CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This review is confined to research findings of the socioemotional development of children and curricula comparative studies. It also reviews the importance of school environment towards socioemotional development of the children.

2.1 Socioemotional Development

Researches have shown that social and emotional development are closely related to personality, social cognition, moral development, self-concept, patterns of parenting, interaction with peers (Crowl, Kaminsky, & Podell, 1997), and interaction with caregivers and some traits of genetic endowment such as temperament (Santrock, 1998). Yong (1993) also states that socioemotional development also encompasses the developmental trend of sharing behavior, social interaction, racial awareness, development of basic emotion and the ability to empathize.

Merrell (1996) has mentioned that many existing instruments may not adequately reflect the unique socioemotional developmental characteristics of preschool and kindergarten children. Some of these measures are narrowly designed for specific types of behavioral concerns (e.g. severe psychopathology, adaptive behavior deficits, and so forth) rather than typical sorts of social, emotional and behavioral problems that early childhood educators encounter daily. It is also agreed that the socioemotional behavior of young children can be divided into two very broad areas of
adaptive behavior, which is positive, goal-directed, and productive behavior; and maladaptive behavior, which is detrimental to oneself or others (Achenbach, 1982).

Merrell (1996), however, states that there is no generally accepted system for dimensional classification of children's social skills at present, although a few large scale, nationwide studies have been conducted. Thus, within the two broad areas of adaptive and maladaptive behaviors, Merrell (1996) measures a cluster of young children's social skills that have been consistent with, but not mutually exclusive to, peer-related and adult-related dichotomy. Adult-related, however, can also be considered as teacher-related in the early childhood population.

Besides relating social skills to peer-related and teacher-related dichotomies, Merrell (1996) also refers social skills to Gresham's (1986) definition, in which, skills are often viewed as part of a broader construct known as competence. Gresham (1994) defines social skills as the specific abilities to know about and deal effectively with relatively specific others in relatively specific situations involving relatively specific interpersonal and personal goals, and social competence has been defined generally as the ability to know about and deal effectively and adaptively with the environment (cited in Gilbert & Connolly, 1991, p. 87). Peer relations is often thought of as a result or product of one's social skills (Merrell, 1994).

Besides social skills, Buck (1991) integrates emotional factor in Gresham's definition of competence. While social competence refers to the ability to know about and deal with the social environment, emotional competence refers to the ability know about and deal with internal, bodily environment of feelings and desires (cited in Gilbert & Connolly, 1991, p.87).
In contrast to social skills, there is a large body of research evidences classifying behavioral and emotional problems. Experts in the field of children psychology generally agree that children’s problem behaviors can be divided into two broad dimensions, namely internalizing problems and externalizing problems (Achenbach, 1991, Cicchetti & Toth, 1996).

The internalizing behavioral and emotional problem dimension is characterized as depression, social withdrawal, anxiety, and the development of somatic illness. Although internalizing problems such as depression and withdrawal are overt symptoms, the psychological conflicts are turning inward. On the other hand, the externalizing behavioral and emotional problems are maladjusted or maladaptive behaviors that often can be seen directly among the externalizing symptoms. The externalizing dimension of behavioral and emotional problems includes symptoms of aggressive, defiant, acting-out, disruptive, oppositional, and hyperactive behavior.

Although this study is confined to examining the social skills and problem behaviors of preschool children, the developmental aspect and other related aspects of socioemotional of the children will also be discussed.

2.1.1 Socioemotional Behaviors and Their Developmental Significance

Erik Erikson (1997) believes human beings are inherently rational, that the social aspects of their culture determine individuals’ emotional and social behaviors and that all individuals go through a sequence of eight life crises (cited in Crowl, Kaminsky and Podell, 1997, p. 204). According to Erikson, preschool children between the ages of three to six are in the psychosocial stage of initiative versus guilt. As
children encounter a widening social world, they are challenged more and need to develop more purposeful behavior to cope with these challenges. Children are now asked to assume more responsibility. They sometimes extend their independence in ways that exceed their abilities or that infringe on the rights of others. The family caregiver initially, and the teacher later, can help the child learn to take the initiative without infringing on other’s rights. Children who are irresponsible or whose behavior lead to conflicts with other people may develop feelings of guilt. During the elementary years (six to 12 years) which is known as industry versus inferiority stage, children begin to compare themselves with peers in terms of academic performance and other intellectual skills. Teachers can encourage students to be industrious and to achieve proficiency at both academic and social tasks, thereby gaining self-confidence. Children who are not proficient begin to view themselves as inferior to others.

Hartup (1989) suggested that children would experience two major kinds of social relationships. Firstly, children formed vertical attachments with individuals who had greater knowledge and social power than they did. Consequently, teachers played very important role in all developmental aspects of the children in school especially when these children were away from their parents and elder siblings.

Secondly, children also formed horizontal relationships with other children. Basic social skills emerged within vertical interaction with adults as a result of nurturance, imitation, protection or controlling of behavior. Horizontal relationships, on the other hand, were the contexts in which children elaborated these skills with individuals who were more or less similar to themselves.
Individuals in every relationship change with age. Friendships were relatively rare in the first two years. In the current meta-analysis of three different age levels-preschool, childhood, and early adolescence, Newcomb and Bagwell (1995) provided evidence that behavioral manifestations of friendships were expected to change with age as well. In the preschool period, shared activities and opportunities for play were at the heart of friendships. Although these relationships themselves were far less stable than friendships in later childhood, they were considered to be precursors of later development. As children grew, they did different things with their companions, organized their interactions differently, manifested different expectations, and communicated differently with others. Roberts and Strayer (1996) also agreed that age was strongly linked to increasing cognitive ability to understand others but not related to emotional expressive and empathy, in which, empathy would eventually predict prosocial behavior. However, Roberts and Strayer (1996) stressed that the insignificant findings of the relationships with age and prosocial behavior was due to methodological deficiency. Moreover, Konchanska, Murray and Coy (1997) confirmed that the stability of inhibitory control increased with age. Continuity between early experience and later social and emotional understanding indeed existed (Brown & Dunn, 1996; Lagattuta, Wellman, & Flavell, 1997).

In the Malaysian Child Development Project, Yong (1993) examined 3099 children aged three to six years old in Klang Valley from four different sectors- urban advantaged, urban disadvantaged, rural, and estate. The measures for social development comprises prosocial behavior and racial awareness, the development of
basic emotions includes sadness, happiness, anger or anger, and children’s ability to empathize.

Yong (1993) stated that prosocial behavior was seen as the sharing behavior of the child (or social cooperation as in Merrell, 1994) as well as social interaction (also similar to as in Merrell’s definition). Results indicated that the older the child was, the more likely he or she was to exhibit sharing behavior. The younger children tend to be more self-centered and more likely meet their demands first than sharing with others. There are no significant differences in sharing behavior among all sectors, except for the six-year-olds in the estate sector.

Yong (1993) also stated that the ability to interact benefited children in terms of intellectual and emotional growth, because the greater the children interacted the greater experiences they gained and would give the children the feelings of self-worth and acceptance. Parents’ reports indicating significant differences in social interaction were observed in the age four groups. Elder children tended to have better interacting skills than younger children. Urban advantaged children generally demonstrate greater social interaction skills than rural, urban disadvantaged, and estate children. However, by age six, sectorial differences in the social interaction are no longer significant.

Racial awareness in this study is measured in terms of child’s preference for playmates of his or her own race. The results for racial awareness suggested that the children are generally not aware of racial differences, even by the age of six.

As for emotional development, evidence based on a modified version of Helene Borke’s method indicated that the children exhibited progressive ability in recognition of basic emotions and ability to empathize from age three to six. More children,
however, could recognize happiness and sadness as compared to anger and fear. Analyses of sectorial differences had clearly shown that urban advantaged children exhibit a greater emotional development than children from other sectors but the differences tended to level off for all sectors by the age of six.

To summarize, the sharing behaviors, social interactions, and emotional development of Malaysian preschool children increase with age, except for racial awareness. An explanation for the leveling off effects for six-year-olds on sharing behaviors, social interactions, racial awareness and emotional development by different socioeconomic sectors are probably due to kindergarten experiences that might help the children in dealing with their prosocial behaviors and emotions. In Malaysia, children from the urban disadvantaged, rural and estate sectors generally have a year of kindergarten experience just before entry into primary school, that is, at age six. On the other hand, there is a large proportion of urban advantaged children attending kindergarten at an earlier age, some as young as three years old.

On issue of gender, Weikart, Bond and McNeil (1978) found no evidence in pre- and post-tests that boys and girls benefited differently from preschool experience. Stephens (1973) also had shown that sex differences did not affect locus of control of a child. Hartup (1989) also stated that children’s friendships were mainly same-sex relationships although cross-sex friendships did exist. However, gender differences were found in other studies (Crick, 1996; Murphy & Eisenberg, 1997; Roberts & Strayer, 1996; Brown & Dunn, 1996, Kochanska, Murray, & Coy, 1997; Reuter & Yunik, 1973; Burts, Harts, Renee, Charlesworth, Fleege, & Mosley, 1992).
In the article written by Rose-Krasnor (1997), in spite of extensive literature documenting group differences in social behaviors, there was relatively little consistency among these empirical data due to small magnitude of gender differences, the situational context of the study, as well as due to the methodological differences. The predisposition of gender difference in children’s socioemotional behavioral development, therefore, had not been clearly established yet. Rose-Krasnor (1997) stated that gender differences, however, still began early in life and continued until adolescence. Boys and girls may live in two different ‘cultures’, thus, resulting in different behavioral norms and have dissimilar social experiences. More researches need to be carried out on gender differences in order to ascertain the antecedents for such differences.

2.1.2 Social Skills and Peer Relationships

Merrell (1994) had grouped three major categories of social skills, i.e. social cooperation, social interaction and social independence, and related social skills to peer acceptance as well. Hartup (1983) also noted that social skills were positively correlated with some commonalities such as the ability to initiate and respond, use peers as resources, and display appropriate affection, friendliness, sociability, leadership capabilities, moderately high self-esteem, intellectual ability, academic performance and success experiences.

In addition to these studies, a very recent study undertaken by Cillessen, Haselager and van Lieshout (1997) investigated the role of early peer interaction in elementary school as predictor of their social adjustment at the end of elementary
school. It aimed to investigate whether peer rejection would predict social behaviors as well as poor school adjustment later.

Two hundred thirty one boys from two age cohorts were selected from 37 elementary schools. A three staggered observation was made at different year. Data were collected by interviewing peers, and through teachers' reports and self-report. Playgroup observational data was also recorded. The measures of social behaviors included internalizing and externalizing behaviors such as aggression, disruptive behavior, prosocial behaviors, and withdrawal. Social adjustment measures included bullying, victimization, loneliness, depression, and friendship. The findings confirmed that early peer interaction was important to later social behaviors and social adjustments. The majority of these studies, however, assess the predictions of peer relation problems from elementary school into early adolescence.

Ladd, Kochenderfer and Coleman (1997) examined the correlation between different types of peer relationships and social adjustment among five- to six year-old children among 109 boys and 95 girls. Specifically, the study examined the relationships between children's participation in different types of peer relationships (i.e. friendship, peer acceptance, and peer victimization) and their adjustment to school. The findings suggested that adjustment might be influenced by the diverse experiences that children encountered in different forms of peer relationships, and that certain types of peer relationships might have greater or lesser adaptive significance depending on the adjustment outcomes. For instances, children with more mutual friends were likely to have higher levels of group acceptance, and those with more friends were likely to have a best friendship. However, the study also found that many low-accepted children
have friends, and not all highly accepted children have friends. Also, not all rejected children were victimized and not all victimized children were rejected. Thus, the diversity of children’s peer relationships must be considered when attempting to delineate the antecedents of early adaptation and adjustment in schools.

Next, Renshaw and Asher (1982) noted that there were evidences indicating that a negative interaction styles predicted one’s low status in the group, and being rejected in one group predicted being rejected in a completely new group. Failure to adopt the frame of reference or norms of the group characterized rejected children’s negative interaction style. Renshaw and Asher hypothesized that if low status was caused by social skill deficits, then teaching appropriate social skills to low status children should lead to greater acceptance by the peer group. The unpopular children were taught on social skills such as teaching the children on how to communicate (e.g., being cooperative, being supportive), provided with play opportunities to promote positive social interaction skills, and then having the children to evaluate their own play behaviors. The results of these studies gave clear support for the intervention of social skill deficits. The gains on status for the group with social skills instruction exceeded no instruction group.

Thus, Renshaw and Asher (1982) supported the social skills intervention would promote higher positive social interaction of the children. Another implication of Renshaw and Asher’s (1982) study is that desirable social interaction can be nurtured. As was stated earlier that child-initiated learning programme encourages more social interaction among children than teacher-directed instruction programme. The findings
of Renshaw and Asher's (1982) would help the interpretation of the results at the end of this research.

2.1.3 Problem Behaviors

Merrell (1994) described various problem behaviors commonly seen in the early childhood population. The internalizing behavioral dimension included social withdrawal, and anxiety/somatic problems. The externalizing behavioral dimension included self-centered/explosive problems which were closely related to temperament; attention/overactive problems; and antisocial/aggressive problems. This section examines the interactions of social and emotional factors in children's problem behaviors.

Part of a longitudinal study done by Brown and Dunn (1996) involved testing 47 children on their understanding of basic emotions when they were three years old and tested again at the age of six. The predispositions of emotion understanding tested were discourse about feelings and causality, positive interaction with older siblings, and language ability. The findings showed significant individual differences over this three-year period. Girls had better understanding of emotions than boys. Children's reports of negative experiences at home and at school were related to their sensitivity to experience of ambivalent emotions.

Lagattuta, Wellman and Flavell (1997) extended the evidence on significant changes of cognitive and emotional development in preschool age children. They recruited a group of three through six years old preschoolers and examined children's understanding on how emotions would change with knowledge of thinking and feeling.
towards the experimental objects. The children were presented with four illustrated sad stories, and the children were shown visual and semantic cues. Later, the children were asked to explain why the characters felt that way.

The findings suggested that there was considerable competence as well as substantial development in the years between four to six in the understanding of the influence of mental activity on emotions. The majority of elder preschoolers, five- and six-year-olds accurately predicted that the character's emotion would fluctuate if they changed the focus of their thoughts compared to four-year-olds. Although those preschoolers who could not provide a cognitive cuing response, they were able to show that they understood the linkages of cognitive cuing and emotion as young as three years old.

The findings of Brown and Dunn (1996) and Lagattuta et al. (1997) directed our attention to the developments of emotion understanding in children's everyday lives. Children are likely to talk about their negative experiences with siblings and schoolmates. Three- to six-year-olds have demonstrated that their perceptions of events are related to their emotional understandings. This experience continues to influence them as they grow. Indeed, it is also important to study both home and school environments and to examine the relative contribution of family, teachers and peer experiences to children's social and emotional developments. The scope of this study, however, is confined to the school environments.

Kochanska, Murray and Coy (1997) reported a longitudinal extension of previous findings about temperamental inhibitory control. Eighty-three children at early school age (six-year-old) had been followed since they were three years old. The
finding of Kochanska et al. (1997) confirmed the stability of inhibitory control increase with age which was consistent with Brown and Dunn (1996). They also found that gender differences existed, with girls outperforming boys. They also confirmed strong relationships between inhibitory control and multiple measures of moral conduct, moral cognition and moral self. In addition, children who had high inhibitory control were also well internalized.

In another study done by Normandeau and Guay (1998) involved two hundred and ninety one kindergarten children. Normandeau and Guay (1998) suggested that children’s behavior such as aggressiveness, anxious-withdrawn, and prosocial behaviors could influence their cognitive self-control. Cognitive control, in turn, positively determined school achievement at the end of first grade. For instance, children who were less aggressive or more prosocial exerted better cognitive self-control over their school tasks.

The finding of Normandeau and Guay’s (1998) indirectly implies socioemotional development is the precursor of, although it does not cause, cognitive and intellectual development. Has teacher-directed instruction programme done too much of enhancing preschool children’s academic attainment but neglecting their socioemotional needs? Norman and Guay’s (1998) finding seem to in line with other researches that support child-initiated learning programme.

Eisenberg, Fabes, Murphy, Maszk, Smith and Karbon (1995) found that socially acceptable behavior including low level of aggressiveness and disruptive behaviors were related to the child’s low negative emotionality as reported by teachers, and were related to high behavioral regulation as reported by parents. Thus, children who were
both unregulated and high emotional intensity especially negative emotional intensity are prone to have behavioral and social problems.

Roberts and Strayer (1996) confirmed that emotional expressiveness, emotional insights, and role taking were strong predictors of empathy seventy-three children in three age groups (five-, nine-, and 13-year-olds). Empathy, then, was an important contributor to prosocial behaviors participated in this study. Thus, in relation to emotional, social and behavioral development as indicate by Eisenberg et al. (1995), emotion is again related to prosocial behaviors. They also confirmed that boys' empathy was a strong predictor of prosocial behaviors. Boys appeared to be under less pressure to behave prosocially than girls. Girls, in contrast, were required to behave prosocially whether they felt empathetic or not.

Harrist, Zaia, Bates, Dodge and Pettit (1997) studied the subtypes of social withdrawal in early childhood in further details. A sample of 150 kindergarten children who were classified as socially withdrawn were followed over four years. A cluster analysis involving ratings was used to identify subtypes of withdrawn children such as unsociable, active-isolated, and sad/depressed. The findings indicated that unsociable children were prone to be neglected, active-isolates had higher than expected levels of rejection, and sad/depressed children were both neglected and rejected. Active-isolate children also displayed the least competent skills. The findings had ascertained that social withdrawal was a risk factor in psychosocial development although it is a multidimensional construct.
Adalbjarnardottir (1995), on the other hand, associated social withdrawal, social anxiety, and locus of control with how children negotiated conflicts. Ninety-six elementary school children aged eight and 11 participated in the study. The results indicated that sociable children were more likely to exhibit greater competence in negotiating conflicts than socially withdrawn children. Social anxiety tended to influence this relation. Among less socially anxious children, the sociable children had used interpersonal negotiation strategies more frequently than socially withdrawn children, but this relation was not revealed the same result among the more socially anxious children. Finally, children who showed internal locus of control were more competent in negotiation skills than children with external locus of control.

The patterns of research findings done by Adalbjarnardottir’s (1995), Harrist et al. (1997), and Normandeau and Guay’s (1998) are consistent with Hartup (1989)’s suggestion, that is, experience in well-functioning relationships is associated with good functioning in a child. Therefore, while promoting cognitive and intellectual growth, it is essential to consider the social and emotional aspects of a child development.

In a longitudinal study related to aggression, Crick (1996) assessed aggression, prosocial behavior, and social adjustment of 245 third- through sixth-grade children at age nine to 12. Findings showed that aggression in individuals were relatively stable over time. Aggression was also found to predict social maladjustment for both boys and girls whereas prosocial behavior was found to predict social adjustment.

Based on Crick’s (1996) findings, it appears that both behavioral patterns characterized by high level of aggression together with low levels of prosocial behavior may be particularly problematic for children. Moreover, based on Crick’s (1996)
findings, it does not suggest any intervention programme for the socially maladjusted children. Hence, whether a child-initiated learning programme would be able to increase prosocial behavior and reduce aversive behavior remains unchallenged. The result of this study would also provide important insight especially in the understanding of aggression in girls, whereby people generally tend to relate aggression with boys. Whether or not aggression and self-centered/explosive behaviors such as annoying others, seeking revenge against others, tempers outburst or tantrums are related to provocation need to be further studied.

Murphy and Eisenberg (1997) extended the work anger-related behaviors on four- to six-year-old children, and on how they dealt with other’s anger when it was directed at them. As predicted by Murphy and Eisenberg (1997), children’s reactions to peers’ anger did not vary with sex or level of anger. Both mothers and teachers viewed boys and girls were aggressive. Teachers rated boys as emotionally intense, unregulated, nonconstructive copers, aggressive, and socially inappropriate. They tended to show unfriendly responses when they were targets of a peer’s anger. Mothers reported girls who showed unfriendly responses were aggressive and had low self-regulation. In addition, peers’ reports of children’s involvement in anger conflicts were found to be associated with children’s high emotional intensity, nonconstructive coping, low regulation, socially inappropriate behavior, and low popularity.

Eisenberg, Fabes, Nyman, Bernzweig and Pinuelas (1994) confirmed that emotionality and regulatory skills among the children were associated with constructive reactions to anger. Teachers’ ratings of four- to six-year-olds’ constructive coping and attentional control were associated with children’s constructive anger reactions. Acting
out, avoidant coping, emotional intensity, and anger intensity generally were correlated with low levels of constructive reactions to anger. Mothers’ reports of children’s constructive coping and low emotional intensity were associated with children’s use of nonabusive language to deal with anger, whereas aggressive coping and negative emotionality were associated with escape behavior when angry.

To conclude, some information relating to social competence, social relationship, sociometric status, emotional development and other factors relating to emotions, and problem behaviors of preschool children have been obtained. The influences of cognitive and temperamental factors, along with home environments and school programme, may contribute to the different patterns of children’s socioemotional development and behaviors. This study, however, only investigates the outcomes of two different preschool programmes on the socioemotional aspects.

2.2 Curricula Comparative Studies

As mentioned in the previous chapter, there are a number of short- and long-term curricula comparative studies on cognitive performance of children. The influence of preschool programmes, either teacher-directed instruction or child-initiated learning, on socioemotional behaviors were not as consistent as cognitive constructs like learning readiness, academic achievement and aptitude.

Weikart, Epstein, Schweinhart and Bond (1978) reported the outcomes of three different well-implemented preschool programmes- the Direct Instruction curriculum, the High/Scope curriculum, and a nursery school on young children until through the age of 15. The High/Scope curriculum featured both child-centered and child-initiated
learning approaches whereas the nursery school featured a child-centered approach. Sixty-eight impoverished children who were equal in terms of ethnicity, sex, age, and with average IQ were objectively assigned to attend these programmes that lasted eight and a half months.

The Direct Instruction approach taught formal language, reading, and arithmetic in the manner similar to as described earlier in definition chapter. In the nursery school approach, the opposite of Direct Instruction, the child chose own activities while the teacher responded to the child’s particular interests and activities. It emphasized social and emotional growth and self-expression rather than the acquisition of specific pre-academic skills or cognitive development. Classroom environment was typically open and ideally stimulus-rich. The relationship between teacher and child tended to be permissive. Lesson content revolved around things of interest to the child that support his general socialization, providing opportunities for independent and creative activity and exploration and development of peer interaction. In the High/Scope curriculum as described in the previous study, the children and teachers planned the work sessions together, so that the curriculum enhance the cognitive, social and emotional functioning of the children.

Seventy-nine percent of the members of the sample were interviewed at age 15. At age 15, both High/Scope and the nursery school groups were reported to be significantly engaging in about half as many delinquent acts as the Direct Instruction group- averages of 13 in the Direct Instruction group, seven in the nursery school group, and five in the High/Scope group. Also, group differences of high-rate offenders (defined as persons reporting 16 or more delinquent acts such as property violence,
personal violence, drug abuse, in-family offenses) had shown that 44% from the Direct Instruction group were high-rate offenders, as compared to only 6% from the High/Scope and 11% from the nursery school groups.

The outcomes of the three groups on general self-concept, teenage employment and participation in sports were also examined. Thirty-three percent of the Direct Instruction group confessed that their families felt they were doing poorly, while none of such confession came from the High/Scope group and only 6% from the nursery school group. None of the Direct Instruction group had ever been appointed to a school office or job, this was being the case for 12% of the High/Scope group and 33% for the nursery school group. And it was reported that 94% of the High/Scope group and 72% of the nursery school group participated in sports, while only 44% of the Direct Instruction group did so.

In short, the above longitudinal study indicated that children in the Direct Instruction group showed more socially inappropriate behaviors than did the children in the other two curricula. This study, however, does not provide evidence of short-term effects of early childhood programmes on social skills and problem behaviors at preschool level; and raises doubts on matters such as small sample size and the validity of the self-reported delinquency.

Despite the importance of different types of preschool programmes that have been reported to influence one's success later in life, it will be interesting to find out empirically what makes a preschool programme effective besides the inherent characteristics of the children. It is important to determine whether different
educational approach and the influence of its educational process have different magnitude of impacts on the children.

Besides the Ypsilanti Preschool project, a number of other studies also examined the outcomes of different curricula impacts in the preschool and elementary levels. Stevens (1976) reviewed seven studies comparing the differential effects of early childhood programmes on children’s development. Among those studies relating to the cognitive, affective and behavioral development were Planned Variations in Follow Through Project by Stalling (1976), Miller and Dyer’s Planned Variation Study (Miller & Dyer, 1976), and a Comprehensive Assessment of the Impact of Schooling by Minuchin, Biber, Shapiro and Zimiles (1976). Various programmes were involved and were grouped into three major categories. These programmes were known as the teacher-directed, academically oriented programme; the child-initiated learning cognitive-discovery programme, and the child-centered informal learning programme.

The Planned Variations in Follow Through Project involved about 72 models. Stallings (1976) (cited from Stevens, 1976) examined the nature and outcomes of seven programmes which were Englemann-Becker Distar Programme, the Bushell Applied Behavior Analysis Model (ABA), the Nimnicht Responsive Model (Nimnicht), the Tucson Early Education Model (TEEM), Weikart’s High Scope Cognitive-Oriented Model, the Education Development Center Model (EDC), and Bank Street programme. Distar and ABA were highly teacher-directed that emphasized on mastering academic skills. Nimnicht, TEEM and High/Scope were cognitive-discovery programmes that believed in developing all aspects of development such as cognitive, affective, and psychomotor. The instructional settings in cognitive-discovery programmes mediated
between academic and discovery programmes. EDC and Bank Street were discovery programmes that practised informal learning approach.

Stallings (1976) found that teacher-directed instruction programmes (i.e. Distar or ABA) spent more time on reading and mathematics instructions and had children who performed better on achievement tests in these areas. The mathematic computation and reading subtest scores were highly correlated with programmes that heavily relied on textbooks and programmed texts, and negatively correlated with those of the flexible and open models like Nimnicht, High/Scope, Bank Street, EDC.

At the same time, no significant differences in self-concept as measured by the Coppersmith's Self-Concept children in Bank Street and EDC (the informal discovery programmes), and High Scope (a cognitive-discovery programme) were observed although children from these programmes were more likely to accept responsibility for their success and less likely to accept responsibility for failure, often worked individually with teachers, and had manipulative skills on the materials compared to children in the teacher-directed programmes.

Although Stallings's (1976) findings seemed to favour child-initiated learning and child-centered programmes, some limitations are observed. One of which is that there was no comparison between treatment group and comparison group. Again, the comparison of different curricula on various variables were not conducted at preschool level itself. Comparisons were made from first through fourth grades.

Minuchin, Biber, Shapiro and Zimiles (1976) (cited in Stevens, 1976) measured both cognitive and affective measures (including IQ, achievement, group problem solving, moral development, creativity and self-concept) on fourth graders in their
curriculum comparative study. Minuchin et al. (1976) found that academic-oriented children scored higher on achievement and group intelligent tests. No significant difference was recorded for the individual IQ tests. In term of group problem-solving assessment, discovery classrooms exhibited greater cooperation, used more organized strategies, and solved the problem more frequently. No significant difference was also found for imaginative thinking. Minuchin et al. (1976) also found that children in the discovery classrooms were more likely to attribute positive as well as negative traits to themselves compared to children in academically-oriented classrooms.

The implication is, group problem solving skills are related to one’s social skills because it encourages cooperation among peers. Therefore, it is important to know how a programme that emphasizes more on social and emotional needs influences the children’s socioemotional behaviors. From Minuchin et al.’s (1976) findings, children in discovery programme (a child-centered approach) tend to have more positive behaviors. At the same time, it is also found to be effectively enhancing children’s cognitive skills. Thus, it would be interesting and in line with the objective of this study to confirm further Minuchin et al.’s (1976) findings especially on preschool age children rather than the primary school children.

Another study by Miller and Dyer (1976) (cited in Stevens,1976, and also see Miller and Bizzell, 1983) compared four curriculum models in Head Start project. The two programmes that emphasized teacher-directed instruction and academically oriented were Bereiter-Engelmann Distar and the Demonstration & Research Centre for Early Education (DARCEE). Subsequently, the other two programmes were Montessori
(a cognitive and discovery approach) and a traditional child-centered nursery school approach (an informal discovery approach).

Various Head Start subjects in Louisville, Kentucky were randomly assigned to one of the experimental group and control group. Demographic measures indicated that groups were not significantly different on age and education of the parents, number of siblings, and other relevant variables. Data indicated that all classrooms conformed to expectations for a particular model.

Miller and Dyer (1976) followed these children from prekindergarten year to second grade. Similar to Stallings’ (1976) study, Miller and Dyer (1976) conducted direct observation to describe the teacher’s and child’s behavior, classroom environment and instructional setting. Data revealed two types of classroom structures. While Distar and DARCEE included characteristics such as teacher using fast-paced teacher-centered instruction and few stable groups of children working out the same task, the Montessori and nursery school programmes were child-centered and slower-paced. While the children in a Montessori programme involved more personalized contact with the teacher, the children in a Distar programme involved more group contact with the teacher.

In term of intellectual achievement, the findings of Miller and Dyer (1976) are consistent with Weikart, Epstein, Schweinhart and Bond (1978) and Schweinhart and Weikart (1980) in which teacher-centered programme contributed to higher academic achievement of the children as compared to child-initiated learning programme but are not consistent with Dunn and Kontos (1997).
The finding also revealed that the children in DARCEE and Montessori programmes were more inventive than Distar and nursery school programmes. DARCEE children were also rated high on achievement-motivation and verbal-social participation. Montessori children scored high on inventiveness and curiosity. The ranking of verbal recitation from low to high level is as follows: Distar, Montessori, DARCEE, and nursery.

Some explanations are drawn from the above findings. One of which is that conversation plays an important role in positive and healthy social interaction between teacher and child, and among peers. Although DARCEE is an academically oriented programme, the children are still allowed to interact verbally. Therefore, DARCEE children scored high on verbal-social participation. As expected, Montessori programme is child-centered and emphasizes a holistic approach of development. Montessori programme uses a variety of manipulative and learning materials on top of the workbooks. Therefore, Montessori children scored high on inventiveness and curiosity.

Miller and Dyer’s (1976) study has some advantages and disadvantages. They have randomly assigned classrooms to treatment groups at preschools level with a sizeable number of subject, i.e. 250 participants, and in the replica study. As compare to other long-term curricula comparative studies that compare the primary school age children until their adolescence years, Miller and Dyer (1976) make direct observation on the children at preschool level. However, comparison on socioemotional development are not clear. Furthermore, Miller and Dyer (1976) tend to compare the
difference of the characteristics of the programmes rather than the outcome of the programmes on the children.

Other comparison on preschool children was also found. Marcon (1990, 1993) investigated the influences of early childhood learning programmes on three cohorts of children from prekindergarten or Head Start until grade one. The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales (1985-86 norms) and four other instruments which measured the aspects of communication (receptive, expressive, written), daily living skills (personal, domestic, communication), socialization (interpersonal relationships, play and leisure time, coping skills) and motor development (fine and gross) had been used. The first group of prekindergarten children along with their control group that had not attended any prekindergarten or Head Start were followed into first grade. The second group of prekindergarteners along with the matched group was followed into kindergarten. Finally, a third group of prekindergarteners and control group at age four was added to the study.

Prekindergarten children were exposed to the following educational models: (a) M Model, combining child-initiated and academic, teacher-directed approaches; (b) AD Model, an academic, teacher-directed approach; and (c) CI Model, a child-initiated approach. Kindergarten children were exposed to a ModAck/SE programme, emphasizing socioemotional goals, and a ModAcK programme, emphasizing academic preparation. The Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales were used to measure the progress of three cohorts of children from prekindergarten through grade one.

As for the comparisons which were done at prekindergarten level, M Model was found to be ineffective. CI Model had fostered a higher level of social development and
basic skills than the other two models. AD Model had placed children at a disadvantage for later social development. Comparisons at kindergarten level had shown that the ModAcK/SE programme were more effective than the ModAcK programme.

Marcon's (1990, 1993) study implies that a kindergarten programme that pushes academics too soon especially if it occurs at the expenses of other important areas of development, does not result in better academic performance. These results are evident, not only in the short-term, but also in the first year of the primary school experience.

To summarize, there are findings indicating that, despite the fact that direct instruction from teacher in preschool accelerates academic achievement during elementary years, this early focus on academic harms the students in later life, especially in the sphere of social behaviors. Several curricula comparative studies that favoured child-initiated learning programme over teacher-directed instruction programme are supported. Many studies measure the affective and behavioral variables such as teenage employment, delinquent behaviors, grade retention and school dropouts, creativity, self-concept, verbal-social participation, adaptive behaviors, moral and achievement motivations. These variables, however, do not consistently and comprehensively measure the socioemotional construct. Marcon's (1990, 1993) has at least compared the socioemotional construct in the preschool level. Nevertheless, there is still little empirical evidence social skills and behavioral problem measures.

Another study that supported child-centered activities was done by DeVries, Reese-Learned and Morgan (1991). The three kindergarten programmes involved were a teacher-directed instruction programme called DISTAR, a constructivist programme
representing the cognitive developmental approach, and an eclectic programme having some characteristics of both paradigms. Pairs of children were videotaped playing a board game and dividing stickers.

Children's negotiation strategies and shared experiences were recorded in order to see the relationships between children's sociomoral development and the sociomoral atmospheres of three types of kindergarten classrooms. Analysis of 8,256 negotiation strategies and shared experience suggested the possibility of heavily academic, teacher-centered programmes hinder children's development of interpersonal understanding and their broader social-cognitive and moral development. Moreover, while the direct-instruction group had significantly higher scores on preschool-screening tests and first-grade achievement tests than both constructivist and eclectic groups, the differences between direct-instruction group and constructivist group disappeared by third grade. The development of the eclectic group fell midway between that of constructivist and teacher-directed groups but was often close to the direct instruction group.

The results on non-cognitive variables of all the empirical studies as above mentioned support the contention that of more positive social and behavioral outcomes have been observed in the child-initiated learning programme, and to some extent, the child-centered programme (Weikart, Epstein, Schweinhart and Bond, 1978; Schweinhart & Weikart, 1980, 1988; Miller & Dyer, 1976; Stalling, 1976; Minuchin et al., 1976; DeVries et al., 1991; Marcon, 1990, 1993).

The following studies also supported the child-initiated learning approach. Battistich, Solomon and Deluchi (1990) studied the influences of an intensive and comprehensive school based intervention programme on children's peer relations and
social adjustment. The programme, known as the Child Development Project, was designed to promote the development of prosocial values and behaviors such as using non-authoritarian control techniques, classroom setting that facilitated self-control and a positive interpersonal climate, and students worked together in small groups on academic and non-academic tasks that promoted interpersonal understanding and prosocial values. This kind of child-initiated learning programme is consistent with the developmentally appropriate practice guidelines.

A total of 236 comparison subjects (118 boys and 118 girls) and 285 programme subjects (140 boys and 145 girls) participated in this research from six schools. They were matched in terms of their achievement, family socioeconomic status, and teacher interest in the programme.

Measures of peer acceptance, prosocial behavior, antisocial, assertive, and withdrawn behavior and social adjustment were obtained through: (a) peer's nomination (the form developed by Asher, Hymel, & Renshaw, 1984), and (b) from the questionnaire administered (LaGreca, Dandes, Shaw, & Stone, 1988) from third through sixth grades.

The questionnaire includes a variety of measures like self-esteem, liking for school, popularity, loneliness, and social dissatisfaction. Assessment of students in the Child Development Project and comparison schools from third through six grade revealed that the programme students were more accepted by their peers, were less lonely, and were lower in social anxiety than the comparison group. Surprisingly, as contrasted to the findings for perceived loneliness and popularity, programme students did not see themselves as being significantly more popular than comparison students.
The inconsistency might be due to different validity of self-report. Assessment prior to the start of the programme showed no large and consistent differences.

Relatively the above study contributes to the small, but growing patterns of peer relationships in different programmes. As was discussed earlier, previous researches pay little attention on the relationships between the type of preschool programmes and peer relations. In addition, it has been proven that elementary school children who have attended the child-initiated learning programme during their early childhood years have better social adjustment than the comparative group. Unfortunately, the empirical evidence on social skills and problem behaviors is not extensive enough.

In addition to Battistich et al.'s (1990) finding, Gotlieb, Lennox, Kronitz, Allan, Hart and read (1993) investigated the effectiveness of a kindergarten programme, known as the Kindergarten Intervention Project (KIP). KIP involved teachers’ supports, parent involvement and direct community services. It was a three-year pilot project that aimed to provide a coordinated effort in order to help the children to adapt and socialize in their classroom and to reduce the severity and incidence of problem behaviors.

Four hundred thirty one subjects participated in this KIP programme, and another 347 subjects in regular kindergarten classes were chosen as control. Pre- and post-intervention data were collected from both groups, including teacher’s ratings of prosocial skills and problem behaviors on Social Skill Rating System (Gresham & Elliot, 1993). Also, a direct observation was made on the randomly selected subgroups (n = 69 of KIP, and n = 58 of controls) during free play situation. The children
behaviors were coded based on Socially Appropriate, Socially Inappropriate and Nonsocial Behaviors (modified from Mize & Ladd, 1993).

The overall pre- and post-test results indicated that the majority of KIP students improved more in social skills, had more self-control, showed greater decrease in problem behaviors, had fewer internalizing and externalizing problem behaviors, and showed higher cooperation than the control group. Observation data had shown that KIP students also had more socially appropriate behaviors and fewer non-social behaviors than control subjects.

Both findings of Battistich et al. (1990) and Gotlieb et al. (1993) implied that the performance on the social competence and behavioral adjustment of children who have attended a preschool programme that emphasizes on social, emotional and prosocial behavioral development as encouraging. In Gotlieb et al. (1993)’s study, however, parents and community interference were involved. It would be more challenging to exclude parenting style and attachment or community involvement so that the findings would be the result of programme influence alone.

Dunn and Kontos (1997) also examined recent researches on developmentally appropriate practice and socioemotional and cognitive development. The findings indicated that child-initiated programmes were associated with higher levels of cognitive functioning, had higher association with better stress and motivation scores. Dunn and Kontos (1997) also indicated that studies on a didactic approach did not necessary promote children’s academic skills, and suggested that children might not academically benefit from developmentally appropriate practices in the long run. While
academic environments were associated with higher levels of achievement, this achievement might have bad effect on the child.

Burts, Harts, Renee, Charlesworth, Fleege and Mosley (1990) (also see Burts, Harts, Charlesworth, Fleege, Mosley, & Thomasson, 1992) revealed that kindergarten children in a developmentally inappropriate classroom exhibited significantly more stress behaviors compared to children in a developmentally appropriate classroom. A total of 204 kindergarten children in six developmentally appropriate and six developmentally inappropriate classrooms were observed for behaviors indicative of stress. Two instruments were used. The classroom practices were identified using a modified version of teacher questionnaire that was based on the NAEYC guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice as cited by Charlesworth, Hart, Burts and Hernandez (1992), and a Checklist for Rating Developmentally Appropriate Practice in Kindergarten Classrooms (NAYEC, 1992). To document children’s stress behaviors, observers were trained to use a scan sampling procedure (Altmann, 1992) along with the Classroom Child Stress Behavior instruments (Burts, Hart, Charlesworth, & Kirk, 1990).

Findings indicated that the 101 children in inappropriate classrooms exhibited significantly more stress behaviors compared to the 103 children in appropriate classrooms. Race and socioeconomic status (SES) differences indicated that there were more stress behaviors in lower SES black children than in lower SES white children. Marginal gender differences were noted. Males in inappropriate classrooms displayed more stress behaviors than males in appropriate classrooms.
After reviewing the above mentioned empirical studies, it is more confident now to conclude that teacher-directed instruction approach has more potential negative outcomes than the child-initiated learning approach on the socioemotional aspect of preschool children.

Egerston (1987) highlighted that many kindergarten curricula in the United States that are now being geared towards child-initiated activities rather than academic oriented or the kinds of programme that once only conceived of child-centered play activities. Child-initiated learning programme promotes a holistic approach of all aspects of child development.

The following studies are related to Montessori programme. In the first part of study, Stephens (1973) had found that there were significant differences between different socio-economic variables among early school age children, except for ethnicity. The findings are consistent with Yong (1993) relating to the research areas of socio-economic status and ethnicity. The second part of the study examined the effects of four different kinds of preschool programme on the development of internal control expectancies from the beginning to the end of the school years. There were four programmes involved, i.e., (a) Head Start, (b) Montessori, (c) parent cooperative nursery programme, and (d) a non-Head Start but federally funded compensatory programme.

A total of 114 sample was identified. The subjects for the Head Start programme included five boys and 15 girls (all black and all disadvantaged), eight boys and six girls in the Montessori programme (one black and the rest white), nine boys and
13 girls in the parent cooperative nursery (all white, all middle class), and 27 boys and 33 girls in the compensatory programme (all black and disadvantaged).

Although the results were not significant, the general trend was that the Montessori group scored the highest increase in locus of control expectancies, followed by parents cooperative group, compensatory, and Head Start respectively. This study, however, did not strongly support the hypothesis that the Montessori programme contribute to a better desire of internal competency because of its many setbacks. The insignificant results were probably due to small sample sizes, attrition, and uncontrolled sampling variables. Also, an one-month experience in the respective programmes was just too short to determine if there was any significant effect. Although this study does not examine the socioemotional factors, the research give an insight relating to a Montessori programme. Moreover, research which deals with middle class children in a preschool setting like Stephens’ study is limited. Thus, more researches need to be carried out since the outcomes of Montessori setting on children’s socioemotional behaviors have not been extensively studied.

In another study, McKinnon, Flieger and Patterson (1982) also compared the influences of Montessori preschool programme with the nursery/day care and non-preschoolers among the middle class children. Preschool Programme Observation Checklist (McKinnon et al., 1982), and Preschool Programme Checklist (McKinnon et al., 1982) were used to identify preschools, nurseries and day care centers. Parents were interviewed, using the Developmental Profile II (DP II)(Alpern, Boll, & Shearer, 1982). DP II has five scales: physical, self-help, social, academic, and communication that compared the present development of the child with child’s chronological age. Parents
of 60 Montessori preschoolers, and parents of 91 children from some form of preschool other than Montessori, with a further 50 who had no preschool background were interviewed. Besides interviews, parents and teachers also rated the performance of the child using Parent Questionnaire and Teacher Questionnaire (McKinnon et al., 1982) on language, self-help, social, motor and academic skills as well as parents’ occupation and education level, full/half-day programme attendance and reasons for choosing the particular school.

The sample was chosen based on age, attendance of preschool and social class. The subject ages ranged from 64 to 128 months who had at least one year experience in these schools (three or more days per week, either half or full day). Preschoolers and nonpreschoolers both were the residents of suburban, middle class areas.

Analysis of variance on the profile scores from the ages of five to nine years had shown that there were no significant differences between Montessori, nursery preschoolers and nonpreschoolers in terms of academic and motor scores, social development and all areas of development. There were also no significant differences found between Montessori’s, nursery preschoolers’, and non-preschoolers’ scores when all age levels were combined on each of the five profile scales.

While the parents of children who attended Montessori school rated high on social scores, teachers rated them lower on social, motor skills and academic mean scores than did nursery and no preschool experience. Also, parents of Montessori rated their children slightly higher on mean social scores than did the parents who had children in other preschools and had not attended any preschools. The authors
concluded this result might be due to the "self-fulfilling prophecy" effect because 75% of Montessori parents chose Montessori because of its philosophy.

This study implies that enriched home and parents' beliefs are more influential than the type of preschool programme. The length of time spent in preschool appears to be of no consequence to the performance of the middle class as measured by DP II. Again, this study is generally indicated that middle-class children in the primary grades, regardless of preschool background, seem to function at the same level. However, the instrument (i.e. DP II) could only measure the maximum age of 114 months, the significance of the finding was not reliable for children who exceeded 114-month-old. Since the interviews were conducted at home, distractions such as telephone calls, the presence of young children, etc, might affect the validity of the study too.

In a very recent longitudinal study done by Glenn (1999), he found that a Montessori programme was moderately related to positive life-long learning and self-development. A number of 45 Montessori students with an average age of 18 years were participated in this study. The findings showed that learning and the striving for self-development were manifested by a strong desire for self-understanding, general personality development, self-direction and discipline, and a strong positive attitude toward social-interactive activities. There were also strong evidence that participants with a Montessori education would be at least as successful as the general population.

Some developmentalists, however, criticized that the Montessori approach neglects children's social development. Montessori method is seen as putting too much emphasis on the individualism and too little emphasis upon group work (Chattin-
McNichols, 1998). However, Flynn (1990) has found that there is no interference of children's opportunities to associate with others in a Montessori programme. Orem (1974) asserts that Montessori environment offers far more opportunity for constructive socialization because competitiveness is not encouraged. Orem (1974) regards the prepared environment as a miniature society in which each child has the opportunity to develop collective interest. Cooperation and concern for the group welfare can be nurtured by helping each other in the upgraded prepared environment. The findings of a longitudinal study done by Glenn (1999) also strongly support the correlation of a Montessori programme with positive socioemotional development.

Nonetheless, after careful consideration and justification, this study has chosen a combination of Montessori approach and theme teaching approach to represent the child-initiated learning approach. The characteristics of Montessori/thematic-play programme differ with the common child-centered Montessori approach because this programme also incorporate theme teaching as well.

2.3 The Importance of School Environment towards Socioemotional Development

As indicated by Erikson in his theory, school environment is important in both stages of psychosocial development. The importance of preschool attendance had been established since 1960's. The Perry Preschool Project, for instance, was conducted in Ypsilanti, Michigan with 123 socio-economically deprived children who were born between 1958 and 1962 (Schweinhart & Weikart, 1980). This project was based on the High/Scope Cognitively Oriented Curriculum. It was a child-initiated learning
programme. In this longitudinal study, they found that children who attended the cognitive based preschool programme had shown a stable maintenance of gains of aptitude and academic achievement; and were able to sustain a positive trend of social development in terms of social relationships with classmates, relationship with teachers, less grade detainment, delinquent behaviors, and higher rate of youth employment than children who did not attend preschool. Data were collected using various kinds of instruments, namely, Pupil Behavior Inventory (Vinter, Sarri, Vorwaller, & Shafer, 1966); Ypsilanti Rating Scale; and Youth Interview (based in part on Bachman, O’Malley, & Johnson, 1980). The subjects’ parents were also satisfied with the subjects’ school performance and had higher aspirations for their educational attainment.

In another study, Weikart, Bond and McNeil (1978) did a replica study of Ypsilanti Perry Preschool Project. The replication involved five pairs of experimental (with preschool experience) and control groups (without preschool experience) of children through fourth grade. Although the preschool programme was not systematically documented over the course of the project, the curriculum model involved was the High/Scope Cognitively Oriented Curriculum.

Two instruments were employed to assess the social and emotional development of the children: Ypsilanti Rating Scale- Social Development and Emotional Adjustment Factors (developed by project staffs), and Pupil Behavior Inventory- Socio-Emotional State, Classroom Conduct, Teacher Dependence, and Personal Behavior Scales (Vinter, Sarri, Vorwaller, & Schafe, 1966). Their teachers
from preschools, first, second, and third grades rated the children based on both instruments.

Pre- and post-test result had shown that although the overall patterns of ratings among the elementary-school teachers ratings favored the children who had attended preschool (experimental group) and were more socially and emotionally mature than children without such experience, comparisons between groups were not consistently significant.

This replica study once again failed to differentiate the outcomes of High/Scope Cognitively Orientated Curriculum and various preschool programmes at preschool level. And also, it did not specifically compare the child-initiated learning programme and teacher-directed programme.

Nonetheless, the findings of Schweinhart and Weikart (1980) and Weikart, Bond and McNeil (1978) study have at least two implications. Firstly, the effects of child-initiated learning programmes on socioemotional measures are impressive. Secondly, we know that that preschool experience is critical for one’s school success later. In fact, our government is planning to make preschool attendance compulsory for every child (Abraham, 2000; Vijian, 2000).

Whether preschool children should adopt a child-initiated learning programme remains uncertain. As discussed in the earlier section, researches seem to favour child-initiated learning programmes. Evidences also have indicated that both well-functioning vertical and horizontal relationships are associated with good functioning in the child (Hartup, 1989, Santrock, 1998). If the child's opportunity for constructive socialization with teacher and peers was limited, the child might experience social
inadequacies. Hence, determining an appropriate preschool programme is crucial for the socioemotional development.

Dodge, Goldhammer and Colker (1990) believes that children deal with two specific states, that is, learning to be independent and to practise self-control, and learning to take initiative and assert oneself in socially acceptable ways. In an environment that promotes the socioemotional development of the children, Dodge et al. (1990) states that teachers should be sensitive to the children’s needs and know how to foster positive responses. Dodge et al. (1990) has outlined that teacher shall have frequent contacts with each child, makes positive comments about the children’s play activities, and follows a consistent schedule. These would enhance and develop the sense of trust and belonging in the children. Howes, Hamilton and Philipsen (1988) also have demonstrated that children’s perceptions of their relationships with teachers can be predicted by the quality of their attachment relationships with their first teachers.

Dodge et al. (1990) has also identified that for the children to develop a sense of competence, they should be given developmentally appropriate materials to play with, and by letting them know that their actions will be valued. This kind of environment shall also encourage interactions with peers and adults. As a child grows socially, he or she also learns to appreciate the view of others as well as his or her own opinions. Children will demonstrate prosocial behavior if they have identified and appreciated differences, have accepted some responsibilities for maintaining the classroom environment, have helped others in need, and are willing to learn and respect the rights of others and to share and to take turns with others.
A supportive social environment would also allow children to learn to express their feelings, opinions, and to develop the good mental attitudes. These social skills as they developed, helps to propel the direction of young children's demonstrating both, interest inside or outside the classroom activities, and enthusiasm to learn new activities.

A survey was conducted by Benton-Murray (1994) revealed that kindergarten teachers handled a daily average of 10 classroom disruptions due to fighting, verbal confrontations and disobeying rules. The causes of the problem were identified by observations, interviewed with staffs, daily checklists, and the teacher survey. The information gathered indicating that a major contributor to the frequency of classroom disruptions was the lack of nonviolent problem-solving skills.

A four-step method of conflict resolution was used, along with open-ended stories, art, music, and role play, to teach children to identify their emotions and conflict situations nonviolently. The subjects consisted of 25 kindergarten children. Results of a post-intervention teacher survey revealed a positive trend toward the reduction in the number of disruptive incidents, requiring teacher's intervention as well as an increase in the number of incidents that the children were able to resolve their own conflicts successfully.

In another study, Cook, Senders and Torgerson (1995) examined a programmes for improving student social skills in the three classrooms of kindergarten and second grade in order to reduce the number of problem behaviors. Problem behaviors were documented through teacher observation using a behavioral checklist, discipline related contacts with parents, and the number of discipline referrals. The causes for the
problem behaviors included lack of social skills in students, lack of positive role model, lack of self-esteem, lack of positive parental involvement, media violence, and childhood abuse.

The social skills intervention programme was implemented through direct instruction, conflict resolution, role playing, modeling, and cooperative learning opportunities. The post-data indicated an increase in appropriate behavior and in interpersonal skills.

As discussed in the earlier sections, the outcomes of educational processes of child-initiated learning and teacher-directed instruction preschool programmes on various variables have been extensively studied. However, the findings of the differences of children's social skills and problem behaviors in these programmes are not extensive enough.

The scope of this research is limited to the investigation of socioemotional behaviors in different school settings. An ideal measure of social behavior patterns can be obtained through naturalistic observation because a researcher recording the child's social behaviors outside the social milieu can be biased. However, due to inter-rater reliability, time and money concerns, an alternative indirect measure was considered which involves ratings made by teachers. Walker, Stieber and Eisert (1991) found that teacher rating of the children's social skills proved to be the best predictor of future academic achievement, school adjustment, and delinquency.

Although Eisenberg, Fabes, Murphy, Maszk, Smith and Karbon (1995) and McKinnon et al. (1982) have noted that there is variation between parent's and teacher's rating, teacher's ratings is one of the more appropriate method to evaluate
children's behaviors in school because teachers have close contact with children and interact frequently with them.

Eisenberg et al. (1995) noted that lack of consistency in parents' and teachers' reports was likely due to the fact that both children behaving differently in different settings (i.e. home and school), and parents and teachers focusing on different aspects of emotionality and behavioral regulation. For example, children's prosocial/sociable behavior in school (i.e. popularity, and low social insecurity) was associated with children's emotionality and regulation by adults in the school setting, but was seldom predicted by the adults in the home setting. Similarly, teacher reports on emotionality and regulation were infrequently correlated with parent reports on problem solving behaviors. Teachers tended to associate problem behaviors with disciplining the child whereas parents tended to associate problem behaviors with the maternal measures.

In conclusion, children in the child-initiated learning approach have been shown to have better short- and long-term social, emotional and behavioral development than children in the teacher-directed instruction approach. Researchers have also shown that an appropriate intervention programme was effective in developing desired socioemotional behaviors. Nevertheless, studies specifically geared towards the social skills and problem behaviors aspects need to be further explored. As for gender differences on the socioemotional development, the findings are generally inconclusive.