

INFLUENCE OF TEACHING LEARNING MATERIALS ON READING READINESS SKILLS IN PRE-PRIMARY 2 IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS IN KAKAMEGA CENTRAL SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

Every child has the right toward education, according to which, fundamentally every government around the world has ratified. It is widely believed that children know how to learn, regardless of their bodily, logical, societal, expressive, grammatical, or additional characteristics. Thus, the purpose of the study was to assess the influence of teaching learning materials on reading readiness skills in preprimary 2 in public primary schools in Kakamega central sub-county, Kenya. It adopted a descriptive survey research design, with a target population of 464 people that consisted of 63 head teachers, 384 Pre-primary Teachers and 16 Members of the county education Board. The sample size of 214 persons was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan Table (1970) for determining sample sizes. The researcher collected data using questionnaires, interview guides and observation guide. The instruments were validated by the supervisors. Reliability of the instruments was determined through a pilot study where Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (r) was analyzed for the two scores and found to be 0.78, thus, the instruments were reliable. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics and presented in tables, while qualitative data was analyzed in themes and sub themes and presented using quotations. The study established that classroom-learning environment such as teaching learning materials, teacher - pupil ratio, physical facilities and teaching strategies have a statistically significant association with reading readiness skills in pre-primary 2. It was therefore recommended that there should be a consideration of different classroom-learning environment like teaching learning materials as they enhance reading readiness in preprimary 2 school pupils. The information provided by this study will benefit policymakers, community members and academicians.

Keywords: pre-primary 2, teaching learning materials; reading readiness skills

INTRODUCTION

In Pre-school Education Program, it is emphasized that readiness for reading and writing activities take an important place in terms of preparing children for school and creating positive attitudes towards reading and writing. Within the scope of readiness for reading and writing activities, the program includes visual perception, auditory perception / phonological awareness, attention - memory, basic concept, problem solving, hand skills, self-care skills, confidence and independent behavior skills, social and emotional maturity, sensory training, breathing and rhythm exercises. As an additional, evidence-based solution to overcome the difficulties in achieving these global goals, school preparation skills are offered. Knowledge and skills gained during pre-school period affect individuals' entire live. For this reason, awareness about and attention paid to pre-school education have been in a considerable increase day by day because pre-school education creates a human profile that a society needs (Elimelech & Aram, 2020).

In addition, it aims to provide knowledge, skills and concepts that will make it easier for children to learn to read and write in the future. Reading and writing are skills that are acquired together and are the ability of children to understand what they read, write, speak, hear and be literate the foundations of the process of obtaining literacy are laid from infancy and continue throughout life. This process is called readiness for reading and writing in the pre-school period, in readiness for school and is made to facilitate the transition of children to primary school. Readiness for reading and writing includes the skills that children develop before learning formal literacy. It is emphasized that verbal language skills, phonological awareness, print awareness, and alphabet knowledge should be supported to develop pre-school children's readiness for reading and writing skills. Readiness for reading and writing activities in pre-school education program implemented in Turkey said that these skills are applied in a similar manner (Chambré, Ehri, & Ness, 2017).

The skills that children need to acquire to be ready to be reading and writing during the pre-school period are more effective when presented with a qualified education program, appropriate materials, and adult support. The studies conducted included teachers' having rich language with children to prepare them for reading and writing activities related to all their readiness for reading and writing skills, reading books, and providing a rich classroom environment for children in terms of readiness for reading and writing materials. In addition, in this content, the opinions of teachers about the readiness for reading and writing and their knowledge level (Dickinson et al., 2019). Assessments on school readiness abilities reveal a strong link between success and achievement in primary schools (La Paro and Pianta 2014). Children who participate within those pre-primary early childhood experiences seem to be more likely to attend school and perform well there than their classmates who have not had the opportunity to participate in such programs, which has also been observed in undeveloped countries (Arnold et al., 2016). In truth, girls, and other disadvantaged children in countries with limited accessibility to pre-primary education have benefited significantly from UNICEF's school preparation skills programs. Additional information from a multi-country study that assessed the connection concerning preschool registration as well as primary school graduation lends credence to this conclusion (Jaramillo and Mingat 2016).

According to the findings, more than two thirds of children that participated in specific kind of pre-primary program finished primary school as opposed to roughly half of children who did not. Similar findings were found for grade repetition; children who participated in a school preparation skills program were less likely to repeat a grade than those who did not. Skills for School Readiness: A Conceptual Framework The statistics unambiguously indicate that improving school preparation skills is necessary to timely and sustained achievement of the worldwide education targets. According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2011, over 72 million children would not attend school in 2015. School readiness skills have the power to get kids ready for school, get schools ready for kids, and get families ready for this experience, which will help with enrollment, attendance retention, and retention rates—all important aspects of the educational goals. Schooling, whether recognized not recognized, has long ensued, acknowledged as a tool for society as well as individual change. This remains the basic motivation behind every society's ongoing effort to pass along to future generations. An education that is of both high quality and practical use. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013) recognized education as the preeminent tool for promoting national development in her National Policy on Education. For education to truly achieve its goal of societal transformation, excellence infrastructures in the form of favorable as well as satisfactory classes, professional trainers (teachers) throughout completely grades that seem incredibly motivated, as well as appropriate instructional learning materials, and curriculum, are required (Okolo 2016). Society must provide a solid basis for early childhood education to achieve the desired results in education. Therefore, the early growth of children should be the focal point of this organization. Early childhood education (ECE) is the instruction provided to young children in a learning environment before they start primary school. The formative years are important for a person's development. Any assistance provided at this stage with suitable practice aids in the promotion of growth because it serves as the cornerstone for the accomplishment otherwise disappointment of the absolute educational technique (FRN 2013).

There was a point in the Nigerian educational system when there was no early childhood education curriculum and children were educated on the initiative of the proprietors. Children were sent to school to wait until their parents or other adult caregivers returned from their regular activities to fetch them up. Recent times have seen the emergence of early childhood curricula because of industrialization and globalization. Recent studies have revealed that a child's first six years are a crucial time in their development. The brain is now developing more quickly than ever (Obioma 2013). Whatever the child learns here will have an impact on them as adults. It became crucial to offer children an interesting, welcoming, and safe environment as a result. Today, it is imperative that early childhood educators are aware of the need to guarantee the execution of the early childhood curriculum. A course of study is the most basic definition of curriculum. Curriculum is all that is taught and learnt, according to Brewer (2014) and Estes (2013). For most early childhood educators. According to Tanner (2013), a curriculum is a plan or program of every experience that a student has while been guided by a school. In a similar vein, Gatawa (2014) asserts that the curriculum represents the entirety of children's experiences for which

schools are accountable. From the definitions, it can be inferred that curriculum refers to all the experiences that a learner would encounter while being guided by a teacher.

The teacher carries out the curriculum. The instructor is expected to employ the many forms that are included in the early childhood curriculum. Among the many distinct types of curricula are those for literacy and math. We will talk about the literacy curriculum for the sake of this study. Literacy, according to Harnby (2015), is the capacity for reading and writing. Obidike, Enemu, and Onwuka (2019) define literacy as the capacity to comprehend, communicate, and acquire valuable knowledge using language, numbers, images, computers, and other fundamental tools, as well as the ability to employ the preeminent sign systems of a culture. The literacy curriculum, on the other hand, consists of educational resources that teachers use to carry out literacy activities in schools (Nnamuch 2018). As well as teaching materials, the author also used the terms instructional aids, instructional resources, and instructional gadgets. The literacy curriculum of a typical nursery school includes, among other things, the identification of pictures, picture reading, object recognition, alphabets, numbers, nursery rhymes, recognition and identification of shapes, coloring, sometimes story time, and the foundational skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic. More time is spent learning the alphabet, memorizing facts, poetry, and a few brief passages from various English-language novels than on recreational and social activities since most people place more importance on the intellectual development of children (Federal Ministry of Education 2013). However, without effective curriculum implementation, literacy curricula might not be progressive.

Implementation, as defined by Morris, Wooding, and Grant (2011), is a continuous process that entails several actions intended to put a program or activity into action. The National Policy on Education (FRN 2013) outlined curriculum accomplishment as the course of action over which a teacher renovates a premeditated or lawfully intended progression of study into learning experiences that benefit the student. In order to aid learners in acquiring information or experiences, curriculum implementation, according to Onwuka (2015), requires putting into practice the formally defined courses of study. The process of putting the curriculum itself, as a program for education, into effect can also be referred to as curriculum implementation. The teacher is the agent in the curriculum implementation process, according to Onwuka (2015), who defined it as the way the teacher chooses and combines the numerous knowledge strands included in curriculum documents or syllabuses. According to the author, implementation occurs when the teacher has created a syllabus, has set up the classroom with the necessary instructional materials, and interacts with the student in a way that causes them to pick up the planned knowledge, ideas, and attitudes that will enable them to function well in society. When executing the curriculum, the teacher must be dedicated and informed about the usage of instructional resources.

Okongo, Ngao, Rop and Nyongesa (2015) conducted a study on availability of teaching and learning resources influenced implementation of inclusive education in pre-school Centers in Nyamira North sub-county. The study employed descriptive survey research design. The target population was 134 head teachers in 134 pre-school centers, 402 pre-school teachers, 12 Education officers and 938 pre-school parents in Nyamira North Sub-County. Sample size was 40 pre-school centers and 40 head teachers which were randomly sampled to represent 30% of the centers. Further, 134 pre-school teachers and 270 pre-school parents were sampled through stratified random sampling and 12 Education Officers sampled by census sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires and observation checklists. Descriptive statistics of means, percentages and weighted averages were used in analyzing the data. Findings revealed that there were inadequate teaching and learning resources at pre-school centers in Nyamira North sub-county. 78 percent of the respondents revealed that inadequate resources affected the implementation of inclusive education. The study recommends that adequate teaching and learning resources should be provided to ensure effective implementation of inclusive education and more funds to be allocated for procuring teaching and learning materials for Special Needs Education (SNE) learners.

A non-professional can just view instructional materials as tools the instructor uses to increase the efficacy of instruction. Eya and Ureme (2011) define instructional materials as instruction aids that a teacher uses when delivering a lesson to help the students understand the material. To achieve effective instruction as well as education, it is implied that the usage of instructional materials is unavoidable. Diagrams, models, charts, toys, cartoons, and maps are some more categories into which instructional materials might be further divided. Radio, television, chalkboards, and suspense boards are among more media. (Eze 2012). The author also provided a brief history of educational materials and their value in terms of information acquisition, memory retention, recall, thinking, reasoning, interest, and better assimilation. The foundation of all classroom communication is instructional materials, which speed up learning and teaching by engaging teachers and students' senses in a variety of ways (Okeke 2013). Hazel (2014) emphasized the importance of visual materials. Charts, a chalkboard, a book, models, images, and flashcards are just a few examples of visual materials. The author also stated that it is crucial to teach young children using objects (toys) that they can see and handle since "what I hear I forget, what I see, I remember, and what I do, I know."

When a teacher employs educational resources in their lessons, the students engage with them and gain knowledge from them. According to Oni (2016), the obtainability and appropriate consumption of instructional resources enhance efficient teaching and learning activities in the classroom, but their inadequate usage has a detrimental impact on academic achievement. Ikegulu (2014) asserts that teachers employ instructional materials and aid students in understanding what is being taught to improve the quality of instruction. Whether something is available refers to whether it can be obtained, attained as well as how much it can cost. While using something effectively and practically is the action of doing so. Harnby (2015). Shofoyeke (2014) investigated the impact of three teaching methods on pre-school pupils' learning achievement in some selected nursery and primary schools in Ondo West Local Government. The study found that adequate instructional materials, current ECCD curriculum and adequate space including pupils' chairs and tables are provided to aid teaching and learning.

Methodology

A descriptive research design was used for the study. A descriptive design is a procedure to assemble data involving interrogations or distributing a questionnaire to a sample of people (Orodho, 2009). When gathering data on people’s views, ideas, behaviors, or any number of social issues, it is employed (Orodho and Kombo, 2012). Descriptive research design was beneficial because it generated and described findings that permitted an all-purpose thoughtful as well as clarification to evaluate the classroom learning environment in reading readiness abilities in pre-primary 2 in public primary schools in Kakamega central sub-county, Kakamega County, Kenya. Consequently, the study targeted 464 people that consisted of 63 head teachers, 384 Preprimary Teachers and 16 Members of the county education Board. The target population is as summarised in Table 1.

Table 1: Target Population

Category	Target Population
Head teachers	63
Pre-primary Teachers	384
Members of the county education Board	14
Total	464

Source: Ministry of Education, Kakamega Central Sub County Office (2022)

Sampling frequently entails looking at a subset of a population to learn more regarding the overall group (Kothari, 2014). The study utilised Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table for estimating sample sizes to arrive at a sample size of 214 persons. According to the Table 2, a sample size of 214, comprising of 29 head teachers, 178 Pre-primary Teachers, and 7 Members of the county education Board was obtained for a target population of 464 persons.

Table 2: Sample size

Category	Target Population	Proportion allocation	Sample size
Head teachers	63	(63/464) *214	29
Preprimary Teachers	384	(384/464) *214	178
Members of the County Education Board	14	(14/464) *214	7
Total	464	(464/464) *214	214

Members of the County Education Board interview schedules, questionnaires for Head teachers and Pre-primary teachers, observation guide and checklists for reading readiness skills and observation guides were used in collecting the data.

The Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 23 data analysis program was used to compile, sort, modify, classify, and code survey data into a coding sheet. To present the results, frequency, tables, percentages, and graphs were used. The detailed responses from the respondents regarding their opinions on the effects of classroom learning environment on reading readiness skills in early childhood development education in Central Sub County PPE, in Kakamega central sub-county, Kakamega County, were used to analyse qualitative data logically. The analysis method included a content analysis in which the data were divided into content domains for the comparison of topics from various points of view.

Results

The study employed descriptive statistical techniques such as frequency, percentage, and mean distribution. This helped to establish the influence of teaching learning materials on reading readiness skills in preprimary 2 in public primary schools in Kakamega central sub-county, Kakamega County. For analysis, descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, and mean distribution) for the level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale of the variable, teaching learning materials were established and summarized in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive statistics for teaching learning materials and reading readiness skills in preprimary 2 in public primary schools.

Statements		SD	D	U	A	SA	MEAN
Appropriate implementation of curriculum enhances pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2.	F	21	15	17	76	69	3.79
	%	10.6	7.6	8.6	38.4	34.8	
Availability of reference books improves pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2.	F	3	40	15	81	59	3.77
	%	1.5	20.2	7.6	40.9	29.8	
Availability of teaching materials such as manilas, dusters, chalk, models, charts enhance pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2.	F	5	4	43	56	90	4.12
	%	2.5	2.0	21.7	28.3	45.5	
Usage of computers in teaching enhances pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2.	F	7	25	10	65	91	4.05
	%	3.5	12.6	5.1	32.8	46.0	

Table 3 shows that 76(38.4%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that appropriate implementation of curriculum enhanced pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2, 69(34.8%) strongly agreed, 21(10.6%) strongly disagreed, 17(8.6%) were undecided and 15(7.6%) disagreed with the statement. The study findings suggested that the respondents

tended to agree (Mean=3.79) that that appropriate implementation of curriculum enhanced pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2. This was supported by an interviewee who had the following to say;

“... The teacher is, expected to employ the many forms that are included in the early childhood curriculum. Early childhood educators are aware of the need of guaranteeing the execution of the early childhood curriculum...” Female Participant, 42 years, Members of the County Education Board.

This was further supported by the observation results from the schools that syllabus was 52(85.5%) available, 9(14.3%) fairly and 2(3.2%) not available in schools. This implies that appropriate implementation of curriculum enhances pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2. This concurs with the findings of Gatawa (2014) that the curriculum represents the entirety of children’s experiences for which schools are accountable.

Similarly, 81(40.9%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that availability of reference and pupils’ books improved pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2, 59(29.8%) strongly agreed, 40(20.2%) disagreed, 15(7.6%) were undecided and 3(1.5%) strongly disagreed with the statement. It emerged from the study that the respondents tended to agree (Mean=3.77) that availability of reference and pupils’ books improved pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2. This was supported by an interviewee who had the following to say;

“... Reading to young children is an important way to help them build language skills, as it exposes them to new words and ways of using language. Teachers in preprimary 2 use references books, however, reference books are inadequate. Reference books are important resources in teaching and learning because they help in enhancing clarity of content and they give the learners and the teachers a wider scope...” Male Participant, 54 years, Members of the County Education Board.

This was further supported by the observation results from the schools that teacher guides were 57(90.5%) available, 4(6.3%) fairly and 2(3.2%) not available in schools. Besides, course books were 51(81.0%) available, 8(12.7%) fairly and 4(6.3%) not available in schools. Lastly, on the observation, pupils’ books were 62(98.4%) available, 1(1.6%) fairly and 0(0.0%) not available in schools This implies that availability of reference and pupils’ books improves pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2. This supports the findings of Oni (2016)enhancesthe obtainability and appropriate consumption of instructional resources enhance efficient teaching and learning activities in the classroom, but their inadequate usage has a detrimental impact on academic achievement.

Additionally, 90(45.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that availability of teaching materials such as manilas, dusters, chalk, models, charts enhanced pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2, 56(28.3%) agreed, 43(21.7%) were undecided, 5(2.5%) strongly disagreed and 4(2.0%) disagreed with the statement. The study findings suggested that the respondents agreed (Mean=4.12) that availability of teaching material such as manilas, dusters, chalk, models, charts enhanced pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2. This was supported by the observation results from the schools that charts were 44(69.8%) available, 16(25.4%) fairly and 3(4.8%) not available in schools. Besides, chalk boards were 54(85.7%) available, 7(11.1%) fairly and 2(3.2%) not available in schools. This implies that availability of teaching materials such as manilas, dusters, chalk, models, charts enhance pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2. This concurs with the findings of Hazel (2014) that visual materials like charts, a chalkboard, a book, models, images, and flashcards are important for children’s learning.

Lastly, 91(46.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that usage of computers in teaching enhanced pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2, 65(32.8%) agreed, 25(12.6%) disagreed, 10(5.1%) were undecided and 7(3.5%) strongly disagreed with the statement. It emerged from the study that the respondents agreed (Mean=4.05) that usage of computers in teaching enhanced pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2. This was supported by an interviewee who had the following to say;

“... Some teachers employ instructional aids, and this helps pupils in understanding what is being, taught to improve the quality of instruction. Computers are important instructional aids in the teaching/learning process. Appropriate use of instructional aids helps keep pupils interested and improves their reading skills....” Male Participant, 43 years, Members of the County Education Board.

This was further supported by the observation results from most 39(61.9%) schools that pupils had interest in reading, while 24(38.1%) did not. This implies that usage of computers in teaching enhanced pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2. This supports the findings of Okongo, Ngao, Rop and Nyongesa (2015) that adequate teaching and learning resources like computers should be provided to ensure in pre-school centers.

These descriptive statistics of objective one was followed by a Chi-square test of association. The Chi-square test at $p \leq 0.05$ significance level illustrating statistically significant association between teaching learning materials and reading readiness skills in preprimary 2 in public primary schools in Kakamega central sub-county, Kakamega County is as summarized in Table 4. To achieve this, the hypothesis below was tested.

H₀₁: There is no statistically significant relationship between teaching learning materials and reading readiness skills in preprimary 2 in public primary schools in Kakamega central sub-county, Kakamega County.

Table 4: Chi-square test of association between teaching learning materials and reading readiness skills in preprimary 2 in public primary schools.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	779.191 ^a	144	.000
Likelihood Ratio	411.930	144	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	134.387	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	198		

a. 162 cells (95.9%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .02.

Table 4 shows that the p value ($p=0.000$) for teaching learning materials was less than 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis, “there is no significant association between teaching learning materials and reading readiness skills in preprimary 2 in public primary schools in Kakamega central sub-county, Kakamega County” was rejected. This implies that there is a statistically significant association between teaching learning materials and reading readiness skills in preprimary 2 in public primary schools in Kakamega central sub-county, Kakamega County.

Conclusion

On the influence of teaching learning materials on reading readiness skills in pre-primary 2 in public primary schools, the study findings suggested that the respondents tended to agree that that appropriate implementation of curriculum enhanced pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2. Similarly, it emerged from the study that the respondents tended to agree that availability of reference books improved pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2. Additionally, the study findings suggested that the respondents agreed that availability of teaching material such as manilas, dusters, chalk, models, charts enhanced pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2. Lastly, it emerged from the study that the respondents agreed that usage of computers in teaching enhanced pupils reading readiness skills in preprimary 2. On Chi-square test of association, the study established that there is statistically significant association ($p=.000$) between teaching learning materials and reading readiness skills in preprimary 2 in public primary schools in Kakamega central sub-county, Kakamega County.

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