

Utilization of Teaching/Learning Resources in Teaching Literacy Skills: A Case of Pre-Primary Schools in Bungoma County, Kenya

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Abstract:-The purpose of this study was to investigate the pre-school teachers' utilization of teaching/learning resources to develop literacy skills among preschoolers in Bungoma County. The researcher used a cross-sectional survey approach. The study targeted a population of 290 schools from both private and public schools. Stratified sampling strategy was used to proportionally select a total of 29 ECD centres, a representation of 10% of the targeted schools. Two (2) teachers were picked from each of the fourteen schools selected to participate in the study leading to a total of 58 ECDE teachers. Purposive sampling procedure was used in the study to select all the 14 head teachers from the selected schools. Questionnaires comprising of both open-ended and closed ended inquiries and semi structured interview schedules were used to collect primary data. Qualitative and quantitative data analyses were used throughout the survey. Information was collected through open-ended questions in the questionnaires. Statistical package for social science (SPSS) version was used for data organization. Findings revealed that teaching and learning materials were not sufficient in most primary schools under study. The study concluded that majority of schools did not have resources for teaching and learning literacy skills. However, among the schools which were reported to have such teaching/learning resources did not have sufficient resources for teaching and learning. The overall mean of below 3.0 (mean<3.0) implied that teaching and learning resources were not adequately utilized by teaching in instruction of languages in primary schools under study. The study recommended that the school administration need to push the language department should form departmental guidance and counselling committee composed of HoD language and two teachers. It is recommended that that all stakeholders should be involved in implementation of ECD programmes. These include government, local councils, traditional leaders, political leaders, private sector as well as parents.

Keywords: Teaching/Learning Materials, Literacy Skills, Pre-primary School Children

I. INTRODUCTION

Proficiency in reading and writing has been considered as one of the most reliable indicators of whether a learning child will attain the competence and skills required to accomplish academic success and to contribute actively to society (Wairimu, 2014). This is because early grade reading assist earners enhance their thinking skills, learn to concentrate and improve their vocabulary. Successful reading and writing entails comprehension, fluency and mastery of basic strategies and motivation in reading (Strategic

Marketing & Research, 2013). Thus, teaching in phonological awareness ought to begin in pre-school to enable children learn that written words represent spoken sounds, a process called decoding which involves breaking a word into separate sound. Children need to be explicitly taught how to sound out words into phonemes before decoding (Clark & Douglas, 2011).

The foundation for learning is laid during the first years of life. Therefore, to stimulate learning, children should be provided with appropriate materials, guidance, stimulation and care. During the first two years, critical brain structures develop that affect children's ability to learn. Providing appropriately complex perceptual and motor experiences at an early age favorably affects learning abilities in later life (Kweyu, 2012). Unlike in developing countries where children do not attain the early literacy skills, many schools in Britain have achieved impressive results for their pupils in every challenging situation (Read on Get on, 2014). Lack of suitable learning materials in pre-school centers creates boredom and could lead to anger and aggression without relevant ECD materials; children tend to lack motivational learning. This is because materials induce both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Not only is pre-school education in short supply in Africa, but the quality of schooling has often been far from satisfactory.

Teaching and learning materials have always been inadequate in most ECDE centers. The responsibility of teaching/learning resources development has always been shouldered by teachers without the input of the government. Through Kenya's Session Paper No. 1 of 2005, a comprehensive Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy Framework and Service Standard Guidelines have been developed to ensure that quality services are delivered efficiently and effectively at all times in ECD Centers in Kenya. Nevertheless, the Sessional Paper No. 1 (2005) did not expressly advocate for teaching /learning resource development. There is need for expanding early childhood development activities, exploration of all available instruments of minimum basic learning necessary for a better life (Okudo & Omotuyole, 2013).

There is a huge gap and is growing in availability of resources in Bungoma County due to population growth and stagnant development (Uwezo Kenya, 2011). Although it is

acknowledged that the parents are responsible for planning, developing and managing different early childhood programs, it is beyond the parents in every village of Kenya to properly and adequately do this. The resources mobilization should address availability of learning and playing space and provision of learning equipment and trained teachers and assistant teachers.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the types of teaching/learning resources that pre-primary school teachers utilize to teach literacy skills in Bungoma County.

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Types of Teaching/Learning Resources Used in Teaching Language Activities

Learning materials entail textbooks, other reading materials, equipment and tools used for instruction in the first level of education are chalkboards, maps, scissors and simple science equipment as well as non-durable supplies used by the pupil and teacher, such as notebooks, pencils and chalk. Today, the learning materials used to support teaching cover a wide range of media. Besides books, audio-visual facilities, scientific and technical equipment, and computers have become an integral part of educational practice (Aslam, & Kingdon, 2011).

Charts and graphs are drawn on Manila paper including any printed material which are displayed or exhibited to present information. They provide learners with visual information on new practices. According to the research, models such as toys, cars and dolls help the learner develop manipulative skills. Learning/teaching objects such as toys, cars and dolls are vital for learning, children need different skills while playing with models for example when a child was playing with a doll (Okudo & Omotuyole, 2013). According to the research, models were small copies of real materials and objects such as toys, cars and dolls which were vital for learning children needed different skills while playing with models for example when a child was playing with a doll. Models are only used when the real objects are too big or not available. Models should be large enough to be seen by all the students including those at the back of the class. Models are only used when the real objects are too big or not available (Okudo & Omotuyole, 2013).

Audio/visual materials are used to transmit sound or optical images to support hearing or seeing. Sounds and images can be transmitted using computers, LCD projectors and television or film projectors (Amollo, 2005). ECDE teachers may expose children to appropriate teaching/learning materials using audio/visual equipment as cited. The teaching/learning equipment stimulate child learning particularly as a methodology to break class monotony. On the other hand the audio only materials communicate refer to messages of the ear stimulus only; meaning the message was vocalized without visual stimuli. Examples are radio and sound tapes

Audio-visual materials are mostly used in audio-visual arts subjects such as fine arts, crafts and music. In general, art embraces any human effort to be creative and to express oneself freely through the medium of visual symbols. Such expression may, for example, include the individual's view of beauty, reality or agony in a given situation (Mbiti, 2007).

Children were exposed to picture which included printing and photograph of different objects, animals and feature to enhance their learning (Howes & Ritchie, 2002). According to researchers, pictures made learning more interesting and meaningful. These enabled each child to grow and learn at their pace and time. Graphic designs on the other hand are the resources that are drawn for example charts (pie-charts, bar charts, historical and wall charts, posters and maps). Charts and graphs can be drawn on Manila paper including any printed material which can be displayed or exhibited to present information. They can provide learners with visual information on new practices.

We have ICT materials that can be used in computer or on radio like the CDs, flash discs. The computers are used to display the slides which are either saved on CDs or flash discs. Slides are photographs projected on to a screen by a slide projector. Slides can be excellent teaching materials and must therefore be prepared well in advance. We have ICT materials that can be used in computer or on radio like the CDs, flash discs. The computers are used to display the slides which are either saved on CDs or flash discs (Narayan, 2000).

In poor countries where books are scarce and teachers are often untrained, textbooks assume wider importance than they do in more developed countries. Then the textbook becomes the most important, if not the only means of teaching. Without the textbook, the skills, concepts and content required by the curriculum cannot be taught. In the absence of other sources of information, the textbook becomes the most important and often the only source of content for the teacher and the sole basis for testing and assessment (Vander Ven, 2008).

III. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design which involved describing, recording, analyzing and interpreting conditions that exist. Descriptive research design was significant because it provided an in-depth examination of the phenomenon of the study through ascertaining attitudes, values and opinions.

Study Population

The study targeted a population of 290 schools from both private and public schools.

This study targeted a total of 105 respondents comprising of 90 ECDE Teachers and 15 Head teachers from 15 Pre-primary schools in Ndivisi division Bungoma County.

Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Bungoma County was sub-divided into three divisions and aligned with the types of schools, both located in rural and urban centres. Stratified sampling strategy was used to proportionally select a total of 29 ECD centres, a representation of 10% of the targeted schools. Two (2) teachers were picked from each of the fourteen schools selected to participate in the study leading to a total of 58 ECDE teachers. Purposive sampling procedure was used in the study to select all the 14 head teachers from the selected schools.

Data Instruments

Questionnaires comprising of both open-ended and closed ended inquiries structured in accordance with the study objective were used to collect information from teachers and head teachers. Questionnaires were the most preferred instrument of data collection owing to the fact that they are easy to administer hence it saves on time and enhance credibility. Semi structured interview schedules were used to collect primary and in-depth data from the head teachers and parents/guardians. The secondary data was generated from critical analysis of books, journals, newspapers, conference proceedings, thesis and dissertations, internet, magazines and archival sources.

Data Collection Procedures and Analysis

The researcher made a visit to the sampled schools to brief the heads of schools about the research and set date for data collection. The researcher personally administered questionnaires to the respondents on a drop and pick-later method. Individual face to face interview approach was used to obtain information and data from the head-teachers and parents/guardians. Completed questionnaires were assembled, edited for completeness and consistency, coded using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) and interpreted in relation to the objectives of the research study. The data was put in appropriate tables first before being used in descriptive statistical graphs. The findings were quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed; qualitative analysis is summary by explanation of the respondent's view about the problem and views compared to come up with an explanation about the problem under study and quantitative analysis included frequency distribution tables, percentages, pie charts and graphs which were then used to present the information.

IV. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This section presents the data collected from the field and the data analysis procedures done to achieve the purpose of the study. Table 1 gives a presentation of findings on the availability of instructional materials.

Table 1: Availability of Instructional Materials as Reported by Teachers

Instructional Materials	Availability of the Teaching/Learning Resources					
	Have adequate materials		Have instructional but not inadequate		Not available	
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Improvised teaching materials	0	0	44	88.0	6	12.0
Modeling	5	10.0	37	74.0	8	16.0
Audio-visual materials	0	0	18	36.0	32	64.0
Audio only	6	12.0	44	88.0	0	0
Pictures and graphic designs	14	28.0	36	72.0	0	0
Play equipment	7	14.0	25	50.0	18	36.0
Community resources	0	0	21	42.0	29	58.0
Chalk board	17	34.0	33	66.0	0	0
Wall papers	0	0	41	82.0	9	18.0
Posters	5	10.0	37	74.0	8	16.0
Compute games	0	0	2	4.0	48	96.0
Written words and symbols from text books	6	12.0	44	88.0	0	0
Anthologies and poetry	0	0	14	28.0	36	72.0
Shapes and colours	18	36.0	32	64.0	0	0
Mean	5.571429		30.57147		13.85714	

Results in Table 1 indicated that teaching and learning materials were not sufficient in most primary schools under study. The results indicated that majority 48(96.0%) of

teachers who participated in the study said that computer games were not available in their schools. Another high proportion 36(72.0%) of teachers reported that anthologies

and poetry books were not available. The results further indicated that 32(64.0%) of teachers reported that audio-visual materials were not available in the schools. Teachers who reported that their schools had instructional materials but not inadequate had the highest mean score (mean=30.57147). Nevertheless, teachers who reported that their schools had adequate instructional materials had the lowest mean score (mean=30.57147). These findings imply that most schools did not have resources for teaching and learning literacy skills. However, among the schools which were reported to have such teaching/learning resources did not have sufficient resources for teaching and learning. The findings inferred that teaching and learning of literacy skills was not enhanced because of the gap related to lack of adequate and basic resources. According to Githuthwa (2011) who asserted that learning is strengthened when there are enough reference materials such as textbooks, stationary and teaching aids. Thus shortage of textbooks and materials had harmful effect on satisfactory teaching and learning of literacy and reading

skills. The findings corroborate with those of Ng'asike (2012) which revealed a strong positive significant relationship between instructional resources and academic performance in literacy skills among children at pre-school level. Effective teaching cannot take place within the classroom if basic instructional resources are not adequate.

Importantly, following the advancement of technology and teaching pedagogies, the use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) has become the vital part in teaching and learning literacy skills. However, based on the findings, most schools did not have ICT facilities including computer games. These findings agree with those of Aslam and Kindom (2011) which postulate that besides books, audio-visual facilities, scientific and technical equipment and computers have become an integral part of educational practice.

Head teachers were asked to state the extent to which teachers uses their mentioned teaching and learning resources and the results were summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Extent of Use of Teaching and Learning Resources as Reported by Head Teachers

	Material		Very often	Often	Rarely	Very rarely	Mean
1.	Improvised teaching materials	F	1	4	16	4	2.64
		%	4.0	16.0	64.0	16.0	
2.	Audio-visual materials	F	1	2	8	14	2.29
		%	4.0	8.0	32.0	52.0	
3	Pictures and graphic designs	F	15	8	2	0	3.87
		%	60.0	32.0	8.0	0	
4	Community resources	F	0	3	17	5	2.89
		%	0	12.0	68.0	20.0	
6	Compute games	F	0	0	7	18	1.89
		%	0	0	28.0	72.0	
7	Anthologies and poetry	F	0	2	9	14	2.33
		%	0	8.0	36.0	56.0	
8	Play materials	F	0	2	18	5	2.41
		%	0	8.0	72.0	20.0	
9	Written words and symbols from text books	F	13	7	5	0	3.11
		%	52.0	28.0	20.0	0	
10	Wall papers	F	3	2	12	4	3.43
		%	15.0	8.0	55.0	16.0	
11	Chalk board	F	25	0	0	0	4.24
		%	100	0	0	0	
Overall Mean							2.6787

N=25

Results in Table 2 indicated that all 25(100%) the head teachers reported that teachers used chalkboard to facilitate learning (mean=4.24). However, such teaching/learning resources as; computer games, play materials, anthologies and poetry, audio-visual materials and improvised teaching

materials had relatively lower mean scores (mean<3.0) implying that they were either rarely used or never used at all. Such resources as pictures and graphic designs, written words and symbols from text books and wall papers were averagely utilized by teachers in teaching literacy skills because they

had mean scores of above 3.0 (mean>3.0). The overall mean of below 3.0 (mean<3.0) implied that teaching and learning resources were not adequately utilized by teaching in instruction of languages in primary schools under study. From the foregoing, it can be deduced from the findings that teachers do not fully fulfill their roles by exploring all the learning activities associated with teaching literacy skills in pre-schools. This is in conformity with the findings of the study by Murundu et al. (2014) which found that teachers do not fulfill some of the roles specified to them in the integration of play during learning.

As Gichuba, Opatsa and Nguchu (2009) point out, the teacher is supposed to guide and set the stage for the child to learn. With appropriate professional development, preschool administrators and teachers can prioritize the procurement of certain basic teaching/learning resources that allow all young children to prosper during the preschool years. These findings also indicate that the head teachers and the teachers are largely compliant on the use of effective teaching resources in the activity areas taught in preschool.

V. CONCLUSION

Most schools did not have resources for teaching and learning literacy skills. However, among the schools which were reported to have such teaching/learning resources did not have sufficient resources for teaching and learning. The overall mean of below 3.0 (mean<3.0) implied that teaching and learning resources were not adequately utilized by teaching in instruction of languages in primary schools under study.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations of the study are based on the key findings of the study in relation to the utilization of teaching/learning resources on literacy skills in Bungoma County, Kenya.

1. It is recommended that that all stakeholders should be involved in implementation of ECD programmes. These include government, local councils, traditional leaders, political leaders, private sector as well as parents.
2. The school administration, with the help of local leaders should sensitize the community on the importance of education and the role of parents on improving the learners' performance in languages.
3. Teachers should develop positive attitudes towards education, which in turn would influence the curriculum implementation in ECDE centres.
4. To motivate teachers to improvise, the schools BoGs in conjunction with county quality and County Quality Assurance Standards Officer (CQASO) should develop a county language panel where teachers can present their improvised resources and how they can be used to teach various topics.

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