

**IMPACT OF PLAY ON ACADEMIC PERFROMANCE OF LEARNERS IN
SELECTED EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CENTRES
IN SOUTH ZONE, KAKAMEGA
SOUTH DISTRICT, KENYA**

**By
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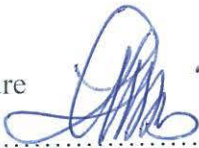
**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF OPEN AND
DISTANCE LEARNING IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF BACHELOR OF
EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD AND
PRIMARY EDUCATION OF KAMPALA
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AUGUST 2011

DECLARATION

I, **UKANDA .M. DENNIS** declare that this project is my original work and has never been presented to any other university for award of any academic certificate or anything similar to such. I solemnly bear and stand to correct any inconsistency.

Signature



UKANDA .M. DENNIS

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DATE

24TH AUG 2011

APPROVAL

This report was conducted under my supervision with my approval; it is now ready for submission to the academic board for the award of a bachelor degree in early childhood and primary education of Kampala International University

Signed


.....

MUGWERI FREDRICK

SUPERVISOR

DATE: 24th August 2011.
.....

DEDICATION

This work is affectionately dedicated to my beloved wife Everlyne Matoyi; children Innocent and Flevian and my Dad Henry Mutsami for their support, patience and understanding during the period of study.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First of all I give thanks to the almighty God for his mercy and grace granted to me during this time of my degree course and through this research project

I would like to thank my supervisor Mr. Mugweri Fredrick for being there for me whenever I needed him and also offering his professional advice where necessary.

I would like also to thank my family and my friend for their support and prayers towards the success of my course.

Am also grateful to the full faculty of Kampala International University for mounting all the directives, procedures and methods of carrying out this research project

I would also like to thank the respondents who returned the questionnaires and those who were cooperative to me.

May God bless you all

ACRONYMS

ECD: Early childhood education

ECDE: Early Childhood Education

ECD Early Childhood Development

ECDE Early Childhood Development and Education

DICECE District Centre for Early Childhood Education

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Academic performance: How children do in school either good or bad. This includes coping with the environment of the school and interactions with other children.

Early Childhood Development (ECD) is the term used in Kenya to refer to the area of discipline that concerns the care, development and learning of young children of ages 0+-5+ years.

Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centre is a generic term for various early childhood services provided under the framework of ECD, including those mentioned above.

Play: the voluntary activities of children, which are inherently enjoyable.

Malnutrition: condition caused by not getting enough food or the right sort of food.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to determine impact of play on academic performance of Early childhood education in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya. The research objectives were; to investigate the common types of play, to determine the factors that hinder children's play to determine the impact of play on academic performance of early childhood education and to determine the importance of play on early childhood development in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya. The methods used for data collection were questionnaires to both the teachers and learners.

The study revealed that play helps the children perform well in class, it makes the children like the school environment, children who play do not find difficulties in solving problems and play improves children's performance in the later years

The study revealed that the most commonly games mentioned were football and net ball, hide and seek, running and jumping, riding bicycles and driving toy cars and swinging parallel play, followed by collaborative play, negotiating play.

The study revealed that the factors hindering children's play were poverty with and gender inequality. The study revealed that play makes muscular development and control of large muscles, play helps the children to develop the language skills and through play children's explore the word around them.

Government should make sure early childhood centers have enough and strong playing materials before they are licensed. The community and parents should be sensitized about the importance of playing so that they also participate in children's playing activities. Schools should make sure they fulfill what is in the curriculum by involving children in playing activities. Play and play materials should be one of the key topics taught to teachers so that they understand the importance of play fully.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Recent years have seen a global endeavor to prioritize early childhood care and education as a foundation for later learning and development, as evidenced by the Global Guidelines for Early Childhood Education and Care in the 21st Century (Association for Childhood Education International/World Organization for Early Childhood, 1999). Such efforts are a response to a variety of complex social issues and economic trends. These forces, which are referred to here as "complex family stressors," include, but are not limited to, societal changes due to industrialization, the increased number of women with young children entering the labor force, families with two working parents, a rise in the number of single parents, and the demise of traditional systems of child care and extended family support systems (Driscoll & Nagel, 2002; Graves, Gargiulo, & Sluder, 1996).

The belief that early learning begets later learning and success, just like early failure breeds later failure, has been validated in both economic and educational research (Boocock, 1995; Heckman, 1999). According to the World Development Report (Jaycox, 1992), education and economic development are positively correlated, making education intrinsic to development. Therefore, the potential long-term benefits for children's cognitive and social development (Barnett, 1995; Gonzalez-Mena, 2000) have inspired increased interest in early childhood education and care. This interest continues to be championed by UNICEF's health and nutrition programs (UNICEF, 2002).

Play is essential to development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth. Play is so important to optimal child development that it has been recognized by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights as a right of every child. (UNHCR 2006)

However this birthright is challenged by forces including child labor and exploitation practices, war and neighborhood violence, and the limited resources available to children living in poverty. However, even those children who are fortunate enough to have

abundant available resources and who live in relative peace may not be receiving the full benefits of play (Lareau A. 2003).it is upon this background that the study was undertaken.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Play is important for the children's development and education. However children's play has been neglected among schools which have resulted into loss of talents, poor socialization, poor academic performance among others hence affecting their academic performance.

1.3 Objectives of the study

To examine the impact of play on academic performance of Early childhood education in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya

Investigate the common types of play in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya

Determine the factors that hinder children's play in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya

Determine the importance of play on early childhood development in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya

1.4 Research Questions

What is the impact of play on academic performance of early childhood education in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya?

What are the common types of play in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya?

What factors hinder children's play in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya?

What is the importance of play on early childhood development in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya?

1.5. Scope of the study

The study was carried in South Zone Kakamega South District, Kenya. Kakamega South District is an administrative district in the Central Province of Kenya. Its capital town is Kakamega South. The district is adjacent to the northeastern border of Nairobi. The district has a population of 645,713. The district is predominantly rural, but its urban population is soaring as Nairobi is growing rapidly. Kikuyu are the dominant tribe in the district. The study investigated the types of play, the factors affecting children's play and the impact of play on learner's academic achievement. The study was conducted from April 2011 to August 2011.

1.6 Significance of the study

This study will benefit the following disciplines:

Play is included in the curriculum but is in most cases not taken seriously and therefore the ministry of education will be able to follow up in ECDE centers and make sure that children are not denied their right.

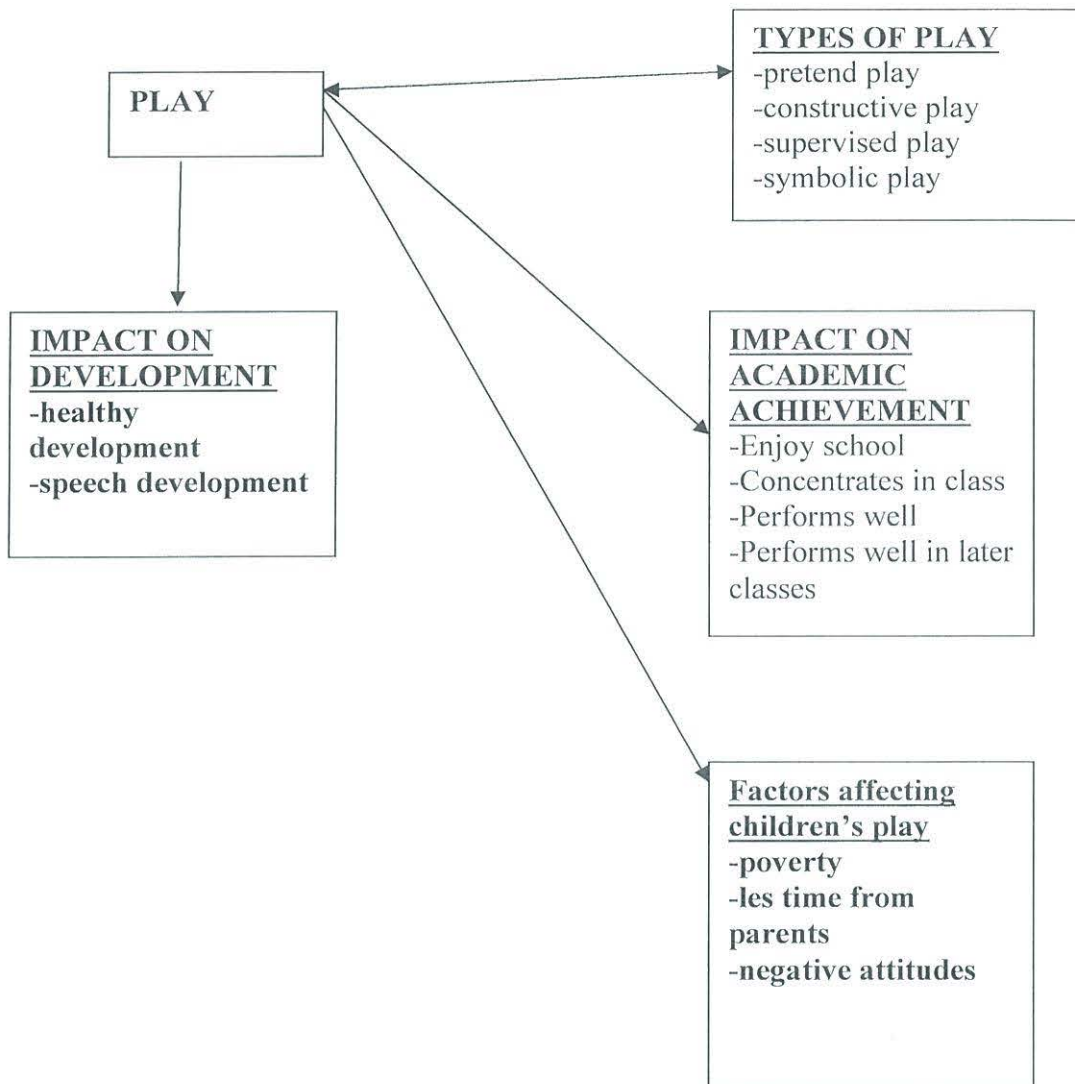
The data obtained from this study will be of considerable value in helping to undo the negative view or attitude towards play which has had an influence on ECD centers especially the place of play in daily activities

Playing is important in child development and yet most children are denied the opportunity to play. The study is therefore intended to benefit to the children who have been denied the opportunity to play.

Future researchers will use the findings of the study as reference material in regards to play and academic performance of early childhood education

Conceptual framework

Impact of play on academic performance of learners



Source : (Researchers own construction)

According to the diagram play is important on the academic achievement and development of early childhood. However play is limited by factors like poverty, negative attitudes among others.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

This chapter reviews literature as an account of the knowledge and ideas that have been established by accredited scholars and experts in the field of play and its impact on early childhood education.

2.2. Impact of play on academic performance of early childhood education

In a meta-analysis, Fisher (1992) indicated that there is a body of evidence showing the effectiveness of play, especially socio dramatic play, in promoting problem-solving abilities. In order to clarify what types of play and problem solving were related and whether these relationships were unidirectional or reciprocal, Wyver and Spence (1999) looked at two types of problem solving (divergent and convergent), two types of divergent problem solving (figural and semantic), and a range of play types and play social levels.

In one study (controlling for IQ), they found relationships between thematic pretense and semantic divergent problem solving and between cooperative play and both semantic and figural divergent problem solving. They then gave some children divergent problem-solving training (figural and semantic) and found that there was a significant increase in figural problem-solving ability and in thematic play for the trained group (Sraufe (1997). They gave other children pretend play training (thematic/associative, thematic/cooperative, or cooperative/non thematic) and found the thematic training groups increased in thematic play and in semantic problem solving, whereas the cooperative play groups increased in cooperative play and on both semantic and figural problem solving.

The researchers concluded that there seems to be a reciprocal, rather than a unidirectional, relationship between problem solving and pretend play, with cooperative social play having a more general influence on divergent problem solving and thematic play having a more specific influence on semantic problem solving.

Because pretense involves language use and takes place in social contexts, many studies of pretense include information on social and linguistic competence, which are also vital for school success. In an extensive observational study of pretend play, Srauf (1997), found that, rather than following a script, much of the preschool children's pretense involved improvisational exchanges and that implicit, in-frame play strategies were more successful than explicit, out-of-frame strategies. He provides rich examples of the skill children exhibit in using improvisation in pretense. The movement to complex social pretense does not occur smoothly for some children, however, as researchers studying the consequences of social or language difficulties on play and cognitive development have observed. For example, Rubin and Coplan (1998) report on a series of studies that followed children who exhibited nonsocial or "withdrawn" play behaviors during preschool; they found that early social withdrawal predicts peer rejection, social anxiety, loneliness, depression, and negative self-esteem in later childhood and adolescence, as well as having negative implications for academic success.

2.3. Common types of play

Functional Play: The child enjoys repetitive play with objects and gains motor and practice skills. Good examples are dumping, filling, stacking, water play, and outdoors play. Functional play characterizes infants and toddlers and at age 3 constitutes 50% of a child's play. Although functional play decreases as a child grows older, it remains important. Functional play can be either solitary or parallel (another child is involved in a similar activity at the same time.) Children experience enjoyment, develop motor skills, and achieve mastery through functional play.

Constructive Play: The child creates or makes something and solves problems. Examples are building with blocks, playing with arts, crafts and puppets and doing puzzles. Approximately 50% of all activity for 4, 5 and 6 year olds is constructive play, and this type of play continues to be important through the primary grades. Children can play constructively alone as well as with others. This type of play develops thinking and reasoning skills, problem solving, and creativity.

Pretend Play: Through pretend play, children transform themselves, others, and objects from real into make-believe. Pretend play can be both a solitary and a group activity. It reaches its highest level at pre-school and kindergarten age and becomes less important as a child grows older. Pretend play helps children process emotions and events in their lives, practice social skills, learn values, develop language skills, and create a rich imagination.

Games with Rules Play: This play involves pre-set rules such as board games, ball games, chanting, and skipping games. This type of play becomes dominant as children reach school age. Through this type of play children learn and practice cooperation, mutual understanding, and logical thinking

Sharing. When a preschooler wants something, the thought of giving it up to someone else is almost unbearable. Learning to share is made even more complex by the confusing ways in which we use the word *share*. (If we ask a child to share her toys, she'll get them back in a short while, but if we ask her to share her cookies, she never gets them back!) Preschoolers have an easier time sharing if they've already spent a lot of time playing games in which they give something to a parent and then get it back again.

Negotiating. Who gets to go first? How do you decide which game to play? Who gets to be the sheriff and who will be the deputy? Collaborative play requires your child to give as well as take, to compromise on what he wants—a hard thing to accept when you're the centre of the universe. But once your child can negotiate, share, take turns, and follow rules, he will be well on his way to navigating the school playground, the high school dance, the college dormitory, and the corporate boardroom.

Structured play

Structured, or guided, play refers to play experiences in which the adult has more of an input, either in initiating the play, controlling the resources available, or intervening or participating during the course of play. Usually practitioners will have a fairly clear idea about the aim of the structured play, and may have specific learning intentions in mind, which will influence the nature of the practitioner's intervention.

2. 4. Factors that hinder children's play

Poverty is one of the hindrances to children's playing. In today's high demanding world parents find themselves working and therefore do not have the time to look after their children leave alone play with them Hallowell EM. (2002)

The process of play development may also be affected by socioeconomic factors. Observations at two time periods of the play of children participating in Title I preschool programs in 22 classrooms did not show the same increase in social pretense that is typically found over time in most preschool studies (Farran & Son-Yarbrough, 2001). In this study, the play state with the most positive relationship to quantity of verbal behaviors was associative play (in which children interact briefly), but over the two time periods, associative play decreased while parallel play (in which children play along side others but do not interact) increased. This trend was most evident in Title I preschool classrooms enrolling the largest proportion of children from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

Gender differences in play may also affect kindergarten adjustment, with boys who have solitary-passive play behaviors and girls who have solitary-active play behaviors being rated as more poorly adjusted by teachers Lareau A. (2003) Children with disabilities also find it hard to play well more especially with the able children.

However, in a review of research on the symbolic play skills of children with language disabilities, Casby (1997) concluded that their actual differences in symbolic play abilities appear to be quite small; they have "a symbolic *performance* deficit more so than a symbolic *competence* deficit". That is, their capabilities for using symbolic ideas in play may be similar to children without language disabilities. Because of their language problems, however, they are less able to make their pretense themes and roles explicit in their play. Similarly, Guralnik and Hammond (1999) found that children with mild disabilities exhibit play transition patterns (i.e., from solitary to parallel to social) that are congruent with those of typical peers, although the transitions may occur slightly later.

2.5. Importance of play on early childhood development

Lowell 1994 in her book writes about the benefits of free play that it makes:- Muscular development and control of large muscles, fine motor skill and eye- hand coordination. Speech development through social interaction during play through parallel play leading to cooperative play. Language skill development through dramatic play to clarify ideas Problem solving and creative thinking –probably the most important skill for living in the world today.

Increase consciousness of the cause and effect involved in a sequence of events. Therapeutic value in providing opportunities for safe acting, out behaviors. Opportunities for self-talk, a useful tool for teachers as they listen to children at play. Development of self confidence while trying new things in a non-judgmental

Environment. Learning co-operation and values by putting themselves in the “shoes” of others. This one makes a sense of good livelihood in the growth of all children worldwide.

Goodyen 1988 states that play is important. It is through play that children explore the world around them. They do this in many different ways; you will be able to see them doing this if you watch a group of them playing at dressing up, watch them “step into the role” of a doctor, father, a teacher etc. Listen to what they say and how they say it. Watch their face and body movements. They are not “acting”. They are unconcerned about any audience who might be watching them. They are exploring what it feels like to be angry, sad, ill, and so on, in a similar way. “Maybe brain size and play are both correlated with metabolic rate or some factor certainly, something about being (warm blooded) seems important for promoting play.”

Beckoff says play is a sign of health development. “When play drops out, something is wrong,” he says. Children destined to suffer mental illness such as Schizophrenia as adults, for example engage in precious little social play early in life. But can lack of play affect the creativity and learning abilities of normal children? The answer is that nobody knows.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

This chapter discusses the methods the researcher used to collect data. It focused on the Research design, organization of the study, data collection, and data collection procedure and data analysis.

3.1. Research Design

The design that was used consisted of both quantitative and qualitative method. Field work was undertaken and this comprised of direct observations and questionnaires for the respondents.

3.2. Study area

The research was carried out in South Zone Kakamega South District, Kenya. The case study was selected because that is where the researcher lives and hence made it easy to access the respondents and the costs of transport were reduced.

3.3. Study population.

This study involved teachers from ECD centers and learners in selected schools.

3.4. Sample size and sampling technique

A school sample of 50 respondents (learners) was obtained out of 2000 and a sample of 35 teachers out of 100 was also obtained. This research used simple random sampling from each school. Seven ECD centers were selected for the study and five teachers were from selected using random sampling from each centre.

3.5. Research instruments

Questionnaires were used to get information from the teachers and pupils. The questionnaires were open and closed ended.

3.5.1 Reliability of instruments.

.Since the teachers and pupils were many questionnaires are convenient because they got information in a short period of time they also contain an element of privacy and hence respondents expressed themselves freely.

3.6. Data collection procedure

A letter of introduction from the institute of continuing education was sent to facilitate in the data collection exercise. The letter was handed to the head teachers before questionnaires distributed to the teachers and pupils. The data collected was sorted and categorized after which it was analyzed. The conclusions and recommendations were made.

3.7. Data analysis

The frequencies and percentages were used to determine the number of sample respondents that were used in the research process and the number that participated positively in contribution to the research.

Formula;

$$\text{Percentage (\%)} = \frac{F}{\text{Total number of respondents}} \times 100$$

Where F = number of respondents

Observed

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter is a presentation, discussion of the findings. The results are presented in form of tables, frequency counts and percentages. This chapter focuses on “impact of play on academic performance of Early childhood education in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya

. The research objectives were; to investigate the common types of play, to determine the factors that hinder children’s play to determine the impact of play on academic performance of early childhood education and to determine the importance of play on early childhood development in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya

4.1. Profile of the respondents

Table 4.1 profile of the respondents

	Teachers		Pupils	
Gender	Frequency	%Age	Frequency	%Age
Male	20	57	30	60
Female	15	43	20	40
TOTAL	35	100	50	100
Age				
3 years and below			5	10
4-6 years			30	60
7 years and above			15	30
18-25 yrs	8	23		
26-34 yrs	12	34		
35 and above	15	43		
TOTAL	35	100	50	100
Academic level				
Certificate	7	20		
Diploma	10	29		
Degree	18	51		
TOTAL	35	100		

Source: Primary data 2011

Thirty (35) questionnaires were distributed to the teachers and all were filled and returned .This therefore represents 100 % of the total number of questionnaires that were distributed.

The study covered 35 randomly selected teachers of whom 20 (57%) were male and 15 (43%) were female

The age category of the respondents was divided in three groups that is 18-25 years were 8 which was 23%, 26-34 yrs were 12 (34%) and 35 and above were 15 representing (43%) of the respondents.

The academic level of the respondents was divided in three categories that are certificate, diploma and degree. 7 (20%) of the respondents had certificates, 10 (29%) had diploma and 18 (51%) had degrees.

Focus group discussions were used to extract information from the community members.

The respondents were asked whether they included playing in the curriculum and this was their response.

Table 4.2: Response on whether children are involved in play activities

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	35	100
No	-	-
Total	35	100

Source: field data 2011

The results in table 4.2 indicate all the respondents that is 35(100%) agreed that they involve children in play activities. This means that at least each school has the type of play in which they involve children.

The respondents were asked to list the different types of play in which they involve children and below were their response

Table 4.3: Response on the kind of activity available in the ECD Centers

No.	Kind of activity	Frequency (fq) out of 35	Percentage (%) out of 100
1	See-saws	35	100 %
2	swings	35	100%
3	Beam balance	15	43 %
4	Sliders	10	29%
5	Climbers	-	-
6	Sand corners	32	91%
7	Water corners	-	-
8	Play grounds	35	100%
9	tunnels	-	-
10	Merry-go-ground	29	83(%)

Source: field data 2011

According to the table all the teachers revealed that their schools did not have climbers and tunnels and water corners while they all revealed that their schools had see saws, swings and play grounds but the play grounds were very small and children could not play freely. 32(91%) of the respondents revealed that they had sand corners, 29(83%) revealed that they had Merry-go-ground. Only 25(43%) of the teachers revealed that they had beam balance and 10(29%) revealed that they had sliders. seven schools had merry go rounds. In most of the schools it was observed that that the playing materials were not up to the standard and this hinders children's play

4.2 Impact of play on the academic performance of early childhood

The first researcher objective was to Assess the impact of play on the academic performance of early childhood in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya. To achieve this, respondents were asked questions related to the objective. Data collected was analyzed under the question: What is the impact of play on the academic performance of early childhood in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya. The results are presented in the subsections below;

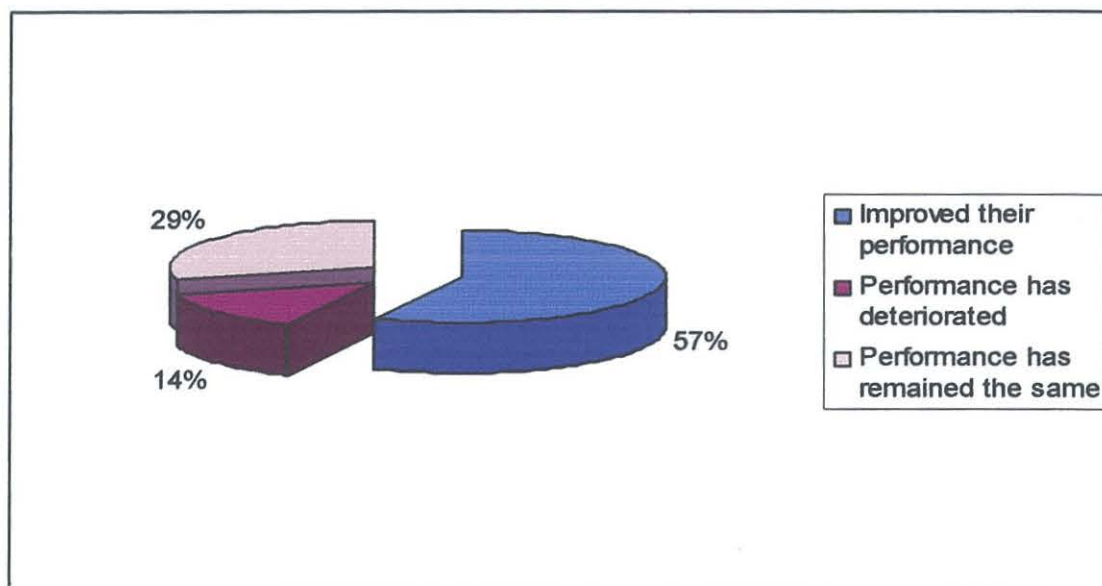
The respondents were asked how play has affected the academic performance of learners and below were their response

Table 4.4: Response on how plat has affected pupils academic performance

Response	Frequency	percentage
Improved their performance	20	57
Performance has deteriorated	5	14
Performance has remained the same	10	29
Total	35	100

Source: field data 2011

Figure 1: Response on how plat has affected pupils academic performance



The results in table and figure indicate that 20(57%) of the respondents agreed revealed that play has helped to improve pupils performance while 5(14%) said that it has remained that same and 10(29%) said that the performance has remained that same. This means that in one way or the other play helps to improve pupil's performance.

The teachers further revealed that if children play, they get relaxed out of the stress and thus refresh their minds academically.

The respondents were asked whether when children involve in play they like the school environment and below were their response

Table 4.5: Response on whether when children involve in play they like the school environment

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	30	86
No	5	14
Not sure	-	-
Total	35	100

Source: field data 2011

According to the table, 30(86%) of the respondents agreed that when children involve in play they like the school environment while 5(14%) of them disagreed. This implies that many children like the school environment because of play. Community members revealed that every morning their children are always eager to go to school because they enjoy playing and at school they have many children to play with. They also revealed that when its time to go home, they also don't want to leave school because of play.

The respondents were asked whether children who play do not find difficulties in solving problems and below were their response

Table 4.6: Response on whether children who play do not find difficulties in solving problems

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	20	57
No	10	49
Not sure	5	14
Total	35	100

Source: field data 2011

According to the table, 20(57%) of the respondents agreed that children who play do not find difficulties in solving problems while 10(49%) disagreed and 5(14%) of the respondents were not sure. This means that through play many children learn how to solve different problems.

This is supported by Fisher (1992) indicated that there is a body of evidence showing the effectiveness of play, especially socio dramatic play, in promoting problem-solving abilities. In order to clarify what types of play and problem solving were related and whether these relationships were unidirectional or reciprocal, Wyver and Spence (1999) looked at two types of problem solving (divergent and convergent), two types of divergent problem solving (figural and semantic), and a range of play types and play social levels.

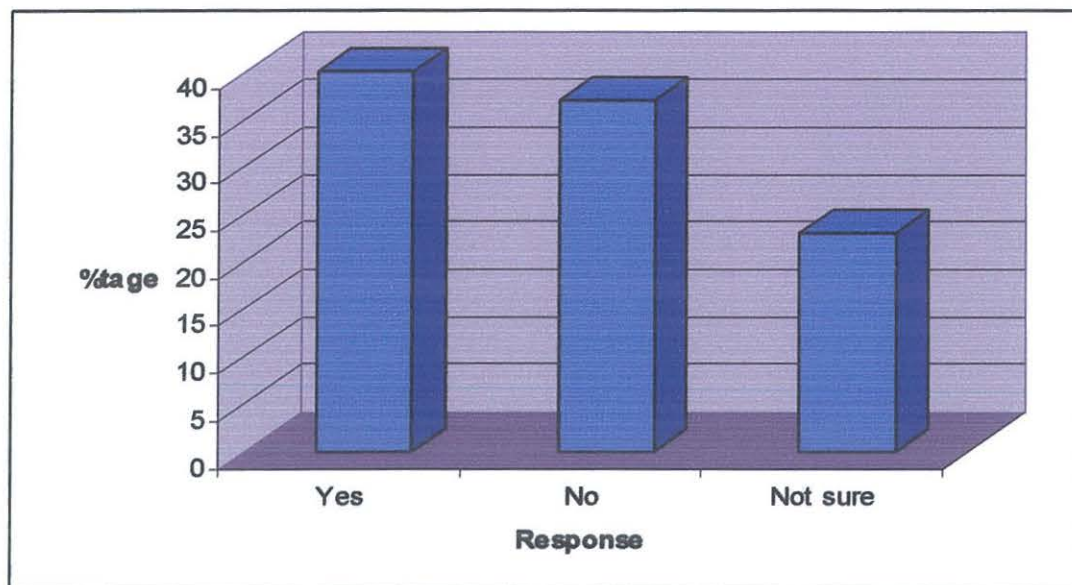
The respondents were asked whether play makes the children confident and hence improve their academic performance and this was their response

Table 4.7: Response on whether makes the children confident

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	14	40
No	13	37
Not sure	8	23
Total	35	100

Source: field data 2011

Figure 2: Response on whether makes the children confident



The table and chart indicates that 14(40%) of the respondents agreed that play makes the children confident and hence improve their academic performance while 13(37%) disagreed and 8(23%) of the respondents were not sure whether play makes the children confident and hence improve their academic performance.

The respondents were asked whether play improves the academic performance of children in later years and below were their response

Table 4.8: Response on play improves the academic performance of children in later years

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	16	46
No	12	34
Not sure	7	20
Total	35	100

Source: field data 2011

According to the table, 16(46%) of the respondents agreed play improves the academic performance of children in later years while 12(34%) disagreed and 7(14%) of the

respondents were not sure play improves the academic performance of children in later years.

4.3 Common types of play

The second researcher objective was to investigate the common types of play in South zone Kakamega South District Kenya. To achieve this, respondents were asked questions related to the objective. Data collected was analyzed under the question: What are the common types of play in South zone Kakamega South District Kenya, The results are presented in the subsections below;

The respondents were asked what types of play in which they involve children and below were their response

Table 4.9: Response on the different types of play

No.	Types of play	Frequency (fq) out of 35	Percentage (%) out of 100
1	Football & net ball	35	100 (%)
2	Collaborative Play	28	80(%)
3	Sharing	20	57(%)
4	Parallel play	29	83(%)
5	Taking turns.	7	20(%)
6	Obeying rules	8	23(%)
7	Negotiating	27	77(%)
8	Structured play	18	51(%)
9	riding bicycles	29	83 (%)
10	driving toy cars	29	83(%)
11	Swinging	29	83(%)
12	hide and seek	35	100 (%)
13	Jumping	35	100 (%)
14	Running	35	100 (%)
15	Swimming	15	43(%)

Source: field data 2011

According to the table the most commonly games mentioned were football and net ball, hide and seek, running and jumping that is they were mentioned by all the respondents, followed by riding bicycles and driving toy cars and swinging (88%), parallel play (88%), followed by collaborative play (80%), negotiating play (77%) and the least mentioned were taking turns with (20%), obeying rules (23%) and swimming (43%). It was observed by the researcher that few schools had swimming pools and all that had them were private schools.

The child enjoys repetitive play with objects and gains motor and practice skills. Good examples are dumping, filling, stacking, water play, and outdoors play. Functional play characterizes infants and toddlers and at age 3 constitutes 50% of a child's play. Although functional play decreases as a child grows older, it remains important. Functional play can be either solitary or parallel (another child is involved in a similar activity at the same time.) Children experience enjoyment, develop motor skills, and achieve mastery through functional play

4.4 Factors hindering children's play

The third research objective was to investigate the factors hindering the effective of children's play in South zone Kakamega South District Kenya. To achieve this, respondents were asked questions related to the objective. Data collected was analyzed under the question: What are the factors hindering children's play in play in South zone Kakamega South District Kenya.? The results are presented below.

The respondents were asked whether poverty hinder children's play and below were their response

Table 4.10: Response whether poverty hinder children's play

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	29	83
No	6	17
Not sure	-	-
Total	35	100

Source: field data 2011

The table indicates that 29(83%) of the respondents agreed poverty hinder children's play while 6(17%) of the respondents disagreed. The teachers revealed that there are some schools which can not afford to buy playing materials for children and some parents at home are too poor to purchase playing materials for their children. Hence poverty a hindrance to children's play

The respondents were asked whether social economic factors affect children's play and below were their response.

Table 4.11: Response on whether social economic factors affect children's play

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	12	34
No	12	34
Not sure	11	31
Total	35	100

Source: field data 2011

According to the table, 12(34%) of the respondents agreed that social economic factors affect children's play while 12(34%) disagreed and 11(31%) of the respondents were not whether social economic factors affect children's play

The process of play development may also be affected by socioeconomic factors. Observations at two time periods of the play of children participating in Title I preschool programs in 22 classrooms did not show the same increase in social pretense that is

typically found over time in most preschool studies (Farran & Son-Yarbrough, 2001). In this study, the play state with the most positive relationship to quantity of verbal behaviors was associative play (in which children interact briefly), but over the two time periods, associative play decreased while parallel play (in which children play along side others but do not interact) increased. This trend was most evident in Title I preschool classrooms enrolling the largest proportion of children from low socioeconomic backgrounds.

The respondents were asked whether gender differences affect children's play and below were their response

Table 4.12: Response on whether gender differences affect children's play

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	16	46
No	14	40
Not sure	5	14
Total	35	100

Source: field data 2011

According to the table, 16(46%) of the respondents agreed that gender differences affect children's play while 14(40%) disagreed and 5(14%) of the respondents were not whether gender differences affect children's play

Gender differences in play may also affect kindergarten adjustment, with boys who have solitary-passive play behaviors and girls who have solitary-active play behaviors being rated as more poorly adjusted by teachers Lareau A. (2003) Children with disabilities also find it hard to play well more especially with the able children.

4.5 Importance of play on early childhood development

The last research objective was to determine the importance of play on early childhood development in South zone Kakamega South District Kenya. To achieve this, respondents were asked questions related to the objective. Data collected was analyzed

under the question: What is the importance of play on early childhood development in South zone Kakamega South District Kenya.? The results are presented below

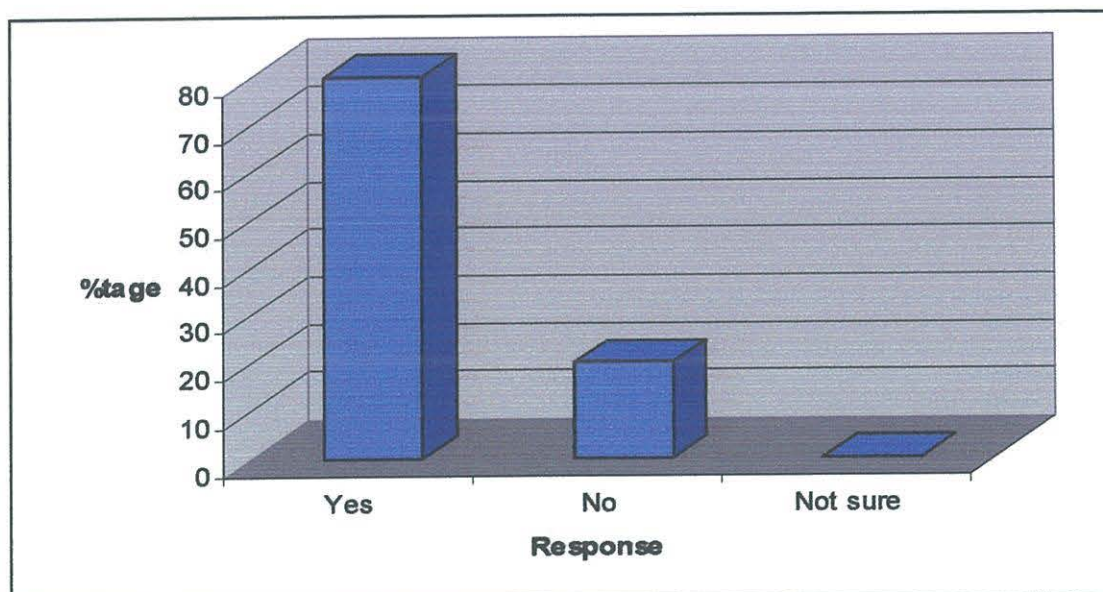
The respondents were asked whether play make muscular development and control of large muscles and below were their response

Table 4.13: Response on whether play makes muscular development and control of large muscles

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	28	80
No	7	20
Not sure	-	-
Total	35	100

Source: field data 2011

Figure 3: Response on whether play makes muscular development and control of large muscles



According to the table and figure, 28(80%) of the respondents agreed that play make muscular development and control of large muscles while 7(20%) of the respondents

disagreed. This means that through play children's muscles develop strong and firm since it is a form of exercise.

According to Lowell 1994 in her book writes about the benefits of free play that it makes:- Muscular development and control of large muscles, fine motor skill and eye-hand coordination. Speech development through social interaction during play through parallel play leading to cooperative play. Language skill development through dramatic play to clarify ideas Problem solving and creative thinking –probably the most important skill for living in the world today

The respondents were asked whether play helps the children to develop the language skills and this was their response

Table 4.14: Response on whether play helps the children to develop the language skills

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	25	71
No	7	20
Not sure	3	9
Total	35	100

Source: field data 2011

According to the table, 25(71%) of the respondents agreed that play helps the children to develop the language skills while 7(20%) disagreed and 3(9%) of the respondents were not whether play helps the children to develop the language skills. This means that when children play they learn how to speak.

The respondents were asked whether through play children's explore the word around them and this was their response.

Table 4.15: Response on whether through play children's explore the word around them

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	17	49
No	13	37
Not sure	5	14
Total	35	100

Source: field data 2011

According to the table, 15(43%) of the respondents agreed that through play children's explore the word around them while 15(43%) disagreed and 5(14%) of the respondents were not whether through play children's explore the word around them.

Goodyen 1988 states that play is important. It is through play that children explore the world around them. They do this in many different ways; you will be able to see them doing this if you watch a group of them playing at dressing up, watch them "step into the role" of a doctor, father, a teacher etc. Listen to what they say and how they say it. Watch their face and body movements. They are not "acting".

The respondents were asked whether they involve in playing activities at the schools and home and this was their response

Table 4.16: response on whether children involve in playing activities in their schools and home

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	45	90
No	5	10
Total	50	100

Source: field data 2011

The table indicates that 45(90%) of the respondents agreed that they involve in play activities and 5(10%) of the respondents disagreed.

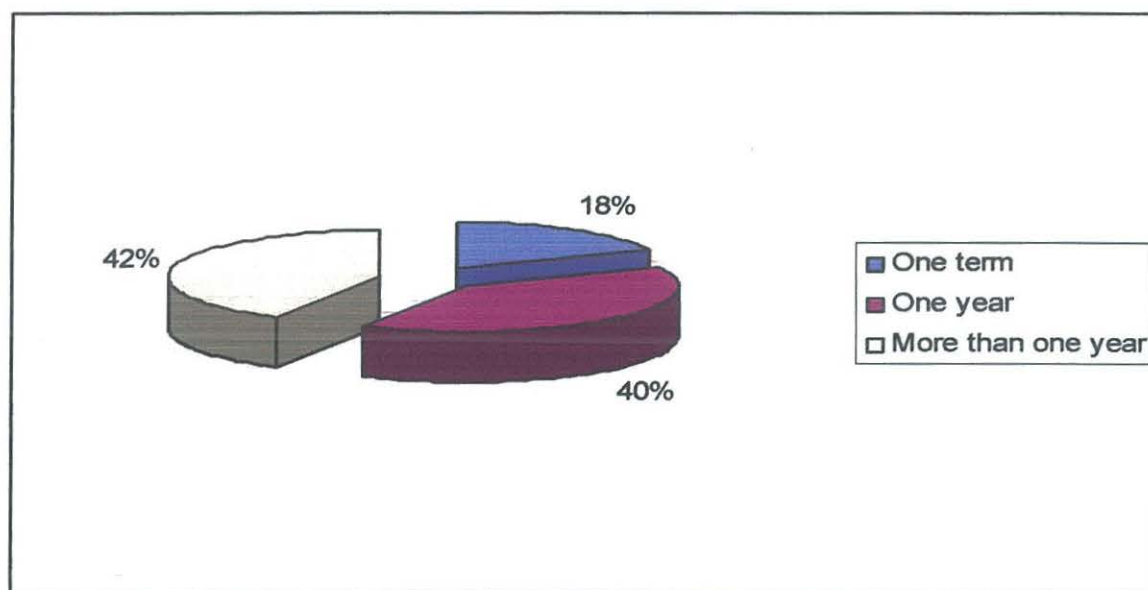
The respondents were asked for how long they have stayed in school and below were their response

Table 4.17: Response on how long the children have stayed in school

Response	Frequency	Percentage
One term	9	18
One year	20	40
More than one year	21	42
Total	50	100

Source: field data 2011

Figure 4: Response on how long the children have stayed in school



The table and chart indicates that 9(18%) of the pupils revealed that they have stayed in school for only one term, 20(40%) said for one year and 21(42%) of them revealed that they have stayed at school for more than one year.

The respondents were asked whether they like playing and below were their response

Table 4.18: Response on whether children like playing

Response	Frequency	percentage
Yes	48	96
No	2	4
Total	50	100

Source: field data 2011

The table shows that 48(96%) of the respondents agreed that they like playing while 2(4%) of them disagreed. This means that most of the children in all the schools visited liked playing.

The respondents were asked what kind of play they like most and below were their response

Table 4.19: Response on the type of play children like

Types of play	Frequency (fq) out of 50	Percentage (%) out of 100
Football & net ball	45	90 (%)
riding bicycles	48	96 (%)
driving toy cars	50	100(%)
Swinging	50	100(%)
hide and seek	50	100 (%)
Jumping	50	100 (%)
Running	30	60 (%)
Swimming	20	40(%)

Source: field data 2011

According to the table the most common types of play children like were driving toy cars, hide and seek, jumping and swinging that is they were mentioned by all the respondents, followed by riding bicycles 48(96%), foot ball and net ball (90%), running 30(60%) and lastly swimming with 20(40%). It was revealed that some children did not know how to swim and had no swimming pools they way they did not like the play

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The purpose of the study was to determine impact of play on academic performance of Early childhood education in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya. The research objectives were; to investigate the common types of play, to determine the factors that hinder children's play to determine the impact of play on academic performance of early childhood education and to determine the importance of play on early childhood development in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya.

5.1 Summary

Impact of play on the academic performance of early childhood

The first researcher objective was to assess the impact of play on the academic performance of early childhood in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya. The study revealed that play helps the children perform well in class (57%), it makes the children like the school environment (86%), children who play do not find difficulties in solving problems (57%) and play improves children's performance in the later years (40%).

Fisher (1992) indicated that there is a body of evidence showing the effectiveness of play, especially socio dramatic play, in promoting problem-solving abilities. In order to clarify what types of play and problem solving were related and whether these relationships were unidirectional or reciprocal, Wyver and Spence (1999) looked at two types of problem solving (divergent and convergent), two types of divergent problem solving (figural and semantic), and a range of play types and play social levels.

The common types of play

The second researcher objective was to investigate the common types of play in South zone Kakamega South District Kenya. The study revealed that the most commonly games mentioned were football and net ball, hide and seek, running and jumping that is they

were mentioned by all the respondents, followed by riding bicycles and driving toy cars and swinging (88%), parallel play (88%), followed by collaborative play (80%), negotiating play (77%) and the least mentioned were taking turns with (20%), obeying rules (23%) and swimming (43%).

The child enjoys repetitive play with objects and gains motor and practice skills. Good examples are dumping, filling, stacking, water play, and outdoors play. Functional play characterizes infants and toddlers and at age 3 constitutes 50% of a child's play. Although functional play decreases as a child grows older, it remains important. Functional play can be either solitary or parallel (another child is involved in a similar activity at the same time.) Children experience enjoyment, develop motor skills, and achieve mastery through functional play

Factors hindering children's play

The third research objective was to investigate the factors hindering the effective of children's play in South zone Kakamega South District Kenya. The study revealed that the factors hindering children's play were poverty with 83% and gender inequality 46%.

Gender differences in play may also affect kindergarten adjustment, with boys who have solitary-passive play behaviors and girls who have solitary-active play behaviors being rated as more poorly adjusted by teachers Lareau A. (2003) Children with disabilities also find it hard to play well more especially with the able children.

Importance of play on early childhood development

The last research objective was to determine the importance of play on early childhood development in South zone Kakamega South District Kenya. The study revealed that play make muscular development and control of large muscles (80%), play helps the children to develop the language skills (71%) and through play children's explore the word around them (49%)

According to Lowell 1994 in her book writes about the benefits of free play that it makes:- Muscular development and control of large muscles, fine motor skill and eye-hand coordination. Speech development through social interaction during play through

parallel play leading to cooperative play. Language skill development through dramatic play to clarify ideas Problem solving and creative thinking –probably the most important skill for living in the world today

5.2. Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to determine impact of play on academic performance of Early childhood education in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya. The research objectives were; to investigate the common types of play, to determine the factors that hinder children's play to determine the impact of play on academic performance of early childhood education and to determine the importance of play on early childhood development in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya.

The study revealed that play helps the children perform well in class, it makes the children like the school environment, children who play do not find difficulties in solving problems and play improves children's performance in the later years

The study revealed that the most commonly games mentioned were football and net ball, hide and seek, running and jumping, riding bicycles and driving toy cars and swinging parallel play, followed by collaborative play, negotiating play.

The study revealed that the factors hindering children's play were poverty with and gender inequality.

The study revealed that play makes muscular development and control of large muscles, play helps the children to develop the language skills and through play children's explore the word around them.

5.3 Recommendations

Looking at the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made;

Government should make sure early childhood centers have enough and strong playing materials before they are licensed.

The community and parents should be sensitized about the importance of playing so that they also participate in children's playing activities.

Schools should make sure they fulfill what is in the curriculum by involving children in playing activities.

Schools, parents and the government should come in full force to make sure that the schools are equipped with the necessary playing materials.

Play and play materials should be one of the key topics taught to teachers so that they understand the importance of play fully.

5.4 Areas for further studies

The researcher appeals to other researchers to go deep into the study of the impact of play on early childhood education. Few researchers have ventured on the topic.

Time frame of the study

Activity	Time	In	Months	
	1	2	3	4
Proposal writing				
Data collection				
Data analysis				
Submission				

Budget of the study

Items	Cost (Ug shs)	Costs (K shs)
Stationary	5,000/=	208/=-
Pens and pencils	10,000/=	416/=-
Ream of paper		1458/=-
Transport costs	35,000/=	4166/=-
Miscellaneous expenses	100,000/=	6250/=-
Typing and printing charges	150,000/=	
Total	300,000/=	12500/=-

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Appendix I: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Dear respondent,

I NGANGA AGATHA WAITHERERO am a student of Kampala International University carrying out an academic research on the topic “Determine the impact of play on academic performance of Early childhood education in South Zone, Kakamega South district, Kenya.” You have been randomly selected to participate in the study and are therefore kindly requested to provide an appropriate answer by either ticking the best option or give explanation where applicable. The answers provided will only be used for academic purposes and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

NB: do not write your name anywhere on this paper.

1) Personal Information

GENDER

Male ☐

Female ☐

AGE

19-25years ☐

26-30yrs ☐

31 and above ☐

ACADEMIC LEVEL

a) Certificate ☐

b) Diploma ☐

c) Degree ☐

2. Do you involve children in play activities?

Yes ☐

No ☐

3. What kind of activities is available in your centre for the children? Tick all that

Apply

a) See-saws ☐

b) Swings ☐

c) Beam balance ☐

- d) Sliders
- e) Climbers
- f) Sand corner
- g) Water corner
- h) Play ground
- i) Tunnels
- j) Merry-go-round

Impact of play on academic performance of early childhood

4. How has play affected the academic performance of learners?

Improved their performance [☐]

Performance has deteriorated [☐]

Performance has remained the same [☐]

5. When children involve in play they like the school environment

Agree [☐] Disagree [☐] Not sure [☐]

6. Children who play do not find difficulties in problem solving.

Agree [☐] Disagree [☐] Not sure [☐]

7. Play makes children confident and hence improves academic performance

Agree [☐] Disagree [☐] Not sure [☐]

8. Play improves academic performance in later years

Agree [☐] Disagree [☐] Not sure [☐]

Types of play

9. Which of the following play is available at your school?

Foot ball and net ball ☐

Collaborative play ☐

Hide and seek ☐

Sharing play ☐

Riding bicycles ☐

Negotiating play ☐

Driving toy cars ☐

Taking turns ☐

Swimming ☐

Obedying rules ☐

Parallel play ☐

Structured play ☐

Jumping ☐

swinging ☐

Running ☐

Factors hindering children's play

10. Poverty hinders children's play

Agree [] Disagree [] Not sure []

11. Gender equality hinders play

Agree [] Disagree [] Not sure []

12. Social economic factors affect play

Agree [] Disagree [] Not sure []

Importance of play on child's development

13. Play makes muscular development and control of large muscles

Agree [] Disagree [] Not sure []

14. Play helps the children to develop the language skills

Agree [☐] Disagree [☐] Not sure [☐]

15. Through play children's explore the world around them.

Agree [☐] Disagree [☐] Not sure [☐]

Appendix II: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LEARNERS

16. Profile of children

Gender

Male

female

Age

3 years and below []

4-6 years []

7 years and above []

Class

Pre-school []

nursery []

middle class []

17. Do you involve in playing activities?

Yes []

No []

18. How long have you been in school/

One term []

One year []

More than one year []

19. Do you like play?

Yes []

No []

20. What kind of play do you like most?

Football & net ball []

Riding bicycles []

Driving toy cars []

Swimming []

Swinging []

Hide and seek []

Jumping []

running []

Riding bicycles []

APPENDIX III: TRANSMITAL LETTER



**KAMPALA
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**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR
INSTITUTE OF OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING (IODL)**

DATE:

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR MS/MRS/MR

The above named is our student in Institute of Open and Distance Learning (IODL), pursuing a Diploma/Bachelors degree in Education.

He/She wishes to carry out a research in your Organization on:

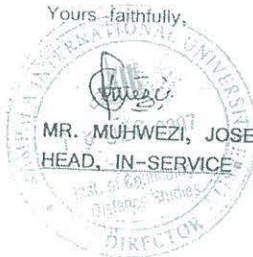
.

Case Study:

The research is a requirement for the award of a Diploma/Bachelors degree in Education.

Any assistance accorded to her regarding research will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,



**MR. MUHWEZI, JOSEPH
HEAD, IN-SERVICE**