

Educators' Attributions to the Prevalence of Non-Readers among Learners at Early Childhood Education (ECE) Level in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province

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Abstract: This research sought to establish educators' attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan province. The study was guided by the theoretical framework of Attribution theory by Bernard Weiner. The mixed methods approach and case study with snowball sampling method were used to enable an in-depth exploration of primary schools teaching reading at ECE level. Open-ended questionnaires and structured interview guide were employed for generating data. The study revealed that there was a high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan province. The study also revealed that the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level was attributed to educators' lack of knowledge on the child development theories, lack of psychology of reading, lack of clarity of ECE policy or circular on teaching reading at ECE level in Zimbabwe and to mother tongue interference. The research also attributed the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level to educators' lack of reading teaching skills, attitude toward teaching reading and to unavailability of reading resources as well as to poor staffing in infant department. The study recommended that there is need for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to revise and review the ECE policy on teaching of reading at ECE level, to ensure that ECE teachers are adequately trained, developed and assisted to obtain the highest qualifications and skills possible in the teaching of reading at ECE level and, to provide quality and relevant ECE reading resources and facilities to ECE teachers.

Key words: Prevalence, non-readers, ECE level, Educator's attributions

I. INTRODUCTION

Teaching reading at Early Childhood Education (ECE) level is a fundamental task for teachers in Zimbabwe in their attempt to improve young children's academic performance. The integration of ECE into the Zimbabwean formal primary school system calls for the need for qualified ECE teachers to use effective methods in the teaching of reading since there is an increase in the number of non-readers

in infant classes (Dyanda, Makoni, Muduku and Kuyayama, 2006). Moyo (2005) observes that most of Zimbabwean children at ECE level struggle to read. Such reports did not give a good picture about what is happening in the Zimbabwean education sector, particularly, ECE level. Where is the problem? Is it the ECE learners who are dull? Is there something wrong with the ECE curriculum in Zimbabwe? Could it be the educators who are not well trained or there is something wrong with the teaching methods? All these questions deserve to be addressed by this study seeking to establish educators' attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan province.

Statement of the problem

Given the persistence of high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Zimbabwe, it was important to explore educators' attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan Province.

Sub-Research Questions

1. What is the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district?
2. What do teachers in Khami district attribute the prevalence of non-readers at ECE level to?
3. What are the strategies that may be used to improve the teaching of reading at Early Childhood Education level?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore educators' attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district in order to establish the strategies that may be used to improve the teaching of reading.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this study, the assessment of educators' attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in

Khami district was guided by the theoretical framework of Attribution theory by Bernard Weiner. Strong (2010) and Titter (2014) maintained that attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level needs a frame of reference like Bernard Weiner's theory to guide the generation of data and interpretation of empirical findings. It assisted the researcher of this study to find out how educators attached meaning to the high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level. Thus, how did they interpret causes of the prevalence of non-readers among ECE learners? An essential assumption of Bernard Weiner's attribution theory is educators attempt to explain the causes as either internal (ability, effort) factors or external causes (luck, context) of the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level (Titter, 2014; Rakes, Dunn and Rakes, 2013; Strong, 2010). Internal and external factors may be viewed by an educator as either controllable or uncontrollable (Titter, 2014) and can determine the ECE learner's level of motivation and influence subsequent behavior based on whether the cause is viewed as changeable and within the learner's control (Rakes et al, 2013; Weiner, 1986). Individual educators may attribute these perceived failures (high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level) to things such as ability, effort, context, luck, or mood (Graham and Williams, 2009; Weiner, 2006; Hamilton and Akhter, 2002). These perceived causal determinants of the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level fall within three dimensions - locus, stability, and control (Weiner, 2000, 2006; Rakes et al, 2013; Titter, 2014) (see Table 1.1). For example, luck is external (locus), unstable (stability), and uncontrollable (controllability).

Table 1.1 Causal determinants of prevalence of non-readers among learners

Dimension	Attributional Quality	
Locus	Internal	Factors that originate within the individual
	External	Factors that originate from the environment
Stability	Stable	Individual believes the outcome is likely to be identical if same behavior occurs in the future
	Unstable	Individual believes that the outcome is likely to be different if same behavior occurs in the future
Controllability	Controllable	Individual believes the factor can be altered
	Uncontrollable	Individual does not believe the factor can be easily altered

Adopted from Rakes et al, (2013)

Basing on Bernard Weiner's attribution theory, the perceived causal determinants of the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level based on one's ability, effort or mood fall in internal locus of control (Hamilton and Akhter, 2002) and they originate within the individual ECE educator or ECE learner (Weiner, 2000, 2006; Rakes et al, 2013; Titter, 2014). They are stable because individual believes that the outcome

is likely to be identical if same behavior occurs in the future (Weiner, 2006; Strong 2010) and are controllable because individual believes that the attribute can be altered (Weiner, 2006; Strong 2010). Educators' attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level based on context and luck fall in external locus of control (Hamilton and Akhter, 2002). These attributions originate from the environment (Weiner, 2000, 2006; Rakes et al, 2013; Titter, 2014) and are unstable (Weiner, 2006; Strong 2010). Individual believes that the outcome is likely to be different if same behavior occurs in the future and are uncontrollable as well as not be easily altered (Weiner, 2006; Strong 2010). Therefore, these types of attributions impact how educators cognitively, affectively, and behaviorally respond in future situations of teaching reading to learners at ECE level (Weiner, 2006; Strong 2010).

The prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level

Studies in developed and developing countries reveal that there is a high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level (Nyamu, 2015; Zano, Tshabalala, Ncube and Khosi, 2015; UN, 2013; Geske and Ozola, 2008). A study by Geske and Ozola (2008) in Latvia presents that the prevalence of non-readers among learners at pre-school age range from 15% to 62%. The results reveal that majority of learners at ECE level in Latvia had reading difficulties with some learners who cannot read at all. According to Shamir and Korat (2007) reading failure at ECE level is a serious national problem in American states and 44% of the nation's children had little skills to perform reading activities at ECE level (Guthrie, Wigfield, Metsala and Cox, 2009). A study by UN (2013) in developed and developing countries presents that over 200 million learners at ECE level lack basic reading whether in school or not. According to studies by Ise, Leo, Daisy and Luis (2011) in EU countries, a high prevalence of no-readers among learners at ECE level was reported. In a similar study by Wim, Bouwmans and Broeders (2006) the prevalence of non-readers among Dutch general elementary education learners was 20%.

Despite significant gains in expanding access to Early Childhood Education throughout the world, large numbers of ECE children in African region are simply not able to read (Mwanamukubi, 2013; Nyamu, 2015). More than 200 million children under the age of seven in the developing world, particularly Africa, are at risk of not reading to their full potential (UNICEF, 2012). Mwanamukubi (2013) presents that most of ECE children from Southern African countries including Mauritius, Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique and Zimbabwe had reading difficulties, with some infants unable to read at all. Another study by Butler (2016) in South Africa revealed that ECE in the Eastern Cape was in deep trouble, with almost three-quarters of the children not even being taught the bare minimum of reading. One of the most shocking findings is that there was a national reading crisis, as about 60% of children had not learnt to read in any language by the end of ECE level. Zambia has been concerned with the

unsatisfactory levels of reading ability among ECE children (Kachenga, 2008) with majority graduated without the ability to read (Mwanamukubi, 2013). A study by Matafwali (2005) reiterated that 49.1% of the ECE children in Zambia could not read words at all, with 57.5% infants not able to read any single sentence. In similar survey by Uwezo (2011) in East African countries, most of the children at ECE level were not able to read. A study by Gottesman, Lilacroen and Rotkin (2002) in Ghana, found a high prevalence of non-readers in socio-economically disadvantaged ECE children. Most of ECE children in Kenyan primary schools were identified as poor readers and weaker in phonological awareness skills (Nyamu, 2015).

In the Zimbabwean scenario, a study by Zano et al (2015) in Nkayi district found that high failure rate at infant level was a result of high prevalence of non-readers. In a related study carried out in Harare by Dyanda et al (2006) revealed that there was an increase in the number of non-readers among learners at infant level. Findings from a study by Hungwe (2015) in Vhutika Mberengwa district reflect that the percentage of non-readers among learners at infant level was in the range 20% to 60%. Moyo (2005) observes that most of Zimbabwean children at ECE level struggle to read. It appears that the high prevalence of non-readers across the globe is a cause of concern and influenced this study to assess educators' attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan province.

Attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level

Findings from studies by Mawere, (2016) and Katz (1996) attribute the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in developing countries to educators' lack of knowledge in child development theories and psychology of reading (Neuman, Josephson and Chau, 2015; Murnane, Sawhill and Snow, 2012). ECE teachers' lack of knowledge in child development theory and psychology of reading, to guide their teaching of reading to children from birth to 8 years of age, caused the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level (Mawere, 2016; Mataruse, 2002; Brown, 2000). Child development theories are useful in helping educators to guide their reading instruction at ECE level. Therefore, it is from this point of view that ECE teachers' poor child development and reading psychological knowledge contributed to the existence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in developing countries including Zimbabwe. Research study by Ackerman, (2006) presents that one of the major causes of high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Kenya was lack of proper policy framework on teaching reading at ECE level. The findings shows that Kenyan ECE policy was silent on how teachers should teach reading at ECE level and contributed to the prevalence of non-readers among ECE learners.

A study by Uwezo (2011) in East Africa, indicated that the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level was attributed to educators' lack of adequate reading teaching skills. The results reveal that teachers were not aware of phonics and whole word approaches to teaching reading at ECE level (Hlaethwa, 2013). In a similar study by Marima (2016) in Kenya, high prevalence of non-readers among ECE learners was due to lack of proper training on teaching reading skills at ECE level. Kenyan ECE educators did not have phonological skills needed to effectively teach children with phonemic problems during the teaching of reading at ECE level. In Zambia, most teachers were not adequately equipped with skills to teach reading at ECE level (Kalindi, 2005; Mwanamukubi, 2013). A study by Akinrotimi and Olowe (2016) in Nigeria discovered that Early Childhood Educators were not professionally qualified to teach reading at ECE level and caused the prevalence of non-readers among ECE learners. This is in agreement with Amadi (2013) that educators' lack of professional qualification in teaching reading was a critical attribution to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Nigeria. A study by Jackson (2016) and Murnane et al (2012) in the Western and Southern regions of the United States reveals that high prevalence of non-readers among ECE English Language learners was attributed to unqualified educators. In South Africa, the prevalence of poor reading achievement in the Early Childhood learning experienced at home and in ECE centers was attributed to educators' poor pedagogical knowledge and it inadequately prepared children for the demands of further schooling (Hlaethwa, 2013; Neuman et al 2015; Verbeek, 2010).

Findings from a study by Cummings (2015) in Washington State also disclosed that high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level was attributed to educators' negative attitudes towards teaching of reading at ECE level. Gutrie et al (2009) revealed that the high prevalence of non-readers among ECE children in United States was attributed to infants' negative attitudes towards reading. According to Murnane et al (2012), and Anderman and Midgley (1998), struggling readers negatively assumed that they were responsible for their reading difficulties and eventually disturbed their reading ability. Thus, ECE children doubted their ability to learn reading and quickly gave up when faced with reading challenges (Schunk and Zimmerman, 1997). The high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Zambia and Jamaican primary schools was attributed to different backgrounds of the ECE learners (Mwanamukubi, 2013; Moodie-Reid, 2016). Findings disclose that it was difficult for the teacher to give individual attention to too many infants with different reading backgrounds and contributed to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level.

The prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Kenyan and Nigerian primary schools was attributed to unavailability of reading resources (Amali et al, 2012;

Okewole, et al., Osho, et al., 2014; Marima, 2016). The findings showed that lack of reading materials in the homes and schools was perceived by educators as the most common attribution to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Kenya and Nigeria. In Zambia, serious poor staffing especially in remote areas also influenced to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level (Mwanamukubi, 2013). Mother tongue interference was another attribution to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Kenya (Marima (2016), in Zambia (Mwanamukubi, 2013; Maruyama, 2007) and in Jamaica (Moodie-Reid, 2016; Bryan, 2012; Jettka, 2010; Lewis, 2010). The findings reveal that ECE children used their mother tongue, such as Chewa and Ngoni as well as Jamaican Creole, respectively at home and at school in the Early Childhood Education as prescribed by their government policies resulting in difficulties in learning reading English language. The mother tongue seems to have an upper hand compared to English which is the official language thereby complicated the learning of reading at ECE level in Southern African countries (Hlalethwa, 2013). Although the abundance of research evidence supports that there is a high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in developed and developing countries (Butler, 2016; Zano et al, 2015; Mwanamukubi, 2013; UNICEF, 2012) and attributions to prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in developed countries (Akinrotimi and Olowe, 2016; Jackson, 2016; Eithne et al 2012; Verbeek, 2010), it is important for this study to assess educators' attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khambi district Bulawayo Metropolitan province Zimbabwe.

Strategies that may be used to improve effective teaching of reading at ECE level

A study by Foorman, Herrera and Adrea (2015) recommends that oral language with rich language support is the foundation for teaching of reading at ECE level in order to reduce the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level. Thus, oral language provides children with a sense of words and sentences, and builds sensitivity to the sound system for educators to effectively assist ECE learners to acquire phonological awareness and phonics that will improve their reading ability. Researchers in America suggest that ECE learners need to see and interact with print (books, magazines, grocery lists) in everyday situations at home, in preschool, and daycare well before they start primary school to achieve effective teaching of reading at ECE level (Hooper, 2010; Froma and Dianne, 2006). Thus, educators can see their ECE learners' growing appreciation and enjoyment of print as he or she begins interaction with print such as to recognize words that rhyme, scribble with crayons, point out logos and street signs, and name some letters of the alphabet. This implies that, effective teaching of reading at ECE level needs learners with strong verbal abilities and good print exposure. Marima, (2016) also suggests that educators need to allow children playfully engage in sound play, learn to segment words into

their separate sounds, and map sounds onto printed letters to achieve effective teaching of reading at ECE level. Therefore, it is important for the educators to engage their ECE learners in sound play and equip them with reading materials such as books, pictures, magazines, words and alphabet to achieve an effective teaching of reading at ECE level in order to reduce the prevalence of non-readers (Strickland and Riley-Ayers, 2006; Roskos, Christie and Richgels, 2003). Thus, educators need to provide their ECE learners with enough time and space to explore books and print on her own or with friends to achieve effective teaching of reading at ECE level. The study by Marima et al (2016) in Kenya suggests that educators should be adequately equipped with teaching and learning resources, trained in different approaches and in-serviced in the latest approaches of teaching reading at ECE level in order to reduce prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level. Thus, educators should get refresher courses, workshops and seminars on methods of teaching reading at ECE level. Studies Marima et al (2016) and Hooper (2010) also suggested that Phonics method is the best known and widely used method in the teaching of reading in the English language at ECE level. Pedagogical practice for beginning readers at ECE level focuses on learning letter names, then sounds, then syllable blending until the learners master the code (Moodie-Reid, 2016; Campbell, 2015; Cunningham, 2012; Verbeek, 2010; Pearson, 2000). Strickland and Riley-Ayers (2006) suggested that Educators need to use the whole word approach known as 'look and say' to teach reading at ECE level. With an aid of pictures, ECE learners can effectively learn to recognize whole words or sentences rather than individual sounds (Hooper, 2010; Mercer, 2001). Thus, an ECE learner need to look at a picture and word which the teacher reads and repeat the word (Noddings, 2007; Mercer, 2001). According to the philosophy of Comenius to the teaching of reading at ECE level, use of combination of words and pictures is powerful in the teaching of reading at ECE level in order to reduce non-reader among ECE learners (Moodie-Reid, 2016; Campbell, 2015; Noddings, 2007; Strickland and Riley-Ayers, 2006)

III. METHODOLOGY

Research Approach

This study used mixed methods approach where the researcher mixes quantitative approach and qualitative approach in a single study (Tichapondwa, 2013; Creswell, 2007; Maree, 2007) to explore educators' attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khambi district Bulawayo Metropolitan province. Mixed methods approach facilitated combination and triangulation of research approaches which offers a more comprehensive approach to finding answers to the research questions (Johnson and Christensen, 2014).

Research Design

The case study was considered the most appropriate design to employ in this study because it provided a systematic way to

collect data or multiple perspectives rooted in the ECE context (Creswell, 2013; Ritchie and Lewis, 2003). The main aim was to understand participants in a social context by interpreting their actions as a single group or community, hence the case (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Case study allowed the researcher of this study to generate a variety of ECE participant perspectives over the educators' attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan province.

Sample

The sample was drawn from a target population of 60 ECE teachers and 15 Administrators (School Head or Infant Teacher in Charge – TIC) from Khami district, Bulawayo Metropolitan province. The ECE teachers were used in this study because they experienced the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district. Primary School Heads or infant TIC as School administrators, are directly involved with the supervision and monitoring of teaching reading at ECE level in Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan province. The chosen sample was made up of 16 purposively snowballed selected ECE teachers who voluntarily responded to the open-ended questionnaires and 4 school administrators (Primary School Heads or infant TICs) who also voluntarily participated in the interviews. Therefore, the sample size of 20 snowballed participants was determined by data saturation principle where no new or relevant information seemed to emerge (Creswell, 2007; Johnson and Christensen, 2014).

Instruments

In this study, self-administered open-ended questionnaires and interview were used to generate information on educators' attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE in Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan province. The researcher of this study was the main data generating instrument to administer questionnaires to the selected primary school ECE teachers and school administrators (primary school heads or ECE TICs) from Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan province.

Data collection procedure

The researcher got permission to conduct the study from the Bulawayo Provincial Education Office and verbal consent from the participants before any questionnaire sent to them. To achieve a hundred percent (100%) return of questionnaires, then researcher of this study had a follow up exercise to the respective respondents. Interview sessions with selected participants were carried out at respective selected primary schools in Khami district, by the researcher himself.

Data Analysis

In this empirical study, interim and thematic analysis approaches were employed throughout the study for data processing. Interim analysis helped the researcher to collect data over an extended time period until he successfully deeper

understood the participants' opinions on the educators' attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE in Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan province. The data generated constantly reviewed, categorised, labelled and analysed to form themes and patterns based on sub-research questions which guided this study. The qualitative data generated was effectively analysed through transcription, segmenting, and coding as recommended by (Johnson and Christensen, 2014).

IV. RESULTS

What is the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district?

The ECE teachers indicated that there was a high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan province. ECE teachers acknowledged that 20% to 44% of their ECE classes had poor reading skills with some ECE learners unable to read even a picture at all. The following excerpts from the open-ended questionnaires confirm the above:

“Forty-four percent (44%) of my class have reading difficulties. These children have little skills to perform reading activities”.

“We are in deep trouble, almost one quarter (1/4) of the children are unable to read the vowels or letters from the alphabet or pictures”.

“Forty percent (40%) of my ECE learners lacks the ability to read. Truly speaking, letter or number recognition is a problem. They cannot read simple pictures at all”.

“Fifteen (15) out of forty-five (45) ECE learners struggle to read. This is a high prevalence because the number of non-readers is too big”.

Above findings agree with the results from the interviews of primary school administrators (Heads or infant TICs) which disclosed that there was a high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in their schools in Khami district Bulawayo metropolitan province. This is evidenced by the one participant who said;

“Mmmm, about forty percent (40%) of learners at ECE level have reading difficulties with ten percent (10%) unable to read all. This is a serious problem we are experiencing at our school because majority of such percentage may graduate from ECE level without reading skills”.

Another said;

“The average statistics reported by ECE teachers range from thirty percent (30%) to forty-five percent (45%) non-readers among learners at ECE level. ECE teachers are trying their best to reduce this figure but it is very tough because the number is too big”.

These views indicate that the ECE teachers and primary school administrators (Heads or infant TICs) admitted that

there was a high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan province. This concur with studies in developed and developing countries which reveal that there is a high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level (Nyamu, 2015; Zano et al, 2015; UN, 2013; Geske and Ozola, 2008). Most of ECE children in Kenyan primary schools are identified as poor readers and weaker in phonological awareness skills (Nyamu, 2015). A study by Geske and Ozola (2008) in Latvia presents that the prevalence of non-readers among learners at pre-school age range from 15% to 62%. In the same vein, findings from a study by Guthrie et al (2009) in America also revealed that 44% of the nation's children had little skills to perform reading activities at ECE level. In a similar study by Wim et al (2006) the prevalence of non-readers among Dutch general elementary education learners was 20%.

How do teachers attribute the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level?

Results from open-ended questionnaire are presented in table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2. Table showing ECE teachers' responses on the attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan Province

N = 16

Responses generated (attributions)	Frequency	Percentage
Educators' lack of knowledge in the child development and in psychology of reading.	14	88%
Lack of proper ECE policy on teaching reading at ECE level.	10	63%
Lack of adequate reading teaching skills	9	56%
Negative attitudes towards teaching and learning reading	15	94%
Unavailability of reading resources	16	100%
Mother tongue interference	14	88%
Poor staffing	8	50%

Table 1.2 illustrates that ECE teachers attributed the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district to educators' lack of knowledge on the child development theories and in psychology of reading. This also agree with the school administrators that ECE educators in Khami district lacked knowledge on the child development theories and in psychology of reading that explain how to teach young children to read. The results also show that the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level was due to lack of clarity of ECE policy or circular on teaching reading at ECE level in Zimbabwe. The primary school administrators also admitted that Zimbabwean ECE policy was silent on how teachers should teach reading at ECE level and contributed to the prevalence of non-readers among learners in Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan province.

Table 1.2 shows that high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district was attributed to educator's lack of reading teaching skills. The results from the

school administrators also indicated that ECE teachers in Khami district lacked adequate teaching skills for reading at ECE level. Findings reveal that high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district was attributed to negative attitudes towards the teaching and learning of reading. ECE teachers agreed with school administrators that high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district was attributed to ECE teachers, parents and ECE learners' attitude toward teaching and learning reading.

Results from ECE teachers and school administrators reveal that high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level can be attributed to unavailability of reading resources. The study disclosed that lack of suitable reading resources or materials in homes and schools influenced the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district. Results revealed that high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district was attributed to mother tongue interference. The findings indicated that too much mother tongue interference contributed to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district. The study finally attributed the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district to poor staffing in infant department. Results disclosed that poor staffing of teachers by school heads also played a role in the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district.

V. DISCUSSION

The ECE teachers and primary school administrators (heads or ECE TIC) attributed the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district to educators' lack of knowledge on the child development theories and in psychology of reading. This concur with the findings from studies by Mawere, (2016), Neuman et al (2015) and Katz (1996) which attributed the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in developing countries to educators' lack of knowledge in child development theories and psychology of reading. Thus, ECE teachers' lack of knowledge in child development theory and in psychology of reading to guide their teaching of reading to children from birth to 8 years of age, caused the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level (Mawere, 2016; Mataruse, 2002; Brown, 2000).

The study disclosed that the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district was attributed to educator's lack of reading teaching skills. This concur with the findings from a study by Uwezo (2011) in East Africa and by Marima (2016) in Kenya that the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level was attributed to educators' lack of adequate reading teaching skills. Most teachers in Zambia were not oriented towards helping poor readers in their ECE classes and contributed to the prevalence of non-readers (Mwanamukubi, 2013; Kalindi, 2005).

The study attributed the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district to ECE teachers, parents and ECE learners' negative attitudes toward the teaching and learning of reading. This concurs with the findings from Gutrie et al (2009) who revealed that the high prevalence of non-readers among ECE children in United States was attributed to infants' negative attitudes towards reading. Anderman and Midgley (1998) also reiterated by saying that struggling readers negatively assumed that they were responsible for their reading difficulties and eventually disturbed their reading ability. The results presents that ECE children doubted their ability to learn reading and quickly gave up when faced with reading challenges (Schunk and Zimmerman, 1997).

The study also revealed that the ECE teachers and primary school administrators (heads or ECE TIC) attributed the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district to mother tongue interference. Thus, too much mother tongue interference contributed to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district. This concurs with the results from studies by Mwanamukubi (2013) and Maruyama (2007) that mother tongue interference was one of the main attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level ECE Level in Zambia.

The above generated attributions (educators' lack of knowledge on the child development theories an in psychology of reading; lack of reading teaching skills; ECE teachers, parents and ECE learners' attitude toward teaching and learning reading; mother tongue interference) concurs with the belief of theoretical framework of Attribution theory by Bernard Weiner that the perceived attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level were based on ECE educators, parents and ECE learners' ability, mood and effort, and they fell in internal locus of control (Hamilton & Akhter, 2002). Such attributions originate within the individual ECE educator, parent and ECE learner (Weiner, 2000, 2006; Rakes et al, 2013; Titter, 2014). The attributions were stable because individuals believe that the outcomes were likely to be identical if same behaviors occur in the future (Weiner, 2006; Strong 2010). However, such attributions to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level were controllable because individual ECE educators believed that the factors can be altered. This implies that child development theories, psychology of reading, reading teaching skills, positive attitude and control of mother tongue interference are useful in helping educators to guide their reading instruction at ECE level in Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan province.

Some of the ECE teachers and primary school administrators (heads or ECE TIC) attributed the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district to lack of clarity of ECE policy or circular on teaching reading at ECE level. The results revealed that Zimbabwean ECE policy was silent on how teachers should teach reading at ECE level and contributed to the prevalence of non-readers among learners

in Khami district. This concurs with the results from a study by Ackerman (2006) that one of the major causes of high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Kenya was lack of proper policy framework on teaching reading at ECE level because it was silent on how teachers should teach reading at ECE level. The study revealed that the participants attributed the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district to unavailability of reading resources. Thus, lack of suitable reading resources or materials in homes and schools influenced the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district. This concurs with various studies that the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Kenyan and Nigerian primary schools was attributed to unavailability of reading resources (Amali et al, 2012; Okewole, et al., 2013; Osho, et al., 2014, Marima et al, 2016). The findings disclosed that the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district was attributed to poor staffing in the infant department. Thus, poor staffing of teachers by school heads played a role in the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district. This concurs with the findings from the study by Mwanamukubi (2013) that serious poor ECE staffing especially in remote areas influenced the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Zambia.

The above educators' attributions (lack of clarity of ECE policy or circular; unavailability of reading resources; poor staffing in the infant department) to the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Khami district were based on context and fell in external locus of control as prescribed by psychological perspectives of Bernard Weiner's theoretical framework (Hamilton & Akhter, 2002). These attributions originated from the Zimbabwean government, economic environment, educational manpower challenges (Weiner, 2000, 2006; Rakes et al, 2013; Titter, 2014) and were unstable (Weiner, 2006; Strong 2010). Individual ECE educators believed that the outcomes were likely to be different if same behaviors occur in the future. Bernard Weiner believes that such attributions with external locus of control were uncontrollable (Weiner, 2006; Strong 2010). This entails that there is a need to build more realistic ECE policy provision in Zimbabwe, provide ECE centers with adequate reading resources and qualified teaching staff in order to safeguard the integral teaching of reading at Early Childhood Education level in Khami district Bulawayo Metropolitan province.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concluded that there was a high prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level and attributed to educators' lack of knowledge on the child development theories and in psychology of reading, lack of reading teaching skills, attitude toward teaching reading, lack of clarity of ECE policy or circular on teaching reading at ECE level, to mother tongue interference, and to unavailability of reading resources. The study recommended that there is need

for the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education to revise and review the ECE policy on teaching of reading at ECE level in Zimbabwe, to ensure that ECE teachers are adequately trained, equipped with child development theories and psychology of reading, developed and assisted to obtain the highest qualifications and skills possible in the teaching of reading at ECE level and to provide quality and relevant ECE reading resources and facilities to ECE teachers.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The study further recommended that a more comprehensive study on educators' attributions to prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level should be executed nationally to establish mitigations to address the prevalence of non-readers among learners at ECE level in Zimbabwe. The study also further recommended that an ECE reading instructional model, as a teaching device, should be researched and designed to promote and improve the teaching of reading at Early Childhood Education level.

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