

## **PROSOCIAL BEHAVIOURS AS PREDICTORS OF PRESCHOOLERS' EMOTIONAL ADJUSTMENT IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN IMO STATE**

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### **Abstract**

The study investigated pro-social behaviours as predictors of preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State. Two research questions were answered while corresponding two hypotheses were tested to guide the study. The research design for the study was a correlation survey research design. The sample for the study was 450 preschoolers' represented by their parents in the 45 schools. The sample was drawn using multistage sampling procedure. Pro-social Behaviours Rating Scale (PBRs) and Preschoolers' Emotional Adjustment Questionnaire (PEAQ) were used for data collection. The PBRs and PEAQ were face validate by three experts, each from Early Childhood and Primary Education Department, Educational Foundations (Psychology Unit) and Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation) respectively. The internal consistency reliability type was estimated for the two instruments. Kandel's coefficient of concordance was used to compute reliability coefficient of 0.88 for PBRs while Cronbach alpha was used to compute the reliability of 0.77 for PEAQ respectively. The data collected were analyzed using linear regression to answer the research questions while t-test associated with linear regression was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. It was found that proactive pro-social behaviour significantly predicted preschoolers' emotional adjustment to a very high extent while reactive pro-social behaviour was to a high extent. Based on the findings it was recommended that the caregivers should encourage the preschoolers to be sensitive to their environment by always telling them stories that can make them learn how to be relational in all their classroom activities for improved emotional adjustment to a very high extent. The caregivers should constantly educate the preschoolers on how to response to already existing situation in order to enhance emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State to a high extent.

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**Keywords:** pro-social (proactive and retroactive) behaviours, preschoolers, emotional adjustment

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### **Introduction**

Emotional issues have been identified to be the major challenges preschoolers are saddled with in the contemporary. Emotion can be seen as a forceful feeling stemming from prevailing environmental stimuli. Emotions are reactions that human beings experience in response to events or situations (Cherry, 2023). If emotion is properly managed it amounts to emotional adjustment. Adjustment can be referred to as the psychological process through which an individual aligns with environmental and personal demands. Adjustment is the adoption and familiarization of an individual to self and the immediate milieu (Richard, 2015). Adjustment in the area of emotional management can be likened to emotional adjustment. Emotional adjustment can be seen as the process of positive mental and relational status in the responses towards environmental stimuli. Emotional adjustment can be seen as the acclimatizing with an individual's challenges through the modifications of attitudes and perception in order to assume reasonable control of mood and relationships with others. Richard opined that emotional adjustment is the striking of

stability between external and internal stressors. On the other hand, poor emotional adjustment entails a lot the pupils in the school system.

Maladjustment is defined as a condition of poor **emotional** function manifested in unacceptable behaviours and attitude. By extension, emotional maladjustment can be seen as the act of not properly coordinating emotional dispositions based on nagging environmental stimuli. Emotional maladjustment in primary schools can be seen as the poor level of commitment and dedication that the preschoolers can display in the school. According to Madu (2022), emotional maladjustment can be seen the constant manifestation of poor emotional function leading to low level of association with other students in the school. Emotional maladjustment has been a serious emotional condition that the primary school is replete with in the present. An empirical study by Ugochukwu (2023) revealed that most of the primary school pupils in Imo State suffer from issues around emotional adjustment. This finding is buttressed by personal observation by the researchers which showed that most of the primary school pupils in Imo State find it difficult to concentrate in the classroom as well as to sustain any positive relationship with peers. This ugly situation may be attributed to so many factors ranging from school factors, family factors or pupils' factors. This study concentrated on pupils' factors especially the pro-social behaviour in order to ascertain whether they have predictive power on the pupils' emotional adjustment.

Pro-social behavior refers to the actions that are meant to benefit colleagues or friends which filled with support, kindness and protection. Pro-social behavior includes many actions, such as comforting, helping, cooperating and sharing (Cherry, 2025). These kindness, support and protection in pro-social behaviour must be in line with acceptable social norms and personal interest. The three types of pro-social behavior are altruistic, proactive and reactive behaviours. The altruistic behaviour entails more on the motivation to do good always especially to others. On the other hand, proactive behaviour is an act of goodness done because there is a benefit to the individual performing the behaviour (Cherry, 2025). It was found that proactive behaviour is instrumental in the enhancement of students' emotional challenges (Okoro, 2025). The study by Ademola (2025) showed that proactive interventions predicted students' emotional dispositions. The opposite of the proactive behaviour is the reactive behaviour. Reactive behaviour can be seen as the behaviour as a result of recognized need in others. Reactive behaviours can be seen as one that brings about support, stress reduction in response to individual's need. It was revealed that reactive behaviours have strong association with students' school accommodation (Okoro, 2025). The study by Ademola (2025) also showed that reactive behaviours are strong determinants of students' active involvement in the school programme. Therefore, the study investigated pro-social behaviours as predictors of preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The study investigated prosocial variables as predictors of preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. determine the predictive power of proactive pro-social behaviour on preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State.
2. Find out the predictive power of reactive pro-social behaviour on preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered in this study

1. What is the predictive power of proactive pro-social behaviour on preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State?
2. What is the predictive power of reactive pro-social behaviour on preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

**H01:** proactive pro-social behaviour does not significantly predict preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State.

**H02:** reactive pro-social behaviour does not significantly predict preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State.

### **Methods**

The research design for the study was a correlation survey research design. According to Nworgu (2015), a correlation research design is used to establish the extent of relationship, association or co-variation between two or more variables. It enables a researcher to find out the proportion of variation in the dependent variable (criterion variable) that is predicted by the independent variable (predictor variable) using regression analysis. The population of this study consisted of 30,296 nursery two pupils in the 1,275 preschools in Imo State. Imo State has three education zones. Okigwe zone has six (6) L.G.As. with 7,550 and 284 schools, Owerri Education Zone has nine (9) L.G.As with 12,558 pupils in 493 schools and Orlu Education Zone has 12 L.G.As with 8,584 pupils in 493 schools respectively (Imo State Universal Basic Education Board (IMSUBEB), Owerri, Department of Planning, Research and Statistics, Data on the Population of Nursery Schools by L.G.A. by L.G.A, 2020/2021). The sample for the study was 450 preschoolers' represented by their parents in the 45 schools. The sample was drawn using multistage sampling procedure. In the first stage, the schools were clustered into three Education Zones of Owerri, Okigwe and Orlu zones. Purposive sampling technique was used to sample 15 schools from each of the zones making a total of 45 schools from the three zones. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to draw 10 preschoolers each from the 45 schools. This gave 450 preschoolers in the 45 nursery schools sampled from the three zones. Pro-social Behaviours Rating Scale (PBRs) and Preschoolers' Emotional Adjustment Questionnaire (PEAQ) were used for data collection. The PBRs and PEAQ were face validate by three experts, each from Early Childhood and Primary Education Department, Educational Foundations (Psychology Unit) and Science Education (Measurement and Evaluation) respectively. The internal consistency reliability type was estimated for the two instruments. Kandel's coefficient of concordance was used to compute reliability coefficient of 0.88 for PBRs while Cronbach alpha was used to compute the reliability of 0.77 for PEAQ respectively. The data collected were analyzed using linear regression to answer the research questions while t-test associated with linear regression was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The decision rules for the extent of prediction are Very low extent (25% - 0%), low extent (50-26), high extent (75%- 51%) and Very high extent (100% -76%). The hypotheses were tested with t-test at 0.05 level of significance.

### **Results**

**Research Question 1:** What is the predictive power of proactive pro-social behaviour on preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State?

**Table 1: linear regression of the predictive power of proactive pro-social behaviour on preschoolers' emotional adjustment**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Decision
1	.91 <sup>a</sup>	.83	.82	Very High extent of prediction

Very low extent (0% - 25%), low extent (26% - 50), high extent (51% - 75%) and Very high extent (76% - 100%)

Table 1 revealed that the regression coefficient (R) and regression square coefficient (R<sup>2</sup>) are .91 and .83 respectively. The coefficient of determination is gotten by multiplying the regression square value by 100% which gave 83% (.83\*100%). This implied that proactive pro-social behaviour predicted preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State to a very high extent.

**Hypothesis 1:** proactive pro-social behaviour does not significantly predict preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State.

**Table 2: t-test associated with linear regression of the predictive power of proactive pro-social behaviour on preschoolers' emotional adjustment**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Prob. >  t	Alpha value	Decision
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
(Constant)	22.71	1.23		11.65	.00	
1 proactive pro-social behaviour	.66	.06	.91	7.88	.00	Significant

Table 2 showed that the t-test associated with linear regression is 7.88. The result revealed that the hypothesis is rejected because the probability value of .00 is less than the alpha value of .05. Therefore, proactive pro-social behaviour significantly predicted preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State.

**Research Question 2:** What is the predictive power of reactive pro-social behaviour on preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State?

**Table 3: linear regression of the predictive power of reactive pro-social behaviour on preschoolers' emotional adjustment**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Decision
1	.77 <sup>a</sup>	.59	.53	High extent of prediction

Very low extent (0% - 25%), low extent (26% - 50), high extent (51% - 75%) and Very high extent (76% - 100%)

Table 3 revealed that the regression coefficient (R) and regression square coefficient (R<sup>2</sup>) are .77 and .59 respectively. The coefficient of determination is gotten by multiplying the regression square value by 100% which gave 59% (.59\*100%). This implied that reactive pro-social behaviour predicted preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State to a high extent.

**Hypothesis 2:** reactive pro-social behaviour does not significantly predict preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State.

**Table 4: t-test associated with linear regression of the predictive power of reactive pro-social behaviour on preschoolers' emotional adjustment**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t	Probability value	Alpha value	Decision
	B	Std. Error					
1	(Constant)	21.99	2.01	2.71	.00	0.05	Significant
	reactive pro-social behaviour	.53	.03	.77	21.00		

Table 4 showed that the t-test associated with linear regression is 21.00. The result revealed that the hypothesis is rejected because the probability value of .00 is less than the alpha value of .05. Therefore, reactive pro-social behaviour significantly predicted preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State.

### Discussion

The finding of this study revealed that proactive pro-social behaviour significantly predicted preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State to a very high extent. The finding of this study has shown that the preschoolers need proactive prosocial behaviour to assume proper emotional adjustment in the school system. The finding of this study is in agreement with that of Okoro (2025) which found that proactive behaviour is instrumental in the enhancement of students' emotional challenges. The finding of this study corroborated that of Ademola (2025) which showed that proactive interventions predicted students' emotional dispositions. The opposite of the proactive behaviour is the reactive behaviour.

The finding of this study revealed that reactive pro-social behaviour significantly predicted preschoolers' emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State to a high extent. The finding of this study revealed that reactive prosocial behaviour is indispensable in the enhancement of preschoolers' level of adjustment in the school environment. The finding of this study buttressed that of Okoro (2025) which revealed that reactive behaviours have strong association with students school accommodation. The finding of this study also is in tandem with that of Ademola (2025) which showed that reactive behaviours are strong determinants of students' active involvement in the school programme.

### Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it was concluded that proactive and reactive pro-social behaviours are contributory and indispensable in the determination of emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made that:

1. The caregivers should encourage the preschoolers to be sensitive to their environment by always telling them stories that can make them learn how to be relational in all their classroom activities for improved emotional adjustment to a very high extent.

2. The caregivers should constantly educate the preschoolers on how to response to already existing situation in order to enhance emotional adjustment in primary schools in Imo State to a high extent.

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