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MOBILE PHONE USE AND FAMILY LITERACY PRACTICES OF
GAYAZA FAMILY LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE
BENEFICIARIES

BY

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Abstract

Many research studies exist to confirm that mobile phone use support learning activities in different formal learning practices. These however, do not give in-depth insight of how mobile phones are used to facilitate learning in informal learning contexts. This study examined mobile phone use and family literacy practices of Gayaza Family Learning Resource Centre (GFLRC) beneficiaries. GFLRC is a non formal learning institution offering family literacy activities to parents in Gayaza parish, Nangabo Sub-County, Wakiso District in Uganda. This was a multiple-case study interested in examining several cases (beneficiaries) to establish how the cases use mobile phones to enhance family literacy practices. Specifically, the study examined how beneficiaries use mobile phones, content of messages they exchange and how content engages beneficiaries in family literacy activities.

This was a qualitative case study informed by the fundamental assumptions and beliefs of interpretative paradigmatic perspective. Literacy as social practice was a theoretical perspective whose lens was used to illuminate the literacy practices enhanced by use of mobile phones. As a common practice with qualitative case study design, a variety of methods were used to generate data. They included document review, interviews and observations.

Findings revealed that GFLRC beneficiaries socially use mobile phones to send text messages, pictures and videos, make phone calls, do a mobile data backup, play games, listen to the radio and use the web browser to access information. They use such technologies to exchange messages with religious content, emergencies and news items and messages on livelihood activities such as mobile money transfers. The social use enhances the writing and reading, numeracy, oral and visual, leisure and new technology family literacy practices of the beneficiaries but the nature of mobile phones used affects the practices. Unfortunately, most of the messages which provoked beneficiaries to engage in family literacy were not generated by GFLRC. Mobile phones would enhance family literacy activities but GFLRC has not maximized their usage.

I therefore, recommend that GFLRC Management provide necessary technical training to facilitators if they are to introduce mobile learning solutions and opportunities in facilitating family literacy activities. They should also avail all the beneficiaries with high end mobile phones which open up learning opportunities in all contexts.