



Research Article

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Behavioural Patterns Exhibited by Preschoolers in Large Class Size: A Case of Early Childhood Centres in Ghana

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Abstract

The purpose of the paper was to investigate behavioural patterns exhibited by preschoolers in large class size and suggested recommendations to tackle them. The study was based on pragmatism philosophical thought where concurrent triangulation mixed method design was used for the study. At the quantitative phase, descriptive survey was used while multiple case study was also used for the qualitative phase. The sample size was 234, where 216 questionnaires were distributed to preschool teachers in the quantitative phase. At the qualitative phase, interviews were conducted with 12 preschool teachers while observations were carried out at 6 early childhood education centres (ECECs). The study shows that out of seat behaviour, talking out of turn, disrespecting teachers, verbal and physical aggression towards teachers were the behavioural patterns exhibited by preschoolers in large class size. Considering these behavioural patterns, the study suggested that building design used for ECECs should have toilet and other facilities to prevent preschoolers from exhibiting out of seat behaviour in classroom. The finding also shows that building more ECECs in addition to the existing ones and employing more substitute teachers to assist the permanent teachers could help teachers performance scaffolding, zone of proximal development and social interaction in managing preschoolers in classroom.

Keywords: Preschoolers, Large class size, out of seat behaviour, Verbal aggression, Physical aggression, Talking out of turn, Disrespecting teachers, Ghana, Negative behavioural pattern

1. Introduction

The heart of development of every country mostly depends on education (Akoto-Baako, 2018) and for this reason most developing countries like Ghana has invested to improve their educational standard to attain development. The first point of education starts from the home but early childhood education (ECE) is considered as the first stage of formal education for preschoolers. The institutionalisation of Education for All policy shows that a global international movement about the need for meeting the learning requirements of all preschoolers by the year 2015. It was first launched by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 1990 (UNESCO, 2006). From this assertion, UNESCO mandated all member countries to coordinate efforts to ensure that all preschoolers have good access to education. However, looking at how important the initiative was to help every citizen in every society, there was a coalition of government agencies, civil societies and the world bank group with committed effort to champion the concept of EFA (UNESCO, 2012).

The development of preschoolers in ECE depends on many factors such as the number of preschoolers supervised by teachers, the pattern of behaviour exhibited in class, resources, parental involvement, class size and teacher's competence. Large class size and behaviour exhibited by preschoolers were found as the major concerns of early childhood educational centres (ECECs) in Ghana due to the compulsory education policy for every Ghanaian child (Ministry of Education, 2017). Before the establishment of the compulsory education policy, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (2008) had established a class size for eighteen (18) preschoolers for nursery and kindergarten to improve the quality and efficiency of classroom management to ensure good teaching and learning processes in ECECs.

In a developing country like Ghana, it will be very difficult to found the stipulated number of eighteen (18) preschoolers in classroom (Ministry of Education Statistical Profile, 2020). In the same vein, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics report (2018) shows that sub-Saharan African countries have the highest teacher-to-learner ratio (TLR) for ECE. The statistics shows that Ethiopia and Malawi have the highest TLR (1:70) with Mozambique (1:67), Mali (1:55), Congo (1:54), Burundi (1:51), Ghana (1:48), Gambia (1:46), Liberia (1:45), Central African Republic (1:44), Guinea (1:34) and Chad (1:32). The UNESCO Institute for Statistics Report (2018) showed that ECE in Ghana was in a troubling state looking at the target set by Ghana's Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports in 2008 and the current situation of large class size.

The effectiveness of ECE also depend on the class size since ECE is the start of formal education for the preschoolers, it will be necessary for teachers to supervise smaller number of preschoolers to be able to assist them with social and behavioural pattern in large class size. For these reasons much attention is needed for preschoolers since they are in their exploratory stage and full adventure which normally put them in trouble when they are found in large class size. When they found themselves in large class size, they may observe and learn certain negative behavioural patterns from friends which may affect their career trajectories. Due to the high teacher-to-learner ratio found in large class sizes, teachers' ability to pay attention to all preschooler's behavioural pattern can be affected. Leung and Ho (2011) and Torkorny (2019) concluded that preschoolers found in large class size are normally found exhibiting negative behavioural pattern like talking out of turn, disturbing others when paying attention to instructional activities, out of seat without permission, disrespecting teachers, verbal and physical aggression. In the same vein, Olson (2012), asserted that preschoolers were negatively affect due to insult, laughing and teasing. Olson (2012) further asserted that the insult and teasing negatively affect the preschooler's self-confidence in class when answering questions or associating with friends.

The of the study was to investigate behavioural patterns exhibited by preschoolers in large class sizes and suggest recommendations to tackle them.

Torkorny (2019), defines out of seat behaviour as any incident or behavioural pattern exhibited by preschoolers for leaving their class seat without asking permission from their class teacher. Leung

and Ho (2011) studied disruptive classroom behaviour perceived by Hong Kong kindergarten teachers with the sample size of 120 pupils. The findings suggested that 80 pupils out of the 120 sample were frequently leaving classroom or seat without asking permission from their class teachers. Leung and Ho (2011) confirmed that order and discipline are less in kindergarten schools in Hong Kong. This was so because schools in Hong Kong allow preschoolers to engage in pure discovery learning than passively receiving knowledge from teachers in class. This form of learning ensures preschoolers moving or roaming from one place to another to seek clarification of ideas from colleagues. Sun and Shek (2012), concluded that wandering around was most exhibited by preschoolers in classroom. However, teachers complained that it was annoying and hassling when serious instructional demonstrations are ongoing, and preschoolers are playing or doing things in private.

Sun and Shek (2012), define verbal aggression as repeatedly uttering provoking words of insults that tarnish preschooler's self-image. However, Sun and Shek (2012), study on "student classroom misbehaviour: an exploratory study based on teachers' perceptions" provided forms of verbal aggression as insulting classmate, laughing, teasing classmate, maledictions, ridicule, profanity, nonverbal emblems and using offensive language in classroom which tarnish preschoolers' self-image. Olson (2012) reported that verbal aggression had a negative impact on preschoolers' relationships because those who experience such forms of abuse like insulting, laughing and teasing lack self-confidence in class when answering questions. However, Leung and Ho (2011), confirmed that in Hong Kong kindergarten centres attacking and using of foul knowledge was normal among the native Hong Kong children. The reason was that most of the children there joined Marshal-Act groups which expose them to attacking and ridiculing their peers in class. In the same vein, Hyman (2017), said that in large class size mature preschoolers often scream, threaten, and ridicule to control the younger ones. He further explained that the negative effect is that verbal aggression interferes with the preschooler's development of self-esteem and self-efficacy, and even affects their psychological and physical development.

A comparative study by Kohli and Malik (2019), showed that male subject score higher scores when it comes to physical aggression than female who recorded higher scores in verbal aggression. However, Ghosh (2012), found that preschoolers' physical aggression behaviour may have manifested from the home or environment. Ghosh (2012), study further shows that there was significant difference between preschoolers' physical aggression and situation of parental aggressive behaviour found in the home or environment. However, Sun and Shek (2012), provided forms of physical aggression as biting, hitting and kicking in classroom which tarnish and suppress preschoolers' psychological effect. Olson (2012), reported that physical aggression had a negative impact on self-confidence while Appiah-Essuman (2019), concluded that physical aggression undermined preschoolers' self-esteem and self-efficacy. Leung and Ho (2011) confirmed that the native Hong Kong preschoolers like kicking and physically attacking peers due the "Marshal Act" environment. In a large class size mature preschoolers physically attack or are hostile to the young ones which affect their self-esteem and self-efficacy in class (Hyman, 2017). Heins (2013), explained that in ECECs preschoolers physically attack or kick their peers to seek physical or psychological supremacy over them.

Sun and Shek (2012), confirmed that talking out of turn are behavioural challenges exhibited by preschoolers which include shouting while answering questions in class or speaking out louder in class. The finding of Sun and Shek (2012), shows that preschoolers shout when answering questions and do not put up their hands before answering questions were predominantly practiced by preschoolers in Hong Kong. However, Wearmouth and Connors (2004), explained that noise in classroom affects teacher's attention to control or manage preschoolers. In support, Ntim (2019), said it is annoying to see pupils chatting in class when classes are in session. Sun and Shek (2012), said that chatting and personal conversation among preschoolers disturb instructional activities.

Sun and Shek (2012), stated that disrespecting teachers are behaviour exhibited when preschoolers refuse to follow instruction in class, talking back when teachers caution them and sometimes attacking teachers. However, Torkornyó (2019), said that preschoolers exhibited

disruptive behaviour such as refusal to carry out instructions in class. Wearmouth and Connors (2004) said that preschoolers chitchat their teachers when they are given instructions or activities to perform in class. However, in Appiah-Essuman (2019), study with selected schools in Effutu Municipality, Winneba, teachers complained that disobedience by preschoolers to perform duties was frequent behaviour exhibited by them in class.

2. Contextual Review

Early childhood education centres in Ghana are likely to experience increase in class size due government of Ghana flagship policies like the Education for All (EFA) and compulsory child education have result in ECECs operating in large class size. For instance, in some ECECs visited, preschool teachers are teaching large class sizes ranging from 60-70 couple with lack of classroom space for the preschoolers to play. Therefore, preschoolers learning in such condition could exhibit some negative behavioural pattern in classroom.

3. Research Methods

The study is based on pragmatism philosophical thought where researcher aligns study to concurrent triangulation mixed method design. This design allows the researcher to collect, merge and analysis both quantitative and qualitative data simultaneously in a single study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). From this design, the researcher chose descriptive survey for the quantitative phase and multiple case study for the qualitative phase. In this design, either quantitative or qualitative data complement each other, where the weakness of one set of data becomes the strength of other (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Kusi, 2012).

The population of the study consist of all preschool teachers in Ghana. The targeted population consist of preschool teachers at Cape Coast, Kumasi and Tamale metropolis. The estimated population was 878 which consist of Tamale (268), Kumasi (402) and Cape Coast (208) for the study (Ministry of Education School Profile, 2018). At the quantitative phase, the research adapted Gay and Deihli (1992) way of determining sample. The researcher calculated 24.6% of the population which was equal to 216 and were proportionately shared among the three (3) metropolises. At the qualitative phase, the researcher purposively selected twelve (12) preschool teachers who supervise more than sixty (60) preschoolers in classroom and convenient sampling procedure was used to observe six (6) early childhood education centres from the study areas. The sample size for the qualitative phase was manageable and it will allow the researchers to make in-depth assessment into the case (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The instruments used for data collection were structured questionnaire and semi-structured interview. The questionnaire was used to gather the quantitative data, whereas the semi-structured interview and observational guide were used to gather the qualitative data. The instruments were design based on the issues that were discussed in the literature review which were related disrespecting teachers, physical aggression, talking out of turn, verbal aggression and out of seat behaviour.

To establish trustworthiness of the study, experts with knowledge in research and data analysis were given the instruments for thorough review. However, comments made by the experts were favourable, so the researcher did not change major items in the instruments. Again, the language during data collection was clearly understood by both researchers and research participants. After data collection, researchers informed the participants to approve or disapprove their comment. The instruments were piloted using test-retest reliability. It yielded an alpha level of 0.83 for test one (1) and 0.86 for test two (2). Using Cronbach Alpha, the instrument yielded an alpha level of 0.85 which was considered reliable, but the researchers adapted Castillo-Montoya (2016) procedure for preparing interview protocol.

The quantitative result was analysed with the aid of the Statistical Package for the Social

Sciences (SPSS) developed by Hull and Nie (1975). The software aided the analysis of mean and standard deviation scores used in the quantitative phase. The qualitative data was analysed thematically. For instance, a statement like “most preschoolers in class fail to identify objects, words and letters when asked to perform such activities in the mix of their peers” was coded “disrespecting teachers”. However, respondent’s attribution on comments were transcripts and assigned with numbers. For instance, Interviewee preschool teacher were assigned IPT -1 to 12.

4. Phase 1: Results

This section provides results from the analysis of the questionnaire. The analysis found in Table 1 represents that the quantitative findings of the study.

Table 1: Pattern of behaviour exhibited by preschoolers in large class size

Statement	Mean	St.D
Out of seat behaviour		
Changing seats during lessons	3.91	0.29
Jumping from one place to the other in the classroom	3.86	0.35
Wandering around in classroom	3.82	0.38
Mean of means	3.86	0.34
Physical aggression		
Biting peer in classroom	3.63	0.54
Using pencils or objects to pinch peer during lesson	3.62	0.68
Kicking peer in classroom	3.59	0.72
Hitting peer during lessons	3.57	0.85
Mean of means	3.60	0.70
Talking out of turn		
Having disruptive conversation with peer	3.41	0.90
Interfering with others when they are answering questions in class	3.30	0.95
Shouting when answering questions in classroom	3.20	0.99
Talking or answering question when not called	3.01	1.16
Mean of means	3.23	1.00
Verbal aggression		
Using abusive language	3.08	1.22
Insulting peer in classroom	3.06	1.16
Laughing at peers during lessons	2.91	1.22
Teasing classmates during lesson	2.81	1.14
Mean of means	2.97	1.19
Disrespecting teachers		
Attacking teachers when offended	3.17	1.00
Leaving class without permission	2.86	0.98
Talking back at teacher	2.61	1.30
Refusing to carry out instructions	2.19	1.24
Mean of means	2.71	1.13

N=216

Source: Field survey, (2020)

Table 1 shows that the afore-listed patterns of behaviours were frequently exhibited by preschoolers in large class size. The overall mean of means value from the “out of seat behaviours” recorded (M=3.86, SD=0.34) which shows a high response rate of behaviour exhibited by preschoolers in large class size. However, from the scale under out of seat behaviours, respondents suggested that “changing seats during lesson” was the highest frequent behaviour exhibited by preschoolers in large class size with the mean and standard deviation score of (M=3.91, SD=0.29). On the same theme

under out of seat behaviour on Table 1. The mean and standard deviation score of ($M=3.86$, $SD=0.35$) and ($M=3.82$, $SD=0.38$) representing “Jumping from one place to the other in the classroom” and “Wandering around in classroom” score second and third highest frequent behaviour exhibited by preschoolers in large class size respectively.

However, Table 1 also recorded mean and standard deviation value of ($M=3.60$, $SD=0.70$) representing physical aggression. Analysis under “physical aggression” shows that biting peer in classroom was the first behaviour exhibited by preschooler in large class size with the mean and standard deviation score of ($M=3.63$, $SD=0.54$). Again, respondents’ comment on “Using pencils or objects to pinch peer during lesson” recorded ($M=3.62$, $SD=0.68$) was the second behavioural pattern under physical aggression. Table 1 further recorded ($M=3.59$, $SD=0.72$) and ($M=3.57$, $SD=0.85$) representing “kicking peer in classroom” and “hitting during lessons” respectively and that recorded third and fourth behavioural pattern from physical aggression theme.

Another, theme that produce a high response rate from Table 1 was “talking out of turn” as a behaviour pattern exhibited by preschoolers in large class size. To confirm this, the mean and standard deviation value recorded under this theme was ($M=3.23$, $SD=1.00$). However, response from scale under talking out of turn scored a mean above (3.00). For instance, respondents comment that “Having disruptive conversation with peer” was first behavioural pattern with mean and standard deviation score of ($M=3.41$, $SD=0.90$) while “Interfering others when they are answering questions in classroom” also recorded ($M=3.30$, $SD=0.95$). Again, the third high response rate from the scale under talking out of turns was on “Shouting when answering questions in classroom” recorded ($M=3.20$, $SD=0.99$) and the last scale had a mean and standard deviation value of ($M=3.01$, $SD=1.16$) representing “Talking or answering question when not called”.

Table 1 however recorded mean and standard deviation value of ($M=2.97$, $SD=1.19$). Participants comment on “Using abusive language” recorded ($M=3.08$, $SD=1.22$) represent high response rate under verbal aggression. This was followed by ($M=3.06$, $SD=1.16$) representing respondents’ comment on “Insulting classmates during the lessons”. Again, Table 1 further reported that “Laughing at peers during lessons” and “Teasing classmates during lesson” recorded ($M=2.91$, $SD=1.22$) and ($M=2.81$, $SD=1.14$) respectively shows a moderate rate of response on behaviour pattern exhibited by preschoolers in large class size.

Disrespecting teachers was the last theme recorded under Table 1. The theme recorded an overall mean and standard deviation value of ($M=2.71$, $SD=1.13$). From the individual scale under disrespecting teachers, only one scale recorded high response rate This was on “Attacking teachers when offended” which recorded a mean and standard deviation value of ($M=3.17$, $SD=1.00$). It was also revealed that, “Leaving class without permission” scored ($M=2.86$, $SD=0.98$) which was moderately practice in classroom. However, Table 1 further shows moderate value of ($M=2.61$, $SD=1.30$) and ($M=2.19$, $SD=1.24$) representing “Talking back at teacher” and “Refusing to carry out instructions”.

4.1 Phase 2: Results

This section provides analysis from the interview data. The data were analysed using thematic analysis.

The responses show that disrespecting teachers as a pattern of behaviour exhibited by preschoolers in classroom was the first theme discussed. Responses were presented below. IPT-3 said that:

“As sociologist will say, school is a miniature society within the large society. The same way when preschoolers grown up in society where there is no good manners or respect for individual, they turn to model such learnt behaviour in classroom to their teachers. Again, when preschoolers observe domestic violence or unethical foul language (insult) from adult, they turn to exhibit such behaviour in classroom to their teachers because it seems to be normal language to them”.

IPT-7 also added:

“The training received by these kids from their various homes portray how they behave in classroom. Per my personal observation, I have seen that preschoolers from the nearby villages where they are densely populated behave differently from those coming from the estate house. The reason is that those coming from the village are expose to more deviant behaviours so exhibiting such behaviour to teachers seem common”.

IPT-9 concludes that “preschoolers from the fishing communities are very hostile to their teachers and peers. This is because the preschoolers found in this communities have observed these hostile behaviours from their elders and peers”. IPT-2 and IPT-10 shared similar view that preschoolers refuse to take instructions from teachers. Interviewer: Please what constitutes refusal or the failure to take instruction? IPT-2 said that it is annoying when preschoolers fail to submit their homework on Monday while IPT-10 agreed that failure to submit class exercise on time constitutes refusal to take instruction. In addition, IPT-6 said that preschoolers’ refuse to take simple instructions by not doing independent work as instructed by the preschool teacher.

However, IPT-11 asserted that preschoolers fail to obey simple rule for not sleeping during siesta. IPT-1 commented that they refuse to eat, and IPT-4 complains that some preschoolers do not write during lessons. IPT-10 added that, most preschoolers in class fail to identify objects, words and letters when asked to perform such activities in the mix of their peers. However, other disrespecting behaviour shown by preschoolers to preschool teachers was rudely talking back to teachers. IPT-5 said that preschoolers talk back when you try to correct them from wrongful act. Interviewer: Do this behaviour frequently happen in class? IPT-5 Yes! This normally happened when you caution preschoolers to take instruction or perform an art which they are not familiar with or found it difficult in doing.

IPT-12 states that when you caution preschoolers for wrongdoing, they normally talk back. Interviewer then posed a question on why preschoolers exhibited such behaviour in school. IPT-7 replied that it is attitudinal behaviour learned from their home. IPT-8 also added that preschoolers learn these behaviours due to “lack of proper values and moral training at home because preschooler has witnessed such behaviour from peers or the environment they live”. However, IPT-3 added that in countless times, preschoolers who disrespect their teachers may have been disrespecting others around them, including their own parents. Such preschoolers fail to take instruction from teachers in class during lesson.

Other respondents mentioned that talking out of turn was the behaviour exhibited by preschoolers in classroom. Respondents’ statements on this theme were indicated as follows. IPT-9 said that:

“During questions and answers after instructional lesson, most preschoolers frequently mention or called names which are familiar to them to answer the questions. They even go the step further of pointing figures to their peers to answer such question”.

However, IPT-1 added that “preschoolers who names are popular in the mind of their peers are mentioned or voiced in classroom. For instance, screaming by saying madam!!! Emma or Baffour name are familiar with the preschoolers”. These respondents IPT-2, IPT-4, IPT-6 and IPT-7 went a step further by saying preschoolers “shout when answering questions in class”. IPT-4 again added “preschoolers shout or cry when their pencils or other materials are taken from them by peers”. IPT-8 disclosed that “normal classroom conversations amongst preschoolers are normally loud”. Interviewer: In the presence of teachers, how do their conversation become loud? “We normally give them free period/time for colouring, tracing or sketching image. Personal conversations during that period are very loud” (IPT-8).

The following responses indicate that verbal aggression forms part of pattern of behaviour exhibited by preschoolers in large class size. The responses from the respondents are highlighted as

follows. IPT-9 asserted that:

“Preschoolers who have observed hostile or aggressive behaviours from peer, teachers, media and parents model such behaviour in classroom. For instance, verbal aggressiveness listens by preschoolers from the media or from the parents are normally demonstrated when playing with their peers in classroom. This kids also yelled reprimands to their peer or to their teachers when they are provoked in classroom”.

I have observed that children with low self-esteem or poor self-image normally insult peer when they are called by other names aside their real names (IPT-3). However, IPT-11 added that “Name-calling by peers in classroom were rampantly exhibited in class during role play or questions and answers time”. IPT-8 concludes that, shouting at friends in classroom. IPT-2 shared similar comment, unconscious screaming when one preschooler shout on any frightening object. In the same vein, IPT-10 reveals that there are outbursts of inappropriate comments during class instruction by preschoolers when their peers are answering questions. Making fun of peers was a form of the misbehaviours exhibited by preschoolers in classroom (IPT-4). IPT-7 also confirm that teasing friends when they answer questions wrongly. IPT-1 highlights on teasing. Preschoolers jokes and laughs peers when asked to be serious in class (IPT-6). However, IPT-12 concludes that laughing and mocking openly when preschoolers criticised for wrongdoing.

Responses show that, physical aggression was frequently exhibited by preschoolers in large class size. The responses that speak to this theme are as follow. These respondents confirm that hitting and fighting among peers were frequently exhibited by preschoolers in classroom (IPT-2, IPT-3, IPT-4, IPT-6, IPT-8 & IPT-11). Interviewer: Why was hitting and fighting prevalent among the preschoolers in classroom? IPT-6 further stated, “I have observed that when preschoolers fail to answer question or answer them wrongly, others turn to tease or mock them which result into fighting”.

IPT-2 also added that “teasing” and IPT-8, confirm that “laughing peers cause the fighting in classroom”. Other respondents confirm that “throwing objects or materials with the intention to hit other” (IPT-7). “Biting when they are provoked or successive laughing or mock” (IPT-12). However, IPT-5 “preschoolers pinching others with pencils and objects when sitting or sleeping in class”. On the contrary, IPT-9 said that “frequently the boys bully girls in classroom”.

At this section the responses indicate the out of seat behaviour was part of the pattern of behaviour exhibited by preschoolers in classroom. In respect to this theme, ten (10) respondents said something about it. IPT-2 comments that “running or walking was a common behaviour found in classroom”. IT-6 “some preschoolers run away from the classroom immediately they see their parent car outside”. IPT-12 highlighted that “preschoolers roam in classroom” and IPT-11 stated that “wandering around in classroom was also common behaviour exhibited by preschoolers in classroom”.

IPT-3 and IPT-8 revealed that “changing seat was predominately practise among preschoolers in classroom”. However, IPT-1 said that “moving from one seat to another”. IPT-5 confirms that “most preschoolers run from classroom without permission from the teachers”. Interviewer: why should preschoolers be allowed to roam or change seat in classroom. IPT-4 said, “these preschoolers are not mature to understand some rule”. IPT-9 confirm that “restricting preschoolers to stay at one place was seen as punishment to them”.

4.2 Phase 3: Results

This section provides analysis from the observational data. The data were analysed using counting and frequency. The responses from this section were cited from five (5) themes. These are disrespecting teachers, verbal aggression, physical aggression, talking out of turn and out of seat behaviour. Table 2 presents the observation of pattern of behaviour exhibited by preschoolers in large class size.

Table 2 shows that pattern of behaviour exhibited by preschoolers in large class size. One thousand four hundred and fourteen (1414) activities were recorded from twelve (12) behavioural pattern exhibited by preschoolers within the six (6) weeks observation. The observation was done from six (6) ECECs within Cape Coast, Kumasi and Tamale metropolises. However, Table 2 shows that “sleeping during lesson” was the most frequent pattern of behaviour exhibited by preschoolers in classroom whereas preschoolers in public ECECs exhibited this behaviour as compared to preschoolers in private ECECs. The observation from public ECECs recorded 48(24.6%), 31(15.5%) and 43(21.5%) while 23(11.5%), 28(14%) and 27(13.5%) for private ECECs. Moreover, on “frequent asking of questions” the researcher recorded a total count of (163) times. On this theme, preschoolers in private ECECs exhibited this behaviour with 41(25.2%), 20(12.3%) and 37(22.7%) as against 19(11.7%), 28(17.2%) and 18(11.0%) counted from public ECECs.

Furthermore, on “leaving class without permission” scored (152 counts) where public ECECs recorded highest marks 30(19.7%), 45(29.6%) and 29(19.1%) than the private ECECs with 15(9.9%), 12(7.9%) and 21(13.8%). Again, Table 2 recorded frequency and percentage score of 31(21.8%),19(13.4%) and 25(17.6%) for public ECECs while private ECECs was 29(20.4%), 16(11.3%) and 22(15.5%) representing punching and fighting exhibited by preschoolers in large class size. However, “laughing and teasing at peers” recorded a total count of (136). This behaviour was frequently exhibited by preschoolers in public ECECs than their peer in the private ECECs. the observation from public ECECs scored 15(11.0%), 24(17.6%) and 47(34.6%) while 21(15.4%),11(8.1%) and 18(13.2%) was recorded from private ECECs. Table 2 shows that preschoolers found in public ECECs exhibited behaviours on “calling out colleague’s names during lesson” than preschoolers found in private ECECs. The theme recorded frequency and percentage of 31(26.5%), 21(17.9%) and 8(6.8%) for public ECECs while 16(13.7%), 22(18.8%) and 19(16.2%) was recorded from private ECECs. On “unconventional usage of TLM’s” preschoolers in private ECECs were found exhibiting such behaviour than their colleagues found in public ECECs. From this theme, a total of (111 counts) where 5(4.5%), 2(1.8%) and 8(7.2%) was recorded from public ECECs while 46(41.4%), 27(24.3%) and 23(20.7%) was also recorded from private ECECs.

However, “changing seat and wandering around” recorded (107 counts) where preschoolers found in private ECECs exhibited this behaviour than their colleagues found in public ECECs. The theme recorded frequency and percentage of 14(13.1%), 12(11.2%) and 19(17.8%) for public ECECs while 32(29.9%), 19(17.8%) and 11(10.3) was recorded from private ECECs. Again, Table 2 shows that “speaking foul language” was dominated in public ECECs than private ECECs with the total score of (79 counts). Where 25(31.6%), 13(16.5%) and 10(12.7%) was recorded from public ECECs and 9(11.4%), 4(5.1%) and 18(22.8%) was also recorded from private ECECs. Table 2 shows that “irrelevant drawing” recorded (72 counts) where preschoolers in private ECECs dominated with this behaviour than public ECECs. However, 9(12.5%), 16(22.2%) and 7(9.7%) was scores from private ECECs while 16(22.2%), 20(27.7%) and 4(5.5%) was recorded from public ECECs. However, these themes “rudeness/talking back/arguing with teachers” and “shouting, disobeying/refusing to carry out instructions” found in Table 2 were more exhibited in public ECECs than private ECECs. These themes recorded a total count of 70 and 65 respectively.

Table 2: Observation of behavioural pattern exhibited by preschoolers in large class size

Statement	Public ECEC-1	Public ECECs-2	Public ECEC-3	Private ECEC-4	Private ECEC-5	Private ECEC-6	Total Frequency
Sleeping during lessons	48(24.6%)	31(15.5%)	43(21.5%)	23(11.5%)	28(14%)	27(13.5%)	200
Frequent asking of questions	9(11.7%)	28(17.2%)	18(11.0%)	41(25.2%)	20(12.3%)	37(22.7%)	163
Leaving class without permission	30(19.7%)	45(29.6%)	29(19.1%)	15(9.9%)	12(7.9%)	21(13.8%)	152
Punching, pinching, kicking and fighting	31(21.8%)	19(13.4%)	25(17.6%)	29(20.4%)	16(11.3%)	22(15.5%)	142
Laughing and teasing at peers	15(11.0%)	24(17.6%)	47(34.6%)	21(15.4%)	11(8.1%)	18(13.2%)	136
Calling out names during lesson	31(26.5%)	21(17.9%)	8(6.8%)	16(13.7%)	22(18.8%)	19(16.2%)	117
Unconventional usage of TLM’s	5(4.5%)	2(1.8%)	8(7.2%)	46(41.4%)	27(24.3%)	23(20.7%)	111
Changing seats and wandering around	14(13.1%)	12(11.2%)	19(17.8%)	32(29.9%)	19(17.8%)	11(10.3)	107

Statement	Public ECEC-1	Public ECECs-2	Public ECEC-3	Private ECEC-4	Private ECEC-5	Private ECEC-6	Total Frequency
Speaking foul language	25(31.6%)	13(16.5%)	10(12.7%)	9(11.4%)	4(5.1%)	18(22.8%)	79
Irrelevant drawing	9(12.5%)	16(22.2%)	7(9.7%)	16(22.2%)	20(27.7%)	4(5.5%)	72
Rudeness/talking back/arguing with teacher	6(8.6%)	14(20.0%)	18(25.7%)	12(17.1%)	18(25.7%)	2(2.9%)	70
Shouting, disobeying/refusing to carry out instructions	12(18.5%)	18(27.7%)	10(15.4%)	11(16.9%)	6(9.2%)	8(12.3%)	65
Total observation for ECECs	269	223	262	254	232	174	1414

Source: Field observation, (2020)

5. Discussion

It was evident from both quantitative and qualitative phases that “out of seat behaviour” was the behavioural pattern exhibited by preschoolers in ECECs. From the analysis of quantitative data, out of seat behaviour recorded highest mean and standard deviation value of (M. 3.86, SD=0.34). With respect to this theme, the individual text items found under “out of seat behaviour” found in Table 1 like “Changing seats during lesson” was more frequently exhibited by preschoolers in classroom. This was followed by “Jumping from one place to another in classroom and wandering around in classroom” was also practised in classroom. From the qualitative interview data it is revealed that ten (10) respondents out of twelve (12) made comment to the fact that “out of seat behaviour” was frequently exhibited by preschoolers in ECECs. IPT-2 and IPT-6 concluded that running and walking within classroom was commonly exhibited by preschoolers in large class size in ECECs. Sun and Shek (2012), concluded that wandering around was most exhibited by preschoolers in classroom. However, teachers complain that it was annoying and hassling when serious instructional demonstration are ongoing, and preschoolers are playing or doing things in private. Johnson and Fullwood (2016), also concluded that wandering around was stress-provoking behaviour exhibited by preschoolers in classroom.

Other respondents suggested that roaming and wandering around in classroom was also predominately exhibited in ECECs (IPT-11 & IPT-12). The observational data shows that “out of seat behaviour” was predominately exhibited by preschoolers in private ECECs than their counterparts found in the public ECECs. During the researcher’s visit to ECECs, he observed that public ECECs were lacking seats or chairs for preschoolers to sit on in classroom. From this assertion, the researcher could conclude that the lack of seats found in the public ECECs could also influence the out of seat behaviour exhibited by them in ECECs. In conclusion, preschoolers are their exploration stage and are full of adventure so managing behaviour like jumping, out of seat and wandering around may be difficult to avoid totally in ECECs.

From this theme, both quantitative and qualitative data show that verbal aggression was frequently exhibited by preschoolers in ECECs. The quantitative data shown in Table 1 recorded overall mean and standard deviation value of (M=2.97, SD=1.19). The findings from Table 1 shows that “verbal aggression” was frequently exhibited by preschoolers in large class size followed by “Using abusive language and Insulting classmates during the lessons”. In support, observational data found in Table 2 shows that speaking of foul language was also highly exhibited by preschoolers in public ECECs than their counterpart found in private ECECs. Olson (2012), reported that verbal aggression had a negative impact on preschooler relationships because those who experience such form of abuse like insulting, laughing and teasing, lack self-confidence in classroom when answering questions. However, Leung and Ho (2011), confirm that in rural Hong Kong kindergarten centres attacking and use of foul knowledge was seen as normal among the native Hong Kong children. The reason was that most of the children there joint there their mashed-act groups which expose them to attacking and ridicule their peer in classroom.

In support, IPT-7 said that teasing friends when they answer questions wrongly was predominantly exhibited by preschoolers in ECECs. In the same vein, IPT-1 confirms that teasing form part of behaviour exhibited by preschoolers in classroom. However, other respondents like IPT-

6 and IPT-12 commented that it can be observed that preschoolers joke, laugh at peers and mock peers openly in classroom. In the same vein, laughing and teasing at peers were frequent in public ECECs in Ghana. The observational analysis found in Table 2 shows that preschoolers in public ECECs were found in laughing and teasing peer in classroom than the colleagues in private ECECs. To confirm this statement, public ECECs recorded 15(11.0%), 24(17.6%) and 47(34.6%) scores while private ECECs also recorded 21(15.4%), 11(8.1%) and 18(13.2%). Appiah-Essuman (2019) view verbal aggression as the exchange of words or message between two preschoolers that inflict psychological pain. However, Sun and Shek (2012), study on “*student classroom misbehaviour: an exploratory study based on teachers’ perceptions*” provided forms of verbal aggression as insulting classmate, laughing, teasing classmate, maledictions, ridicule, profanity, nonverbal emblems and using offensive language in classroom which tarnish preschoolers’ self-image.

IPT-3 and IPT-11 confirm that name-calling and making comic comment was also exhibited by preschoolers in classroom. However, the observational data found in Table 2 shows that “calling out colleague’s names during lesson” was frequently exhibited in in public ECECs than private ECECs. From the observational analysis public ECECs scored 31(26.5%), 21(17.9%) and 8(6.8%) while private ECECs also recorded 16(13.7%), 22(18.8%) and 19(16.2%). On the contrary, Chapell et al., (2014), posit that verbal aggression was more predominant in middle and high school. Hyman and Snook (2019) disagreed that verbal aggression was predominant in middle and high school but ridicule teasing and calling out names were behaviours found among preschoolers of the same age group.

The analysis shows that preschoolers were found biting their peers in classroom. The biting happens consciously when preschoolers are being mocked or provoke by their colleagues (IPT-12). However, it was observed that laughing at and teasing peers which normally provoked them also led to biting among preschoolers. Appiah-Essuman (2019), concludes that physical aggression such as attacking, kicking, hitting and biting found amongst students were done in the quest for supremacy.

Another physical aggression behaviour exhibited by preschoolers was the act of using pencils or objects to pinch peer during lesson or punching peers. Table 1 shows that punching during lesson was frequently exhibited by preschoolers in large class size. In support, IPT-5 said that preschoolers pinching other with pencils while asleep was normal among preschoolers in classroom. This behaviour normally happens when preschoolers are observing “siesta”. Those cannot sleep or do not feel like sleeping exhibited this behaviour to their peers. From the observational phase, punching and pinching was counted more among preschoolers from public ECECs with the score 31(21.8%), 19(13.4%) and 25(17.6%) whereas 29(20.4%), 16(11.3%) and 22(15.5%) was also recorded from private ECECs. Victoria state Government (2017), document on education and training shows that violent and unsafe behaviour among preschoolers are head banging, kicking, biting, smashing equipment, punching, fighting and running away from class.

However, kicking peer in classroom was also a behavioural pattern exhibited by preschoolers in large class size in ECECs. Table 1 shows that “kicking peer in classroom” recorded a high response of mean and standard deviation ($M=3.59$, $SD=0.72$). From the qualitative interview data IPT-2, IPT-3, IPT-4, IPT-6, IPT-8 and IPT-11 shared similar view that kicking and hitting were behaviour exhibited among preschoolers in large class size. However, Sun and Shek (2012), provided forms of physical aggression as biting, hitting and kicking in classroom which tarnish and suppress preschoolers’ psychological. Olson (2012), reported that physical aggression had a negative impact self-confidence while Appiah-Essuman (2019), concluded that physical aggression undermined preschoolers’ self-esteem and self-efficacy. Again, the qualitative observational data from public ECECs recorded 31(21.8%), 19(13.4%) and 25(17.6%). However, 29(20.4%), 16(11.3%) and 22(15.5%) was also recorded from private ECECs. Leung and Ho (2011), confirm that the native Hong Kong preschoolers like kicking and physical attacking peer due the “mashel act” environment.

The last behavioural pattern exhibited by preschoolers in large class size under “physical aggression” was on hitting peers during lesson. Although, it was last among the themes under physical aggression, but it recorded high response rate of ($M=3.57$, $SD=0.85$). From qualitative interview data, IPT-2, IPT-3, IPT-4, IPT-6, IPT-8 and IPT-11 all highlighted that hitting was exhibited

by preschoolers. However, IPT-6 further asserted that hitting are prevalent among preschoolers in class. This was prevalent because when preschoolers answer questions wrongly, other preschoolers turn to tease or laugh at them that result into hitting by the fellow who is being tease or laugh. Again, the qualitative observational data showed no record on hitting by preschoolers during lesson but pinching and fighting which was similar to hitting was recorded 31(21.8%), 19(13.4%) and 25(17.6%) representing public ECECs and 29(20.4%), 16(11.3%) and 22(15.5%) for private ECECs. In a large class size mature preschooler physical attack, the young ones which affect their self-esteem and self-efficacy in classroom (Hyman, 2017). Heins (2013), explained that in ECECs preschoolers physically attack or kick their peer to seek physical or psychological supremacy over them. The next section presents discussion on talking out in turns as a pattern of behaviour exhibited by preschoolers in large class size.

The records from both quantitative and qualitative data shows that “talking out of turn” as behavioural pattern exhibited by preschoolers in large class size was frequently in most ECECs in Ghana. Table 1 recorded a mean of means value of ($M=3.23$, $SD=1.00$) and the sub-themes found under “talking out of turn” recorded mean value between (3.00-3.45) which represent high response rate. In support with the quantitative data, IPT-8 disclosed that classroom conversations among preschoolers are normally loud that disrupt the teaching and learning process in classroom. She further asserted such loudness conversation normally happen when preschoolers are given personal time or period to develop or create something that comes to mind. However, other respondents suggested that during colouring, tracing and sketching personal conversation or discussion are very loud in classroom. Again, at the observational phase, it was revealed that preschoolers having disruptive conversation or discussion was also counted under shouting, disobeying or refusing to carryout instruction. Table 2 shows that disruptive conversation or discussion was also counted under disobeying or refusing to carryout instruction was predominately found in public ECECs than what was observe in private ECECs.

However, the next behavioural pattern found under “talking out of turn” was preschoolers interfering with others when they are answering questions in classroom. It was observed that in classroom when preschoolers are asked to explain or describe something, other preschoolers normally disrupt or interfered with their answer or conversation when they are not call by the class teacher. This behaviour by preschoolers discourages others from answering questions in classroom. However, qualitative data reveal that during questions and answers after instructional lesson, preschoolers frequently called names which are popular in the class to answer the questions (IPT-9). IPT-9 further said that preschoolers even go the step further of pointing figure on their peers to answer the questions. In the same vein, (IPT-1) added that preschoolers who names are popular in the mind of their peers are mentioned or voice in classroom. It was observed from the observational phase that calling out colleague’s names during lesson was a behaviour exhibited in classroom. The qualitative observational data from public ECECs recorded 31(26.5%), 21(17.9%) and 8(6.8%) whereas 16(13.7%), 22(18.8%) and 19(16.2%) was also recorded from private ECECs. However, Wearmouth, Richmond, Glynn and Berryman (2014), explained that noise in classroom affect teacher’s attention to control or manage preschoolers. In support, Sun and Shek (2012), said that chatting and personal conversation among preschoolers disturb instructional activities.

The other pattern of behaviour under “talking out of turn” was shouting when answering questions in classroom. On this theme “shouting when answering questions” was found as the third frequent behaviour exhibited under “talking out of turn” recorded ($M=3.20$, $SD=0.99$) from Table 1. However, at the qualitative interview phase, these respondents (IPT-2, IPT-4, IPT-6 & IPT-7) said that preschoolers shout in classroom. Again, IPT-4 added that preschoolers shout or cry when pencils or other materials are taking from them by peers. However, from the observational data, preschoolers interfering with others when they are answering questions in class was also counted under shouting, disobeying or refusing to carryout instruction. Table 2 shows that it was frequently found in public ECECs than what was observe in private ECECs. Sun and Shek (2012), confirm that talking out of turn are behavioural challenge exhibited by preschoolers which include shouting while answering

questions in classroom or speaking out louder in classroom. Similarly, Torkornyó (2019), also highlighted speaking loudly to let other preschoolers hear their answers are very irritating. It was evident from both quantitative and qualitative phase that preschoolers in ECECs disrespect their teachers in classroom. However, the analysis of this theme revealed that disrespecting teachers were in the form of attacking teachers when offended, leaving class without permission, talking back at teachers and refusing to carry out instruction. The analysis of this theme recorded a moderate response with mean of means value of ($M=2.71$, $SD=1.13$). The first sub-theme recorded under disrespecting teachers was on “attacking teachers when offender”. Table 1 recorded a mean and standard deviation value of ($M=3.17$, $SD=1.00$) representing attacking teachers when offender. It was reported that when preschoolers are being tease or laugh by peers in classroom and the teacher try to correct them. They displace their grievance by attack their teachers. At the qualitative phase, none of the respondents commented about preschoolers attacking teachers in classroom. Again, the researcher never observes a case on preschoolers attacking teachers in classroom. However, Ghosh (2012), found that preschoolers’ physical aggression behaviour may have manifested from the home or environment. Ghosh (2012), study further shows that there was significant different between preschoolers’ physical aggression and situation of parental aggressive behaviour found in the home or environment. Chamandar, Fateme and Susan (2017), work on component aggression. Their findings show that preschoolers who were expose to aggressive movies or activities were physical abusing their peers and teachers in classroom than those were not expose to aggressive movies or activities.

The next theme recorded under disrespecting teachers was “leaving class without permission”. The preschool teachers were not happy when preschoolers leave classroom without their noticing them. At the interview phase, no respondent highlighted on this theme but at the observational phase the researcher counted 152 cases on leaving classroom without asking permission from the class teachers. As shown in Table 2, the researcher recorded 30(19.7%), 45(29.6%) and 29(19.1%) for public ECECs whereas 15(9.9%), 12(7.9%) and 21(13.8%) were recorded from private ECECs. The result shows that “leaving class without permission” was frequently found in public ECECs than private ECECs. Wearmouth, Richmond, Glynn and Berryman (2014), said that preschoolers’ chitchat and were leaving classroom without permission their teachers when they were given instructions or activities to perform in classroom.

Another theme highlighted under disrespecting teachers was on “Talking back at teacher” when offended in classroom. This theme recorded mean and standard deviation value of ($M=2.61$, $SD=1.30$). At the interview phase, IPT-5 asserted that preschoolers talk back when you try to correct them from wrongful act. IPT-5 further said that this behaviour normally happened when you caution preschoolers to take instruction or perform an art which they are not familiar with or found it difficult in doing. IPT-12 states that when you caution preschoolers for wrongdoing, they normally talk back. The researcher observes that preschoolers were rudely talk back or arguing with their teachers in classroom. From the observation this behaviour was frequently found public ECECs than Private ECECs.

The last theme reveal under disrespecting teachers was on preschoolers “refusing to carry out instructions” in classroom. This theme recorded a mean and standard deviation value of ($M=2.19$, $SD=1.24$). Although, the theme was last, but it had moderate response rate. Preschoolers refusing to carry out instruction was also reported last on the observational data. However, the observational data recorded 12(18.5%), 18(27.7%) and 10(15.4%) for public ECECs while 11(16.9%), 6(9.2%) and 8(12.3%) were also recorded for private ECECs. In the same vein, IPT-2 and IPT-10 shared similar view that preschoolers refuse to take instructions from teachers. IPT-2 said that it was annoying when preschoolers fail to submit their homework on Monday while IPT-10 reply that failure to submit class exercise on time. On the contrary, IPT-6 said that preschoolers’ refusal to take simple instructions by not doing independent work as ascribe by the preschool teacher.

6. Recommendations

Based on findings, it emerged that the behavioural pattern exhibited by preschoolers cut across all ECECs visited because preschoolers are in their exploratory stage and control their behaviour was extremely difficult.

- The researcher recommends that preschool teachers should be equipped with rudimentary skills of handling preschoolers' behaviour in ECECs. The researcher further recommends that the practicum for preschool teachers at the universities or colleges should extensively depend on behaviour management and anger management to help teachers cope with misbehaving students in a healthy and productive manner.
- It is also recommended that the Ministry of Education and Ghana Education Service should organise workshops and seminars for preschool teachers in the country on how to manage preschoolers' behaviour in classroom. Again, there should be need for clear national policy about the establishment of ECEC where building design and facilities (toilet, water tap and dinner room) would be place within the school building to prevent preschooler from out of seat behaviour.
- Government should build more classroom or ECECs to add up to the already existing ones. This would help reduce the large class size in the classroom thereby reducing workload on teachers.
- Government should also recruit more teachers to meet up with the growing population and add up to the inadequate number of teachers we have in our ECECs.
- The researchers recommend that an appropriate classroom management plan or guideline under which the preschool teacher must operate should be well established in the ECECs. The classroom management guideline should be carved out of the national guidelines but must be tailored to meet the specific needs of the preschoolers each ECECs. This classroom management guideline should also be made aware of ECE trainee teachers during practicum to guide them in executing their duties in classroom.
- The researchers recommend that government substitute teachers should be engage in ECECs to assist with classroom activities by monitoring preschoolers' behavioural pattern when the permanent teachers are teaching. However, employing more substitute teachers to assist the permanent teachers in using scaffolding, zone of proximal development and social interaction in managing preschoolers in classroom.

7. Conclusions

- It was concluded that preschoolers found at the ECE are at their exploratory stage so behavioural pattern exhibited comes as a result of learnt behaviour through observing and imitating others.
- The study concludes that negative behavioural pattern like Sleeping during lessons, leaving class without permission, punching, pinching, laughing and fighting with peers were predominantly found in the public ECECs than private ECECs.
- It was revealed that these negative behavioural patterns exhibited by preschoolers in large class size were affecting preschool teacher's health since they were always shouting to calm preschoolers down in classroom. In the same vein, it was reported that negative behavioural patterns also affect instructional activities and distract instruction periods in ECECs.
- From observations, a predominant behaviour like out seat was cause because of the design structure of the school since facilities like toilet and urinal were separated from the classroom block. Hence, when a preschooler asks permission to visit these facilities other preschoolers also try to follow him/her.

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