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HOW FREQUENT DO TEACHERS' USE OF TEACHING AIDS TO FACILITATE TEACHING AND LEARNING?

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ABSTRACT

Use of teaching and learning aids creates such a friendly environment. Teaching aids are materials used by the teacher to supplement classroom learning or to stimulate learning. The purpose of this study was to establish the frequency at which pre-primary school teachers' use of teaching aids to enhance learning in pre-primary schools in Isinya Sub-County. The study adopted a descriptive cross sectional research design, this enabled collection of information on habits of preschool teachers with aim of teaching aids. Data was collected through the use of questionnaire and observational checklist. A sample size of 20 schools of the target population was drawn from the pre-schools. A qualitative method was used to analyze data. Data is presented using tables, graphs and pie charts. The study revealed that most teachers adopted only one teaching aid with majority using black/white board.

Keywords: Teaching AIDs, Teaching and Learning

1. INTRODUCTION

Teaching aids are materials used by teachers or learners to facilitate teaching and learning. These teaching aids can take numerous forms, from the beans students might count while learning simple math in pre-schools to the photos of famous people, to chalk boards, charts and places teachers might display during teaching and learning process (National Teacher Institute, 2006). There are many different kinds of teaching aids and the choice depends on the needs of children and their availability. Although numerous challenges exist, all the instructors are required to incorporate these teaching aids while instructing children. This has made many teachers to only use blackboard or white board as the only teaching aid since it is easily available. A lot of challenges face the use of electronic and advanced teaching aids in most of the pre-schools such as lack of electricity and insecurity in some of the regions (Sarah, 2007). Oguntuase (2008) defined teaching aids as a record on any medium through which a moving image may be produced. They are derivative works which are usually based on original literacy, dramatic, musical and artistic works. Pre-school teachers are now expected to make use of video for mass media teaching or learning. Finally, many recent methods of teaching have focused on the use of authentic material. The study aimed at establishing how pre-school teachers used these teaching aids to enhance learning in pre-schools.

According to reviewed studies, chalkboard is widely used as the only teaching aid in many schools in Kenya hence majority of teachers would find teaching without one to be a challenge, it is also the case that teachers frequently do not adequately consider how to present material on the board. It is generally considered a good practice to list the lesson's objectives on the board and leave them up throughout the lesson, for the pre-school to refer to. It is also helpful to leave a running list of vocabulary on one part of the board. The central part of the board can be used for examples, charts, drawings, etc., which will generally only be left up for one part of the lesson (Sarah, 2007). This study sort to establish use of teaching aids adopted by pre-school teachers to enhance the learning process.

The process of maintaining the good quality of pre-school education involves the corporation of teachers who are the key stakeholders in ensuring that the learning process of learners is smooth and meets required standards. Use of teaching aids plays a very important role in teaching and learning process in preschools. However, for teachers to use these aids appropriately, they have to be aware of how and when to use each teaching aid and to which category of children. Children usually view their teachers as role models and hence they acquire most of the key social and intellectual skills from their teachers. Therefore, teachers should be careful on how they behave while interacting with learners. The pre-schoolers should use teaching aids and when anything is put before them in a three dimensional form they pay more attention. Moreover use of teaching aids is one innovative idea which teachers worldwide sought after to help in curriculum delivery - the teaching aids can be used in order to teach children in the most interactive manner. Sarah is of the view that many teachers advocate teaching aids as it simplifies their job and also helps children get the facts right (Sarah 2007).

It is generally accepted that varies forms and types of teaching aids suite dynamic needs of learners. The pre-school teaching aids manufacturers have various unique concepts which pre-school teachers use in an innovative manner to help them know the best way to deliver the content to the child. Been creative is a unique concept, however irrespective of the teaching aid used by a teacher, they should be able to meet the intended objective or pass the information it was planned to deliver. Teaching aids help in ensuring that children do not get bored but instead they

find learning interesting.

Different children respond in various ways to different teaching aids used by their teachers due to the different learning capacities of the learners and level of understanding. The use of teaching aids helps in evaluating how the child is developing in all the aspects, each teaching aid helps in monitoring the progress of the child during lessons. The teaching aids can be displayed in differently forms, irrespective of how they are presented, these teaching aids make learning a fun filled experience and help in improving reading, writing and grasping skills. Pre-schoolers perform various tasks as assigned to them repeatedly using these teaching aids and ultimately learn activities.

Puthen, (2000) recognizes that due to the small retention power of pre-schoolers, using teaching aids in classroom makes the environment friendly and interactive. The use of attractive and eye-catching teaching aids helps in developing a better way to remember for the children hence improving their grasping and retention powers gradually. However, many activity based teaching aids may be relevant in enabling the pre-schooler to develop perseverance, confidence, cooperation, communication and creating curiosity in their minds for knowledge acquisition. These activities prepare learners for future learning experiences and environments. These activity based teaching aids are useful in art science discoveries and they also help the learner to acquire personal and social skills which are crucial in later stages of life. The use of teaching aids while instructing preschool children has had a great positive impact on the learning experience of pre- school children, this has motivated pre-school owners and teachers to devote their resources in ensuring children have access to the modern teaching aids and aids of good quality (Puthen, 2000).

The incorporation of teaching aids while instructing learners is crucial in ensuring that the children concentration is not diverted and it also make learners to clearly understand the different concepts learned in class. Most teachers take this opportunity of using teaching aids to install positive values into the young and energetic minds of the children. This helps in moulding the children to be more responsible and prepare them for future bigger assignments. Various teaching colleges and institutions train teachers on different skills and techniques which should be applied while in classrooms although the way in which the teachers eventually apply the skills is different, hence a lot still needs to be done to ensure transfer of knowledge to the learners is done in a systematic manner (Mkhahatshwa, 1990). Through this, teaching aids can be used as a medium to meet the intended objectives (Mkhahatshwa, 1990). Moreover, students can easily recognize problems and strategize on ways which can be used to solve that particular problem through exchanging ideas with other learners. This can be spearheaded by incorporating the best teaching aids while instructing then to enhance their interaction and create a friendly environment for them to learn and socialize. Alaku (1998) stated that teachers' competency depends on his use of appropriate teaching aids and learning strategy. Adoption of the correct teaching aids and strategies can also be used by the government and other regulatory agencies in accessing the competency and efficiency of teachers in pre-schools. By using the right teaching aid during lessons, learners can easily capture the concepts been demonstrated by their teacher with charts, maps or any other teaching aid that the teacher may find appropriate to use in to cater for the diverse needs of the learners.

According to Alaku (1998) video play is vital role in teaching and in knowledge acquisition. The use of videos creates more interest in learners. Children can easily remember something they saw in a clip which improves their development and retention rate hence enhancing a smooth learning environment. Children usually find it interesting to see real simulation of what they have theoretically learned in class. Of all the senses, it has been discovered that hearing and sight are the most used to gather information (Van Rooyen and Van Der Merwe, 1990; Spencer, 1988). For example, a teacher holding an A4 paper rectangle up to a class - some of the children may already be familiar with rectangles; they will recognize the object, remember what they learnt and incorporate any new knowledge about rectangles. This will make the concept rectangle meaning full to them. On the other hand, other children in the class might have no knowledge about the rectangles. Kindler (2006) as quoted by Fakunle (2008) declared that people generally remember 10% of what they read, 20% of what they hear, 30% of what they see, 50% of what they hear and see, 70% of what they say and 90% of what they say as they do a thing. This clearly implies that the children will need to incorporate all the above aspects in order to perform well in their studies.

Researchers have discovered that use of teaching aids enable the teacher and children to engage in solid conversation about something tangible. The incorporation of tangible objects to demonstrate and illustrate several mathematical procedures and concepts helps to ensure a good learning conditions (Szendrei, 1996). When children are given objects to work with and a familiar background they are able to solve problems that teachers never thought they could. Children communicate their thinking to others through verbal explanations and visual demonstration when they are given concrete objects to use. Ensor, (1997) observed that preschool children can be able to come up with innovate new ways and strategies to solve problems hence changing the old way of doing things.

Childs development depends a lot on pre-school learning environment and the quality of preschools education received by the child. This stresses the importance of providing an encouraging environment for learning in school, learning materials, including safety and protection from violence, access to clean water and sanitation, as well as effective teaching and learning processes, improved governance and successful learning outcomes (Ackerman, and Barnett, 2005). There are significant differences between individual pre-school settings and their impact on children; some settings are more effective than others in promoting positive child outcomes. Researchers have found out that irrespective of the school setup, there are other things that can be done in order to establish a culture of effective

teaching and learning materials. These include establishing quality education, supporting early childhood development, reducing gender gaps, assessing children with disability, equipping them with life skills and equity impact (Ackerman and Barnett, 2005).

An effective teaching and providing all learning materials for preschool children is a crucial aspect in ensuring that children receive quality and standard education. Highly qualified and experienced professional educators, staff-to-child ratios which allow staff to interact with children, effective intentional curriculum that involves active engagement with children, space for children to have nurturing and emotionally supportive relationships with early childhood staff, an integration between care and education, promotion of early literacy and math skills, responsiveness to cultural diversity, high standards of safety and child protection, and an atmosphere that fosters social, emotional and regulatory skills can be used to assess the quality of education (Ackerman and Barnett, 2005).

Quality pre-school education will provide developmentally appropriate learning experiences for young children to develop holistically and nurture positive attitudes towards learning. It will also help the children develop foundational literacy and numeracy skills and build up confidence as well as self-management and social skills. This foundational development will enable children to have a smoother transition from pre-school to formal education in primary schools. However, it is the responsibility of the government to ensure that education is affordable and it's of good quality, the education should be also accessible to all the citizens. However, there have been a lot of challenges in developing countries in ensuring that quality basic education is accessible and affordable to all the citizens irrespective of social class in the society. The government under the Ministry of Education should devote more resources in ensuring the quality of education is improved in public preschools by implementing strategies aimed at improving the standards of education. Teachers Training Colleges and institutions should ensure that teachers are well trained and prepared to change the society through transferring the knowledge gained while in college to the children by adopting effective teaching practices such as the use of teaching aids (Borich, 1998).

In the pursuit of quality, pre-schoolers' needs should be comprehensively addressed. This should cover all the basic needs of the child to ensure all their different needs are adequately met in an effective manner. Strategies can also be formulated to ensure participation of learners in all the activities prepared by the teacher. The standards of education can be measured from the effectiveness of linking the school to a wider community from which it derives its sense of engagement with reality and confirms the relevance of its curriculum (Halle, 2004).

Effective learning is only achieved if the health and sanitation conditions are maintained by different stakeholders in the education sector who include the government, society and teachers. Sanitation topics range from hand washing procedures to air quality and from plumbing connections to lead exposure prevention. Sanitation guidelines should be created to promote wellness and healthy child development to prevent accidents and to stop the spread of infectious diseases. Experts from National Environment Management Authority should conduct regular inspections in preschools to help in ensuring that maintain healthy environments. High health and sanitation standards have to be maintained and observed all the time to reduce the rate of disease infection among children. It is the responsibility of the preschool teachers and instructors to ensure that all laid and recommended healthy and sanitation standard and procedures are adhered by the children. Maintaining sanitation and health conditions in preschools is paramount since the immunity of the learners is usually weak and vulnerable to diseases. These may include proper hand washing, dis-infecting, and use of diapers which can reduce the spread of communicable diseases (Halle, 2004).

Children with disability need to be targeted and their needs established and met in the school setup (Bullock, 1998). This is an important phase targeting system wide interventions in education. Some measures can be formulated as projects on the small scale and those which can be localised and this can result in problem solving policies through allocating resources and investments to the less fortunate in the society. Proper and strategized interventions can out-do most national average in terms of ensuring quality is maintained and improved gradually. Although they play a very crucial role in ensuring quality is maintained, they are yet not the most effective policy in ensuring that children receive the best quality of their education. These strategies encourage children to attend school and help in eventually eradication poverty in the society.

Children with special needs such as developmental, emotional, physical or learning difficulties are often at risk for difficulties in social-emotional development. Many of these pre-schoolers seem to lack the social and language skills needed to initiate or maintain age-mate relationships. Some have personal characteristics or personal styles that keep them isolated or contribute to rejection from peers, and have no idea that their own behaviour is part of the problem. Such situations should be addressed as early as possible in order to ensure that all the children interact freely and understand the special needs of their fellow learners. Early friendships for all children begin through play, providing frequent and appropriate play experiences with compatible age mates could help youngsters with limited or poor social behaviours. Facilities that serve preschool children with disabilities, either in inclusionary or self-contained settings have an obligation to provide experiences that promote the social-emotional competencies needed for children to have successful peer relationships and to facilitate the children's inclusion in as many settings as possible (Odom, 2000).

An approach that provides frequent and appropriate play experiences in settings that include children with disabilities increases the likelihood that they will learn, generalize new behaviours, maintain skills, and hopefully, make new and lasting friends. The study noted that most of the pre-school or pre-primary school teachers' use of teaching aids was

mainly found in urban areas and mostly in private pre-schools. Few scholars looked at use of teaching aids in public pre-schools that reflected the rural setting. This study seeks to establish how teaching aids have been incorporated in teaching and learning in the rural settings

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.

a. 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.

b. Sampling Techniques

The study adopted cluster sampling technique. The location has (5) sub zones which includes Oloolokitush, 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.

c. 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.

d. 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.

3. DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

Data was collected in two stages as follows;

i. 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.

ii. 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.

4. 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

A total of 60 questionnaires were administered to the respondents on a personal basis in order to maximize the response rate. The study achieved a 100% response rate and all the filled questionnaires were obtained and used in the analysis.

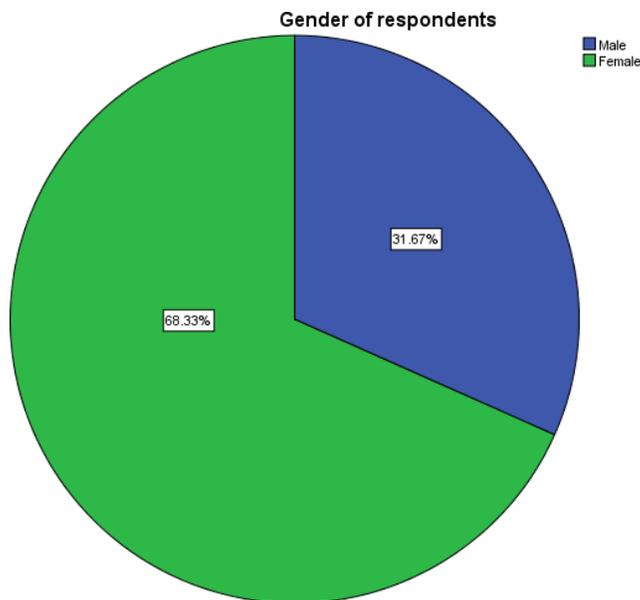
i. Gender of Respondents

Figure 1 Gender of the Respondents

A total of 60 pre-school teachers participated in the study where by the majority of the teachers were female (41) representing 68.33%, while the male teachers were 19 representing 31.67%.

ii. **Age of Respondents**

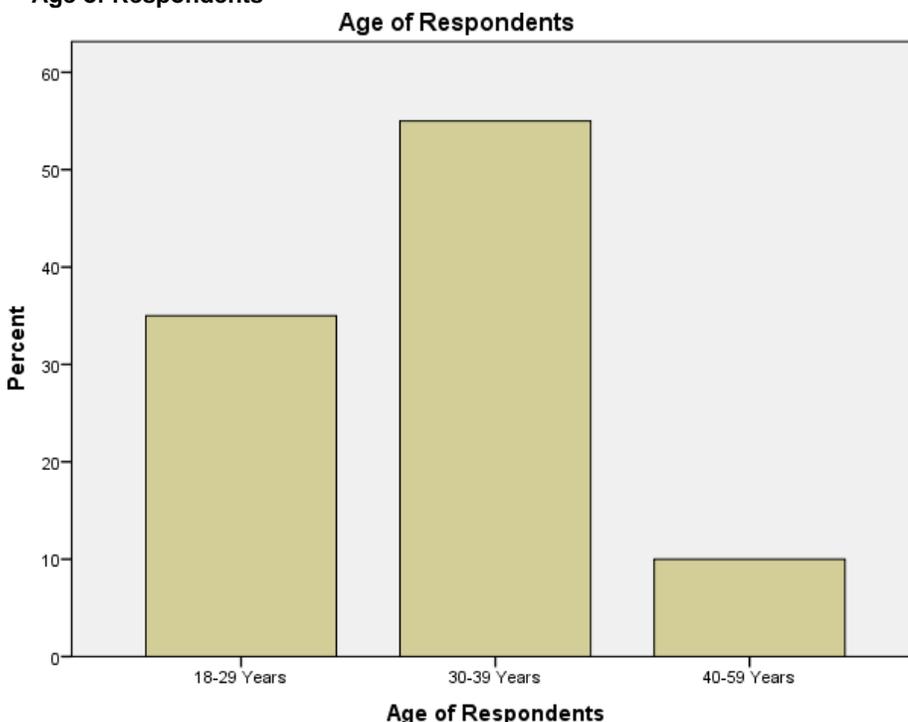


Figure 2 Age of Respondents

According to figure 2, majority of the teachers were within the age group of 30-39 years representing 55.0%, this was followed by teachers within 18-29 years age bracket (35.0%). Teachers whose ages fall in 40-59 years age bracket were 6 representing 10.0% while none of the teachers had 60 years and above .

iii. **Level of Education**

The teachers who participated in the Study were required to indicate the highest level of education they attained. Table 1 presents the results.

Table 1 Respondents Level of Education

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	completed primary	0	0	0	0.0
	Secondary	9	15.0	15.0	15.0
	College	45	75.0	75.0	90.0
	University	6	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	60	100.0	100.0	

As shown in Table 1, majority of the teachers had acquired middle level college education representing 75.5 %, this was followed by those who had attained secondary education representing 15.0%, while teachers who had attained University education were 6 representing 10.0% while none of the teacher had attained primary education as the highest level of education (0.0%).

iv. Teachers' Use of Teaching Aids to Enhance Learning

The first objective of the study was to determine how teachers used teaching aids to enhance learning. To achieve this objective, teachers were asked whether they used teaching aids to enhance teaching learning. Figure 3 presents the results.

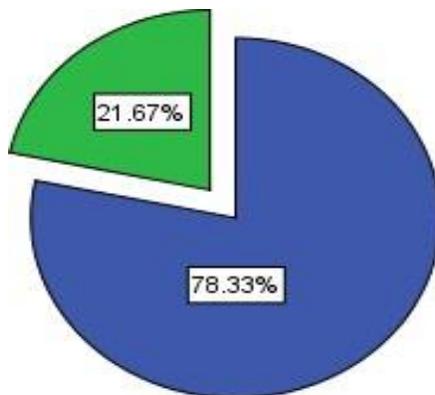


Figure 3 Pre-school Teachers' Use of Teaching Aids to Enhance Learning.

As shown in figure 3, majority of the teachers had reported that they were using one or more teaching aids in classrooms while instructing children representing 78.33%. However, 21.67% of the teachers were not using any kind of teaching aid while teaching children. The types of teaching aids used by teachers were determined and the results are shown in Figure 4

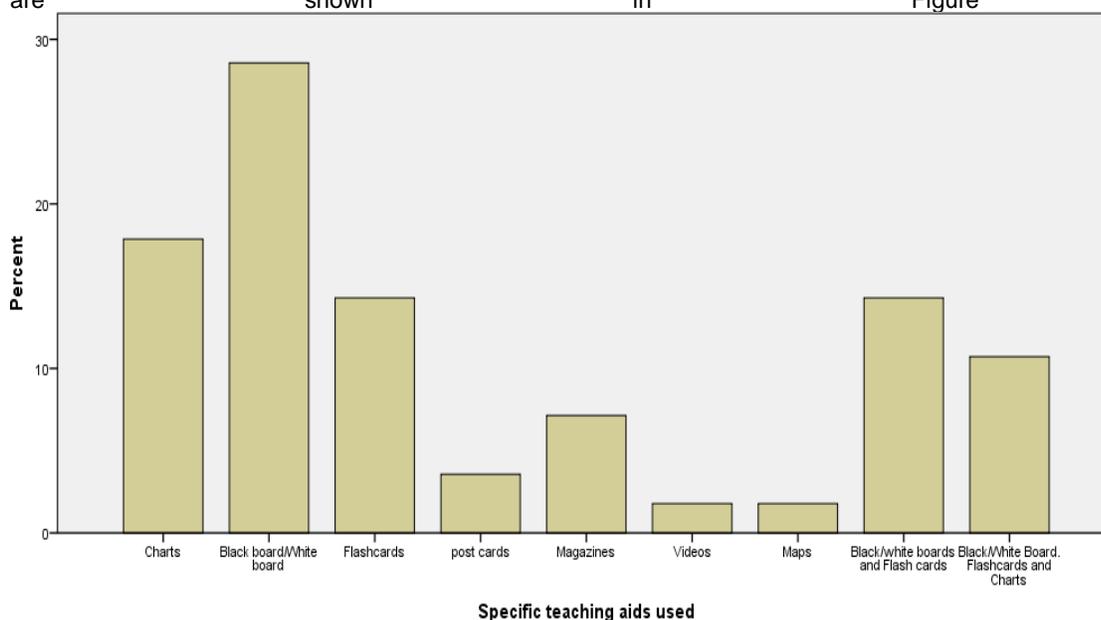


Figure 4 Distributions of Teaching Aids Used to Enhance Learning

The teachers who used at least one teaching aid were further required to indicate the specific teaching aid(s) which they used in instructing children. Figure 4 shows the distribution of the specific teaching aids used by teachers. The study affirmed Sarah (2007) finding that majority of the teachers used black/white boards as the only teaching aid representing 28.6%, while 17.9% of the teachers used charts as the only teaching aids. Those who used post cards, Magazines, videos and maps represented 3.6%, 7.1%, 1.8% and 1.8% respectively. Some teachers had also reported using more than one teaching aid to instruct children. Teachers who used both black/white boards and flashcards represented 14.3%, while those who used black/white boards, flashcards and charts represented 10.7%. The findings are also in agreement with the position taken by Oguntuase (2008), who argued that teachers usually use the readily available teaching aids such as black boards and charts. This is attributed to the non- corporation

among stake holders. The teachers' perception of teaching aids was determined, figure 4 presents the results.

Table 2 Teachers' Perception of Use of Teaching Aids

	Frequency	Percentage
Very Important	26	43.3%
Important	16	26.7%
Not sure	8	13.3%
Unimportant	8	13.3%
Not Important at all	2	3.3%
Total	60	100%

As shown in table 2, majority of the teachers' perceived teaching aids as very important in instructing children representing 43.3%, this was followed by those who said it was important (26.7%). This confirms Farris, (2000) suggestion that many teachers were aware of teaching aids but they ignored them. The percentage of those who reported to be not sure was equal to the percentage of those who said it was unimportant representing 13.3% each, while only 3.3% said that use of teaching aids was not important at all.

6. CONCLUSIONS

From the findings and discussion, the study concludes that the use of teaching aids in pre- schools in Isinya Sub-County has not received much attention from stakeholders. The failure of several schools to use teaching aids may affect the quality of education in pre- schools.

The study further concluded 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. Several strategies that could be used to improve the use of teaching aids in pre-schools included: providing enough materials for children, making teaching aids affordable to all pre-schools; provide attractive teaching aids and make sure they are in relation to the theme of the lessons, teachers to form groups for developing teaching aids materials, creating awareness to teachers on the importance of using teaching aids and use of computerized teaching aids.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i). Ministry of Education science and technology should continuously supervise learning in pre-schools to ensure pre-school teachers use teaching aids and advise them accordingly to ensure that children use teaching and learning aids.
- (ii). Management of the pre-schools in Isinya Sub-county should put more emphasis on effective use of teaching aids in all pre-schools.
- (iii). The study mainly concentrated on general use of teaching aids in pre-schools. Further research can be done in future to investigate the use of teaching aids in rural schools as compared to schools in urban setting. This would help unveil if children in urban schools have any advantage over those in rural settings.

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