is safer and more beneficial than total avoidance (\bar{x} = 2.88), and Most schools do not encourage risky play enough. (\bar{x} = 2.93). Meanwhile, based on the value of the weighted average (2.89 out of 4.00 maximum value obtainable) which falls, within the decision value for positive, it can be inferred that the perception of teachers about risky play is positive.

Research Question 2: What is the attitude of teachers towards risky play?

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	S	Mean	Std. D.
1	Allow children to engage in activities such as climbing, jumping from heights, or exploring unfamiliar areas	22 (18.3%)	32 (26.7%)	34 (28.3%)	32 (26.7%)	2.37	1.07
2	Feel anxious when children are involved in risky play	22 (18.3%)	48 (40.0%)	37 (30.8%)	13 (10.8%)	2.66	0.90
3	Risky play should be restricted to ensure safety	45 (37.5%)	47 (39.2%)	20 (16.7%)	8 (6.7%)	3.08	0.90
4	Risky play should be encouraged within safe boundaries	38 (31.7%)	33 (27.5%)	34 (28.3%)	15 (12.5%)	2.78	1.003
5	Promote or support opportunities for risky play in my home/classroom	17 (14.2%)	28 (23.3%)	50 (41.7%)	25 (20.8%)	2.31	0.96

S/N Items	SA	A	D	S	Mean	Std. D.
6 Risky play can lead to serious injuries that outweigh the benefits	59 (49.2%)	30 (25.0%)	19 (15.8%)	12 (10.0%)	3.13	1.02
Weighted Mean					2.72	

Mean and Standard deviation showing the attitude of teachers towards risky play

Key: SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree

Decision Value for Remark: 0.00 - 2.49 = *Negative*, 2.50 - 4.00 = *Positive*

Table 3 highlights the attitude of teachers towards risky play. The teachers agreed to the following items: Feel anxious when children are involved in risky play. (\bar{x} = 2.66), Believe risky play should be restricted to ensure safety (\bar{x} = 3.08), Risky play should be encourage within safe boundaries (\bar{x} = 2.78), Promote or support opportunities for risky play in my home/

classroom. (\bar{x} = 2.31), and Risky play can lead to serious injuries that outweigh the benefits. (\bar{x} = 3.13). the teacher disagree with the item: Allow children to engage in activities such as climbing, jumping from heights, or exploring unfamiliar areas (\bar{x} = 2.37). Meanwhile, based on the value of the weighted average (2.72 out of 4.00 maximum value obtainable) which falls, within the decision value for positive, it can be inferred that the attitude of teachers towards risky play is positive.

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the perception of teachers about risky play among pupils based on gender?

Table 4: *Summary T-test showing significant difference in the perception of teachers about risky play among pupils based on gender*

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	t	Df	Sig.	Remark
Male	30	24.000	0.000				
				10.149	118	.000	Significant
Female	90	15.133	4.77				

Table 4 showed the difference in the perception of teachers about risky play among pupils based on gender ($t = 10.149$; $df = 118$; $p < 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is less than 0.05. This implies that there is significant difference in the perception of

teachers about risky play among pupils based on gender.

Research Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the attitude of teachers about risky play among pupils based on gender?

Table 5: *Summary T-test showing significant difference in the attitude of teachers about risky play among pupils based on gender*

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Dev	T	Df	Sig	Remark
Male	30	23.033	1.2994				
				10.517	118	.000	Significant
Female	90	14.089	4.5854				

Table 5 showed the difference in the attitude of teachers about risky play among pupils based on gender ($t = 10.517$; $df = 118$; $p < 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in the light of the result since the significant value is less than 0.05. This implies that there is no significant difference in the attitudes of teachers about risky play among pupils based on gender.

Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the perceptions and attitudes of teachers on risky play among pupils in lower-based primary Schools in Oke-Ero Local Government area of Kwara State, Nigeria. The findings reveal that both teachers in the study area have knowledge of risky play among children. However, it is perceived from the negative point of views not minding the positive benefits accrue to risky play on the holistic development of children. This views are in line with Stapples (2021) that Early Childhood Education practitioners are knowledgeable on risky play among children but view it from the danger inherent in risky play rather than considering the benefits.

It is also found out that teachers of the pupils in the schools of the study area, that structured risky play activities are not encouraged in the schools as a result of the envisaged hazards that may arise from the play activities. Hence, most of the schools does not have outdoor materials for children to play with. This is also in line with the study of Chaney, 2018 and Stapples (2021) that maintain that most Teachers and childhood practitioners are pesmisstic at encouraging outdoor risky play in the lower- based primary schools.

CONCLUSION

The study investigated the perceptions and attitudes of teachers on risky play among pupils in lower- based primary Schools in Oke-Ero local Government area of Kwara State, Nigeria. It was observed that most teachers in the study area understand what risky play is among the pupils but, for the fear of the danger of injuries envisaged to be sustained, discourage the play.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Training and awareness workshops should be organized to educate the teachers on the benefits

inherent in risky play activities for the holistic development of children.

2. Educators and School owners should be mandated to put in place structures for outdoor risky play in the school environments for encouragement.
3. The government should expressly include outdoor risky play in the school curriculum to encourage children partake in such activities in order to enjoy the benefits.

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