



Original Article

The Effectiveness of Home Learning Among Secondary School Students in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South

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Article DOI: <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.5.4.1032>

Date Published: ABSTRACT

28 December 2022

Keywords:

*Effectiveness,
Home Learning,
Secondary School,
Students.*

The study assesses the effectiveness of home learning among secondary school students in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South. The researcher used a cross-sectional research design. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. The population of the study comprised the Mbarara City Inspector of Schools, Mbarara City Education Officer, Students, Headteachers, Director of Studies, Chairperson LC1, and parents. A sample size of 311 respondents participated in the study. The study findings found that the effectiveness of home learning in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South was bad. It was concluded that there was the ineffectiveness of home learning in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South. It was recommended that the government should always distribute self-study materials on time. This will enable students to keep motivated while learning from home during holidays. The government should ensure that the study materials distributed are effectively utilised by students. This can be implemented through sensitisation on mass media like radios, TVs, and Newspapers, among others.

APA CITATION

Nahurira, B., Barigye, E., & Tibanyendera, B. (2022). The Effectiveness of Home Learning Among Secondary School Students in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 5(4), 169-176. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.5.4.1032>.

CHICAGO CITATION

Nahurira, Beatrace, Enock Barigye and Basil Tibanyendera. 2022. "The Effectiveness of Home Learning Among Secondary School Students in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South". *East African Journal of Education Studies* 5 (4), 169-176. <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.5.4.1032>

HARVARD CITATION

Nahurira, B., Barigye, E., & Tibanyendera, B. (2022) "The Effectiveness of Home Learning Among Secondary School Students in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South", *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 5(4), pp. 169-176. doi: 10.37284/eajes.5.4.1032.

IEEE CITATION

B. Nahurira, E. Barigye & B. Tibanyendera. "The Effectiveness of Home Learning Among Secondary School Students in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South", *EAJES*, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 169-176, Dec. 2022.

MLA CITATION

Nahurira, Beatrice, Enock Barigye & Basil Tibanyendera. "The Effectiveness of Home Learning Among Secondary School Students in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South". *East African Journal of Education Studies*, Vol. 5, no. 4, Dec. 2022, pp. 169-176, doi:10.37284/eajes.5.4.1032

INTRODUCTION

Home learning is the education of students at home or in a variety of places other than school (Redford et al., 2016). Home learning is a self-reflective statement of parents' beliefs about learning and teaching at home. It conveys parents' core ideas about being effective parents in the context of home learning support for their children. It guides parents' choices, behaviours, thoughts, and feelings. Home learning can range from reading a book aloud to completing a research project about a specific subject. The education of children at home is the responsibility of parents or other adults at home. Parents assume the primary responsibility for their children's education during home learning. In this study home learning will be conceptualised as; the participation of parents in home learning, less or no participation of teachers in teaching and learning, self-motivated to learn while at home, and access to learning materials.

The Uganda government developed and produced homeschool materials, but distribution posed a significant challenge (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2021). The Ministry of Education and Sports embarked on the nationwide distribution of printed self-study materials to enable secondary school students to continue with their studies (Omara, 2020). The materials were introduced as one of the interventions to ensure that learners continue learning during the lockdown. Home learning has gained a lot of popularity in secondary schools in Uganda. Olum et al. (2020) contend that relevant and quality self-study materials are the main teaching tool as well as the teacher for home learning. The distribution of self-study materials is a very critical factor in influencing home learning. Students were advised to access reading materials to help them during the lockdown.

Some television stations introduced learning programs designed for learners to study while at home (Suleiman et al., 2021). For home learning to take place, other gadgets like Laptops, tablets, and smartphones are also required. However, this was expensive for most students in Nyakayojo Division. This became a stumbling block to home learning. Another limitation of home learning is the distractions at home, including other programmes on television, house chores, and playing with siblings. In Nyakayojo Mbarara City South, much as the materials were expected when learners had started the holiday due to the pandemic, they were distributed a few days before the expected phased resumption of teaching and learning in schools and some students were unable to receive these study materials (Mbarara City Inspector of Schools' Report, 2021). About 70% of the students did not get distributed study materials which may have negatively impacted their home learning.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study will assess the effectiveness of home learning in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was guided by the theory of transactional distance developed by Moore in 2007. The theory of transactional distance is one of the fundamental theories in distance education involving three key variables, namely dialogue, structure, and learner autonomy. According to Moore (2007), dialogue refers to the interaction between the learners and the teacher. The structure is defined by Moore (2007) as the level of the course flexibility and rigidity. Learner autonomy is contingent upon dialogue and structure involving the learners' ability to control their own learning and manage it in a self-reliant way by creating a learning plan, finding resources

that support study, and by self-evaluating. Full autonomy permits the determination of goals and their accomplishment by learners and allows them to determine how much to learn. On the other hand, the decision-making power of the learner is restricted when there is a lack of autonomy. This theory was applicable to the study because it suggests that the distribution of self-study materials enables effective home learning as well as enables students to have full control of their own learning. Several researchers refer to learner autonomy as the willingness of learners to be active, take control, and supervise their own learning as well as to take risks. Furthermore, they refer to learner autonomy as the learners' ability to set goals, act independently, and make decisions about choosing materials, methods, and tasks.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The researcher used a cross-sectional research design since data was collected at a single point in time. Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used. Cross-sectional research was preferred because it was easy to apply research instruments such as questionnaires which allowed for the collection of data from a large number of respondents in a relatively short period.

Study Population

The population of the study comprised the Mbarara City Inspector of Schools, Mbarara City Education Officer, Students, Headteachers, Director of Studies, Chairperson LC1, and parents.

Sample Size

A sample size of 311 respondents participated in the study. These included one Mbarara City Inspector of Schools, one Mbarara City Education Officer, 149 Students, one Chairperson LC1, five Headteachers, five directors of schools, and 149 parents.

Sampling Techniques

The study employed a simple random sampling technique to select students and parents. Simple random sampling avoided bias in the selection of students and parents. Purposive sampling was used to select the Mbarara City Inspector of Schools, Mbarara City Education Officer, and Mbarara Resident City Commissioner because of their positions and involvement in the distribution of self-study materials.

Data Collection Methods

Research Questionnaire Survey; this method was used to collect data from students and parents. The questionnaire survey included close-ended questions. Interview method; this method was used to collect data from the Mbarara Inspector of Schools, the Mbarara City Education Officer, and the Mbarara Resident City Commissioner. Qualitative data provided by interviewing was added to the interpretation of data collected by the survey.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data was analysed descriptively and information was presented in narrative form. Quantitative data from the questionnaires was sorted, coded, edited, and classified into categories as per study objectives. The results from objective three were summarised and entered SPSS Version 20, where frequency tables with percentages and mean scores were generated for easy interpretation of findings. Rating for descriptive statistics was done according to the Likert scale ranging from 1 to represent strongly disagree (very bad), 2 to represent disagree (bad), 3 to represent not sure (moderate), 4 to represent agree (good) and 5 to represent strongly agree (excellent) on a scale of 1-5.

RESULTS

Study findings presented in *Table 1*, concerning whether there are laptops/computers at home which enable students to surf reading content from the internet, more than half of the respondents (178, 65.2%) disagreed, 54 (19.8%) were undecided, 30 (11.0%) strongly agreed, and 11 (4.0%) agreed. The mean score of 2.17 implied that there are no laptops/computers at home, which limited students from surfing and reading content from the internet.

Concerning whether students always use their parents' phones to surf reading content from the internet, slightly more than half of the respondents (139, 50.9%) mentioned disagree, 67 (24.5%) mentioned undecided, 54 (19.8%) mentioned strongly disagree, 10 (3.7%) agree and 3 (1.1%) mentioned strongly agree (see *Table 1*). The mean score of 2.15 implied that students do not always use their parents' phones to surf reading content on the internet. Regarding whether parents afford to buy data bundles for educational purposes, most of the respondents (160, 58.6%) disagreed, 65 (23.8%) were undecided, 27 (9.9%) strongly disagreed, 12 (4.4%) agreed, 9 (3.3%) strongly agreed. The mean score of 2.33 implied that the parents do not afford to buy data bundles for educational purposes (see *Table 1*).

Concerning whether students have skills in surfing and learning content from the internet, most of the respondents (175, 64.1%) disagreed, 40 (14.7%) strongly disagreed, 49 (17.9%) were undecided, 6 (2.2%) agreed, and 3 (1.1%) strongly agreed. The mean score of 2.11 implied that students do not have skills for surfing and learning content from the internet (see *Table 1*). With respect to whether there are radios at home where students can access online lessons, most of the respondents (131, 48.0%), disagreed, 48 (17.6%) strongly agreed, 65 (23.8%) were undecided, 18 (6.6%) agreed, and 11 (4.0%) strongly agreed. The mean score of 2.32 indicated that there are limited radios at home where students can access online lessons (see *Table 1*). Regarding

whether there are TVs at homes where students can access visual online lessons, approximately half of the respondents (141, 51.6%) disagreed, 51 (18.7%) strongly disagreed, 45 (16.5%) were undecided, 22 (8.1%) agreed, and 14 (5.1%) strongly agreed. The mean score of 2.29 implied that there are limited TVs (see *Table 1*).

With respect to whether there is the power to enable continuous home learning via radio or TV, most of the respondents (141, 51.6%) disagreed, 82 (30.0%) strongly disagreed, 30 (11.0%) undecided, 15 (5.5%) agreed, and 5 (1.8%) strongly agreed. The mean score of 1.97 implied that there is no power to enable continuous home learning via radio or TV (see *Table 1*). Concerning whether students have access to all study distributed materials, most of the respondents (130, 47.6%) disagreed, 55 (20.1%) strongly disagreed, 65 (23.8%) were undecided, 17 (6.2%) agreed, and 6 (2.2%) strongly agreed (see *Table 1*). The mean score of 2.23 implied that students had no access to all study-distributed materials. With respect to whether students are able to read all the content in the distributed study materials, most of the respondents (130, 47.6%) mentioned disagree, 60 (22.0%) indicated strongly disagree, 60 (22.0%) undecided, 22 (8.1%) agree, and 1 (0.4%) strongly agree. The mean score =of 2.17 implied that students are not able to read all the content in the distributed study materials (see *Table 1*). Concerning whether students are able to do all tests in distributed materials, most of the respondents (172, 63.0%), mentioned disagree, 32 (11.7%) mentioned strongly disagree, 47 (17.2%) mentioned undecided, 12 (4.4%) agree, and 10 (3.7%) strongly agree. The mean score of 2.25 implied that students are not able to do all tests in distributed materials (see *Table 1*).

Table 1: Descriptive statistics on the effectiveness of home learning in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South

Items	5		4		3		2		1		Mean score
	f	%	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
There is a laptop/computer at home which enables me to surf and read content from the internet	0	0.0	11	4.0	54	19.8	178	65.2	30	11.0	2.17
I use my parent's phone to surf and read content from the internet	3	1.1	10	3.7	67	24.5	139	50.9	54	19.8	2.15
My parents afford to buy data bundles for educational purposes.	9	3.3	12	4.4	65	23.8	160	58.6	27	9.9	2.33
I have skills in surfing and learning content from the internet.	3	1.1	6	2.2	49	17.9	175	64.1	40	14.7	2.11
There is a radio at home where I can access online lessons	11	4.0	18	6.6	65	23.8	131	48.0	48	17.6	2.32
There is a TV at home where I can access visual online lessons	14	5.1	22	8.1	45	16.5	141	51.6	51	18.7	2.29
There is power to enable continuous home learning via radio or TV	5	1.8	15	5.5	30	11.0	141	51.6	82	30.0	1.97
I have access to all study-distributed materials	6	2.2	17	6.2	65	23.8	130	47.6	55	20.1	2.23
I am able to read all the content in the distributed study materials	1	0.4	22	8.1	60	22.0	130	47.6	60	22.0	2.17
I am able to do all tests with distributed materials.	10	3.7	12	4.4	47	17.2	172	63.0	32	11.7	2.25
My parents always remind the stakeholder involved in the distribution of study materials about my need for my learning.	5	1.8	12	4.4	60	22.0	154	56.4	42	15.4	2.21
My parents also visit the nearest educational government official to inquire about the distribution of study materials.	6	2.2	13	4.8	55	20.1	161	59.0	38	13.9	2.22
My parents always make phone calls to the residence city commissioner concerning the distribution of study materials	7	2.6	14	5.1	47	17.2	170	62.3	35	12.8	2.22
My parents make sure that I receive all the study materials of my education level.	4	1.5	10	3.7	40	14.7	182	66.7	37	13.6	2.13
Overall Mean											2.20

Source: Primary Data, 2022

With respect to whether parents always remind the stakeholders involved in the distribution of study materials about students' needs for their learning, most of the respondents (154, 56.4%) disagreed, 42 (15.4%) strongly disagreed, 60 (22.0%) were undecided, 12 (4.4%) agreed, and 5 (1.8%) strongly disagreed. The mean score of 2.21 implied that parents do not always remind the stakeholders involved in the distribution of study materials about students' needs for their learning (see *Table 1*). Concerning whether parents visit the nearest education government official for inquiry about the distribution of study materials, more than half of the respondents (161, 59.0%) disagreed, 38 (13.9%) strongly disagreed, 55 (20.1%) were undecided, 13 (4.8%) agreed, and 6 (2.2%) strongly agreed. The mean score of 2.21 implied that parents do not always visit the nearest education government official for inquiry about the distribution of study materials (see *Table 1*).

Concerning whether parents always make phone calls to the residence city commissioner concerning the distribution of study materials, most of the respondents (170, 62.3%) disagreed, 35 (12.8%) strongly disagreed, 47 (17.2%) were undecided, 14 (5.1%) agreed, and 7 (2.6%) strongly agreed. The mean score of 2.22 indicated that parents do not always make phone calls to the residence city commissioner concerning the distribution of study materials (see *Table 1*). With respect to whether parents make sure that students receive all study materials of their education level, most of the respondents (182, 66.7%) mentioned disagree, 37 (13.6%) mentioned strongly disagree, 40 (14.7%) undecided, 10 (3.7%) agreed, and 4 (1.5%) strongly agreed, the mean score of 2.13 implied that parents don't make sure that students receive all study materials of their education level. The oversell mean score of 2.20 implied that the effectiveness of home learning in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South was poor (disagree) (see *Table 1*).

In addition, from interviews when asked to comment on the effectiveness of home learning

among secondary school students, the Resident District Commissioner said that:

"... home learning was generally good... However, this contradicts views from the inspector of schools who said that ... home learning was not effective because students did not concentrate on studying, some students were exposed to immorality within the communities.... One of the parents said that for us in the village, we did not even know that there was online learning...." (Respondent E, 2022).

In addition, when asked about the ways which self-study materials help to improve home learning in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South, the RDC said that;

"... in cooperation with media and parents, self-study materials have helped to improve home learning.... Similarly, the inspector of schools said that.... to a smaller extent, self-study materials helped to improve home learning in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South" The above study findings imply that the effectiveness of home learning in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South was moderate. Some parents had laptops, phones, internet data bundles, radios, TVs, and power/internet.

DISCUSSION

The study findings found that the effectiveness of home learning in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South was poor. This is in agreement with Musingafi et al. (2015) who indicated that lack of concentration at home contributes to poor effective home learning and low academic performance of learners. They further added that there is a need for proper guidance from parents to support and enable effective home learning. Additionally, Irfan and Iman (2020) found that home learning is ineffective and is conducted unsuitably. They showed this with reference to different causes, such as poor and unsuitable internet services/facilities, instructors' inability to implement and sustain home learning,

and poor cooperation among parents. Similarly, Awal et al. (2020) revealed that home learning is effective but inefficient. They comprehend home learning to be effective as an answer to the earnestness of the pandemic. However, home learning results cannot meet, as it requires noteworthy charges to buy appropriate internet bundles.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that the effectiveness of home learning in Nyakayojo Mbarara City South was poor. This implies that students were unable to access gadgets such as laptops/computers at home which disrupted the continuity of learning, parents were not able to buy internet data for students, and there was poor or lack of power supply; students were not able to read all the content in the distributed study materials.

Recommendation

The parents should play the role of monitoring and supervising their children at home while they are learning. This will increase the effectiveness of students in home learning. The parents should guide their children on how to use the study materials distributed. This will enable the effective utilisation of study materials.

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