

Amount of time Spent by pre-primary children in viewing television and Achievement in Learning Activities in Kangema Sub-County, Murang'a County

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to establish the extent to which pre-primary children view television in Kangema sub-county. The study used survey research design and was guided by Gadberry's, displacement theory. The study was conducted in Kangema Constituency of Murang'a County. The target population was made up of the 320 preprimary school children in the 10 selected primary schools in the region. Random sampling was used to obtain the sample of 60 children and 60 parents. One teacher from each of the schools participated in the research. All sampled respondents who participated in the research were 60 children, 60 parents and 10 teachers making a response rate of 100 percent. Data was collected by use of questionnaires for the teachers, interview schedules for the parents and observation checklist for pre-primary school children. Quantitative and qualitative data were collected on variables related to the influence of TV programmes on performance of pre-school children's. Qualitative data were analyzed according to study themes while descriptive statistics namely frequencies, means, percentages were used to analyze quantitative data. Frequency tables as well as bar graphs were used to present information obtained. The analysis established that majority of children watch television. The study recommended a national policy be put in place to guide television program transmitters regarding how they can make programs bearing in mind the needs of pre-primary school children. Parents have to be sensitized regarding amount of time their children are left to watch television and how to take appropriate action to prevent children from being addicted to television.

Keywords: Television, Activity level, Pre-primary children

I. INTRODUCTION

Findings on children's reading achievement indicates that a significant number of children in several parts of the world are not able to read at their class levels (Maduekwe, 2010). In Africa, similar studies conducted in Uganda and Tanzania recorded poor numeracy and literacy skills. Specifically, in Tanzania the study found that, 92.3% of the standard three pupils could not read a class two text in English (Research Triangle Institute, 2010). In Uganda, the study found that 98% of the pupils in class three could not read a class two story in English and that 28% could not read a class two text by the time they completed primary schooling (RTI, 2010).

Further, there has been an outcry over poor examination performance in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE), particularly English, Kiswahili and mathematics as attested by the audit of the 2012 examination (Gichobi, 2013). The audit report indicated that in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE); some of the standard eight candidates could not write simple English and Kiswahili words.

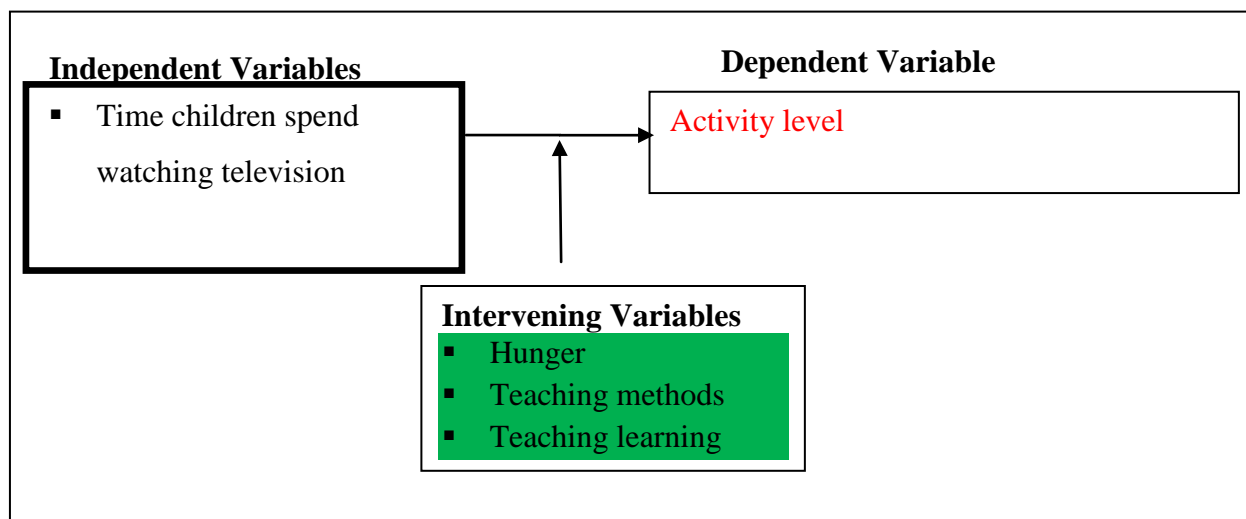
Locally, available studies on television viewing have focused mainly on social behaviour and sociability in play (Gitahi, 2011; Ahinda, 2010) but the influence of television on performance in learning activities at the pre-primary level has not received due attention locally. Hence, there is a need for a study specifically focusing on influence of television on performance in learning activities at the pre-primary level. Children do not have time to comprehend what was seen compared to slower and more deliberately paced content such as story telling session. Although these studies give insight on influence of television on children, they did not investigate influence of television on children in Kenya hence this study will be necessary.

According to Nganda (2007), parents have little information on the impact of television stimulation's on their children. Continued lack of adequate knowledge and comprehensive information on how television viewing affects children's performance on pre-primary activities in Kenya may make it difficult to develop relevant policies, strategies and programmes to guide parents on how to regulate television viewing effectively. Consequently, parents may continue failing to adequately and appropriately regulate amount the of television viewing and in-turn negatively influencing children's literacy development at this critical level of development. As a result, many pre-primary children may continue to perform poorly in reading, and subsequently in all academic subjects. Therefore, there is need for a study specifically focusing on the extent to which pre-primary children view television in Kangema sub-county, Murang'a County.

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish the extent to which pre-primary children view television in Kangema sub-county.

1.2 Conceptual Framework



II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Pre-Primary Children and Television Watching

Television is a technology that is dynamic bringing with it unforeseen problems. Children spend 18,000 hours watching television by the time they graduate high schools and only 13,000 hours in a classroom (Bianchi & Robinson, 2012). Vittrup (2009) observes that children who have televisions in their bedrooms view more television compared to those without. Furthermore, a study conducted by Hofferth and Sandberg (2010) revealed that ninety eight percent (98%) of U.S.A homes have one television set and ninety percent (90%) of U.S.A homes have two or more television sets leading to 98% of American families watching television. Kraiser Family Foundation (2016) surveyed more than 1000 parents with children ages six months to six years. The results of the survey found that, on average, 73% of children are watching about an hour a day of television daily and that 65% lives in homes where the television is on half the time, although no one is watching and 36% stays in homes where the television is left on most of the time. Seventy seven percent (77%) of children are able to turn on the TV without assistant. Seventy one percent (71%) of children can request for videos. Sixty seven percent (67%) can ask for specific programs and sixty two percent (62%) can use the remote to change channels.

Common Sense Media (2011) built on the previous studies and administered a telephone and an online survey to learn about viewing habits. This study found that sixty five percent (65%) of children view television daily for an average of an hour and half and that 39% live in an environment where the television is on almost all the time (Common Sense Media,

2011). A study done by Tompkins (2005) revealed that 54.5% of American families turn on to television in the evening at mealtime. However, these studies show the percentage of children watching television in developed countries. A study focusing on percentage of children watching television in Kenya will be necessary.

In Kenya, there is irrefutable massive explosion in the industry of communication. Unlike before the 1980s when there was one television channel (VOK), there has been an influx of television stations and many more are still coming. In addition, today, television is present in many households. Television is taking over, in shaping the characters of preschool children, (Canton & Wilson 2013). Moreover, many parents, educators, policy makers, health care professionals and other stakeholders are expressing concern about the television viewing and young children (Gitahi, 2011).

A study conducted by Steadman (2008), puts Kenyans' televisions' viewers at 73% or 15.37 million. This number exempt children because they may not be polled. However, it is reasonable to presume that seventy-three (73%) of Kenyan children, under 15 or about 11.5million now has access to television. Expanding rural electrification and television sets that can be powered by car batteries has contributed to enormous growth of television viewership, in particular among peri-urban and in rural areas. These studies however did not adequately ascertain the percentage of children who watch television in Kenya and specifically in Kangema constituency.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Target Population

This study used survey research design. The design was appropriate for the study because it attempted to investigate whether television viewing is associated to children's performance in pre-primary school's activities as a result of consistent viewing of television over a duration of time. The study targeted all sixty five public schools in Kangema constituency. This study was carried out in the pre-primary classes in registered primary schools in Kangema Sub County in Murang'a County. The pre-primary children in selected 10 primary schools in Kangema Sub County made the population of this research. The population of study was the 320 children in the pre-primary classes in the schools, the children's teachers and parents.

3.2 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

Pre-primary schools for the study were selected using random sampling from all the pre-primary schools in Kangema Sub County. To accomplish this, the researcher printed out the names of schools in the Sub County and cut them out in small pieces of papers, folded the papers and reshuffled them in a container. The researcher picked randomly the required number of papers representing the sample size. Pre-primary children from each selected pre-primary schools were selected using simple random sampling.

Pre-primary schools' teachers were selected using simple random sampling. The researcher picked randomly one paper to represent the sample size of teachers per pre-primary school. Simple random sampling was used because every member of the population had an equal chance of been selected. Only one parent or guardian per selected child was interviewed. Parents were requested to decide whether it was the father or mother who would participate in the study.

3.3 Research Instruments

The study used both open and close ended questionnaires which were administered to the ECD teachers. Closed ended questions were used in an effort to save time and money as well as to facilitate an easier analysis as they are in immediate usable form; while the open ended questions were used as they encourage the respondent to give an in-depth and fill response without feeling held back in revealing of any information. The researcher employed an interview to parents in data collection to establish the background and attitude towards TV watching and children's performance in pre-primary school's activities. The researcher also used structured observation checklist to observe the pre-school children's specific behaviour whenever it occurred and recorded it. The observation checklist contains items regarding level of attention span, preschool children's persistence in learning tasks or their activity level in class and their performance in learning activities.

3.4 Pilot Study

Piloting was conducted in two (2) schools with 4 pre-school teachers, 10 parents and 20 children. The subjects involved in the pilot of the study were not included in the main study. The purpose of the pilot study was to pre-test the research instruments so as to ensure that they were well constructed to give consistent results and to remove ambiguities. It also helps in making any necessary modifications in the research tools before undertaking the main study.

3.4.1 Instrument Validity

To establish content validity of the instruments, the researcher used three types of data collection instruments (Interview Schedules, Questionnaire and Observation Checklist). The instruments were tested in order to check their content validity by keenly counterchecking the items against the objectives to be achieved. Test re-test method was done in a span of one week to test the reliability of the instruments.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The visits to pre-primary schools were restricted to weekdays only. Before administering the research instruments, the purpose of the study was explained to each respondent and his or her permission to participate in the study was sought. Questionnaires were administered to pre-primary school teachers in their respective schools by the researcher. The questionnaires were collected after two days.

The head teachers were requested to invite one parent or a guardian of sampled pupils for the interview at an agreed date. The researcher interviewed the parents individually. Parents' interviews was conducted in two days per school. Interviews were administered orally, whenever necessary respondents were requested to provide information to clarify their responses or explain vague answers. All parents turned up for the interview on the agreed date. The whole interview was completed within a month. Parents' responses were recorded at the appropriate part of the interview schedule. Children were observed during learning sessions. In each pre-primary school, the observation was conducted within three days. The observed behaviour was recorded in the appropriate observation schedule.

3.6 Data Processing and Analysis

Data was collected, coded, organized and analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Qualitative data analysis involved describing and explaining the information on teachers whether television viewing is associated to children's performance in pre-primary school's activities. Data from the instruments were analyzed as follows; first, collected data was inspected thoroughly to ensure completeness by identifying mistakes such as wrongly spelt words. Thereafter, the data were sorted into various themes related to the study objectives. The sorted data were then coded, processed, analyzed and tabulated in form of graphs, tables and pie charts with the assistance of Statistical Package for Social Sciences

(SPSS) software version 20. Researcher organized the responses given in order to establish the pattern of the responses and tabulated them appropriately. This information was also used to support the quantitative data in the narrative presentation.

IV. STUDY RESULTS

This section presents the data collected from the field and its analysis based on the achievement of the study objective. Headteachers and teachers in special units were required to give curriculum-based factors related to acquisition of adaptive skills among learners with ID in special units. Findings have been presented in the following sections:

4.1 Extent to Which Pre-primary Children Watch Television in Kangema Sub-County

Findings in this section are in response to the first research objective, which aimed at finding out the proportion of pre-primary children who view television in Kangema sub-county. Figure 1 presents the summary of the findings.

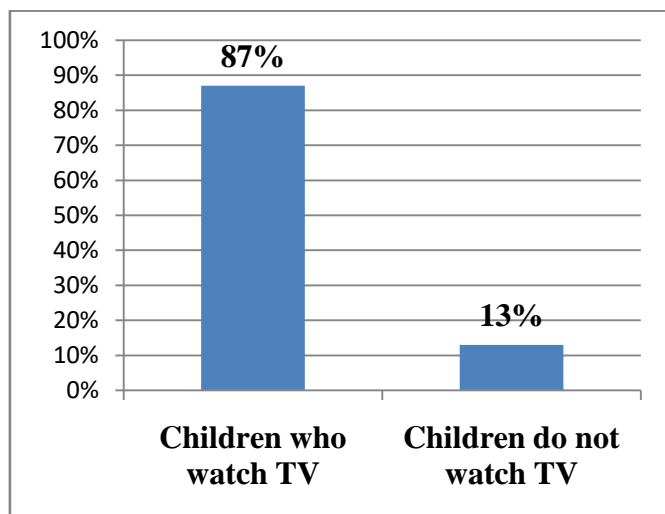


Figure 1: Children who Watch Television in Kangemi Sub-County

The results in figure 1 show that majority of children 52(87%) watched television and only 8(13%) did not watch television. These results demonstrate that majority of pre-primary school children watched television. The results further indicate that, television is omnipresent for most children to watch. Children found time to watch television primarily by giving up time for learning at home. Learning at home was also displaced qualitatively through sharing it with watching television. Learning requires high level of concentration therefore it suffered by being time shared with television viewing. However, children who did not watch television were more likely to learn while at home since they did not share their time with watching of television. Consequently, children who watched television were likely to perform poorly as compared to their counterpart who did not watch television. The data implies that TVs are popular among the pre-primary school children in Kangema Sub- County. This is consistent with a

study done by Hofferth& Sandberg (2010) that revealed that 98% of U.S.A children watched television. In addition, a study conducted by Steadman (2008) shows that 73% of Kenyans watches television.

The time children watched television per day was also established where parents were presented with options between morning, afternoon, evening and late at night from which they indicated when one’s child was mostly engrossed on television. The findings on these items are presented in the Figure 2.

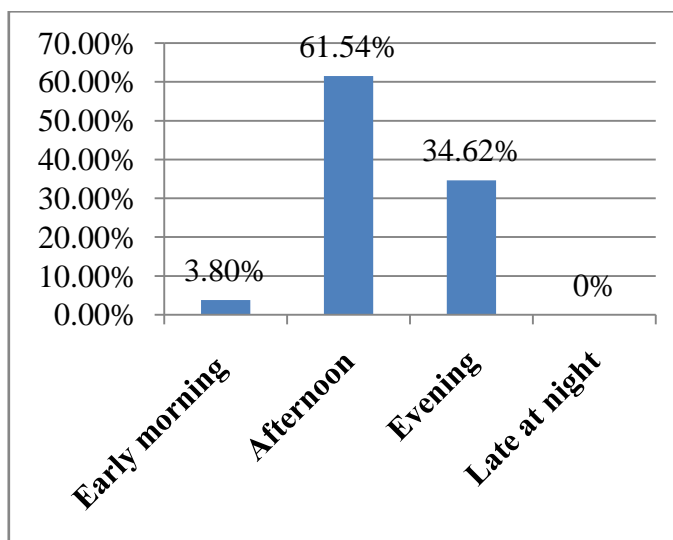


Figure 2: Time pre-primary children watch television

Data in Figure 2 shows that 32(61.54%) of pre-primary school children watched television in the afternoon, while 18(34.62%) of children watched television in the evening. However, whereas no child watched television late at night 2(3.8%) watched in early morning. The results indicate that majority of children watched television after school. Many parents reported that their children arrived home at approximately 3.30 pm and they usually switched on the TV immediately after they arrived at home. This is inconsistent with a study done by Tompkins, (2003) which revealed that 54.5% of American families turn on to television in the evening at mealtime. However, some parents reported that their children stay with them in their places of work hence they do not watch television until evening when they go back to their homes.

V. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that majority of pre-primary school children in Kangema sub-county frequently watch television. This reduces the amount of time they spend in learning activities at home. Little engagement in learning at home in turn influences their performance in learning activities negatively. Children who have more time to read at home score high in performance and learning activities than their peers who watched television.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development needs to develop training programs to train teachers on strategies to use while handling children who have attention span disorder due to watching television.
2. Parents should keep television turned off as much as possible and encourage their children to read a book before watching television. They should assist and encourage their children to involve themselves more in academic learning activities while at home.
3. Non-Governmental Organizations, private individuals and Community Based Organizations need to avail funds for training teachers and parents on influence of television on children's performance in learning activities.

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