

The Influence of Language and Literacy in Opening up Education of an African Child: A Case of Kenya

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Abstract

Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Educational methods include storytelling, discussion, teaching, training and directed research. Language is a structured and conventional way of human communication, either spoken or written while literacy is the ability to read and write. The purpose of the study was to determine the influence of language and literacy in opening up education of an African child. The study sought to determine the effects of reading, writing and communication on creativity, innovative skills, knowledge acquisition, values and norms of an African child. The study was guided by diffusion of innovation theory and theory of learning. This research adopted a participatory action research (PAR) design, which came up with innovations in pedagogical practices right from kindergarten up to college or university. The study employed simple random sampling for selection of the sample. Anonymous and self-administered questionnaires and interview guides were distributed to 10,000 respondents to collect Primary data. Secondary data was collected through review of records, reports, journals and books. The data was analyzed using thematic analysis. The results for objectives 1-4 were based on qualitative data analysis showing that language and literacy significantly affect education through creativity, innovation, knowledge acquisition, values and norms. For example the study found that good writing, reading and communication skills significantly led to creativity. When children were given opportunity to freely express their thoughts, language and literacy fluency they became significantly creative. Reading story books during early childhood have the capability to help build children's knowledge base and support their early language and literacy development. It revealed that children provide greater details and become more innovative when discussions are done in their ethnic languages or languages that they are comfortable with most and we recommend that this should be encouraged.

Keywords: Language, Literacy, Education, Communication, Creativity, Writing, Reading, Innovation, Collaboration and Partnership

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