

ABSTRACT

AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF KITTITIAN PARENTS' CONCEPTIONS OF EARLY LITERACY ON THEIR PRESCHOOLERS' LITERACY DEVELOPMENT

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The purpose of this research was to investigate the literacy practices of Kittitian parents with their preschoolers in four literacy environments influenced by two SES bands - Lower and Middle. Based on the findings from the investigation, implications for educating parents as early literacy providers were suggested.

A qualitative paradigm was employed as it was the most appropriate method to explore the research questions. Data were collected from a group of twelve Kittitian families through the use of ethnographic methodologies - questionnaires, interview schedules and audio-taping of parent-child interactions. The analysis of the data examined three categories of parent behaviours- psycho-social, general support and literacy behaviours. An adaptation of Hannon's (1995) literacy framework was used to categorise and interpret the parents' literacy behaviours. The four areas of the framework were opportunities, recognition, interaction, and model. Factors impinging on those behaviours such as parents' and children's perception about reading were also analysed.

Findings from the analysis revealed that the assumed differences in parental literacy practices in terms of SES did not obtain. The data showed that it was the quality of the parental practices that influenced the types, frequency and quality of the literacy behaviours practised in each environment.

The implications stated that, through suitably planned programmes, parents should be educated in terms of important practices that are optimal for children's early literacy development.