
Teachers Perception of Early Childhood Drawings in Selected Schools in the Offinso Municipality

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ABSTRACT

Young children use many signs to create meaning and to represent reality within the medium of drawing-telling. Their drawings communicate how cognitive, physical, and emotional development relates to creative and artistic expression. These drawings made by the child are related to self ideas, events, objects, and people in the environment. The idea on what children actually exhibit at this stage of development are supposed to help their teachers to offer the professional support necessary for them. Ironically, it has not being so in the case of some schools in the Offinso municipality because the teachers expect realistic drawings from children. Therefore, the research sought to (i) find out the nature of drawings early childhood teachers expect from children and also (ii) educate early childhood educators on the developmental stages involved in artistic development of children. An action research was conducted since the problem at hand persists in the classroom. Using purposive sampling, two groups of schools in the Offinso municipality were chosen. It was from these schools that the pupils comprising both boys and girls in class one to three totalling 128 and their class teachers totalling 6 were selected. Pre-intervention, intervention, and post-intervention activities were also organised for the teachers. It was obvious from the studies that the class teachers of Basic one to three had little knowledge about the artistic development of children aged 6 to 8 years. Interviews and discussions with the class teachers revealed that children are supposed to draw what they see in a very realistic way hence, resulting in the low marks the pupils obtained during the pre-intervention stage. Moreover, the study also revealed to early childhood educators that what children draw reflects their age level; it is not what children produce that matter, rather the process involved in drawing and the value of their experiences they integrate in their drawing. These corroborated findings from literature gathered on theories and empirical studies which showed that children exhibit different characteristics in their drawing as a result of their developmental stages. These findings suggest that the educational background of the class teachers play vital roles in the teaching and learning process. The class teachers should be made aware that pupils draw what is in their mind but not what they see. That is they know that human figures have head, leg, arms, facial features and present them as such in their drawings. Also, the class teachers should keep records of children's drawings as they move from one stage to the other to enable them appreciate the differences in details that children show in their drawings. In-service training on artistic development of children for teachers already on the field yielded positive results, which brought a new dimension the way these teachers perceived children's drawings.

Keywords: *Artistic, contour, drawing, geometric, schematic, scribbling*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is seen as the most vital stage where children set up learning patterns, attitudes, and a reflection of the natural, biological process of mental development through drawing (Bleiker, 1999). Uzoagba (2002) maintains that drawing remains the intellectual exercise by which we train ourselves to observe and think plastically in terms of the dimensions of space. Thus, drawing develops constructive imagination and the habit of exact thinking in children.

According to Bleiker(1999) children learn to see and imitate the contours of nature with its irregular curves and criss-crossing patterns through drawing activities. This becomes useful when they begin to study subjects such as elementary science and geography. Children also discover geometric-shapes such as circles, squares, and triangles which lead not only to drawing but what theorists in child art describe as ‘concept formation’(Feldman 1997).Bleiker (1999) added that, intellectually, children learn very fast as they apply their senses to add details to their drawings. Therefore this study intends to expose class one, two, and three teachers to Lowenfeld and Brittain artistic developmental stages. Early childhood educators have long felt that art especially drawing has much to teach us about the world and ourselves (Hymes, 1975; Johnson, 1928; Seefeldt, 1992). It is considered to be a cornerstone of the early childhood curriculum (Bleiker, 1999). Psychological researchers such as Gardner and Piaget have long believed that children’s drawings hold the key to understanding both cognitive, physical, and emotional development in children (Gardner, 1983; Piaget, 1956).

Unfortunately, the researchers initial interactions with some class teachers of Ampabame Zion and Abuaso Kokote D/A primary schools revealed that the characteristics of children’s drawings appear to be out of context to their teachers. Their comments, low marks, and attention paid to them caused children to develop attitudes such as poor self-image and lack of self-esteem, withdrawal and isolation which remain with them as they progress through formal education. An interaction with some of the pupils shows that some children. They have also become dependent instead of being independent because what come out of them as a result of drawing are not appreciated.

However, through preliminary exploratory discussions the researchers assumed that teachers, who are supposed to appreciate, understand, and guide children to unearth their creativity through drawing look down upon these children’s drawings. They consider children’s drawings to be wrong because they do not appear realistic. That is, teachers expect children to portray the subject matter which is normally seen in adults’ drawings (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987). Kitahara and Matsuishi (2007) added that they do so without knowing that children only draw what is in their mind.

It may be that these teachers are often not familiar with the developmental stages involved in artistic development of children and the kinds of drawings they are likely to portray at each level. This may be due to the fact that some teachers may not have received training on the stages involved in artistic development of children as outlined by Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) as

scribbling stage, pre-schematic stage, schematic stage and the stage of dawning realism. Therefore, this study intends to expose class one, two, and three teachers to Lowenfeld and Brittain artistic developmental stages.

The research seeks to find out the nature of drawings early childhood teachers expect from children and educate early childhood educators on the developmental stages involved in artistic development of children using seminar. These questions are meant to direct the course of the study: (i) What is the nature of drawing early childhood teachers expect from children? and (ii) How can early childhood teachers be helped to appreciate and accept children's drawings through better understanding of children's artistic development? The study focused on how boys and girls aged 6 to 8 years in classes one to three represented the world around them through drawing in Ampabame Zion and Abuaso Kokote D/A primary schools in the Offinso municipality in the Ashanti region of Ghana. The study looked at Lowenfeld and Brittain pre-schematic and schematic artistic developmental stages, since the pupils chosen for the study were in classes one to three.

Early childhood education

Early childhood education is the formal teaching and care of young children by people other than their family or in settings outside of the home. "Early childhood" is usually defined as before the age of normal schooling thus five years in most nations, though the U.S. National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) instead defines "early childhood" as before the age of eight Pertreena (2017).

The early years of life are critical to the development of intelligence, personality and social behaviour (Wenner, 2009). Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to reflect on today's approach to art education and recognize that when making art or responding to it, children are engaged in thoughtful, creative activity. (Wenner, 2009) views early childhood as the period from birth to 8 years old. A time of remarkable brain development, these years laid the foundation for subsequent learning (Farquhar, 2007).

In Ghana, early childhood starts from birth to 9 years where children in class one to three who are the main subjects for the study fall within (GES, 2008). Thus, a child may be left with a developmental shortfall that hampers his or her success in school and beyond especially children in the formative years.

Drawing

Drawing according to Katz, Lankford, & Plank (1995) is the process of creating a representation on a surface with a drawing instrument. They further explained that children spent hours drawing their preferred images with pencils or crayons and get better their drawing skills, learn new and diverse techniques as they move up on the educational ladder. One of the important ways of observing and reacting to the world around us is through drawing (Amenuke, Dogbe, Asare, Ayiku, and Baffoe 1991). It is additionally explained that drawing is not just a particular or eccentric endowment for a few nor is drawing a meagre skill of accurate representation, but a process to be used for learning. Uzoagba (2002) maintains that drawing remains the intellectual exercise by which we train ourselves to observe and think plastically in terms of the dimensions of space. Thus, drawing develops constructive imagination and the habit of exact thinking in children.

Nature of children's drawings

Children take delight in making marks and shapes with simple instruments such as pencil, crayons, markers, chalk, and pen. These marks and shapes could be the basis on which one can assess the developmental level of children (Encyclopedia of Children's Health 2020). Children's drawings obviously show artistic development and expression. In educational setting, they can be vehicles for assessing a child's personality, intellectual development, communication skills, and emotional adjustment (Cherney, I.D, Seiwert, C.S, Dickey, T.M and Flichtbeil, J.D. 2006). Children's drawings can also aid in helping to diagnose learning disabilities (Levick, 2003). Moreover, the nature of children's drawings create meaning and communicate their experiences through the representation of images, marks, and colours they make on surfaces thereby giving the ideas and themes in children's drawings. Chandler (2002) in support writes young children's drawings shows how they brilliantly use all kinds of symbols to make sense and also stand for the truth. Children in their formative years express themselves better through drawing, therefore, it is not required of children to exhibit adult drawing skills.

Theories of Victor Lowenfeld

In the field of art education, Viktor Lowenfeld is well known for his attention to the importance of children's drawings in determining a progression of developmental levels. He has developed a theory of stages of drawing development which defines appropriate drawing activities according to the age level of children. Kelly (2004) outlined a range of Lowenfeld's stages of development and suitable art activities for each stage of personality growth as Scribbling Stage (occurring 2 to 4 years of age); Pre-schematic Stage (4 to 7 years); Schematic Stage (7 to 9 years); Dawning Realism (9 to 12 years); and Pseudo - Realistic Stage (12 to 14 years).

Children's drawings according to Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) are not for the purpose of imitating subject matter. Moreover, he describes his belief that individual self - expression in drawing promotes intellectual growth and individual growth, stressing the significance of hopeful impulsive self-expression (Thomas & Silk, 1990). In view of this, Piaget's theory on cognitive development was reviewed for the reason that it corresponds with Lowenfeld's theory.

Theories of Jean Piaget

Jean Piaget is one of the world's psychologists who have propounded theories on cognitive development in children (Kelly, 2004). Kelly further proved that on the topic of child development in art, Piaget used children's drawings to support his theory of child development. Despite the fact that Piaget did not analyse children's drawings differently (Thomas & Silk, 1990), his cognitive theory of development presents a theoretical approach of child development through drawing. Piaget's theory explains how children interpreted their experiences through assimilation or accommodation. These reflect in children's drawings when they begin to include all body parts probably as a result of their experiences. Furthermore, Thomas & Silk (1990) cited that Piaget considered children's scribbles as exercises which progress to the onset of drawing images which portrays the child's graphic skills and realistic intentions. At this stage, children recreate incidents that are personally important to them as result of assimilation.

METHODOLOGY

The researchers adopted qualitative study approach to unravel the nature of children's drawings in their first three years in the primary school. Qualitative research is a systematic process of describing, analysing and interpreting insights discovered in everyday life (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). Since the problem at hand actually persists in the classroom, the researchers conducted an action research in order to find immediate solution to the problem. Creswell (2002) defined action research as a method in which the researcher works with a group under investigation, that is to say he or she takes lead of the group or on what is to be done. McAlpine (2005) further explains that action research is based on the fundamental principle that people are best equipped to research when they are able to understand, explain and address issues bordering them. Interviews were arranged and recorded with the teachers who were in charge of class 1 to 3 in both schools using an interview guide validated by a cross-section of people and non-participant observation was used during the children's drawings period in their usual classroom settings as a pre-intervention stage. As an intervention, a seminar was conducted to expose the teachers to children's artistic development; sight was not lost on the fact that children's drawings are thought to be a mirror of a child's representational development (Cherney, 2006). To ascertain this, pupils drew for the teachers to compare their characteristics as a post-intervention activity. The teachers' attention was drawn to the omissions and details exhibited by the pupils in their drawings. Thus, teachers reflected on Piaget's succession of sequential stages which contributes to the overall understanding of the child's intellectual growth and development (Kelley, 2004). The study helped the class teachers to understand children artistic development as well as promoting their personal development and practice.

Population is a well-defined collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics (Castillo, 2009). The targeted population in this research were Ampabame Zion primary and Abuasu Kokote primary in the Offinso Municipality comprising 400 pupils and 12 teachers. The accessible population was put into groups; teachers and children aged 6 to 8 years. Using purposive sampling, Ampabame Zion and Abuasu Kokote primary schools in the Offinso municipality were chosen. It was from these schools that the pupils comprising both teachers and pupils from class one to three were selected. The pupils comprised 75 boys and 53 girls in class one to three totalling 128. Of the girls 20 were in class one, 17 in class two, and 16 in class three. Of the boys 26 were in class one, 25 in class two, and 24 in class three. Purposive sampling was used as the name suggests, for a specific purpose (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The purpose for selecting the schools was based on the fact that creative art was a compulsory subject in both schools. Also, purposive sampling illustrates or highlights what is typical or average, illustrates characteristics of particular sub-groups of interest and facilitates comparisons. The researchers determined the representativeness of each sample (Franklin & Wallen, 2009). Moreover, Acquah (2007) explained that purposive sampling is best used with small numbers of individuals which may well be sufficient for understanding human perceptions, problems, needs, behaviours and contexts, which are the main justification for a qualitative study, as is the case of this study.

Researchers often use multiple forms of data in any single study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005) thus, observation, interview, written documents, and electronic documents. With respect to the objectives, thus, the nature of drawings early childhood teachers expect from children and

educating early childhood educators on the developmental stages involved in artistic development of children, observations and interviews were used as the data collection tools. As in qualitative research, non-participant observation was used. Non-participant observation according to Franklin and Wallen (2009) is a method of data collection in which the researcher does not participate in the activity been observed but rather sit down and watches what goes on. Thus, the researcher does not directly involve him or herself in the activity. In view of that the researchers designed an observation check list as a guide. Observation check list is a set of questions or guidelines that the researcher writes down to guide him or her during the observation period. This implies that the researcher checks his or her observation against the list to prevent him or her from observing things which will not be essential to the study (Agyenim-Boateng 2011). Cohen & Manoin (1989) defined interview as the encounters between a researcher and respondent in which the latter asked a series of questions important to the subject of the research. Respondents' answers constitute the raw data which is analyzed at a later point in time by the researcher. An interviewed guide was used to find out the nature of drawings some class teachers expect. According to Fant (2008) interview guide is similar to questionnaire and both are set of questions to be answered by participants of a study but with an interview guide, the questions are administered by the researcher and information gathered is recorded.

Pre-Intervention Stage

The pre-intervention stage was based on the first objective outlined for the study. Objective one of the study has to do with the nature of drawings teachers expect from children age 6 to 8 years in some public schools in the Offinso municipality. Interviews were arranged and recorded with the teachers who were in charge of class one to three in both schools using an interview guide validated by a cross section of people, thus, Art teachers and colleagues after series of drawings from the children. The interview aided the teachers to illustrate the nature of drawings they expected from the children. It also aided the researchers to appreciate the marks the teachers awarded the pupils as shown in table one.

Table 1: Pre-intervention scores of children's drawings

CLASS	SCORES			TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
	0-3	4-6	7-10		
ONE	38	8	0	46	35.9
TWO	30	9	3	42	32.8
THREE	25	13	2	40	31.3

Furthermore, non-participant observation was used during the children's drawing activities in their usual classroom settings. This was done to find out whether children's drawings were truly internal representation or symbolic expression of the inner psyche or a mere imitation of subject matter from textbooks Lowenfeld and Brittain (1987) or whether pupils copied from their colleagues.

Intervention Stage

The second objective sought to expose class 1 to 3 teachers in selected public schools in Offinso municipality acquire knowledge in artistic development of children. Kellogg (1970) asserted a

worldwide prototype of development in the drawings and art of young children. In support, Lowenfeld postulated a progression of developmental levels in children's drawings. Moreover, he developed a theory of artistic development, thus, appropriate drawing activities according to the age level of children (Kelly, 2004).

Educational background information about the teachers was obtained from interviewing the six teachers involved. This aided the researchers to find out whether the teachers have professional training in artistic development which Lowenfeld, encouraged its use in the classroom (Lowenfeld, 1975).

The researchers through a seminar exposed the class teachers to Lowenfeld's artistic development on children's drawings which is based on systematic creative and cognitive stages which demonstrate specific characteristics with respect to age range. As part of the interventions, Betty Edward's (1979) child art developmental stages was reviewed and exposed to the class teachers during the seminar.

Although, this objective was meant to expose the teachers to children's artistic development, sight was not lost on the fact that children's drawings are thought to be a mirror of a child's representational development (Cherney, 2006). Furthermore, Golomb (2004) identifies children's drawings of the human figure as the most informative in terms of cognitive development. This allows teachers to assess the development of children's use of figural differentiation and representation. Thus, the teachers were prepared through a seminar to recognize that children's human figure drawings could be used to give an idea about children's personality. (Hammer, 1953). The seminar also highlighted children's drawing as a means of enhancing children's communication skills. Chandler (2002) supported the idea that children's creative communication involves a variation of verbal and non-verbal texts, artworks which integrate narration, music that has lyrics or dance which includes expressive vocalization.

Teachers response to pupils drawings in terms of characteristics during the seminar

Apart from the scores recorded in the table 1, the following drawings were selected and analysed based on the teachers expectations which reflected in the low marks the pupils obtained. The drawings were analysed based on the following criteria: artistic development level, human schema, placement of figures (space schema) and, omission, distortions, and exaggerations Donley (1987) found in Lowenfeld's and Betty Edwards's child development theory.

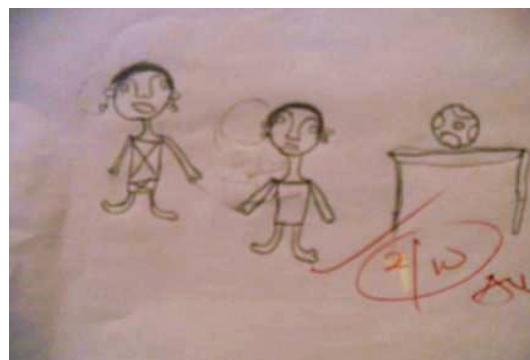


Figure 1. Playing Football by a class two (2) boy aged 7

In this drawing, the child was awarded a low mark of two (2) out of ten (10). Out of the six (6) teachers, four share the view that the drawing lack realism because of the following reasons: What the child identifies as a goalpost was described by the teachers as a table and a ball over the goalpost according to the child was described by the teachers as a ball on top of a table. The remaining two teachers could not draw a distinction between the two scenarios.

The researchers through the seminar explained to the class teachers that the child's drawing reflects the artistic characteristics of Lowenfeld's artistic development, for example; the human figures look at the viewer thus, with a schema repeated in each figure. The schema consists of geometric forms as seen in the body, head, and arms. Also, the human figures include arms, body, hair, and facial features.



Figure 2. My Family by a class two (2) boy aged 7 years

A boy described himself carrying an umbrella, our house is behind a tree, my father is standing under the tree, and our church is near our house. In this work, the child scored a low mark of three out of ten from the class teacher because of these expectations: the boy should include his mother; the church building is not necessary compared to the title of the drawing 'my family', and lack of facial features of his father.

This work was drawn by a boy in class two (2) who omitted his mother from the family drawing. He drew himself big carrying an umbrella below the paper as compared to his father behind him without facial features. The child relates himself to his environment by including things in the environment in the work titled 'My Family'. Behind the child is a church building. His father is in front of a tree with two houses behind him. The class teachers were made aware that the drawing signifies that the child understands himself and his environment. This indicates that the child has become aware of the environment. Intelligence is based on this assumption (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987). This implies that the greater the intellectual development, the greater the child's awareness and use of the things in the environment. Day & Hurwitz (2001) also stated that drawing makes children more aware of the physical environment in which they live.

Again, the exclusion of his mother and the omission of features of his father may suggest unsatisfactory parental relationship that exists at home. The umbrella the child is carrying may show how children invent ways of showing events that occurs. This could signify a rainy or sunny day.

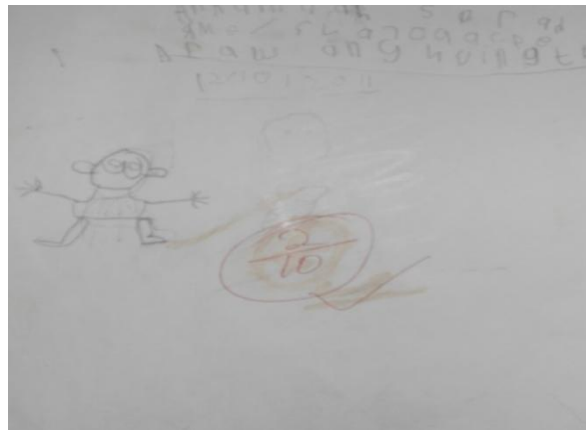


Figure 3. My Self by a class one (1) girl aged 6 years

A child in class (1) drew herself without her mouth, four fingers on both hands, and positioned the figure at the left side of the paper. These accounted for two out of ten marks from the class teacher. In this figure, a girl drew herself small and positioned the figure close to the edge of the paper. She omitted her mouth with her nose below the eyes. Her arms were without flesh with four fingers on each arm. There is no relationship between the thigh and leg. The head is round without hair. At this stage Lowenfeld's studies shows that children are not trying to copy but rather drawing themselves.

Lowenfeld explains that children's involvement primarily in the self; their egocentric view of the world is actually a view of themselves. The researchers explained to the class teachers that how the child represented herself is characterised by Lowenfeld's pre-schematic stage which is a reflection of growth. Furthermore, through drawing the child is beginning to establish some sort of conceptual organisation. Therefore, an attempt to teach certain artistic skills to the child at this stage will not help her.

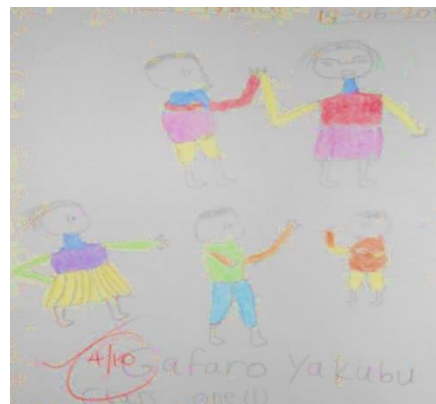


Figure 4. My Family by a class one (1) boy aged 6 years

The boy explains ‘my family’ as I am playing with my brother with my sister behind me and my parents at the top holding each other. An interaction with the class teacher as to why the boy scored four out of ten revealed omission of their fingers, and short and long arms.

The boy is in class one (1) and he is six years old. He drew his mother and father holding each other with himself and the younger brother playing isolating his sister below the paper. During the seminar, the researchers discussed with the class teachers that in the first representational level, children show a concept of space quite different from that of adults. Thus, children conceive space as what is around them. That is, objects will appear above, below, and beside each other in the way children understand them.

In this work the boy placed his parents above and his siblings beside him. Lowenfeld’s studies show that children do not see themselves standing on the ground with other objects also on the ground beside them (Lowenfeld and Brittain 1987). This is obvious when one compares where he is standing with his siblings. The basic essential included in this work is the elongated arm. The boy’s drawings portray the kind of relationship that exists in the home by elongating his mother’s arm to reach his father as well as himself and his younger brother.

The inclusion of his father’s bier to differentiate the three male figures could be a tangible record of the boy’s thinking process. Lowenfeld’s pre-schematic stage stressed that the more details included in a drawing, the greater the child’s awareness of the world. The concept of intelligence is based primarily upon this assumption (Lowenfeld and Brittain 1987).

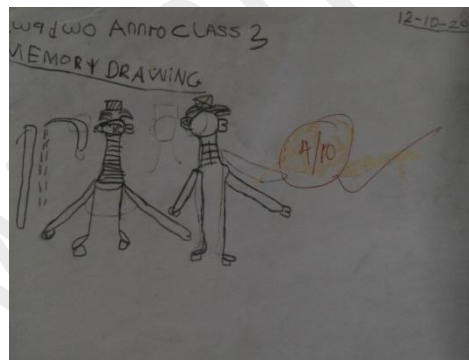


Figure 5. Fetching Water by a boy in class three (3) aged 8 years

In figure 5, the boy explains that they are two friends carrying water from a pipe stand. The class teacher scored the drawing four out of ten because of the following reasons. There is no relationship between the neck, body, and legs. One of the figures is without eyes, nose, and mouth. The figures are positioned at the left side of the paper thereby wasting the paper. The child drew this from memory and titled it ‘Fetching Water’. The boy omitted facial features from one of the figures. The two figures do not have body. Their arms are elongated. The legs and arms relates to the neck. Both figures appear to be standing on the same ground. The pipe is distance from the figures.

Lowenfeld’s schematic stage shows that children have conscious awareness of definite order in space relationships (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987). That is, children relate what they draw to one

another. In this picture, the child creates the awareness that he is walking with someone on the same ground.

Through interactions with the class teachers they realised that one of the indications of the child's growing intellect is an increased understanding of the surrounding world (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987). Growing intellectually depends upon the ability to take into the system new information which can be combined and integrated with existing concepts. It is expected that the child will draw definite symbol for features that are repeatedly represented. In the drawing 'Fetching Water', the child repeated his schema for head, ears, hair, neck, arms, leg, and foot in the two figures.

Post-intervention stage

In order to consolidate the teachers understanding of artistic development, post-intervention drawing activities were organized for the pupils. The teachers' attention was drawn to the pupils' intellectual growth, behaviour patterns, and use of space as well as human schema. To ascertain this, pupils drew for the teachers to compare their characteristics. The teachers' attention was drawn to the omissions and details exhibited by the pupils in their drawings. Thus, teachers reflected on Piaget's succession of sequential stages which contributes to the overall understanding of the child's intellectual growth and development. The pupils' drawings were compared to Lowenfeld's artistic development as well as Kellogg's(1970) theory of universal pattern of development in the drawings and art of young children and Golomb's (2004) assertion that children's drawings of the human figure is the most informative in terms of cognitive development. Marks obtained by the same pupils who were sampled before the intervention shot up tremendously as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Pupils' post-intervention scores

CLASS	SCORES			TOTAL	PERCENTAGE (%)
	BELOW AVERAGE	AVERAG E	ABOVE AVERAGE		
	0-3	4-6	7-10		
ONE	0	14	32	46	35.9
TWO	0	12	30	42	32.8
THREE	0	6	34	40	31.3

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data collected on pupils' performance at the pre-intervention stage and during the post-intervention stage tables 1 and 2 were dully analysed. This helped the researchers to assess how effectively the intervention strategy influenced the class teachers. The study investigated the nature of children's drawings and the perceptions of class one to three teachers. Further the data was analysed based on the theoretical framework on artistic development by Lowenfeld and some Art educationists.

Analysis of Children's Post-Intervention Drawings

The researchers held a seminar for the six (6) class teachers. The purpose of the seminar was to educate the class teachers on children's artistic development. The class teachers were taken through Lowenfeld's pre-schematic and schematic stages. Sample of pupil's work scored by the class teachers were analysed. This aided the class teachers to appreciate the nature of drawing children aged 6 to 8 years expresses.

Also, the class teachers were able to assess their scores whether it were true reflection of the pupils performance. This was achieved after the class teachers compared the characteristics of the children's drawings with Lowenfeld's and Betty Edwards child art developmental stages. The class teachers realised that the pupils deserve more than the initial scores they awarded them. The class teachers were made to score the pupils again after the seminar. Some of the pupils' drawings the class teachers rescored. Samples of children's drawings scored by class teachers for post-intervention were analysed.

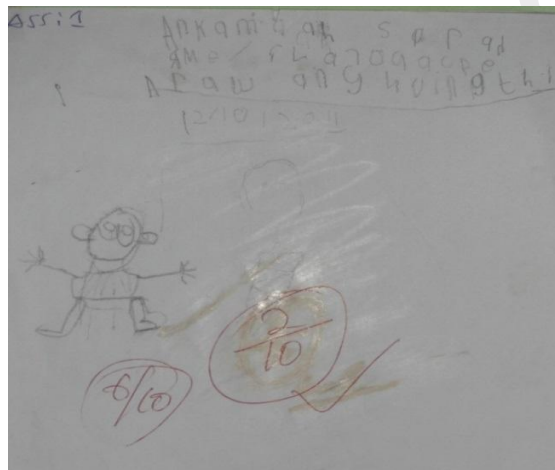


Figure 6. 'My Self' by Sarah (class one)

At this stage, the child is primarily involved in drawing herself that is why there is no relationship between the body parts. However, Lowenfeld considers it as a reflection of growth.

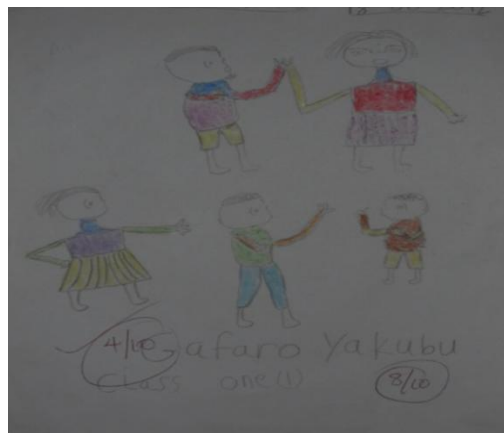


Figure 7. My Family by a class one (1) boy aged 6 years

The boy was given an average mark of four (4) out of ten (10). The class teacher remarked elongated arms, and short arms as in the case of the boy’s father, mother, and the boy himself standing in between his sister and younger brother. Also, the class teacher expressed that the human figures were not properly positioned thus; the parents are on top and the children are down.

After the seminar, the class teacher understood that children creates size relationships that are ‘real’ to them (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987). In this drawing the boy elongated his parent’s arms to reach each other. Also, the boy elongated his arm towards his younger brother’s arm. Also, the boy has conceived space as what is around him; objects above, below, and beside (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987). The class teacher rescored the boy and gave him eight (8) out of ten (10) marks.



Figure 8. Fetching water by a boy in class three (3) aged 8 years

The class teacher scored the drawing four (4) out of ten (10) during the pre-intervention stage because of the following reasons. There is no relationship between the neck, body, and legs. One of the figures is without eyes, nose, and mouth. It was explained to the class teacher that in ‘Fetching Water’, the child is conscious of objects having a common space relationship (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987). He has shown this by placing the two figures on the same ground (base line). The class teacher added three (3) marks to an initial mark after the seminar presentation.

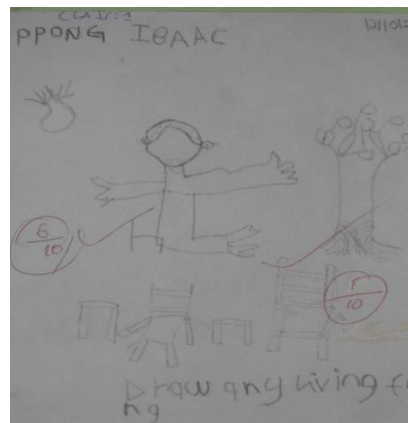


Figure 9. my sister is sitting under a tree by a boy in class one (1) aged 6 years

In this drawing, the boy scored one (1) out of ten (10) during the pre- intervention stage. The teacher outlined omission of facial features for example; nose, eyes, and mouth as well as fingers and toes. They also complained of exaggeration in one arm as the reasons. The intervention discussion base on Lowenfeld's pre-schematic stage revealed to the class teacher that the boy has enlarged parts emotionally important to him and omitted those which were indifferent (Donley, 1987). Also, Betty Edwards's landscape stage explains that the position of the seated figure, chair, tree, and the sun at the top left corner are symbolic representation of the ground and sky respectively (Donley, 1987).



Figure 10. My Family by a girl in class two (2) aged 7 years

In 'My Family', the girl scored two and half out of ten. The class teacher complained that the girl included objects that were not important. The class teacher was made to understand that the girl has shown her awareness of the environment by including different objects. This indicates the child's intellectual growth (Lowenfeld Brittain, 1987). Also, the girl has conceive space as what is around and the base line concept; the two human figures are on the same ground whiles the objects are above, below, and beside. The girl has created size relationships; Lowenfeld and Brittain, (1987) she exaggerated her arm to reach the bucket she is carrying.



Figure 11. My Family by a girl in class two (2) aged 7 years

The girl scored four (4) out of ten because the class teacher was expecting only human figures in the drawing. After the post-intervention stage the class teacher added four (4) marks because of the following reasons. The girl has shown human schema repeated, detailed human features which is an indication of intellectual growth Lowenfeld and Brittain, (1987), awareness of the environment by including different objects, and x-ray effect; concern for things inside (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987).

Discussions of Findings

It is obvious that the class teachers of basic one to three have little knowledge about the artistic development of children aged 6 to 8 years. Discussions and interviews with the class teachers revealed that children are supposed to draw what they see in a very realistic way therefore, resulting in the low marks the pupils obtained as shown in Table 1. Drawing reflects the child's total being (Lowenfeld and Brittain, 1987). The emergency of a specific schema has many implications. This could be the means by which class teachers can gain insight into the child's development. For As Golomb (2004) stressed, children's drawings of the human figure is the most informative in terms of cognitive development. However, if children show variations as in exaggerations, omissions, and distortions in the human figure, they are not conscious of it. Rather children create size relationships that are 'real' to them. For example, in (figure 10), the child exaggerated the arm to reach the bucket she is carrying. Figure 7 shows how the boy father's arm is elongated to reach his mother. The children's post-intervention drawings recorded encouraging scores as compared to the marks they obtained before the intervention stage. This was a result from a seminar presented to educate the class teachers on Lowenfeld and Betty Edwards's artistic developmental stages. Samples of pupil's works that were marked by the class teachers before the intervention stage were remarked. The results show improvement in the pupil's performance as indicated in (figures 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11).

CONCLUSIONS

The nature of children's drawings communicates their experiences and feelings. Generally, the more details included in a drawing, the greater the child's awareness of the environment. But it was realised that the class teachers of class one, two, and three have not received any education on children's artistic development and as such scored the pupils poorly. If the child does not receive sufficient nurturing, positive teacher interaction, thus, the correct response to drawing during this decisive stage, the child may be left with a developmental shortfall that hampers his or her achievement in other subject areas. Furthermore, certain responses to children's drawings could affect their intellectual growth since detailed presentation in a child's drawings is a sign of cognitive development.

Meanwhile, the study revealed that children around the ages of 6 and 7 years included many objects in their drawings which were randomly placed with no relationships irrespective of the title. This implies that children at this stage have not understood or perceived the use of space. Also, the class teachers were made to understand that children see objects to be around them and present them as such in their drawing. The children in class two and three who are around age 8 showed relationships between the objects they drew. This indicates that children at this stage have understood the base line concept. They show concern for things inside buildings through the use of x-ray pictures.

Again, children's drawings in this study revealed that the human figures were drawn with large head, wide mouth, long and short arms as compared to the entire body. This implies that children at this age have not developed the concept of scale (proportion). The human figures that showed no distinction between the leg and thigh, body and neck, arms and fingers, and head and neck are indications that the child has not developed the concept of copying reality.

The study revealed that the differences in details the children at different stages exhibited in their drawings shows that cognitive growth is progressive. This shows that that age influences artistic characteristics of children's drawings. Therefore, the class teachers of class one, two, and three should consider pupils age level when responding to children's drawings. Moreover, the growth of intelligence in childhood progresses through a succession of stages which are strong-minded by the age of the child (Thomas and Silk, 1990).

Recommendations

The educational background of the class teachers play vital role in the teaching and learning process. In view of this the researchers suggest that teachers with art education background must be made to teach creative art in the primary school. In an attempt to help the class teachers understand and appreciate the nature of children's drawings, the researchers organised a seminar to educate the teachers on the characteristics of Lowenfeld's pre-schematic and schematic stage of his artistic development. The outcome of the seminar proved a change in attitude towards children's drawings. It is therefore necessary for stakeholders in basic education to arrange and organise in-service training for class teachers periodically.

Furthermore, the study has revealed that the class teacher's response to children's drawings was based on how they perceive subject matter in drawing. The class teachers of class one, two, and three should be made to do away with the expectation that the pupils have developed the concept of copying reality. However, Piaget's studies prove that the evidence of learning is tied to maturation This implies that the development of concept necessary for drawing would come naturally. It is therefore necessary for the class teachers to give the pupils the freedom to draw without instructions and also avoid teaching certain artistic skills.

The class teachers should be made aware that pupils draw what is in their mind but not what they see. That is they know that human figures have head, leg, arms, facial features and present them as such in their drawings.

Lastly, the class teachers should keep records of children's drawings as they move from one stage to the other to enable them appreciate the differences in details that children show in their drawings.

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APPENDICES

APPENDICE A

INTERVIEW GUIDE

Nature of children's drawings

1. Do you engage your pupils in drawing?
2. Do you have drawing sections on the timetable?
3. What kind of drawing do the pupils draw?
4. Is it necessary for children aged 6 to 8 to draw?
5. Do the drawings of children aged 6 to 8 communicate something meaningful?
6. Do you consider these drawings as intellectual exercise?
7. How do you rate your pupils' drawings?
8. How do you respond to children aged 6 to 8 drawings in terms of scores?
9. What do you expect from children apart from what they draw?

APPENDICE B

Educational background of the class teachers

1. What are your academic qualifications?
2. How long have you been teaching?
3. How many years have you taught in the lower primary?
4. Do you have other experiences such as seminar on early childhood education?
5. Have you experience seminar on children artistic development?

APPENDICE C

Observational Check List

1. Do children have interest in drawing?
2. How often do they draw?
3. Do all children participate during drawing periods?
4. What motivate them to draw?
5. Are there enough drawing tools and materials for the pupils?
6. What kind of tools and materials do they use?
7. Do class teachers use fair criteria in assessing pupils?
8. Is there any difficulty that the teachers find in assessing drawing?
9. Is time allocated for drawing enough?
10. Do children copy from text books or their colleagues?