

**IMPACT OF INSTRUCTIONAL RESOURCES ON THE PERFORMANCE OF
PRESCHOOLERS' READING IN TALA ZONE, MATUNGULU DISTRICT, KENYA.**

BY

KAMAMA, JANE WANGUI

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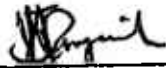
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DECLARATION

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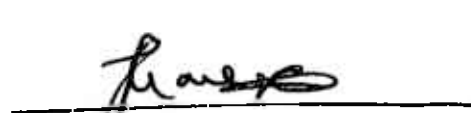


KAMAMA JANE WANGUI

This project has been submitted with our approval as university supervisors



DR. BONIFACE NGARUIYA
LECTURER
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI



MRS. JULIET MUASYA
LECTURER
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI



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P. O. Box 30197
NAIROBI

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of learning resources in enhancing the performance of preschoolers in their reading. The study examines the background information relating to reading and the place of reading in society and in learning. The study reviewed literature related to pedagogic strategies for teaching reading in general and specifically in addressing the needs of second language learners preparing to read for the first time. A sample of 17 schools in Tala zone and all the preschool teachers in these schools were used for the study. A Semi structured questionnaires was administered on the preschool teachers. These questionnaires generally sought information on teaching methodology and on student performance. Furthermore, the researcher attended four reading lessons in each school to observe the teaching and learning activities. The researcher recorded notes on what was observed in the classroom interactions. The study established that learning resources were indeed used to teach reading in these preschools and they significantly impacted upon the performance of learners in preschool reading classrooms. Furthermore, the study established the various learning aids that were used by teachers to teach reading. The study recommends that teachers need to be in-serviced to improve their pedagogic strategies to effectively enhance the capacity of preschool children to read; and the teachers to diversify their learning aids in the achievement of learning objectives.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the study

Recent reviews of the research on language and literacy provide overwhelming evidence that quality preschool language and early literacy experiences have far reaching effects (Bowman 2000; Strickland and Shanahan, 2004). These studies identify the key language and literacy skills that young children need to learn, environments that facilitate skills development, and interventions that support later academic success. The convergence of evidence provides clear direction for preschool programs, teachers, and curriculum developers. Children with strong skills in alphabetic knowledge, phonological awareness, print awareness and oral language are those most likely to become successful readers. Effective interventions, those that show statistically significant positive effects on reading outcomes, include the teaching of sounds and letters, helping children make sense of print, reading to and sharing books with young children, as well as direct efforts to teach oral language.

Reading research confirms that regardless of the method of instruction (phonics, whole language, and everything in between), the majority of children will learn how to read (Bruer, 1993; Lesgold, Resnick, Hammond, and Curtis, 1985). Four pre-reading skills have been found to be highly associated with proficient reading by the end of first and second grade. These skills are: phonological awareness, letter identification, vocabulary development, and the ability to recall and retell sentences and stories (Scarborough, 1998). Interventions that have focused instruction on these skills in preschool and kindergarten classrooms have been effective in increasing reading achievement both at the end of the academic year, and in later grades (Ball

and Blachman, 1991; Byrne, 1992; Lundberg, Frost, and Peterson, 1988; Lindamood and Lindamood, 1975; Truch, 1991; Whitehurst, 1994; Scanlon and Vellutino, 1996). Comprehensive school-wide programs that focus on all as opposed to one or two of these skills, according to Snow, Burns, and Griffin, (1998) are likely to have the greatest impact.

Research has also shown conclusively that preschoolers and early primary school pupils should be taught systematically, directly, and explicitly in phonics decoding, fluent sight word vocabulary, and comprehension skills. (Adam and Engelmann, 1996) demonstrated that direct instruction with an emphasis on phonics and sight word vocabulary skills improves reading performance. Studies by Foorman, (1998); Torgesen, (1992; 1997), have shown that systematic and explicit phonics instruction leads to increased reading achievement when compared to other methods, and that those exposed to systematic and direct instruction achieve measurable gains over the course of the school year. Instructional programs that include a solid, explicit, systematic strand of conventional phonics have been shown to bring along more children at risk than those that do not (Adams, 1990; Aukerman, 1972, 1984; Bond and Dykstra, 1967).

Furthermore, these studies reveal that reading instructional practices should highlight: (a) ample explicit instruction and practice with sound letter correspondences, (b) familiarity with spelling sound correspondences, (c) practice in sight recognition, (d) sustained reading practice in the classroom through choral reading, partnered reading, and individual reading, (e) re-reading of familiar text, (f) explicit teaching of comprehension strategies such as summarization, prediction, drawing inferences, asking questions, and monitoring one's reading, (g) matching reading materials to the child's reading level, (h) creating reading environments where children have access to a variety of reading materials, and (i) encouraging frequent and sustained reading at home.

One of the paradoxes which we come across is that, although people in general have a much higher level of education than they did in the 1950s. This has not brought about an increase in the time spent on reading by the majority of the population (Adams, 1990). Another paradox is that although people spend less time on reading, books are still considered to be valuable objects worth possessing and cherished even by those who hardly ever read. And non-reading parents still consider reading to be an important activity for their children. This means that there is certainly a good basis for the promotion of reading. The general trends is that people are reading less than they used to, in spite of a higher level of education; that young people, in particular, are reading less; and that a worrying percentage of children have trouble with reading. It is feared that the negative trend will eventually lead to a split in the population: between those who do have access to information and the book culture and those do not. The need of developing a reading culture is based on the perceived need to promote literacy amongst rural communities as the country reels from sharp decline in educational standards.

The importance of independent reading has been addressed by the Ministry of Education in Kenya (MoEST, 2001). It provides a variety of ways for encouraging children to read, including setting aside time each week to be used for reading in class; indicates instructional resources to be used by pupils in reading Early Childhood Development and Education Syllabus (2008). The amount of reading to be done out of class is specified and a record is kept to track the reading that the pupil has done; asking children to give oral reports of what they are reading; using resource persons to read to the pupils, modeling how they want the pupils to read; and rewarding effort made to read (Commeyras and Inyega, 2007). The one barrier that still needs to be addressed, however, is the question of access. Efforts to encourage independent reading will be pointless if the children have no access to reading materials. According to Scharer (1992),

young children develop literacy through the use of high quality literature such as narratives and expository works as the core materials for instruction.

Instructional resources as well as reading materials enhance access of preschoolers to reading materials (Adam and Engelmann, 1996). However, in many of the public preschools, particularly those in Tala Zone, there are no provisions for standardized resources because the curriculum for preschool is also rather fluid. It is therefore important to examine the role that these learning and teaching resources play in enriching the pedagogic strategies adopted by teachers of reading in preschools. We have so far avoided alluding to the contribution of the school in producing a “reading culture”. A child who has been through school for eight, twelve or sixteen years should have learned one thing: how to read. How is it then that after so many years of study many children graduate from primary school, secondary school or even university and have not developed a reading culture? One explanation for this reality is the fact that our schools are not interested in teaching children to read. The teachers, therefore, make it their business to ensure that children read their textbooks for the purpose of passing examinations. It seems clear that our teachers expect their children to study their textbooks, pass their examinations and forget the rest. And that is exactly what happens. Little wonder that at the end of their school cycle many children make a bonfire, burn their school books and celebrate the end of their enslavement by swearing never again to read a book in their lives (Mbac, 2005).

English is seen in very pragmatic terms to obtain an education and write examinations. As Commeyras and Inyega, (2007) argue, “their instruction in English typically lacks meaningful interactive use in meaningful contexts” (2007). English is not the language of social interaction. Code-switching is very common in instructional contexts. The use of Kiswahili or mother tongue among pupils outside of class is the norm. Voluntary reading in English is therefore rare because

English is perceived as a tool used only to pass examinations and secure employment (Commeyras and Inyega, 2007).

Language is an important tool for the dissemination of knowledge and learning. In Kenya, the language policy requires that in lower primary school, Mother Tongues should be used as the languages of instruction (up to class 3). English and Kiswahili are taught as subjects, but from class 4-8, English is adopted as the Language of instruction (Republic of Kenya, 1976). In urban areas, however, Kiswahili is taken as the Mother Tongue and is used for instruction in lower classes. Hence, the learning of reading English is impeded by these policy issues. Disparities also occur in performance resulting, in part, from the differences in exposure to target languages. If we examine the KCPE results for Tala Zone, for example, it can be noted that the private schools, who insist on using English at preschool, post better results in English than their public counterparts who use either mother tongue or Kiswahili.

Table 1.1 Tala Zone KCPE Results (2009)

| School | Category | Mean score for English |
|-----------------|----------|------------------------|
| Tala Academy | Private | 77.07 |
| Kangundo junior | Private | 75.10 |
| Muusini | Public | 53.58 |
| Tala Girls | Public | 53.57 |
| Nguluni | Public | 51.79 |
| Tala boys | Public | 47.46 |

Source: ZTAC Tala (2010)

This may be, in part, motivated by the teaching approaches adopted by teachers of reading particularly in the preschool and primary level. The resources used in teaching reading have significant impact on enhancing or reducing the desire to read.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Almost all the pupils and teachers in the rural schools speak English as their second or even third language. Yet, when teachers speak of encouraging a culture of reading, they invariably mean the culture of reading in English. In other words, they want to encourage a culture of reading in a language that pupils use very rarely outside the classroom. Moreover, the Kenyan system of education is dominated by examinations which play a crucial role in deciding the pupils' future. Results obtained on these examinations determine whether or not the child can move on to the next grade, to high school, or to post-secondary education. If the results are not high enough, the child is almost always left without options.

English is not the language you hear on the street in small towns and villages in rural Kenya. It is rarely used by the pupils outside of class time. What this means in the classroom is that the mother tongue or Kiswahili are used quite often. Occasionally, even the teacher uses the mother tongue or Kiswahili to explain challenging concepts (Muthwii, 2004). Also, when pupils converse with each other, both in class and outside instructional times, they very rarely use English. Reading readiness skills involve training children to observe and interpret details in pictures, objects, symbols, animals, people or other items. Children in private pre-schools are able to access reading materials with ease compared to those in public pre-schools since there are varieties of learning materials in their classrooms District Centres for Early Childhood Education (DICECE) Kangundo (2010). KCPE results (2009) shows the difference in performance in

English between the private and public schools within the zone. There is need to address this problem because this has led to fewer numbers of public school pupils being admitted to most of the best provincial high schools as compared to their private schools counterpart Zonal Teachers Advisory Centre (ZTAC) Tala (2010). Introduction of reading, usually done at preschool, lays the foundation for the development of interest in reading. If poorly done, the learners develop poor reading habits and if well done, the learners develop a lifelong interest in reading. The aim of the study was to examine the impact of learning resources in enhancing reading skills in preschoolers for a lifelong interest in reading performance.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of learning resources in enhancing the performance of preschoolers in their reading in Tala Zone.

1.3 Research Objectives

This study will seek to achieve the following objectives:

1. Identify the teaching and learning resources used in preschools to teach reading skills.
2. Observe the use of instructional resources in teaching reading.
3. Identify children's preferred instructional resources in learning to read.
4. Examine the teacher's perception on the importance of instructional resources in teaching reading.

1.4 Research Questions

1. Which teaching and learning resources are used by teachers in preschools to teach reading skills?

2. What instructional resources are adopted by preschool teachers to teach reading using these teaching and learning resources used?
3. Which of these learning resources are preferred for teaching reading skills among preschoolers?
4. What are the teachers' perceptions about the effectiveness of learning resources in reading lessons in preschools?

1.5 Significance of the Study

Development of reading skills is an important tool in creating a knowledgeable society. The ability to read widely is dependent upon the strong foundation resource in learners to desire to read and to enjoy reading. This study strives to examine the role of learning and teaching resources in enhancing the preschoolers competence in reading. It is hoped that the findings of this study will inform teachers and curriculum planners on the best approaches of teaching reading by maximizing on the effective use of teaching and learning resources available in and out of the classroom. Furthermore, this study will provoke teachers in preschool to adopt critical pedagogies in their approach to teaching reading skills to preschoolers.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

This study has two principal limitations. The first arises from the geographical context of the study. This study will only get data from schools in Tala Zone of Matungulu District. This study will identify preschool pupils in one geographical zone that presents unique socio-economic and cultural characteristics. Therefore, the findings of this study may not be applicable to areas that experience different socio-economic and cultural characteristics. The second limitation lies in the use of more than one theory to explain such phenomena that may be psychological and personal that the study will be limited to those aspects of overt behaviour that

the respondents will display during the study. Hence, the details of covert behaviour will not be used for this study yet they may reveal a lot about the motivations for behaviour.

1.7 Delimitations of the Study

This study will be limited in its scope in the sense that it will only deal with schools in Tala Zone. Furthermore, the study will be limited in the areas of reading that it will use to identify the use of learning resources. The study will deal with reading skills related to phonics, letter identification, and the alphabet whereas the syllabus covers many more areas of the study of reading skills.

1.8 Basic Assumptions

This study will be conducted on the assumptions that:

1. All preschools use teaching and learning resources to teach reading skills
2. There exist guidelines in the teaching of reading skills to preschoolers in Kenya.

1.9 Definition of Key Terms

- Preschools** **Preschool is an early childhood program in which children combine learning with play in a program run by professionally trained adults. Children are most commonly enrolled in preschool between the ages of three and five, though those as young as two can attend some schools. Preschools are different from traditional day care in that their emphasis is, learning and development rather than enabling parents to work or pursue other activities.**
- Reading** **Reading is a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols for the purpose of deriving meaning (reading comprehension) and/or constructing meaning. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Reading)**
- Instructional resources** **This includes a rich variety of learning resources designed to support preschoolers' reading including but not limited textbooks, library books, printed materials, magazines, charts, pictures.**
- Reading performance** **This refers to the measure/level of the learner's ability to read varieties of texts in English.**
- Pre-Primary II preschoolers** **These are children at level three aged five to six years according to Early Childhood Development and Education Syllabus.**

1.10 Organization of the Study

This study will be organized in five chapters. Chapter one will present the background to the study, the statement of the problem, study questions, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study and the basic assumptions made for the study. Chapter two will present the literature review of related literature as well as the theoretical and the conceptual frameworks for the study. Chapter three will present the study methodology detailing the research design, study sample and sampling procedures, data collection instruments and data analysis methods. Chapter four will consist of data presentation and analysis where tabular presentation and narrative discussions of the data will be done. Chapter five will include the conclusions and recommendations of the study which will be drawn from the data analysis done in chapter four.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will examine literature related to the study. The review will examine literature related to teaching and learning resources for reading, pedagogic strategies in teaching reading, appropriate use of teaching and learning resources for reading. The review will then examine relevant theories to the study of reading and conclude with a conceptual framework based on the variables in the study.

2.1 Teaching Reading

Reading is an important gateway to personal development, and to social, economic and civic life (Holden, 2004). It allows us to learn “about other people, about history and social studies, the language arts, science, mathematics, and the other content subjects that must be mastered in school” (Lyon, 1997). Reading is a prerequisite for almost all cultural and social activities. Reading for pleasure refers to reading that we do of our own free will anticipating the satisfaction that we get from the act of reading. It also refers to reading that having begun at someone else’s request we continue because we are interested in it. It typically involves materials that reflect our own choice, at a time and place that suits us. According to (Nell 1988), reading for pleasure is a form of play that allows us to experience other worlds and roles in our imagination. Holden (2004) also conceived of reading as a “creative activity” that is far removed from the passive pursuit it is frequently perceived to be. Others have described reading for pleasure as a hermeneutic, interpretative activity, which is shaped by the reader’s expectations and experiences as well as by the social contexts in which it takes place (Graff, 1992). This is

especially true with children who are thought to be at risk of reading failure (Snow, Burns and Griffin, 1998). Children who read very little do not have the benefits that come with reading. Studies show that when struggling readers are not motivated to read, their opportunities to learn decrease significantly (Baker, Dreher and Guthrie, 2000). This can lead to strong negative feelings about reading and create a vicious circle in which poor readers remain poor readers (Juel, 1988).

According to Alvermann (2001, p. 680) ,“the possibility that as a culture we are making struggling readers out of some adolescents who for any number of reasons have turned their backs on a version of literacy called school literacy is a sobering thought”. Furthermore, research suggests that a growing number of young people do not read for pleasure. Similarly, a number of studies have shown that boys enjoy reading less and therefore read less than girls (Clark and Foster, 2005), while children from lower socio-economic backgrounds read less for enjoyment than children from more privileged social classes (Clark and Akerman, 2006). To support young children in developing literacy, high-quality literature, including narrative and expository works, are the core materials used during literature-based instruction (Scharer, 1992). This type of instruction, which has gained increased emphasis in reading research and practice, provides authentic learning experiences and activities by using literature to teach and foster literacy (Morrow and Gambrell, 2000). Cullinan, (1987); Galda, Cullinan and Strickland, (1993) and Tompkins and McGee, (1993) agree on the distinguishing characteristics of literature-based instruction in preschool, kindergarten, and first-grade classrooms. These include: literature is used as an important vehicle for language arts instruction; high-quality narrative and informational literature provides the basis for a consistent read-aloud program in which children are read to daily; literature is the sole or primary basis for initial reading instruction, or it is a

significant supplement to a basal program; Opportunities are provided for children to listen to and read books of their own choosing; and Children are provided with sustained time for both independent and collaborative book sharing, reading, and writing activities. Discussions of literature among children and teachers are commonplace.

Definitions of literature-based instruction emphasize the use of high-quality literacy works as the core instructional materials used to support literacy development (Harris and Hodges, 1995; Huck, 1977; Scharer, 1992). A guiding principle of the literature-based perspective is that literacy acquisition occurs in a book-rich context where there is an abundance of purposeful communication and meaning is socially constructed (Cullinan, 1987). Literary works in such contexts include a wide range of materials: picture books, big books, predictable books, folk tales, fables, myths, fantasy, science fiction, poetry, contemporary realistic fiction, historical fiction, nonfiction informational books, and biographies (Lehman, Freeman, and Allen, 1994; Routman, 1988).

Inadequate teacher education (Start Early Finish Strong, 1999) is a major factor of poor preparation to teach reading. Novice teachers receive little formal education in reading instruction before entering the classroom; most have taken only one course in the subject as undergraduates (Good, 1990). College children in teacher education programs report that professors do not demonstrate the most effective instructional reading techniques, and that they rarely get supervised practice time to develop as effective reading teachers (Lyons, 1989). The need for better training, preparation, and use of reading diagnostics by preschool teachers is essential.

2.2 Instructional Strategies for Reading and Teachers' perception

Reading strategy instruction can help learners to be aware of their effective (and ineffective) use of strategies and can build reading skills. Brown, (2001) states that, "For most second language learners who are already literate in a previous language, reading comprehension is primarily a matter of developing appropriate, efficient comprehension strategies" (p. 291). He suggests that both top-down and bottom-up strategies may need to be emphasized depending on individual needs and proficiency levels. For beginning level learners, attention to teaching bottom-up (decoding) reading processes may be needed, especially if the first language is orthographically very different from the target language. At intermediate or advanced levels of proficiency, teachers may help children develop top-down strategies such as understanding discourse markers or paying attention to inferred or implied meanings in a text. Regardless of proficiency level, it is considered important for teachers to help child draw upon background knowledge to make predictions and guesses. Likewise, regardless of proficiency level, children can be helped to develop cohesive and synthesis techniques such as semantic mapping or concept clustering to see how ideas and concepts in the text relate to each other. These strategies can be introduced and practiced at various phases of instruction.

For reading interventions to succeed, all children at risk for reading failure need to be identified and helped well before age 9 (Lyon, 1997). The reason is simple: without intervention, eighty-eight percent of children who have difficulty reading in first grade will have difficulty reading at the end of fourth grade (Juel, 1988). In addition, without intervention, seventy-five percent of children who are poor readers at the end of third grade will remain poor readers in high school (Shaywitz, 1997). With appropriate intervention, two-thirds of reading disabled children can become average or above average readers if they are identified early

(Vellutino, 1996; Fletcher and Lyon, 1998). Torgesen, (1995) argues that two simple 15-minute tests of phonological awareness and letter identification for second semester kindergartners can successfully identify children at risk of reading failure. A testing system can take place at the district or school level by regularly employing these simple diagnostics. Decisions about what to do and what programs to employ based on these diagnostics are critical.

- A simple prerequisite of reading comprehension is a high degree of oral reading fluency, which can most easily be optimized by selecting decodable and readable text that is at the children' reading level. Instruction that optimizes success permits children to set short-term goals in reading (Linnenbrink and Pintrich, 2003). This may include having children determine the number of pages they wish to read to explain a certain topic, or identifying the number of topics they wish to read in a given domain in a given time period. Teacher feedback is vitally important for success in attaining goals. To increase their self-efficacy, children need frequent feedback on whether content is understood, whether reading strategies are well used, and whether self-regulatory decisions are well made.

Success-promoting teachers also encourage children to make effort attributions for either success or failure in their comprehension tasks (Linnenbrink and Pintrich, 2003). Teachers reward successful story comprehension with compliments for effort, as well as for a reading skill such as predicting or inferring. Teachers who build success into their instruction recognize perseverance in children' reading activities. After a long text is finished successfully, teachers comment on the value and benefits of sustained effort. They may prominently display products such as extensive summaries of long texts around the classroom, enabling children to perceive the value of cognitive perseverance and internalize it (Schunk, 2003).

2.3 Children's Preferred Instructional Resources

Few researchers have analyzed basal readers, but those who have found that the activities and teaching methods emphasized in basal readers do not align themselves well with research. Stein. (1993) found that explicit teaching and application of the alphabet principle were neglected by basal readers yet their importance was strongly supported by research. These neglected instructional components are those whose importance is strongly supported by research. Simmons, (1994) examined the four best-selling commercial basal reading programs to evaluate if educational publishers incorporated current research on beginning reading. Simmons, (1994) found: 1. Phonological awareness activities occur but in limited quantity and scope; 2. The phonological awareness activities of segmenting and blending -- which are most highly correlated with beginning reading acquisition -- are simply not included in any of the basal reading programs; 3. Strategies for teaching children to manipulate the sounds of language are often not conspicuous and do not appear to provide the necessary scaffolding for children with diverse learning needs; 4. The phonological activities require children to manipulate primarily single-syllable and multi-syllable words, instead of phoneme-level phonologic units -- which are much more difficult skills to master.

Studies have shown that parents' reading disabilities predict a higher-than-normal rate of reading disabilities in their children (31 to 62 percent versus 5 to 10 percent). Thus, when parents are identified as having reading disabilities, their children can be at substantially greater risk (Scarborough, 1990). Research by Scarborough, (1990, 1991) suggests that whether these children develop reading problems can be predicted from a battery of preschool measures of language and literacy skills. Testing a preschool subset of children whose parents have identified themselves as having reading disabilities could substantially reduce the number of

poor readers. Developing a confidential system whereby parents are encouraged to step forward could reduce early reading difficulties in their children, but would be a challenge for a district or school to enact. Reading to young children has always been the most common practice for implementing literature-based instruction in preschool and primary classrooms. Anecdotes and observations drawn from case studies of children who have been read to frequently have described behaviors associated with early literacy development (Baghban, 1984; Sulzby, 1985; Teale, 1987). These cases demonstrate that young children who have been read to frequently know how to handle books and can identify the front of a book, the print to be read, and the appropriate direction for reading the print.

Several studies using experimental designs have investigated the effects of storybook reading as a regular classroom practice on children's achievement in various aspects of literacy development. In these investigations, children in the experimental classrooms who were read to daily over long periods of time scored significantly better on measures of vocabulary, comprehension, and decoding ability than did children in the control groups who were not read to by an adult (Bus, van Ijzendoorn, and Pellegrini, 1995; Dickinson and Smith, 1994; Feitelson, Goldstein, Iraqi, and Share, 1993; Robbins and Ehri, 1994; Senechal, Thomas, and Monker, 1995).

Experimental investigations in school settings have tried to identify specific elements of storybook reading that enhance literacy skills. Each of the studies has involved children in some type of active participation before, during, or after storybook reading. Qualitative studies, through observations and interviews, have documented how children and parents interact and participate together in reading in the home environment (Teale, 1987). Other research has focused on the influence of the teacher when reading to a whole class. Although the studies cited

in this section highlight the positive effects of storybook reading, Meyer, Wardrop, Stahl, and Linn, (1994) suggest that reading stories is not a magical activity for literacy development; it is the quality of the interaction that occurs during reading that results in positive effects, rather than just the storybook reading itself. They report that storybook reading sessions in classrooms are often not of sufficient quality to engage children fully and to maximize literacy growth. Reading stories as an act in itself does not necessarily promote literacy; attitudes and interaction enhance the potential of the read-aloud event for promoting literacy development.

The primary goal of the read-aloud event is the construction of meaning from the interactive process between adult and child (Vygotsky, 1978). During story reading, the adult helps the child understand the text by interpreting the written language based on experiences, background, and beliefs (Altwerger, Diehl-Faxon, and Dockstader-Anderson, 1985). Teale, (1984) describes the interaction as being interpsychological first -- that is, negotiated between adult and child together -- and intrapsychological next, when the child internalizes the interactions and can function independently. Studies focusing on teachers' interactive behaviors when reading to whole classes have documented the impact of reading style on children's comprehension of stories (Green and Harker, 1982; Peterman, Dunning, and Mason, 1985). A series of investigations were carried out in classrooms to determine children's comprehension of stories in whole-group, small-group, and one-to-one settings (Morrow, 1987, 1988; Morrow and Smith, 1990). The interactions that occurred within these different settings were also studied. On a test of comprehension, children who heard stories in small groups performed significantly better than did children who heard stories read one to one; these children, in turn, performed significantly better than did children who heard stories read to the whole class. In addition, children who heard stories read in a small-group or one-to-one setting generated significantly

more comments and questions than did children in the whole-class setting. Thus, reading to children in small groups offers as much interaction as one-to-one readings, and it appears to lead to greater comprehension than either whole-class or one-to-one readings.

Guided repeated oral reading is instructional strategies that can help children improve a variety of reading skills, including fluency (Morrow, 1987, 1988; Morrow and Smith, 1990). There are a number of effective procedures that can be used in providing guided oral reading. In general, a teacher, parent, or peer reads a passage aloud, modeling fluent reading. Then children reread the text quietly, on their own, sometimes several times. The text should be at the child's independent reading level. Next, the children read aloud and then reread the same passage. Usually, reading the same text four times is sufficient. Readers' theater can be a motivating way to improve fluency (Yaden, 1985). Children read scripts and rehearse a play to prepare for a performance. The practice in reading and rereading the scripts provides an excellent opportunity to improve fluency skills.

Children's responses to read-aloud experiences, both in questions and in comments, are a critical aspect of the interactive process. When questions are asked and then answered, children receive immediate feedback, which may resource their literacy development (Yaden, 1985). Holdaway's, (1979) model for literacy instruction advocates that children have the opportunity to regulate their own learning by questioning adults in literacy situations. Comments young children make during story-reading events help us gain insight into the way they attempt to construct meaning and make sense of text. Children often request that favorite stories be read aloud repeatedly, a practice that has attracted the attention of many scholars. Researchers have questioned whether lasting cognitive and affective benefits result from repeated readings of the

same story. Roser and Martinez, (1985) and Yaden, (1985) suggest that children's comments and questions increase and become more interpretive and evaluative when they have listened to repeated readings of the same story. Children also elaborate more often and interpret issues in the story following repeated readings. Sulzby, (1985) reports that the familiarity that comes with repeated readings enables children to reenact stories or attempt to read them on their own. Repeated readings seem to be an important component in reading stories; the familiarity gained through the experience provides children with background information that enables them to deal with the text on various levels.

Other activities boost the value of reading aloud to young children. For example, research has demonstrated that the following activities increase comprehension and language development: inviting preschoolers and kindergartners to retell or dramatize stories (Cornell, Sénéchal, and Brodo, 1988; Pellegrini and Galda, 1982); reading several books on a similar topic and inviting children to play with objects related to the concepts or characters introduced in these books (Rowe, 1998; Wasik and Bond, 2001); reading a book repeatedly (Crago and Crago, 1976) inserting short definitions for some words while reading aloud (Collins, 2004; Elley, 1989) and encouraging children to use these same words when they answer questions, discuss book events, (Hargrave and Sénéchal, 2000; Robbins and Ehri, 1994), or describe illustrations (Reese and Cox, 1999). Thus, effective interactive read-alouds include a systematic approach that incorporates teachers' modeling of higher-level thinking, asking thoughtful questions calling for analytic talk, prompting children to recall a story in some way within a reasonable time frame, reading a single book repeatedly, and reading books related by topic. It also involves a systematic approach to developing children's understanding of vocabulary, such as inserting short definitions of words and phrases during reading.

Two recent methods for reading aloud to children aged 3 to 6 include many of these research-based techniques. Klesius and Griffith, (1996) described a technique for reading aloud to small groups of at-risk kindergartners that they claimed extended children's talk about books. Using interactive read-alouds, teachers point to details in illustrations and ask questions about vocabulary words as they read. They extend children's responses by asking them to clarify and explain. After reading, children recall a portion of, or the entire, story. Beck and McKeown, (2001) developed a similar technique, called Text Talk, to help kindergarten and primary children expand vocabulary. As teachers read, they draw attention to a few vocabulary words by inserting short definitions. They also ask open-ended questions in which children must provide explanations rather than one-or two-word responses. After reading, teachers discuss vocabulary words in the context of the story and in other contexts.

As children are learning about concept of word they are building upon the foundations in the developmental progression of reading (Mbae, 2005). This progression also includes learning about concepts of print (also referred to as print awareness). Not to be confused with concept of word, concept of print includes an understanding that: print carries meaning, that books contain letters, words, sentences, and spaces. It also includes understanding what books are used for, and that books have parts such as a front cover, back cover and a spine. One of the simplest ways to develop a concept of word is to work individually with a child and a picture he or she has drawn. As the child begins to talk, summarize what he has said in a few words or consider the child's words as dictation. Then help the child begin to write sounds for each different word in their dictation. Physical involvement and hands-on activities are great for increasing learning in young children. The link below describes an activity in which each child physically represents a word in

a sentence that the teacher creates. Children are able to work together to arrange themselves into the proper order to form the sentence.

Cut-up sentence is an activity that includes active learning about words as part of a sentence. Children are asked to cut a sentence apart and manipulate the words to re-create the sentence in proper order. This helps encourage children to recognize that each word is a separate entity, has meaning, and is separated by a space within each sentence (Mbae, 2005). Unifix word is an activity which includes the use of unifix cubes. Teachers can show children how to build and rebuild sentences by connecting the unifix cubes. Children can learn about concept of word as they grasp the understanding that each cube represents a word in the target sentence regardless of syllables within words.

Make-a-book is a concept of word task that allows children to use picture cues to represent words. Teachers can choose a target concept such as "food" and have children cut out and sort the pictures they find from magazines. Children can glue their collection of pictures into a book organized by target concept and label each picture. A more advance task may include asking the children to write a sentence using each of the items they found.

2.4 Theoretical Framework

Cognitive view

According to Nunan, Dubin and Bycina, (1991), the psycholinguistic model of reading and the top-down model are in exact concordance. Goodman (1967); cited in Paran, (1996) presented reading as a psycholinguistic guessing game, a process in which readers sample the text, make hypotheses, confirm or reject them, make new hypotheses, and so forth. Here, the reader rather than the text is at the heart of the reading process. Cognitively based views of reading comprehension emphasize the interactive nature of reading and the constructive nature of comprehension. Dole, (1991) have stated that, besides knowledge brought to bear on the reading process, a set of flexible, adaptable strategies are used to make sense of a text and to monitor ongoing understanding.

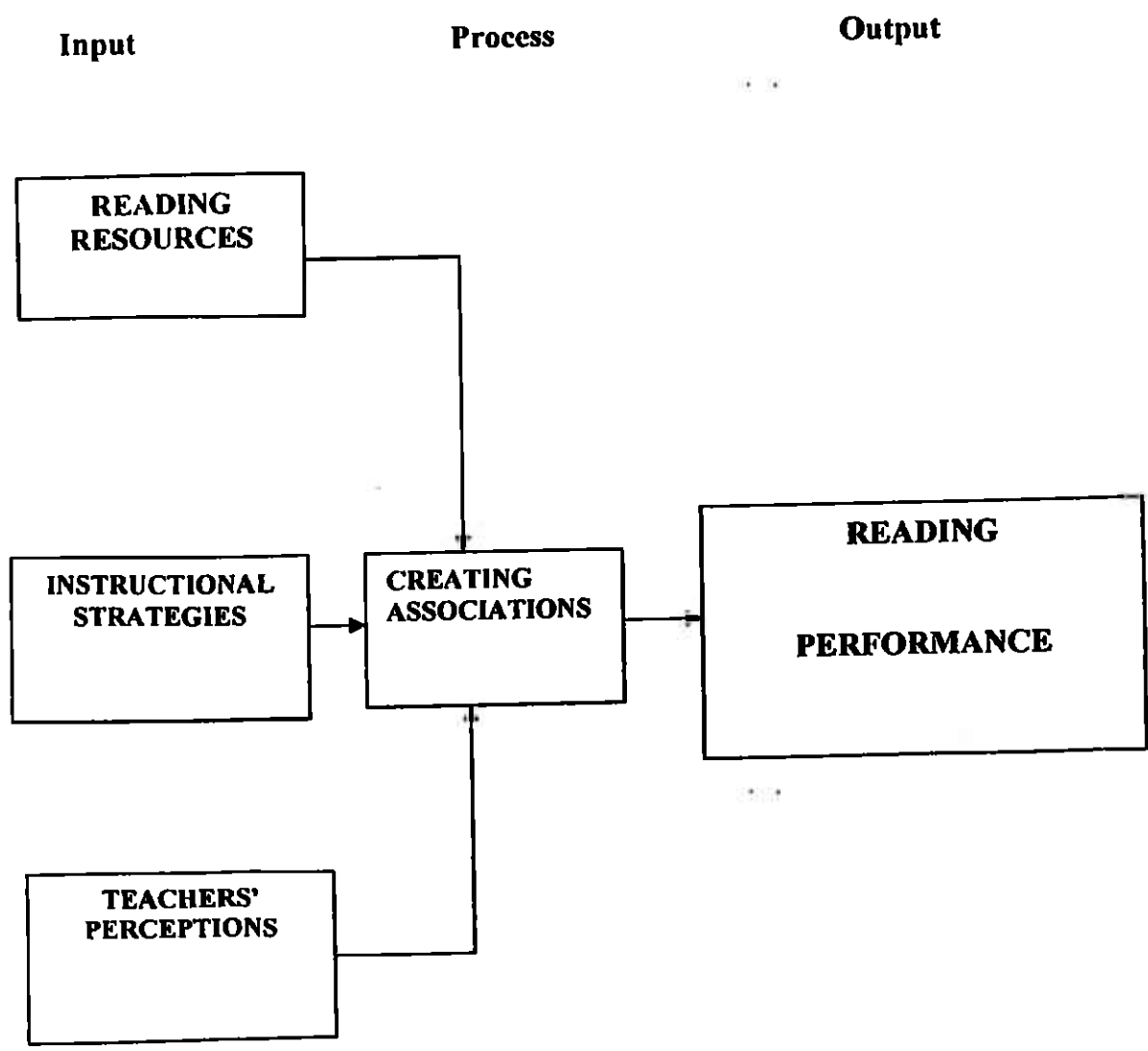
According to Block, (1992), there is now no more debate on "whether reading is a bottom-up, language-based process or a top-down, knowledge-based process." Research has gone even further to define the control readers execute on their ability to understand a text. This control is referred to as metacognition (Block, 1992). Metacognition involves thinking about what one is doing while reading. (Klein, 1991) stated that strategic readers attempt the following while reading:

- a) Identifying the purpose of the reading before reading
- b) Identifying the form or type of the text before reading
- c) Thinking about the general character and features of the form or type of the text. For instance, they try to locate a topic sentence and follow supporting details toward a conclusion

- d) Projecting the author's purpose for writing the text (while reading it)
- e) Choosing, scanning, or reading in detail
- f) Making continuous predictions about what will occur next, based on information obtained earlier, prior knowledge, and conclusions obtained within the previous stages.

Moreover, they attempt to form a summary of what was read. Carrying out the previous steps requires the reader to be able to classify, sequence, establish whole-part relationships, compare and contrast, determine cause-effect, summarize, hypothesize and predict, infer, and conclude. As in behaviourism, the goal of instruction in cognitivism remained the communication or transfer of knowledge to learners in the most efficient effective manner possible (Bednar, 1995). The cognitive scientist would analyze a task, break it down into smaller steps or chunks and use that information to develop instruction that moves from simple to complex building on prior schema. The influence of cognitive science in instructional design is evidenced by the use of advance organizers, mnemonic devices, metaphors, chunking into meaningful parts and the careful organization of instructional materials from simple to complex. Since the use of learning resources falls within the domain of instructional design, this learning theory will adequately inform this study.

2.5 Conceptual Framework



The diagram above shows the relationships that exist between variables for this study. The diagram shows that the learning resources available, the teaching/instructional strategies, the teachers' perceptions on the appropriateness of these resources and a clear creation of associations between the learning resources and the reading materials all contribute towards reading performance for the preschooler.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of the use of teaching and learning resources in the enhancement of reading skills among preschool pupils. A research methodology is defined as the steps and actions that are to ensure that data is obtained from adequate representative sample with minimal bias. Methodology will also include the analyses of the results thereafter using appropriate tools. Operational framework within which the facts are placed so that meaning may be seen more clearly (Leedy, 1989). Furthermore, it can be defined as the description of the procedures that would be followed in conducting a study (Mugenda and Mugenda, 2003).

3.1 Study Design

Orodho, (2006) describes research design as the arrangement of conditions for collections and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in the procedure. This study used both the descriptive and correlation method. The descriptive design sought and showed the impact of teaching on learning resources on the reading ability of preschoolers in Tala Zone. The survey facilitated the collection of data from the teachers on their opinions, feelings, structures and reasons that may enhance or reduce the use of learning resources among variables. This is based on the premise that where a statistically significant relationship exists between two variables, then it is possible to predict one variable using the information available on another variable, (Mugenda, 2003). The study explored the

interrelationships between performance in reading and specific teaching and learning materials as relayed in the conceptual framework.

3.2 Target Population

All research questions address issues that are of great relevance to important groups of individuals known as a research population. A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific inquiry. It is for the benefit of the population that researches are done. A research population is also known as a well-defined collection of individuals or objects known to have similar characteristics. All individuals or objects within a certain population usually have a common, binding characteristic or trait. Hence, target population refers to the entire group of individuals or objects to which researchers are interested in the conclusions. The target population usually has varying characteristics and it is also known as the theoretical population. This is as opposed to the accessible population, which refers to the population in research to which the researchers can apply their conclusions.

The study population for this study comprised of preschool children and teachers in Tala Zone. Tala Zone is an educational administrative zone that is divided into 4 subzones namely: Koma subzones, Nguluni subzone, Katine subzone and Isooni subzone. The total number of preschoolers in Tala Zone is 316. Table 3.1 in the next page illustrates the number of schools in the different Educational sub zones in Tala Zone.

Table 3.1 Pre-primary II preschoolers in Tala Zone (5-6 years)

| Educational subzone | Number of public preschools | Preschoolers population |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Koma subzones | 5 | 60 |
| Nguluni subzone | 4 | 75 |
| Katine subzone | 4 | 86 |
| Isooni subzone | 4 | 95 |
| Total | 17 | 316 |

3.3 Study Sample and Sampling Technique

Population sampling is the process of taking a subset of subjects that is representative of the entire population. The sample must have sufficient size to warrant statistical analysis (Orodho, 2006). Sampling is done usually because it is impossible to test every single individual in the population. It is also done to save time, money and effort while conducting the research. Still, every researcher must keep in mind that the ideal scenario is to test all the individuals to obtain reliable, valid and accurate results. Performing population sampling must be conducted correctly since errors can lead to inaccurate and misleading data.

The study used purposive sampling to identify the respondents for this study. This is because it allowed the researcher to select the sample which serves his/her purpose. The sample was selected because they were informative or they had the required information (Mays and Pope, 1995). In purposive sampling, it is easy to select a sample. It is not expensive and short time is used to select a sample. The sampled respondents consisted of 17 preschool teachers from the 17 schools in the sample. This study used observation of class teaching by teachers from the schools in the sample. Three lessons were examined from four schools randomly selected from the sample schools. The observation was prearranged by the class teacher and the

researcher. The researcher sat at the back of the class in such a position that she attracted little attention from the children. An observation schedule was used to identify aspects of the reading lesson that were pertinent to the study.

3.4 Survey Instruments

Data collection methods involve operationalising the research design into instruments of data collection with a view to collecting data in order to meet the research objectives (Chandran, 2004). The study employed questionnaires and observations as the research instruments.

3. 4.1 Questionnaire

According to Kombo and Tromp, (2006), a questionnaire is a research instrument that gathers data over a large sample. It can reach a large number of subjects who are able to read and write independently. A questionnaire enhances anonymity of respondents and uniformity of questions, thus, allowing comparability. The use of closed ended questionnaires was easier to analyze, administer, and economic in terms of time and money (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). This study used questionnaires to answer the four research questions as shown in Appendix A.

3.4.2 Observation

The observation method involves human or mechanical observation of what people actually do or what events take place during a buying or consumption situation. "Information is collected by observing process at work." (Kombo and Tromp, 2006) Observational techniques are an important aspect of many action research studies and of case studies whether undertaken by participants or outsiders. Observation of human behaviour provides an opportunity to come to conclusions based on our observation, to generate explanations and understandings and even to

come up with predictions. However, in research we need to go beyond the subjective and impressionistic, we need to be aware of and, if possible, eliminate bias, we need to be systematic and open about our procedures so as to open them up for public scrutiny so that others may check the bases on which we reach conclusions (Kombo and Tromp, 2006)

If the researcher observes and record events, it is not necessary to rely on the willingness and ability of respondents to report accurately (Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). The biasing effect of interviewers is either eliminated or reduced. Data collected by observation are, thus, more objective and generally more accurate. The most limiting factor in the use of observation method is the inability to observe such things such as attitudes, motivations, customers/consumers state of mind, their buying motives and their images. It also takes time for the investigator to wait for a particular action to take place.

Personal and intimate activities, such as watching television late at night, are more easily discussed with questionnaires than they are observed. Cost is the final disadvantage of observation method. Under most circumstances, observational data are more expensive to obtain than other survey data. The observer has to wait doing nothing, between events to be observed. The unproductive time is an increased cost. The researcher used the observation checklist to answer all the four research questions as shown in Appendix B.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Validity is establishing whether the instrument content is measuring what it is supposed to measure (Orodho, 2006; Mugenda, 1999). Reliability is the measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. The researcher conducted a pilot test of the instruments before using them in the study. This was done with one school not selected in the study sample; which is Alpha Marcas preschool, but with similar

characteristics to those selected in the study sample; such as geographical context, socio-economic and cultural characteristics. The purpose of piloting the instruments was to test the appropriateness of the items to the respondents in order to improve the instruments and enhance the reliability and validity of the instruments. The researcher made use of the supervising experts to ensure proper guidance was given on the piloting of the instruments.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher got permission from the relevant authorities, the Ministry of Education (see Appendix C), DEO, Headteachers and preschool teachers before starting to collect data. The researcher administered the questionnaire to teachers and then picked them back during the observation stage. The researcher attended three reading lessons in each school to observe the teaching and learning activities. The researcher recorded notes on what was observed in the classroom interactions.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of bringing orderly structure and meaning to the mass of information collected. It involves examining what has been collected and making deductions and inferences (Kombo and Tromp, 2006; Mugenda and Mugenda, 1999). The data collected from the field was coded and presented in graphic and tabular form. The coding involved corroborating the findings from the questionnaires and the observations. The analysis of the findings was done immediately after the presentation of data followed by the discussion of those findings. Tables were used to present the findings. The researcher then discussed the findings in view of data collected from the observations in an attempt to answer the research questions.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the impact of learning resources in enhancing the performance of preschoolers in their reading. To obtain the data for this study, a semi structured questionnaire were administered on the preschool teachers. These questionnaires generally sought information on teaching methodology and on child performance. These questionnaires were given to the teachers before the commencement of data collection and were collected during the observation stage. Furthermore, the researcher attended three reading lessons in each school to observe the teaching and learning resources used. The researcher recorded notes on the use of learning resources as observed in the classroom interactions.

4.1 Questionnaire Return Rate

This study identified 17 preschools in Tala Zone as its study sample. Each of the preschool teachers in these sample schools constituted the respondents for the study. The researcher gave out 17 questionnaires (one to each respondent). All the questionnaires that were given out were returned. There was a 100% return rate on the questionnaires issued during data collection.

4.2 Demographic Data

The study sought to know the number of years the respondents had worked in their various schools. The results are shown below:

Table 4.1: Years of Service of Respondents

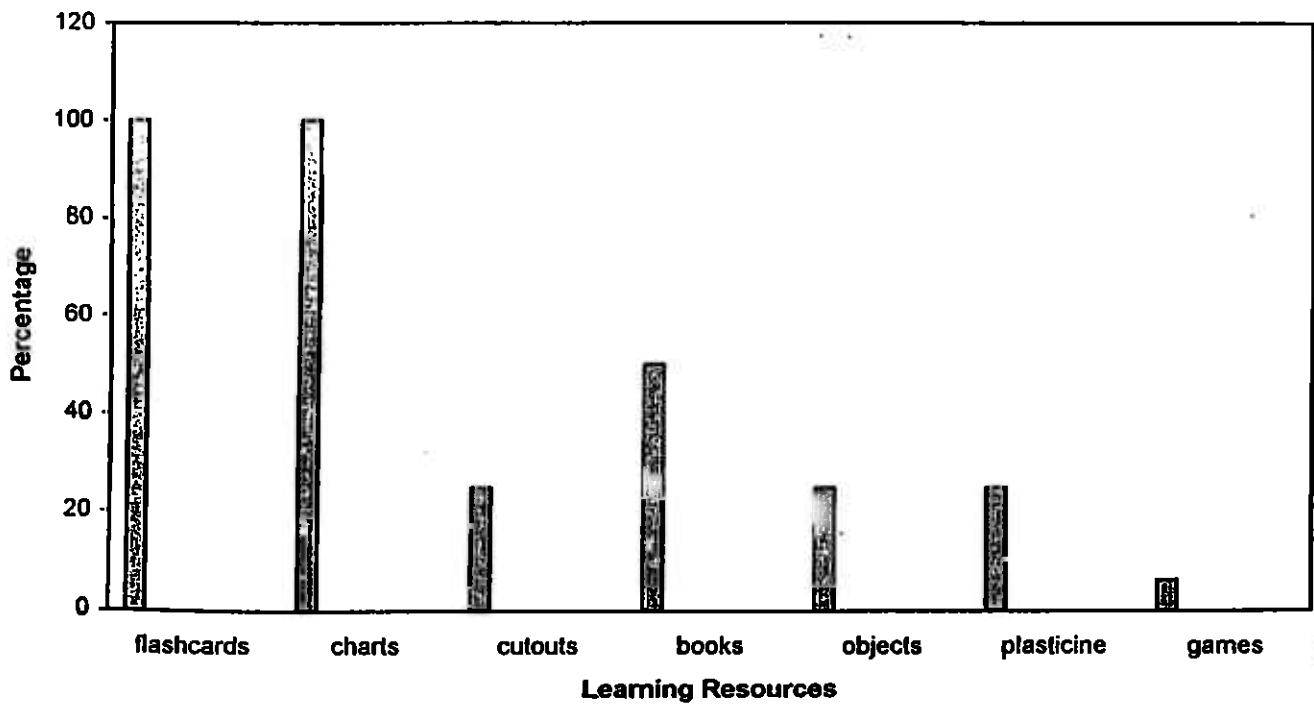
| No. of years of service | Frequency | Percentage |
|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| < 1 year | 0 | 0 |
| 1-2 years | 4 | 23.5 |
| 2-5 years | 4 | 23.5 |
| > 5 years | 9 | 53 |
| Total | 17 | 100 |

Table 4.1 above shows that the highest number of preschool teachers in the sample had worked for over 5 years. According to the data, 53% of these respondents belonged to this category while 23.5% had worked for 1 to 2 years and another 23.5% had worked for between 2 and 5 years.

4.3 The teaching and learning resources used in preschools to teach reading skills

The first objective for this study was to identify the teaching and learning resources used by teachers in their reading lessons for preschoolers. This was essential since it was upon this basis that the discussion of use and effectiveness could follow. The study sought to know how often teachers taught reading to their class. All the teachers (100%) indicated that they taught reading to their classes on daily basis. When asked if they used learning resources to teach reading in their classes, all the respondents agreed that they used learning resources. The questionnaire then sought to know what teaching resources were commonly used to teach reading to their classes. The findings are shown below:

Figure 1: Learning Resources Used In Preschool Reading



Source: Questionnaires (2010).

Figure 1 above indicates the most commonly used learning resources to teach reading. According to the data, flashcards and charts were used by all the teachers hence scoring 100% response. Fifty percent of the respondents indicated that they used books; while 25% each indicated that they used cut-outs, objects or plasticine. Only 6% indicated that they used games for reading. These included dominoes games, matching games, lotto games and fishing game.

The study further sought to find out from the respondents which of these learning resources they most frequently used. The findings are found in the next page:

Table 4.2: The Most and Least Frequently Used Learning Resources

| Most frequently used | Frequency | % | Least frequently used | Frequency | % |
|-----------------------------|------------------|----------|------------------------------|------------------|----------|
| Wall charts | 17 | 100 | Books | 10 | 60 |
| flash cards | 17 | 100 | Cut-outs | 13 | 80 |
| objects | 17 | 100 | | | |
| pictures | 17 | 100 | | | |

Source: Questionnaires (2010)

Table 4.2 shows the most commonly used and the least commonly used learning resources. All the respondents, 100%, indicated that they used wall charts, flashcards, objects and pictures most frequently. On the other hand, 60% of the respondents indicated that they rarely used books while 80% indicated that they rarely used cut-outs.

Subsequently, respondents were asked to explain why they used the various learning resources or teaching. The findings in this regard, are found in Table 4.3 in the next page:

Table 4.3: Reasons for Using Learning Resources

| Reason | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| To ensure that children understood well | 17 | 100 |
| They make learning real | 3 | 20 |
| They make learning enjoyable, easy and interesting | 17 | 100 |
| They reinforce concepts learnt | 17 | 100 |
| They help to sustain children's interest in reading | 17 | 100 |
| Help the child to develop eye-hand coordination | 10 | 60 |
| Reason and think logically | 3 | 20 |
| Speak fluently and clearly | 7 | 40 |
| Develop vocabulary | 10 | 60 |

Source: Questionnaires 2010)

According to the data in Table 4.3 above, 100% of the respondents indicated that they used learning resources because the use of these resources ensured that pupils understood the lesson; it made learning more enjoyable, easy and interesting; it reinforced concepts and helped sustain children's interest in learning. Twenty percent indicated that learning resources made learning more real; 60% indicated that learning resources helped the child develop eye-hand coordination; 40% thought learning resources helped the pupils to speak fluently and clearly; while 20% indicated that learning resources helped the pupils to think and reason logically. The

questionnaire then sought to establish the effectiveness of each learning resources when used in the classroom to teach reading. The findings are presented in Table 4.4 below:

Table 4.4: Effectiveness of Individual Learning Resources

| Learning Resources | Effect when used | Effect when not used |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Charts | The lesson is understandable and interesting Reading is easy Learners see and remember better | The lesson is boring and understanding low Learners forget easily Lesson is more teacher centred |
| Cut-outs | While manipulating the sounds they recognize and understand faster They develop reasoning and logical thinking | Recognition is low Poor letter/number formation |
| Flash cards | While manipulating the sounds they recognize and understand faster Recall sounds easily | |
| Real objects | They are able to look at and interpret objects, pictures, symbols and signs Can construct sounds They develop concentration | Learners not able to form words May not develop fluency |
| Books | Children develop interest in books Children are able to read using picture books They learn to take care of books They develop eye-hand coordination *Since they are unable to read, books are not important | Not able to write Children can still do well without books |
| Pictures | The lesson is interesting Look and say becomes effective | The learners cannot explore, exploit and realize their reading abilities No recognition of things |

Source: Questionnaires(2010)

Table 4.4 above presents data relating to the effectiveness of individual learning resources. With regard to charts, the respondents indicated that, when used, the lessons are

understandable and interesting; reading is easy and the learners see and remember better. However, when this learning resource is not used, the lesson is boring and understanding low. Moreover, learners forget easily since the lesson is more teacher –centred. With regard to the use of cut-outs, the respondents indicated that this learning resource is useful because, while manipulating the sounds, the pupils recognize and understand faster and they also develop reasoning and logical thinking. However, when cut-outs are not used, recognition is low and there is poor letter/number formation.

With regard to the use of flash cards, the respondents indicated that, while manipulating the sounds, the pupils recognize and understand faster and are able to recall sounds easily. However, respondents did not indicate what happened when they did not use this learning resource. Respondents also indicated that they used real objects to teach reading in class. In this regard, they showed that real objects, when used to teach reading, provided the learner with an opportunity to look at and interpret objects, pictures, symbols and signs. Hence, the pupils can construct sounds. Furthermore, the respondents indicated that the use of real objects helped to develop concentration. However, when the teachers did not use real objects, they indicated that learners were not able to form words and may, over time, not develop fluency.

The respondents also mentioned books as a learning resource in the teaching of reading in preschool. 95% of these felt that children develop interest in books; they are able to read using picture books; they learn to take care of books; and they develop eye-hand coordination. This group felt that when books were not used, then the learners would have difficulty in writing. Interestingly, one respondent felt that since preschoolers do not have the capacity to read, then books were not important. The respondent felt that the pupils could still do well even without books. Finally, the respondents cited the use of pictures. According to the data, the use of

pictures made the lesson interesting and enhanced look and say to become more effective. When the respondents did not use pictures, the learners could not explore, exploit and realize their reading abilities and it was difficult to recognize things.

4.4 The use of instructional resources in teaching reading.

The second objective of this study was to observe the use of instructional resources in teaching reading in preschools. As a prerequisite, the researcher examined the lesson plans prepared by the teachers in order to follow the instructional process more accurately and to evaluate the achievement of instructional objectives at the end of the lessons. All the respondents' lesson plans schedule captured the various activities and learning resources for each stage of the lesson.

It indicates that the introduction to the lesson will usually involve either singing or reciting a poem. The learning resources used in this case include sound charts or plasticine. Children read the sounds on the sound chart. Step one of the plan includes activities such as displaying types of fruits and saying their names; repeating after the teacher; displaying pictures and asking pupils to name one by one; reading sounds as the learners listen; and asking the learners to read the sounds from the chart. The learning resources include cut-outs, flashcards and pictures.

The second step involves the teacher to distributing flashcards and sound cut-outs for children to read in groups; asking the learners to repeat what teacher has read and correcting mistakes; giving out group activities; and giving out books for pupils to do the work. No learning resources were identified for this stage. The third step involves the teacher writing the sounds for the children; encouraging the children; asking pupils to use letter flashcards to make words; calling upon individuals to do reading while other s repeat; and writing the sounds on the

chalkboard for the children to copy. The learning resources in this case were cited to be books, pencils and flashcards. The conclusion to the lesson would normally include oral questions, poem, song or a recapitulation.

When asked if there was significant difference in learning when they used learning resources, all the respondents (100%) indicated that there was marked difference when they used learning resources to teach reading. The study used observation as a data collection instrument to collect data that would corroborate the information given by respondents in the questionnaire. The researcher sat through three class sessions and made observations of the teachers' use of learning resources in the classrooms. First, the researcher sought to establish how frequently the learning resources were used to teach reading in the preschool classrooms. The findings are presented in Table 4.5 in the next page:

Table 4.5: Frequency of Use of Learning Resources

| Learning resources | School A Time (minutes) | | | | School B Time (minutes) | | | | School C Time (minutes) | | | | School D Time (minutes) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
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| | 0-5 | 6-15 | 11-20 | 16-20 | 0-5 | 6-15 | 11-20 | 16-20 | 0-5 | 6-15 | 11-20 | 16-20 | 0-5 | 6-15 | 11-20 | 16-20 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Day 1 | <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Charts</td> <td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Real objects</td> <td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chalk board</td> <td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cut-outs</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Books</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td></td><td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Flashcards</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Plasticine</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Charts | | | X | | | | | | X | X | | X | | | X | | Real objects | X | | | | | | | | X | X | X | | | | | | Chalk board | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | Cut-outs | | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | Books | | | | | | | | | | X | X | | | X | | X | Flashcards | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | | | Plasticine | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| Charts | | | X | | | | | | X | X | | X | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Real objects | X | | | | | | | | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chalk board | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cut-outs | | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Books | | | | | | | | | | X | X | | | X | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Flashcards | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Plasticine | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Day 2 | <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Charts</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Real objects</td> <td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td></td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chalk board</td> <td>X</td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cut-outs</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Books</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Flashcards</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Plasticine</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Charts | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | | X | X | | | Real objects | | X | X | | | | | | | X | | X | | | | | Chalk board | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | Cut-outs | | | | | | | | | | X | | X | X | | | X | Books | | | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | Flashcards | | | | | | | | | X | X | | X | | | | | Plasticine | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | |
| Charts | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Real objects | | X | X | | | | | | | X | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chalk board | X | | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cut-outs | | | | | | | | | | X | | X | X | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Books | | | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Flashcards | | | | | | | | | X | X | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Plasticine | | | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Day 3 | <table border="0"> <tr> <td>Charts</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td>X</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Real objects</td> <td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Chalk board</td> <td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Cut-outs</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Books</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td>X</td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Flashcards</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Plasticine</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>X</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table> | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Charts | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | | X | X | | X | Real objects | | X | X | | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | | | Chalk board | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | X | | | X | X | X | X | | Cut-outs | | | | | | | | | X | X | | X | | | | | Books | | | | | | | | | X | X | | X | | X | X | | Flashcards | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | | | Plasticine | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | |
| Charts | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | | X | X | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Real objects | | X | X | | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Chalk board | X | X | | X | X | X | X | | X | | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Cut-outs | | | | | | | | | X | X | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Books | | | | | | | | | X | X | | X | | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Flashcards | | | | | | | | | X | X | X | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Plasticine | | | | | | | | | | X | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Source: Questionnaires(2010)

Table 4.5 above presents the findings from the observation on the frequency of use of learning resources in reading lessons. According to the data above, the chalkboard is the most frequently used learning resources followed by real objects. The least used learning resources was plasticine.

4.5 Children's preferred instructional resources in learning to read.

Having examined the use of the instructional materials in the 4.4 above, the study sought to achieve its third objective of identifying those instructional resources most preferred by pupils during reading lessons. The study further wanted to know which of the learning resources were most preferred by pupils. Fifty nine percent of the respondents indicated that they preferred using charts while 18% indicated that they preferred using books.

The preference for pupils is presented in table 6 below:

Table 4.6: Learning Resources Preferred By Pupils

| Learning resources | Frequency | Percentage |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|
| Flash cards | 10 | 59 |
| Cut-outs | 10 | 59 |
| Plasticine | 3 | 18 |
| Pictures | 7 | 41 |
| Real materials | 7 | 41 |
| Books | 7 | 41 |
| Matching games | 3 | 18 |

Source: Questionnaires (2010)

Table 4.6 above shows the preference for the children in so far as the learning resources are concerned. Data in the table shows that 59% of the respondents felt that pupils preferred the use of flash cards and cut-outs as learning resources. 18% preferred to use plasticine or matching games. Respondents indicated, by 41% that pupils preferred to use Pictures, real materials or books.

4.6 Teacher's perception on the importance of instructional resources in teaching reading.

The study finally sought to establish teacher perception on the use of learning resources in the reading classroom. The study hoped to capture the teachers' opinions on the functional aspects of learning resources and their impact on the reading lesson. Respondents were then asked to rate learning resources in terms of their effectiveness in the reading lesson. The responses are shown here below:

Table 4.7: Effectiveness of Learning Resources

| Learning resources | Effective | | Not effective | |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|---------------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Wall charts | 17 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Flashcards | 13 | 80 | 4 | 20 |
| Plasticine | 4 | 20 | 13 | 80 |
| Objects | 10 | 60 | 7 | 40 |
| Pictures | 17 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Others | 10 | 60 | 7 | 40 |

Source: Questionnaires (2010)

Table 4.7 above presents respondents' rating of the effectiveness of the learning resources they use. According to the data presented in the table, wall charts and pictures are rated to be the most effective learning resources, with 100% of the respondents indicating that they were very effective. Flashcards follow in the line of effectiveness with 80% of the respondents indicating that they are effective. 60% of the respondents indicated that real objects and others (games and puzzles) were also effective as learning resources. Plasticine scored the lowest rating

with only 20% of the respondents indicating that it is an effective learning resource. The respondents were further asked to rate their achievement of lesson objectives during lessons taught using these learning resources. The findings are presented here below:

Table 4.8: Rate of Achievement of Lesson Objectives

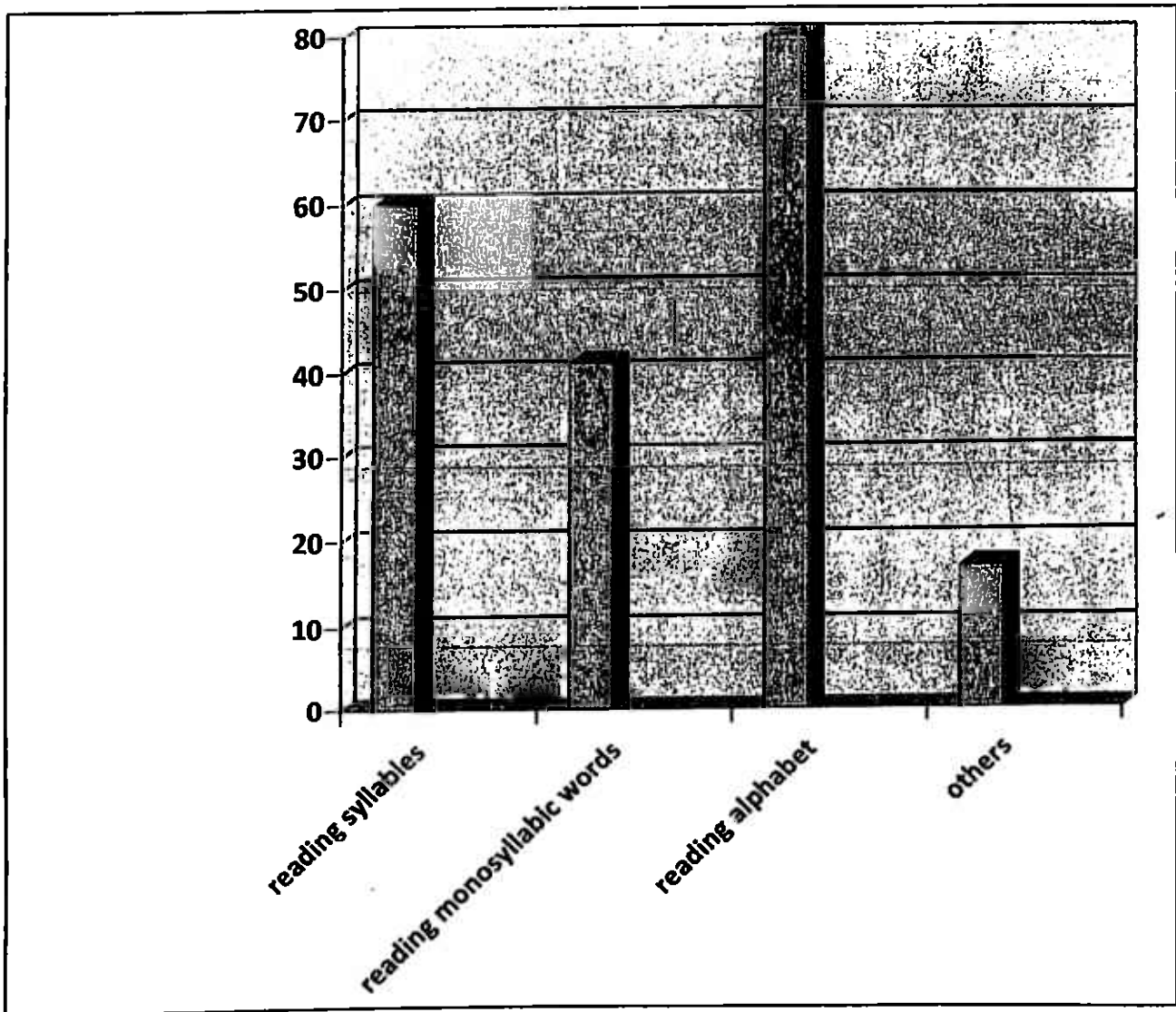
| Learning resources | Achieved | | Not Achieved | |
|--------------------|-----------|------------|--------------|------------|
| | Frequency | Percentage | Frequency | Percentage |
| Wall charts | 17 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Flashcards | 17 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Plasticine | 17 | 100 | 0 | 0 |
| Objects | 14 | 80 | 3 | 20 |
| Pictures | 17 | 100 | 0 | 0 |

Source: Questionnaires (2010)

Table 4.8 presents the ratings of teachers' achievement of lesson objectives during reading lessons where learning resources have been used. According to the data, all the respondents indicated that the lesson objectives had been achieved with the use of these learning resources. The only difference occurs with real objects where 20% of the respondents felt the objectives of the lesson had not been well achieved.

The respondents were asked to confirm whether or not the pupils taught by the respondents responded better when learning resources were used in teaching reading. All of them (100%) agreed that the performance of the pupils was much better when these learning resources were used. Therefore, the study sought to establish what aspects of reading were better done when these learning resources were used. The findings are presented in figure 2 in the next page.

Figure 2: Aspects of reading better done when using learning resources



Source: Questionnaires(2010)

Figure 2 above shows the findings with regard to aspects of reading that are better done as a result of using learning resources. According to the data in the chart above, 80% of the respondents indicated that reading the alphabet was well done when using learning resources; 60% felt that reading syllables was well done; 41% felt that reading mono syllabic words was done better. 17 % of the respondents indicated that other issues such as aesthetic development

where children develop the ability to write were well done. The study sought to find from respondents what measures could be taken to improve the teaching of reading in preschool. The following suggestions were made:

Table 4.9: Suggestions for Improvement of Reading Lessons

| Suggestion | Frequency | Percentage |
|----------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Provide daily reading activities | 17 | 100 |
| Provision of more materials | 17 | 100 |
| Involve learners in their own learning | 3 | 20 |

Source: Questionnaires (2010)

Table 4.9 above shows the various suggestions provided by respondents with regard to the improvement of reading lessons in preschool. All the respondents indicated that there was need to have daily reading activities and to provide more materials to function as learning resources in the classrooms. 20% of the respondents indicated that there was need to involve learners in their own learning.

Table 4.10: Observation Schedule Results- School A(14 pupils)

| Indicators | No. of pupils Able | No. of pupils Can attempt | No. of pupils Unable |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Picture reading can observe different pictures and participate in reading activities such as interpreting and describing details in pictures | 3 | 5 | 6 |
| Basic alphabet skills | | | |
| • can recite vowels and letters of the alphabet; | 8 | 6 | - |
| • has single letter-sound articulation and formation of syllables; | 6 | 5 | 3 |
| • can read syllables and three letter words | 5 | 7 | 2 |
| Letter sounds – can read letter sounds in lower case | 10 | 4 | - |
| Recognition of letter, sound and syllables; can engage in games which enhance letter recognition | 7 | 3 | 4 |

The Table 4.10 above indicates the number of pupils who were able to perform a variety of reading related tasks in the class in school A. In this school, three pupils were able to read pictures well; five could attempt reading the pictures while six were unable to interpret pictures and read from them. With regard to basic alphabet skills, 8 pupils were able to recite the alphabet comfortably while 6 were just able to recite. Six of these were able to articulate single letter sounds; 5 were just able to articulate while 3 were unable to recite the alphabet. Five of these pupils could read syllables and single syllable words; seven could just read and 2 were unable to read the alphabet. Ten pupils could read letter sounds in lower case while 4 could just read. All the children could engage in recognition of letters and syllables however, 4 pupils were unable to do this.

Table 4. 11: Observation Schedule Results- School B (8 pupils)

| Indicators | No. of pupils Able | No. of pupils Can attempt | No. of pupils Unable |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Picture reading can observe different pictures and participate in reading activities such as interpreting and describing details in pictures | 2 | 5 | 1 |
| Basic alphabet skills | | | |
| (i) can recite vowels and letters of the alphabet; | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| (ii) has single letter-sound articulation and formation of syllables; | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| (iii) can read syllables and three letter words | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Letter sounds | | | |
| can read letter sounds in lower case | 5 | 3 | - |
| Recognition of letter, sound and syllables; can engage in games which enhance letter recognition | 6 | - | 2 |

Table 4.11 above indicates the number of pupils who were able to perform a variety of reading related tasks in the class in school B. In this school, two pupils were able to read pictures well; five could attempt reading the pictures while one were unable to interpret pictures and read from them. With regard to basic alphabet skills, 4 pupils were able to recite the alphabet

comfortably while 2 attempted to recite. Two of these were able to articulate single letter sounds; 3 were just able to articulate while 3 were unable to recite the alphabet. Three of these pupils could read syllables and single syllable words; four could attempt to read and 1 was unable to read the alphabet. Five pupils could read letter sounds in lower case while three could just attempt to read. All the children could engage in recognition of letters and syllables and engage in letter recognition games however, 2 pupils were unable to do this.

Table 4. 12: Observation Schedule Results-School C(10 pupils)

| Indicators | No. of pupils Able | No. of pupils Can attempt | No. of pupils Unable |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Picture reading – can observe different pictures and participate in reading activities such as interpreting and describing details in pictures | 8 | 2 | - |
| Basic alphabet skills- | | | |
| (i) can recite vowels and letters of the alphabet; | 10 | - | - |
| (ii) has single letter-sound articulation and formation of syllables; | 10 | - | - |
| (iii) can read syllables and three letter words | 10 | - | - |
| Letter sounds | | | |
| can read letter sounds in lower case | 10 | - | - |
| Recognition of letter, sound and syllables; can engage in games which enhance letter recognition | 8 | 2 | - |

Table 4.12 above indicates the number of pupils who were able to perform a variety of reading related tasks in the class in school C. In this school, 8 pupils were able to read pictures well; 2 could attempt reading the pictures while none were unable to interpret pictures and read from them. With regard to basic alphabet skills, 10 pupils were able to recite the alphabet

comfortably while 10 were able to articulate single letter sounds none was unable to do these activities. Ten pupils could read letter sounds in lower case while none was unable to read. All the children could engage in recognition of letters and syllables however, none was unable to do this.

Table 4.13: Observation Schedule Results- School D(18 pupils)

| Indicators | No. of pupils Able | No. of pupils Can attempt | No. of pupils Unable |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Picture reading can observe different pictures and participate in reading activities such as interpreting and describing details in pictures | 11 | 5 | 2 |
| Basic alphabet skills | | | |
| a. can recite vowels and letters of the alphabet; | 12 | 4 | 2 |
| b. has single letter-sound articulation and formation of syllables; | 8 | 7 | 3 |
| c. can read syllables and three letter words | 9 | 5 | 4 |
| Letter sounds can read letter sounds in lower case | 12 | 5 | 1 |
| Recognition of letter, sound and syllables; can engage in games which enhance letter recognition | 13 | 5 | - |

Table 4.13 above indicates the number of pupils who were able to perform a variety of reading related tasks in the class in school D. In this school, 11 pupils were able to read pictures well; five could attempt reading the pictures while none were unable to interpret pictures and read from them. With regard to basic alphabet skills, 12 pupils were able to recite the alphabet comfortably while 4 attempted to recite. 8 of these were able to articulate single letter sounds; 7 were just able to articulate while none were unable to recite the alphabet. Nine of these pupils could read syllables and single syllable words; 5 could just read and 2 were unable to read the alphabet. Ten pupils could read letter sounds in lower case while 5 could just read. All the children could engage in recognition of letters and syllables. No pupils were unable to do this.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This study sought to establish the effect of learning resources on preschool reading lessons. In chapter four, the data collected was presented and analysed. In this chapter, the discussion of the findings in chapter four will be summarized and conclusions and recommendations made based on these findings.

5.1 Summary

The summary of the findings will be based on the objectives the study set out to achieve.

5.1.1 Identifying the teaching and learning resources used in preschools to teach reading skills.

This study established that the most commonly used learning resources to teach reading were flashcards and charts. These were used by all the teachers. Fifty percent of the respondents indicated that they used books; while 25% each indicated that they used cut-outs, objects or plasticine. Only 6% indicated that they used games for reading. These included dominoes games, matching games, lotto games and fishing game. Teachers indicated that flashcards and charts were easier to make hence their popularity as learning resources. Also frequently used were books which are easily available to both teachers and pupils. All the teachers indicated that they taught reading to their classes on daily basis and that they used learning resources to teach reading in their classes.

5.1.2 Observing the use of instructional resources in teaching reading.

The use of instructional materials was observed through the direct observation by the researcher and in some of the responses given by respondents. Data revealed that wall charts, flashcards, objects and pictures were most frequently used. Subsequently, the study found that learning resources were used because they ensured that pupils understood the lesson; it made learning more enjoyable, easy and interesting; it reinforced concepts; helped sustain children's interest in learning. Furthermore the study found that learning resources made learning more real; helped the child develop eye-hand coordination; speak fluently and clearly; think and reason logically. The study further found that the use of charts made the lessons understandable and interesting; reading was easy and the learners saw and remembered better. However, when this learning resource is not used, the lessons are boring and understanding low. Moreover, learners forget easily since the lesson is more teacher-centred

Cut-outs were found to be useful because, while manipulating the sounds, the pupils recognize and understand faster and they also develop reasoning and logical thinking. However, when cut-outs are not used, Recognition is low and there is poor letter/number formation. Flash cards were found to help the pupils to recognize and understand faster and be able to recall sounds easily. The study also found that real objects, when used to teach reading, provided the learner with an opportunity to look at and interpret objects, pictures, symbols and signs. Hence, pupils can construct sounds. Furthermore, the use of real objects helped to develop concentration. However, when the teachers did not use real objects, they indicated that learners were not able to form words and may, over time, not develop fluency. The use of pictures made the lesson interesting and enhanced look-and-say to become more effective. When the

respondents did not use pictures, the learners could not explore, exploit and realize their reading abilities and it was difficult to recognize things.

5.1.3 Children's preferred instructional resources in learning to read.

The study established that the performance of the pupils was much better when these learning resources were used. Reading the alphabet was well done when using learning resources as well as reading syllables and mono syllabic words. Data showed that teachers preferred charts and books while pupils preferred the use of flash cards and cut-outs as learning resources. A smaller number preferred to use plasticine or matching games, pictures, real materials or books.

In terms of their effectiveness, the study found that learning resources were effective in learning. Wall charts and pictures were rated to be the most effective learning resources, with all the respondents indicating that they were very effective. These were followed by flashcards real objects and others (games and puzzles). Plasticine was found to be the least learning resource.

5.2 Conclusions

Following the discussion of findings done above, the following conclusions can be made:

1. The use of learning resources in the teaching of reading to preschoolers is a vital component in enhancing capability and understanding in a reading lesson. As revealed by the data, the lessons in which learning resources were provided, the learners showed not only interest but increased performance in their reading ability. This confirms the view propounded by (Scharer, 1992) that in order to support young children in developing literacy, high-quality literature, including narrative and expository works, are the core materials used during literature-based instruction. This type of instruction which has gained increased emphasis in reading research and practice, provides authentic learning experiences and activities by using literature to teach and foster literacy (Morrow and

Gambrell, 2000).

2. There is a similarity in the type of learning resources that are preferred by teachers and those preferred by pupils. All the respondents agreed that they used learning resources. Flashcards and charts were found to be the most commonly used learning resources in the preschools in the sample. Moreover, books are also widely used. Wherever these were used, there was a higher motivation to read from the pupils. However, there was a significant lack of variety in these learning resources as used in the schools. Very few had a significant variety of learning resources that they could use.
3. It may also be concluded that learner competence in reading is founded in the use of learning resources in teaching reading at the preschool level. Since it is a foundation stage, future reading interest is sustained when reading is enjoyable and interesting at such beginner levels. The goal of instruction remained the communication or transfer of knowledge to learners in the most efficient, effective manner possible (Bednar, 1995). Hence the employment of learning resources provides the necessary efficiency and effectiveness of learning. The findings indicated that they used learning resources because the use of these resources ensured that pupils understood the lesson; it made learning more enjoyable, easy and interesting, reinforced concepts and helped sustain children's interest in learning.

5.3 Recommendations

Following the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made.

1. There is need to conduct refresher courses for preschool teachers. Here, the pedagogy of reading in preschools will be improved by equipping teachers with a variety of pedagogic skills and strategies to better teach reading at preschool.

2. Teachers should provide variety to heighten interest in the learners. The findings showed teachers using the same methodology to teach learners without reflecting the variety that is necessary for the different aspects of reading.
3. Valid reading assessment tools need to be incorporated in the teaching to help evaluate the success of these learning resources. Assessment provides the necessary feedback for correction and improvement. None of the teachers in the sample showed the use of assessment in teaching reading at preschool.
4. Introduction of reading aloud is necessary as an alternative/supplementary reading activity that can be shared between the teacher and the parent.
5. The study also recommends that learners be involved in their own learning. The lesson plans that the teachers gave indicated teacher driven lessons where the child was fed with information rather than guided to know how to do it.

5.4 Suggestions For Further Research

This study has limited itself to aspects related to preschool reading. Further investigation may be carried out on the specific pedagogy of reading and language learning in preschools. Furthermore, research is needed in defining specific strategies to handle reading among preschoolers from regions that have challenged environments.

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Appendices

Appendix A

QUESTIONNAIRES FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

I am a child at Nairobi university pursuing a masters degree programme. I am conducting a research on preschool reading. All the answers you give shall be treated with due confidentiality.

School:

Qualification

1. For how long have you worked with preschool children?

Below 1 year 1-2 years 2-5yrs above 5 yrs

2. How often do you teach reading in your class?

Daily weekly

3. Do you use learning resources in your teaching? Yes No

4. List the learning resources you use to teach reading to your class

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

5 Which of these resources do you use:

a) Most frequently

b) Least frequently

6. Briefly explain why you use the above mentioned learning resources as shown above.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

7. Briefly describe the lesson activities and the relevant teaching resources in a typical reading lesson in your class.

| Activities | Learning resources |
|--------------|--------------------|
| Introduction | |
| step 1 | |
| step2 | |
| step 3 | |
| conclusion | |

8. Is there any significant difference in learning when you use learning resources? Yes/No

9. If yes, indicate the effectiveness of using the following learning resources in your class.

| | |
|--------------------|------------------------|
| Using charts | Not using charts |
| Using cutouts | Not Using cutouts |
| Using flash cards | Not Using flash cards |
| Using real objects | Not Using real objects |
| Using books | Not Using books |
| Using pictures | Not Using pictures |

10. Do your pupils read better when you use learning resources?

11. What aspects of reading are better done when you use learning resources?

Reading syllables

Reading mono syllabic words

Reading the alphabet

Others (please specify)

12. Would you associate this reading ability with the use of learning resources?

13. In your own assessment, which learning resources are preferred by:

Teachers

Pupils

14. Rate the following in terms of effectiveness of use in a reading lesson:

| Learning resource | Very effective | Effective | Fairly effective | Not effective |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----------|------------------|---------------|
| Wall charts | | | | |
| Flashcards | | | | |
| Plasticine | | | | |
| Objects | | | | |
| pictures | | | | |
| Others (please specify) | | | | |

15. Rate your achievement of reading objectives after the use of the following learning resources.

| Learning resource | Very effective | Effective | Fairly effective | Not effective |
|-------------------------|----------------|-----------|------------------|---------------|
| Wall charts | | | | |
| Flashcards | | | | |
| Plasticine | | | | |
| Objects | | | | |
| pictures | | | | |
| Others (please specify) | | | | |

16. How else do you think reading in your classroom can be improved?

Appendix B: Lesson Observation Schedule

| Indicators | School | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | No. of pupils Able | No. of pupils Can attempt | No. of pupils Unable |
| Picture reading can observe different pictures and participate in reading activities such as interpreting and describing details in pictures | | | |
| Basic alphabet skills- (iv) can recite vowels and letters of the alphabet; (v) has single letter-sound articulation and formation of syllables; (vi) can read syllables and three letter words | | | |
| Letter sounds – can read letter sounds in lower case | | | |
| Recognition of letter, sound and syllables; can engage in games which enhance letter recognition | | | |

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:

Prof./ Dr./ Mr./ Mrs./ Miss..... JANE

KAMAMA WANGUI

of (Address) UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

P.O. BOX 30197, NBI

has been permitted to conduct research in

Location,

NATUNGULU

District,

EASTERN

Province,

on the topic Impact of instructional

resources on the performance of

preschoolers' reading in Tala Zone

Matungulu District, Kenya

for a period ending... 31ST DECEMBER, 20 10

Research Permit No. NCST/RRI/12/1/SS/656

Date of issue 19/07/2010

Fee received SHS 1,000



Applicant's Signature

Handwritten signature of the Secretary.

Secretary National Council for Science and Technology

UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI
KIKUYU CAMPUS
P.O. Box 30197
NAIROBI

CONDITIONS

1. You must report to the District Commissioner and the District Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit
2. Government Officers will not be interviewed with-out prior appointment.
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.
5. You are required to submit at least two(2)/four (4) bound copies of your final report for Kenyans and non-Kenyans respectively.
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice.



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**RESEARCH CLEARANCE
PERMIT**

GPK6055t3mt10/2010

(CONDITIONS—see back page)