

**INFLUENCE OF SONGS ON PRE-SCHOOL CHILDREN'S WORD  
KNOWLEDGE IN KIKUYU SUB-COUNTY, KIAMBU COUNTY.**

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Department of Educational Communication and Technology**

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## **DECLARATION**

This is my original work and has not been previously, in its entirety or in part, been presented to any other university or anywhere else for academic purpose. All references cited in the text have been duly acknowledged.

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## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my late dad Joseph John whose passion for music was undying and still lives in us. His struggles to raise my school fees since I was small gave the energy to fight on, and this far I have come. This work is also dedicated to my beloved son Jayden John, though unknowingly he has been the source of my inspiration.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

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Special attributes go to Shaban my typist, my friends and classmates for their moral support.

## **ABSTRACT**

The main purpose of this study was to examine the influence of songs on pre-school children's word knowledge in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County. The study was guided by the following research objectives: To determine the influence of songs on children's verbal memory, to identify the influence of songs on children's listening, to find out how songs influence children's vocabulary and to establish how songs influence children's writing instruction in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County. The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design consisting of all public pre-schools (34), teachers and pre-school administrators in the area under study. All (3686) class 7&8 Pupils were also targeted. A representative sample of thirty (30) teachers and ten (10) administrators took part in the study. Questionnaires and interview guides were used as the main instruments for data collection. Data was analyzed using both descriptive statistics and narrative techniques. From the analysis, the study revealed that the use of songs indeed increased children's verbal memory, listening skills, vocabulary, writing instruction, fluency in reading and oral skills to a great extent.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

During the preschool period, children development shows a significant change. In this period, children are curious and their rate of learning is notably high. Apart from that, children come from different social classes, families and life standards, more so they come from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds. Children start the preschool period with different experiences and skills. These experiences are also affected by the conditions of musical skills, games they play and learning rate in school. The early childhood stage is the period when the brain and neural development process is fast, therefore it is an important period for musical education (Dartt, 2009). Music elicits the concentration of the children.

Music is generally perceived and viewed as an enjoyable, pleasurable, and aesthetic experience (Davies, 2000). Music is often used consciously or unconsciously as a vehicle to help create a certain feeling or mood within the listener. Historically, music has been used as a tool for learning. Music has always helped people tell and remember stories. Early man sitting around campfires told tales of great battles accompanied by drumbeats (Garcia, 2011). Today, music is used to help facilitate one's gaining knowledge of self, others, and the world (Davies, 2000). Especially, academic cognitive skills such as mathematics and reading efficiently and other skills like focusing and social emotional skills are the important keys of readiness for school. Musical activities help children to have early musical experiences such as listening to music, singing or dancing, creating basic sounds and rhythmic words. Parents and care givers across cultures communicate with infants through lullabies and musical baby talk (Weinberger, 1998).

Recent studies indicate that infants have musical capabilities .For example, they can discriminate between two notes, remember the contour or pitches of melodies, mentally segment or "chunk" extended melodies into smaller phrases, as adults do, and comprehend rhythm (Weinberger, 2000).

The brains of children are well equipped to understand music. If parents and caregivers would reinforce children's spontaneous musical activities, then they would enhance children's natural development of communication, expression, and cognition (Weinberger, 2000).The help of conducive environment where teachers have various intense musical experiences and proper pedagogical techniques, helps children make progress on speaking skills, word knowledge and vocabulary (Etopio, 2009)

Reading is a process of turning the series of visual motor symbols into verbal or nonverbal sound series. Children learn how to create new stories or express themselves using or creating new words and how to communicate through sounds using their word knowledge with the help of books they choose on their own (Bay, 2008). Many skills like paying attention, listening, vocabulary, pronunciation and word knowledge as well are meant to be given along with musical activities. The linguistic skills integrated with musical education would be helpful to children for speaking skills and rhythm. In this case, music is a multifunctional tool which is used in the development of speaking and literacy skills (Darrow, 2008). A child gains many important skills like hearing what he/she listens, understanding what he/she hears during the period of pre-literacy. Any sort of musical activities bring in auditory sense development, phonological core memory and upper cognitive data skills. Phonics is often learned with musical games and rhythmic process involving matching sounds to different objects, movements, and activities. Sense making comes through perception of meaning in patterns. Music greatly assists sense making of

patterns (Finnerty, 1999). At about age four, the child gets ready for right brain activities, such as creativity, artistic expression, and musical intelligence (Finnerty, 1999). The key of a successful reading skill is to develop the listening skills in efficient levels. Thus, many researchers have observed that musical education for pre-school children has a deep impact on literacy skills.

Music and reading are complimentary, for singing is a celebration of language. Children's language has rhythm and melody. Children bring this natural "music" language when they are learning to read. So singing is drawing upon what the children already know and building upon that foundation (Kolb, 1996). By teaching music in classrooms, children are learning to make the connections between their world and the world of print. They are experiencing opportunities to activate their senses, imaginations, emotions, and their life experiences while interacting with text (Bussis, 1982). Music develops the perceptual skill necessary in reading.

Also, songs improve the development of reading readiness skills in at-risk learners (Kelstrom, 1998). The skill children gain in listening to music will provide a solid framework for successfully attending to language in print. The singing-reading connection fosters a love for reading while learning how to read (Kolb, 1996). Hence, the parallelism between music and reading stands out significantly. Nursery rhymes may be hundreds of years old and have been passed on from one generation to another. These songs are very simple in nature with repetition and simple up and down patterns in their melodies.

African-American children's stories and songs originate from a rich oral tradition passed along for centuries. Each story carries a bit of history that describes the lives of people who struggled and suffered, yet still found the ability to live life to the fullest.

Some of these stories also describe the achievements of African-Americans who have changed the way we all live our lives (Smith, 2002). The English nursery rhymes are translated to the language of the people. In South Africa, There are approximately 25 different languages spoken, 11 of which are official: isiNdebele, isiXhosa, isiZulu, siSwati, Sesotho, Sepedi, Setswana (Tswana), Tshivenda, Xitsonga, English and African.

Afrikaans is one of the major languages of South Africa. It is based on Zuid-Hollands, a dialect spoken by the earliest Dutch settlers. Its vocabulary has been enhanced by borrowings from various other European and African languages and its grammar has been simplified. Many of the nursery rhymes in SA correspond to similar rhymes in the English Mother Goose tradition (Garcia, 2011). Mama lisa stated that she couldn't say for sure whether these rhymes have been passed on for a few generations but she said that they had been around since she was a baby and her mother knew them. In addition she said, one will find them in almost every nursery rhyme book in Afrikaans and all the kids know them because they are very popular in Afrikaans.

Skilled reading requires the integration of several skills and abilities. Pupils cannot learn to read an alphabetic language like English unless they understand that the words that they hear contain smaller sounds called "phonemes (Stringer, 2004). Phonemes cannot actually be "heard" by the ear because when people speak, the sounds in each syllable and word are folded into one sound to permit rapid communication. Thus, when speaking the word /cat/, the ear hears one sound, not three as in /c/ /a/ /t/. Many readers must be taught "phoneme awareness" if it does not come easily to them.

Understanding that spoken words are composed of phonemes is critical because in beginning reading, new words are decoded by linking the phonemes to the letter symbols. Once children learn how to apply sounds to letter symbols, they must practice the process to ensure that their reading becomes rapid and fluent (Just, 1993). Reading requires phoneme awareness, phonics, reading fluency, and comprehension skills. Each of these skills is necessary and none are sufficient in their own right. They must be integrated and applied in text through consistent and frequent practice. Learning to read is not a natural process - it requires systematic and well-informed instruction (Smith, 2000). Use of songs in pre-school is an instructional method that helps in acquisition of word knowledge. Based on the parallelism between music and reading, this research aims at finding out the effects of songs on word knowledge of pupils in preschool.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Kenya's political pressure emphasizing higher standardized test scores, leads to a school's function becoming more about the preparing of students for the tests instead of producing a well-educated child. Kiambu County is not an exception. Due to the focus on academic performance mainly the written work, reading is not practiced regularly. To keep up with the preschool's performance in written tests, teachers employs teacher-centered approach to teaching and do not give children time to read on their own.

Children develop reading abilities differently universally due to their individual differences. Songs for children influence children's word knowledge. In Kiambu county children acquire word knowledge differently in terms of fluency, and direct reading despite coming from the same geographical region. This therefore indicates that the school environment and in particular the classroom experiences plays a great

role in influencing reading in pre-school pupils. With this basic assumption the researcher felt the need of conducting a study to find out the influence of songs on pre-school children's word knowledge in Kikuyu sub-county, Kiambu County.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to examine how songs influence children's word knowledge in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The study will be guided by the following research objectives:

1. To determine the influence of songs on children's verbal memory in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County.
2. To identify the influence of songs on children's listening skills in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County.
3. To find out how songs influence children's vocabulary in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County.
4. To establish how songs influence children's writing instruction in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the influence of songs on children's verbal memory in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County?
2. What is the influence of songs on children's listening skills in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County?
3. How do songs influence children's vocabulary in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County?

4. How do songs influence children's writing instruction in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The research will help the government to realize the importance of songs to education performance. It will help the government to address this by coming up with a music policy and increase budgetary allocation to ECDE sector to help employ music teachers. The research will also help the Ministry of Education to realize the importance of songs and offer refresher courses and workshops to retrain the managers and teachers on new teaching strategies. The ministry will incorporate relevant songs to be learnt in the pre-school syllabus alongside the themes.

The research will also create awareness to the parents who are the children's first teachers. This will help them become more involved in preparing children for reading through the use of songs. They will become sensitized on the importance of providing musical support and resources to the E.C.D centers. The research will also help teachers to re-evaluate themselves and improve their role in enhancing reading for the pupils. Teachers' creativity will be raised as they compose and source for more songs to use as they teach. Teachers'-pupils' relationship will be enhanced as they both participate in singing and reading hence improving their word knowledge.

### **1.7 Basic Assumptions of the Study**

This study assumed that all preschool teachers in Kikuyu sub-county, Kiambu County uses songs as they teach the children.

### **1.8 Delimitations of the Study**

This study was conducted in Kikuyu Sub-County in Kiambu County. It involved thirty four (34) public pre-schools in the area whose enrolment as per March was at

3468. Data was collected from the sampled pre-school teachers, pre-unit pupils and school head teachers.

### **1.9 Limitations of the Study**

Teachers may not know the purpose of the songs they use and particularly the effect songs have on word knowledge. The researcher explained to the teachers the importance of using songs in class.

The management may be very strict on syllabus coverage and therefore restrict use of songs in the classrooms as is viewed to waste time. The researcher sort permission from the management to collect data from the school.

### **1.10 Definition of Terms**

**Songs-** this refers to melodies for young children such as nursery rhymes, counting rhymes

**Pupils-** these are children in the pre-unit class 5 to 6 years old.

**Counting rhymes-**these rhymes help to teach numbers and counting, either normal upwards counting but including counting downwards for some songs

**Nursery rhymes-** these are songs that tell stories which are timeless some of which can be considered as cautionary tales with morals.

**Simple action and movement songs-** these are songs that are reinforced using simple actions in which children join in and copy their leaders.

**Round singing exercises-** these songs are structured in a way which lends them to being sung as a round

**Oral skills-** this refers to the spoken language

**Fluency-** involves direct reading of text for the pleasure to communicate orally and in reading

**Translation of text-**ability to translate a text from one language to another language

**Listening skills-** the ability to be attentive to information with understanding

**Public pre-schools-** refers to the government pre-schools mostly within a primary school institution.

**Influence** – the process of producing effects on the behavior of pupils on word knowledge

**Word knowledge** – the ability to read, write and understand a word.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the review of related literature on the influence of songs on pre-school children's word knowledge. The chapter is based on the research objectives which include; to determine the influence of songs on children's verbal memory, to identify the influence of songs on children's listening, to find out how songs influence children's vocabulary and to establish how songs influence children's writing instruction in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County. Theoretical and conceptual framework is to be provided. Summary forms the last part of the chapter.

##### **2.1.1 Influence of Songs on Pre-School Children's Vocabulary**

The use of songs has a great impact on children's vocabulary. According to Durkin (1990), reading comprehension as well as singing is seen as the essence of vocabulary enrichment among children. Comprehension is defined as intentional thinking during which meaning is constructed through interactions between text and reader (Harris & Hodges, 1995).

Hurwitz (1975) carried out a study to examine whether music training improved reading performance in first grade children. The experimental group received musical instruction including listening to folk songs with an emphasis the listening for melodic and rhythmic elements. The control group consisted of children who were matched in age, IQ, and socioeconomic status and who received no special treatment. After training, the music group exhibited significantly higher reading scores than did the control group, scoring in the 88th percentile versus the 72nd percentile. Moreover, continued musical training was beneficial; after an additional year of musical training, the experimental group's reading comprehension scores were still superior to the

control group's scores. The study found that music instruction facilitates the ability to read as well as vocabulary development. However, the finding of this study cannot be generalized into the current study due to methodological differences. In addition, the study concentrated on effects of music on children's reading. Thus, there is need for the current study to examine the underlying issues on the influence of songs on pre-school children's word knowledge in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County.

Levy (2002) carried out a study to examine the relationship between musical training and linguistic development among children. The study sought to examine the effects of music on phonological awareness, early word knowledge, and music perception skills among 100 children between the ages of 4-5 years. The children were given experiences with a set of musical tasks that focused on rhythm, melody, and chord progression. The study found that music skills were correlated with phonological awareness and early word knowledge. The basic auditory skills for music perception were similar to early word knowledge which shared some of the same auditory mechanisms that predicted reading ability. Thus, although this study was not based on an experimental methodology, it slightly contributes to the findings of the current study since it tried to show how music affects children's word knowledge. However, this study has yet to be carried out in Kikuyu sub-county. Hence, there is need for this study to examine the influence of songs on pre-school children's word knowledge in Kikuyu Sub-County in Kiambu County.

### **2.1.2 Influence of Songs on Pre-School Children's Verbal Memory**

Verbal memory is essential for reading printed words with comprehension as well as acquisition of word knowledge among children. As reading progresses to sentences and texts of greater lengths, verbal memory allows a child to retain material in memory as it is being read so that syntactic and semantic analyses necessary to

comprehension can be performed. Verbal memory is essential for all children learning to read and poor performance in verbal memory has been associated with reading disabilities for young children (Brady, 1991).

Rossi (2011) carried out a study to examine how music alone and music containing words affect knowledge acquisition and reading comprehension among college students in the US. The eye-tracking data was used as one of the primary methods of data collection. The eye-tracking data was used in order to provide a means to analyze each participant's reading/viewing patterns and eye fixations while reading and viewing the assigned materials in either the music or music with words condition, as well as to accurately determine reading and viewing times for each participant. The study found that there was significant relationship between music and knowledge acquisition and reading comprehension. This study slightly contributes to the current study as it tried to examine how music affects students' word knowledge. However, its findings cannot be generalized into the current study since it was carried out in the US. In addition, it involved college students while the current one deals with pre-school children. Hence, there is need for the current study to examine the influence of songs on pre-school children with respect to Kikuyu Sub-County in Kiambu County.

### **2.1.3 Influence of Songs on Pre-School Children's Listening Skills**

According to Mayesky (1986), learning to listen is a prerequisite to listening to learn. Listening is the first language mode that children acquire, and it provides a foundation for all aspects of language and reading development. Listening is a very large part of school learning, with students spending an estimated 50 to 75 percent of classroom time listening to the teacher, to other students, or to media (Smith, 1992).

Despite the frequency of listening activity in classrooms, listening skills are not frequently taught explicitly (Hyslop & Tone, 1988; Newton, 1990). “Most teachers teach, assuming that because they are talking, their students are listening (Swanson, 1996). As a result, many children do not acquire the listening skills necessary to acquire new knowledge and information. In most cases listening is thought to be a natural skill that develops automatically. Developing good listening skills requires explicit instruction.

Research shows that music training can be of immense benefit to language development. Music listening such as paying attention to the pitch variation and timbre can increase a child’s ability to distinguish specific sounds within words. The awareness that comes from listening to rhythm in music can increase awareness of the rhythmic structure of language, thus helping children learn to read fluently (Susannah J, 1993). Music can focus the mind on the sounds being perceived and promote learning through an interactive process. It is important in teaching early childhood pupils to be conscious of auditory and discrimination skills. Music and songs help increase listening skills in a fun, relaxed manner. Listening skills are key in singing, language and expressive movement, and later reading and writing. (Wolf, 1992)

#### **2.1.4 Influence of Songs on Children’s Writing Instruction**

Songs play a significant role on children’s writing instruction. Tallman (2002) indicates that singing nursery rhymes allows all kids to feel confident about singing, dancing and performing because they are so easy to grasp and fun. She adds that songs build confidence right in front of “my eyes,”.

According to Jalongo (1995), early experience of songs may improve children’s verbal memory as well as their writing instruction is concerned, an important factor in

successful text comprehension for later stages of reading development to teach them to become active listeners. Direct instruction in listening skills should include lessons designed to specifically teach and model the skills necessary for active listening (Matheson, Moon & Winiecki, 2000).

Gobert (2004) carried out a study on effects of music on learning among students in Central Massachusetts. A total of 13 students, grades 5-8, participated in the study. The eye-tracking data was used as one of the primary methods of data collection, as the effects of music on learning. From the study, I was found that reading and viewing times will increase for the music with words condition due to the interference of words in the music with the words being read. No statistically significant differences were found for the number of fixations across the two conditions. However the music with words group had a tendency to have longer reading/viewing times for the first two sections of the text/graphics, while the opposite was found for the final section, possibly suggesting that participants were able to adapt by screening out the words in the music. The findings of this study cannot be generalized into the current study. The study was carried out in Massachusetts and involved 13 students only. Thus, there is need for the current study to examine the influence of songs on children's word knowledge in Kikuyu sub County in Kiambu County.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

This study employs Vygotsky's theory of social development. This theory is very relevant to this study and shall therefore expound it to some detail in relation to the intended study.

The theory of social interaction was developed by Vygotsky in 1986. Vygotsky argued that there were zones of proximal development, which describe the distance

between the actual development level as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. According to his theory children are provided with necessary tools and assistance or scaffolding for learning while they are in the zone of proximal development. Eventually the child moves towards gaining the necessary skill away from the zone of proximal development. At this point the scaffolding can be removed and the child can act independently.

In this study, songs for pupils are viewed as necessary tools to help children develop word knowledge. Pre-unit teachers should identify the zones of proximal development of their pupils in regards to reading in order to provide necessary scaffolding. Through the use of nursery rhymes teachers can help children develop proper word knowledge. Songs also encourages interaction and collaboration among peers making it possible to develop oral skills, fluency, and listening skills among themselves. After proper mastery of the skills, teachers can make songs less frequent and hence enhance independence in reading.

#### **2.4 Conceptual Framework**

Orodho (2005) defines a conceptual framework as a model of representation where a researcher conceptualizes relationships between variables in the study and shows this relationship diagrammatically or graphically. In this section, the conceptual framework shows the relationship between independent (verbal memory, listening skill, vocabulary and early writing instruction) and the dependent variable (Pre-school Children word knowledge). Figure 1.1 shows the influence of songs on children's word knowledge.



teaching tool of choice. The catchy tunes are fun to sing and when the words are put to music, the children can sing them over and over again. Using the songs repeatedly during the learning process helps the children to remember the information even when the music is not being played. Children, who are exposed to the music before they can talk, will often begin to sound out the letters at a much earlier age than those who are not exposed to the music. In addition, songs are good for the brain. Not only does the repetition of rhymes and stories teach children how language works, it also builds memory capabilities that can be applied to all sorts of activities. However, the findings of these studies cannot be generalized into the current study due to methodological differences. None of these studies has been carried out in Kiambu County. Thus, this study examines the influence of songs on children's word knowledge in Kikuyu Sub-County in Kiambu County.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the specific aspects of methodology used in the study. Research methodology refers to the system of collecting data for research projects. This chapter contains a description of the research design, target population, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, validity and reliability of the instruments, data collection procedures and techniques for data analysis.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

Research design is the strategy, the plan, and the structure of conducting a research project Borg (1996). This study will employ cross-sectional survey research design. According to Owen (2002), a survey research design is a design that focuses on the dynamics present within two or more settings. The study applies this research design in establishing the influence of songs on children's word knowledge as it is in Kikuyu Sub County in Kiambu County. This design will be chosen since it allows a thorough, meticulous and systematic data collection on the research problem (Yin, 1994). It also gives a deep understanding of the issues, and allows data collection using in-depth interviews, questionnaires and document analysis. This design will enable the researcher understand the.

#### **3.3 Target population**

According to Busha and Harter (1980), a population is any set of persons or objects that possesses at least one common characteristic. On the other hand, A target population provides a solid foundation from which data is collected (Gall *et al*, 2003). The target population for this study consists of all public pre-schools (34), teachers and pre-school administrators in Kikuyu Sub County, Kiambu County.

### **3.4 Sample and sampling Techniques**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a sample is a small group obtained from the accessible population. The study will adopt probability sampling technique referred to as simple random sampling. According to Mulusa (1988), at least 30% of the total population is representative. The sample for this study includes ten (10) pre-schools. Simple random sampling procedure was used to arrive at a sample of teachers and pupils. Here, three pre-school teachers and six pupils were selected from each of the sampled schools respectively. Therefore, thirty (30) teachers and (60) pupils took part in the study. For the administrators, purposive sampling procedure was used to select one administrator from each of the sample pre-schools. Thus, ten administrators took part in the study. In total, there was a sample of 100 respondents who took part in the study.

### **3.5 Research Instruments**

#### **3.5.1 Questionnaires**

The questionnaires were administered to the preschool teachers. The questions helped to understand the influence of songs on children's word knowledge. The questionnaires were structured such that it contained open and closed ended questions so that an in depth information could be gathered from the teachers. Information from the preschool teachers helped us to know if songs were used in classes and the relationship between the different types of songs and word knowledge.

#### **3.5.2 Interview guides**

An interview guide is an oral administration of a questionnaire or an interview guide (Owen, 2002). Interview guides were used to obtain qualitative information from the pre-school administrators. The researcher used open-ended interviews, which make it easy to penetrate the thought and feeling of the respondents in conversational manner.

This instrument helped gather information about the administrators' attitude towards the use of songs in the preschools.

### **3.5.3 Observation Schedule**

An observation schedule is an analytical form, or coding sheet, filled out by researchers during structured observation. It carefully specifies beforehand the categories of behaviors or events under scrutiny and under what circumstances they should be assigned to those categories. Pupils were observed during singing and reading activities. The observation schedule was used to gather information on pupil's fluency in reading, listening skills, vocabularies and verbal memory.

## **3.6 Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments**

### **3.6.1 Validity**

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the variables of the study. For validation to be achieved, the study also conducted a pilot testing. The validation of the questionnaires and interview schedule was done through the following ways: the researcher requested research experts and administration to review the items on the instrument to determine whether the set of items accurately represent the variables under study. They were asked to read, judge, make recommendations and give feedback to the researcher.

### **3.5.2 Reliability**

Reliability is the ability of a research instrument to consistently measure characteristics of interest over time (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). It is the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Nachmias, 1996). To establish the reliability of the research instruments, the researcher carried out a pilot test of the instruments using another similar group with

the same characteristics as the one targeted in the study. The reliability of the teachers and administrators' questionnaires was computed using split half method with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). If the value found falls within the accepted levels (0.05), the questionnaires would be held reliable (George & Mallery, 2003). Interview guides, being mainly open ended, were not be tested for reliability.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

Before data was collected, the researcher applied for an introductory letter from the education office to seek permission from school head teachers in order to conduct the study in their schools. Administrators were interviewed on agreed dates within the first week of data collection. The researcher administered the questionnaires to the sampled teachers who were expected to fill in on the spot or for a period not more than one week depending on the time available. The researcher followed up with the teachers from the sampled schools for a date when pupils were to be observed during singing and reading sessions.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

The data collected from respondents through use of questionnaires, interview guides and observation guide was coded into a computer software; Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0. Quantitative approach and qualitative approaches were employed, where simple frequencies and percentages were used. This involved grouping the responses according to their respective themes. The themes basically fell under respective research areas which are informed by research objectives. This data presented in frequencies and percentages using pie charts, graphs and tables. The analyzed data was presented in chapter four together with discussions of the findings.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents results and analysis on the influence children's word knowledge in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County. The data was analyzed with the help of a computer program, SPSS. This enabled the researcher to present the data in frequencies, percentages, tables and charts. The chapter is organized based on the major research questions except the first part which deals with demographic information of the respondents. Other sections are presented based on the following research objectives: influence of songs on children's verbal memory, influence of songs on children's listening skills, influence of songs children's vocabulary and influence of children's writing instruction.

#### **4.2 Background Information**

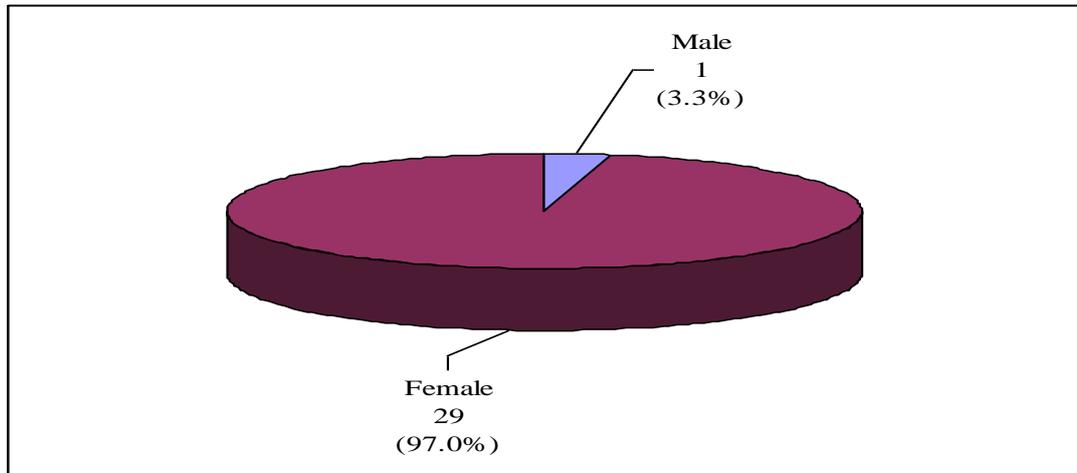
The study considered background characteristics of all those who participated in the study. These included the pre-school teachers and administrators from the sampled schools. These characteristics helped to provide the demographic characteristics of the target population, which form the foundation of any study.

##### **4.2.1 Teachers**

The background characteristics of teachers that were considered included: Gender, age, academic qualification and working experience.

## Gender

The study sought to understand the gender of teachers. This was categorized into; Male and female. Figure 4.1 shows the distribution of teachers by their gender.

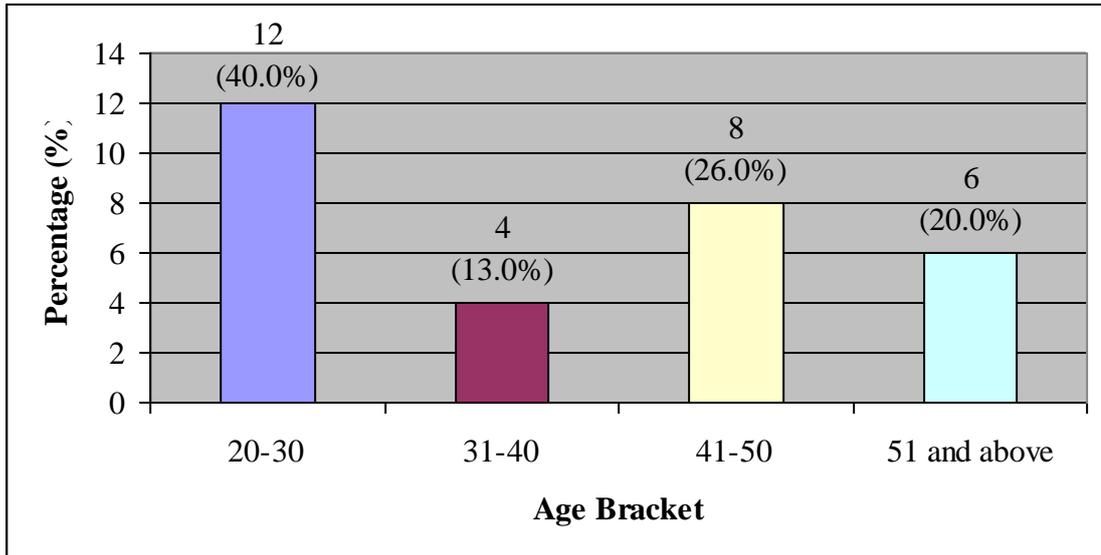


**Figure 4.1: Distribution of Teachers by their Gender**

When asked to indicate their gender, an overwhelming majority, (97.0%) of the respondents who took part in the study were female. Only 3.3% of them were male teachers. This shows that pre-school sector is dominated by female teachers since the sector consists of children.

## Age Bracket

Teachers were also asked to indicate their age brackets. This was categorized into; 20-25 years, 26-30 years, 31-35 years, 36-40 years, 41-45 years, 46-50 years and 51 years and above. Figure 4.2 shows the distribution of teachers by their age brackets.

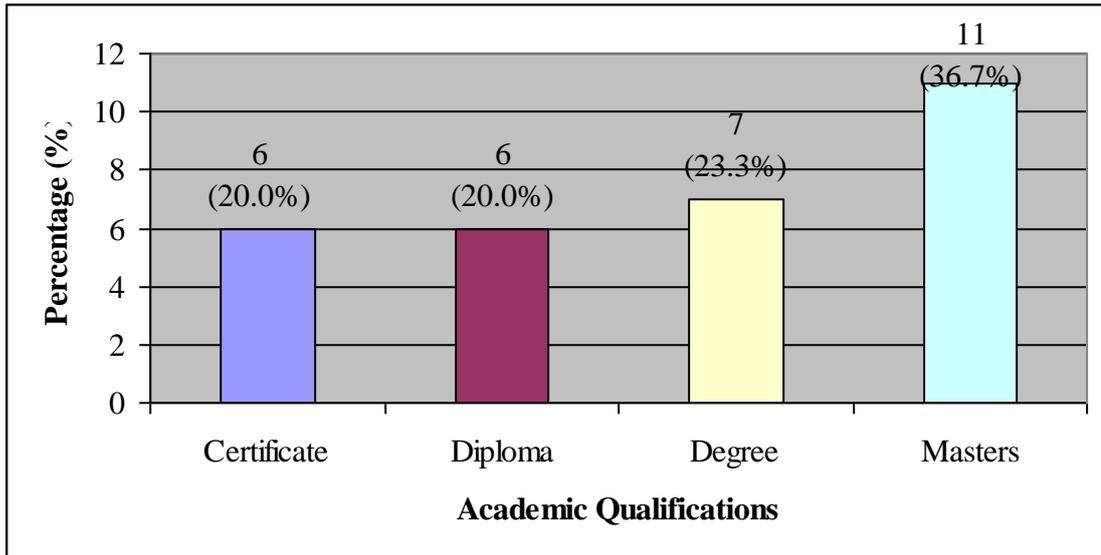


**Figure 4.2: Distribution of Teachers by their Age Brackets**

Slightly less than half, (40.0%) of the teachers who took part in the study were between 20-30 years. 13.0% of them were between 31-40 years. Slightly more than (26.0%) were between 41-50 years. The remaining percentage of the teachers were 51 years and above.

### **Academic Qualifications**

The study sought to find out the academic qualifications for the respondents who took part in the study. This was categorized into certificate, Diploma, Degree and Masters and PhD levels. Figure 4.3 shows the distribution of teachers by their academic qualifications.

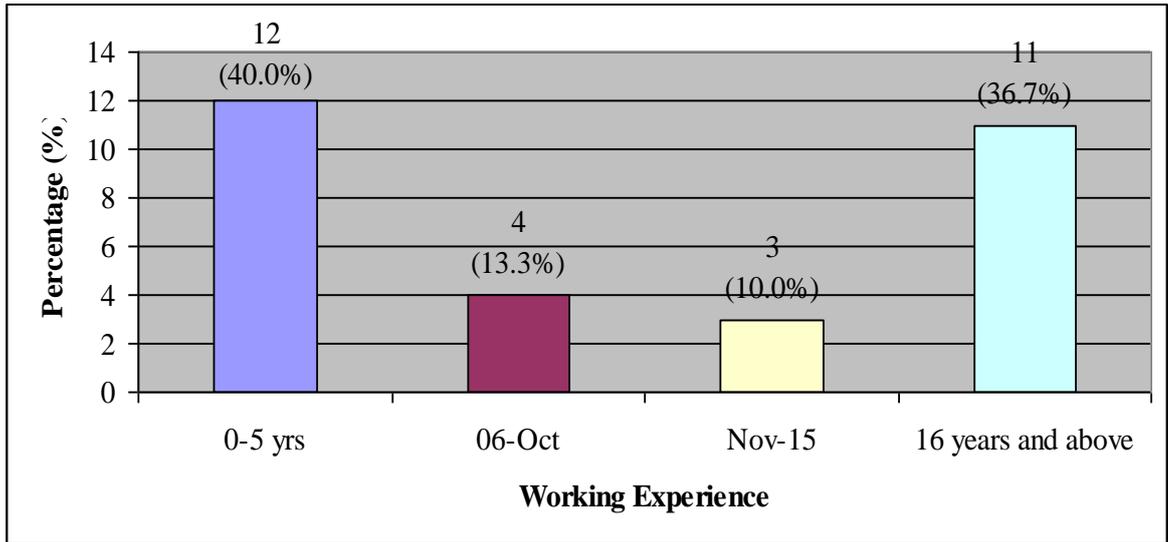


**Figure 4.3: Distribution of Teachers by their Academic Qualifications**

Slightly less than half, (40.0%) of the teachers had attained either certificate, (20.0%) or Diploma (20.0%) as their highest academic qualifications. Slightly less than a quarter of them, (23.3%) had degree level of education. However, majority the teachers (36.7%) who took part in the county had masters level of education. This shows that the pre-school centers in the county have highly educated teachers.

### **Working Experience**

Teachers were further asked to indicate their working experiences. This was categorized into; 0-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years, 16 years and above. Figure 4.4 shows the distribution of teachers by their working experience.



**Figure 4.4: Distribution of Teachers by their Working Experience**

Majority of the teachers, (40.0%) who took part in the study had a working experience of between 0-5 years. Slightly less than a third of them, (23.3%) had a working experience of between 6-15 years. The remaining percentage of teachers, (36.7%) who took part in the study had a working experience of between of 16 years and above. These working experiences helped in providing relevant information about the influence of songs on children’s word knowledge since they were also knowledgeable with the topic.

#### **4.2.2 Administrators**

Ten administrators were interviewed to gather information about their attitude towards the use of songs in the preschools.

The study sought to understand the back round information of the school administrators. This was categorized into, gender, level of education and working performance. Table 4.1 shows the distribution of the background information of the school administrators.

**Table 4.1: Distribution of School Administrators' Background Information**

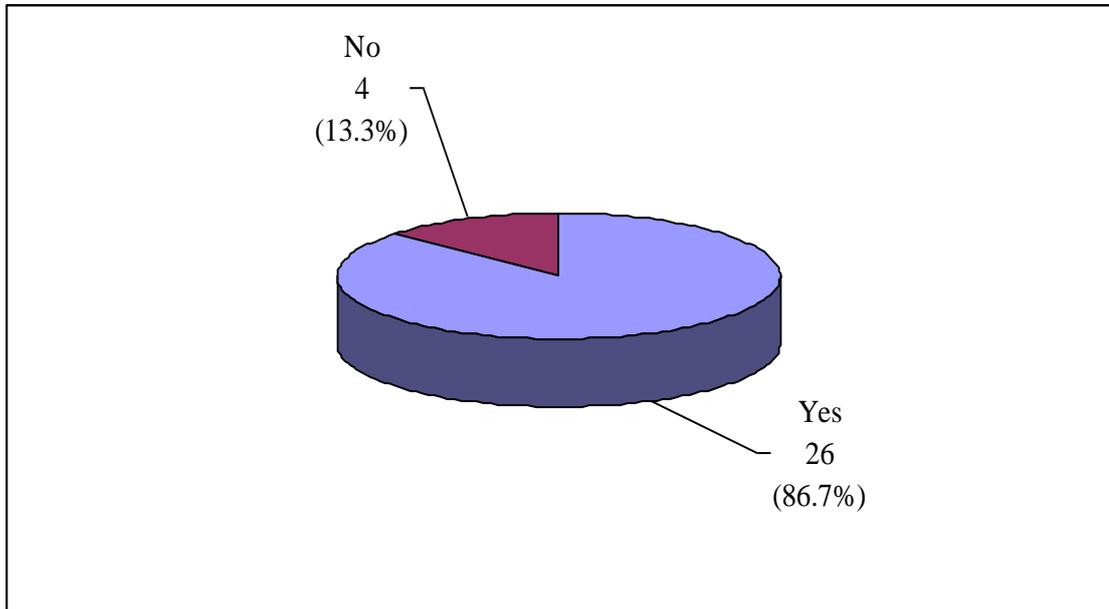
	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	2	20
Female	8	80.0
Level of Education		
Diploma	20	66.7
Degree	7	15.0
Certificate	3	19.0
Working Experience		
3-5 years	18	60.0
6 -10	5	15.0
2 years and below	7	25.0

Majority of the school administrators, (80.0%) were female. Only 20% of them were male. This shows that pre-school unit is dominated by female teachers.

In regards to their level of education, majority of them, (66.7%) had diploma level. This was followed by 19% of them who had attained certificate level of education. The remaining percentage of them, (15.0%) had degree level.

Majority of the school administrators, (60.0%) had working experience of between 3-5 years. A quarter of them had a working experience of 2 years and below. The remaining percentage of them had a working experience of between 6-10 years.

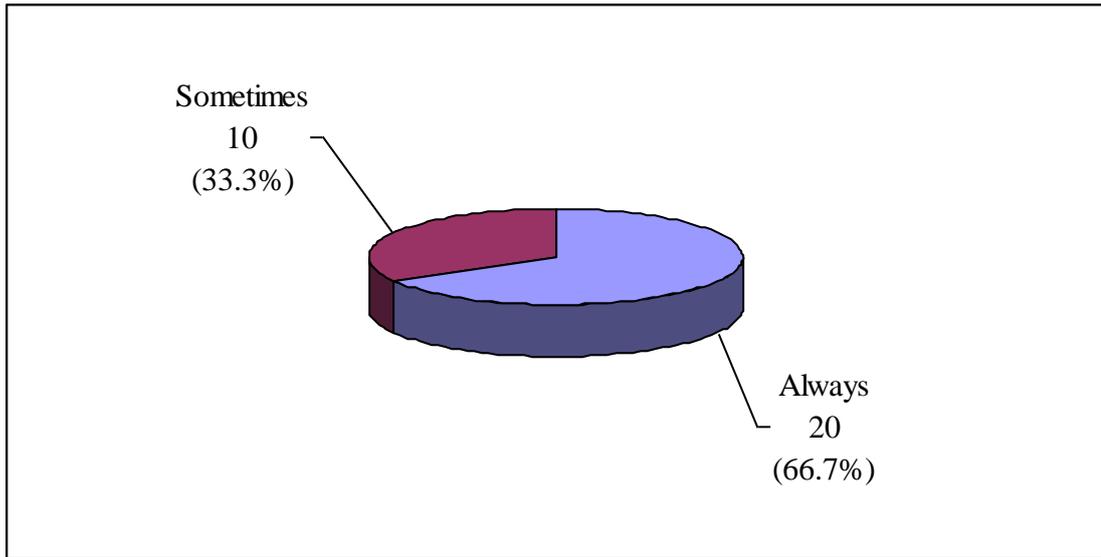
The study sought to find out whether teachers use songs when teaching in class. Figure 4.5 shows the distribution of teachers' responses on whether they use songs when teaching in class.



**Figure 4.5: Distribution of Teachers' responses on whether they use Songs when Teaching in Class**

Majority of the teachers, (86.7%) who took part in the study indicated that they use songs when teaching in class. Only 13.3% of them indicated otherwise. This shows that the teachers were knew the importance of songs on children's word knowledge.

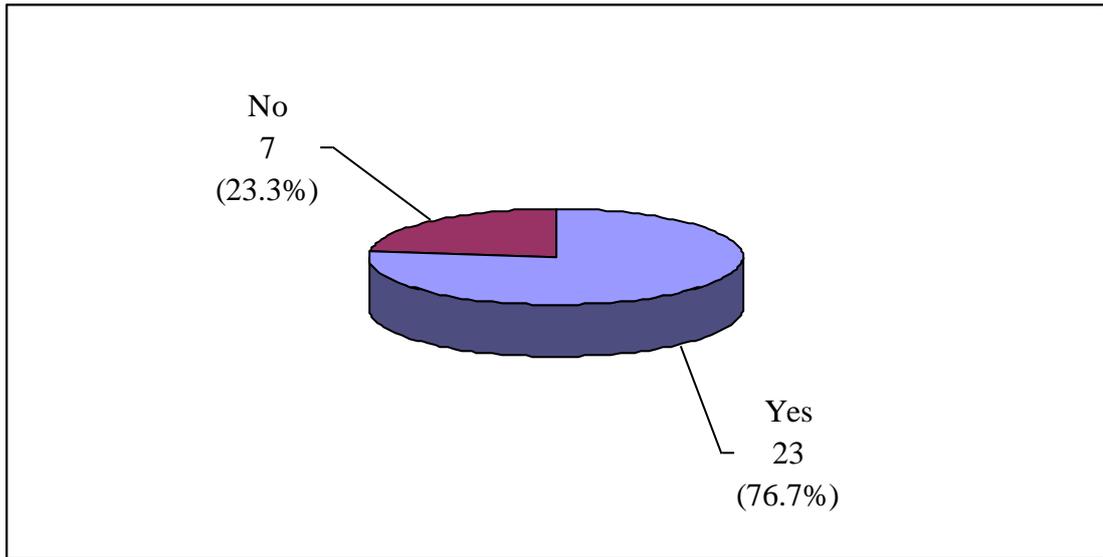
The respondents were further asked to indicate how often teachers use the songs during class lessons. Figure 4.6 shows the distribution of responses on how often teachers use the songs during class lessons.



**Figure 4.6: Distribution of Responses on how Often Teachers use the Songs during Class Lessons**

Majority of the respondents, (66.7%) were in agreement that they always used songs during lessons. This was supported by slightly more than a third of them, (33.3%) who indicated that they used songs during class lessons for sometimes. This also shows that teachers were aware of the significant role of songs on children's word knowledge hence had no reason as in to avoid using it in classes.

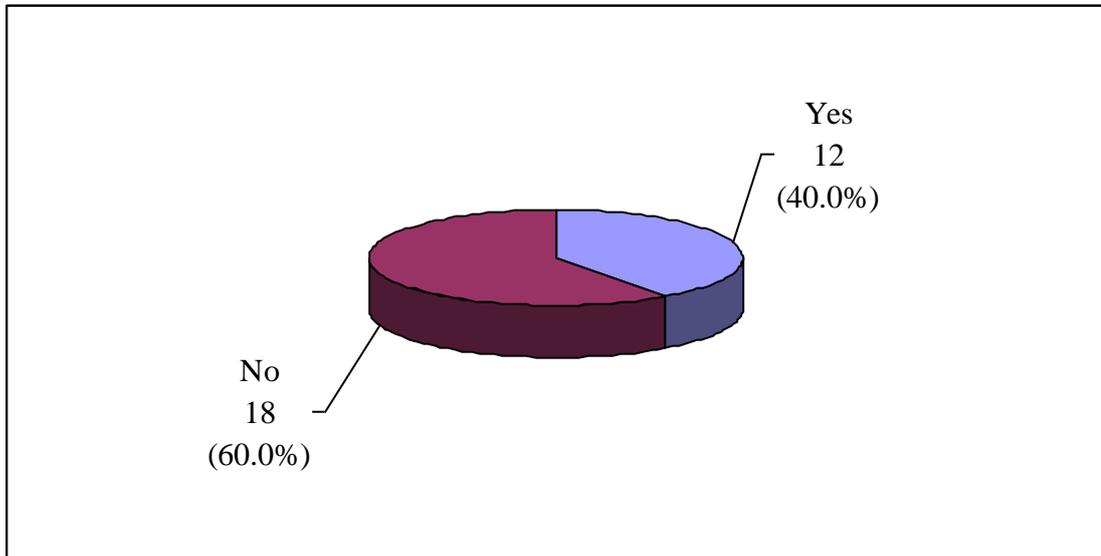
The study also sought to find out if teachers participate in singing with children. Figure 4.7 shows the distribution of responses on whether teachers participate in singing with children



**Figure 4.7: Distribution of Responses on whether Teachers Participate in Singing with Children**

Majority of the teachers who took part in the study were in agreement that they participate in singing with children. Only less than a third of them, (23.3%) indicated otherwise. This shows that teachers had to guide the children as they sing by participating with them.

The respondents were further asked to indicate whether the use of songs helps in acquisition of word knowledge. Figure 4.8 shows the distribution of responses on whether the use of songs helps in acquisition of word knowledge.



**Figure 4.8: Distribution of responses on whether the use of Songs helps in Acquisition of Word Knowledge**

Majority of the teachers, (60.0) who took part in the study were in agreement that the use of songs initiates children’s acquisition of word of knowledge. The remaining percentage of them, (40.0%) indicated otherwise. This shows that teachers are in the pre-school education sector are aware of the importance of songs on children.

The respondents were further asked to indicate whether they agreed on various statements about the influence of songs on pupils’ word knowledge. Table 4.2 shows the distribution of responses on various statements about the influence of songs on pupils’ word knowledge.

<b>Table 4.2: Distribution of Responses on Various Statements about the Influence of Songs on Pupils' Word Knowledge</b>										
Statement	A		SA		NS		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
The use of songs increases pupils verbal memory	14	46.7	4	13.3	12	40.0	-	-	-	-
By using songs, I have observed many pupils have improved their listening skills in my class	12	40.0	12	40.0	6	20.0	-	-	-	-
My pupils vocabulary has steadily increased since I started using songs in my teaching	19	63.3	11	36.7	-	-	-	-	-	-
My pupils are currently speaking fluently since the use of songs has improved their oral skills	20	66.7	10	33.3	-	-	-	-	-	-

Majority of the respondents, (60.0%) either agreed or strongly agreed that use of songs increases pupils' verbal memory. The remaining percentage of the respondents, (40.0%) who took part in the study were not sure about the statement.

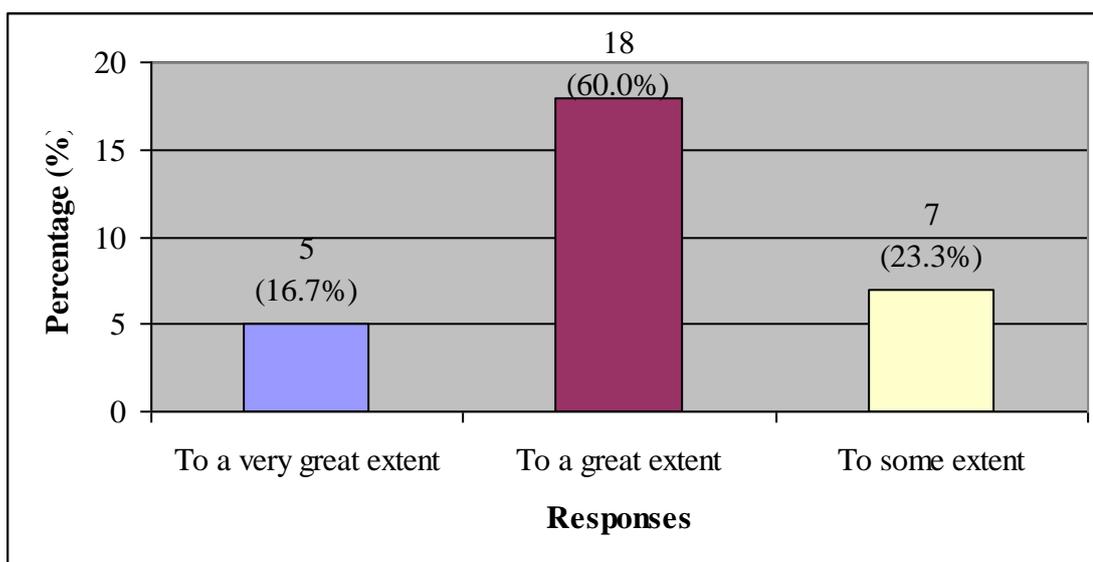
Regarding whether the use of songs improved children's listening skills, Majority of the respondents, (40.0%) were in agreement with the statement. This was supported by the same percentage of the respondents (40.0%) who strongly agreed that they

observed a gradual improvement on children's listening skills. Only 20.0% of them were not sure of the statement.

Majority of the respondents, (63.3%) agreed that their pupils' vocabulary has steadily increased since they started using songs in their teaching. This was supported by slightly more than a third of them, (36.7%) who strongly agreed with the statement.

Majority of the respondents, (66.7%) agreed that their pupils are currently speaking fluently since the use of songs has improved their oral skills. This was supported by slightly more than a third, (33.3%) of them who strongly agreed that pupils are currently speaking fluently since the use of songs has improved their oral skills.

The study sought to find out the extent to which the use of songs affects acquisition of word knowledge among pupils. Figure 4.9 shows the distribution of teachers' responses on the extent to which the use of songs affects acquisition of word knowledge among pupils.



**Figure 4.9: Distribution of Teachers' Responses on the Extent to which the use of Songs Affects Acquisition of word knowledge among Pupils**

Majority of the respondents, (60.0%) who took part in the study indicated that songs affects acquisition of word knowledge among pupils to a very great extent. Slightly less than a quarter of them, (23.3%) were in support that the use of songs affects acquisition of word knowledge among pupils to some extent. Only 16.7% of them indicated that it affects acquisition of word knowledge among pupils to a very great extent.

The study sought to find out the extent to which songs can influence children’s word knowledge. Table 4.3 shows the distribution of responses on the extent to which songs can influence children’s word knowledge.

**Table 4.3: Distribution of Responses on the Extent to which Songs can Influence Children’s Word Knowledge**

Statement	To a very great extent		To a great extent		To some extent		Not Sure		Not at All	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Verbal Memory	18	60.0	5	16.7	7	23.3	-	-	-	-
Listening skills	-	-	12	40.0	18	60.0	-	-	-	-
Vocabulary	-	-	13	43.3	17	56.7	-	-	-	-
Writing instruction	-	-	12	40.0	18	60.0	-	-	-	-
Fluency in reading	23	76.7	-	-	7	23.3	-	-	-	-
Oral skills	-	-	19	63.3	11	36.7	-	-	-	-

Majority of the respondents, (60.0%) indicate that the use of songs affects children’s verbal memory to a very great extent. This was supported by slightly less than a

quarter of them, (23.3%) who were in agreement that the use of songs affects children's verbal memory to some extent.

Regarding children's listening skills, majority of the respondents, (60.0%) indicate that the use of songs affects children's listening skills to some extent. This was supported by slightly less than half of them, (40.0%) who were in agreement that the use of songs affects children's listening skills to a great extent.

Slightly more than half, (56.7%) were in agreement that that the use of songs affects children's vocabulary to a very great extent. This was supported by slightly less than half of them, (43.3%) who were in agreement that the use of songs affects children's vocabulary to some extent.

Majority of the respondents, (76.7%) indicated that the use of songs affects children's fluency in reading to a very great extent. This was supported by slightly less than a quarter of them, (23.3%) who were in agreement that the use of songs affects children's fluency in reading to some extent.

In regards children's oral skills, majority of the respondents, (63.0%) indicated that the use of songs affects children's oral skills to a great extent. This was supported by the remaining percentage of the teachers, (36.7%) who took part in the study that the use of songs affects children's listening skills to a great extent.

When asked to indicate whether they allowed teachers to use songs for teaching in their schools, all of the school administrators who took part in the study were in agreement with the statement. This shows that they embraced songs because they are important acquisition of knowledge.

In regards to the kind of support they give their teachers, majority of the administrators indicated that they allowed their teachers to attend training workshops and seminars.

When asked to indicate whether songs help pupil's in acquisition of word knowledge, all of the school administrators who took part in the study were positive to the statement. One of them explained that songs make children to memorize some words which could be hard for them to read or say.

The study sought to examine the language which pupils use when communicating with each other, majority of the school administrators who took part in the study indicated that pupils should use English language. They also indicated that slightly more than a third of the pupils were fluent in the very language. The study sought to examine the extent to which songs can influence children's acquisition of word knowledge. Figure shows respondents on to which songs can influence children's acquisition of word knowledge.

Majority of the school administrators who took part in the study, (71.7%) indicated that songs can influence children's acquisition of word knowledge to a great extent. The remaining percentage of them, (28.3%) were in agreement that it can influence to some extent. (To a very great extent/to a great extent/to some extent/Not sure)

When asked to indicate the initiatives taken to ensure pre-unit pupils acquire appropriate word knowledge, majority of them indicated that ensure pre-unit pupils can acquire appropriately word knowledge by allowing English teachers to attend training workshops and seminars. This can also be achieved by employing experienced and qualified teaching professionals.

When asked to indicate the number of lessons in a week that are set for reading in pre-unit class, all of the school administrators who took part in the study indicated that reading in pre-unit class is set for 3 lessons in week.

The respondents were further asked to indicate whether the pre-unit pupils were able to read on their own, majority of them, (82.0%) indicated that pupils were able to read on their own. The remaining percentage of them were not sure about it.

The study sought to examine pupil's listening with understanding during reading and answering comprehension questions. Majority of the pupils who took part in the study, (53.8%) were able to answer some questions. Slightly more than a third of them, (33.9%) answered some questions. The remaining percentage of them did not answer the questions.

The study sought to investigate pupils' fluency in reading texts. Slightly more than a third a quarter of them, (26.4%) were sometimes fluent. However, only 10% of them were always fluent.

The study sought to examine pupils' oral skills as they communicated with each other. Majority of the pupils who took part in the study, (53.8%) were able to talk for sometimes. Slightly more than a third of them, (33.2%) were always talking. The remaining percentage of them, (10.0%) never talked.

Majority of the pupils were able to translate text skills. Only 10% of them always translated. However, 20% of them never translated the text skills.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study. The summary mainly contains the key findings. Conclusions and recommendations on the other hand, are based on the research objectives and the key findings of the study respectively.

#### 5.2 Summary

The main purpose of this study was to examine the influence of songs on pre-school children's word knowledge in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County. The study was guided by the following research objectives: To determine the influence of songs on children's verbal memory, to identify the influence of songs on children's listening, to find out how songs influence children's vocabulary and to establish how songs influence children's writing instruction in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County. The study employed a cross-sectional survey research design consisting of all public pre-schools (34), teachers and pre-school administrators in the area under study. All (3686) class 7&8 Pupils were also be targeted. A representative sample of thirty (30) teachers and ten (10) administrators took part in the study. Questionnaires and interview guides were used as the main instruments for data collection. Data was analysed using both descriptive statistics and narrative techniques. From the analysis, the study revealed the following:

An overwhelming majority, (97.0%) of the respondents who took part in the study were female. Only 3.3% of them were male teachers. This shows that pre-school sector is dominated by female teachers since the sector consists of children.

Majority of the teachers in the pre-school centers embrace the use of songs as it plays a significant role on children's word knowledge.

Majority of the respondents, (66.7%) were in agreement that they always used songs during lessons. This was supported by slightly more than a third of them, (33.3%) who indicated that they used songs during class lessons for sometimes. This was supported by almost all of them who indicated that songs indeed increased children's verbal memory, listening skills, vocabulary, writing instruction, fluency in reading and oral skills to a great extent.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

It is quite clear that the use of songs has a great effect on children's word knowledge. From the findings of this study, it can be concluded that songs indeed increased children's verbal memory, listening skills, vocabulary, writing instruction, fluency in reading and oral skills among pre-schools in Kikuyu Sub-county, Kiambu County.

Bearing in mind the importance of songs, adequate instructional aids should be provided for the teaching of the songs in order to increase pre-school children's word knowledge.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

On the basis of the findings of this study, it is recommended that the school administration should ensure that its teaching professionals implement the use of songs during class lessons.

The school administration should provide workshops to show teachers and motivate them to embrace songs so as to improve pre-school children's word knowledge. This will also play a pivotal role in improving their attitude towards the use of songs.

The government, NGOs and the school administration boards should hold seminars and workshops for all the pre-schools teachers. This should enable them to be able to share and grow professionally. However, teachers should also be advised to always attend these workshops, seminars, vocational courses. This makes them to be abreast of the current development in the educational sector as well as to be creative and resourceful.

Local administrators should sensitize the parents and the entire community in embracing the role of songs to children's development as well as their improvement in word knowledge.

All the concerned stakeholders should work towards promoting positive relationships between teachers and pupils in pre-schools. This can play a significant role eradicating the negative attitude among teachers and the community at large towards the use of songs.

#### **5.4.1 Recommendations for further study(s)**

Based on the findings of the study, it is recommended that another study can be carried out in other parts of the country.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Questionnaire for Pre-school Teachers

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a student at the University of Nairobi and I am carrying out a study on the influence of songs on pre-school children's word knowledge. You are therefore requested to participate in the study by filling in this questionnaire appropriately. All your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Do not write your name on this questionnaire.

#### SECTION A: Background Information

1. Gender

a) Male

b) Female

2. Age Bracket

c) 20-30yrs

d) 31-40yrs

e) 41-50yrs

f) 51yrs-above

3. Academic qualifications

g) Certificate

h) Diploma

i) Degree

j) Masters

k) Any other specify-----

4. Working experience

- a) 0-5 yrs [ ]
- b) 6-10 yrs [ ]
- c) 11-15yrs [ ]
- d) 16yrs- above [ ]

**SECTION B: Influence of Songs on Children's Word Knowledge**

5. Do you use songs when teaching in class?

- a) Yes [ ]
- b) No [ ]

5. If yes, how often do you use the songs during class lessons?

- a) Always [ ]
- b) Sometimes [ ]
- c) Never [ ]

6. Do you participate in singing with children?

- a) Yes [ ]
- b) No [ ]

7. Do you think the use of songs helps in acquisition of word knowledge?

- a) Yes [ ]
- b) No [ ]

8. Indicate whether you Strongly agree (SA), agree (A), Not sure, (NS), Disagree (D) or strongly disagree (SD) on the following statements about the influence of songs on pupils' word knowledge.

Statement	SA	A	NS	D	SD
The use of increases pupils verbal memory					
By using songs, I have observed many pupils have improved their listening skills in my class					
My pupils vocabulary has steadily increased since I started using songs in my teaching					
My pupils are currently speaking fluently since the use of songs has improved their oral skills					

9. To what extent do you think the use of songs affects acquisition of word knowledge among your pupils?

- a) To a very great extent [ ]
- b) To a great extent [ ]
- c) To some Extent [ ]
- d) Not sure [ ]
- e) Not at all [ ]

10. Indicate the extent to songs can influence children's word knowledge through the following ways.

Statement	To a very great extent	To a great extent	To some Extent	Not sure	Not at all
Verbal Memory					
listening skills					
Vocabulary					
writing instruction					
Fluency in reading					
Oral skills					

## Appendix II: Interview schedule for Pre-school Administrators

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a student at the University of Nairobi and I am carrying out a study on the influence of songs on pre-school children's word knowledge. You are therefore requested to participate in the study by filling in this questionnaire appropriately. All your responses will be treated with utmost confidentiality. Do not write your name on this questionnaire.

### Section A: Background Information

#### 1. Gender

- a) Male [  ]
- b) Female [  ]

#### 2. Age

- a) 20 – 25 [  ]
- b) 26 – 35 [  ]
- c) 36 -40 [  ]
- d) 41-50 [  ]
- e) 51 and above [  ]

#### 3. Education level

- a) Certificate [  ]
- b) Diploma [  ]
- c) Degree [  ]
- d) Masters [  ]
- e) PhD [  ]
- f) Any other specify \_\_\_\_\_

4. Working experience

- a) 2 years and below [ ]
- b) 3-5 years [ ]
- c) 6 -10 [ ]
- d) 11-15 [ ]
- e) 15 years and above [ ]

**SECTION A: Influence of Songs on Children's Word Knowledge**

5i. Do you allow teachers to use songs for teaching in your school (Yes/No)?

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5ii. If yes which support do you give your teachers?

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6. Do you think songs help in pupil's in acquisition of word knowledge?(Yes/No)

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7. To what extent do you think can influence children's acquisition of word knowledge? (To a very great extent/to a great extent/to some extent/Not sure)

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8. Which language should pupils use when communicating with each other?

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9. Are all the pupils in pre-unit fluent in that language?

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If yes how?

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10. As the head of the school which initiatives have you taken to ensure pre-unit pupils acquire appropriate word knowledge?

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11. How many lessons in a week are set for reading in pre-unit class?

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12. Are pre-unit pupils able to read on their own?

### Appendix III: Observation Schedule

Checking for listening with understanding during reading and answering comprehension questions

<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Answers all questions</b>	<b>Answers some questions</b>	<b>Does not answer questions</b>
<b>1</b>			
<b>2</b>			
<b>3</b>			
<b>4</b>			

Fluency in reading a text

<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Always fluent</b>	<b>Sometimes fluent</b>	<b>Never fluent</b>
<b>1</b>			
<b>2</b>			
<b>3</b>			
<b>4</b>			

Checking for Oral skills as children communicate with each other

<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Always talking</b>	<b>Talks sometimes</b>	<b>Never talks</b>
<b>1</b>			
<b>2</b>			
<b>3</b>			
<b>4</b>			

Translation of text skills

<b>Pupils</b>	<b>Always translates</b>	<b>Sometimes translates</b>	<b>Never translates</b>
<b>1</b>			
<b>2</b>			
<b>3</b>			
<b>4</b>			