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WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE TEACHERS' USE OF TEACHING AIDS TO ENHANCE TEACHING LEARNING IN PRE-SCHOOLS?

Makau Agnes Nsiza¹, Catherine Gakii Murungi², Begi Nyakwara³

^{1,2,3} Early Childhood Studies Department, Kenyatta University, PO BOX 43844-00100, Nairobi, Kenya
(KENYA)

makaunzisa@yahoo.com, Catherine_gakii@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Teaching should entail more than just workbooks and textbooks. It should engage learners and make them part of learning. The purpose of this study was to establish factors influencing pre-school teachers' use of teaching aids to enhance learning in pre-primary schools. The study was carried out in Isinya Sub-county, Kenya. The target population was pre-primary school teachers in selected schools in Isinya Sub-County. Data was collected through the use of questionnaire and an observation schedule. A sample size of 20 schools of the target population was drawn from the pre-schools. Descriptive statistics was used to analyze data. Data is presented using tables, graphs and pie charts. The study revealed that several factors influenced the use of teaching aids in pre-schools which included; non-availability of teaching aids, teachers' attitude and perceptions on particular teaching aids.

Keywords: Teaching AIDs, Learning, Teaching

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching aids are essential in fostering meaningful learning among children in pre-schools. Yule (1991) views courses in most of the institutions with the mandate to train teachers as having emphasizing on imparting knowledge in teachers and neglecting the transition of the same to the preschool learners. Creating an environment in the classroom where reshaping and redesigning of knowledge, stimulation of intellectual curiosity, and innovative and independent thinking can take place, is a real challenge. Subject matter expertise is not the only criteria that the effective teacher has to fulfill. The existence of similarity in the two situations is that teaching aid help in the delivery of curriculum, accessing topics, skill acquisition, and lessening of the child's anxiety about their ability to understand. However disparities exist in questioning and evaluation skills that indicate disparity in learning skills acquired in the classroom situation. Many studies have been done by scholars on the area of the efficiency of a teacher in transferring knowledge to learners during in a given lesson.

The quality of teaching aids is of great concern in ensuring that children receive quality education. Experience of children in their early years play a crucial role in the child's development in terms of psychological, emotional and social needs. This includes unresponsiveness to developmentally appropriate guidance and actions such as prolonged tantrums, physical and verbal aggression, disruptive vocal and motor behavior, property destruction, self-injury, noncompliance, and withdrawal. Challenging behaviors during the preschool years constitute one of the strongest predictors of later, more serious problem behaviors including delinquency, antisocial behavior, and substance abuse (Farris, 2000).

Participation in early care and education is sometimes linked to higher rates of challenging behaviors, Borich, (1998) especially in programs of lower quality that do not specifically address the social development needs of young children. High-quality preschool education that includes an emphasis on children's social development can reduce rates of challenging behaviors and serve as a long-term protective factor for children at risk for developing challenging behaviors.

Universal, classroom-based curricula that include social skills teaching should be viewed as the base tier of a teaching pyramid that serves all pre-school children. Children who struggle with challenging behaviors should receive additional tiers that provide intentional teaching of social problem-solving and other pro-social skills as well as interventions from experts and family members as needed. Developmentally appropriate screening for early identification of problems is essential. The use of teaching aid that is necessary to carry out this education should be reviewed to make sure they are effective and absolute teaching and learning takes place (Borich, 1998).

Due to heavy workloads, compulsion of covering the syllabus within a given time limit and overcrowded classes, pre-school teachers tend to combine certain skills like evaluation and recapitulation or overlook skills like use of teaching aids (Mkhahatshwa, 1990). Since many schools cannot afford most of the advanced teaching aids, most teachers are using blackboards and ignore the use of the rest of the teaching aids.

Experimentation, creativity and innovation do not find priority in the teaching practice of most of pre-school teachers. Recapitulation and evaluation are integral part of teaching behavior in the class. If, in a given period, teacher is unable to use these skills, in the next class these can be used as a set induction to introduce a new topic. However

children need practical activities in order to comprehend theoretical knowledge learned in class. Demonstrations such as pictures drawn on chalkboard can help in ensuring that the learners find it interesting and also it can expand the dimension of their reasoning. Where no teaching aid is used little knowledge will be acquired and the pre-school children will always have trouble in answering questions from the topic due to poor memory or in ability to think critically (Mkhahatshwa, 1990). Teaching aids play an important role in teaching most of the practical and technical subjects in ensuring that the learners can see demonstrations and presentation of concepts and procedures.

Teaching aid can be useful but also harmful to the pre-schoolers in teaching and learning mathematics (Szendrei 1996; Grooves and Doig 1999). There is always the problem of bureaucratic barriers that can kill teacher enthusiasm. The school managers and heads should encourage teachers who are practical in their teaching and learning and not demoralize them or let them seek alternative teaching aids that they have no knowledge about on how to teach the pre-schoolers.

Lack of training and orientation can limit the teacher's ability to use teaching aids. Acquisition of such material should follow the training of teachers on how to use the materials and when to use the materials in delivering the curriculum to the pre-schoolers. These items are normally acquired with good intention to help the pre-school teachers deliver and present better lessons and attempts should be made to help the pre-primary school teachers to use them effectively. Where there is no training, the teaching aids are misused and there is failure in subject delivery too (Szendrei, 1996; Grooves and Doig, 1999). The study explores factors influencing teachers' use of teaching aids in pre-schools, a case study of Isinya Sub-County.

2. METHODOLOGY

Descriptive research design was used. The dependent variable was teacher's use of teaching aids to enhance learning which was measured by determining the teaching aids used to enhance learning and how they were used. The independent variables were the factors which influenced pre-school teachers to use teaching aids to enhance learning.

i. Location of the Study

The study was conducted in selected pre-schools in Isinya Sub- County, Kajiado County.

ii. Target Population

The study targeted 30 pre-schools in Isinya Sub-County with approximately 87 pre- school teachers. There were only 29 public pre-schools in Isinya and data was collected from the targeted pre-schools only.

iii. Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

They are described in the following sub-sections;

a. Sampling Techniques

The study adopted cluster sampling technique. The location has (5) sub zones which includes Oloolotikush, Noon Kopir, Sholinke, Nyompopong and Emakoko. The zones formed the five clusters each with four schools. Each of the (5) clusters was divided into (4) sub clusters (schools) totalling to 20 schools. The sample of the population was selected among the targeted pre-school centres.

b. Sample Size

The total sample size comprised of pre-primary school teachers in the pre-schools selected. Five clusters formed part of the study. Each cluster zone had four schools; each school provided three pre-school teachers who formed part of the respondents. Random sampling was used to select the three teachers. This brought the sample size of this study to 60 (69%) pre-school teachers. A sampling frame with all the pre-schools in Isinya Sub County was obtained from the sub-county education office.

3. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

A questionnaire and observational checklist were used to collect data. Close ended questions helped in collecting quantitative data while open ended questionnaire was used to generate qualitative data.

- i. Questionnaires were administered to pre-primary school teachers in pre-schools selected. Section one was

for obtaining the general information on the respondent's characteristics. The second part was to determine pre-primary school teachers' use of teaching aids to enhance teaching and learning in pre-primary schools. Since the sample size was considered to be big enough, the information that was collected was useful and generated data that was considered as reliable to make generalizations and conclusions. This enabled a rich source of information to be gathered.

- ii. Observation checklist was also used in the study. The researcher observed the availability and adequacy on use of teaching aids while teaching pre-school children. This enabled the researcher to gain real detailed and in-depth knowledge of the situation on the ground.

4. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Data was collected in two stages as follows;

a. Stages I. Administration of questionnaires to teachers

The questionnaire consisted of both open ended and close ended questions. The questionnaires were handed over to the concerned pre-school teachers, who were properly oriented, then urged to fill in the blank using a pen.

b. Stage II. Conduction of observation

The researcher observed the availability and use of teaching aids. This was done by visiting pre-schools in order to observe the real situation on the ground.

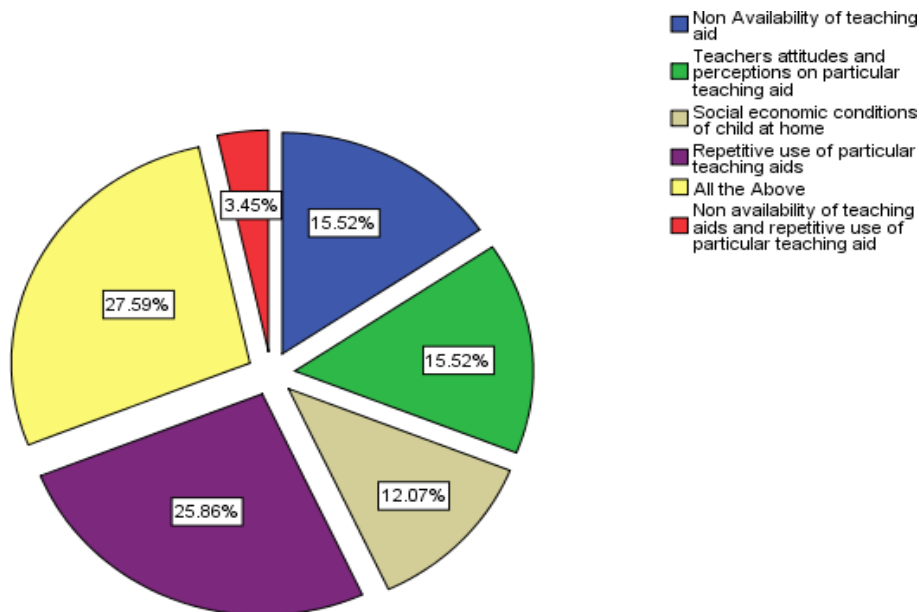
c. Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics. Results from data analysis were presented in form of frequency tables, figures and in text.

5. FINDINGS

i. Factors Influencing Teachers' Use of TeachingAids

In the second objective the researcher was to find out the factors influencing teachers' use of teaching aids. To



achieve the objective, teachers were asked to indicate the different factors that influenced them to use teaching aids. Figure 4.6 presents the results.

ii. Factors influencing the use of Teaching Aids

Figure 1, shows that majority of the teachers had reported that all the listed factors greatly influenced their use of teaching aids in instructing children representing 27.59%, that is, non-availability of teaching aids, teachers' attitude and perceptions on particular teaching aid and repetitive use of a particular teaching aids. However 25.86% reported that repetitive use of teaching aid was the main factor while equal number of teachers said that the teachers' attitude and perceptions on particular teaching aids and non- availability of teaching aids were the main factors affecting the use of teaching aids each representing 15.25%.

This confirmed Borich (1998) conclusion that many factors influence the use of teaching aids in enhancing learning. Those who reported social economic conditions were 12.07%. Lastly 3.45% said that both non-availability of teaching aids and repetitive use of particular teaching aids were the main factors. This however contradicted Halle (2004) findings on factors affecting teaching methods. He argued that the main factors that contributed to use of different teaching methods was the availability and accessibility relevant resources. The findings also align with the findings made by Puthen (2000), whose study showed that use of non-repetitive and eye-catching teaching aids greatly influence learner's ability to understand new concepts. Similarly, in their study, Ackerman and Barnett (2005) concluded that availing teaching aids to pre-schools would result to a more conducive learning environment hence changing the perspective of teachers towards use of teaching aids.

6. CONCLUSIONS

The study concludes that several factors influenced the use of teaching aids in pre-schools which included; non-availability of teaching aids; teachers' attitude; and perceptions of teaching aids; and social economic conditions of the child at home.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i). Pre-schools in Isinya Sub-county should put more emphasis on effective use of teaching aids in all pre-schools.
- (ii). Parents should support teachers in ensuring that all the essential teaching aids are available and accessible to learners to enhance learning in society.
- (iii). Future Research can be done to investigate the effectiveness of different types of teaching aids in pre-schools.

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