

Implementation of Southern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality Recommended Strategies in Literacy and Numeracy in Four Selected Districts in Kenya

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Abstract

Education is recognized as one of the drivers of economic and social development. However, millions of children who attend school do not acquire essential knowledge and skills. Studies done on strategies to improve pupils' literacy and numeracy skills vary due to diverse country conditions and differences in implementation. The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' views about in-service training and utilization of instructional materials in improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The study was carried out in four selected districts in Kenya: Kitui, Gatanga, Transmara and Migori. The population of the study was 574 public primary schools (254 in Kitui, 167 in Transmara, 102 in Migori and 51 in Gatanga), 574 headteachers and 574 teachers of class three. A sample of 68 primary schools was sampled using both stratified proportionate sampling and random sampling techniques. All 68 headteachers of the sampled schools became automatic respondents. Class three teachers in the 68 schools were sampled. In cases where there was more than one class three, simple random sampling technique was used to sample one class three teacher. Three instruments namely: Teachers' questionnaire, headteachers' interview guide and classroom observation guide were utilized. Validity of the instruments was ensured through content validity while the reliability was determined by using internal consistency method. All instruments were piloted before data collection. The qualitative data was analyzed thematically while the quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages. The findings are presented in tables. It was found that teachers attended in-service training through workshops. The useful areas covered in the workshops included literacy and numeracy content, lesson preparation, teaching methods, improvisation of teaching resources and handling pupils' diversity. The sampled schools had purchased instructional materials and teachers utilized them mainly as reference material, used for guiding pupils to copy literacy and numeracy exercises in their exercise books, writing work on the blackboard for pupils to do or copy, given to pupils to read and do simple arithmetic on their own, observing examples, given to pupils to do homework; and finally used as learning resources. Among the main challenges teachers faced in improving lower primary pupils' literacy and numeracy skills were high pupil enrolment, inadequate instructional materials, lack of funds, absenteeism, presence of over-age pupils, long distance covered to school, non repetition of pupils, lack of feeding programme in schools and diversity of pupils. To improve lower primary pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, the study recommends provision of adequate instructional materials. The government, through Ministry of Education should organize regular teachers' in-service training. The study will be important to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills firm foundation developed. Teachers can apply SACMEQ strategy in various curriculum areas

because literacy and numeracy skills are integral in all learning areas and across all years of education level. Finally, community outcry over low pupils' achievement will cease when pupils literacy and numeracy skills improve.

Key words: Implementation of Southern African Consortium, Monitoring Education Quality, Recommended Strategies in Literacy and Numeracy, Four Selected Districts in Kenya

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