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Assessing reading culture of Tanzanian primary school children and its implication on to achieving quality education

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This study aimed at assessing the reading culture of pupils in Tanzania primary schools and its implication to achieve quality education. The focus was on assessing the context used to develop reading skills in schools, attitude of pupils towards reading, availability and accessibility of textbooks at schools and how reading skills could affect learning and therefore achievement of quality education. The study used a qualitative research approach using a sample of 120 pupils in standard six from 4 schools, 20 language teachers, and 4 head teachers within Kinondoni Municipal Council. The study used a combination of research instruments namely: questionnaires, documentary reviews, observation, checklists and reading skills tests. Data analysis involved descriptive and content analysis. The major findings revealed that poor reading culture of the pupils was contributed by: poor teaching methods and techniques used by teachers to promote reading skills, lack of school libraries and a conducive reading environment for pupils, large classes, insufficient textbooks, story books, supplementary readers and magazines for pupils to read; lack of reading activities for example use of school clubs and also inadequate financial support from the government and parent support. It was concluded that the teaching methods and techniques used by teachers did not promote reading culture as they did not give much time for pupils to interact during reading activities. Also, textbooks and other reading materials were not easily available and accessible to all pupils so the reading and learning processes were not appropriately done at schools. Therefore, it was recommended that teachers should be creative in their lessons and know the type of books which the pupils enjoy reading so that pupils' interests in books is developed. Schools should have libraries, clubs, organise language and reading competitions and provide enough textbooks, story books, supplementary reader and magazines to pupils in each grade.