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Primary School Playground and Pupils Physical Skill Acquisition

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the relationship between primary school playground quality and pupils' physical skill acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. Using simple random sampling, eight private and ten public primary schools were selected. Data were collected using two instruments: the Primary School Playground, Materials, Qualities and Activities Checklist (PSPMQA) and the Rating Scale for Pupils' Skill Acquisition (RSPA), with a reliability index of 0.75. Descriptive and inferential statistics, including t-tests, were used for data analysis. Findings revealed that most playgrounds were spacious, safe, and equipped with basic materials such as swings and sand areas, and common activities included running and ball games. Despite these conditions, pupils' overall physical skill acquisition level was low. Playground qualities and activities significantly influenced skill acquisition, while no significant differences were found based on gender or school type. The study recommends increased institutional support and awareness programs to promote effective playground utilization.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Based on our previous studies (Sulyman *et al.*, 2022a; Sulyman *et al.*, 2022b; Sulyman *et al.*, 2022c; Sulyman *et al.*, 2022d; Sulyman *et al.*, 2022e; Sulyman and Oladoye., 2022; Sulyman *et al.*, 2022f; Sulyman *et al.*, 2022g; Sulyman, 2021), the purpose of this study was to playgrounds are naturally capable of stimulating all areas of children's development and improving their senses, emotions, and skills. During playground activities, children acquire physical skills that contribute to their holistic growth and development. Playgrounds also promote children's social skills by providing opportunities for cooperation and interaction. Research has demonstrated that children who regularly engage in playground activities are healthier, stronger, and happier than those who do not. Playground activities are essential in childhood because they allow young children to use their whole bodies while playing. Children who are physically active at school are more likely to engage in energetic activities at home, unlike those who are inactive and tend to participate in sedentary activities such as playing computer games or watching television. Interaction with playground equipment provides opportunities to stimulate age-appropriate physical development.

Physical interaction in playgrounds improves children's physical skills and enables them to take turns and exercise self-control. As children play, they converse and imitate one another. Playing with peers enhances oral communication skills and helps children manage their feelings and ideas. As cited in Landscape Structures Incorporated (Https://Www.Playlsi.Com/En/Playground-Planning-Tools/Resources/School-Playgrounds/Benefits-Of-School-Play/), 75 percent of brain development occurs between birth and early adulthood, and play is essential for healthy brain development. Play stimulates neural connections that support both gross motor skills (such as walking, running, jumping, and coordination) and fine motor skills, including writing and manipulating small objects.

Physical activity refers to any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. A well-designed and properly managed playground provides opportunities for children to improve motor skills, social development, learning, decision-making, and imaginative play. Skill performance and acquisition are context-dependent and influenced by social interaction (Smith, 2011). Playgrounds offer children opportunities to practice skills that contribute to adult competencies such as collaboration, leadership, decision-making, perseverance, and creativity (Https://Www.Playlsi.Com/En/Playground-Planning-Tools/Resources/School-Playgrounds/Benefits-Of-School-Play/). When children are physically active in playgrounds, they develop critical life skills and gain opportunities to explore freely and express creativity (Https://Www.Playlsi.Com/En/Playground-Planning-Tools/Resources/School-Playgrounds/Benefits-Of-School-Play/). Primary schools often serve as spaces where traditional play activities promote social bonding (Https://Thefword.Org.Uk/2009/10/Self_Esteem).

Traditionally, physical development has been viewed from a maturational theory perspective, which focuses on developmental milestones such as sitting, standing, and walking—functions largely determined by nervous system maturation (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). More recently, Piaget's theory has contributed to integrative models suggesting that motor behaviors support cognitive development (Williams & Monsma, 2017). Physical activity in childhood is vital, as evidence indicates a direct relationship between physical activity and children's health (Hope *et al.*, 2007).

Playgrounds are essential spaces for skill development. Parents, school administrators, and government agencies should collaborate to promote children's holistic development. Despite existing research, many schools lack adequate playground facilities and equipment necessary for developing physical skills. This study, therefore, investigates the influence of primary

school playground quality and activities on pupils' physical skill acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State, and examines whether differences exist based on gender and school type.

Secondary school students generally have positive attitudes toward physical education and sports, although many spend their leisure time in non-physical activities. In Nigeria, however, pupils' physical skill acquisition appears to be declining due to inadequate playground facilities and insufficient attention to physical development in schools. Many schools lack properly equipped playgrounds, limiting opportunities for structured physical activities. Based on these concerns, this study examines playground facilities, activities, and their influence on pupils' physical skill acquisition.

Research questions are as follows:

(i) What are the Qualities of Primary school playgrounds in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State?
(ii) What are the playground activities in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State?
(iii) What is the Level of pupils' physical skill in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State?

Research hypotheses are as follows:

(i) There is no significant Influence of Primary school playground qualities on pupils' physical skill in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State.
(ii) There is no significant Influence of Primary school playground activities on pupils' physical skill in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State.
(iii) There is no significant difference in Primary school pupils' physical skills in Ilorin West Local Government Area based on gender.
(iv) There is no significant difference in Primary school pupils' physical skills in Ilorin West local government area based on school type

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW

2.1 Affordance Theory

This study was guided by Affordance Theory. According to Gibson, affordance refers to the possibilities for action that the environment provides to an organism. The theory emphasizes the relationship between the environment and the individual, suggesting that the environment offers opportunities for action independent of the individual's immediate recognition of them. However, the perception of these affordances depends on the meaning attributed to objects and on the capabilities of the individual. In this study, the agents are preschool children.

Preschool children develop perceptual understanding through interaction with their environment, particularly through the functional use of space and objects. The affordances of a playground refer to the action possibilities that playground equipment offers children. For example, monkey bars afford climbing, swinging, hanging, and jumping, while swings afford leg pumping and propulsion. A well-equipped playground, therefore, becomes a rich learning environment where children acquire skills through active play.

Affordance Theory establishes a link between perception and action. Children's behavior is influenced by how they perceive environmental features. Outdoor play activities such as balancing, climbing, sliding, and swinging require attention to environmental elements, including height, slope, surface safety, and structural design. For instance, a child evaluates whether climbing equipment is too high, too steep, or safe to use before engaging with it.

This theory is appropriate for the study because it explains how children's participation in outdoor play is shaped by their perception of playground facilities. Teachers, as supervisors, guide children in the safe and effective use of these facilities. Ultimately, children's engagement in playground activities depends on how they perceive and interpret the action possibilities available to them.

2.2 Concept of Education

The concept of education is complex and difficult to define. Its complexity arises from the numerous functions it performs as a fundamental social institution. For this paper, several definitions of education are considered.

From an etymological perspective, the word education is derived from two Latin terms: educere, meaning "to lead out," and educare, meaning "to bring up" or "to rear." These origins suggest that education involves drawing out an individual's potential while nurturing and developing skills and abilities. In this sense, education both develops inherent capacities and fosters personal growth.

Education as a social construct designed to meet the specific needs of society at a particular point in time. According to this view, the form, content, methodology, and target beneficiaries of education are shaped by societal demands and expectations.

2.3 Structure of the Educational System in Nigeria

The Nigerian educational system comprises four levels of organization. The first level is informal education, while the remaining three constitute the formal system of education. These include:

(i) Pre-primary Education: This level is regarded as early childhood care and development education. Although largely informal, it caters to children between the ages of 2 and 5 years. These institutions were established under Decree No. 16 of 1985 (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions). They operate as daycare centers and nursery or kindergarten schools, primarily managed by private individuals and agencies. Their major objective is to cultivate and inculcate appropriate learning attitudes and school readiness in young children.

(ii) Primary Education: This is the first level of formal education and provides a six-year program for children aged 6 to 12 years. It is considered the foundation of the entire education system and plays a crucial role in determining its overall success or failure. Its objectives include providing broad-based education with emphasis on permanent and functional literacy, numeracy, and effective communication skills.

(iii) Secondary Education: Secondary education follows primary education and spans six years in two stages. The first stage covers Junior Secondary School (JSS 1–3). At the end of JSS 3, students sit for the Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination (JSSCE). Most students at this level are between 12 and 15 years of age. Those who are unable to continue in the formal academic track are expected to acquire vocational skills.

(iv) Tertiary Education: This level provides post-secondary education to qualified students in universities, colleges of education, polytechnics, and other related institutions.

Tertiary education includes:

(i) University Education: Universities represent the highest level of tertiary education in Nigeria. They are categorized into federal and state institutions. Admission is granted to candidates who pass the Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB) examination and obtain at least five credit passes in O-level examinations. Students are typically

between 18 and 22 years of age. Universities award bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, as well as diplomas and professional certifications.

(ii) Colleges of Education: Colleges of Education are teacher-training institutions affiliated with universities. They offer a three-year program leading to the award of the Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE). Some colleges also have degree-awarding status.

(iii) Polytechnic Education: Polytechnics provide middle-level manpower training and vocational skills in various fields. Programs are structured in two phases of two years each, leading to the award of the National Diploma (ND) and the Higher National Diploma (HND). Other tertiary institutions include inter-university centers, monotechnics, and specialized institutions such as Schools of Health Technology, Colleges of Agriculture, and the National Teachers' Institute (NTI).

2.4 Concept of Primary Education

Primary education is one of the three levels of Nigeria's education system, the others being secondary and tertiary education. Among the three, primary education is the most critical, as it forms the foundation of the entire system and largely determines its overall success or failure.

The National Policy on Education defines primary education as "the education given in institutions for children aged 6 to 11 plus," specifying a duration of six years.

2.5 Goals of Primary Education

The Federal Government of Nigeria, in the National Policy on Education, identified seven goals that form the foundation of the six-year primary education program across all states of the federation. The goals are as follows:

(i) To inculcate permanent literacy and numeracy, and the ability to communicate effectively;

(ii) To lay a sound basis for scientific and reflective thinking;

(iii) To provide citizenship education as a basis for effective participation in and contribution to societal life;

(iv) To mould character and develop sound moral values in the child;

(v) To develop in the child the ability to adapt to a changing environment;

(vi) To provide opportunities for the development of manipulative skills that enable the child to function effectively in society within the limits of their capacity; and

(vii) To equip the child with basic tools for further educational advancement, including preparation for local trades and crafts.

In pursuit of these goals, primary education is designed to be tuition-free, universal, and compulsory. These objectives require substantial investment in infrastructure, instructional materials, qualified teaching staff, regular salary payments, and consistent supervision and inspection. This discussion focuses primarily on public schools established and managed by federal, state, and local governments in Nigeria. However, reference is also made to schools operated by voluntary agencies, communities, and private individuals that meet the minimum standards set by the federal government.

2.6 Concept of Playground

A playground area is a place designed to provide an environment for children that facilitates play, typically outdoors. While a playground is usually designed for children, some are designed for other age groups or people with disabilities. A playground might exclude children below a certain age.

2.7 Importance of primary school playground

Schools are not only responsible for preparing children for future careers but also for equipping them with essential life skills, attitudes, and habits that enable them to overcome challenges in adulthood. To achieve this objective, teachers and learners must look beyond the classroom and incorporate outdoor play into the curriculum. According to (Https://Www.Crossfitsouthie.Com/10-Components Physical-Fitness/), school playgrounds contribute to children's development in four major areas: social and emotional development, physical development, imagination and creativity, and learning through play.

(i) Social and Emotional Development: Interactions that occur on school playgrounds support children's emotional and social growth. These interactions are often spontaneous and varied. Children engage in group games such as tag, converse while swinging side by side, or collaborate in activities such as pushing one another on swings or rotating playground equipment. Older children may also assist younger peers in navigating playground structures. Such experiences foster cooperation, empathy, and social competence.

(ii) Physical Benefits: Although playground activities appear recreational, they provide significant physical exercise. Child development experts recommend at least one hour of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily. Playgrounds offer opportunities to develop strength, balance, agility, coordination, and speed through activities involving swings, slides, climbers, and monkey bars. Regular engagement in enjoyable physical activity encourages lifelong healthy habits.

(iii) Promotion of Imagination and Creativity: Playgrounds stimulate imaginative and creative play beyond physical activities. Children often engage in make-believe games that enhance problem-solving skills and social role development. Creative play fosters self-confidence, critical thinking, and self-awareness.

(iv) Learning Through Play: Play is a spontaneous and enjoyable activity fundamental to childhood development. Research across disciplines—including psychology, education, and health sciences—consistently recognizes play as essential to learning. Through play, children develop cognitive, social, language, motor, and teamwork skills. As children grow, their play becomes increasingly complex. Just as proper nutrition and adequate sleep are vital to health, meaningful play is essential for optimal development.

2.8 Qualities of the playground

According to (Https://Www.Csrwire.Com/Press_Releases/18282), a playground should possess certain essential qualities. Motion play spaces should encourage children to run, jump, toss, throw, hop, slide, swing, climb, and move freely. Playground equipment should include movable components such as swings, activity panels, and balance structures with interactive parts. An effective play space should also incorporate elements of the natural environment. Green spaces are important for physical activity, while features such as sand and water provide dynamic settings that enhance children's manipulative skills (Https://Www.Csrwire.Com/Press_Releases/18282).

(Https://Www.Csrwire.Com/Press_Releases/18282) further emphasizes that playgrounds should be visually and physically stimulating. Sound, color, and texture excite the senses and spark children's imagination. Equipment that promotes upper-body development—such as monkey bars, monorails, and chain ladders—should be included. Balance structures are equally important, as they help children develop coordination while engaging in enjoyable activities.

A well-designed playground should appeal to the entire family by providing shade, picnic tables, and seating areas. It should also offer opportunities for friendly competition, such as parallel climbing bars or double slides, as well as designated spaces for traditional games like basketball or tetherball. Furthermore, playgrounds should be accessible to all children by providing ground-level play options, multi-sensory experiences, and safe surfaces that cushion falls. Equipment should not be installed on hard surfaces such as concrete or asphalt (Https://Www.Csrwire.Com/Press_Releases/18282).

2.9 Playground Facilities

A playground is a space intentionally designed and equipped for children's play. Several factors determine the quality of a playground, including the availability of facilities, safety measures, adult supervision, and accessibility. Playgrounds are typically characterized by protective surfacing, fencing, signage, internal pathways, and appropriate play equipment. These facilities play a significant role in promoting children's active involvement in play.

Early Childhood Development (ECD) professionals recognize the value of outdoor environments as extensions of classroom learning. Time spent outdoors provides opportunities to support children's overall development. Such experiences should not be limited to enhancing physical skills alone but should also promote cognitive, social, creative, and emotional development. Therefore, playgrounds should be adequately equipped to create environments where children can learn while engaging in enjoyable and meaningful play activities.

3. METHODS

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to investigate primary school playgrounds and pupils' physical skill acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. The population comprised all public and private primary school pupils in the area. According to the Annual School Census Report (2018–2019), there were 54 public schools and 238 private schools, making a total of 292 schools.

A simple random sampling technique was employed to ensure that each school had an equal chance of being selected. A total of 20 schools (both public and private) and 376 pupils were sampled for the study.

Two research instruments were developed: a checklist and a rating scale. The checklist, titled Checklist on Primary School Playground and Playground Activities (CPSPPA), was used to obtain data on playground facilities and activities. The rating scale, titled Rating Scale for Pupils' Physical Skill Acquisition (RSPPAS), was used to assess pupils' physical skill acquisition.

The instruments were validated by experts in Early Childhood and Primary Education, and their suggestions were incorporated before administration. Reliability was established using the test–retest method. The instruments were administered twice, and the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to determine reliability.

An introductory letter was obtained from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education, Kwara State University, Malete, to seek permission from the school authorities.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency counts and percentages) for demographic data and research questions, while t-tests were used to test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The decision rule was as follows: 2.50 and above = High; 2.00–2.49 = Average; 1.99 and below = Low.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Characteristics

Data presented in **Table 1** show the distribution of schools by type in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. Eight schools (41.2%) were public, while ten schools (58.8%) were private. This indicates that private schools constituted the majority of the sampled schools.

Data in **Table 2** presents the distribution of respondents by gender in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. Of the 376 respondents, 174 (46.3%) were male, while 202 (53.7%) were female. This indicates that female respondents were slightly more represented than male respondents in the sample.

Table 1. Distribution of Schools based on Types in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State.

School Type	Frequency	Percentage
Public	8	41.2%
Private	10	58.8%
Total	**18**	**100 %**

Table 2. Distribution of the Respondents based on Gender in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State.

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	174	46.3%
Female	202	53.7%
Total	**376**	**100 %**

4.2 Research Question One

What are the qualities of primary school playgrounds in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State?

Data in **Table 3** shows the frequency of the qualities of primary school playgrounds in Ilorin West Local Government, Kwara State. The following are the qualities of primary school playgrounds in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State: playgrounds have enough space for children to play, it is free from dangerous objects, it is safe and secure, and they also it has grasses.

Table 3. Frequency of the qualities of primary school playgrounds in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

S/N	Qualities of primary school playgrounds	YES	NO
1.	Is there enough space for children to play	18(100.0)	0(0.0)
2.	It is free from dangerous objects	14(77.8)	4(22.2)
3.	Is there waterlogged	0(0.0)	18(100.0)
4.	It is safe and secure	16(88.9)	2(11.1)
5.	It may have grass	14(77.8)	4(22.2)

4.3 Research Question Two

What are the playground activities in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State?

Data in **Table 4** shows the frequency of playground activities in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. Activities that are always done on the playground in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State includes running, hide and seek, passing a ball, and kicking a ball.

Table 4. Frequency of playground activities in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

S/N	Playground activities	OFTEN	ALWAYS	NEVER
1.	They run	4(22.2)	11(61.1)	3(16.7)
2.	They play rainbow tag	10(55.6)	2(11.1)	6(33.3)
3.	They do hide and seek	6(33.3)	10(55.6)	2(11.1)
4.	They pass the ball	4(22.2)	11(61.1)	3(16.7)
5.	They dodge the ball	6(33.3)	3(16.7)	9(50.0)
6.	They kick a ball	8(44.4)	9(50.0)	1(5.6)

4.4 Research Question Three

What are the available playground materials in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State?

Data in **Table 5** shows the frequency of playground materials in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. Available playground materials in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State are swings, play sand, and natural grass.

Table 5. Frequency of playground materials in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

S/N	Playground materials	YES	NO
1.	Are there swings?	10(55.6)	8(44.4)
2.	Are there slides?	3(16.7)	15(83.3)
3.	Are there playground climbers?	2(11.1)	16(88.9)
4.	Are there see-saws?	1(5.6)	17(94.4)
5.	Are there merry-go-rounds?	1(5.6)	17(94.4)
6.	Are there spring riders?	0(0.0)	18(100.0)
7.	Are there tubes?	0(0.0)	18(100.0)
8.	Are there spinners?	2(11.1)	16(88.9)
9.	Is there play sand?	11(61.1)	7(38.9)
10.	Are there pea gravel	3(16.7)	15(18.3)
11.	Are there poured rubber and rubber tiles?	0(0.0)	18(100.0)
12.	Is there natural grass?	14(77.8)	4(22.2)
13.	Is there artificial grass?	5(27.8)	13(72.2)
14.	Are there wood chips and mulch?	1(5.6)	17(94.4)
15.	Is there a giant stride?	0(0.0)	18(100.0)
16.	Are there monkey bars?	2(11.1)	16(88.9)

4.5 Research Question four

What is the level of pupils' physical acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State?

Data in **Table 6** shows the frequency of pupils' physical acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. The finding revealed the level of pupils' physical activity in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. The weighted mean is 1.57, which is a clear indication that the level of pupils' physical activity in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State is low.

Table 6. Frequency of the level of pupils' physical acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

S/N	Pupils physical skill acquisition	ALWAYS	SOMETIMES	NEVER	MEAN
1.	The child can climb on and off things	198(52.7)	131(34.8)	47(12.5)	1.60
2.	The child can jump on and off things	181(48.1)	182(48.4)	`13(3.5)	1.55
3.	The child can swing on and off	178(47.3)	135(35.9)	63(16.8)	1.69
4.	The child can practice with fine motor skills (gripping the chain)	192(51.1)	108(28.7)	76(20.2)	1.69
5.	The child can put things all together	208(55.3)	158(42.0)	10(2.7)	1.47
6.	The child can skip	147(39.1)	124(33.0)	105(27.9)	1.89
7.	The child can stand and balance on one leg	177(47.1)	165(43.9)	34(9.0)	1.62
8.	The child can throw objects	222(59.0)	144(38.3)	10(2.7)	1.44
9.	The child can catch	252(67.0)	110(0.0)	14(3.7)	1.37
10.	The child can catch up and balance	258(68.6)	94(25.0)	(100.0)	1.38
	Weighted Mean	1.57			

Note : Decision rule: 2.5 and above- High; 2.0- 2.49 – Average; 1.9 and below- Low

4.6 Research hypothesis One

There is no significant influence of primary school playground qualities on pupils' physical skill acquisition of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Table 7 showed the regression Analysis of the influence of primary school playground qualities on pupils' physical skill acquisition of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. The result indicated that there was a positive relationship between primary school playground qualities and pupils' physical skill acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State (R = 0.207), while the R-Square is 0.043, which means that the independent variable (primary school playground qualities) explained 4.3% variation of the dependent variable (physical skill). This indicates a good fit of the regression equation. Thus, it is a reflection that primary school playground qualities have a significant influence on pupils' physical skill acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State ($F(1,375) = 0.719$, $P < 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in light of the result.

Table 7. Summary of Regression Analysis showing the influence of primary school playground qualities on pupils' physical skill acquisition of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Model	N	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	F	Sig
1	376	0.207	0.043	-0.017	0.719	0.000

Note : Dependent Variable: physical skill

4.7 Research hypothesis two

There is no significant influence of primary school playground activities on pupils' physical skill acquisition of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Table 8 shows the regression Analysis of the influence of primary school playground activities on pupils' physical skill acquisition of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. The result indicated that there was a positive relationship between primary school playground activities and physical skill acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State (R = 0.026), while the R-Square is 0.001, which means that the independent variable (primary school playground activities) explained 0.1% variation of the dependent variable (physical skill). This indicates a good fit of the regression equation. Thus, it is a reflection that primary school playground activities have a significant influence on pupils' physical skill acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State (F (1, 375) = 0.11, P < 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore rejected in light of the result.

Table 8. Summary of Regression Analysis showing the influence of primary school playground activities on pupils' physical skill acquisition of primary school pupils in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State.

Model	N	R	R Square	Adjusted R-Square	F	Sig
1	374	0.026	0.001	-0.062	0.11	0.000

Note : Dependent Variable: physical skill

4.8 Research Hypothesis three

There is no significant difference in pupils' physical skill acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State, based on gender.

Table 9 shows a significant difference in pupils' skill acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State, based on gender. The finding revealed that there was no significant difference (t = -2.698; df = 374; P > 0.05). The hypothesis was therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significance value is greater than 0.05. This implies that male physical skill acquisition (Mean= 15.24) is not significantly higher than that of females (Mean= 16.09).

Table 9. Summary of t-test Analysis on the significance difference in pupils' skill acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State, based on gender.

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig.	Remark
Male	174	15.24	3.075	-2.698	374	0.007	Not Significant
Female	202	16.09	3.040				

Note : Dependent Variable: Pupils' physical skill acquisition

4.9 Research Hypothesis four

There is no significant difference in pupils' skill acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State, based on school type.

Table 10 shows a significant difference in pupils' skill acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State, based on school type. The finding revealed that there was no significant difference (t = -2.444; df = 374; P > 0.05). The hypothesis was therefore not rejected

in the light of the result since the significance value is greater than 0.05. This implies that public school pupils' physical skill acquisition (Mean= 15.24) is not significantly higher than that of private school pupils' physical skill acquisition (Mean= 16.02).

Table 10. Summary of t-test Analysis on the significance difference in pupils' skill acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State, based on school type.

School Type	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	T	Df	Sig.	Remark
Public	155	15.24	2.921	-2.444	374	0.015	Not Significant
Private	221	16.02	3.156				

Note : Dependent Variable: Pupils' physical skill acquisition

4.10 Discussion of findings

This study examined the qualities of primary school playgrounds in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State. The findings revealed that most primary school playgrounds in the area have adequate space for children to play, are free from dangerous objects, are safe and secure, and contain grassy surfaces. However, this finding contrasts with the study conducted, which reported that associations between playground space and physical activity were largely non-linear and moderated by the availability of loose equipment. Their study found that schools without loose equipment showed only a weak association between playground space and meeting recommended physical activity levels.

The study also investigated playground activities commonly practiced in Ilorin West. The findings indicated that activities such as running, hide-and-seek, ball passing, and kicking are frequently performed. This aligns with some papers, who emphasized the role of school playground games in children's development across various settings.

Furthermore, the study assessed the level of pupils' physical skill acquisition and found it to be low (weighted mean = 1.57).

The findings also revealed that playground qualities significantly influence pupils' physical skill acquisition ($F(1.375) = 0.719$, $p < 0.05$). Similarly, playground activities significantly influence pupils' physical skill acquisition ($F(1, 375) = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$).

However, no significant differences were found in pupils' physical skill acquisition based on gender ($t = -2.698$, $df = 374$, $p > 0.05$) or school type ($t = -2.444$, $df = 374$, $p > 0.05$).

5. CONCLUSION

This study examined primary school playgrounds and pupils' physical skill acquisition in Ilorin West Local Government Area of Kwara State. The findings revealed that the overall level of pupils' physical skill acquisition was low. However, playground qualities significantly influenced pupils' physical skill acquisition in the study area. Similarly, playground activities were found to have a significant influence on pupils' physical skill acquisition. The study further revealed that there was no significant difference in pupils' physical skill acquisition based on gender or school type.

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

(i) Teachers should encourage and supervise pupils in the effective use of playground facilities to promote holistic development.

(ii) School heads and proprietors should employ competent teachers who can effectively utilize playground equipment to enhance pupils' physical development.

(iii) Ministries of education and other relevant agencies should organize workshops, seminars, and conferences to raise awareness about the importance of playground facilities in promoting pupils' physical skill acquisition and overall development.

6. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. Authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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