

Research Title	Attitude of Teachers and Parents towards the Reading Encouragement Model for Early Childhood
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ABSTRACT

The purposes of this research were to study knowledge, attitudes, and expectations of teachers and parents towards the reading encouragement for early childhood, to identify reading encouragement factors for early childhood, to examine the relationship between knowledge, attitudes, expectations and reading encouragement factors for early childhood, and to develop a reading encouragement model for early childhood. The research methodology was a mixture of a qualitative and a quantitative approach. The research data were gathered by an in-depth interview of thirty-eight key informants consisting of executives, teachers, parents and early childhood specialists together with a focus group of twenty-one key informants. The 3,221 of teachers and parents were a sample of respondents selected by multi-stage random sampling. Data collection period was between June 2009 and May 2010. Research instruments used were semi-structured questions for the in-depth interview and the focus group and rating-scale questionnaires with a confidence level of 0.8229 - 0.9295. The statistics employed in the data analysis were percentages (%), means (\bar{X}), standard deviations (S.D.), t-tests, and Pearson's correlation coefficients.

The research results are presented as follows:

1) According to the in-depth interview, knowledge, attitudes, and expectations on reading encouragement of teachers and parents for early childhood shows that the early childhood pedagogy has been categorized into two groups. The first group emphasizes on the development of early childhood while the second one emphasizes

on the early childhood learning competition. In reality, early childhood education needs to focus on the readiness of physical, emotional, social and intellectual development. The reading encouragement for early childhood is, therefore, classified into two types. The first type of reading encouragement would be developed in accordance with the needs and the nature of early childhood themselves. It has been understood that “early childhood have the potential to read but not the ability to read”. They mostly read from their imagination and/or by imitating adults. Through this particular style of reading technique, the early childhood will gradually become familiar with books and will eventually be in love with them. On the contrary, the second type rather focuses on the text-spelling and/or the readings as being told and pushed. Through this type of reading, the early childhood might be able to read alright but since their reading ability does not truly come from their “passion”, thus, sooner or later, it is possible that they might stop reading.

In accordance with the questionnaires, the knowledge and understanding on reading encouragement for early childhood found 98.20 % of parents understood that they played a crucial role in supporting the early childhood for their reading development. 97.73 % of parents realized that the reading development of early childhood could possibly be generated from their own intellectual development. And another 96.62 % of parents were obviously aware that reading encouragement could cultivate a reading habit for the early childhood.

The results of the attitudes on the reading encouragement for early childhood have revealed that teachers were most interested in reading encouragement ($\bar{X} = 3.95$ and S.D. = 0.811). The followings were the development of reading materials for early childhood ($\bar{X} = 3.80$ and S.D. = 0.859) and, then, the importance of reading encouragement ($\bar{X} = 3.77$ and S.D. = 0.834). The results of the expectations on the reading encouragement for early childhood showed that teachers were interested in the reading encouragement with the highest mean (\bar{X}) of 4.34 and the standard deviation (S.D.) of 0.725. The followings were having useful reading materials for early childhood

(\bar{X} = 4.25 and S.D. = 0.741) and the development of reading materials for early childhood (\bar{X} = 4.23 and S.D. = 0.723).

2) The study also found key reading encouragement factors for early childhood. Those factors were to read for them, not to force them into readings and/or spellings. Good reading encouragement should actually start from the early childhood's surroundings, namely, people around them (parents, guardians, grandparents, teachers, etc.). Proper reading materials and books should suit their age and should contain pictures. The other factors were to have wide varieties of books and, especially, the parental participation and contribution towards the reading encouragement of early childhood were considered to be extremely important.

The overall opinions on reading encouragement and the reading encouragement factors for early childhood were in high level for all aspects. When considering in each aspect, for the physical development, the readiness to listen was found with the highest mean (\bar{X}). The followings were the readiness to see and the wholesomeness. For the emotional development, the feeling of happiness during listening to adult reading aloud was found with the highest mean (\bar{X}). The followings were listening attention and emotional readiness before reading. For the social development, early childhood's surroundings and reading development was found with the highest mean (\bar{X}). The followings were good and proper reading surroundings and parents' readiness for reading development. For the intellectual development, early childhood's creativity was found with the highest mean (\bar{X}). The followings were early childhood's curiousness and inquisitiveness for problem-solving.

3) The results of the relationship between knowledge, attitudes, expectations and the reading encouragement factors for early childhood have revealed that knowledge, attitudes, expectations were correlated with physical, emotional, social and intellectual development. The relationship between knowledge and understanding of

reading encouragement and the intellectual development were statistically significant at 0.05. The others were significantly related at 0.01.

4) The reading encouragement model for early childhood needs clear and specific policies from involving ministries and related organizations identifying “how” to promote and support the reading for early childhood. The model should initiate educational campaign for parents so as to assist them to understand the right process of reading development for early childhood, encourage parents to take part in the reading preparation of early childhood, promote research on books that would be useful for the early childhood at the age of 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, and 3 years, provide daily activities relating to reading development for early childhood on a continuous basis, and put library in their classrooms, etc.

The research findings can be synthesized as the “UPA”, the triangular model of reading encouragement for early childhood. All three components of reading encouragement include “Understanding”, “Policies”, and “Activities”. They are all correlated and should be run (or driven) SMART in SEQUENCE with Public Consciousness and/or Public Mind.



