

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INSTRUCTIONAL  
RESOURCES AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AMONGST PRESCHOOL  
LEARNERS IN GATANGA SUB-COUNTY, MURANG'A COUNTY, KENYA**

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## ABSTRACT

The promptitude for conducting the study was based on the fact that effective application of instructional materials to supplement the theoretical techniques of pedagogy has been low and has thus been a concern for different education stakeholders in developing countries. Thus, the proposed study was focused on investigating the role of instructional resources on academic performance of preschool children in terms of cognitive development, acquisition of language, problem solving and basic arithmetic skills in Gatanga Sub-county, Murang'a County. The study was guided by The Behaviorist Learning Theory. The study used mixed methods approach and thus applied concurrent triangulation design which enabled the researcher to use the quantitative and qualitative methods during the same timeframe and with equal weight. Questionnaires were used to collect data from preschool managers and preschool teachers whereas interview schedules and an observation checklist were used to gather information from parents' representatives and preschool children respectively. Piloting of research instruments was conducted in Gatanga Sub-county to establish validity, reliability, credibility and dependability. Reliability was determined using test retest method and reliability coefficient obtained using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Method with a value of  $r = 0.65$  indicating high internal reliability. The target population for the study comprised of 40 preschool managers, 80 preschool teachers, 120 parents' representatives and 1260 preschool children in Gatanga Sub-county. Using The Central Limit Theorem, 8 preschools, that is, 20% of 40, and 300 respondents, that is, 20% of 1500, were sampled. Stratified sampling was applied to create 8 different strata based on the number of zones. From each zone, one preschool manager and three preschool teachers were selected using purposive sampling. Simple random sampling was then applied to select 5 parents' representatives and 29 preschool children from each zone. Data analysis began by identifying common themes. Frequency counts of the responses were then obtained to generate information about the respondents and to illustrate the general trend of findings on the various variables that were under investigation. Qualitative data was analyzed based on themes whereas quantitative data was analyzed inferentially using ANOVA in Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS Version 21). The findings of the study were presented using tables. The study established that there are different instructional resources which enhance preschool children's academic performance. These include; realia, charts, audio-visuales, concept videos/DVDs, dioramas and models. Effective use of instructional resources enhance preschool children's acquisition of cognitive, language, problem solving and numeracy skills. The study thus recommends that preschool teachers should adopt instructional resources suitable for enhancing every aspect of cognition amongst preschool learners. Preschool teachers should be sensitized to understand the importance of language to preschool learners and thus suitable and relevant instructional resources should be adopted to ensure maximum instruction and preschool children's acquisition of reading, writing and listening skills. Education stakeholders should provide a variety of instructional resources which can enhance different aspects of problem solving amongst preschool children. Education planners and

policy makers need to formulate policies which enforce effective use of instructional resources to enhance preschool children's acquisition of numeracy skills.