

**INFLUENCE OF TELEVISION VIEWING ON PRE-SCHOOL
CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE PERFORMANCE IN
MUNICIPALITY ZONE OF MERU COUNTY**

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the requirements for the award of the Degree of
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DECLARATION

This research proposal is my original work and has not been submitted to any other institution for any academic award.

Signature..........Date.....30/11/10

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This research proposal has been submitted for examination with my approval as University supervisor

Signature..........Date.....25/11/2011

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DEDICATION

I dedicate my work to my late mum and my lovely son Nick .I appreciate you so much mum and son.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost may i take this opportunity to thank the almighty father for giving me the strength and heart without which I would not have been able to complete my course. Secondly I wish to thank and convey my gratitude to my supervisor Dr Origa, without his guidance, encouragement and commitment the study would have been difficult to understand. His insight, inspiration and patience made my work easy, organized within the shortest time possible.

I wish to thank the University of Nairobi and in particular the department of early childhood education for according me the opportunity to pursue this degree. The coordinator of this department Dr Gatumu has been so instrumental towards the success of the entire group of students pursuing the course.

My heart felt appreciation also goes to my late mum for her effort and contribution towards my joining of the course through her moral and financial support she accorded me. To my dear mum, “Mum although you passed on before witnessing my success and receiving the honour of my masters degree as you had wished, I feel that I have done my level best. You had always wished to see me go through the ladder of education to the highest level, I will make sure I try my level best to make you happy wherever you are and will always do it for you dear mum.” I also most sincerely thank my dear son “Nick” who has always been there with me even during the most difficult times, we have always walked the journey together. I also thank my sisters Gladys and Esther for their moral and financial support throughout the course.

I also appreciate the cordial team spirit we shared with the members of my class in seeing to it that all is well and course work is always done and in good time. Lastly may i take this opportunity to thank sister Leah, brother Muchai and mum for their support.

ABSTRACT

This study sought to find out the influence of TV watching on preschool children's language performance, the relationship between television presentations and role modeling in language development among pre-school children determine the effect of types of programs children watch on their language performance, it also sort to find out the influence of the duration of time spent on television viewing on children's language performance and to establish the relationship between television viewing on preschool children's language performance in Municipality Zone of Meru County. The rearch used survey research design. The study population involved all the preschoolers and teachers in the preschools as well as the parents of the pupils. The specific sample constituted of 56 Preschoolers, 26 parents and 13 Preschool teachers making a total of 95 respondents. The instruments used in collection of data included questionnaires and interviews. Data collected during the study was then coded and presented graphically for easier understanding.

From the study, it was concluded that TV viewing affects the language development of children through role modeling where children always want to behave like the characters they see and end up developing language aspects such as pronunciation, intonations, vocabulary like those of the TV presenters. The study also found out that children like watching some programs more than others. In addition, the study established that the duration of time spent viewing TV is not directly proportional to language performance. Finally, the study found out that TV viewing affects language performance of preschoolers only to some extent by children role modeling the characters they admire on TV which may influence aspects of language performance such as pronunciation, intonations, vocabulary and spelling as there are other factors that determine the language performance of a child.

After the above conclusions the research recommended that children should be allowed to watch children friendly programs under the supervision of adults .Parents should not allow their children to spend too much time watching TV as this would not be of help to the child. Teachers should make use of other instructional materials during language teaching and this affects language performance more .Children also should be allowed to interact with each others so as to develop their language further and parent and teachers should also help them differentiate between episodes on TV and real life. The media should uphold the law that protects children from harmful TV programs that negatively affect children.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

NACECE	National centre for early childhood education
IQ	Intelligence Quotient
TV	Television

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Too much time in front of the Television reduces children's learning abilities, academic achievement, and even the likelihood of their graduation from university. It may be the quality, not quantity, of the programs that really matters. Gaddy (1986) and Ritchie (1987) have found that high quality educational TV programs are a boon for learning. Wiecha (2001) shows that the negative effects on hours in front of the TV disappear when confounding factors such as IQ or socio-economic status are included. Erloy (1997) advocated that the early years in a child's life are very important. Parents and undertakers handling young children are a great influence to their holistic development including intellectually and morally and other spheres of life. The required age for children to be in pre-school in Kenya is 3-6 years after which the child moves to primary school at 7 years (NACECE, 1992). This is the time when their physical and mental growth is rapid, and the child is curiously trying to learn from the environment (Williams, 1984). It is during this period that television viewing, if not properly monitored may have drastic effects on the young mind.

On the other hand, Sheridah (1999) states that children can use television media to increase their understanding of the world around them. Television viewing has been studied in children who are academically gifted with results suggesting that selective viewing can promote academic abilities (Zimmerman, 1982). Zimmerman (1982) further adds that the television, which is very common with the children, improves the General Knowledge and IQ of Children. Children also learn to interact in various languages with help of television media. TV also increases the social awareness of children. Cartoon channels keep the children happy. Generally, television and in moderation can be a good thing: Preschoolers can get help learning the alphabet on television

(Zimmerman, 1982). Parents are by no means the only ones in the home to shape children's behaviour. The brothers, sisters, extended family and people in the surrounding community affect children in modern societies. The outside world enters home through letters, magazines, radios, television and books. The magnitude of children's exposure to media makes it important to understand it's important in children's development levels.

Television viewing is a major activity and has influence on children. Children in the United States watch an average of three to four hours of television a day. By the time of high school graduation, they will have spent more time watching television than they have in the classroom. While television can entertain, inform, and keep our children company, it may also influence them in undesirable ways. Silva (1996) has demonstrated that heavy television-viewing may lead to serious health consequences like sedentary lifestyles, eating a lot of junk food leading to obesity; eye problem and lack of exercise for proper skeletal and motor development. Now the American medical community, which has long voiced its concerns about the nation's epidemic of violence, TV addiction and the passive, sedentary nature of TV-watching, is taking a more activist stance, demonstrated by its endorsement of National TV-Turnoff Week..

On the other hand, television is an extremely effective form of communication that has potential to increase children to a much wide range of experiences and ideas than would otherwise be possible. Much of the content of children's television programming is entertainment and probably low educational value. Time spent viewing television programs may displace education activities such as homework, reading or creative work (wright,2001). Numerous cross sectional surveys of television viewing and educational achievements have been undertaken indicating a small negative association (William, 1992; Ozmert and Toyran, 2002). The apparent association tends to disappear or is minimal in studies than adjusting for baseline performance. Follow-up studies of pre-school children indicate that watching education television programs may enhance school readiness and performance (Morgan, 1983).

Despite several decades of research, there is little consensus on whether childhood television viewing has beneficial, harmful or negligible effects on educational achievement (Morgan, 1996). This uncertainty is due to lack of long term follow-up data particularly for school age children. Findings by Hancox (2002) indicate that excessive television viewing is likely to have negative impact on educational achievements. It is likely to have far reaching consequences for an individual's social economic status and well being in adult life. High rates of television viewing have been associated with displacement of learning activities, poor attention and other behavioral problems which affect performance. Findings indicate that majority of television viewing is unlikely to have an educational program. Many problems of television viewing in Kenya are inherent in the media and technology itself thus cannot be reformed (Anderson, 2001).

Mander (1993) says that the technology and institutions such as mass production and advertising, the basic form of the institution and the technology determines its interaction with the world in the way it will be used and the kind of people who use it. He says far from being neutral, television predetermines who shall use it, how they will use it and what effects it will have on an individual's life.

The standards of living in this nation have improved, which has made it possible for many households in the rural areas to own a TV set. Every major event happening in the nation would definitely be recited by the school going kids during their free time. There is a lot of unfiltered or unguided TV viewing within Municipality zone due to the behaviour exhibited by the youngsters where many have been found to act the same bad scenes in the education corridors. This has influenced the researcher's desire to investigate the influence of TV watching on pre-school children language performance.

Although the content of general audience programming is highly variable, much of it is light

entertainment that is not designed to convey educational messages (Anderson et al., 2001). The level of vocabulary and required background knowledge is, for the most part, not geared toward young children. According to Huston et al., (1999), television viewing displaces more intellectually variable activity, resulting in lowered levels of language and intellectual functioning. For young children, general audience programming may displace or interfere with the child's opportunity to interact with adults. As a result, children may have fewer social and linguistic interactions with adults while deriving little from the television content that is occupying the adult's attention (St. Peters, et al., 1991).

According to Ormond (1999) Social learning theory focuses on the learning that occurs within a social context. It considers that people learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modeling. The social learning theory of Bandura emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Bandura (1977) state: "Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behaviour is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action." In doing this children develop their language through imitating adults and older children.

There is very poor language performance in municipality Zone of Meru County (DEO annual report 2009). This made the researcher get interested in researching on the cause of the poor language performance in the zone.

1.2 Statement of the problem

All human beings require the driving force which causes them to set out to achieve goals. But this has to start early in the life of a person. Explanations of language achievement and development, like most explanations of well-being, are complex. Scholarly literature contains five levels of learner characteristics and interactions to explain language achievement and development. These are individual characteristics, family, school, and community interactions on one hand and country-specific socio-economic factors on the other. The TV as a tool can be used as a method of delivering the five levels of learner's language development through imitation and role modeling of the TV presenters.

Television viewing has both negative and positive effects on the development of children. It could hinder intellectual development in languages by reducing the child to a passive role since the child is a nonparticipant he /she just does the listening. At the same time, television viewing could help children to become active viewers frequently incorporating events and character into the pretend play. This would, to a large extent, enhance their language development as compared to those children not exposed to TV viewing. According to Morgan (1996) television viewing is part of children's lives and we know that childhood television viewing experiences have long term implications on children's brain and language development

The researcher found out that there was a lot of unguided TV viewing in municipality zone of Meru county and therefore this study sought to examine how television viewing influences on the pre-school children's language performance. The relationship between TV presentations and role modeling on pre-school children's language performance. The influence of types of programs children watch on their language performance and the influence of the duration of time spent on TV viewing on pre-school children's language performance.

1.3 Purpose of study

The purpose of the study was to establish the influence of television viewing on pre-school children's language performance in municipality Zone of Meru County.

1.4 Research Objectives

The specific objectives that guided this study include:

- i. To find out the relationship between television presentations and role modeling in language development among pre-school children.
- ii. To determine the effect of types of programs children watch on their language performance.
- iii. To find out the influence of the duration of time spent on television viewing on children's language performance.
- iv. To establish the relationship between Television viewing on pre-school children's language performance.

1.5 Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions

- i. What is the relationship between television presentations and role modeling in language development?
- ii. What effect do the types of programs watched by children have on their language performance?
- iii. Does the duration of time spent on television viewing have any influence on children's language performance?
- iv. What influence does TV viewing have on children's language performance?

1.6 Significance of the study

Pre- school education may be described as the most important points of ensuring success in the academic life of an individual. This study featured issues that pose a challenge to pre-school children behaviour as affected by television watching. It is hoped that the findings of this study might be used by the government, community, parents and pre-school teachers to sensitize the public about significance of choosing wisely on young children's television programs. It might also create awareness to the relevant stakeholders who may use the knowledge gathered to enhance holistic growth and development of pre-school children. Other researchers may use the findings from the research as a source of relevant information and a base for future research.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The study anticipated the following challenges during the study:

- i. The main challenge was due to the sensitivity of the issue. Television viewing is a private venture thus the study tended to investigate private issues of television watching and programs which might not have been comfortable to some participants. This might have made them not to give information freely.
- ii. The researcher also encountered problems in the filling of the questionnaire where illiterate parents /respondents were involved. This took time since the researcher was required to explain the questionnaires to majority of the respondents.

1.8 Delimitations of study

The study was carried out in pre- schools in Municipality Zone of Meru County. Parents, teachers and children from the selected pre- school were included in the study.

1.9 Basic Assumptions

The study assumed that all pre-school children in Municipality Zone have access to television since it's a municipality zone. The study also assumed that the respondents gave honest responses to the questions asked. The study also assumed that television viewing habits have an influence on children's character and language performance

1.10 Definitions of terms

Duration	-Time during which something lasts or continues happening.
Influence	-Refers to the effect one thing or somebody has on the way a person Thinks, behaves, works or develops.
Language	- Human communication of knowledge or ideas either verbally or in writing that is used by people of a particular race or country.
Role Modeling	-copying of a character one admires.
Performance	-How well or badly one does in class work.
Pre-school	-This is the early schooling where children are socialized and Oriented to later schooling at ages of about three to six years.
Program type	-class of broadcast, performance, presentation, production or show that people watch on TV or listen to on the radio.
Television	-A box – like device with a screen which receives electronic signals that changes them into moving images and sounds that people watch and listen to.
Viewing habit	-This is the tendency of watching television
Children	-Any young human being who is not an adult .In Kenya anybody under the age of 18 years.

Organization of the study

The study report is organized into five chapters. Chapter one consists of the introduction and shows clearly the background to the problem, statement of the problem, research questions and research objectives, significance of the study, definition of significant terms and organization of the study. Chapter two has the literature review; chapter three contains methodology which includes the research design, target population, sampling, research instruments, procedure for data collection and data analysis techniques. Chapter four is on the findings and their discussions, while chapter five consists of summary, conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This section represents literature review on television viewing, areas of potential harm of watching television, violence, and aggression as behaviour initiated by Television viewing, how television influences gender bias and encourage poor nutrition, the role of parents and caregivers in television viewing. It also goes to show that television when used appropriately has a very positive influence on children's language performance.

2.1 Television viewing and language performance

Is a preschool child who spends many hours in front of the television deprived of enriching experiences and healthy activities that facilitate brain development? No doubt, early childhood experiences are critical in shaping a child's cognitive development and learning ability. Nobel Prize winner and University of Chicago economics professor Heckman (1999) in a working paper wrote, "Success or failure at this stage breeds to success or failure in school which, in turn, leads to success or failure in post-school learning. Early learning begets later learning and early success breeds later success, just as early failure breeds later failure."

During the ages of three to six years, children learn and acquire important social skills and values which will shape the person they become. According to Morgan (1996) television and video are a part of many children's lives and we know that childhood television viewing experiences have long- term implications on children's development.

A study done by Zimmerman, and Christakis (2005) showed that television attracted children away from books and school work. Their study showed that children who read printed materials

such as books, watched television less than those who did not read. It is argued that television trains children to become passive learners because television rarely requires active responses from the observer. To fully understand the impact of video viewing upon young children in Australia, Disney commissioned a “ world first “ independent study of the television and video viewing habits of children aged between three and six years.

2.1.1 Duration of television viewing and language performance.

According to Morgan (1983) the base of tomorrow society is today’s children, and on the way their development depends on how the world is going to look like tomorrow. The television negative effects facts are well known to every single parent, but are ignored by them in order to put the responsibility of bringing up children and showing them example through interaction on the shoulders of somebody else

Comstock (1991) advocated that contemporary parent work a lot, but when they come back home they are not eager to spend time with their children. The consequences of this fact are the following; kids are given to themselves and watch everything they want or television plays a role of baby sitter. Therefore children learn moral principles from the television whereby at the age of 16 they observe about 100,000 violent acts and 33,000 crimes world wide

According to Dorothy (1987) the models of life interactions given in the television are very exaggerated and garbled. Children learn and they can gain through being stronger and subordinating other people that they can become popular through killing and that even if you are “ good guy “ killing is okay. Statistics have proved that the growth of time spent next to the TV set scales up the development of aggression.(Tyler,1977) maintained that many years before the examples of imitation for children were their own parents, now these examples come from hit thrillers and violent films where the personage limited are cruel, impartial, and often purely negative personages. Nowadays, children instead of playing leap and frog on the open air pretend

to be “terminators” and run around “killing “ each other. The facts of child’s identification with a “negative” destructive image has a vital influence on the development of his or her personality.

Roohs and Grat (1983) argue that television viewing is related to children early exposure to sexual scenes which may lead to early sexual contacts, which destroy the healthy development of a young child. People are pressured but such an amount of sexual scenes and these scenes normalize casual sexual encounters. They do not evaluate what they see but take it as the reality. All the mentioned negative effects may cause trauma on a young child’s consciousness and in combination with the violence may produce an unbalanced and unhealthy conduct. Example of such kind of unhealthy conduct is when kids gets guns and go to their schools shooting their teachers and their classmates.

2.1.2 Television presentations and role modeling

Wright and Huston (1995) did a study and found that television has also a great influence on the self image of people watching it. Children see perfectly shaped bodies hundred of times per day. All men shown on the TV screen have big muscles and are handsome and the entire women shown are very skinny and their faces and bodies look like complete perfection. This has coursed numerous eating disorders especially in teenage group. Such things as anorexia and self mutilation become well spread phenomena among the youth in order for them to keep their body image like those they watch over the television

According to Morgan (1996) failing children’s eyes sights is blamed on television and computer. A child that spends a lot of time next to the television set has a very high probability of damaging the eye mechanics and the ability to focus and pay attention. Another negative influence that is connected with the sight is the spoiling of the healing to the shortage of auditory stimulation. Even if the programs watched are not violent, if they are watched over hours may

have a deep impact on the personality or cause psychological and physiological problems. In Sweden a study done by Gall (1989) showed that 50 percent of children below 12 years have myopia [short sightness.]

Girtmaker (1998) advocated that a child may become so much scared of what they had observed in the television that it might cause them depression and emotional imbalance. Studies further shows that television prevents children from doing their homework and adult from completing their work, influencing in a very bad manner their school grades and work productivity. It lowers the average level of physical fitness of a person breaking the coordination. Children being attached to the television set lose the possibility to learn the world through real nature games and sports and thus according to Wikipedia (1987) these children are likely to be overweight. They do not feel the world with all its colours and peculiarities. Television have converted our lives and those of many children into a nightmare where children kills not only in the television screen and adults lose their will sitting next to the television set watching a soap opera is considered to be "family time." It is a nightmare where violent television acts performs the role of the parents. Television destroys the healthy development of a child's personality and it can without any doubt be called one of the worst inventions of modern times.

Austin (1992) on shaping children's viewing practices say that parents who impose restrictions on the child's amount of viewing and on the material watched have been found to reduce the time children spend on watching television whereas discussing program content with the children and helping them to evaluate the programming have been found to stimulate children learning more from television. Parents should restrict television use during the week to encourage homework completion Armstrong (1988) since 1970's researchers have known that children who watch a great deal of television see the world as a manner scarier and more dangerous place than children who do not watch a lot of television Gross and Eleey (1977). Only a handful of television programs teach children important skills such as reading science or problem solving.

Most shows on television including cartoons are non- educational and more time spent watching these is linked with poorer school performance (Redford,1995).

2.1.3 Type of television program and language performance

For decades people have been trying to assess the influence of television viewing upon reading, language and cognitive skills. Templin (1957) argued in favour of periodic studies about children language because of the influence of television on changing norms of language ability. To date we understand little about combined roles of television, the home and the school in influencing the child's development while some have feared that television is the most important promoter of learning. In general television viewing begins at age two; increase rapidly until age seven and continues to rise until adolescent (Anderson, 2001).

Research by Hancox (2004) consistently revealed that teaching by television is effective at all level of instruction and in all types of situations. Instructional, television has been found to be inferior to conventional instruction in only a few cases and in many cases television was found to be significantly more effective.

2.1.4 Language development

Educational programming for young children is based on a straight forward assumption that well designed television can convey academic and social skills to viewers. Most of the research evaluating the influence of educational programming on language and school-related skills has been conducted with *sesame street*. This is a very popular program in the U.S. and it emphasizes linguistic and academic skills more than do most other educational programs (Neapolitan & Huston, 1994). During the first 2 years after its inception,, multisite field experiments were conducted to determine its effects on pre-academic skills. Children whose parents were encouraged by researchers to have them watch *Sesame Street* improved more than a non-encouraged control group on such academic and cognitive skills as letter recognition, numerical

skills and classification (Ball & Bogatz, 1970). Similarly, a summative evaluation of *The Electric Company* showed that viewing the program at home fostered reading performance among children (Ball & Bogatz, 1973).

Longitudinal methods have also been used to examine the relations between viewing and language development and school achievement. In one investigation, viewing *Sesame Street* between ages 3 and 5 predicted improvements in receptive vocabulary at age 5 (Rice, et al., 1990). There was also a tendency for children who watched informative programs designed for children and adults to perform better on letter recognition and reading skills (Truglio, et al., 1986). By contrast, a study of preschool and early school-age children in the United States found out that exposure to adult entertainment television predicted poor letter recognition at age 5, but was unrelated to later reading comprehension (Truglio et al., 1990). There was no relation between viewing cartoons or adult entertainment programs and vocabulary (Rice et al., 1990), but one 3-year longitudinal study in Netherlands showed that viewing entertainment programming was negatively related to subsequent reading comprehension.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

2.2.1 Social learning theory

According to Ormond (1999) Social learning theory focuses on the learning that occurs within a social context. It considers that people learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modeling. The social learning theory of Bandura emphasizes the importance of observing and modeling the behaviours, attitudes, and emotional reactions of others. Bandura (1977) states: "Learning would be exceedingly laborious, not to mention hazardous, if people had to rely solely on the effects of their own actions to inform them what to do. Fortunately, most human behaviour is learned observationally through modeling: from observing others one forms an idea of how new

behaviours are performed, and on later occasions this coded information serves as a guide for action.”

Social learning theory explains human behaviour in terms of continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural, and environmental influences. The component processes underlying observational learning are: Attention, including modeled events (distinctiveness, affective valence, complexity, prevalence, functional value) and observer characteristics (sensory capacities, arousal level, perceptual set, past reinforcement); Retention, including symbolic coding, cognitive organization, symbolic rehearsal, motor rehearsal); Motor Reproduction, including physical capabilities, self-observation of reproduction, accuracy of feedback, and Motivation, including external, vicarious and self reinforcement.

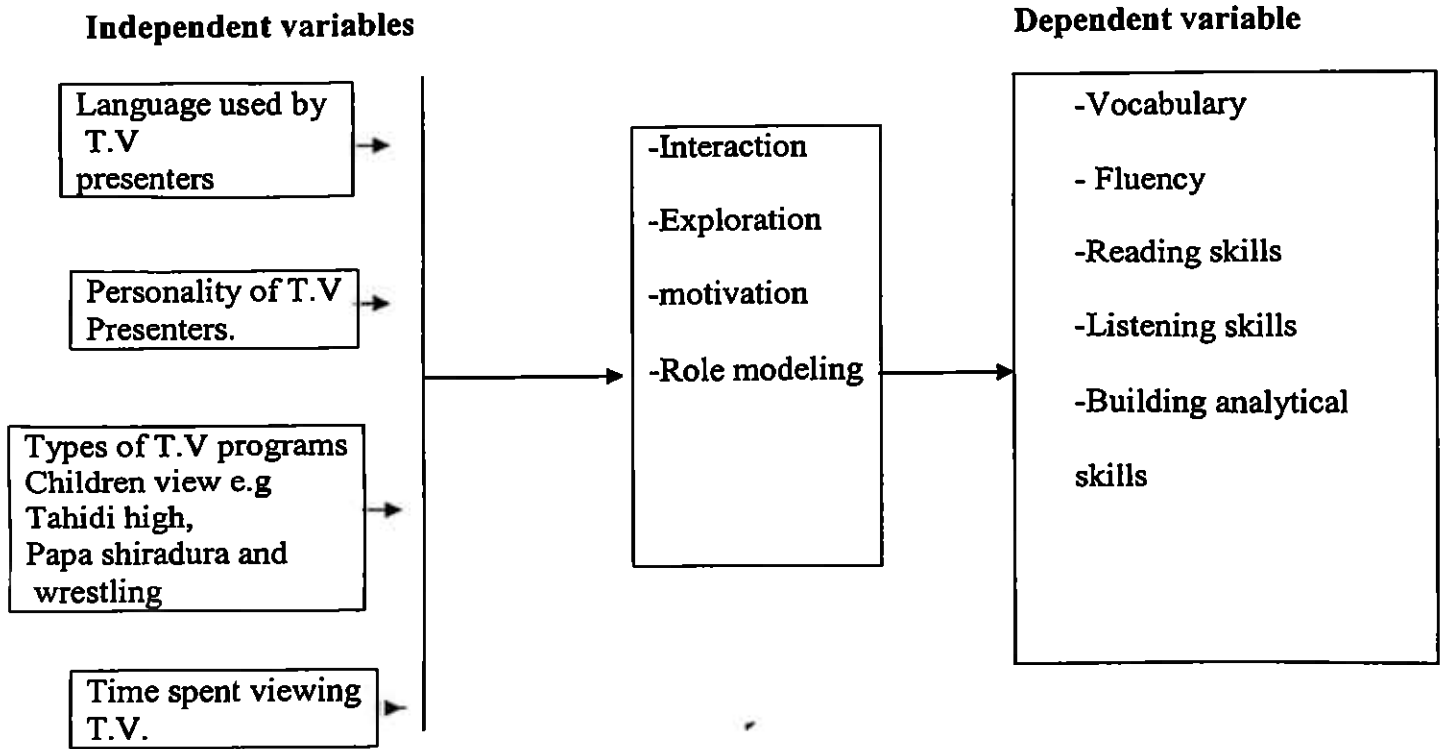
Bandura (1977) premise is that we can learn by observing others. He considers vicarious experience to be the typical way that human beings change. He uses the term *modeling* to describe Campbell's two midrange processes of response acquisition (observation of another's response and modeling), and he claims that modeling can have as much impact as direct experience.

Social learning theory is a general theory of human behaviour, but Bandura (1977), concerned with mass communication has used it specifically to explain media effects. Bandura warned that "children and adults acquire attitudes, emotional responses, and new styles of conduct through filmed and televised modeling." Gerbner (1987) was concerned that television violence would create a false climate of fear. Bandura cautioned that TV might create a violent reality that was worth fearing.

Bandura's warning struck a responsive chord in parents and educators who feared that escalating violence on TV would transform children into bullies. Although he doesn't think this will happen without the tacit approval of those who supervise the children, Bandura regards anxiety over televised violence as legitimate. That stance caused network officials to blackball him from taking part in the 1972 *Surgeon General's Report on Violence*. It is doubtful whether TV sets will ever bear an inscription similar to that on packs of cigarettes: "Warning: The Surgeon General has determined that TV violence may turn your child into an insensitive brute." But if Bandura had been picked as a member of the research team, the report would have been more definitive in pointing out the causal link between television violence and aggressive behaviour. Social learning theory postulates three necessary stages in the causal link between television violence and actual physical harm to another: attention, retention, and motivation

2.3 Conceptual framework

The following diagram represents the relationships between various variables



CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methodology employed in the study. It highlights the study design, target population, sample size, data collection instruments, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques used by the researcher.

3.1 The research Design

Research design is described as the arrangement of conditions or collections and analysis of data in a manner that aims at combining relevant information to the research purpose with economy in the procedure. This study is an evaluation survey which utilized both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Descriptive studies of the survey nature are used not only for the purpose of description but also for the determination of relationships between variables at the time of study (Babbie, 1973). The survey design was chosen in this case because it enabled the study to cover a larger area thus the findings are applicable to a large area.

3.2 Target Population

Summer (1986) defined target population as the entire group of people in a category. In this study the research was carried out in Municipality education Zone of Meru County. Population for the study comprised of pre-school children, parents and teachers from both public and private pre- school in Municipality zone. The researcher targeted 900 total number of children in the 29 pre-schools in the zone, 87 teachers and 900 parents a total of 1887 people

3.3 Sample and sampling procedures

The researcher purposefully sampled Municipality Zone for the study because it has more of the preschools and they are well established since they were started earlier than the others. The study sample included 10 of 20 public preschools and 3 of the 9 private preschools in the zone which were identified through simple random sampling. All the names of 20 public pre-

schools were written on pieces of paper and picked randomly and the picked schools constituted the sample. The same procedure was repeated for the private preschools. The respondents included pre-school teachers, parents and preschoolers from the selected preschools. Purposive sampling was used to sample the parents with the help of the preschool teachers of the various preschools as they were more familiar with these people than the researcher. This helped the researcher get the respondents with the characteristics she wanted as the teacher was able to identify these. Four students from each preschool, 2 boys and 2 girls were also randomly sampled. Therefore the sample population constituted 95 respondents including 56 preschoolers, 26 parents and 13 preschool teachers.

3.4 .Research instrument

3.4.1 Interview schedules

An interview schedule was prepared prior to the commencement of the study and administered to the selected pupils and preschool teachers. The teachers were interviewed on issues concerning television programs pre-school children watch. Generally interviews were used in this study because they enabled the researcher to get clear information from respondents because they were working face to face.

3.4.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire was prepared in advance and issued to the specified parents. The questionnaire gathered information about the kind of television programs watched by pre-school children and the parents' involvement. The respondents answered questions confidently without fear of being known because they were not to write their names on the papers they answered questions on.

3.4.3 Instrument reliability and validity.

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. To test reliability, the researcher used split half technique. By using this method the researcher aimed at determining the co-efficient of internal consistency or reliability co-efficient.

Validity refers to the extent to which an instrument measures what the researcher actually wishes to measure. Although the concept of reliability and validity are related in social sciences, they are related in an asymmetric manner. A test cannot be valid unless it is reliable, but it can be reliable without being valid (Saunders, 2000). Traditional research argues that the only way to produce valid information is through the application of a rigorous research methodology, that is, one that follows a strict set of objective procedures that separate researchers from those researched (Kincheloe and McLaren, 1994). The variables and data collection instruments were scrutinized by experts, mainly the University Supervisor for their expert opinion to ensure that they are in line with the objectives.

3.5 Procedure for data collection

The researcher conducted interviews during the day when the respondents were free. The respondents were interviewed one at a time on different days. The teachers were interviewed after the lesson so as not to interfere with the school daily routine. The researcher, through the head teacher invited parents to come and fill in the questionnaires. A letter was sent to them to come to school. Prior to filling in the questionnaire, the researcher explained to the parents in detail the procedures they should follow while answering the questionnaires. This procedure helped the researcher to establish whether there is a relationship between television watching and performance.

3.6 Data Analysis

Data analysis refers to the process of bringing orderly structure and meaning to the mass of information collected. The information gathered from the interviews and observations was analyzed. The researcher analyzed the answers given by respondents as they were being interviewed and the observations made. This was done by checking the accuracy and uniformity by comparing answers on observation with interview answers. The analysis was done based on research questions which were on language and television viewing , type of programs that children watch and the time they spend watching them. The researcher rated the answers depending on what the respondents gave. Data collected was analyzed and interpreted in order to provide explanations on effects of television watching and children's language performance. Percentages, pie charts, graphs and tables were used to present the findings.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

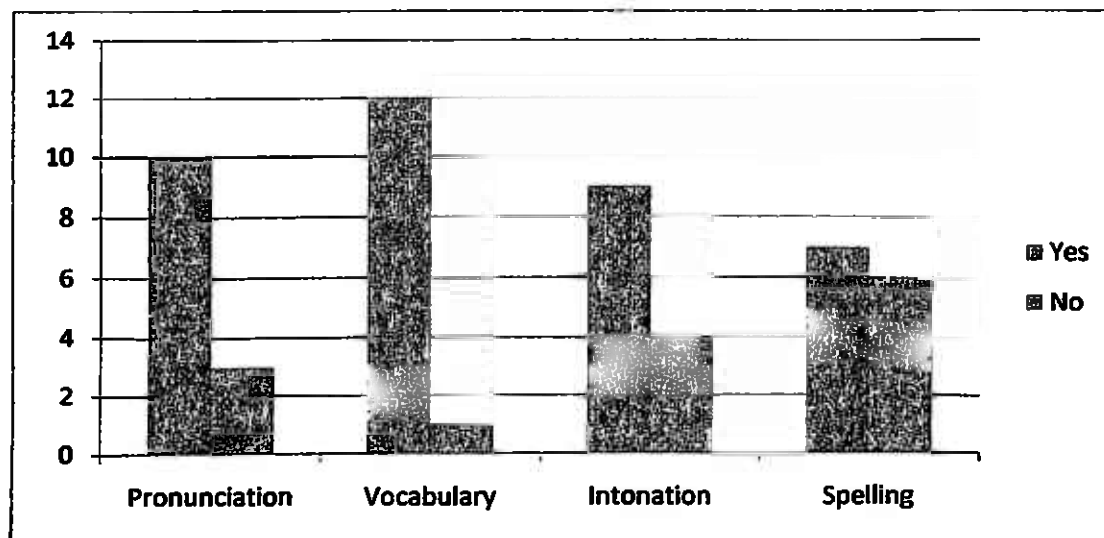
4.1 Introduction

This study set out to investigate the influence of television viewing on language performance in preschools in Municipality Zone of Meru County. Apart from the interview schedules administered on the selected preschoolers and teachers, more data collected by use of questionnaires which were administered on the parents. This chapter presents this data and discusses the findings of the study.

4.2 Television Viewing and Language Development

The study sought to establish if a relationship existed between television viewing and language development. This was gathered through the interviews administered on the teachers where they were required to mention how television viewing affected language development in children. The responses of the teachers are summarized in the figure below:

Figure 4.1: Teachers' Responses on TV Viewing and Language Development



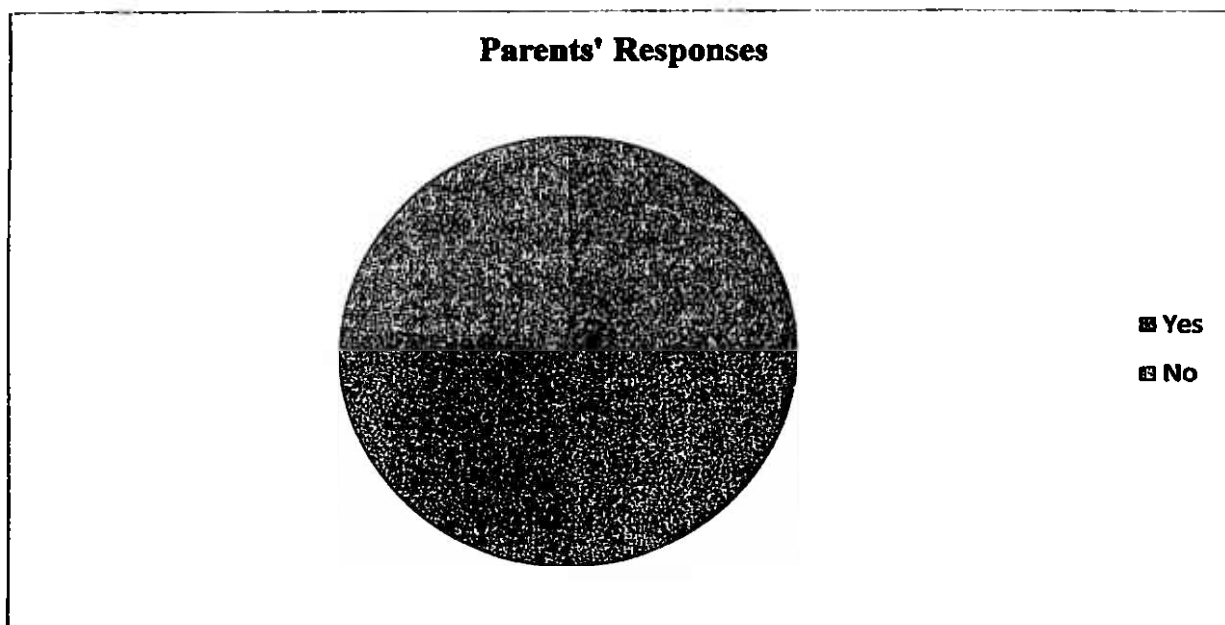
From figure 4.1 above, it is clear that there is a significant relationship between television and aspects of language development. Ten of the 13 respondents felt that TV viewing greatly affects pronunciation in children. This is mainly due to the fact that those presenting on TV are clear in the way they articulate words hence it is easy for a child to pick out the pronunciation of a particular word. On the other hand, three of the respondents had a different opinion as they said that pronunciation is not something a viewer can just pick from someone presenting on TV but instead, had to be learnt in school. They therefore did not associate language development with TV viewing in children.

On vocabulary, only one respondent was of the view that TV viewing did not contribute to its acquisition by children. She felt that vocabulary was learnt through language use and not just viewing television. The others concurred that when children viewed TV, they picked new words which they went ahead to use constantly thus expanding their vocabulary. The figure also shows

that intonation was associated with TV viewing by a good number of the respondents and only 4 were of a different opinion. On the other hand, the issue of TV watching contributing to spelling development was the most controversial aspect of language development with almost a 50-50 response. Those who did not support it argued that since TV did not present the written word, it was not easy for children to figure out the spelling of words.

The parents were also required to give their views on whether TV viewing contributes to the language development of their children. The figure below presents their responses:

Figure 4.2: Parents' Responses on Whether TV Viewing Contributes to Language Development



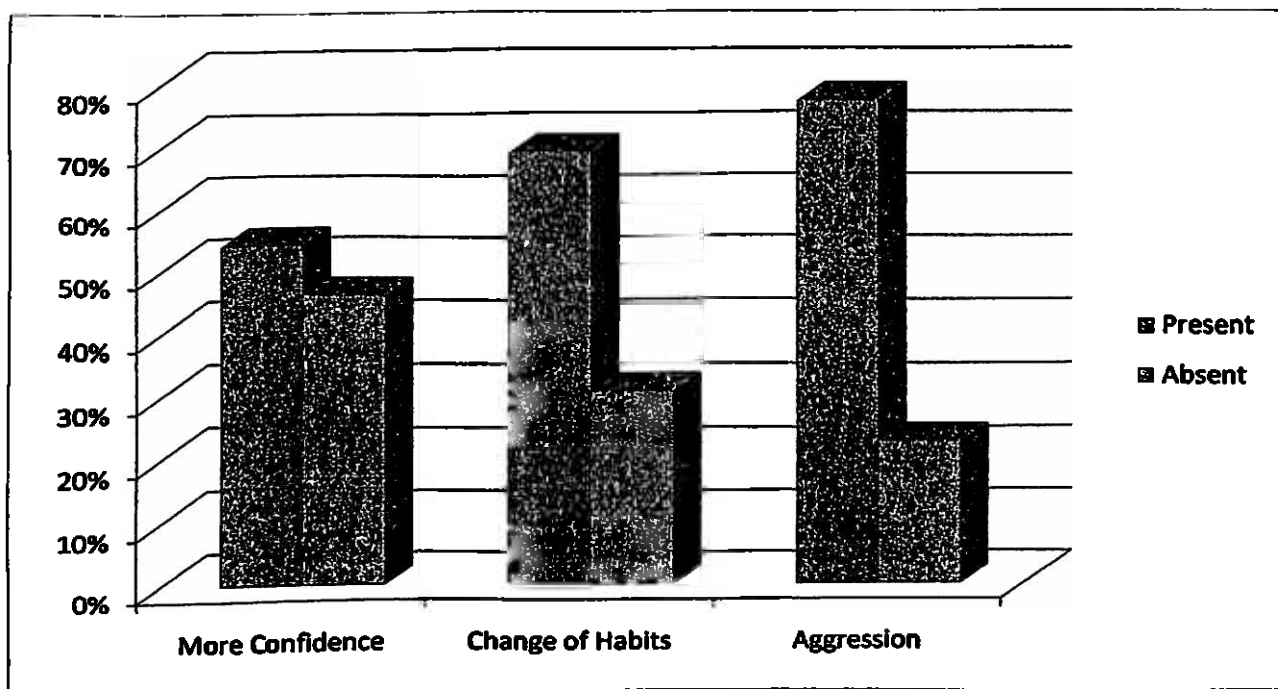
The figure above shows that 77% of the respondents were in agreement that TV viewing affects the language development of children. They explained that children normally learnt language faster than adults thus a relationship must exist between TV watching and development of language. They also added that children who watched TV regularly developed speech faster than

their counterparts. On the other hand, 23% of the respondents were of the opposite opinion. They claimed that when watching television, children were more interested in the action than in the words and this explained why most children are interested in watching news.

4.3 Television Viewing and Role Modeling

Apart from language development, the study also set to find out if there was any relationship between TV viewing and role modeling. This was gathered from both the parents and the teachers during data collection. The responses of the teachers are highlighted in the figure below:

Figure 4.3: Teachers' views on TV Viewing and Role Modeling

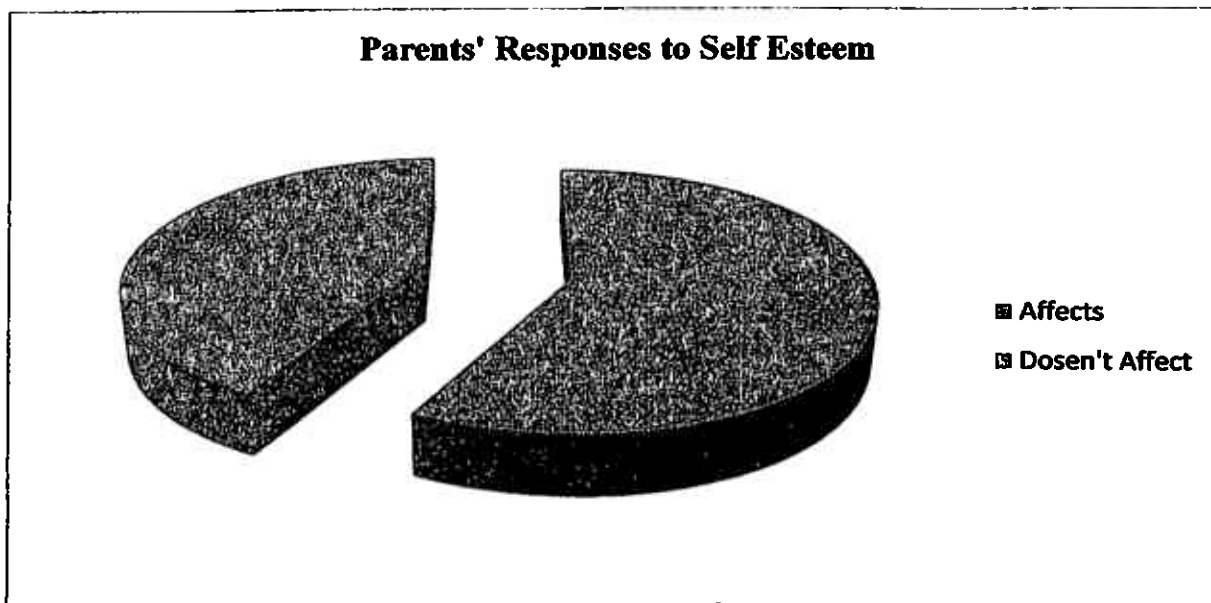


In their responses, the teachers associated some behaviour to TV watching as a result of role modeling. They explained that children learn through imitation and the characters on TV are not an exception to the role models children look up to. Figure 4.1 above indicates that aspects of behaviour found in children could be as a result of TV watching. 77% of the respondents felt that aggression in most cases in children is an indicator of children being exposed to violent or provocative TV programs. They explained that since the children's minds were still developing, it is hard for them to distinguish between reality and fiction hence they would always want to be like the characters on TV. This in turn leads to aggressive or even violent behaviour. On the other hand, 23% of the teachers were of the opinion that aggression in children is not necessarily as a result of TV watching. According to them, other factors such as domestic violence in the homes or neighborhoods where the children come from could result to aggression.

Similarly, 69% of the respondents associated change of habits in children such as speech or walking style to TV viewing and role modeling. They were of the opinion when children learn something, they would want to go and experiment and since TV viewing involved a lot of action, children copied a lot from it. 31% of the respondents however explained that not all habits change following TV watching. The same explanation followed for sudden display of more confidence in children and 54% of the respondents supported this while 46% felt otherwise.

The respondents also concurred that TV viewing and role modeling affect the self esteem of the children since they are still young and want to be like the characters they see on television. This was also echoed by the parents whose responses are summarized below:

Figure 4.4: Parents' Responses on Whether TV Viewing Affects Self Esteem



The figure above shows that 58% of the respondents agreed that TV viewing and role modeling affect self esteem of children in one way or another. They explained that since children are still young and strive to be like the characters they see, they end up feeling annoyed with themselves since they do not measure up to what they see in these characters. However, 42% of the respondents felt that self esteem is affected by many things and not just through TV characters.

4.4 Effect of Types of TV Programs Watched by Children on Language

This study also wanted to establish the influence of the types of programs watched by children on language development. This data was gathered from the children themselves and the parents. Their responses are as shown below:

Table 4.1 Types of Programs Watched by Children

Program Type	Number of Children that Watches	Number of Children that Doesn't Watch
Comedies	50	6
Soap Operas	5	51
Movies	20	36
Children's Programs	56	0
News	0	56

From the table above, it is clear that children's programs are a favorite of all the children in the study. On the other hand, all the children were not interested in news as this does not involve any action yet their concentration levels are low. Comedies are equally liked by many children followed by movies. The table also shows that soap operas are also not liked by many children due to the fact that they call for a lot of attention.

The responses of the parents on whether the programs watched affect the language development of the children are as summarized in the figure below

Figure 4.5 Programs and Language Development

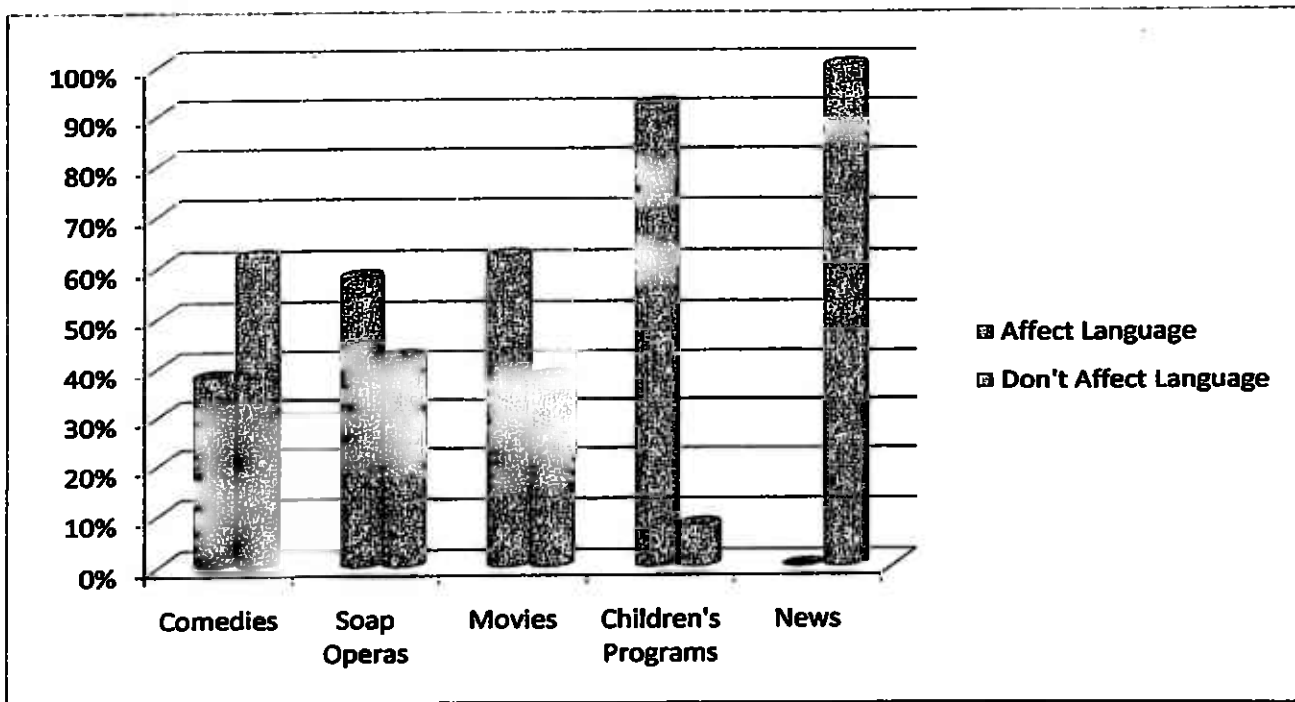


Figure 4.5 above shows the responses of parents on whether specific TV programs watched by children affect language development. The most prominent program that affects language is the children's program which is watched by a majority of the children. 92% of the respondents explained that since children's programs were custom-made for the children, it was easy for them to understand the language used hence easy to adopt it. On the other hand, all the respondents concurred that the news was the only program that was not affecting language development since children never even watched in the first place. Secondly, the respondents explained that the language used in the news was so complicated for the children that it was hard for them to follow.

4.5 Duration of TV Watching and Language Performance

The study also sought to find out the influence of the time spent watching TV by children on their language performance.

4.5.1 Average Time Spent on TV Watching per Day

From the interviews with the children, the study established that all of them spent some considerable amount of time watching TV. The time spent every day varied as most children spent more time watching TV over the weekends as compared to the weekdays. The table below shows the average time spent watching TV by children per day.

Table 4.2: Number of Children versus Average Time Spent Watching TV

Average Time Spent Watching TV	Percentage Number of Children
0- 1 Hour	30%
2-3 Hours	47%
3- 4 Hours	16%
4 Hours and above	7%

Table 4.2 above clearly shows that the largest number of children watches TV at least 2 to 3 hours per day with 47% of the sampled children admitting to this while 30% admitted to doing so for less than an hour daily. The parents admitted to regulating the time spent by children watching TV explaining that if they failed to do so, the children would spend the entire day seated and even forget to do their homework. 16% of the respondents on the other hand watch TV for 3 to 4 hours per day. From the data collected, only 7% of the children spent over 4 hours of TV watching per day. Some parents explained that they were not bothered about the amount of time spent watching TV so long as their children completed their homework. They further explained that this helped keep them out of trouble.

4.5.2 How Duration of TV Watching Influences on Language Performance

The study set to find out if a relationship existed between the duration of time spent watching TV and language performance. The responses of the parents to this issue are summarized below:

Figure 4.6: Duration of TV Watching Versus Language Performance

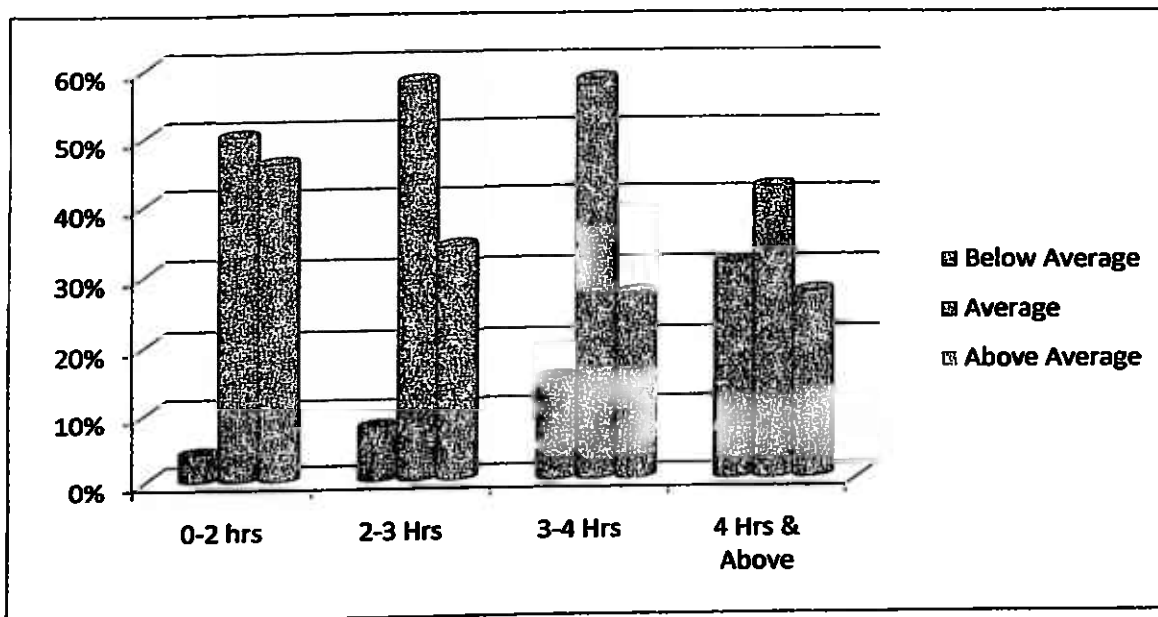


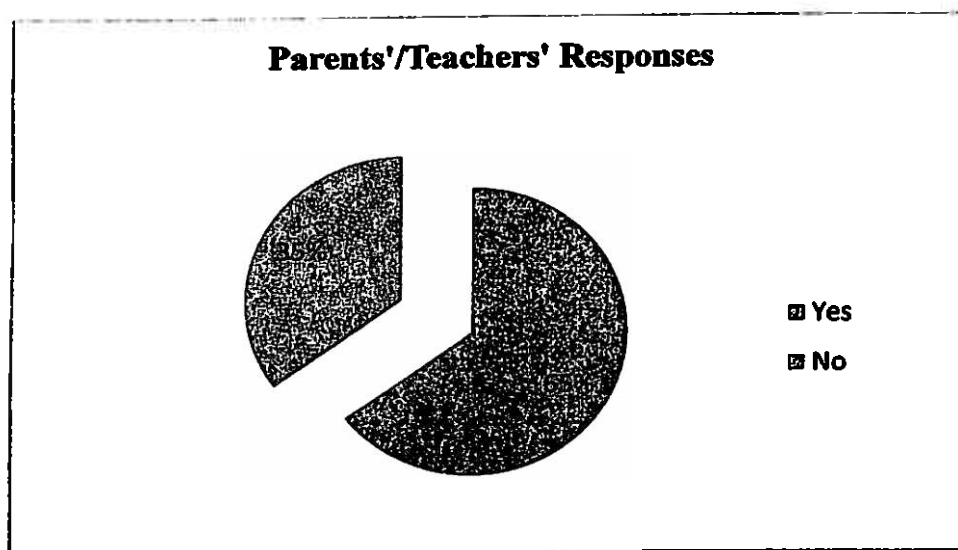
Figure 4.6 above shows the responses of the parents on the relationship between the duration of time spent by children watching TV and their average language performance. The data indicates that spending a lot of time watching TV does not necessarily lead to higher language performance. Indeed, 31% of the parents admitted that children who spent over 4 hours watching TV had higher chances of performing below average than their counterparts. On the other hand, 34% of the parents agreed that spending even up to an hour a day on watching is more than enough to help a child an above average language performance. This clearly indicates that there is more to language performance than the duration of time spent. Rather, the parents concurred

that the quality of the programme watched is what mattered most in addition to other factors like mode of instruction in school and interaction with other children.

4.6 TV Viewing and Language Performance

The study finally sought to establish the general opinion of the parents and teachers on whether TV viewing by children affects in any way their language performance. Their views are as summarized in the figure below:

Figure 4.7: Parents'/Teachers' Responses on TV Viewing & Language Performance



The figure above indicates that most of the respondents were in agreement that exposure to TV viewing affected in one way or another the language performance of children. 65% of the respondents explained that through TV watching, children learnt things like new vocabularies, pronunciation of words and in some programmes, spelling. This contributed to their language performance greatly. On the other hand, 35% of the respondents felt that there was more to language performance than just TV watching. They were of the opinion that since most of the programs on TV were aired for entertainment purposes, chances of children learning from them

were low. They also expressed their reservation on the language which is used in some programs citing how ungrammatical and misleading it can be, especially in the Swahili programmes. Further, they argued that the teacher instruction and the way children interact with the others either at home or in school affected their language performance more than TV watching.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter gives an overview of what has been tackled in the chapters above in summary. It also highlights the conclusions made based on the findings of the study as well as the recommendations that can be employed by stakeholders to improve the language performance of preschoolers in municipality Zone of Meru County.

5.2 Summary

This study sought to find out the influencing of TV watching on preschool children's language performance in Municipality Zone of Meru County. Identifying the relationship between television presentations and role modeling in language development, finding out the effect of types of programs children view on language development, establishing the influence of duration of time spent viewing TV on language performance and finding out the general effect of TV viewing on language performance were the main objectives of this study.

The study population involved all the preschoolers and teachers in the preschools as well as the parents of the pupils. The specific sample constituted of 56 Preschoolers, 26 parents and 13 Preschool teachers making a total of 95 respondents. The instruments used in collection of data included questionnaires and interviews. These were designed to suit the different groups of respondents depending on the kind of information that was to be collected from each group.

Data collected during the study was then coded and presented graphically for easier understanding. The responses from the various respondents formed the basis for this analysis as well as the information obtained from data review.

5.3 Conclusions

In view of the above, it is prudent to conclude that TV viewing affects the language development of children. The findings summarize this statement by highlighting how aspects of language development such as pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary and spelling are influenced by watching TV. On the same note, the study established that TV viewing affects to a great extent role modeling in children who always want to behave like the characters they admire on TV. This may however lead to some undesirable behaviour such as aggression, violence and low self esteem when the children fail to achieve their aim of being like such characters.

The study also found out that children like watching some more programs than others. The study finding summarizes the types of programs watched by children and their effect on language development. From these figures, it can be concluded that children like watching children's programs most and these affect their language development. News on the other hand is the least watched program thus it doesn't affect language development in children.

In addition, the study established that the duration of time spent viewing TV is not directly proportional to language performance. The study finding also has given an elaborate summary of this and indeed, the more time spent watching TV, the higher the chances of performing below average. Finally, the study found out that TV viewing affects language performance of preschoolers only to some extent as there are other factors that determine the language performance of a child.

5.4 Recommendations

Therefore following the findings of this study, the researcher recommended that, children should be allowed to watch children-friendly programs but under the supervision of adults. Parents should not allow their children to spend too much time watching TV as this would not be of help to the child. Teachers should make use of other instructional materials during language teaching

for this enhances language performance more. Children should be allowed to interact with each other so as to further develop their language. Parents and teachers should help the children differentiate between episodes on TV and real life and the media also should uphold the law that protects children from harmful TV programs that negatively affect children.

5.4.1 Recommendation for research

A research on the best types of programs that enhances language development in preschool children should be done and the media people advised accordingly to improve language performance in preschools in Kenya and in municipality zone in meru county.

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INTRODUCTION LETTER

P.O Box 101,

Meru

8th May 2011

To whom it may concern,

Municipality zone

Meru county

Dear sir/madam,

RE: PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA

My name is Kathurima Naomi and I am a student at university of Nairobi, Department of Education communication and technology, university of Nairobi undertaking a master's course in Early Childhood Development. I am undertaking a research project in the area of the Impact of TV watching on the performance of pre-school children in the partial fulfillment of this degree.

I wish to seek your approval to collect the necessary data for this project. This shall entail administering questionnaires to children, teachers in selected schools and parents. The information shall be treated with outmost confidentiality and will only be used for the purpose of this research.

Thanks in advance

Yours faithfully

Naomi Kathurima.

INTERVIEW SHEDULE FOR THE CHILDREN WHO ARE IN CONTACT WITH TELEVISION

1. Gender of respondent female male

2. How old are you?

3. Do you view TV?

4. If yes, what time do you view TV?.....

5. How many hours do you view TV per day?

 b. How much time do you spend doing your homework?

c. Have you ever found yourself not doing homework due to TV watching?

6. Among these choices of programs, which 3 do you watch mostly?

A; Comedy

B; Soap operas

C; Movies

D; children programs

E; News

7. A. Have you ever shared with other children stories on your experience when watching TV?

B. If answer is yes above outline the experience?

.....
.....
.....

8. Have you ever wanted to be like the characters you see on TV?

9. What kind of virtues did you learn from the characters? Let the child enumerate them

.....
.....
.....

10. Did the TV help you to answer questions in your school?

11. What kind of things did you learn from watching the Television?

.....
.....
.....

12. Which position were you in class last term? _____

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE PARENTS WHO ARE IN CONTACT WITH CHILDREN WATCHING TV

This questionnaire attempts to survey the Impact of Television watching on pre-school children Language performance in Municipality zone of Meru County.

1. Name of respondent.....

2. Gender.....

3. Highest level of education attained:

a. no formal education

b primary education

c. some secondary

d completed 'O'or'A'levels

F college/university education

4. Does your child watch TV?

A; Yes NO

5. Which are the favorite programs that your child likes?

A; Comedy

B; Soap operas

C; Movies

D; children programs

E; News

6. At what age did your child get introduced to TV watching?

A; 0-1YRS

B; 1-2

C; 3-4

D; Above

7. How long does your child spend on TV?

A; [] 0-1 HRS

B; [] 2-3

C; [] 3-4

D; [] 5 and above

8. Have you noted any kind of influence on your child due Television watching?

A; [] Yes [] NO

9. Among the following variables indicate the extent of influence?

VARIABLE

Knowledge acquisition

Role modeling

Language

Values

Actuation of activities

10. What problems or benefits do these children face that are unique to them? (3 in each category)

A. at family level

B. at school:

C. with neighbors

D. community level.....

11. In what ways can these problems or benefits affect the development and performance of the affected child/children?

- A
- B
- C
- D
- E

12. Whose responsibility is it to help these children deal with controlled TV watching and benefit from good TV programs?

- a. Their parents (s)
- b. The children themselves
- c. Caregivers/Foster parents
- d. Religious group
- e. Community members
- f. Religious group
- g. Government
- h. Others

13. How do you gauge the intellectual development of the children involved in TV watching?
A; [] High B; [] Low C; [] Varies

12. Based on your experience, what are the factors that determine whether a child affected by TV watching develops a high or low self-esteem?

.....
.....
.....

13. Are there particular circumstances that these children who watch TV face that make them more vulnerable to perform academically compared to other children?

A

B.

C.

D.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS WHO ARE IN CONTACT WITH THE CHILDREN

Teachers only

Name of respondent.....

Gender.....

1. Are there children affected by TV watching in your school?
2. Are there certain characteristics you have observed that make children affected by TV watching different than other children in school? If yes, Name them
 - A
 - B.
 - C.
 - D.
3. How do you compare their language performance with that of other children?
4. In your opinion, what are the reasons that may be causing these differences in the language performance?
6. Do these children interact very well with other children?
7. What is the general attitude of other teachers towards these children?
8. In what ways can TV watching affect the language development of the affected child/children?
9. Whose responsibility is it to help these children deal with these problems or Benefits?
10. In your opinion, how does television viewing affect children's self-esteem?
11. How do you gauge the personality development of the children watching TV in your school?
12. Based on your experience, what are the factors that determine whether a child affected by TV watching develops a high or low self esteem?