

Parent's Level of Education and pupils' reading readiness: A case of rural pre-schools in Kenya

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Abstract: This study explored the relationship between parents' level of education and their children's reading readiness achievement focusing on both parents' level of education. The study adopted a descriptive research design which allowed for in-depth examination of the study variables. This study employed Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. The study adopted stratified random sampling to sample schools as public and private pre-primary schools, urban and rural schools. Systematic random sampling was used to further select the schools to participate in the study. Finally, 12% of the pupils were randomly chosen to be included in the study. The study selected 96 public Pre-Primary school pupils and 16 private pre-primary school pupils to participate in the study. Questionnaires enabled the researcher to collect data from the parents and reading readiness checklists were utilized to collect data from sampled pupils. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics with the help of statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 20. The findings of the study revealed that the high level of parents education positively contributes to their children's reading readiness achievement. Large co-relation was found between parents' level of education and reading readiness achievement. On the basis of the findings, the study recommended introduction of awareness campaigns, use of social media for community education and adult education programs.

Key words: Parent's level of education, reading readiness, reading, pre-primary schools achievement, pre-primary school pupils.

I. INTRODUCTION

Reading is the ability to understand words used in a text for personal advancement. Mike pike (1995) claimed that reading is the 'a gate pass' to all other languages. He believed that reading can enable one understand the world hidden in a text and beyond. Numerous studies (Guthrie, J. T., Wigfield, A., & You, W, 2012) asserted that reading is a multidimensional cognitive process of building meaning of the texts written in different sources. However, many children and adults fall below a basic level of reading. Around 14% of US adults have a 'below basic' reading competency and 21% have a reading competency below a reading age of eleven (NIL, 2015). The situation in the US is not unique, in the UK, 16% of UK adults are not able to read and write (NLT, 2011) and the UK has one of the highest youth functionally illiteracy rates in the developed world (OECD, 2015).

Available studies globally have shown a significant relationship between parental level of education and reading readiness. A study in USA by Isaacs and Magnuson (2011) used data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Birth

(ECLS-B) Cohort to establish the relationship between maternal level of education and children's school readiness in terms of academic skills. The study established that, mother's level of education increases the reading score of the children. The study focused on maternal education and not on both parents. The current study tried to determine the influence of between both parents' level of education on reading readiness of pupils in pre-primary schools.

Manan, David and Dumanig (2015) conducted a study in Pakistan on dysfunction between language policy and children socio-cultural ecology. The study employed a mixed methodology and a sample from 245 students, 11 principals and 8 teachers. The study found out that less educated families have less exposure to language and they meet language passively. The study didn't show in which grade it was conducted and how less exposed to language influence the pupils reading readiness. The current study was conducted in pre-primary and it focused on reading readiness of pupils in pre-primary schools.

Ngorosho (2011) did a study in Tanzania to investigate the role of home environment in literacy skills (reading, writing). He used samples of children from grades 2 to 6 and measured their reading and phonological awareness ability while parents responded to questionnaire based interview. The results showed significant relationship between mother's education and reading ability. Another study by Ngaruiya (2013) on family socio-economic status in four districts; Westlands, Lari, Kasarani, and Ganze in Kenya, used comparative and correlation research design to determine the impact of SES on children's language. She pointed out that a mother's education level has a significant relationship with school readiness. The study dealt with school readiness but didn't provide information on reading readiness. A study by Feitelson and Goldstein (2000) revealed that illiterate parents tend to have lower expectations regarding education of their children. Martin (2012) reported that highly educated parents continue to transmit their advantages to their children, both by sending them to pre-primary schools and by encouraging their school enrolment.

The current study showed how the parents level of education influence reading readiness of the pre-primary school pupils. In a different study Wambiri and Ndani (2015) pointed out that parents' level of education had a significant relationship with emergent reading development of the children. This means that the higher the parents' level of education the

higher the reading level of the children while the lower the parents' level of education the lower the reading level of the children. This shows that the parents' level of education influences the reading ability of the pre-primary school pupils. This study looked at the influence of parents' level of education on reading, the current study focused on influence parents' level of education on reading readiness of pupils in pre-primary schools.

In addition these studies looked at the influence of parental level of education on either the father's or the mother's level of education but not on both parents. In addition, in the studies reviewed, no study was conducted in pre-primary schools. The current study was conducted in pre-primary schools in Siaya County. The current study focused on both parents' level of education and its influence on reading readiness of pre-primary school pupils.

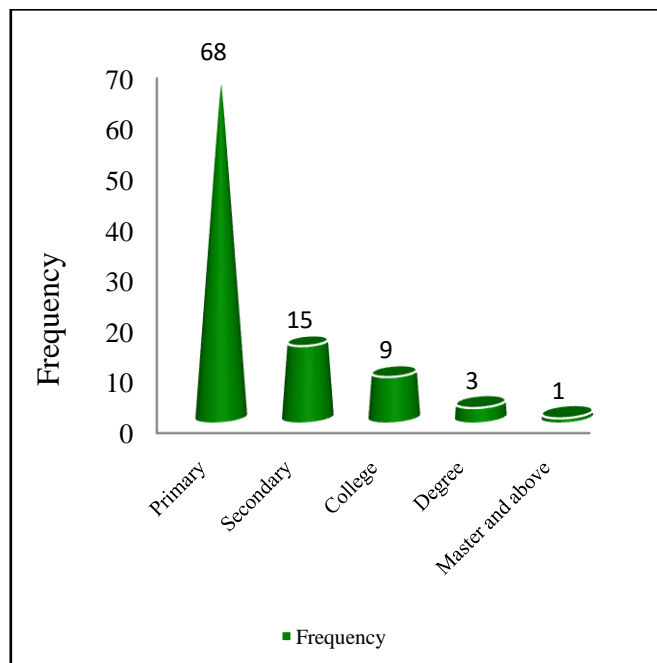
II. METHODOLOGY

To address the above questions the study employed descriptive survey design. The study design was found appropriate to collect information about people's attitudes, opinions, habits, or any other education or social issue (Orodho and Kombo, 2002). Participant selection is a significant aspect in research process, therefore to collect reliable and accurate data. The researcher employed stratified sampling to divide the population in two subgroups, that's rural schools and urban schools. This is because the study area has some population in the urban and majority are in the rural with diverse socio-economic status. Systematic random sampling was then applied to sample the schools to be involved in the study. Finally, all the pupils in Pre-Primary II in the sampled schools were assessed in reading readiness by the researcher in assistance with the class teacher. Finally, 12% of the pupils were randomly selected to participate in a reading readiness activity. The parents of the pupils who were selected to participate in the study were involved in the study. The researcher generated questionnaires for the parents, the parents were invited to school to fill the questionnaire and some that could not manage to come to school, their children took them the questionnaire. A follow was made to ensure that the questionnaire taken to the parents are all returned.

III. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

For purposes of this study, levels of education for parents were determined by the highest educational certificate attained, i.e. primary school certificate, secondary school certificate, College certificate, Master and above. Results were presented in figure 1.1

Figure 1.1: Parents' Level of Education



Results in Figure 1.1 show that, 68 parents had attained a primary education certificate, 15 had a secondary school certificate and nine had a college certificate. Three parents had a university degree while only one had a master degree or above. As has been indicated by the findings in figure 1.1 many parents at least had primary education, the next section established the reading readiness ability of the pupils in relation to their parent's level of education. This is illustrated in table 1.1

Influence of Parents' Level of Education on Pre-primary School Pupils Reading Readiness

The researcher sought to find out the influence of parents' level of education on pre-primary school pupils' reading readiness. Parents' levels of education were categorized as primary, secondary, college, degree and master and above. A questionnaire was used to get information on parents' level of education. The parents' level of education was compared to the level of reading readiness attained by their pre-primary school pupil. The reading readiness levels were categorized as level one, two and three. The researcher used a reading readiness test which was had three sections. Section one consisted of letters 'a b c.....'. Section two consisted of two-syllable words like tap, cup whereas level three consisted words with more than two syllables. Pupils who were able to read section one letters only were considered to be in level one in reading readiness. The pupils who could read section one and then section two only were considered to be in level two in reading readiness. Lastly, the pupils who were able to read section one, two and three were considered to be in level three in reading readiness. The relationship between the pupils' reading readiness ability and their parent's level of education is shown in table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Influence of Parents' Level of Education on Pre-primary School Pupils Reading Readiness

Level of Education * The ability of the child to read Cross-tabulation					
Count					
		The ability of the child to read			Total
		Level One	Level two	Level three	
Level of Education	Primary	43	18	7	68
	Secondary	7	6	2	15
	College	3	3	3	9
	Degree	0	1	2	3
	Master and above	0	0	1	1
Total		53	28	15	96

Results from Table 1.1 show that, most of the children whose parents had only attained primary certificate were concentrated in level one of the reading readiness test. The table shows that 43 of 68 children could not go beyond level one while only seven (7) of the children in the same cohort were able to reach level three. Conversely, children from households where parents had a college certificate and above had better reading readiness levels. This implies that parental education level had a strong influence on the reading readiness of children. As has been indicated by the findings in table 1.1 pupils from households where parents had higher levels of education were in level two and three in reading readiness ability, the study also sought to find out the correlation between parent's level of education and pupils reading readiness. Table 1.2 below show the correlation.

Table 1.2 Relationship between parent's level of education and pupils reading readiness.

Symmetric Measures					
		Value	Asymp. Std. Error ^a	Approx. T ^b	Approx. Sig.
Interval by Interval	Pearson's R	.376	.101	3.934	.000 ^c
Ordinal by Ordinal	Spearman Correlation	.310	.102	3.162	.000 ^c
N of Valid Cases		96			
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.					
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.					
c. Based on normal approximation.					

The table show that the Person rho=0.376. Though modest, rh shows that there was appositve relationship between parent's level of education and children reading readiness in Siaya County, Kenya.

The findings of this study are related to those of Manan, David and Dumanig's (2015) study in Pakistan on dysfunction between language policy and children socio-cultural ecology. The study employed a mixed methodology and a sample from 245 students, 11 principals and 8 teachers. The study found

out that less educated families have less exposure to language and they meet language passively.

The findings of the study are also in line with Feitelson and Goldstein (2000) study which revealed that illiterate parents tend to have lower expectations regarding education of their children. Martin (2012) reported that highly educated parents continue to transmit their advantages to their children, both by sending them to pre- primary schools and by encouraging their school enrolment. Therefore low education in parents would also be duplicated in the children. This supports the findings of the current study which showed an influence of parents' level of education on reading readiness level of their children..

The findings of this study are also consistent with Ngorosho's (2011) study in Tanzania to investigate the role of home environment in literacy skills (reading, writing). He used samples of children from grades 2 to 6 and measured their reading and phonological awareness ability while parents responded to questionnaire based interview. The results showed a significant relationship between mother's education and reading ability.

The findings of this study are also in agreement with those of Ngaruiya's (2013) study on family socio-economic status in four districts; Westlands, Lari, Kasarani, and Ganze in Kenya which used comparative and correlation research design to determine the impact of SES on children's language and pointed out that mothers education levels have a significant relationship with school readiness. Ngaruiya (2013) found out that mothers' education levels have a significant relationship with school readiness. The findings are in agreement with the current study.

IV. CONCLUSION

This paper discussed parent's level of education as a factor that affects reading readiness competency of children. The study revealed that children from families where the parent's had a higher level of education were a level higher in reading readiness competency compared to children from families where the parents had lower level of education. This implies that a parent with higher level of education can comfortably assist a child in various academic tasks; they are also in a better position to understand their role in the child's reading related development.

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