DETERMINANTS OF PUPILS’ ACHIEVEMENT IN LITERACY AND NUMERACY

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SYNOPSIS
The major concern of parents in Gucha district and the county government is having school-going children succeed in their academics. This explains why the Kenya government lays emphasis on free primary and (soon) secondary education. The question however has been on the quality. Studies available on literacy and numeracy levels have been discouraging over the years by Kisii county rating among the very bottom regionally and nationally. What actually determines our children’s academic achievement and especially in the key components of literacy and numeracy? Pre-primary school learning experiences can play a critical role in laying a strong foundation for pupils’ later academic progression and achievement. The purpose of this study was to establish standard one pupils’ academic achievement in literacy and numeracy against variables such as; pre-primary school learning experiences, teachers’ self-efficacy, pupils’ gender, and type of school on standard one pupils’ literacy and numeracy achievement. Albert Bandura’s Self-Efficacy and the Ecological Systems Theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner theories guided the study. Ex post facto research design was used.

The target population was both public and private primary schools in the District. All standard one pupils and their teachers participated in the study. Purposive and stratified random sampling techniques were employed. The study sample consisted of 154 pupils and eight teachers. Descriptive and inferential techniques were employed to analyze data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was utilized in data analysis. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test the null hypotheses at a 0.05 level of significance. Among the key finding were; that pre-primary school learning experiences significantly influenced pupils’ literacy and numeracy achievement and that pupils’ performed better in numeracy compared to literacy. It was concluded that pre-primary school learning experiences, teachers’ self-efficacy, and type of school attended influenced pupils’ achievement in literacy and numeracy. The study underscored the crucial role played by pre-primary school experiences in promoting academic achievement. The main recommendation stakeholders to ensure children acquire necessary pre-primary school experiences before joining school so that they may have adequate school readiness skills to help them cope with standard one syllabus. Further it was recommended that the government should put policies in place to make pre-primary school mandatory to enhance academic performance at primary and subsequent levels.