



Availability of Literacy and Numeracy Learning Materials of Kindergarten Schools in Almeria District, Biliran Province Philippines

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ABSTRACT

Early literacy and numeracy are two important skill areas that needs to develop during the early childhood stage. Therefore, in developing these two critical skills, there is a high need in the availability of appropriate learning resources in order to help young children engage and enjoy the learning process (Jane Mwonga & Wanyama, 2012). Hence, the study primarily investigated the available learning materials on literacy and numeracy skill areas in Kindergarten schools. Descriptive survey design was employed using a needs - assessment survey questionnaire to gather data on the availability of learning materials. Purposive sampling was used which involved all 15 Kindergarten teachers in the School District of Almeria in Almeria, Biliran-Philippines. The study reveals that most of the literacy and numeracy learning materials were unavailable and in limited supply in the 15 Kindergarten schools. Therefore, it is highly indispensable to design and produce basic learning materials that aid in the development of literacy and numeracy skill areas.

Keywords: *Availability, Literacy Skills, Numeracy Skills, Learning Material, Kindergarten*

INTRODUCTION

Early Childhood Development Education is always considered as the bedrock and foundation of all learning in the life of any child (Murunga, 2015). It is a crucial phase of life in terms of young children's physical, cognitive, emotional, and as well as social development (Riungu & Bulinda, 2018). Hence, early learning has strong and positive impact on further learning in primary education and beyond (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2002).

Starting from early years they already have an inherent capacity to learn and those experiences that they will have from their environment strongly shape and impact significantly on their development and future learning. Therefore, it is a period when young children excessively need a high quality of support and very rich learning experiences. Moreover, opportunities should be created for quality child development through quality Early Childhood Education as a means of empowering children as responsible members of the society and future leaders (Republic of Kenya, 1997). For this reason, any government wanting to maximize the development of human resource should provide quality teachers, learning environment and resources.

Ekwueme, L. and Igwe, R. (2001) affirmed that it is the teacher's task to provide experiences that support, stimulate and structure children's learning to bring about a progression and understanding appropriate to the child's needs and abilities. Yet, in order to achieve effective and efficient teaching and learning process, there is the need for the use of learning materials, which serves as the teachers' tools in achieving intended learning outcomes.

Early literacy and numeracy are two important skill areas that develop during the early childhood period. In addition, Lehl, Smidt, Grosse and Richter (2014) mentioned that reading writing and mathematical thinking are some of the most essential competencies during

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their educational career. Not only are these skills critical in and of themselves in terms of early school success, they are also necessary building blocks for knowledge in other areas (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Therefore, in developing these two critical skills, there is a high need in the availability of appropriate learning resources or materials in order to help young children engage and enjoy the learning process (Jane Mwonga & Wanyama, 2012).

However, according to Gross, Giacoluinta and Berntein (1971) learning materials and facilities need not only be available but in the right quantities. In fact, lack of resource materials and facilities frustrates and demotivates teachers (Jane Mwonga & Wanyama, 2012). On the other hand, a teacher who has adequate and relevant teaching materials and facilities will be more confident, effective and productive (Kocchar, 1990).

It is therefore evident from the foregoing views that there is a need to have adequate supply of learning materials for an effective development of early literacy and numeracy skills. Thus, this present study was principally designed to assess the availability of learning materials utilized to facilitate literacy and numeracy skills in Kindergarten classes.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study basically aimed to assess the availability of learning materials in teaching literacy and numeracy skills in Kindergarten.

METHODOLOGY

The study employed a descriptive survey design to gather data pertaining to the availability of early literacy and numeracy materials. This method was deemed to be appropriate since it allow the researcher collects quantifiable information from the respondents (Kombo & Tromp, 2006).

This study was carried out in the 15 public Kindergarten schools in the School District of Almeria, Almeria, Biliran. A purposive sampling was used in the study which resulted in involving teachers who handled Kindergarten education in Almeria District. The choice of Almeria District for the study was due to the fact that this is one of the biggest school districts with the most number of kindergarten pupils throughout the division.

For data collection, a needs – assessment survey questionnaire was adapted from the United States Department of Education on their paper about Measuring Classroom Instructional Processes: Using Survey and Case Study Field Test Results to Improve Item Construction. Likewise, the additional list of materials on the questionnaire was taken from the basic and frequently utilized literacy and numeracy materials based on the National Kindergarten Curriculum Guide. It was then analysed using descriptive statistics through frequencies and percentages

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The present study primarily investigated the available learning materials under literacy and numeracy skills. As stated earlier, the study was carried out to the three Kindergarten classes through the use of a survey-questionnaire. Thereafter, the results obtained were put through statistical analysis and were presented in the succeeding pages.

Results from Table 1 shows that most learning materials in teaching literacy skills to Kindergarten pupils were not available among the 15 Kindergarten schools.

Table 1: Availability of Literacy Materials in Kindergarten (N = 15 Kindergarten Teachers)

Learning Materials	Not Available		Limited Availability		Full Availability	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
letter-cut (uppercase)	10	100	5	33.3		
letter-cut (lowercase)	10	100	5	33.3		
letter-tracing	15	100				
letter dictionary	14	93.3	1	6.7		
pop-up books	15	100				
big books			12	80	3	20
small books	6	40	9	60		

The above result indicates that only big books among literacy learning materials were mostly accessible for both Kindergarten teachers and pupils for use in meeting time, particularly in storytelling. Furthermore, small books have the second most available literacy materials as agreed by the Kindergarten teachers.

In contrast, letter – tracing and pop-up books were found to be unavailable in all Kindergarten schools of Almeria District. Likewise, learning materials that would help increase their vocabulary on letters such as letter-cut (uppercase and lowercase), letter-tracing and letter dictionary are commonly unavailable.

The result further implies that there is quiet a need to produce more literacy materials in order to substantiate quality learning in literacy area.

Table 2 also reveals that basic numeracy learning materials are generally unavailable to all 15 Kindergarten schools in Almeria District.

Table 2: *Availability of Numeracy Materials in Kindergarten (N = 15 Kindergarten Teachers)*

Learning Materials	Not Available		Limited Availability		Full Availability	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
number - tracing	15	100				
number station	13	86.7	2	13.3		
color cover all	11	73.3	4	26.7		
color sorting box	14	93.3	1	6.7		
feely box (size)			12	80	3	20
shape sorting box	15	100				
weight comparison box	15	100				

The above shows that all Kindergarten schools have available feely box that provides Kindergarten pupils' knowledge on the contrasting sizes of big and small. Number-tracing, shape sorting box and weight comparison box were totally unavailable to all 15 Kindergarten schools. However, number station, color cover all and color sorting box were available, yet still had a limited supply towards the number of Kindergarten pupils.

The above results imply that learning materials to be utilized in teaching numeracy skills are in need to be developed for classroom instruction. This would further indicate that it would help Kindergarten pupils master the stipulated numeracy competencies.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The results of this paper show that most learning materials are unavailable and inadequate in supply as to be utilized in teaching early literacy and numeracy skills towards Kindergarten pupils.

Based on the findings and conclusions thereof, it is recommended that it is highly imperative to design and produce more literacy and numeracy materials that are anchored on the National Kindergarten Curriculum Guide (NKCG).

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