

Metacognitive Knowledge and Cognitive Reading Strategy Use As Predictors of Reading Comprehension Performance among Form Three Students in Kiambu County, Kenya

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Abstract

The ability to understand and use information from text is a key predictor of a student's success in school learning. Not all factors related to this ability have been adequately investigated. The purpose of this study was to examine metacognitive knowledge and cognitive reading strategy use as predictors of reading comprehension performance among form three students in Lari Sub County, Kiambu County. The study also tested for gender differences in metacognitive knowledge and cognitive reading strategy use. Flavell's metacognition Theory guided the study. The study adopted a correlational research design. The target population was all the form three students from all public and private secondary schools in Lari Sub County. Purposive sampling was used to select Lari Sub County and form three students while proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select schools from the 38 public and private schools in Lari Sub County as well as to select the 320 students from the schools selected. Data was collected using five instruments: Cognitive Reading Strategy Use Questionnaire, Metacognitive Knowledge Questionnaire, observation checklist, pro forma summary of students' scores in reading comprehension and a comprehension tests. A sample size of 32 students (10% of the actual sample) was used for the pilot study. This was from a school within the county, which was not in the actual study sample. This was done to ascertain the reliability and validity of the research instruments. Data collected was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient(r), Multiple Regression and independent samples t-test were used for inferential data analysis. The results revealed that there was a moderate, positive significant correlation between person knowledge ($r(317) = .21, p < .05$) and reading comprehension. Task knowledge and strategy knowledge had a positive but insignificant correlation with reading comprehension. Global reading strategy use ($r(317) = .21, p < .05$), support reading strategy use ($r(317) = .21, p < .05$) and problem solving reading strategy use ($r(317) = .19, p < .05$) were all positively and significantly correlated to reading comprehension, with global and support reading strategies having the strongest correlation. The findings further revealed that there were no significant gender differences in person knowledge, ($t = -1.36, df = 317, p > .05$) task knowledge ($t = -1.34, df = 317, p > .05$) and strategy knowledge ($t = -1.07, df = 317, p > .05$). Among the cognitive reading strategy use sub scales, only problem solving reading strategy use had a significant gender difference which was in favor of boys. Person knowledge and global reading strategy use were found to be the best predictors of reading comprehension performance. Findings from observation data showed that, none of the cognitive reading strategies sub scales had significant correlation with reading comprehension performance. No significant gender differences were found in the use of three sub scales of cognitive reading strategies observed. It was recommended that teachers lay more emphasis on global reading strategy use; found to be the best predictor of reading comprehension. Teachers should also assist girls improve their use of problem solving reading strategy use.

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