



Journal of Liberal Arts and Humanities (JLAH)
Issue: Vol. 2; No. 1; January 2020 pp. 30-40
ISSN 2690-070X (Print) 2690-0718 (Online)
Website: www.jlahnet.com
E-mail: editor@jlahnet.com
Doi: 10.48150/jlah.v2no1.2021.a4

THE ATTITUDE OF PRE-SCHOOL TEACHERS TOWARDS THE ABUSE OF CHILD RIGHT IN NUMERACY CLASS WITHIN THE KRACHI-EAST MUNICIPALITY

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Abstract

Learners in Krachi-East Municipal have had many challenges in Numeracy and as a result usually obtain low grades in their termly assessment in the course. This study therefore was conducted into finding the details of what affect learners in the catchment area in the study of Numeracy, with special concentration on the knowledge of Child Right as far as schooling and classroom learning are concerned. Questionnaire and interview were the instruments used through stratified sampling techniques for data collection. The study was an embedded mixed-method design that involved simultaneous collection of data set by a qualitative and quantitative approach. It was found that most learners in the Municipality are aware of child right except those who live in the village. The majority has the child right recognition in class but the child abuse in the numeracy class and school environment is still detected as still ongoing in schools. It is recommended that stakeholders in Krachi-East Municipality in the implementation of education should encourage and promote child right in all schools and also mitigate child abuse in class.

1.0 Introduction

United Nations (2002) report indicates that since 1993 the situation of child Rights in almost all countries of the world, the Committee has noted that the Rights of babies and young children are too often overlooked'. This is so although it is widely recognized that early childhood is a crucial period for the sound development of young children and that missed opportunities during these early years cannot be made up at later stages of the child's life. In recent, human Rights issues have drawn the attention of Ghana Governments with parliaments making laws on them. However, it appears there is little or no recognition on the part of teachers about the Rights of children within the school environment especially, those at the pre-school level (Leach and Humphrey, 2007; UNESCO Bangkok, 2006).

A good start in life means that every child, from infancy forward, has the right to live in a nurturing, caring, and safe environment that enables the child to survive and be physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent, and can learn. The Rights of the Child establishes the child's right to education. However, learning and education do not begin with primary school. They begin with responsive and stimulating adult-infant interaction. Information about early learning and development should be made widely available so that families do not miss these early opportunities. Research shows that children profit from organized early learning experiences, particularly the poorest children (OCHRH, 2006).

Play is one of the main ways in which young children learn and develop cognitive and motor skills. It also provides children with opportunities to form social relationships and learn how to interact with and treat others. The more a family can provide play materials and safe play spaces for a young child, the greater are the learning opportunities. Families also need to support play between adults and the child. They should encourage games, dancing, and singing both in the home and among children at a community level.

Robert (2000) explains that learning environments for young children should be child-centered. That means that there should be ample opportunity for children to learn through active engagement with learning materials and people rather than being only teacher-directed. One of the strengths of early learning centers is that children learn the basics of democracy: how to express their desires, how to make plans and carry them through, and how to make simple decisions.

This democratic approach' to learning would help create pre-schools where teachers or caregivers internalize and practice interactive early childhood care. The children in democratic environment build self-confidence, self-esteem, exhibit leadership skills, ask the question of worry, are better prepared for school and better in improving their knowledge, and also use various life skills (UNICEF, 2006). Educators who are supposed to have much insight and recognize the Rights of children appear to do little on the children's Rights under their care and sometimes violate the Rights of these children (Lambert, 2010).

Research conducted in Zimbabwe revealed that 60% of teachers in pre-schools within Masvingo Province were unaware of the Rights of children, let alone recognizing them (Lambert, 2010). Teachers are supposed to assist children to grow up with confidence and the only way this can be possible, is by allowing them to express themselves (Currie *et al.*, 2008). Also, the child's environment determines his or her level of awareness and recognition of Rights (Pinheiro, 2006).

Although human Rights issues have received the attention of many including lawmakers in some parts of the world, it appears some aspects of the topic are still given little or no attention or are even not identified at all (Boye, Luke, and Kurz, 2002). The Rights of children are issues that are not recognized by many especially teachers and other caregivers at the pre-school level in the developing world (Sterner, and Philip, 1998). A study conducted in five districts of Uganda reveals that adults abuse their authority without serious consequences (Naker, 2005). A report from an investigation conducted by the office of the United Nations High Commissioner of refugees (UNHCR) in Liberia refugee camp revealed that, cases of school-related sexual abuse in which teachers and school staff mostly males demanded sex in exchange for good grades (Naker, 2005). One of the most physically deforming punishments-corporal punishments purported to be stopped in schools is vehemently rebuked by teachers and other caregivers (Lambert, 2010). Teachers cite the need for enforcing discipline among other things in schools as an important reason for which the practice is difficult to stop. For example, a young schoolboy in Zambia noted that he "was told to dig five pits for trying to help (someone) who had missed the lesson the previous day, while his female classmate who chewing gum in class was shouted at by a teacher for being a foolish girl and stupid" (Soneson, 2005).

Using playing activities for teaching and learning is very important because children begin to learn very early, and they can, in so doing, make full use of their environment in the learning situation. Games are popular with children have a replaceable role in rearing practices for babies, because they satisfy specific needs of the development of the child at all levels of the child's development. In teaching and developing the child's numeracy skills there should be balancing of folks games. This enables the manifestation of children at the pre-school level to see numeracy as fun, creative abilities, aesthetic feeling to keep them in the atmosphere of cheerfulness and harmony.

1.1 Statement of the problem

In the Krachi-East Municipality majority of the children in the Early-Grade Class could not solve early grade numeracy questions and they also find it difficult to ask questions. They are generally unable to express themselves during learning and teaching in class. Few who attempt to answer questions in numeracy class lack self-confidence. Majority of these children conclude that Numeracy is the most difficult subject. Lack of relevant knowledge of both teachers and learners to the right of the learner could be a militating factor. There could be some other hidden factors to the problem. This research therefore was conducted to locate and provide antidotes to the challenges of the learners in this category.

1.2 Research questions

2. What is the level of teachers' and learners' knowledge on the Children's right in class?
3. Do Numeracy teachers at the Pre-School abuse the Rights of Children in the numeracy class of Krachi-East Municipality?
4. What could be the impact when the child's right is observed during lessons?

2.0 Methodology

2.1 The study area

Krachi-East Municipal is an area that is undergoing rapid infrastructure development change in all aspects of life. The area has different ethnic groups with the varied socio-cultural background. The economic output of the municipality is below middle income. The occupation that binds the majority is Agriculture. Civil servant or Public servant, Health and Education service constitute the least. Educational institutions present in the Municipality start from Early Childhood grade, Kindergarten, Lower and Upper Primary Schools, Junior High Schools, Senior High Schools, and College of Education. The level of education is within the average group.

2.2 Description of study design

The study is an embedded mixed-method design that involves the simultaneous collection of data set by the qualitative and quantitative approach but has one form of data set to play a supportive role to the other form of data. The reason for collecting the second form of data is to support the primary form of data.

The study applied a mixture of the descriptive survey, and cross-sectional design techniques. Descriptive design was used to ascertain in-depth knowledge of learners' and teachers' understanding of the child's Rights and ability to express their views. Cross-sectional design identified teachers and learners who observed and exercise the child's right in the Numeracy class and attested to its efficacy and workability.

2.3 Sampling techniques and sample

A stratified sampling method was used due to the heterogeneous nature of the population. It was grouped into homogeneous groups thus; teachers, school children, and circuit supervisor. To avoid bias, a simple random technique was employed to select respondents among teachers and school children. All the respondents were assigned a number which was put in a key soapbox after which field workers picked on behalf of the respondents. This way everyone in the groups stood the chance of being selected for the study. Besides, the selection also considered schools located in a developed town and undeveloped town.

Convenient purposive sampling method was used to select headteachers and census sampling was used to select circuit supervisors because circuit supervisors were few. This flows from the mixed method (pragmatic) approach.

Table 1: Sampled of the Respondents

<i>Circuits in Krachi-East Municipality</i>	<i>Number of Learners</i>	<i>Number of Teachers</i>	<i>Circuit Supervisors</i>
A	4	2	1
B	2	2	1
C	2	2	1
D	2	2	1
E	3	2	1
F	2	2	1
G	2	2	1
H	4	2	1
I	2	2	1
Total	23	18	9

Sources: Field data

2.4 Data collection instruments

Data collection instruments used were closed-ended questionnaires, observation, and a semi-structured interview guide. Teachers and circuit supervisors were given questionnaires followed by interviews whereas learners were interviewed and followed by observation. In all eighteen (18) teachers as well as headteachers were contacted. Also, Twenty-three (23) learners were interviewed and observed. Seven (9) circuit supervisors responded to the questionnaires and were also interviewed. One (1) percent of the population was calculated for learners using the *raosoft app* to arrive at the sample size. The instrument used was validated by allowing experts with the human right experience and the early grade teacher also corrected a few errors. This was followed by a test-retest for one month to ascertain the consistency of the instrument.

The construct of the instrument merit the study objectives. Pearson Correlation was calculated to be 0.75 ($r = 0.75$) which indicates a positive correlation.

2.5 Description of statistical methods used for analysis

The data analysis was done in this study using simple tables that involved the processing of data from the questionnaire to make a meaningful interpretation. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed for the analysis. The tables were used to give a clear view of the distribution of the responses given by respondents to each question in the questionnaire. Qualitative data were analyzed using QSR NVivo-12 computer-assisted software for analyzing qualitative data). While quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel.

3.0 Result

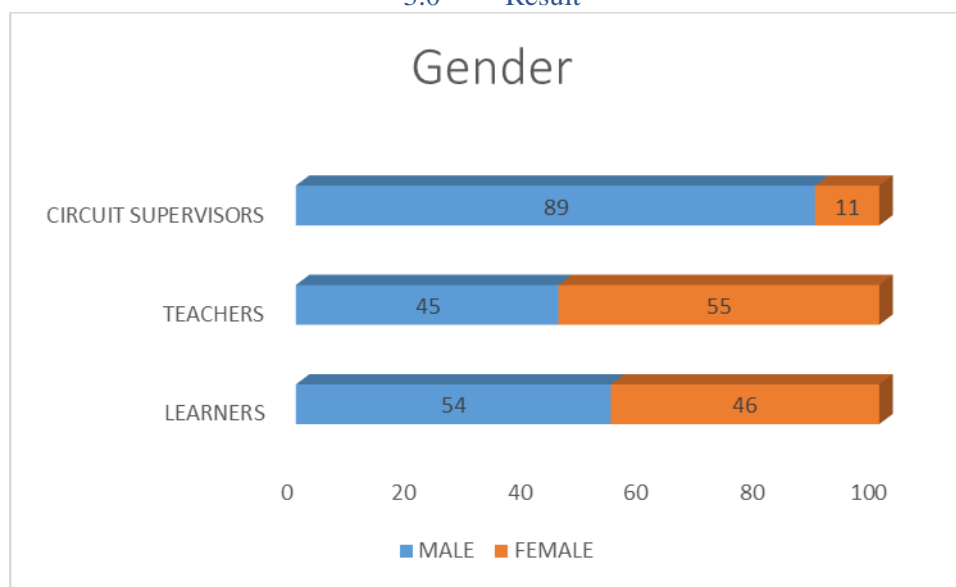


Figure 1: Gender of the respondents

In the gender responses, 54% were male learners and 46% were female learners. Gender distribution for male teachers was 45% and females were 55% teaching in the early childhood grade up to lower primary. For circuit supervisors, the female constitutes 11% and males constitute 89%. There were more male circuit supervisors than there were female. This also applies to male learners in the municipality. However, female teachers dominate the teaching of early and lower grade classes.

3.1 Awareness of the rights of children at school

In table 1.1 indicate that in Krachi-East Municipality 69% of the teachers in the early grade level were aware of the child's right in numeracy class. The learners made of 78% were aware of children's Rights in class. When the learners were asked how they heard of the child's awareness in the school environment. The class teacher, girl-child director, parents, and on television were the medium in which the learners had awareness of the child's Rights.

Table 1.1: Level of Awareness of the Rights of Children at School

Awareness of the Rights of Children at School	Teachers N = 18
	Percentage (%)
Teachers who know children's Rights	69
Teachers who do not know children's Rights	31
	Learners N = 23
	Percentage (%)
Learners who know children's Rights	78
Learners who do not know children's Rights	22

	Circuit Supervisor and Girl Child Director N = 9
	Percentage (%)
Circuit supervisors and girl child who know children's Rights	100
Circuit supervisors and girl child who does not know children's Rights	0

Sources: Field Work

All the education supervisors in Krachi-East Municipality were aware of the children's Rights in school and all this awareness was realized by reading the Children's Act, Act 560.

It is implied that early grade learners, teachers, and circuit supervisors in the municipality are much aware of Children's Rights.

3.2 Recognition of the rights of children within the school environment.

During teaching and other school environment activities, the respondents (learners) were of the view that some teachers recognize children's right whiles teaching. For instance, respondent "PV-001 said during teaching I can ask questions for clarifications; PV-002 when I don't understand what he is teaching and I ask questions, steps are taken to clear the misconception; PV-003 said we are encouraged to ask questions and answer questions in the classroom; PV-004 said I feel free to ask us questions and answer our questions and we also urged to ask and answer their questions; PV-007 they help us to understand what is being taught and we ask questions if it is not clear; PV-009 they allow us to express our opinion on matters being discussed in class; PV-010 when I ask questions in class they don't shout at me they take their time to explain systematically; P-011 am able to share my ideas, listen to what others say and give comments to make all of us understand the lesson effectively ; PV-012 opportunity is given for questioning and comments; PV-013 there is always free atmosphere for questions, answers and contribution to a lesson discussion; PV-014 we are able to express our thoughts on ideas being discussed in class; PV-15 questions and answers on topic being discussed in class are allowed and free atmosphere; PV-016 we are encouraged to answer and ask questions for clarification during lesson delivery for clear concepts; PV-017 through questions and answers from us the learners; PV-020 they encourage us to ask questions, no answer is wrong however there were few teachers who shout at us when we are unable to answer question in class and some also use cane to beat us. This makes some of us hate Numeracy because of the teacher"; according to PV-005 said when it is time for Numeracy the teacher becomes unfriendly.

In support of this 63% of teachers in the municipality said they respected and recognized child right in class whiles 37% disrespect and unrecognize child's Rights in class. Sixty-five percent of the learners in early grade level were given the opportunity in class during the teaching of numeracy whiles 35% said they are not allowed to express themselves in class whenever the teacher is teaching.

Table 1:2 Recognition of the Rights of Children within School Environment

Recognition	Teachers N = 18	
	Percent (%)	
Respect and recognize Child's Right in Class	63	
Disrespect and unrecognize Child's Right in Class	37	
	Learners N = 23	
	Yes	No
Given right in class during Numeracy class	65%	35%
Pupils who do recognize their Rights	73%	27%

Sources: Fieldwork

To ascertain the extent of personal recognition in the school environment, learners (73%) express themselves by saying that they have recognized their right in the school environment by conducting assembly, have a private study in school, and respect each other views and suggestions. However, 27% were of the view that they do not have their right in the school.

Learners recognize the Rights of children within the school environment. It implies that children have the right to learn during teaching and also carry other non-routine activities.

3.3 Abuse of the rights of children in basic schools

Admittedly, all the respondents unanimously answered that there were various forms of abuses of the Rights of children in their schools by some colleagues with the view that African children need a cane to be transformed. Existing forms of abuse identified were; canning, knock pupil on the head, spanking; insults, sacking a child from class, refusal to allow children to go on 'break' at the appointed time, not allowing children to play, sexual look & defilement, and weeding. Running around the classroom block and scrubbing toilets. They also identified causes of child abuse as; Lack of awareness on the part of some teachers and pupils especially those who are living in the villages, non-reinforcement of sanctions when abuses do occur, poverty or low wages, and cultural system.

Out of eighteen (18) teachers contacted, fifteen (15) responded in their questionnaires that even though they heard of child's right, they still lack knowledge of the Rights of the child because the majority of them were not part of the training and no in-service training has been organized from an expert who is rich in the field of Human Right issues.

Table 1.3 Abuses of the rights of children in basic schools

S/N	Abuses in Numeracy Class	Number of Learners and Teachers	Percentage (%) N = 23		Ranking
			Yes	No	
1	Canning	23	71	29	1 st
2	Insults	23	70	30	2 nd
3	Teacher's 'gloomy'	23	68	32	3 rd
4	Sexual Look	23	10	90	4 th
5	All the Above	18	73	27	

From table 1.3 insults came after canning in ranking as the most frequently occurring abuse in the classroom of Krachi-East Municipality. Seventy-one (71%) of the respondents made up of learners mentioned canning as the commonest form of abuse. Also, 70% of the respondents mentioned insults as the next abuse whiles teaching numeracy in the classroom. Teacher's gloomy whiles teaching numeracy endorsed by 68% of the learners and it was concluded that sexual look was said about 10% of the respondents which therefore put it as the least occurring abuse in the sampled schools.

The circuit and lead supervisors in the municipality explained the rationale for the presence of a cane on the headteacher table. It was said that even though they are not supposed to cane children, they are unable to do without it because it is one of the most effective ways of maintaining discipline in school. Again it was said that "*being done when children see you with a cane they will quickly cease any bad doing whatever bad thing they are engaged in, other than when you are not with a cane*". "They become conscious and focus in class". However, in response to that learners said "*it scares them and makes them grab fear especially when learning numeracy*". The teachers (73%) in the municipality accepted the fact that there were some abuses in the educational system and subscribe to Canning; insults, teacher's gloomy.

It is evident that there are some abuses of children in numeracy class which is impeding the child's understanding of numeracy concept in the Krachi-East Municipality

3.3.1 Rate of Occurrence of Child Abuse in Schools, the following ratings were adopted; Very High-meaning frequently occurring, High, Moderate-which means it occurs periodically and Low-which means it occurs once in a very long time or seldom occurs.

Table 1.4: Abuses of the Rights of Children in School

Respondents	Very High	High	Moderate	Low
Teachers (N)			18	
Percentage Rate	2	15	74	9
Learners (N)			23	
Percentage Rate	5	61	34	0

From table 1.4 above it is obvious that the abuse of the Rights of children in the selected schools in the perspective of the teacher is moderate with a percentage rate of 74 %. However, in the receiver's (learners) perspective of the child abuse rate of occurring is dominated by high with a percentage rating of 61%. It can be established that there are elements of child abuse practices in Krachi-East Municipality. When the children were interviewed the affirmative response was PV-006 *said the way the teacher shouts at me does not make me missed Numeracy class; PV-002 said because of the cane in the class sometime I don't even come to school; PV-009 said me sometimes I come to school but when its time for Numeracy I go to the school canteen until the class is closed.*

4.0 Discussions

Ursin and Haanpaa's (2017) study conducted on children's ability to influence their own lives begins with awareness and knowledge of their Rights and it was found that a minority of the children were aware of children's Rights and knew about the Rights they had. On the issues of child awareness of their right, it is found that in Krachi –East Municipality majority of the early grade learners were aware of their Rights which differs from the study conducted by Ursin and Haanpaa (2017). This implies that their awareness of child's Rights will enable learners in Krachi-East Municipality to have the ability to influence their own lives as a core aspect of well-being as found comparatively to Lundy (2014). The learner's experiences of belonging and being heard will be developed by making children build belief systems, attitudes, and confidence in their activities of operations regarding how they can improve their quality of life. This is supported by Grover (2005) and Jiang *et al.*, (2014) study conducted. More important children's awareness of their Rights and perceptions of respect for their Rights are fundamental to the execution of individual participation and, more broadly, the promotion of democratic values in society is the life acquisitions that will be imbibing in them. Learners who do have the comprehensive knowledge of all aspects of matters affecting them can be a voice if they have sufficient awareness and understanding of the Rights they possess to be capable of forming their views on these matters as discussed in UN (2009), again children who participate in children's Rights education exhibit higher self-esteem, more support for others' Rights, higher school engagement, stronger school motivation and more enjoyment of school as concluded by Jiang *et al.*, (2014). However, the finding disagrees with the precision of Torney-Purta *et al.*, (1999) which was realized that the vast majority of children lack knowledge of or have a distorted or incomplete view of children's Rights.

The acuties of being heard and taken seriously by adults go hand in hand with children's lived experiences in both home and school contexts. Respectful growth contexts and possibilities for participation were found to be important in explaining children's knowledge and perceived respect in many countries (Ursin and Haanpaa, 2017). This reflects learner's recognition and respect of their right in the classroom. The result points out to the fact that learner's right being respected correspond to Tomlinson (2011) which was stated that in a high school teacher respect learners's right enable their learners to continually understand how to teach them better and making sure; connect with their learners, and connect their learners; ensure that each learners contributes to the success of the class; make curriculum engaging and meaningful for each learners; expect much of each learners to provide the support necessary for learners to meet those expectations.

Again, Howe and Covell, (2005) & (2010) work have examined a variety of Rights-based education practice and found out recognizing child right promote children's engagement in school, which in turn has led to an increase in children's sense of academic and social efficacy; result in a more positive school climate with better peer and learners-teacher relationships and reductions in bullying and reductions in teacher burnout; enhance learners values and behaviors in studying numeracy. The Rights the children deserve in Numeracy class enable learners to ask questions worry in class and communicate Numeracy and this is reflected in Tripod survey conducted in Cambridge Education which findings indicate learners perceptions relate to achievement gains in numeracy class to the identification of teacher's effective and less effective teaching when it is experienced by learners exercising their right in class (The Education Trust, 2011). Learners' right recognition in the municipality within the school environment will positively be impacted by academic performance.

However, there are abuses that children in the lower grade in the municipality experienced while in the classroom correspond to Umobong (2010) whose paper has been able to show that child abuse and neglect is a global problem that takes place in many setting one of which is the school. The implicated identified presents a serious drawback on the Child who is abused and its Implications for the Educational Sector in Nigeria 117 child educational development is hindered by the societal growth and development.

The problem of child abuse in the education system requires adequate and efficient handling to improve educational development. It was also realized that Chitiyo and Pietrantoni (2019), research conducted has consistently shown that exposure to child maltreatment in all its forms negatively affects the current and future educational performance and emotional and psychological well-being of children. This explains the fact as if the children in the numeracy class are abused in class will create disaffection for Numeracy and the child either partially and permanently becomes dyscalculia.

The study is intended to situate children's accounts on the matter of children's Rights within the context of larger-scale factors and social structures that are assumed to affect their experience. The theoretical base for the present study lies in the sociology of childhood, and which locate children's Rights or Rights thinking within a broader sociological framework (Alanen, 2010). We argue that awareness of and respect for children's Rights are both related to the national context and depend on children's social environment, which shapes individual development and experiences on a more local level (Casas *et al.*, 2006; Mayall, 2015). With a cross-national setting, the present study addresses issues of possible differential handling of state actions and children's lived experiences. Norway, which has been demonstrated to have high levels of awareness, knowledge, and perceived respect among older children (Rees and Main, 2015), was chosen as the reference group for cross-national comparisons. In connection to children's experiences, attention is given to equality of Rights thinking and thus discusses possible inequalities based on gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status.

5.0 Conclusion

Even though the children in the early grade have knowledge on Child's right and some schools and teachers have shown respect to such children making their life approaching possibility in class but there is a worrying situation and calls for the concern of all stakeholders in education people's awareness to provide necessary precautionary measures towards child abuse in numeracy class. This inadequate knowledge about the Rights of the pupil by some learners as well as teachers who should protect, prevent and guard the interest of their pupils leaves them vulnerable.

The implication of non-recognition of the Rights of children in the school environment is that it takes away all the necessary precautionary measures that are supposed to be adhered to by caretakers and the authorities to ensure total peace and harmonious upbringing of these children are not missed in class. This has far-reaching negative repercussions on the learning on the learning environment of children in the sense that, the insecurity that results from this hinders the peaceful learning of Numeracy. It also derails the image of institutions involved and scares potential learners away.

Finally, the high incidence of child abuse in school as indicated in the result serve as distinctive for school attendance and learning. It impacts negatively on the development of the learning skills of children. This is detrimental to national development. This is because children are the future leaders. As such, they are supposed to be properly trained and equipped with the necessary skills so that, they can continue the developmental process of the nation when they take up the mantle in the future. In the era of clamor for sustainable development, if some segments of the society's development are compromised the sustainable national development will be jeopardized.

It is recommended that stakeholders in KEM in-charge of education should encourage and promote child right in all schools and also mitigate child abuse in class

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