# Determinants of Culture on the Socio-Emotional Development of Early Childhood in Buea Municipality, Cameroon

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## Abstract

The study focused on "Determinants of culture on the socio-emotional development of early childhood in Buea Municipality, Cameroon". The study adopted a cross- sectional survey research design in which twenty (20) parents were selected using a purposive sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was an interview guide for parents. Data obtained from the investigation was analysed using frequencies and percentages. The findings of the research showed that culture contributes a lot on children's socio-emotional development in Buea Municipality, Cameroon. From the conclusion of the research findings, the following recommendations were made, that parents and caregivers should bring up their children in more culturally valued ways as this will help foster the socio- emotional development and emotional intelligence of children at their sensitive and critical periods of development..

*Keywords: Culture; Socio-Emotional Development; Cultural Values; Cultural Values; Cultural Norms; Early Childhood*

## Introduction

Socio-emotional development is critical to the affective growth of a child. Especially as parenting and child upbringing is concern, young children need parental contact especially as the dynamics are changing in today's contemporary world. Most parents are working class parents and spent most of their time at work or in the farm especially in traditional African societies, and children are left with secondary caregivers and nannies, while some parents have gone back to school to pursuit higher education and children are left in the mercy of secondary caregivers for parental upbringing, creating a big gap in child-parent interaction, child-parent relationship and parent-child contact. Sometimes, the basic needs of the child are being delayed and not provided that sometimes led to mistrust of the world by the child, depression, stress and anxiety especially in broken homes, single parenthood and even in homes that both parents are raising their children. As observed by the researcher, in most rural areas, some heads of the family like the father, leave home early in the morning, go to work, to their farms, and sometime return very late that affect parent-child contact and most of the upbringing is done by the mother of the house. The environment of the child therefore plays a great role in the socio emotional growth of the child. Sometimes the biological needs of children are not provided on time and children are not breastfed on longer durations as it used to be the case in Africa and Cameroon before, due to the paradigm shift in occupation, lifestyle and globalization as most women are working or have gone back to school. Some parents especially in rural areas in Cameroon, life is difficult, and they live below the poverty line, do peasantry works and will hardly contribute to the basic needs of their children, and sometimes children are being sent away from school, because parents can't

pay their fees or afford their school needs, and this affect parent child- relationship. Some parents do not spent time at home to transmit ethno-parental theories or values to their children that limits the development of values such as empathy, love, care, trust, forgiveness. Some parents who have failed to play their parental role, distance themselves from their children at this early developmental stage, it has affected negatively parent-child relationship. Most young parents get in to early pregnancy, that affect the socio-emotional development of the child, as parental separation and low income factors affect parent-child bonding. Developmental theorists and researchers like Nsamenang, Rogoff, Serpell, John berry have long recognized the comprehensive role of culture in children's social development in the early years. There are considerable individual differences in children's early dispositional characteristics [1,2]. By this view, young children act and participate to daily activities differently because of the differences in their cultural backgrounds. This early characteristics serve as a basis for a socio-emotional development in childhood. Rogoff (2008) found out that early dispositional characteristics and socio-emotional functioning have an extensive and prolonged impact on social and emotional adjustment of children.

## Background to the Study

Early childhood is a critical period in a child's life that include the period from conception to five years of age. According to Piajet, this is the period from 2 - 6 years of age. This period begins after babyhood. This is the toddlerhood and pre-school years. Contextually, culture apart from genetics, the environment is also a source of development for early childhood development. According to Vygoksky (1992) an individual's is seen as an independent entity, inherited characteristics which progress according to early developmental stage. These inherited characteristic might be influenced by culture. Rogoff (1998) agreed with this view and added that as people participate in and contribute to cultural activities; their involvement brings about a change in both the activities and participant. According to Nsamenang [1,2] expectations of young children participate in work activities can be incorporated to early childhood. According to Serpell (1993) culture however help and require children to solve problems which may differ across context.

## Statement of the Problem

Socio-emotional development demands that, parents act as primary caregivers, by providing children with social needs, physical needs and cognitive needs and emotional needs that builds their personalities. Therefore, the emic of a culture through ethno-parental theories becomes very important in transmitting values, norms, customs that can better meet the needs of children. The researcher observed that parents are hardly around and most of them have migrated to urban centers for work, leaving children to be reared by nannies, while some go to the farm, leaving the child home and spending more time in the farm, especially rural mothers, sometimes children find themselves being taking care of by secondary caregivers that affect their socio-emotional development.

## Objectives of the Study

### General objectives

The general objective of the study is to investigate the impact of culture on the socio-emotional development of early childhood.

### Specific objectives

- To extrapolate the effect of cultural values on the socio-emotional development of early childhood.

- To assess the effect of cultural belief on the socio-emotional development of early childhood.

- To determine the effect of cultural norms on the socio-emotional development of early childhood.

## Conceptual Review

## The concept of culture

Whitmore defines culture as a set of learned behaviours and beliefs that characterize a society or a people, group, or what makes a people or a group of people. It is their beliefs, customs, artefacts, language, arts, their religion, their clothing their diet, their entertainment, material and non-material culture, are all that makes up a culture. Blackwell publisher (2000) sees culture as a nebulous structure of feelings that defines the life of a people and a set of productions that reflects upon speak to, or mold that structure of feelings through various strategies of representation. After considering these definitions, one could not be blame for concluding that culture is everything or perhaps nothing. The meaning of culture has become more complex and this is not an entirely innocent phenomenon. To the contrary, the term culture is a product of a long developmental process greatly influenced by powerful relationship through which people have sought to make culture work to their advantage.

## The concept of cultural values

Cultural values are the core principles and an ideal upon which an entire community exists, this is made up of several parts. According to Yelnick (1914) cultural values are the core principles and ideals upon which the entire community exists. He says cultural values can be view in terms of observing the various customs that people have passed down from generations. For example, the cultural values that the Hindu man believes is to respect your ancestors and gods. One of the customs that act as the outward sign of these values is to allow cows to have a natural death rather than slaughtering them. This custom taken with all of other custom that his community practices represents a larger picture of Hindu culture.

According to Shaffer and Santos (2008) culture adapts and evolves along with the group member's needs, wants and opportunities change can be the result of the group moving to a new geographic location or simply be due to passage of time. Technological advances have commonly been the driving forces behind change in daily practices, shifting the frame work inside which humans operate, see cultural values are cultures standard for discerning what is good and just in a society. Values are deeply embedded and critical for transmitting and teaching a culture. Edward (1971) values help shape a society by suggesting what is good and bad, beautiful and ugly, sought or avoided consider the value that the states place upon a youth. Children represent innocence and purity, while a youthful adult appearance signifies sexuality. Shapes by these values individuals spend millions of dollars each year on cosmetics products and surgeries to look young and beautiful. The United States also has an individuality an independence. In contrast, many other cultures are collectivist, meaning the welfare of the group relationships are a primary value. Living up to a cultures value can be difficult. It is easy to value good health, but it's hard to quit smoking. Marital monogamy is valued, but many spouses engage infidelity.

According to Shweder, Bruner (1990), values often suggest how people should behave but they don't accurately reflect how people do behave. Values portray an ideal culture; the standards society would like to embrace and live up to. But ideal culture differs from the real culture, the way society actually is based on what occurs and exists. In traffic accidents, murder, poverty or racial tension. But in real culture, Police officers, Lawmakers, educators and social workers constantly strive to prevent or repair those accidents crime and injustice, American teenagers are encourage to value celibacy.

According to Miller (1990), one way societies strive to put values into action is through rewards, sanctions and punishments, when people observe the norms of such societies and uphold its values, they are often rewarded. When people go against a society's values, they are punished. Breaking norms and rejecting values can lead to cultural sanctions such as earning a negative label, lazy, no good bum fines or imprisonment.

According to Bowlby (1969), values are not static; they vary across time and between groups as people educate, debate and change. Values vary from culture to culture. For example, cultures differ in their values about the kind of physical closeness are appropriate in

public, it's rare to see two mate friends holding hands in the united states where that behaviour often symbolize romantic feeling. But in many nations, masculine physical intimacy is considered natural in public. This difference in cultural value come to light when people reacted to photos of former president George W. Bush holding hands with the crown prince of Saudi Arabia in 2000. A simple gesture such as holding hands carries a great symbolic difference across cultures.

### The concept of cultural norms

According to the (English dictionary) norms refers to the attitude and behaviour that are considered normal, typical or average within the group. According Manuela Hebert (2001) cultural norms are what keep people moving in a similar direction. All societies have cultural norms. Even though norms influenced facet of our lives, including what we value, our attitude and how we behave, we are often aware that we are influenced. Norms are guidelines for expectations of behaviour. Each society makes its own rules for behaviour and decides when those have been violated and what to about it. Norms differ widely among cultures and they can differ from group to group within the same society.

Sociologies speak of at least four types of norm:

- Folkway or customs are standards for of behaviour that are socially approved but not morally significant for example, belching loudly.

- Taboo: Meaning a culture absolutely forbids them e.g. incest in U.S mores are norms of morality and laws which are formally body of rules enacted by a state and backed by the power of state. According to Winston Sieck (2018) are what allows a society to function well. Hence members must want to conform and obey the rules.

### The concept of cultural beliefs

According to Deomor (2017) cultural belief is what is regarded as excellent in arts, letters, and manners. Patricia and Stanley (2017) posited that a cultural belief is what people in a general area believes. For example, in Japan black cats are considered lucky while in U.S.A black cats are considered to bring bad luck. Cultural beliefs, institute all other products of human work and thoughts. Cultural beliefs are seen in all facets of our lives. Your cultural beliefs are primary determine by where you are from. For example, an individual who was born and bred in Africa will have strikingly different cultural beliefs and practices from a French man. There are so many nuances to cultural beliefs. It may seem pretty confusing especially in into days age where the global borders and divides are quickly being eroded the tools of our digital age and more efficient travels. Ed Hopper (2016) perceives cultural beliefs as an imaginary thing that is consider real by a large group of people. Cultural beliefs are usually constructed through a process of social interaction. Cultural beliefs can cause change and they can also be a source of resistance to change.

### The concept of socio-emotional development

Socio emotional development includes the child's experience, expression and management of emotions and the ability to establish positive and rewarding relationships with others [3] says it encompasses both intra-and interpersonal processes. according to (national scientific council on developing child 2004), the core features of emotional development includes the ability to identify and understand one's own feelings, to accurately read and comprehend emotional states in other to manage strong emotions and their expressions in a constructive manner, to develop empathy for others and establish and maintain relationships. According to Johnson and others (1991), healthy social-emotional development for infants and toddlers unfold in an interpersonal context, namely that of a positive ongoing relationship with familiar, nurturing adults. Young children are particularly attuned to social and emotional stimulations. Even new-borns appear to attend more to stimuli that faces. Bronson (200) and Thompson and Godwine (2005) say through nurturance, adults support

the infants' earliest experiences of emotional regulations. According to responsive caring support, in beginning to regulate their emotions and to develop a sense of predictability, safety and responsive in their social environment, early relations are so important to developing infants that research experts have nurturing, stable and consistent relationship are the key to healthy growth, development and learning. Shonkoff (2004) says high quality relationship increase the likelihood of positive outcomes for young children to learn about social relationship and emotions.

## The concept of early childhood

Early childhood is usually defined as the period from birth to about 5years. It is a time for tremendous physical, cognitive, social, emotional and language development (healthy people 2010) addressed the earliest stage of childhood through goals for maternal, infant and child health, but the early and middle childhood stage of development were not highlighted in this initiative. To address this gap, evidence shows that experiences in early and middle childhood are extremely important for a child's development and lifelong learning. How a child develops during this time affects future cognitive, social emotional language and physical development which in turn influences school readiness and later success in life.

## Theoretical Review

Theoretically, the following theories will be reviewed. The following theories are seen relevant in the study. The social ontogenesis; Nsamenang [4], The developmental niche framework; Super and Harkness (1986).

## Social ontogenesis; Nsamenang [4]

Nsamenang [4] developed a theoretical position termed social ontogenesis, based on an indigenous West Africa conception that is phrased within an Eco cultural perspective. His ideas are inspired by the writings of various African trained in philosophy and the humanities, for example Mbiti (1990), Moumouni (1968), and grounded in a combination of systematic observational research and his own personal process on the socialization practices of the royal versus urban Nso communities in western Cameroon (Nsamenang and Lamb, 1993, 1995). His formulation of social ontogenesis is rooted in a wildly shared West African world view. It posits the growth of social selfhood through a series of phases, each characterized by a distinctive developmental task, defined within the framework of the cultures primarily socio-affective, developmental agenda. The theory of social ontogenesis [4,5] points out how, beginning early in life and through developmental stages, African children are active in the life of their families and societies as well as in self-care and self- learning. This theory presents human development as partly determined by the social ecology in which the development occurs and by how African children, especially in siblings and peer setting, learned from each other in peer culture.

The seminal concept of this theory is socio-genesis defined as individual development that is explained more in terms of socially observed markers and culturally preserved task but less on biological unfolding, social ontogenetic thinking does not preclude nature; it assume that biology underpins social onto genesis [6,7]. Ngaujah (2003) has interpreted Nsamenang theoretical approach as revealing the social and affective nature and affective nature of the environment on the child's cognitive and social learning.

The first phrase of social ontogenesis is the ceremony of naming, which projects the kind of socialize being the neonate should become. the major developmental task of the second phase is success in social priming; babies are cuddled and teased to smile along with adults; parents and other caregivers offer infants food items and playthings and lure them both verbally and through nonverbal communication to return the gifts'. This is a preliminary step toward induction into the sharing and exchange norms' that bond siblings and the entire social system together. For example, among the Chewa and Tumbuka peoples in Zambia, Mtonga (2012) interpret such interactions of adult with toddlers as aimed at cultivating generosity and preventing the development of greedness and selfishness.

The next phase roughly responding with childhood is termed the period of social apprenticing in which the principal developmental task is to recognize, cognize and rehearse the social role that pertains to three hierarchical spheres of life household network and public. Much of responsibility for stimulation and guidance in this phase of early childhood development is assigned to preadolescents and adolescent children in the family and neighbourhood. The delegation of responsibility for care and socialization of younger children from adults to preadolescents and adolescents serve the function of priming the emergence social responsibility. these priming strategies embedded in traditional Africa child-rearing practices have an important implication for the design of culturally appropriate forms of intervention to optimize the developmental opportunities for children in the contemporary African (Nsamenang 2009) indeed in many African communities with a subsistence economy, far from constituting a form of exploitation or abuse, caregiving responsibilities assigned to preadolescents and adolescents are better understood as part of 'an indigenous educational strategy that keeps children in in contact with existential realities and the activities of daily life that presents the participatory component of social integration" [4].

By positioning children as emerging into levels of selfhood implying the unfolding of biological potentials and social competences, Africans tacitly acknowledge that self-concept and agency evolve with the maturing self-consciousness that accord a sense of self direction and active search for or choice of the resource and exposure that increasingly differentiate and polish self-identity and goal-directed behaviour towards desired or imagined personal status (Ragiteibasi 2007, Nsamenang 2004).

African parents sensitize children from an early age to seek out from others where they extract local knowledge through situated intelligence (Ogbu, 1992). More so, within siblings and peers space with adults. Children learn social, emotional practical, cognitive, values and other norms ingrained in the activity setting of home, society and peer cultures more through experience adult instruction or prodding. In so doing they graduate from activity setting and participative sector of the peer culture to another, steadily maturing toward adults identity and role [5] describe one instance with the zulu community in south Africa as maturing umuntu umuntu ngabantu, which literally translate into "a person is only the person with other people" this relationship view of identity development downplays lonesome individuation implying that a sense of self cannot be attained or adequately understood without reference to community of others in which it is embedded. Concept place identity and place attachment accentuate the need to incorporate content into theory building and rich agendas.

## The developmental niche framework; Super and Harkeness [1986]

The developmental niche by Super and Harkness (1986) is a theoretical frame work for understanding and analysing how culture shapes a child's development. It is an ecologically grounded theory that, that like Weisner's (2002). Nsamenang [4] social ontogenesis, has the same origin as the developmental niche theory which is a variant of the Eco cultural model that integrates two basic principles from cultural anthropology and developmental psychology. First, that a child's environment is organized as part of the cultural meaning system of the cultural community, second that a child's biological disposition, including attribute, temperaments, skills and potentials affect her or his process of development. The two overarching and principle of the developmental niche framework are; a child's environment is organized in a non-arbitrary manner as part of the cultural system; and the child's own disposition, including a particular constellation of attributes, temperament, skills and potentials, affect the process of development. The developmental niche is seen as the composite of three interacting subsystems.

Physical and social settings; who is there, what affordances are provided by the physical and social others; customs and practices of children rearing; what are the inherited and adaptive ways of nurturing entertaining, educating and protecting the child; and the psychology of the caregivers; particularly parental ethno theories of child development and parenting, which play a directive role in actual child care practices.

The three subsystems of the developmental niche setting, customs and caregiver psychology, share the common function of mediating the child's developmental experiences within the larger culture. The three components of the developmental niche operate together with

powerful though incomplete coordination as a system. Thus for example, in a stable cultural environment, customs of care reflect parental ethno theories about the child and they are further supported the physical and social settings of daily life. In circumstances of rapid social change, or immigration there will be greater inconsistency among the systems but one can usually discern homeostatic processes or acculturative forces at work in the context of changing beliefs and practices and their consequences on children.

Each of the three subsystem of the niche is functionally embedded in other aspect of the human ecology in specific and unique ways; in other words, the three subsystems act as the primary channels through the niche, as an open system, is influenced by outside forces. Any one of the three component may be a primary route of influence. For example, economic or social change may lead to new settings for children. Moreover, each of the three subsystems is involve in the process of mutual adaptation with the individual child. Thus, the age, gender, temperament energy level and talents of the individual child influence parents and others in the niche and moderate cultural expectations and opportunities for the child at any given time.

**Research Method**

The study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The study adopted a cross-sectional survey design because of the small nature of the sample within the larger population in order to get knowledge typical of a particular group of persons especially parents raising young children. The study area was Bolifamba mile 16 and Bomaka in Buea, Cameroon, a rural community emerging to the urban areas of Buea. The sample was made up of twenty (20) parents. The researcher used a purposive sampling technique in that, the researcher worked with parents who have put to birth and have young children at the level preschool and primary school. The instrument for data collection was an interview guide. The purposive sampling technique was used for parents who have young children in their early developmental years, milestones or developmental journey.

| S/N | Villages | Parents | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Bolifamba mile 16, Buea, Cameroon | 10 | 10 |
| 2 | Bomaka, Buea, Cameroon | 10 | 0 |
| Total | | | 20 |

***Table 1:** Family sample distribution by villages.*

**Demographic information**

| Characteristic | | N | % | Extra information |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sex | Male | 12 | 60.0 | Mode = Male (60.0%) |
| | Female | 08 | 40.0 | |
| | Total | 20 | 100.0 | |
| Age group | 2 - 3 | 16 | 80.0 | Mode = 2 - 3 years (80.0%) |
| | 4 - 5 | 04 | 20.0 | |
| | Total | 20 | 100.0 | |
| Level of Education | FSLC | 13 | 65.0 | Mode = FSLC (65.0%) |
| | O/L | 01 | 05.0 | |
| | A/L | 03 | 15.0 | |
| | Bachelor's Degree | 03 | 15.0 | |
| | Total | 20 | 100.0 | |

| Child parenting | Mother | 17 | 85.0 | Mode = Mother (85.0%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Father | 01 | 5.0 | |
| | Siblings | 02 | 10.0 | |
| | Total | 20 | 100.0 | |
| Marital status | Single | 15 | 75.0 | Mode = Single (75.0%) |
| | Married | 04 | 20.0 | |
| | Widow(er) | 01 | 05.0 | |
| | Total | 20 | 100.0 | |
| Parents occupation | Teaching | 09 | 45.0 | Mode = Teaching (45.0%) |
| | Farmer | 01 | 05.0 | |
| | Business | 02 | 10.0 | |
| | Civil Servant | 02 | 10.0 | |
| | Private office | 06 | 30.0 | |
| | Total | 20 | 100.0 | |

*Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to demographic characteristics.*

## Presentation of Results

### The effect of cultural values on the socio-emotional development of early childhood

The results here reveals the cultural values which children are expected to inculcate while they are growing up such that they would be adjusted socio-emotional as they grow up. This is because the cultural values are the core principles, ideals upon which an entire cultural community exists on to guide their children as they grow up. Based on this parents were asked whether their children eat with the left hand as they were introduced to eat. All the respondents indicated that their children do not eat with the left hand. They explain that they train their children not to eat with the left hand because it is considered as disrespect when a child eats with the left hand. Others pointed out that their cultural values believed that they right hand is the most active hand of the child and he should be train to manipulate things with the right hand.

In the words of Mary who pointed out that "children who eat with the left hand are considered to disrespectful…I cannot allow my child to use the left hand in eating". Similarly, James pointed out that "…my child cannot use the left hand to eat because eating with the left hand will make him lazy and he can be challenged by his friends all the times". Alike Peter pointed out that "…children who eat with the left hand are children who do not have morals or manners and are poorly brought up". This findings show that early children are brought up with the community to learn to eat with the right hand which is considered the appropriate hand of eating by the community.

Furthermore, respondents were asked the kind of values which children have to up-hold within the community. The respondents indicated that children have to be brought up to respect, love others, have a spirit of living together and sharing with others, help their friends and the old, listen to instructions and obey their older ones and elders of the community and run errands within the family. These values were further buttressed by respondents who stated that when children within the community have such key values while growing up they will be well adjusted and they will be able to live within the community in an acceptable and well discipline manner.

Esther pointed out that "…a child who grows up with proper cultural values of respect, love, obedience, sharing with others and accepting to live together with people within the community is a child that can cope with everyone". She further pointed out that "…children

with all these values are can live with everyone within the community and they would not be considered as bad children as they have good social skills and equally respect and love other people". On the other hand John pointed out that "...culturally children who respect, listen attentively, run errands and are fast in carrying out tasks within the family as well as in the community are children who are developing well". This findings show that children who respect, love, share and accept other people are well adjusted socio-emotionally and early children are brought up to acquire the skills of communal living, sharing, showing respect and love to all members of the community and kin.

Moreover, respondents were asked to state what children do when they see elders. All the respondents stated that when children see elders they have to greet the elders. Mary pointed out that "... a child is taught to see an elder move towards him/her bow and greet the elder appropriately". Similarly, Susan pointed out that "...the children have to see elders and walk towards them and greet them appropriately as children are supposed to greet their elders and not the elders greeting them". On the other hand David pointed out that "...a child has to be taught to get up every morning and greet the parents as well as every elder whom the child meets". Edna pointed out that "... a child has to see an elder and greet the elder if not the child would be reprimanded and taught the right way of living with elders. This shows that proper cultural values require children to see their elders and greet them in an appropriate manner.

Equally respondents were asked whether children shake hands with their elders. Majority (60.0%) respondents indicated that children do not shake hands with their elders while some (40.0%) pointed out that children do shake hands with their parents. Among respondents who indicated that children do not shake hands with their elders they pointed out that it is disrespectful for a child to shake hands with the elders. For example, Mary pointed out that "...children are brought up to respect elders and a child is taught not to shake hands with the elders".

Whereas among the respondents who indicated that children shake hands with elders they pointed out that children have to greet their elders and if the elder stretches the hand they have to respond equally by giving a hand shake to the elder if not it will be considered disrespectful or the child is impolite. James pointed out that "...I bring up my children to greet elders and I tell them not to shake hands with elders when they meet them and if an elder stretches his hand to greet them they should as well greet back...because I do not want my children to be considered disrespectful". Magdalene pointed out that "... a child can only shake hands with an elder when the elder stretches the hand towards the child to greet him/her...so I bring up my children to greet elders with a hand shake in responds". These findings show that children are brought up not to shake hands with elders and parents equally instruct the children that they have to stretch their hands to greet back elders when the elders stretch their hands towards them for a hand shake. This is to enable the children to develop appropriate social skills and learn appropriate values for proper socio-emotional adjustment.

Correspondingly respondents were asked whether children eat in the same plate or not. Majority (75.0%) of the respondents indicated that their children are train to eat in the same plate while some (25.0%) said they do not train their children to eat in the same plate. Among the respondents who stated that their children eat in the same plate they explained that children are taught within the family to eat together as it keeps the family united, it foster the spirit of togetherness and sharing and equally promotes family love as children have to know that they have to care and protect one another. Jacky pointed out that "...children who eat together stay united, show love for one another and will learn to share with others the little they have". Similarly, James state that "...when children eat in the same plate they love and respect one another...they think of their brothers when they have a little to eat because they are aware of what they others have eaten". Equally Magdalene pointed out that "...children who eat together are very united and they will equally learn to share with other members of the community...as such they would not be greedy and would not steal from others". John pointed out that "...children who eat together do not steal from others because they know that whatever that a person has belongs to the entire household or community and should not be consumed by an individual".

In the same way respondents were asked to about the type of things children do at their early age. All the respondents indicated that children play, learn how to talk, cry and shy aware from strangers and equally stay close to their siblings and parents. Mary stated that

"…children like to play with their peers, siblings and they listen to stories and also learn how to narrate their own stories by telling their parents everything that happen during the day". Equally John pointed out that "…children play, fight, avoid strangers and stay close to their siblings and parents…they also narrate stories to parents on what happen to them at home or in school". Edna stated that "…children at the early stage like playing with siblings, parents, peers and also narrate stories to their friends and siblings as well as they avoid strangers and stay closer to their familial faces". This finding show that early children play, interact with peers, stay close to parents and narrate their daily activities to parents and caregivers. This shows that children are developing socio-emotional skills as they learn to talk, listen, communicate and equally develop good listening skills as they play with one another. Also, when they play they fight and continue playing showing that children learn how to disagree and agree with one another as well as they learn to accept other children. Generally, children at the early age are helped by their parents to develop appropriate social skills as they engage the children to learn appropriate behaviours which are valued within the family and community.

### The effect of cultural norms on the socio-emotional development of early children

The findings here reveal the effect of cultural norms on the socio-emotional development of early children. To assess these effect respondents were asked whether children within the same cultural background exhibit warm attitude toward the peers. Majority (80.0%) respondents indicated that children within the same cultural background exhibit warm attitude toward peers. While some (20.0%) indicated that children within the same cultural group do not exhibit warm attitude toward peers. Amongst those who pointed out that the children exhibit warm attitude towards other peers they stated that children are brought up to love, care and respect one another within the community in the same way. Typically, Mary pointed out that "…children are taught the same cultural norms of respect, love, hard work and living together as such they exhibit these same attitudes towards one another". Equally David pointed out that "…All the children in the community are taught to respect, love, and care and live together with other children…the children equally have to accept one another in other to play together".

On the contrary the respondents who pointed out that children do not exhibit the warm attitude toward peers stated that some children are bullies and violent as such they always beat or hit other children within the community irrespective of the way parents are bringing them up. While some of them indicate that some of the children come from violent homes and neighbourhoods as such they tend to behave violently towards other children. James reiterated that "…some children are not friendly with their peers because they are from homes that parents are fighting as such they are exposed to the violence in their homes…also other children are exposed to violence in the neighbourhoods which they learn". Similarly, Edna pointed out that "…some children come from laisez-faire homes which they are not appropriately train to acquire the right cultural values and norms as such they are exposed to all sorts of violence in movies and on the streets which intend make them to exhibit poor attitude towards peers". The findings here indicate that parents train their children to exhibit warm attitude towards peers. Also, they acknowledge the fact that some children are from homes which they are exposed to violence and they children lack proper social skills of living together.

Similarly, majority (70%) interviewees indicated that children within the same cultural setting live a communal life while some (30.0%) indicated that children with the same cultural community do not live a communal life. All the interviewees who indicated that children live a communal life style indicated that children are taught within the family to accept and love all, share with others, respect and learn to live with one another accepting their individual differences such that they can complement one another. John emphasised that "…children are train within the community to respect, love and accept other children and people as well as learn to share what they have with them because it is right and that's how they are expected to live". Equally Mary stated that "…a child is not an island and must learn to live with other people in order to learn appropriate social skills and communal life of sharing as well as accepting people the way they are".

Conversely respondents who stated that children within the same cultural setting do not live a communal life stated that some children live in homes whose parents do not accept them to associate with other children and the children are always taken to school by their

parents. Equally the children are always bound to stay within the confines of the fence or their parents' houses. David stated that "...not all families allow their children to interact with other children as such the children live their lives within the confines of their premises". Jacky reiterated that "...some children are not allowed by their parents to move about freely or to visit other children as well as play with them". The findings reveal that children generally life a communal life within the same cultural setting but they are some who are restricted by their family rules not to interact or socialised with other children.

Equally all interviewees indicated that children behave in a way that is acceptable and recognised by the community. They reiterated that it is necessary and important for children to behave in a culturally acceptable way that is recognised by the community because children are train to acquire culturally appropriate behaviours within the family and in the community such that they can peaceful co-exist with one another in the community. David pointed out that "...every child has to behave in a culturally acceptable way". Jacky emphasised that "...early children are brought up to respect the norms of the cultural community such that they can learn proper behaviours encouraged by the community".

Correspondingly majority (85.0%) of the interviewees indicated that parents guide their children on how to relate with other members of the society while some (15.0%) indicated that parents do not guide their children on how to relate with other members of the society. The interviewees who indicated that parents guide their children on how to behave with other members of the society stated that it is important to help the children learn social skills and also learn how to interact with every member of the society. They equally stated that the guidance enable children to acquire appropriate values, norms of positive cohabitation with other people. Mary articulated that "...through parental guidance children learn how to talk, behave, accept and learn how to live together with other people". James pointed out that "...parental guidance help children to learn community norms on proper interaction in the society such that children would not be wayward".

Comparably the few (15.0%) interviewees who indicated that parents do not guide their children on how to relate with other members of the society pointed out that some parents do not have time for their children because they are busy chasing money or working. Eveline stated that "...parents have forgotten that guiding and bringing up their children in an appropriate way on how to behave is their responsibility as such they get busy working and looking for money without teaching their children cultural norms". Similarly, John stated that "...parents are now chasing money more than the time they have to use in guiding their children grow in appropriate ways". David further pointed out that "...some parents are even strangers to their homes and they do not even care about proper guidance of their children as such living their children so loose". The findings here reveals that parents' guide their children on how to relate with members of the community but some do neglect to guide their children on how to relate with members of the community because of negligence, work or being so busy looking for money.

Majority (90.0%) of interviewees further indicated that parents act as models for children to learn while few (10.0%) indicated that parents do not act as models for their children. The few who stated that parents do not act as models revealed that some parents do not behave appropriate in the presence of their children and some are always absent from their homes hence their children are free to move about. Mary pointed out that "...parents who do not behave as models for their children absent from home and are never there to guide the children". Similarly John stated that "...some parents do not behave as models because they abandoned their children and even in the presence of their children they quarrel and fight with others". Whereas all those who pointed out that parents behave as models for their children reiterated that parents live by their family norms and community norms and values such that their children will learn from them by observing and imitating.

All the interviewees indicated that children learn social norms by observing, listening, imitating and equally engaged in activities which require them to participate in within the family and community. Eveline emphasised that "...children learn social norms through listening to instruction given by parents, observing behaviours and repeating what they have observed others doing". Jacky further pointed out that "...children learn social norms by listening, observing and doing what others are doing as they participate in their daily activities".

David stated that "…children are expected to listen attentively, look at what people are doing and repeat the same behaviour as they are interacting within the community". The findings here show that children learn social norms through listening, observation, imitation and practicing what has been observed through their interaction with other members of the society".

### The effect of cultural beliefs on the socio-emotional development of early children

The findings here reveal the effect of cultural beliefs on the socio-emotional development of early children. All the interviewees pointed out that children learn cultural beliefs through observation, listening, and interacting within the family and community with other people. They further pointed out that children respond to the cultural beliefs positively and they imitate what their siblings and parents are practicing. John emphasised that "…a child who listen and observes parents talk about something which is practiced and acceptable by all also learns about it". Jacky reiterated that "…children learn cultural beliefs through listening and interacting with family members and community members as such what the family believes and values is equally believed and valued by the child".

Furthermore, James stated that "…if the family dislike a belief or cultural practice the child would also grow to dislike it…children learn what their parents belief and practice through their interaction within the family as they talk, listen and observe". This shows that children learn and respond to cultural beliefs the way their family members and community members interact towards it. Therefore, parents' guide their children to respect cultural beliefs that best satisfied and suit them while those that they do not like they ignore them and their children equally do not learn the beliefs since the children learn this beliefs and cultural practices by listening, watching, observing and imitating what others are doing within the family and community.

### Aspects of socio-emotional development of early children

The findings here reveal the aspect of socio-emotional development of children with respect to the observation of interviewees within the cultural community. Majority (90.0%) of the interviewees indicated that children react positively towards their peers by being friendly, playful, interacting freely with others, listening, talking and discussing with others as they play while few (10.0%) interviewees indicated that children react negatively towards their peers by hitting, fighting or bullying their peers. James reiterated that "…children react positively with peers as they are friendly, playful, talk freely and discussed with others". Similarly, Jacky pointed out that "…children react positively with others as they always play laugh…talk with each other and run about and even call one another my friend". David further pointed out that "…children are always friendly and their friends increase everyday as they interact with one another and they are always happy seeing their peers…at times I am always afraid the way they run because I am always thinking they would sustain injuries".

Contrarily the few (10.0%) interviewees who pointed out that children react negatively towards peers stated that some children react negatively by hitting others, fighting and bullying their peers when they are playing together. They emphasised that although children like playing together others still react negatively towards their peers by hitting them and bullying them. David stated that "…some children have bad manners because they hit others and even take things from others without asking them politely…this shows the children are not caution by their parents on how to behave appropriately with peers". Eveline reiterated that "…some children react negatively by fighting or constantly hitting other children they play with them…showing that the children do not respect other children".

Furthermore, all the interviewees indicated that children generally react to unpleasant situations by crying, fighting back, throwing objects, hitting their heads on the wall or floor or avoiding the unpleasant situations. John emphasised that "…children cry, fight or throw object at others when they are faced with unpleasant situations". Equally Mary stated that "…some children cry, hit their heads on the wall or floor and even run towards their parents or into their houses when they are faced with unpleasant situations. The findings here show that early children generally develop socio-emotionally as they interact within their culture.

## Discussion

The results are in line with the theory of Super and Harkness that examines the ecological niche with the three systems, the physical setting, the customs and the caregivers' psychology that affect the wellbeing of the child and the child's socio-emotional development. According to the Human-ontogenesis theory of Nsamenang, children develop in to social ontogenetic stages, with developmental tasks that propel their development, that include, the period of the newborn, social priming, social apprenticing, social entrée, social internship till they transit to adulthood and old-age. For the seek of the study, the first three stages will be examine. How children learn and develop, to become competent members of their communities is determine by their culture. Some children learn through active involvement in the family life and communities (Nsamenang, 1994). Children therefore learn values and skills through interaction in their communities and African parents determine intelligent behaviour through social responsibility, emotional adjustability and the running of errands by the child. African parents believe that children have the ability to receive and give social support. Children therefore learns through observation and imitation and this facilitate emotional development. According to Nsamenang [4] the development of personhood can be view in developmental stages and developmental tasks which include: stage one; period of the newborn, with core features that is identified by happiness for safe arrival, the gift and projection of the future. The core developmental task is naming ceremony, and names determined by historical circumstances. Stage two; social priming (infancy) with core developmental task, smiling, crying, teething, cuddling. Stage three; social priming, (childhood) core features, social apprentice, with core developmental task, recognize and rehearse social role. These first three stages of Nsamenang human ontogenesis theory therefore affect the emotional development of African children positively and negatively. The ecocultural environment has a great role to play in imprinting positive values, beliefs and customs that makes the child to positively regulate his or her emotions [8-14].

## Summary of Findings

The findings reveal that cultural values influence children socio-emotional development positively as they are taught to respect the values of respect, love, care, living together and providing help to the elderly in the community as well as running errands within the family at a tender age. Similarly, cultural norms affect children positively as they are encourage to interact with one another, live a communal life style, respect and care for one another. Furthermore, cultural beliefs positively influence early children socio-emotional development as the children learn values and norms uphold by their parents through observation, listening and practice them which foster peaceful coexistence of all. Finally, early children in cultural communities have positive socio-emotional skills of being friendly, playing together, talking, chatting and conversing with one another. Although they are some children who react negatively towards others leading to children unpleasant behaviours to such circumstances such as crying, throw objects, fighting or hitting the head on the floor. The findings are inline with the Socio-ontogenesis theory by Nsamenang and Super and Harkness Eco Cultural Niche theory.

## Conclusion

From the findings, it is concluded that, when parents care, show love, respect and valued their children, they turn to trust their environment, learn cultural knowledge, and develop positive socio-emotional development and trust their environment. Cultural practices such as norms, values and beliefs therefore impact the socio-emotional development of young children especially in their formative years.

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