

Home, School and Gender Differences in Early Reading Fluency among Standard Three Pupils in Primary Schools in Kiuu Sublocation, Kiambu County, Kenya

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Abstract

The intention of the study was to establish the relationship between home and school factors and reading fluency in Kiswahili and English languages among standard three pupils in Kiuu sub location, Kiambu County, Kenya. To achieve this, the study investigated family factors such as family size, number of children attending school, languages spoken at home, parental support such as helping with homework and the frequency of reading story books for children. The study also sought to establish school factors that support reading fluency such as languages of instruction teachers used as well as the number of Kiswahili and English text books children possessed. Bronfenbrenner (1979) ecological systems theory was used to ground the study. The study sample consisted of four purposefully selected primary schools two of which were public and the other two privately owned. Data regarding the school and home factors were collected through a paper based questionnaire while the data relating to pupils' Kiswahili and English reading fluency was collected through one-minute reading passages one in Kiswahili and the other in English. The results revealed that majority of the children lived with both parents and had between 1 and 3 siblings in school and the languages spoken at home, school and among the peers were mother tongue, Kiswahili and English. For majority of the children homework was overseen by the mother while many of them could not recall the last time a parent read to them a story book. With regard to accessing books for reading, the findings revealed that children in private schools had more access to English and Kiswahili books than their counterparts in public schools. With regard to reading fluency, the study established that the maximum number of English words read per minute were 171 while the least were 0 with a mode of 69. The maximum number of Kiswahili words read was 118 with a minimum of 0 and a mode of 61. Children in Private schools displayed better fluent reading than their counterparts in public schools and girls were more fluent readers than boys. The study recommended that the literary environments be improved both at home and in the schools and that the language policy be further interrogated given that the language children are exposed to at home is different from the language of instruction at school and also different from the language used among peers. Another recommendation of this study was that curriculum developers engage in material development both in Kiswahili and the various local languages in tandem with policy requirements. The study further recommended that methods of improving reading acquisition and fluency be sought.

Keywords: reading fluency, public primary school, private primary school, gender differences

Full text:

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