INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL CONTEXTUAL DYNAMICS ON ACQUISITION OF READING SKILLS AMONG STANDARD THREE PUPILS IN KISII COUNTY, KENYA

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E83/25709/2011

A RESEARCH THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES) OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

JANUARY 2018
DECLARATION

I declare that this research thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university for consideration. This research proposal has been complemented by referenced sources duly acknowledged. Where texts, data (spoken words), graphics, pictures or tables have been borrowed from other sources, including the internet, these are specifically accredited and references cited in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my spouse, Hezekiah Ogetange Otieno and my daughters, Zipporah, Evelyne, Violet, Monica and Susan for their support during my studies.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

An undertaking of this magnitude is quite involving. I am grateful to God for His provision during this time. I wish to register my appreciation for the efforts of all those who contributed to its realization. First, I would like to thank my supervisors Dr. Catherine Murungi and Dr. Wanjohi Githinji for giving me useful information in research methods and guidance in the course of writing this thesis. I feel obligated to the lecturers in the Department of the Early Childhood Studies for their advice, support and encouragement. I also wish to acknowledge my colleagues in the Department of Early Childhood Studies for offering an insightful critique on my work and for their moral support in the course of this undertaking. Further, I would like to appreciate Dr. Peter Koech, Dr. Hudson Ouko, Dr. Nyakwara Begi, Dr Edwin Gimonde and Mr. Samuel Muthami for their contributions to the realization of this work. Finally, a special note of gratitude goes to my husband for his inspiration and financial support. I am also indebted to all my relatives and good friends who in one way or the other contributed to the success of this study. May God’s abundant blessings be upon you all.
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OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

**Literacy-Rich Environment**: A setting that stimulates pupils participate in language and literacy activities and gives them an understanding of the usefulness and purpose of oral and written text.

**Reading skills acquisition**: Refers to the process of acquiring the skills necessary to form meaning from written text.

**School Contextual Dynamics**: Refers to school factors which influence the acquisition of reading skills. Such as the physical facilities such as buildings, teachers, school policies, and literacy environment and information technology among others.

**School literacy environment**: An environment comprising of written materials, electronic and broadcast media and information and communications technology, which encourage literacy acquisition, a reading culture, improved literacy retention and access to information.

**Teacher demographic characteristics**: These are teachers’ qualities, qualifications and behavior. For this study teachers’ gender, professional qualifications and experience was assessed.
Schools’ reading strategies: These are the structures that schools have put in place to enhance the acquisition of reading skills among pupils.

Teacher pupil ratio: These are the number of pupils enrolled in Standard three.
# LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ADEA</td>
<td>Association for the Development of Education in Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CBOs</td>
<td>Community–Based Organizations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EGRA</td>
<td>Early Grade Reading Assessment</td>
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<td>FBOs</td>
<td>Faith-Based Organizations</td>
</tr>
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<td>FPE</td>
<td>Free primary education</td>
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<tr>
<td>HLM</td>
<td>Hierarchical linear modelling</td>
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<tr>
<td>KUERC</td>
<td>Kenyatta University Ethics Review Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACOSTI</td>
<td>National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NASMLA</td>
<td>National Assessment System for Monitoring Learning Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NICHD</td>
<td>National Institute of Child Health and Human Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIRLS</td>
<td>Progress in International Reading Literacy Study</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PISA</td>
<td>Programme for International Student Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMASSE</td>
<td>Strengthening of Mathematics and Science in Secondary Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Developmental Program</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>United States Agency for International Development</td>
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ABSTRACT

Reading is the most significant basic academic skill that influences learning at all levels and other academic subjects. It is the most indispensable skill learners attain as they advance through Standard 1-3. Globally, reading has been recognized as a fundamental skill contributing to academic success in the formal education system. However, in Kenya, a significant number of pupils are unable to read at the primary school level. In Kisii County, in particular, reading levels among pupils is less than 30% of the National Standards. Thus, the purpose of this study was to assess the influence of school contextual dynamics on the acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils in Kisii County. The objectives of this study were; to assess the levels of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils, to establish the influence of school literacy environment, teachers’ characteristics and teacher-pupil ratio on the acquisition of reading skills and to find out the strategies schools adapt to promote the acquisition of reading skills. The study was guided by Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory and Uta Frith’s Stage Theory. The study adopted a mixed method approach and thus applied descriptive survey research design. The target population was 3234 consisting of 77 head teachers, 77 Standard III teachers and 3080 Standard III pupils from which a sample of 30% was selected. A Questionnaire, an interview guide, observation checklist and a pupils’ reading test were used to collect data. Validity was established through expert judgment and Reliability was established using test-retest technique and reliability coefficient, \( r = 0.817 \) was obtained using Cronbach Alpha Method which indicated high internal reliability. Data was analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative data was analysed thematically along the study objectives whereas the quantitative data was analysed descriptively using frequencies and percentages and inferentially using ANOVA to test the hypotheses and presented using tables and charts. This study found out that the school-literacy environment influences the acquisition of reading skills. Female teachers were better at teaching reading than their male counterparts, while the teachers’ qualifications had a positive impact on learners’ reading skills acquisition. Higher pupil-teacher ratio negatively affected the acquisition of reading skills among pupils and inadequate of training of teachers in reading skills greatly led to poor reading skills among pupils. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education and other educational agencies should ensure that there are adequate learning facilities in primary schools that enable pupils to adequately acquire reading literacy skills, language teachers should be given regular capacity building courses on reading to make them cope with changing time and the government and other educational agencies should ensure that the teacher-Pupil ratio is as low as possible in order to promote reading skills acquisition in primary schools.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the background to the study, statement of the research problem, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study and the research questions. It also covers the significance of the study, limitations, delimitations and assumptions of the study. It further provides the theoretical and conceptual framework and a list of operational definition of terms.

1.1 Background to the Study

Reading is the most significant basic academic skill that influences learning at all levels and other academic subjects. It is considered as the most indispensable skill learners attain as they advance through Standard 1-3 (Mullis, Martin, Foy & Drucker, 2012; Alfassi, 2014). Globally, reading has been recognized as a fundamental skill contributing to academic success in the formal education system. Reading skills form the basis upon which all other learning and academic skills are based (Kuculoglu, 2012). Ehri (2013) indicated that early acquisition of reading skills forms the foundation upon which language and literacy learning is built. Further, Teale (2013) concedes that Learners need to be versed in reading in their earliest years of formal schooling to build a better foundation for all formal learning, otherwise, they will struggle to catch up in the successive grades.

Failure to acquire reading skills early affects learners greatly leading to low academic performance and increased high school dropout rates. Herbers et al
Calderon, Slavin and Sanchez (2011) confirm that when pupils fail to acquire reading skills early, their academic achievement and lives after school also get affected. Consistent with the assertions of Calderon et al (2011), Shapiro (2011) reported that learners with low reading levels usually have difficulties in the acquisition of several other concepts leading to low academic outcomes.

Reading is a complex and active intellectual process that involves understanding of written text, developing and deducing meaning appropriate to the type of text, situation and purpose (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development (NICHD), 2013). Unlike language which seems automatic, children required skilled instructions in learning to read and to developing strong reading skills. Bates, (2011) argues that before a child acquires the skills to read and write, she/he needs to gain the sub-skills for reading, that is, the ability to speak, listen, understand, watch and draw. Armbruster (2010) and Bainbridgske (2016) assert that as the child gets older, he/she also needs to learn about the connection between letters on a page and speech sounds. For this to happen, the child needs to know how to blend different sounds and syllables into words and vice versa. Kail and Cavanaugh (2016) indicates that components of reading includes phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

Multiple ecological factors influence the development of reading skills differently and that each of these factors plays a significant role and none can succeed on its own (De Fraja, Oliveira & Zanchi, 2010). Klucznik, Lehr,
Kuger and Robbach (2013) indicates that the home environment, the family’s socioeconomic status, parents’ educational level and reading aloud to a child at the preschool age greatly influenced pupils’ reading. The World Bank Brief (2016) also reports that congested classrooms, poor teacher training, and little family support for pupils’ learning are some of the causes of poor reading skills among children. Further, Kimberly (2013) reports that poorly designed classrooms with empty walls and few text books and other materials contribute to less pupil interactions and engagement with one another and text.

Many strategies have been found to influence the acquisition or reading skills among learners. Learners need effective reading instructions grounded in professional knowledge to help them learn to read and to develop strong reading skills (Mc Ewan, 2013; Calderon Slavin & Sanchez, 2011). In Malaysia, for example, there has been a growing need for elementary school teachers to apply such appropriate instructional methods at an early stage, which has consequently resulted in improved academic performance on language subjects in higher academic grades. Likewise, in the US, the government provides teachers with the necessary infrastructure for the implementation of lower primary education programmes designed for the development of reading skills among learners in lower primary (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 2006). Further, in Australia, effective use of literacy materials has seen an increase of 2.9% in lower primary school learner autonomy and improved development of reading skills (Hall, 200).
Developing children’s reading skills is a great challenge and concern for both developed and developing nations in spite of incredible improvements achieved over the past 55 years (Wagner, 2015). According to Strickland and Riley-Ayers (2006), literacy is at the center of the public policy debate all over the world. Save the Children US (2013) asserts that most current reading initiatives emphasizes more on supporting reading skills in the early primary levels. Promoting reading skills for a 100 million primary school pupils has been given the first priority among the recently established goals of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Literacy was a top priority on the development agenda among the six goals of Education for All World Conference of 1990 and is still a among the Sustainable Development Goals Vision 2030 (goal No. 4). Therefore, this means that reading is considered as the most fundamental component of basic education that is linked to academic success of learners.

The acquisition of reading skills is a problem that exists almost in all countries in the world. Globally, around 10% of the youth still emerge out of the education systems with no basic reading skills despite a general increase in literacy rate among the youth (World Bank, 2013). Sanford (2015) indicates that nearly 30 million Americans adults are considered functionally illiterate and the cause of this can be traced to below-grade level reading at the elementary school levels. Despite the fact that Europe and America are English speaking countries, 20% of children aged 11 years are not confident readers of the English language (Davis and Braun, 2011). Africa has the lowest rates of
reading skills as compared to other developing regions (The World Bank (2013) and the Millennium Development Goals (2011)).

Whereas Kenya is one of the best-educated countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, still a big number of her pupils have low levels of reading skills (Fernald, Jakiela, Ozier, 2016). While Uwezo (2011) conducted a study on whether our children are learning across the three East African countries. Uwezo (2011) and NASMIA (2010) reveal that reading and numeracy levels in Kenya are still below average. These two reports also indicated that in Kenya, approximately 50% of the learners are not able to read at their Standard level. Further, it was revealed that about 32% of the Standard III pupils were able to read a Standard two passage in English and Kiswahili.

In Kisii County, the acquisition of reading literacy skills among pupils is low. Ouko (2015) reported that pupils performed better in numeracy compared to literacy in the Gucha district in Kenya. Uwezo (2014) showed that in 2011, only 8% of Standard three pupils in Kenya sub-county (former Gucha South district) could read a Standard two level story in English and kiswahili while in 2013 only 11% could. In comparison with other regions in Kenya and the rest of the world, these figures are wanting and require urgent action to reverse the trend.

Recent studies continue to show low levels of reading skills among school learners all over the world. For instance, Sanford (2015) carried out a study on fundamental aspects influencing reading comprehension among Secondary school students with Disabilities in America. Geske and Ozola (2008) also
conducted an analysis on factors affecting reading skills at the primary school level in Latvia in Northern Europe. In Zambia, Tamara (2014) conducted an experimental study on the home environment’s effect on early development of reading skills. While Uwezo (2011) conducted a study on whether our children are learning across the three East African countries.

In Kenya, Mwoma (2017) conducted a study on factors affecting pupils’ reading ability in early primary schooling in the Narok County in Kenya. Similarly, Piper and Zuilkowski (2015) did an analysis based on the results of the Primary Math and Reading Initiative in Kenya. Further, Ouko (2015) also conducted a study on determinants of Standard one pupils’ achievement in literacy and numeracy in the Gucha District (Current Kenyenya Sub-county) in Kenya. Whereas many of these studies focused on the acquisition of reading skills, they did not contextualize on school contextual dynamics and its influence on acquisition of reading skills among the Standard III pupils. Therefore, it is on this basis that the researcher sought out to assess the influence of school contextual dynamics on the acquisition of reading skills among standard three pupils in Kisii County.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Whereas an incredible rise in enrolment has been realized at primary school levels due to free primary education in Kenya, still a big number of pupils have low levels of reading skills. In Kisii County and Kenyenya Sub-county in particular, reading levels among pupils is less than 30% of the national standards (Uwezo 2014). In Kenyenya Sub-county in in 2011, only 8% of
Standard III pupils could read a class two level story in English while in 2013 only 11% could read. Ouko (2015) also revealed that in Kenyanya Sub-county pupils performed better in numeracy compared to literacy.

Efforts to mitigate these problems have not yielded much and have failed to register remarkable progress. Many studies have been conducted on reading as stated earlier. Despite these findings, few empirical studies have interrogated the extent to which school contextual dynamics influence the acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard three pupils. Further, little is known about how school literacy environment, teachers’ charatersitics and teacher-pupil ratio influence ability of Standard three pupils to acquire reading skills. Therefore, it is on this basis that the researcher undertook this study in order to fill these research gaps and give recommendations that could promote the acquisition of reading skills among the Standard III pupils and other lower primary levels.

1.3.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study focused on assessing the influence of school contextual dynamics on the acquisition of reading skills among Standard three pupils of Kisii County, Kenya.

1.3.2 Research Objectives

This study was guided by the following objectives:

i. To assess the levels of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils;

ii. To examine the influence of school literacy environment on acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils;
iii. To establish the influence of teachers’ characteristics on acquisition of reading skills among Standard III pupils;

iv. To determine the influence of teacher/pupil ratio on acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils; and

v. To establish the different strategies employed by schools in promoting the acquisition of reading skills among Standard III pupils.

1.2.3 Research Questions and hypothesis

The following research questions and hypothesis guided this study.

i. What is the level of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils?

ii. What strategies do schools employ in promoting the acquisition of reading skills among Standard III pupils?

iii. \( H_{01} \): There is no significant influence of school literacy environment on acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils;

iv. \( H_{02} \): There is no significant influence of teachers’ characteristics on acquisition of reading skills among Standard III pupils; and

v. \( H_{03} \): There is no significant influence of teacher/pupil ratio on acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils.

1.3 Significance of the Study

It was antedated that the findings of this research may be utilized to create awareness about school factors that influence the reading skills acquisition among Standard three learners. Specifically, the findings are hoped to be useful to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) which could use the outcomes of this study in making policies regarding the instruction of
literacy skills. These policies include those that could advocate for the early teaching of reading skill and that these skills to be taught by teachers who have been trained on the same. The MoEST would also utilize the study’s outcomes to conduct seminars and workshops on improving school factors influencing the acquisition of early reading literacy skills and learning outcomes of Standard three pupils.

The findings of this study may also help the government through MoEST to refine its approach to instructions and the assessment of early reading skills. The Teachers’ Service Commission (TSC) may use the findings of this study when posting teachers to primary schools to ensure that sufficient teachers are available to alleviate the Teacher-Pupil Ratio (TPR). The TSC may also use this study’s findings to identify areas of need for teachers with special skills in reading literacy. Further, the TSC may use the findings of this study to develop more effective ways of ensuring teacher effectiveness like performance appraisal that is objective.

Similarly, it is hoped that this study’s outcome may help the educators to advance their teaching skills and capacity to handle efficiently challenges that contribute to the poor acquisition of reading skills among learners and would significantly boost the teachers’ content knowledge, skills and attitudes required to promote the acquisition of reading skills by pupils. Further, the other stakeholders that may benefit from the findings of this study include Non-Governmental Organization (NGOs), Faith-Based Organizations (FBOs) and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs). The results of this study may be
helpful to these organizations when conducting needs assessment and prioritization in the community in order to give sensitization on school factors that affect acquisition of literacy skills. Finally, it was hoped that the study findings could form a basis for further research by academicians interested in conducting further studies in a similar area.

1.4 Limitations and Delimitation of the Study

In this section, the study highlighted the limitations and delimitations of the study.

1.4.1 Limitations of the Study

This study covered only one Sub-county (Kenyenya) in Kisii County due to time and financial limitations. However, the sample size of the study was large enough (30% of the target population) to be representative of the larger County (Mugenda & Muenda, 2003). This study also focused only on Standard three instead of all the lower primary levels. However, an adequate sample was used to provide a broader picture of the lower primary. Some schools were not easy to access since they were situated in the interior. The researcher, therefore, used motorbikes and sometimes walked to ensure that all schools where reached.

There could be other dynamics which influence the acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils other than instructional strategies and thus the findings of this study may not be generalized to all schools. In this case, the researcher recommended that further studies be conducted on reading skills,
but with focus on different variables other than those under investigation. Head teachers, Standard III teachers and Standard III pupils sampled in the study could not reflect the entire target population in the in Kisii County. In this case, the researcher sampled as many respondents as possible to make the findings credible. Some of the respondents were unwilling to volunteer for fear of victimization. In this case, the researcher explained to them that the study aimed at complementing their efforts of improving reading skills amongst Standard III learners.

1.4.2 Delimitations of the Study

This study was delimited to primary schools in Kenyenza Sub-county in Kisii County. The study focused only on school factors that influence the acquisition of reading literacy skills. The study was also delimited to Standard three pupils in Kenyenza Sub-county. Further, the study was delimited to pupils reading skills acquisition in the English subject only.

1.5 Assumptions of the Study

This study made the following assumptions:

i. That the respondents would co-operate and provide genuine feedback that would register a 100% return rate of the questionnaires.

ii. That all the Standard III teachers were professionally trained and taught the language.

iii. That pupil’s acquisition of reading skills was influenced by other factors other than the actual teaching process and
iv. That the ability of the pupils to learn and acquire the reading skills was more or less at the same level.

1.6 Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

This section presents the theoretical underpinnings which guided the study. It also provides the conceptual framework showing the relationship between the variables of the study.

1.6.1 Theoretical Frameworks

This study was guided by two theories. The Ecological Systems’ Theory and the Uta Frith’s Stage theory (1985). Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory focused on the school literacy environment while Uta Frith’s Stage Theory (1985) emphases on the acquisition and development of reading skills among learners.

Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory (1986)

This study was based on Bronfenbrenner’s Ecological Systems Theory (1986) also referred to as the Bio-ecological theory. Bronfenbrenner argued that the child’s own biological characteristics and the environment in which he/she grows in, together influences on how the child develops. Bronfenbrenner defined the natural environment as a set of layered structures one within the other, similar to a set of Russian toys. According to him, a child is at the centre being surrounded by several environmental systems. These systems postulated by Bronfenbrenner includes the Microsystem (the child’s immediate environment), the Mesosystem (the interactions between different aspects of the Micro-system such as the child’s school, church and peer groups and
family), the Exo-system (encompasses aspects of structures within the Microsystem that does not directly affect the child), the Macro system (the individual’s ethnicity and culture) and the Chrono-system (which includes the transitions and shifts in one's lifespan). Bronfenbrenner argued that the child’s biological make-up and the environment in which she/he lives in will affect how she/he grows and develops. Further, he explained that both the child and the environment affect one another bi-directionally and changes or conflict in any one layer affects all the other environments. The way in which these five systems interact with the child determines the child’s development.

In a school environment, there are many dynamics that when working in harmony influences how the pupils learn. In the school context, there are many Dynamics that influence pupils acquisition of reading skills. These dynamics include physical design, the school literacy environment and the quality of teachers among others. This theory was relevant to this study because it showed how the school environment affects how pupils.

**Uta Frith’s Stage Theory (1985)**

Frith (1985) is one of the Stage Model theorists. Frith proposed three stages of how children develop reading skills. The first stage is the Logographic (whole word) skills, at this stage, the child processes words in the same way as any other visual object or symbol and recognizes them instantly. At this stage, only some letters of a word are recognized, therefore, children can make errors when they see words with similar letters (e.g. strain and stamp). At this level, children can also read by recognizing a whole word from a group of letters, but
when given new words they cannot read them by breaking them into different sounds.

The second stage is the Alphabetic stage. At this stage, pupils start to acquire an explicit knowledge of sounds and their corresponding letters. Consequently, the pupils get to know that words are made of letters and these letters represent sound. Therefore, the pupils are able to blend sounds to form words. The third stage is the orthographic stage. During this stage, children start to recognize written words as a whole and do sound out the new words only. Readers at this stage are able to identify a large number of words spontaneously and promptly access their meaning, matching them to an internal vocabulary that they have learned in the previous stages.

This theory postulates that learning to read progresses from children learning the parts of language (letters) to understanding the whole text. It explains how children become readers by learning the sub-skills first (being able to identify letter names and letter sounds), progress to blending whole words, then how to connect word meanings to comprehend texts. This theory was found relevant to this study since reading is a complex process that requires one to learn the different reading sub-skills in order to be able to read. These components of reading include decoding, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension.

1.6.2 The Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework was based on school contextual dynamics reflected through school literacy environment, teachers’ characteristics, teacher/pupil
ratio and strategies for promoting reading skills which constituted independent variables whereas the acquisition of reading skills among Standard III pupils was the dependent variable. The intervening variables for this study were peer influences, teacher attitudes and competency as shown in Figure 1:1.

The conceptual framework (Figure 1.1) demonstrates the envisioned relationship between the study variables. These factors can influence the acquisition of reading literacy both positively or negatively. When the effect is positive, it leads to the development of good reading skills which in turn leads to good performance in all subjects hence better overall academic achievement. On the other hand, these same variables can also impact negatively on the acquisition of reading skills resulting in poor academic performance.
Figure 1.1: The Conceptual Framework Showing Influence of School Contextual Dynamics Influencing Acquisition of Reading Skills

Source: Researcher (2017)
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter highlights the literature related to the topic of study. The researcher provides divergent views that are critical to different authors who raised various versions related to the issues being investigated. The review is based on the assessment of levels of reading skills among Standard III pupils, the concept of school contextual dynamics and the influence of school literacy environment, teachers’ characteristics, teacher/pupil ratio and reading strategies for acquisition of reading skills among Standard III pupils. It also provides a summary of the literature review citing the research gaps identified during the review.

2.1 Reading Skills of Standard Three Pupils

Reading is the making of meaning from a written text that involves word recognition, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. Baird et al. (2011) defined reading as reflecting on, understanding of, using and getting involved with texts in order to develop the potential, knowledge and achieve goals in one’s life and help him/her to participate in society. Barton and Hamilton (2012) defined reading as the use of written text in society to achieve goals and develop potential and knowledge. Similarly, Kail and Cavanaugh (2016) asserted that reading includes a number of component skills such as knowing letters and the sounds associated with them, showing phonemic awareness, word recognition, fluency in reading as well as comprehending a reading task.
Further, Roe, Smith and Burns (2011) indicated that effective reading teaching addresses five significant areas. These areas comprise of phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, phonemic awareness, and fluency. All these sub-skills are interrelated in terms of development, teaching, and evaluation (Kane, Taylor, Tyler & Wooten, 2011). The ability to read is a major determiner of pupils' academic success or failure. Early acquisition of reading skills lays a firm foundation for future success in reading and other subjects which are linked to later school achievement.

Successful acquisition of reading skills during the lower primary levels is a good indicator of later literacy achievement (Lonigan, Allan & Lerner, 2011). A good reader has a better opportunity for greater achievement (Karuoya, 2015). According to Leipzig (2001), reading fluently and comprehending a reading task suffers when poor readers fail to attain the alphabetic principle because they have not developed phonetic awareness. Standard three learners with the ability to read at an early age, experience quite a lot of exposure to print media and eventual advancements in a variety of knowledge domains (Cutting & Scarborough, 2006).

On the contrary, pupils who delay in acquiring reading abilities obtain little preparation in reading compared to other learners. At the same time, they miss chances to improve reading comprehension approaches and regularly come across reading material which is above their skills. Subsequently, this pupils may develop negative attitudes towards reading (Anderson & Freebody, 2001). Such processes may lead to what Ouellette (2006) termed as the Matthew
effect, in which little reading skills hamper learning of further academic subjects which progressively rely on reading over the school period. Whereas reading is a single action, the mind is essentially involved in many different chores concurrently, whenever pupils are reading. There are five aspects to the process of reading: phonics, phonemic awareness, vocabulary, reading comprehension and fluency. The five facets work together to generate the reading skill.

Data from the Uwezo assessment (2010 & 2011) estimates that only around 50% of children in grade IV are capable of reading at Standard 2 level. Ascertaining substantial delays in the acquisition of reading competency among children in Kenyan primary schools. Indeed, studies have established that a significant number of learners complete the primary school cycle without having achieved the basic levels of reading and comprehension (Uwezo, 2011).

Lerner (2006) noted that reading difficulties among school-going children should be considered as a serious handicap in life in that learners who failure to acquire read skills might not flourish in life. Standard three school learners with such developed vocabulary, thus; acquire effective fluency in their communication, that is, the readers acquire the aptitude to read quickly, accurately and with expression. Therefore, the need for the that the Standard III school learners to pool and use numerous reading abilities at the once which eventually improves their comprehension. According to Kail, and Cavanaugh (2016) components of reading skills are identifying letters and the sounds related to them, showing phonemic awareness, word recognition, fluency in
reading as well as comprehending a written passage. These skills are discussed as follows.

2.1.1 Levels of Standard III Pupils’ Decoding Skills

Decoding is the capacity to distinguish between sounds and letters of a language (Ehri, 2013). It is the ability to relate letter-sound associations, to know letter patterns and to accurately articulate written text. Pupils can decode when they know that every alphabetical letter has a corresponding sound. DiLorenzo, Rody, Bucholz and Brady (2011) likewise advocated that children should be taught decoding skills early because they are the foundation upon which other reading skills are based. These skills of decoding are a vital constituent of the development of early literacy skills. Neuman and Dickinson (2011) and Bainbridgeke (2016) reported that teaching of phonological awareness and systematic phonics early enhances pupils acquisition of reading abilities.

Many studies have been done on decoding skills. In Sydney, Cologne, Cupples and Wyver (2011) conducted an evaluation on the effectiveness of reading instruction for Down syndrome children. The study assessed phonological awareness, language, vocabulary, comprehension, oral and reading abilities and cognition, among the children. The study used a sample of children ranging from 2 years, 11 months to ten years. The 23 participants showed that phonic reading instruction was generally an effective method in improving reading skills among learners with Down syndrome. Cologne, Cupples and Wyver (2011) conducted an evaluation on the efficiency of reading teaching but the
current study intended to assess the levels of reading skills acquisition among Standard III pupils.

In South Africa, De Sousa (2011) carried out a study to compare monolingual English and bilingual Zulu-English standard III learners in learning how to read in English. The diverse blends of phonological pieces were forecourters of word decoding and reading comprehension. The study observed that since the skills that were required for reading in Zulu and English varied, principally at the stage of rime, depend on a letter-by-letter decoding approach was not an effective approach. De Sousa (2011) observed that the ineffectiveness was as a result of the fact that English was a partially phonetic language and most words could not to be read using sound alone. Learner’s better word reading as compared to reading comprehension ability suggested that the predominant phonological decoding-oriented approaches could be sufficient for word decoding, though not fully successful because English was more predictable at the level of groups of letters than individual letter sequences. While De Sousa (2011) conducted his study in South Africa, the current research was done in Kenya.

In the UK, a longitudinal study carried out by Corson (2000) asserts that learners who start school with less reading-associated abilities stand at a high chance of being eligible for special education facilities. In other words, their poor reading skills cannot allow them to transit to other levels. This study affirms the fact that reading skills and emergent literacy strategies enhance the learners’ ability to acquire literacy skills as a developmental continuum with its
originates early in the life of a child, rather than an all-or-none phenomenon that begins when children start formal schooling. Corson (2000) study was a longitudinal one carried out (2000) in UK and did not concern itself with establishing the levels of decoding among learners.

Share (2004) conducted a longitudinal study in Nigeria among 111 respondents to find out the relationship amid early literacy and academic success among learners. Share (2004) confirmed positive associations and longitudinal steadiness between individual differences in oral language skills and phonemic awareness and later differences in reading. The study further asserted that learners with well-developed phonemic and phonological awareness register impressive transition rates. This research supports the fact that the capacity of pupils to distinguish sounds and symbols and establish the connection between them enable the learners to acquire pre-requisite skills for transitions to other levels of study. Whereas this was a longitudinal study conducted in Nigeria, the current study is a descriptive survey done in Kenya.

Likewise Johnston, Anderson and Holligan (2006) conducted a study in Tanzania to assess the influence of phonological sensitivity on language development. The study found out that phonological awareness plays a fundamental and a instrumental part in the acquisition of reading skills. Pupils who are proficient at identifying and manipulating syllables, rhymes, or phonemes are quicker to learn to read, and this relation is present even after variability in reading skill owing to factors such as IQ, receptive vocabulary, memory skills, and social standard is partied out. Johnston, Anderson and
Holligan (2006) observed the effects of phonological awareness on language development and did not unearth the levels of reading skills among Standard III pupils.

While the strong relationship between oral language and reading is clear for reading written text, vocabulary skills also have a substantial bearing on decoding skills initially in the development and acquisition of read skills (Wagner, Torgesen, Rashotte, Hecht & Barker, 2003). Studies of Standard III pupils have shown simultaneous and longitudinal relationships between pupils’ vocabulary skills and their phonological awareness. Further, studies of children with special needs and poor readers indicate that there is a core phonological deficit in nearly all poor readers, regardless of whether their reading abilities are consistent or inconsistent with their general cognitive abilities (Phillips & Torgesen, 2006).

In Kenya, teaching reading ability is taught at primary school level (Pre-unit to Standard 8) as a basic skill, in addition to listening, speaking and writing (Dubeck, Jukes & Okello, 2012). After 9 years of age, which in Kenya places pupils in grade 4, the learners are expected to learn all the subjects in the school curriculum without any difficulties, using the reading ability as the instruction medium through communication. Information about the stages of reading development indicates that learners starting at this level should read to learn, where they use reading as a purposeful instrument to acquire new knowledge (Mugo, Mwoma & Limboro, 2011).
Piper, Schroeder and Trudell (2015) conducted a study on oral reading fluency and comprehension in a multi-lingual location in Kenya. The study findings indicated that reading comprehension is the result of both listening comprehension and decoding and that understanding of print is a product of a pupils’ decoding and listening comprehension skills. The study also observed that for first-language readers, fluency of word-decoding skill was a strong predictor of comprehension. The study concluded that successful reading skills acquisition in a second language depends on phonological awareness, decoding skills and oral reading fluency in the first language, along with oral fluency in the second language. While Piper, Schroeder and Trudell (2015) focused on acquisition of oral reading fluency and comprehension in a multilingual setting, this current research sought to establish the levels of reading skills among Standard III pupils.

2.1.2 Levels of Standard III Pupils’ Vocabulary Skills

Vocabulary is a list or collection of words or phrases of any given language. These words can be in oral or print form. Alqahtani (2015) defined vocabulary as the words one must be familiar with to communicate efficiently. Vocabulary plays a crucial role in the reading process (Hanson & Padua, 2014). In reading, vocabulary knowledge is necessary to understand a text. Apthorp et al. (2012) concluded that vocabulary training leads to gains in comprehension skills.

According to Lehr, Osborn, and Hiebert (2004), there are two major groups of vocabulary these are the receptive vocabulary and reproductive vocabulary. The receptive vocabularies are the words comprehended through hearing and
reading. On the other hand, productive vocabularies are the words we use to express ourselves when writing and or speaking. Having adequate vocabulary and understanding the meanings of the words is a key component of comprehension.

Moses and Duke (2003) noted that vocabulary is imperative to children’s acquisition of reading skills and hence learners with larger vocabularies generally have higher academic achievement, higher reading achievement and higher IQ. Acquisition of skills to read and understand vocabulary is another component of reading skills which enhances the transition of children from Standard one to Standard three. To be able to read words, it is imperative that the learners know their meanings.

According to Johnston et al (2006), as Standard three learners develop and become better readers, they also learn to connect their oral vocabularies to their reading prowess while at the same time reinforcing this sub-skill by adding new words to their glossaries. Vocabulary is a strong indicator of reading achievement (Proctor, Silverman, Harring and Montecillo, 2012). It has been established that pupils’ poor reading comprehension skill results from lack of vocabulary knowledge that is basically caused by lack of learning opportunities, and not their inability.

Duke and Block (2012) found out that underprivileged learners showed declining reading comprehension due to their limited vocabulary leading to a low understanding of texts. Having limited vocabulary can trap pupils in a vicious circle. This is due to the fact that pupils who can’t read more difficult
passages lack an opportunity to increase their glossaries and at the same time lack approach for word knowledge. Lepola et al. (2012) indicated that verbal valuation of vocabulary levels of 6-year-old pupils contributed to 30% of reading comprehension variation at age 16 and poor vocabulary knowledge as the primary causes of academic failure of disadvantaged pupils. This means that learners with fewer vocabularies need early intervention to enable them to become good readers.

In the US, Anderson and Freebody (2001) conducted a study to ascertain the influence of vocabulary knowledge on the academic achievement of learners. The outcomes of the study indicated that pupils who do experience reading problems at lower grades are likely to continue to encountering reading issues throughout the school years and into adulthood. The study further indicated that the probability that pupils would remain poor readers at the end of Standard IV without transiting to any other level if they were poor readers at the end of Standard I grade was 88%. Similar arguments were posed by Landi (2010) in a study conducted in Malawi amongst 123 respondents to establish the significance of understanding meanings of words in language learning. The study indicated that vocabulary development among school-age pupils is a key element of reading.

In Nigeria, Ahmad, Armarego and Sudweeks (2017) examined the effect of using mobile assisted language learning (MALL) on vocabulary acquisition among migrant women English learners in Australia. The study observed that all participants had somewhat acquired the vocabulary after they attended the
sessions. The study found out that the app-based vocabulary exercises with embedded audio and video components provided good visual and listening exercises as the learners were exposed to a wide range of conversation topics and characters with varied Australian accents. This study was done in Nigeria whereas this current study was done in Kenya.

Nwabudike and Anaso (2013) conducted a study on the impact of extensive reading on ESL learners’ stock of vocabulary at the Nigerian-Turkish International Colleges. The study used a sample of 155 respondents, including 42 students and four teachers. The findings of the study showed that extensive reading programme was not implemented in Nigerian-Turkish International College and students encountered some difficulties engaging in extensive reading. The study further showed that learners who were involved in extensive reading had more vocabulary than those who did not engage in it. While this study targeted college students in Nigeria, the current study targeted Standard III pupils in Kenya.

In Kenya, Piper, Schroeder and Trudell (2015) conducted a study on oral reading, fluency and comprehension. The study found out that the association between oral reading fluency and comprehension depended on the pupils’ early acquisition of vocabulary in the language being used. The study also revealed that after three years of predominantly English instruction, children were able to recognize common words and had modest decoding skills, but lacked the English vocabulary necessary to understand the meaning of the words. Whereas many studies have been done on vocabulary fewer have examined the
school contextual dynamics and its influence on the acquisition of vocabulary among the Standard III pupils.

### 2.1.3 Levels of Standard III Pupils’ Fluency Skills

Fluency may be defined as the ability to read print with necessary speed, correctly, with appropriate intonation, and excellent prosody. It is the capacity to read at the same time speak and understand the passage, without stopping to decode the word first (Schwanenflugel, Westmoreland & Benjamin, 2015). According to Mraz et al. (2013), fluency also includes assembling of words contained in a sentence into phrases, which makes it easier to understand what is being read. Fluency is a developmental process that needs to combine and relate a number of reading sub-skills at the same time. Development of fluency is formed and dictated by all the linguistic schemes that gives us information about words (Good & Harn, 2001; Wolf, 2001). Fluency is usually assessed through oral reading though good readers also demonstrate this skill when reading inaudibly. Fluency develops from reading practice.

Kim, Samson, Fitzgerald and Hartry (2010) noted that frequent oral reading is the best way for children to improve their fluency. Kim, Samson, Fitzgerald and Hartry (2010) examined data from standard I-IV using structural equation models. The outcomes of the examination revealed that reading fluency improved as pupils’ reading proficiency developed. In Standard I, reading fluency is not independently associated to reading comprehension yonder word reading fluency and listening comprehension. Nevertheless, in the second grade to fourth grade, text reading fluency totally showed the relation between word
reading fluency and reading comprehension. Whereas Kim and Wagner (2015) explored a varying role of text reading fluency, they did not focus on establishing the levels of reading among the learners.

In Kenya, Piper and Zuilkowski (2015) examined the importance of timing in assessing oral reading fluency and comprehension. Employing the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) tool to evaluate the pupils, this study aimed at timing in the assessment of oral reading fluency. Targeting 4385 pupils in 95 governments and 125 informal schools, the study noted that pupils’ performance was not related to the amount of time allocated. Whereas many studies have been done on fluency, fewer have contextualized on the influence of the school contextual dynamics and the acquisition of fluency among Standard III pupils.

2.1.4 Levels of Standard III Pupils’ Comprehension Skills

Comprehension is the understanding and interpretation of written text. In order for pupils to accurately understand written text, they should be able to decode; associate what they read and what they already know; and reflect intensely on what they have read. Readers with sturdy comprehension are able to draw conclusions about what they read. That is what is important, factual, and the cause of an event. Comprehension involves combining reading, thinking and reasoning at the same time.

Reading aloud is the foundation for literacy development and the main considerable activity for reading achievement and gives pupils an opportunity to demonstrate the phrased and fluent reading (Stoller, Anderson, Grabe &
Komiyama, 2013). It unveils the returns of reading, promotes the listener's curiosity in books and desire to be a reader (Anthony and Kaywell, 2016). Children are more capable of listening to a higher language level than they can read. Listening to others read promotes key understanding skills as well as the admiration of how a story is written and association with book convention (Machado, 2012). This means that reading aloud makes complex ideas easy to comprehend and exposes pupils to vocabulary and language patterns that are not used regularly. This progressively aids pupils to comprehend and provides slow readers with an opportunity to access same rich and engaging books that fluent readers read on their own, and motivates them to become better readers.

Children of any age gain from listening to an experienced reader reading a breath-taking book. Children employ real-life experiences to enable them to understand books, and books assist children to understand real life experiences. Selecting books that make children respond with interest and understanding is important. Search for books that have affluent language, meaningful plots, compelling characters, and attractive pictures is important (Gambrell & Almasi, 2013).

Various studies have been conducted on comprehension. Kim, Petscher and Foorman (2015) studied variability in reading comprehension achievement existing among schools, Standards, learners and in grades 3–10. They also investigated if silent reading fluency added a notable input to the estimate of spring reading comprehension after keeping in mind fall spelling and reading comprehension. The findings revealed a considerable amount of variance in
reading comprehension, which was caused by the differences between classrooms (21- 46 %). However, the current study focused on establishing levels of comprehension among Standard III Pupils.

Sanford (2015) sought to explore the factors affecting the reading comprehension of secondary students with disabilities A sample of 158 secondary students with disabilities in grades 9 to 12 from a large urban setting took part in the study. The results from this study suggest that several mental and affective factors impact on reading comprehension of secondary. Sanford (2015) in his study focused on secondary students with disabilities in grades 9 to 12 but did not explore the comprehension levels among standard III pupils.

Plocher (2016) also investigated the influence of reading comprehension strategies on reading comprehension when reading Digital Informational Texts in New Ulum. Forty-eight students from the 7th and 8th grade with 36 or 75% of those students having a reading comprehension ability at or above their grade level as measured by Scholastic Reading Inventory software. Outcomes from this study suggested that the three reading comprehension strategies in this study had the same effect on reading comprehension when digital informational texts are read. While Plocher (2016) also examined the effect reading comprehension strategies on Reading Comprehension when reading Digital Informational Texts, the current study investigated the comprehension levels among Standard three pupils.

In Turkey, Kocukoglu (2012) similarly conducted an action research on improving reading skills through effective reading strategies. Fourteen students
took part in the study. The study findings showed that the learners lacked knowledge and practice in reading strategies.

In Kenya Piper (2016) carried out a study on oral reading fluency and comprehension reading skills in a multilingual environment. Using reading assessment data for 2,000 Kenyan pupils in two or three languages: English, Kiswahili and one of two mother tongues, Dholuo or Gikuyu. A comparison was done on the acquisition of fluency and comprehension among any of the three languages. The results revealed that most pupils could read English words more easily than words in Kiswahili or their mother tongue. However, their reading comprehension was considerably lower in English than in Kiswahili, Dholuo or Gikuyu. Piper (2016) focused on oral reading fluency and comprehension reading skills in a multilingual environment but did not contextualize on school dynamics and their influence on the acquisition of comprehension skill among the pupils.

Similarly, Kulo, Onhera and Indembukhani (2014) assessed the relationship between the background knowledge of learners and reading comprehension ability in secondary schools in Kenya. A systematically random sample of 256 from 16 secondary schools took part in the study. The study outcomes revealed that students’ background knowledge and low linguistic proficiency mired their comprehension skill. While many researchers have studied the factors that contribute to pupils’ comprehension skills, fewer have explored the school contextual dynamics and how they influences the acquisition of reading skills among Standard III pupils.
2.2 The Concept of School Contextual Dynamics

School contextual dynamics are school-based factors that involve changes in the social, technical, political, economic and cultural contexts of schools and schooling influence (Keddie, 2013). These factors are influenced by changing societal expectations and times, diverse student communities, school environment and elements of school management and decision making. The school plays a fundamental role in the teaching of reading and the acquisition of early reading skills.

Research shows that a combination of school factors impacts on the quality and quantity of reading literacy (Reis et al, 2011). These school factors include the presence of a demanding curriculum, professional qualified teachers, literacy, environment, a quality system of assessment and additional help given to struggling learner and a positive and productive classroom climate. The physical environment and instructional methods are other school factors that play a great role among others. This study, however, aimed at examining the school literacy environment, teachers’ demographic characteristics, teacher-pupil ratio and the strategies used by schools to promote reading skills among Standard three pupils.

2.2.1 School Literacy Environment and Pupils’ Acquisition of Reading Skills

School literacy environment is viewed from the room decor and atmosphere to interactions with teachers and peers. A literacy-rich environment emphasizes the usefulness of reading, writing and speaking in a learner. A literacy environment
encompasses the assortment of materials and equipment which facilitates language and literacy opportunities, imaging and thought concerning the design of the classroom (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). School Literacy Environment is reviewed in the following sub-sections that is the literacy material and and the physical environment

i). *The Physical Environment and Acquisition of Reading Skills*

The basic school environmental variables such as noise, lighting, good ventilation, temperatures, physical equipment, housing and neighbourhood quality have strongly and consistently be proved to affect learning. Bernelius and Kauppinen (2012) indicated that the school physical setting deeply affects both the developmental outcomes and academic performance of pupils. Thapa, Cohen, Guffey and Higgins-D’Alessandro (2013) also affirms that the quality of school amenities has an effect on educational outcomes and the well-being of the teachers and pupils.

Learners in well-designed Classrooms perform better than their counterparts in poorly designed Classrooms (Nowicki et al., 2013). McNeil (2013) indicated that the provision of and administration of sufficient school buildings and other facilities are required for the success of any educational needs of pupils. The physical setting of a school motivates the acquisition of literacy skills as well as influencing the development and functioning of pupils. A good-looking, well-structured and an engaging environment encourages interactions between pupils and can hasten literacy development and support good reading behaviour and practice.
The appropriate physical organization of furniture, material selection, and the attractive, informative appearance of the classroom offer a setting that contributes to teaching and learning. UNESCO (2011) noted that literacy-rich classroom setting equipped with age-appropriate furniture and sufficient lighting is necessary for the acquiring and developing of reading skills. Further, UNESCO (2011) reported that the availability and organization of reading resources in the classroom do influence learning and improve the achievement of reading and writing skills by pupils.

The classroom design also has an influence on pupils’ academic achievement. Evans (2006) conducted a several on the influence of the physical environment on pupils’ development. The results of these studies revealed that the physical environment has a profound influence on the child’s academic achievement and development. Noise level, overcrowding, housing and neighbourhood quality affects the cognitive, socio-emotional and academic development of pupils. Whereas Evans (2006) focused on the influence of the physical environment on pupils’ Development, he did not look at the school physical environment and its influence on the acquisition of reading skills among class III pupils.

In India, Kekare (2015) conducted a study on Classroom designs and academic achievement of learners. A sample size of 80 learners randomly sampled from different colleges of the Aurangabad city participated in the study. Results from the study were significant at 0.05 levels, indicating that there is that there is a close connection between Classroom physical environment and academic
achievement of pupils. Whereas Kekare (2015) conducted a study on Classroom designs and academic achievement of learners, he did not focus on classroom physical environment and its influence on pupil’s acquisition of reading skills.

Learning environment plays an important role in actual teaching and learning. Alimi, Ehinola and Alabi (2012) carried out a study on the interaction of quality facilities, school environment, and learners, achievement. The study focused on the proposal that part of the description may influence the school environment. Using 80 teachers from middle schools in Virginia a three resource support items and seven-item quality of school infrastructures scale was used. Results revealed a relationship between the school facility quality and the achievement of the student in English and maths. The current study focused on standard three pupils acquisition of reading skills.

Tiemensma (2009) in South African investigated the relationship between the literacy environments at home, at school and in the community and the development of voluntary reading. The study sample comprised of 25 learners from Grade 3-7 from schools in the Highveld Ridge and Gauteng East area with approximately equal numbers of boys and girls (51.7% boys, 48.3% girls). This study also included learners from various racial groups (Black, 58.3%; White, 33.5%, the so-called “coloured” 3.5% and Asian 4.7%). The study found out that many difficulties learners experience include; lack of and limited access to libraries in schools and community and lack of appropriate
reading materials, multilingualism, illiterate parents, and socioeconomic conditions and lack of support from government at various levels.

Further, Wainaina (2015) examined the influence of physical Classroom conditions on pupils learning in early childhood centres in Engineer zone, Nyandarua County. He found out that those pupils from public preschools exhibit lower levels in grasping the four crucial skills (reading, counting, drawing and memory) that were evaluated. The study observed that the classroom conditions affected children’s learning ability. The unfavourable conditions in the public preschools included congestion within the classrooms due to high enrolment, fewer text books and fewer seats that were inappropriate for learning among other factors. Findings showed that in classes with good environments the children performed better in the skills evaluated in the study. Whereas many studies have been carried out on the schools’ physical design and its influence on academic achievement, little is known about, it influences on the acquisition of reading skills among Standard III pupils.

**ii). Literacy Material and Reading Skills Acquisition.**

A Literacy-rich environment has an important influence on what happens in the Classroom. It sets the stage for interactions among pupils and also provides a setting that encourages and supports acquisition of the four basic literacy skills through print and digital media (Kimberly, 2013). Learners need to access age appropriate and interesting books in addition to instructions in literacy skills that teachers provide in order to development of reading skills (Gambrell, Malloy, & Mazzoni, 2007). The literacy material comprises of books, adequate
age and language appropriate materials, school libraries, teacher training, reading materials, reading both in school and at home, and scalable technologies that improve reading.

Studies have reported that literacy-rich environments, both at home and at school stimulate pupils to participate in language and literacy activities. Reading materials of sufficient quantity, quality and variety serve a considerable role in successful early grade literacy acquisition. Such materials guide pupils through the learning of essential reading and writing skills and also provide them with a crucial link between skills acquisition and meaningful use of literacy throughout the pupils’ life (ADEA, 2012).

Several studies have reported that a quality literacy environment that provides many opportunities and materials to promote language and literacy development is linked to later reading. For example, Fiskum and Jacobsen (2012) noted that enriched environments tend to arouse more challenging activity, with a greater repertoire of behaviours such as questions, responses, and complexity of language interactions. A literacy-rich environment setting stimulates pupils to participate in language and literacy activities in their day to day lives. This gives them an understanding of the usefulness and purpose of oral and written text (Fiskum & Jacobsen, 2012).

According to Wilcox, Gray, Guimond and Lafferty (2011) a literacy-rich environment at school is important in promoting literacy and preventing reading difficulties. Positive and rewarding interactions between the parents/caregivers and children is assumed to create the motivation to learn literacy and
to enjoy book reading, which creates a greater interest in language-related activities (Berglund, 2011).

Goldenberg, Reese and Gallimore (1992) conducted a study on the effects of literacy materials from school on Latino children's home experiences and early reading achievement. In the study, a year-long case studies of 10 Hispanic kindergarteners was conducted. The study findings indicated that the school had a large impact on pupils’ literacy experiences. Although pupils in classrooms using photocopied storybooks had higher literacy achievement, whereas work sheet use at home was strongly and positively related to achievement.

Mol and Bus (2011) examined young children’s attitudes towards reading and writing in relation to literacy environment in which they had been enrolled. Of the 201 children sampled, 59.7% scored at or below the fifty percent. The results of the survey revealed that children’s attitudes toward reading and writing tend to be distinctly more positive if they attended a high-quality preschool classroom than those enrolled in a classroom of lesser quality. He observed that literacy environments of low quality might weaken a pupil’s literacy learning ability as well as add to pessimistic attitudes that hamper successful literacy development.
2.3.2 Teacher Demographic Characteristics and Acquisition of Reading Skills

Teachers are well-known as the backbone of the educational process and also as the major determining school factor of excellence and efficiency of its outcome. Research evidence shows that schools greatly influence learners’ academic success and a significant portion of that difference is attributed to teachers (Fehintola, 2014). Adeyemi (2010) also indicated that teachers play a fundamental part in influencing the learners’ academic performance. All educational systems at all levels rely on teachers for the implementation of their programs.

Better and improved learners’ academic performance depends on the recruitment of good and quality teachers. Adeogun (2001) reported that the quality of any education system is depended on the eminence of its teachers. Hanushek and Rivkin (2012) indicated that teachers are significant for the development and success of any education system. Teachers possess a number of characteristics that influence the pupils’ achievement at school. Teacher characteristics are those qualities of teachers which can be assessed by tests or resulting from their academic or professional records competencies.

Teachers academics, leadership, experience, commitment and resilience are directly or indirectly associated with the learners’ behaviour. Kane and Staiger (2008) examined teachers’ impacts on student achievement using a random-assignment experiment in Los Angeles Unified School District. They appraised various non-experimental methods for valuing teacher effects on student test
scores. It was found out that all of the teacher influence estimates considered were significant predictors of student achievement under the random assignment. The study concluded that Classroom characteristics yielded the best prediction accuracy. In both the experimental and non-experimental data, it was found that teacher effects faded out by roughly 50% per year in the two years following teacher assignment. The current study examined the influence of teachers’ professional qualification, experience and gender on the acquisition of reading skills among Standard III pupils.

i). Teachers’ Gender and Acquisition of Reading Skills

Teacher’s gender plays a major role in shaping pupils' ability of self-concepts (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). In primary education, pupils instructed by women teachers tend to perform better (Neugebauer, Helbig & Landmann, 2011). Women teachers are caring, offer a more encouraging classroom environment, and are most likely to use learner-centred instructional approaches which emphasizes the significance of stimulation. Antecol, Erin and Ozbeklik (2012) reported that female teachers have a positive influence on female learners’ performance. The presence of female teachers has a negative impact on female pupils math performance in primary school however, the presence of female teachers in primary schools will enhance both girls’ enrolment and educational success.

Dee (2007) studied the influence of teachers’ gender on pupils’ academic success. He analysed data from the National Education Longitudinal Survey of 1988. A selected a sample of 25,000 from 8th graders participated in the study
the findings of the study found out that same-gender teachers had a positive influence on learners’ academic success. The study established that the influence of teacher-gender was different on the different subject.

Similarly, Antecol, Erin and Ozbeklik (2012) explored the outcomes of teacher’s gender on learners’ academic performance in primary school. The results of the study did not find any effect of having a female teacher on male pupils’ test scores on math or reading. Female pupils’ reading test scores which seemed to rule out explanations pertaining to the un-observed quality differences between male and female teachers. Lastly, the negative effect seemed to persist only in female pupils’ who were assigned to a female teacher with a limited math background. Traditional male teachers are believed to be in excellent math and females are excellent at reading.

Antecol, Erin and Ozbeklik (2012) explored the outcomes of teacher gender on learners’ academic performance in primary school and did not focus on the influence of teachers’ Gender on acquisition of reading skills mong Standard three pupils. Kueckeny and Valfortz (2013) observed the influence of learner-teacher gender interactions on academic results using data from Sub-Saharan Africa. Eleven Sub-Saharan African countries participated in the study, which focused on the influence of primary school performance in math and reading. The results indicated that both male and female pupils performed better in reading when instructed by a female teacher than male teachers. All learners performed better in mathematics with male teachers. While the above studies focused on the influence of teacher’s gender on academic success, this research
aimed at finding out the association of the teachers’ gender on the acquisition of reading skill.

**ii). Teachers’ Professional Qualifications and Acquisition of Reading Skills**

The teaching and learning of reading is a multifaceted and highly skilled professional task that demands high-quality literacy teachers. Professionally qualified teachers are likely to foster high pupils’ overall academic achievement including reading skills (Seebruck, 2015). Akinsolu (2010) and Richardson (2008) concluded that the accessibility of trained teachers impacts on the success of learners in schools. Fisher, Nancy, Douglas and Williams (2002) indicated that teachers need continuous professional development for growth in exports.

Harris and Sass (2011) established that teachers undertaking in-service courses were highly efficient in Classrooms when compared to teachers who had no further training. Kosgei, Kirwa, Odera and Ayugi (2013) found out that teachers who trained at the Kenya Science Teachers’ College were more practically oriented as compared with undergraduate degree holders from public universities. Similarly, Lai, Sadoulet and De Janvr (2011) reported a significant positive association between teacher’s qualification and pupil achievement. The study also attributed good performance to excellent instructions offered by qualified teachers in conjunction with other variables.

Many studies have been done on teachers’ qualifications. Huang and Moon (2009) explored the teachers’ characteristics and learners attainment in low performing and high poverty schools in a Mid-Atlantic state in the USA.
Results indicated that teachers’ qualification contributed to nearly 40 to 60% of the overall success. Vesay and Gischlar (2013) conducted a study on the five major reading skills which including; phonology awareness, accuracy and fluency, alphabets, vocabulary and comprehension. Across all these critical domains of early literacy, professional training was the most common. Although a number of the teachers were untrained in the five key early literacy elements, they had the most consistent training across all critical early literacy areas. Whereas this study was done in the USA, the current study was done in Kenya among the standard III pupils.

In Kenya, Kirembu (2012) carried out a study of selected teacher factors related to performance in mathematics in Kirinyaga District. The findings showed that with regard to teacher qualifications and students' performance in mathematics, students taught by teachers with high academic and professional training did well than those taught by the teacher with lower qualifications. Considering students’ scores in mathematics, the results indicated that teachers in terms of qualifications can be arranged in the following descending order with students' marks in brackets: B/Ed (25.53%), Diploma (22.78%), Approved (19.79%), SI (19.75%), Graduate untrained (17.69%) and A-Level (8.92%). The study thus indicated that teacher qualification highly influences student performance.

Kosgei, Mise, Odera, and Ayugi (2013) conducted a study on teacher characteristics and the learners’ academic performance in Biology. Two
teacher qualities (experience and qualification) were investigated. The study results indicated that 80% of teachers who participated in professional development programs such as SMASSE showed better and improved student performance. While many studies have explored on teachers’ professional and academic performance, fewer have examined the school factors and their influence on the acquisition of reading skills among Standard three pupils.

iii). Teachers’ Experience and Acquisition of Reading Skills

Teacher experience has a momentous influence on pupil’s academic achievement. Experienced teachers have a lot of knowledge on the subject matter. This helps them to give insight and ideas to pupils on the subject learned. At the same time, these teachers are easy to correct and are friendlier to pupils. Rivers and Sanders (2002) reported that learners taught by more experienced teachers scored highly. They also indicate that these teachers had mastery of subject content and had gained classroom management skills which helped them handle learners with care. Experienced teachers are able to apply different teaching approaches to teach different topics also to suit different learners (Heacox, 2012). The focus, therefore, should be put on the most appropriate approaches used in teaching specific topics to learners with different abilities, prior knowledge and backgrounds.

Reading is a complex activity that requires highly skilled literacy teachers. International Dyslexia Association (2010) reported that professionally qualified teachers trained in reading instructions coupled with the understanding and skills on how to use instructional practices can foster high pupil achievement.
To promote reading skills, training and professional development of literacy teachers are necessary. Teachers require continuous professional development for growth in skills (Richter et al., 2011). Whereas many studies have been conducted on teachers experience and learners performance, the current study intended to assess the influence of the teachers’ experience and acquisition reading skills among Standard III pupils.

2.3.3 Teacher-Pupil Ratio and Acquisition of Reading Skills

Class size is an important determinant of pupils’ outcomes (Krueger, 2003). Research has it that large Standard size affects pupils’ test scores in the short run as well as their long-run human capital formation. With smaller classes the atmosphere is best in the classroom, learners can receive more individualized attention and teachers have more flexibility to use instructional approaches and tasks. Small classes might perform well due to many reasons. These may include better teacher-pupil contact and more personal relationships between teachers and pupils. However, because classroom instruction is the most powerful aspect of schooling for achievement, the effects of Standard size on achievement is most likely to occur if Standard size is linked to instruction. Blatchford, Bassett and Brown (2011) indicated that classroom instruction is more likely to improve in small class size as compared to large classes.

Arum and LaFree (2008) analysed the unreleased U.S. census data to find out the relationship between educational achievement and teacher- pupil ratios for individual incarceration risk for five-year birth cohorts, beginning in 1910. Using the fixed effect control methodology, the result of the study indicated
that educational resources measured as teacher-pupil ratios were linked with reduced adult incarceration risk. Their study assessed the robustness of this conclusion by replicating the analysis using school-level measures of teacher/student ratios and longitudinal indicators of individual-level incarceration from the National Longitudinal Study of Youth (NLSY).

A study by the Azim Premji Foundation (2006) focused on the significance of the pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) and its direct association with learners and their academic achievement. A sample of 461,887 pupils were involved in the study from 766 lower primary schools. Marks obtained in Math by 61,709 pupils in classes 1 to 4 were analysed. The outcomes of the study showed that a PTR lower than 30:1 had a high connection with the greater school achievement. It was also found that with a PTR above 40:1, schools seemed to have less than 2% chance of high performance. Schools with a PTR of between 10 and 20 showed excellent performance. Performance decreased sharply as the PTR increased, mostly from 30 upwards.

Further, Kiumi, Kibe and Nganga (2013) sought to establish the influence of PTR and the location of the school on KCPE examination performance in Olkalou Division in Kenya. The results indicated that high PTR had a negative impact on pupils’ progression throughout the primary school years leading to poor achievement in KCPE examination. They reported that the PTR had an impact on pupils' performance in KCPE examination. Particularly, pupils in high PTR schools were less likely to perform better in KCPE examination matched with learners from low PTR schools. While Kiumi et al. (2013) sought
to establish the influence of PTR in regard to Standard 8 KCPE performance, the current study focused on the influence of PTR on the development of reading skills among Standard three pupils.

2.3.4 Schools’ Strategies for Promoting Pupils’ Acquisition of Reading Skills

Knowing how to read is a fundamental skill to be learned in the early years of primary instruction for early and continuous accomplishment in school (Gove and Cvelich, 2011). Therefore, developing a plan for integrating various reading promotion strategies into a reading literacy programme through engaging pupils with what they read is one of the most effective ways of helping pupils think about and make sense of what they read (Lau & Warning, 2007).

Schools employ a diverse strategies and skills to develop reading skills. Calderon Slavin and Sanchez (2011) indicated that explicit instructions, teacher modelling and regular monitoring improve learners' reading skills. The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (2014) also reported that improved instructions, strong teacher training and in-school mentoring and community engagement in learning improves reading achievement among pupils. Mc Ewan (2013) noted that interventions with teacher in-service training are consistently correlated with better pupil learning. Further, Kremer, Brannen and Glennerster (2013) indicated that adapting various teaching techniques to reach the diverse learning levels is exceedingly effective in advancing pupils intellectual realization.
Offering excellent classroom reading instructions with certain research-authenticated features can greatly improve struggling readers’ performance. A study by Pressley (2001) indicated that early reading skills are promoted by coaching in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies. Similarly, Estyn (2007) accentuated on helpful learning and instruction of early reading skills in many childcare centres and primary schools. Further, Estyn (2007) noted that the growth of better quality preschool, provision of early intervention and broader support to families as a component of hard work to advance societal inclusion.

Teachers require ongoing professional development to enhance growth of skills across departments coupled with years of teaching experience. All instructors are required to study each approach, practicing it in the classrooms with peer support, and ultimately assume the duty of delivering future staff development (Douglas, Nancy, Douglas & Williams, 2002). Successful efforts to improve reading achievement emphasize on identification and implementation of evidence-based practices that promote high rates of achievement. When used in classrooms by teachers with diverse instructional styles with children who have diverse instructional needs and interests (Collins, Brown & Newman, 1989). Other essential strategies include sufficient time dedicated to reading each day to developing the strategies that build oral language, fluency, comprehension, and motivation (Rasinski, 2003).

Cunningham (2008) also contended that the quality of an early childhood program has been found to be an important factor for positive effects on
language and literacy skills. The quality of care given to children at ECDE also influences how children develop. In addition, classrooms that met professional requirements in relation child-adult ratios tend to have pupils with improved language skills and healthier cognitive and receptive language skills.

The use of teaching and learning materials enhances the acquisition of reading skills. Goldenberg (2011) concluded that acquisition of reading skills is enhanced by the teaching of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies. The use of real objects is best placed in teaching of young children. This is because children learn best through hands on experiences with materials. Teachers should provide real objects in all reading activities when teaching. Danielson (2011) posits that real objects enhance the use of all senses, which is recommended in teaching young children as it provides holistic growth and development. They also make the pupils more active as they not only motivate them, but also encourage learning because they are engaging during the learning process (Karuoya, 2015). However, this study sought to explore the use of teaching and learning materials and their effect on the acquisition of reading skills among Standard three pupils.

Providing quality Classroom reading instruction can improve the acquisition of reading skills among struggling readers. Many of the reading problems can be prevented when pupils are in the lower primary. School need to be provided with quality Classroom reading instructions, in addition to early interventions. Daly, Neugebauer, Chafoulea and Skinner (2015) noted that pupils who do not receive high-quality instructions and early interventions, their early reading
problems usually develop into serious reading difficulties later on. Denton et al (2007) reported that learners with severe reading problems can improve in a short period when they are provided with concentrated, powerful reading instructions. Further, a study by Danielson (2011) found out that when provided with a quality reading program that included explicit, systematic instruction in the alphabetic within a print-rich Classroom environment, 75% of the 1st graders who were in the bottom, 20% of their Standards in reading could learn to read words in the average range without additional intervention.

2.3 Summary of Literature Review

From the literature reviewed, it is being established that reading is the most significant basic academic skill that influences learning at all levels and all other academic subjects. Reading is a crucial skill in pupils’ education and development equally in school and thereafter. It is a major determiner of pupils’ academic success or failure. Reading is a complex process that combines several associated skills comprising of phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension which needs to be taught effectively.

Literature reviewed shows a number of factors influence the acquisition of reading skills among pupils. School literacy environment spans from the physical, infrastructural and the school environmental aspects that dictate the acquisition of reading literacy skills in pupils. However, many empirical studies have not interrogated the extent to which different dynamics within school environment influence acquisition of reading skills. On teachers’ characteristics, studies by Kuckeney and Valfortz (2013), Kirembu (2012) and
Kosgei, Kirwa, Odera and Ayugi (2013) noted that teachers’ characteristics such as experience, content mastery, teacher gender, availability and qualification greatly determine learners’ achievement. However, many empirical studies have not articulated how specific teachers’ characteristics influence acquisition of reading skills among standard three pupils.

On teacher-pupil ratio, a study by Kiumi, Kibe and Ng’ang’a (2013) noted that high teacher-pupil ratio impact negatively on pupils’ progress. However, Kiumi et al (2013) as did other empirical studies failed to indicate how class size impacts on pupils’ acquisition of reading skills.

On reading strategies, a study conducted by Kremer, Brannen and Glennerster (2013) asserted that adapting various teaching approaches to read at the diverse learning levels is exceedingly effective in advancing pupils’ intellectual realization. However, Kremer et al (2013) failed to articulate the impact of each specific teaching technique in enhancing reading skills. It is not clear how a number of strategies, including explicit instruction, teacher modelling, and regular monitoring can improve learners' reading skills.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the methodology and procedures applied in this study. The chapter consists of the research design, the target population, sampling procedures and sample size. The researcher further describes the research instruments, pilot study, validity, reliability, data collecting and data analysis procedures. Lastly, described are the logistical and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive survey design since this design allows the collection of extensive and intensive data and its in-depth examination (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The acquisition of reading skills is a complex process that encompasses the interaction of many factors that can easily be understood when such a design is in use. This design was chosen since it helped the researcher in describing, analysing, and reporting existing conditions within the schools that affect the acquisition of reading skills among Standard three pupils.

According to Sekran (2007), descriptive survey research is suitable when producing statistical information regarding facets of education that interest strategy makers and educationists. The researcher employed descriptive survey research design to explore and examine the influence of school factors such as
school, school-literacy environment, teachers’ characteristics and teacher-pupil ratio.

For the purpose of credibility, concurrent triangulation design was applied in this study. This design involves the simultaneous, but different gathering and analysing both quantitative and qualitative data to enable the researcher in understanding the research problem. Then researcher combined the three data sets by bringing the distinct results together in the interpretation during the analysis. The researcher collected both qualitative and quantitative data by use of questionnaires, interview guide and observation schedule at the same time and with equal weight (Creswell, 2012). Quantitative data were derived from questionnaires and pupils' reading test. Qualitative data were derived from interviews with head teachers and observation.

3.1.1 Study Variables

There are two levels of variables for this study. They comprise the independent and dependent variables which are described below.

Independent Variables

This study’s independent variable was the school contextual dynamics. This was measured by focusing on the school literacy environment, teacher demographic characteristics, teacher-pupil ratio and strategies used in schools to promote acquisition of reading skills among pupils. The school literacy environment took into consideration reading materials such as books and libraries and the physical environment in which the pupils learn. The research
sought to find out the availability and adequacy of these resources (Appendix III Section C, parts 1 & 2). Data on this variable were measured on a nominal scale.

The teachers’ demographic characteristics were measured by focusing on teachers’ professional qualification, experience and gender (Appendix III, Section D, parts 1 & 2) while, teacher-pupil ratio was measured by focusing on the number of pupils enrolled in Standard III in relation to the number of Standard three teachers (Appendix III, Section E, parts 1 & 2). Finally, the different strategies for promoting the acquisition of reading skills were considered. These strategies were measured by identifying the different structures that the schools have put in place to enhance the acquisition of reading skills among pupils these structures include quality reading instructional methods, the training of teachers on how to teach reading skills, availability of resource centres, remedial teaching and school reading culture. Data on these strategies were measured using the Likert scale (see Appendix III, Section F, parts 1, 2 & 3).

**Dependent Variables**

The dependent variable of the study was the pupils' acquisition of reading skills. This variable may vary considerably depending on the kind of the manipulation done. Reading skills include; decoding, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. These variables were measured using a pupils' test on reading skills (see Appendix V). Decoding was measured by asking the pupils to read both letters of the alphabet their corresponding sounds plus a few common
double sounds. Vocabulary was measured through dictation. Pupils were given dictation of 10 words.

The aim was to check their mastery of spelling of the words. Scores of 7 and above were regarded as very good, 5-7 good, 3-5 fair and below 3 as poor. Fluency was measured through the reading speed which was rewarded as good, average and below average. Fluency was scored as to how many correct words a pupil could read in a minute. Fluency was measured through the reading speed which was rewarded as good, average and below average. At Standard III children are supposed to read 65 words per minute. Comprehension was measured by giving Pupils a passage to read and thereafter answer five comprehension questions. The comprehension questions were 5 in number. Learners who scored above 3 were regarded as good and below three as low performers.

3.1.2 Research Methodology

This study employed both qualitative and quantitative research methods. In this study, qualitative research was used to generate rich, detailed data that was utilized to get in-depth understanding of underlying causes, and views, and inspirations of partakers. It also provided insights into the problem and to uncover trends in thought and opinions, and went deeper into the problem (Given, 2008). Likewise, quantitative research was employed to generate numerical data which was to be transformed into useable statistics. It was used to quantify attitudes, views, actions, and other stated variables. It also allowed the utilization of measurable information, to put together facts and unearth
patterns in research. It also allowed generalizations of results from a sample to an entire population of interest (McLeod, 2008).

3.2 Location of the Study

This study was carried out in Kisii County, Kenya. In Kisii County, education Standard is wanting (See Appendix XII). Among the nine sub-counties in Kisii County, the Kenyeny Sub - County was purposefully sampled due to its low academic performance in the KCPE exams. Studies by Uwezo in the years 2011, 2012 and 2013 indicated low performance in all of the three areas tested that is, reading a Standard two English stories, reading a Standard two Kiswahili story and solving Standard two math problems. Kisii County also recorded low performance of (30%) nationally, which is far below the pass mark of 50%.

Further, the analysis of Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination (KCPE) results of the Kisii County by KNEC for the years 2011, 2012, 2013 and 2014 (see Appendix VII), indicated that the English subject was done poorly as compared to other subjects. Further, recent studies show that in Kenyeny, literacy competencies among primary school pupils are far from better. Ouko (2015) and Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (2013) revealed that pupils do better in numeracy as compared to literacy tasks an indication that pupils do not understand word problems.
3.3 Target Population

The study targeted all the Standard three pupils, their Standard teachers and head teachers in all primary schools in Kenyenya Sub-County. Standard three pupils were targeted in this study since at this level, pupils are expected to have gained the basic reading and writing skills. According to (Uwezo, 2011), by the end of Standard II, pupils should exhibit adequate reading fluency and comprehension to read to learn. NASMLA (2011) also points out that the lower primary classes provide the foundation for the development of numeracy and literacy skills, hence impacting subsequent levels of learning. There were 77 public registered primary schools in the Kenyanya Sub-county. The target population for this study comprised of 77 head teachers and 77 Standard III teachers and 3080 Standard III pupils all totalling to 3234 as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Target Population

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Target Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head teachers</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard III Teachers</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard III Pupils</td>
<td>3080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3234</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kenyanya Sub-county (2017)

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

This section covered sampling techniques and sample size.

3.4.1 Sampling Techniques

This study employed purposive and stratified random sampling techniques to choose the sample. Purposive sampling was used to select Kenyanya Sub-
County in Kisii County. Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2012) indicated that purposeful sampling method is suitable when selecting a sample based on the qualities of the targeted group and the study objectives. Kenyenya sub-county was selected due to the fact that it has been recording low score in reading among the Standard III pupils.

Uwezo (2014) revealed that in Kenyenya Sub-county in 2011, only 8% of Standard 3 pupils could read a Standard two-level story in English and Kiswahili while in 2013 only 11% read. Ouko (2015) also indicated that pupils in Kenyenya performed better in numeracy than literacy. Stratified sampling was applied to create five strata based on the number of zones in Kenyenya Sub-county. From each zone, five head teachers and five Standard III teachers were selected using purposive sampling considering schools where pupils had registered low performance in reading skills.

At the same time, from each zone, 185 Standard III pupils were sampled using simple random sampling to eliminate feelings of bias and favouritism amongst the respondents. Dougherty and Edward (2014) explicated that stratified random sampling entails the splitting up of a population into smaller cluster known as strata. Simple random sampling procedure enabled the researcher to realize a sample of 23 head teachers, 23 Standard III teachers and 924 Standard III pupils.
3.4.2 Sample Size

A study sample of 30% of the schools in the sub-county was selected. According to Kerlinger (1983), a sample of 30% is a fair representation of a population. There were 77 public primary schools in Kenyenya Sub-County. Therefore 23 public primary schools were selected. All the Standard III pupils, their Standard teachers and head teachers in the sampled schools participated in this study as shown in Table 3.2:

Table 3.2: Sampling Grid

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Sample Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head teachers</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard III Teachers</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard III Pupils</td>
<td>924</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>970</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Kenyenya Sub-county (2017)

3.5 Research Instruments

Data was collected using questionnaires, interview guide, observation schedules and pupils' test. These instruments were considered most appropriate in the gathering of in-depth and extensive data. These instruments are described below in detail.

3.5.1 Questionnaires for Standard III Teachers

The researcher used a questionnaire to gather information from the teachers concerning the school contextual dynamics and reading skills acquisition among Standard three pupils. The questionnaires helped to collect a lot of information from the respondent in a short time (Mellenbergh, 2008). It also
allowed the participants to give data with less influence and biases of the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of both closed and open-ended questions.

The questionnaire (see Appendix III), was divided into five sections. Section A: teachers’ demographic information and acquisition of reading skills, Section B: levels of reading skills amongst Standard III Pupils. School literacy environment and the acquisition of reading skills, Section D: Teacher characteristics and acquisition of reading skills E: Teacher-pupil ratio’s influence on the acquisition of reading skills and F: Strategies used in schools to promote the acquisition reading skills. The test items contained a 3-point, 4-point and 5-point Likert type of questions which were based on the research objectives. According to Creswell (2012), the Likert scale illustrates a scale with theoretically equal interval among responses.

3.5.2 Interview Guide for Head teachers

An interview guide (Appendix II), was employed to collect information from the head teachers. The researcher employed interview schedules in order to collect additional data for further clarification on study items. This allowed for in-depth probing of matters to do with the choices made and the reasons given to the responses (Kaplan & Saccuzzo, 2009). The interview schedule served as guide and questions were not asked directly as they appeared on the schedule.

The themes covered include school-literacy environment, teachers’ characteristics, teacher-pupil ratio and strategies used by schools in promoting
the acquisition of reading skills. A notebook and voice tape recorder were used to record responses from the head teacher. The interview guide comprised of five sections. Section A: teachers’ demographic information and acquisition of reading skills, Section B: levels of reading skills amongst Standard III Pupils, Section C: School literacy environment and the acquisition of reading skills, Section D: Teacher characteristics and acquisition of reading skills; Section E: Teacher-pupil ratio’s influence on the acquisition of reading skills and F: Strategies used in schools to influence the acquisition reading skills.

3.5.3 Observation Schedule
Data concerning the school literacy and physical environment was collected through the use of an observation schedule (See Appendix IV). The observation schedule consisted of three sections. Section A: levels of reading skills, Section B: physical Classroom environment, Section C: Classroom literacy environment. The information was rated using the Likert scale. The test items contained a 2-point, 3-point and 4-point Likert type of questions.

3.5.4 Pupils’ Reading Test
A reading test was also prepared by the researcher and was administered to the Standard III pupils (See Appendix V). This aimed at testing Standard III pupils' reading levels. These tests captured reading concepts such as decoding, fluency, vocabulary, dictation and comprehension.
3.6 Pilot Study

The piloting was conducted amongst three Standard III teachers and pupils from a sample of primary schools in Kenyenya Sub-county. However, the respondents in the piloting were not included during the actual data collection. According to Kothari (2005) pilot sample should constitute 10% of the study sample. Piloting helped to pre-test the research instruments in order to validate and ascertain their reliability. Piloting was also suitable in identifying clarity and suitable nature of the questions and relevance of the information sought. This enabled the researcher to modify and test the reliability and validity of the instruments.

3.6.1 Validity of the Research Instruments

The validity of research instruments was measured against construct and content of the instruments. In this regard, instruments validity was measured through consultation with experts and professionals in the department. This was achieved by going through the questionnaires, interview schedule and the sample pupils’ reading test one at a time and comparing the items with the research objectives. Items that failed to measure the variables they are intended to measure were modified and unnecessary items were discarded.

3.6.2 Reliability of the Research Instruments

In order to improve the reliability of the instrument, the researcher critically assessed the consistency of the responses on the piloted instruments to make a judgement on their reliability. The reliability of the instruments was established using test-retest technique where the researcher administered test items to a
group of respondents twice. The results of the pilot study were compiled and correlation calculated using Cronbach Alpha. Cronbach Alpha (α) reliability coefficients was calculated to ascertain the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. According to Rosen et al., (2000), the acceptable values of alpha, range from 0.70 to 0.90. The Cronbach’s Alpha Formula is given as under.

\[
\alpha = \frac{N \cdot \overline{C}}{\overline{V} + (N - 1) \cdot \overline{C}}
\]

\(N = \) Total number of items – respondents

\(C = \) Average inter-item covariance

\(V = \) Average variance

From the results of the piloting, Cronbach Alpha Method was used to obtain reliability coefficient of \(r = 0.817\), which indicated high internal reliability.

3.7 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher visited every school that had been sampled to seek for permission and book appointments from the head teachers to carry out the research and familiarize herself with the participants before the actual study. During the actual data collection, the researcher visited the head teacher/principal’s office to report her presence. Data was collected in four stages. First, the Standard three teachers were given the questionnaires. Every teacher was given 30 minutes to complete the questionnaires thereafter the researcher collected the questionnaires. In the second stage, the researcher interviewed the Head teachers. The researcher spent averagely one hour with
each respondent. During the interview, the researcher took short notes and did the audio recording.

During the third stage, the researcher administered the pupils' test with the help of three research assistants and the Standard teachers. The research assistants with background knowledge on the teaching of reading skills were trained for three days on how to administer the pupils' test. During the test, observations on reading of letter names, letter sounds and fluency were made. Lastly, observations of school literacy and physical environments were done in the sampled schools.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis was guided by the research objectives. The collected data was first edited. Questionnaires were coded, and cleaned to ensure the data collected was clear and precise. Audio recordings were transcribed and arranged thematically according to the objectives of the study. Qualitative and quantitative data were analysed separately. Qualitative data were analysed thematically based on the research objectives whereas the quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages and inferentially using ANOVA Test Analysis at 95% confidence interval (5% confidence level) for testing the hypotheses. Test Results were considered significant only when the p-value of the test was less than 0.05. The qualitative findings were presented in narrative forms, whereas the quantitative findings were presented in tables and charts.
3.9 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

This section consists of logistical considerations and ethical considerations.

3.9.1 Logistical Considerations

The researcher obtained authority from the Graduate School of Kenyatta University to carry out research. The researcher also obtained ethical approval from the Kenyatta University Ethics Review Committee (KUERC). She then sought a permit to undertake research from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). She also sought an introduction letter from the Kisii County Director of Education and Kenya sub-county Education Officer. The researcher explained the nature of the research and then through the head teachers with the help of the Standard teachers, permission from parents to permit their children to take part in the study was sought.

3.9.2 Ethical Considerations

The following ethical considerations were observed. The researcher obtained the informed consent of all respondents to participate in the research study before the commencement of the study. Confidentiality of the information to be provided and anonymity of the respondents was assured since participants’ names were not used (codes were assigned instead). The interviewed head teachers were also informed about the audio taping and requested for their approval. In addition, the researcher ensured minimal interference with the school-programme during the study.
CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. For clarity and chronology, it is arranged according to the four research questions that the study sought to answer. In the first section, respondents’ demographic information is presented, since it might be pertinent in interpreting the data that they provided. The study sought to achieve the following research objectives:

i. to assess the levels of reading skills among Standard III pupils;

ii. to the influence of school-literacy environment on the acquisition of reading skills among Standard three pupils;

iii. to assess the influence of teachers’ demographic characteristics on the acquisition of reading skills among Standard three pupils;

iv. to examine the influence of the teacher-pupil ratio on the acquisition of reading skills among Standard three pupils;

v. to establish the different strategies employed by schools in promoting the acquisition of reading skills among Standard three pupils;

4.1 Response Rate

In this study, 23 questionnaires were administered to the Standard III teachers. In return, 20 were filled and returned. The researcher also conducted interviews amongst 20 head teachers and administered a sample reading test amongst 900 Standard III pupils. This yielded response rates as shown in Table 4.1;
Table 4.1: Response Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Sampled Respondents</th>
<th>Those Who Participated</th>
<th>Achieved Return Rate (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Head teachers</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>87.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard III Teachers</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>87.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard III Pupils</td>
<td>924</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>97.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>970</strong></td>
<td><strong>940</strong></td>
<td><strong>96.9</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From Table 4.1, head teachers, Standard III teachers and Standard III pupils registered a response rate of 96.9%. However, 3.1% of the respondents never participated in the study. This confirmed the findings of Creswell (2009) that a response rate above 75.0% is adequate and of suitable levels to allow for generalization of the outcomes to the target population. These findings are also consistent with the assertions of Massey and Tourangeau (2013) and Peytchev (2013) that low response rates provide biased results.

This response was attained due to the fact that terms of anonymity and confidentiality were clearly articulated to the respondents. After the questionnaires were administered, respondents were given sufficient amount of time to fill the survey after clear instructions on how to complete and submit the survey were given. In addition, the survey was designed such that it was easy to read and follow.

4.2 Respondents’ Demographic Information

The research instruments solicited demographic information of the respondents. These included; gender, level of formal education and experience
of the respondents.

### 4.2.1 School Category

The research instruments also elicited information on school category and the results are indicated in Figure 4.1;

![Bar chart showing school category](Image)

**Figure 4.1: School Category**

Figure 4.1 indicates that most (80.0%) of the public primary schools were day schools with only 20.0% being boarding. This information was consistent with the assertions of Storch and Whitehurst (2001) that school category and type play a crucial role in training of reading and the development of early reading skills. According to Storch and Whitehurst (2001), a combination of school factors impacts on the quality and quantity of reading literacy. These data were also consistent with the assertions of Kim et al. (2015) which showed that a substantial amount of variance in reading comprehension is attributable to differences among schools and districts. Findings by Yeya (2002) and Odhiambo (2006) revealed that students in boarding schools performed better
in national examinations that their counterparts in day schools. Therefore, the low reading skills acquisition could be due to the many day schools in the study area.

4.2.2 Gender of the Respondents

Information about the distribution of the respondents by gender was collected and the results are indicated in Figure 4.2:

![Figure 4.2: Distribution of the Respondents by Gender](image)

Figure 4.2 indicates that the majority (76.0%) of the head teachers were male with their female counterparts constituting only 24.0%. In the same vein, the majority (75.0%) of the sampled Standard III teachers were female with male Standard III teachers constituting a quarter (25.0%). At the same time, Standard III pupils were fairly distributed with slightly more than half (55.0%) being male whereas female Standard III pupils constituted 45.0%. These data reveal that there was gender disparity, though not at all levels of the study. This
information attests to the fact that the influence of school contextual dynamics on acquisition of reading skills by Standard III pupils in public primary schools is appreciated by all male and female stakeholders alike. These results corroborate the assertions of Eccles and Wigfield (2002) and Wigfield and Eccles (2000) that teachers’ gender characteristic influences pupils’ academic achievement. In other words, the teacher’s gender plays a major role in shaping pupils' ability of self-concepts. Further, these data lend credence to the viewpoints held by Laird (2011) that, female teachers are more supportive, offer a more positive Classroom environment, and are more likely to use pupil-oriented methods of instruction emphasizing the significance of stimulation.

In the same vein, these results corroborate the findings of a study conducted by Kueckeny and Valfortz (2013) which established that both male and female pupils performed better in reading when instructed by a female teacher than male teachers. Thus, this data affirm the fact that there is a positive association between teacher’s gender, enrollment and success of learners.

4.2.3 Head Teachers’ Level of Education

The research instruments also elicited information on head teachers’ level of education since this variable could influence their ability to supply credible information about the research objectives. The results are indicated in Figure 4.3;
Figure 4.3: Head teachers’ Level of Education

Figure 4.3 indicates that 20.0% of the head teachers in public primary schools had P1 Certificate, 30.0% had Diplomas, a quarter (25.0%) had Bachelors’ Degrees, 15.0% had Master of Education qualification whereas 10.0% has other qualifications in education. These data are consistent with the assertions of Neuman and Roskos (1990) that the head teachers’ professional qualifications are critical in understanding the relevance of literacy-rich environment which stimulates pupils to participate in language and literacy activities in their day to day lives. This information, thus attests to the fact that level of education is an important characteristic in making the head teachers understand the influence of school contextual dynamics on acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils in public primary schools.
4.2.4 Head Teachers’ Leadership Experience

Information was also collected about head teachers’ leadership experience and the results are indicated in Figure 4.4;

![Figure 4.4: Head Teachers’ Leadership Experience](image)

Figure 4.4 indicates that most (45.0%) of the head teachers in public primary schools had leadership experience between 6-10 years, a quarter (25.0%) had headship experience between 11-15 years, 20.0% had headship experience between 1-5 years whereas a paltry 10.0% had leadership experience stretching well over 16 years. These results are in line with the assertions of Heacox (2012) and Kosgei et al Ayugi (2013) that experience enables teachers and head teachers to apply different teaching approaches to teach different topics also to suit different learners. Hence, this points to the fact that leadership or teaching experience are critical characteristics which reinforce the expectation that the information they provided is authoritative since plausible reasoning is
expected from head teachers with such a wealth of experience. That is, their experience could enable them to provide a trend on the extent to which school contextual dynamics influence the acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils in their respective primary schools.

4.3 Levels of Reading Skills Acquisition amongst Standard III Pupils

The first objective sought to establish the extent to which Standard III pupils in public primary schools manifest readings skills such as phoneme awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, letter naming and fluency. Data was collected from the standard III teachers and the results are shown in Figure 4.5;

![Figure 4.5: Ratings of Pupils’ Reading Skills](image)

Figure 4.5 shows that 57.1% of the Standard III teachers indicated that their Standard III pupils could recognize and read alphabetical letters well, 10.7%
indicated fair and 32.2% indicated that their pupils’ letter reading skills were below average. At the same time, results in Table 4.3 28.6% of the sampled Standard III teachers indicated that their Standard III pupils had fluent letter and sound recognition skills. More than 10% of the teachers indicated fair whereas the majority (60.7%) admitted that their Standard III pupils have fluent letter and sound recognition skills which are below average. In the same breath, the researcher also observed that most Standard III pupils were good and fast in reading of letters of the alphabet. This was evidenced by the sample pupils’ test where most learners were able to read the letters (A, B, C, D etc.), but could not differentiate the letters (A, B, C, D, etc.) and sounds (/a/, /b/, /c/, /e/ etc).

Further, the researcher observed that a good number of Standard three pupils had little knowledge on sounds. These findings corroborate the assertions of Wolf (2016), that early teaching of decoding skills lays a firm foundation for the acquisition of reading skills. In other words, successful acquisition of decoding skills during the lower primary levels is a good indicator of later literacy achievement. This, further, points to the fact that the coaching of phonics in the early grades, helps the pupils to be able to link sounds and letters and letters in words (Bainbridgeke, 2016 & Brown, 2014).

The results in Table 4.2 also shows that slightly more than half (53.6%) of the Standard III teachers indicated that Standard III pupils in had competence in dictation and vocabulary skills. About 7.1% of the Standard III teachers observed that their Standard III pupils’ dictation and vocabulary skills are fairly
good, whereas slightly more than a third (39.6%) of the teachers indicated their Standard III pupils’ dictation and vocabulary skills are below average.

During the interviews, head teachers also alluded to the view that most of Standard III pupils in their schools were good indication, though not good in comprehending vocabularies. One head teacher noted,

“Most of Standard III pupils in my school can write the words, such as girl, house, umbrella, baby, school, blackboard and pencil amongst others. However, they find it difficult to explain the functions of items such as umbrella, bicycle and house amongst others”.

This was corroborated by a sample Standard III test where most Standard III learners could write dictated words such as girl, house, baby, teacher, school, umbrella, blackboard, woman, pencil and bicycle without any difficulty, but surprisingly could not explain the meaning of difficult terms. In the same breath, the researcher also observed that majority of Standard III learners were able to spell and write the words fast, but could not write the words the correctly. Some were not able to write the words at all. These findings are consistent with the assertions of Hanson and Padua (2014) that vocabulary plays a crucial role in reading process and that, in reading, vocabulary knowledge is necessary to understand text.

These findings also lend credence to the viewpoints held by The NICHD (2000) and NRP (2000) that vocabulary training leads to gains in comprehension skills. Further, (Glende, 2013) confirms that pupils with less vocabulary are likely to experience reading. Hence, these findings affirm the fact that the vocabulary is imperative to children’s acquisition of reading skills.
In other words, Standard III learners with less vocabularies need early intervention to enable them to become good readers.

Table 4.2 indicates that slightly more than a third (39.3%) of the Standard III teachers admitted that most Standard III pupils were good in fluent and fast reading of words, 10.7% indicated that the Standard III pupils were fairly good at decoding, that is, fluent, and fast reading of words whereas half (50.0%) of the teachers noted that Standard III pupils’ fluent and fast reading is below average. Similar assertions were also made by the head teachers during the interviews. The interviewees noted,

“Most of Standard III pupils in my school manifest good, fluent, and fast reading of words”.

The researcher also administered a sample test and the results were as shown in Figure 4.6;

![Figure 4.6: Performance of Pupils in Reading Skills](image)
Figure 4.6 shows that most of the Standard III pupils were very good in letter naming. However, they had lots of difficulty in reading of sounds, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension. The researcher also observed that the majority had problems with their fluent pronunciation of words. Worse still, the majority found difficulty fluently pronouncing phrases like,

“Martin had seven white chicks. An eagle ate five of the chicks. Martin was very angry. He wanted to trap the eagle. He did not know how to trap it. His friend Tom suggested they could use a rat”

It was further observed that most Standard III learners read words faster without spending so much time figuring out sounds, were unable to recognize letters when reading words, had a high degree of difficulty with phonics patterns and activities and stumbled a lot and loses their places when reading aloud. These findings corroborate the assertions of Dahl (2004) and Samuels (2005) that fluency is usually measured through oral readings, although good readers also demonstrate this skill when reading silently.

Fluency develops from reading practice. Frequent oral reading is the best way for children to improve their fluency. These findings affirm the fact that skills such as letter-sound, letter combinations and the making of sense and association of words need to be acquired first before the reader can read more complicated comprehension skills. The findings affirm the fact that early acquisition of reading skills lays a firm foundation for future success in reading and other subjects which are linked to later school achievement. In other words, successful acquisition of reading skills during the lower primary levels is a good indicator of later literacy achievement; skills which most Standard III
pupils in Kenyenya Sub-county, Kisii County lack. Furthermore, in acquiring reading skills, knowledge of phonological structure is the central enabling condition of reading in an alphabetical writing system. Likewise, only 32.1% of the Standard III teachers indicated the comprehension skills of their Standard III pupils are good, 14.3% indicated fair whereas slightly more than half (53.6%) admitted that comprehension skills of their Standard III pupils are below average. However, 57.1% of the Standard III teachers noted that their Standard III pupils are good at letter naming, 10.7% indicated fair while 32.2% indicated that their Standard III pupils’ ability to name letters was below average.

Head teachers also responded in favour of the view that Standard III pupils in their schools’ manifested dismal compression skills. One head teacher remarked,

“Most of the Standard III pupils in my school face numerous challenges answering comprehension questions”.

This was evidenced from a sample test for Standard III administered by the researcher which revealed that majority of Standard III pupils did not perform well in the comprehension. For example, most of the learners could not recall what the doctor used to clean Mr. Kusahau’s wounds nor could they recall what Mr. Kusahau wrote down when he got home. These findings were in agreement with what the researcher observed.
In other words, the researcher also observed that quite a number of Standard III learners were not able to answer comprehension questions well and also took more time answering comprehension questions. These findings were consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Kim, Petscher and Foorman (2015) which examined the variance in reading comprehension scores that existed between learners, classes, schools and districts for children in grades 3–10. Kim, Petscher and Foorman (2015) affirms that many factors such as the cognitive factors, fluency and semantic, spelling and a motivational factor, reading and self-concept knowledge matter in influencing comprehension.

4.4 Influence of School Literacy Environment on Standard III Pupils’ Acquisition of Reading Skills

The second objective of the study sought to establish the influence of school literacy environment on Standard III pupils’ acquisition of reading skills. This was measured in terms of physical facilities and literacy materials by assessing the availability, appropriateness and how literacy they influence acquisition of reading skills among standard three pupils.

4.4.1 Availability and Appropriateness of Physical Facilities

First, the study a sought to establish the availability and appropriateness of physical facilities. The basic school environmental variables such as noise, lighting, good ventilation, temperatures, physical equipment, housing and neighborhood quality have strongly and consistently be proved to affect learning. This section sought to establish the appropriateness of the physical
facilities in the sampled schools. Data was collected from teachers and the results are shown in Table 4.2;

Table 4.2: Availability and Appropriateness of Physical Facilities in Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate furniture for reading and writing</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall materials-soft boards</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventilation</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical layout of classroom</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom management</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: f-Frequency

Table 4.2 indicates that only 28.6% of the Standard III teachers hold the view that lighting in both public primary schools are good, 21.4% indicated that lighting is average, whereas half (50.0) of the teachers indicated lighting in primary schools is poor. Slightly less than a third (32.1%) of the Standard III teachers indicated that furniture for reading and writing in public primary schools are appropriate and good, 14.3% indicated average, whereas slightly more than half (53.6%) indicated that furniture for reading and writing in public primary schools are inappropriate and in poor conditions.

During the interviews, the majority of the head teachers concurred with the teachers that the lighting systems within their primary schools are neither good nor are the furniture for reading and writing appropriate. One head teacher remarked,
“My school has no lighting system at all, nor does my school have the appropriate furniture for reading and writing. Chairs, desks and classroom tables are in a dilapidated state and thus not conducive for learning”.

The researcher also observed a similar situation where most public primary schools had no electricity and inappropriate furniture for reading and writing. However, private primary schools had a semblance of improved lighting and furniture. These findings corroborate the assertions of UNESCO (2011) that appropriate physical arrangement of furniture, material selection, and the attractive, informative appearance of the classroom offer a setting that contributes to teaching and learning. UNESCO (2011) noted that literacy-rich classroom setting equipped with age appropriate furniture and sufficient lighting is necessary for the acquisition and development of reading skills.

Further, UNESCO (2011) reported that the availability and organization of reading materials in the classroom also affect learning and improve the attainment of reading and writing skills by pupils. Thus, these findings affirm the fact that the physical setting of a school motivates the acquisition of literacy skills as well as influencing the development and functioning of pupils. This is further indicative of the fact that a good-looking, well-structured and an engaging environment encourage interactions between pupils and can hasten literacy development and support good reading behavior and practice.

In the same vein, 46.4% of the Standard III teachers indicated that wall materials and soft boards in public primary schools are in good condition, 10.7% indicated average whereas 42.9% indicated that the wall materials are in
poor conditions. On the contrary, the majority (71.4%) of the sampled Standard III teachers indicated that ventilation in both public primary schools is good, 7.1% stated average while 21.5% of the teachers indicated that ventilation is poor. Only 32.1% of the sampled Standard III teachers indicated that the physical layout of the classroom is good, 17.9% indicated that physical classroom layout is average, whereas half (50.0%) of the teachers indicated that the physical layout of the classroom is poor.

During interviews, head teachers also responded in favour of the view that wall material-soft boards, ventilation and physical layout of the classroom are in poor conditions. The researcher also observed that wall material-soft boards, ventilation and physical layout of the classroom are not conducive for learning.

These findings lend credence to the assertions of Evans (2006) that school and classroom climate plays a mediating role in the relationship between facility quality and student achievement. These findings affirm the fact that the basic school environmental variables such as noise, lighting, good ventilation, temperatures, physical equipment, housing and neighborhood quality have strongly and consistently be proved to affect learning. At the same time, 42.9% of the sampled Standard III teachers noted that classroom management is good, 21.4% of the Standard III teachers indicated that classroom management is average, whereas slightly more than a third (35.7%) of the Standard III teachers indicated that classroom management is poor.

Head teachers also alluded to the view that their teachers experience numerous challenges in classroom management. One head teacher noted,
“Most Standard teachers in my school face challenges arranging their learners for effective reading and writing, maintaining classroom discipline, including learners with special needs and making Standard III earners be fully involved reading”.

The researcher also observed that most Standard III teachers lack classroom management skills. Seating arrangements, maintaining classroom discipline, inclusion of learners with special needs and adopting learner-centred approaches are a great challenge for Standard III teachers. These findings are consistent with the views expressed by Haroon (1999) that the quality of school amenities has an effect on educational outcomes and the well-being of the teachers and pupils. These findings further attest to the fact that the provision of and administration of sufficient school buildings and other facilities are required for the success of any educational needs of pupils.

**Teachers’ Views on the Influence of School Literacy Environment on Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Class III Pupils**

The study also sought to examine the influence of school literacy environment on acquisition of reading skills amongst class III pupils. Data was collected from class III teachers and results are shown in Table 4.6:
Table 4.3: Standard III Teachers’ Views on the Influence of School Literacy Environment on Reading Skills Acquisition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Items</th>
<th>Ratings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The literacy environment is necessary for literacy development</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability and organization of reading materials in the classroom affect learning and improve the attainment of reading and writing skills by pupils</td>
<td>75.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy environments of low quality may impair pupils’ literacy learning ability that interfere with successful literacy development</td>
<td>88.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A quality literacy environment that provides many opportunities and materials promote literacy development</td>
<td>65.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy-rich classroom setting equipped with age appropriate furniture and sufficient lighting is necessary acquisition of reading skills</td>
<td>70.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The physical school setting of a school motivates acquisition of literacy skills</td>
<td>83.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A good-looking, well-structured and an engaging school environment encourage interactions between pupils and hasten literacy development and good reading</td>
<td>64.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate physical arrangement of furniture, material selection, attractive and informative classroom appearance offer a setting for teaching and learning</td>
<td>65.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 reveals that the majority (75.0%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that the literacy environment that comprises of books,
language appropriate materials, school libraries are necessary for literacy development as did 11.5% of the Standard III teachers who agreed.

However, only a paltry 4.5% of the sampled Head teachers as well as 1.1% of Standard III teachers were undecided, 7.5% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 1.5% of Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. During the interviews, head teachers also responded in favour of the view that literacy-rich environment is critical in enhancing the reading skills amongst Standard III pupils. One head teacher remarked,

“Any school, which has adequate and appropriate reading books, libraries and well-stocked resource centres have their Standard III learners manifest a good grasp of reading skills”.

These findings corroborate with the assertions of Neuman and Roskos (1990) that a literacy-rich environment setting stimulates pupils to participate in language and literacy activities in their day to day lives. Neuman and Roskos (1990) further indicated that literacy-rich environment gives learners an understanding of the usefulness and purpose of oral and written text. These findings thus attest to the fact that a literacy-rich environment at school is important in promoting literacy and preventing reading difficulties.

The study also revealed that the majority (75.0%) of Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that availability and organization of reading materials in the classroom affects learning and improve the attainment of reading and writing skills by Standard III pupils. On the same breath, 10.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed? However, 2.5% of head teachers and 2.8% of the teachers were undecided, 9.0% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas
3.5% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. Head teachers also echoed similar views.

The interviewees noted,

“The ability of Standard III teachers to effectively manipulate the reading materials at their disposal always have their learners acquired good reading skills”.

These findings lend credence to a report by ADEA (2012) which noted that literacy-rich environments, both at home and at school arouse pupils participation in language and literacy activities. Hence, these findings affirm the fact that reading materials of sufficient quantity, quality and variety play a significant role in successful early grade literacy acquisition. Such materials guide pupils through the learning of essential reading and writing skills and also provide them with a crucial link between skills acquisition and meaningful use of literacy.

The majority (88.5%) of Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that literacy environments of low quality may impair pupils’ literacy learning ability and can contribute to negative attitudes that interfere with successful literacy development. A paltry 2.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. At the same time, 1.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 4.5% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 3.0% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed.

Similarly, a majority (65.5%) of Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that quality literacy environment that provides many opportunities and materials promote language and literacy development. 11.5% of Standard III
teachers agreed. At the same time, 4.0% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 13.0% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 6.0% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed.

The interviewing of head teacher revealed similar outcomes. The head teachers responded in favour of the view that literacy environments of low quality may impair pupils’ literacy learning ability and can contribute to negative attitudes that interfere with successful literacy development. The head teachers further noted,

“Quality literacy environment that provides many opportunities and materials promotes language and literacy development”.

These findings support the assertions of (Katims and Pierce 1995) and Kimberly (2013), that a literacy-rich environment at school is important in promoting literacy and preventing reading difficulties. This means that literacy-rich environment setting stimulates pupils to participate in language and literacy activities in their day to day lives. In other words, literacy-rich environment gives learners with an understanding of the importance and purpose of oral and written text.

The majority (70.0%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that literacy-rich classroom setting equipped with age appropriate furniture and sufficient lighting is necessary acquisition and development of reading skills as 15.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. At the same time, 4.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 7.0% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 3.5% of the Standard III teachers strongly
disagreed. The study also established that the majority (83.5%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that the physical setting of a school motivates the acquisition of literacy skills as well as influencing the development and functioning of pupils. A paltry 5.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. At the same time, 2.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 4.5% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 4.0% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed.

During the interviews, the head teachers also supported the view that classrooms with equipped with age appropriate furniture; sufficient lighting and good physical setting enhance learners’ development of reading skills. These findings corroborate the assertions of Ayodele (2004) that the provision of and administration of sufficient school buildings and other facilities are required for the success of any educational needs of pupils. These findings thus affirm the fact that the physical setting of a school motivates the acquisition of literacy skills as well as influencing the development and functioning of pupils.

Besides, a good-looking, well-structured and an engaging environment to encourage interactions between pupils and can hasten literacy development and support good reading behavior and practice. In other words, an appropriate physical arrangement of furniture, material selection, and the attractive, informative appearance of the classroom offer a setting that contributes to teaching and learning of reading skills.

Majority (64.5%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that a good-looking, well-structured and an engaging environment at school
encourage interactions between pupils, can hasten literacy development and support good reading behavior and practice. 11.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. At the same time, 5.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 13.5% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 7.0% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed.

The study also found out that the majority (65.0%) strongly agreed with the view that the appropriate physical arrangement of furniture, material selection, and the attractive, informative appearance of the classroom offer a setting that contributes to teaching and learning. At the same time, 10.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. However, 3.0% of the teachers were undecided, 11.5% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 10.0% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. This was supported by head teachers during their interviews,

“Appropriate physical arrangement of furniture, material selection, and the attractive, informative appearance of the classroom offer a setting that contributes to teaching and learning of reading skills”.

On the same breath, these findings further lend credence to the assertions of McNeil, (2013) who indicated that sufficient school buildings and other facilities are required for the success of any educational needs of pupils. On the same note, UNESCO (2011) reported that the availability and organization of reading materials in the classroom also affects learning and improve the attainment of reading and writing skills by pupils. Thus, the physical setting of a school with good-looking, well-structured and an engaging environment
encourage interactions can hasten literacy development and support good reading behavior and practice.

**Inferential Findings on the Influence of School Physical Facilities on Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Class III Pupils**

To verify the possibility of variance between school physical facilities and Standard III pupils’ acquisition of reading skills, data was collected on pupil/desk ratio and Standard III pupils’ performance in reading skills from the sample pupils’ test. The results are shown in Table 4.4:

**Table 4.4: Pupil/Desk Ratio and Standard III Pupils’ Performance in Reading Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil/Desk Ratio</th>
<th>FR (25)</th>
<th>DCT (10)</th>
<th>COM (5)</th>
<th>LN (25)</th>
<th>MLS (36)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: FR-Fluent Reading; DCT-Dictation; COM-Comprehension; LN-Letter Naming; MLS-Mixing of Letters and Sounds

Table 4.4 indicates that public primary schools have few desks to accommodate their Standard III pupils. In other words, in most schools, pupils sit in overcrowded classrooms where learners congest the few desks available. In such schools, Standard III pupils manifest poorly developed reading skills. That is, such learners do not manifest fluent reading of letters, rarely perform
well in dictation, comprehension, letter naming and register more cases of mixing of letters and sounds.

These findings further corroborate the findings of Neuman and Roskos (1990) and Kimberly (2013). That a literacy-rich environment setting stimulates pupils to participate in language and literacy activities in their day to day lives. Neuman and Roskos (1990) further indicated that literacy-rich environment gives learners an understanding of the usefulness and purpose of oral and written text. These data further affirm the fact that a literacy-rich environment at school is important in promoting literacy and preventing reading difficulties. These results were subjected to ANOVA to analyse the variance and results are shown in Table 4.5:

**Table 4.5: ANOVA Analysis of the Difference between the Means of the Pupil/Desk Ratio and Standard III Pupils’ Performance in Reading Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupil/Desk Ratio</td>
<td>622.917</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>124.583</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluent Reading Dictation</td>
<td>1639.25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>327.850</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>327.850</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Naming</td>
<td>264.583</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>10.583</td>
<td>78</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixing of Letters and Sounds</td>
<td>364.583</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>14.233</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1903.83</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>63.461</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Mean = 10.5833</td>
<td>2526.75</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>72.193</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the ANOVA Statistics in Table 4.5, the processed data, which is the population parameters, had a significance level of 0.000 which shows that the data is ideal for making a conclusion on the population’s parameter as the value
of significance (p-value of 0.000) is less than 5%, that is, p-value = 0.000<0.05. It also indicates that the results were statistically significant and that there is a significant difference between pupil/desk ratio and Standard III pupils’ acquisition of reading skills.

These results were consistent with the findings of Neuman and Roskos (1990) which generated a p-value of 0.013<0.05. Thus, the Null Hypothesis, $H_0$: There is no significant influence of school literacy environment on acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils. These results affirm the fact that in schools where the books are adequate, Standard III pupils manifest excellent reading skills. In other words, such learners manifest fluent reading of letters, perform well in dictation, comprehension, letter naming and register few cases of mixing of letters and sounds.

Thus, a literacy-rich environment setting stimulates pupils to participate in language and literacy activities in their day to day lives. In other words, literacy-rich environment gives learners an understanding of the usefulness and purpose of oral and written text. These data further affirm the fact that a literacy-rich environment at school is important in promoting literacy and preventing reading difficulties.

4.4.2 Availability and Adequacy of Literacy Materials in Primary Schools

The study also sought to assess the availability and adequacy of classroom literacy or reading materials in schools. Data was collected from Standard III teachers and the results are shown in Table 4.6;
Table 4.6: Availability and Adequacy of Literacy Materials in Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>None</th>
<th>Few</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Plenty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence of reading books</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil book ratio classrooms</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Centre</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence and Use of Technology</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age appropriate books</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charts on the walls</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>60.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Opportunities</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing Diversity in the</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39.3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>46.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classrooms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key: f-Frequency**

Table 4.6 indicates that a small proportion (7.1%) of the Standard III teachers admitted that reading books are present in both public primary schools, 60.7% indicated that reading books are few, 17.9% of the teachers indicated that reading books are present and adequate whereas 14.3% of the Standard III teachers noted that reading books are present and in plenty. Similar views were expressed by the head teachers. The respondents also stated that their schools had reading books. However, through observations, the researcher noted that books were inadequate.

A small proportion (3.6%) of the Standard III teachers admitted that pupil book ratio is not adequate, slightly more than half (57.1%) of the Standard III teachers indicated that the pupil book ratio is fair, slightly less than a third
(32.1%) indicated that the pupil book ratio is adequate whereas 7.2% indicated plenty. Head teachers who were interviewed supported these views. One head teacher further stated,

“Reading books in my school are not enough for all Standard III learners. Sometimes, we have three pupils sharing a book and Sometimes, even four”.

The study also revealed that 28.6% of the Standard III teachers admitted that their schools have no class libraries, slightly more than half (53.6%) indicated that few schools have libraries, 10.7% indicated that their schools have adequate libraries whereas 7.2% indicated that they have plenty libraries. The study also revealed that slightly more than half (57.1%) of the Standard III teachers admitted that their schools have no resource centres, 32.1% indicated that few schools have resource centres, 7.2% indicated that their schools have adequate resource centres whereas 3.6% indicated that they have plenty resource centres. During interviews, Head teachers also noted that their schools do not have resource centres. One head teacher remarked,

“Resource centre is a rare occurrence in most schools. If any school attempts to have, then it may not even have pre-requisite reading materials”.

The researcher also made similar observations. These findings are consistent with the findings of a study carried out in South Africa in which Tiemensma (2009) found out that many difficulties learners experience include; lack of and limited access to libraries in schools and community and lack of appropriate reading materials, multilingualism, illiterate parents, and socioeconomic conditions and lack of support from government at various levels. Previous
studies have also indicated that a book rich-environment positively influences the acquisition of literacy reading skills. For example, a study by Koskinen et al (2000) on the impact of using book-rich classrooms environments and home reading on the reading motivation, comprehension, and fluency revealed that reading comprehension improved on the book-rich classrooms.

Reading books in the home-school conditions increased pupils’ reading motivation and promoted parental involvement. Therefore, the low reading skills acquisition in the study area could be due to low pupils- textbook ratio experienced in most schools that were sampled. These findings are indicative of the fact that resource centers with reading materials of sufficient quantity, quality and variety serve a considerable role in successful early grade literacy acquisition. This implies that such materials guide pupils through the learning of essential reading and writing skills and also provide them with a crucial link between skills acquisition and meaningful use of literacy throughout the pupils’ life.

The study also established that 32.1% of the Standard III teachers noted the presence and use of technology in teaching reading skills, slightly more than half (57.1%) of the Standard III teachers noted the few presence and use of technology, 7.2% indicated that technology is adequately present and used in teaching whereas a paltry 3.6% indicated that technology is present in plenty and is used in teaching reading skills. The head teachers also indicated,

“Use of technology is a rare thing in most public primary schools, and its use in teaching reading skills has not been fully embraced”.

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The researcher also observed that despite the scanty presence of technology in some public primary schools, its use in teaching Standard III pupils reading skills is yet to be realized. These findings lend credence to the assertions of ADEA (2012) that the literacy material comprising of books, adequate age and language appropriate materials and scalable technologies improve reading.

At the same time, 28.6% of the Standard III teachers noted the availability of age appropriate reading books, slightly more than half (57.1%) indicated that age appropriate reading books are few, 7.2% indicated adequate whereas 7.1% indicated that age appropriate reading books are in plenty. Head teachers also responded in favour of the view that, in most cases, their pupils lack age appropriate reading books.

One head teacher noted,

“In my school lower primary classrooms are starved of adequate reading book such as story books, pacesetters and other reading materials”.

The researcher also observed the same. These findings are thus inconsistent with the assertions of ADEA (2012) that reading materials of sufficient quantity, quality and variety serve a considerable role in successful early grade literacy acquisition. Further, students need to access age appropriate and interesting books in addition to instructions in literacy skills that teachers provide in order to develop reading skills (Gambrell, Malloy & Mazzoni, 2007). Such materials guide pupils through the learning of essential reading and writing skills and also provide them with a crucial link between skills acquisition and meaningful use of literacy throughout the pupils’ life.
In the same vein, 32.1% of the sampled Standard III teachers indicated that there are no charts on walls for reading, a majority (60.7%) of the teachers indicated that charts are available on the walls, though fewer, 3.6% indicated that charts on the walls are adequate where no Standard III teacher indicated that the charts are in plenty. During interviews, Head teachers also echoed similar sentiments. They responded in favour of the view that most public primary schools have very few chats on walls. One head teacher from public primary school noted,

“My lower primary classes, especially Standard III, lack suitable and relevant teaching aids for improving reading skills. My school lacks wall charts, maps, audio-visuals and pictures which can harness reading skills for learners in Standard III”.

In the same breath, the researcher also observed that most of the public Standard III has no charts, pictures, maps and reading materials on Standard walls as one of the strategies that enhance the acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils. These findings thus corroborate the views expressed by Neuman and Roskos (1990) who asserted that enriched environments tend to arouse more challenging activity, with a greater repertoire of behaviours such as questions, responses, and complexity of language interactions. These findings point to the fact that a quality literacy environment that provides many opportunities and materials to promote language and literacy development is linked to later reading.

In other words, a literacy-rich environment setting stimulates pupils to participate in language and literacy activities in their day to day lives. The
study also found out that 35.7% of the Standard III teachers indicated that Standard III pupils are never offered writing opportunities and instruction, 42.9% indicated that few writing opportunities and instruction are offered to Standard III learners, 14.3% indicated adequately whereas 3.6% indicated plenty. Head teachers also indicated that there are no writing opportunities and instruction.

The study also established that 39.3% of the Standard III pupils noted they do not recognition of diversity in their classrooms, 46.4% admitted that they recognize diversity in their classrooms on a few occasions, 7.2% indicated adequately whereas 3.6% indicated that they recognize diversity in their classrooms in plenty. However, head teachers offered a discounting view, stating that all pupils are catered for devoid of their diverse backgrounds.

Inferential Findings on the Influence of School Literacy Environment on Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Class III Pupils

To verify the possibility of variance between school literacy environment and Standard III pupils’ acquisition of reading skills, data was collected on pupil book ratio and Standard III pupils’ performance in reading skills from the sample pupils’ test. The results are shown in Table 4.7:
Table 4.7: Pupil/Book Ratio and Standard III Pupils’ Performance in Reading Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pupil/Book Ratio</th>
<th>FR (25)</th>
<th>DCT (10)</th>
<th>COM (5)</th>
<th>LN (25)</th>
<th>MLS (36)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: FR-Fluent Reading; DCT-Dictation; COM-Comprehension; LN-Letter Naming; MLS-Mixing of Letters and Sounds

Table 4.7 indicates that public primary schools with smaller pupil/book ratio (PBR) have their Standard III pupils manifest excellent reading skills. That is, such learners manifest fluent reading of letters, perform well in dictation, comprehension, letter naming and register few cases of mixing of letters and sounds. These findings further corroborate the findings of Neuman and Roskos (1990) and Kimberly (2013). That a literacy-rich environment setting stimulates pupils to participate in language and literacy activities in their day to day lives. Neuman and Roskos (1990) further indicated that literacy-rich environment gives learners an understanding of the usefulness and purpose of oral and written text.

These data further affirm the fact that a literacy-rich environment at school is important in promoting literacy and preventing reading difficulties. These results were subjected to ANOVA to analyse such variance and the results are shown in Table 4.8:
Table 4.8: ANOVA Analysis of the Difference between the Means of the Pupil/Book Ratio and Standard III Pupils’ Performance in Reading Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupil/Book Ratio</td>
<td>559.889</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>111.978</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluent Reading</td>
<td>1863.556</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>372.711</td>
<td>31.013</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Naming</td>
<td>300.444</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12.018</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixing of Letters and Sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2164.000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>72.133</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2723.889</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>77.825</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Grand Mean = 10.06

From the ANOVA Statistics in Table 4.8, the processed data, which is the population parameters, had a significance level of 0.002 which shows that the data is ideal for making a conclusion on the population’s parameter as the value of significance (p-value of 0.002) is less than 5%, that is, p-value=0.002<0.05. It also indicates that the results were statistically significant and that there is a significant difference between pupil/book ratio and Standard III pupils’ acquisition of reading skills. These results were consistent with the findings of Neuman and Roskos (1990) which generated a p-value of 0.013<0.05. Thus, the Null Hypothesis, \( H_0: \text{There is no significant influence of school literacy environment on acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils}; \) is rejected. These results affirm the fact that in schools where the books are adequate, Standard III pupils manifest excellent reading skills. In other words, such learners manifest fluent reading of letters, perform well in dictation, comprehension, letter naming and register few cases of mixing of letters and sounds. Thus, a literacy-rich environment setting stimulates pupils to
participate in language and literacy activities in their day to day lives. In other words, literacy-rich environment gives learners an understanding of the usefulness and purpose of oral and written text. These data further affirm the fact that a literacy-rich environment at school is important in promoting literacy and preventing reading difficulties.

4.5 Teachers’ Characteristics and Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Standard III Pupils

The third research objective sought to find out how Standard III teachers’ characteristics influence the acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils. This was measured in terms of teachers’ professional qualifications on teaching reading skills, gender and experience. Data was collected from Standard III teachers and the results are shown in Table 4.9;

Table 4.9: Extent to which Teachers’ Characteristics Influence Standard III Pupils’ Reading Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ Characteristics</th>
<th>VO</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>39.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>42.9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional qualification for teaching reading skills</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>53.6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: VO-Very Often; O-Often; S-Sometimes, N-Never; f-Frequency

Table 4.9 indicates that slightly more than a third (39.3%) of the Standard III teachers noted that gender traits very often influence their learners’ acquisition of reading skills, 14.3% indicated that gender characteristics often influence their
learners’ reading skills, 42.9%, however, indicated that it sometimes influences whereas a paltry 3.5% indicated gender trait never influences acquisition of reading amongst Standard III pupils. During interviews, head teachers also indicated,

“The gender of Standard III teachers has a way of influencing learners’ acquisition of reading skills”.

These findings lend credence to the assertions of Dee (2007) that same-gender teachers had a positive influence on students’ academic success. Dee (2007) further established that the influence of teacher-gender was different on the different subject. These findings are indicative of the fact that the teacher’s gender plays a major role in shaping pupils’ ability of self-concepts.

On the contrary, slightly more than half (57.1%) of the Standard III teachers noted their level of education very often influences their learners’ acquisition of reading skills, 28.6% said it often influences, 10.7% indicated sometimes whereas 3.5% indicated that level of education never influences acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils. Head teachers also expressed similar views. They noted,

“My teachers’ level of education has really influenced their learners’ ability to acquire reading skills. Teachers with higher levels of education inspire their learners since they have the ability to apply different teaching techniques to improve learners’ reading skills”.

These findings corroborate the assertions of (Akinsolu, 2010; & Richardson, 2008) that availability of competent teachers influences the success of learners in schools. These findings also lend credence to the views expressed by Fisher, Nancy, Douglas, and Williams (2002) who indicated that teachers need
continuous professional development for growth in expertise. These findings attest to the fact that teaching and learning of reading is a complex and highly skilled professional activity that demands high quality literacy teachers. This points to the fact that professionally qualified teachers are likely to foster high pupils’ overall academic achievement including reading skills. The teaching and learning of reading is a complex and highly skilled professional activity that demands high quality literacy teachers.

The study also revealed that slightly more than half (53.6%) of the Standard III teachers believed that their teaching experience very often influence their learners’ acquisition of reading skills, 14.3% indicated experience often influences their learners’ acquisition of reading skills, 28.6% indicated sometimes whereas a paltry 3.5% indicated never. During interviews, head teachers also noted that teaching experience influence Standard III pupils’ ability to acquire reading skills. One headteacher remarked,

“Standard III teachers with teaching experience well over 10 years have their learners score impressively in different concepts in reading skills”.

These findings are consistent with the assertions of Gibbons et al (1997) that experienced teachers are able to apply different teaching approaches to teach different topics to suit different learners. This was also consistent with the views expressed by Stringfield and Teddlie (1991) that focus should be put on the most appropriate approaches used in teaching specific topics to learners with different abilities, prior knowledge and backgrounds. These findings affirm the fact that teachers’ experience has an influence on pupil’s
achievement in reading skills. Experienced teachers have a lot of knowledge on the reading skills which helps them to give insight to pupils on subjects.

Further, the study sought to establish the influence of teachers’ characteristics on acquisition of reading skills among Standard III pupils and results are indicated in Table 4.10;

**Table 4.10: Standard III Teachers’ Ratings on the Influence of Teachers’ Characteristics on Acquisition of Reading Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Test Items</th>
<th>SA %</th>
<th>A %</th>
<th>U %</th>
<th>D %</th>
<th>SD %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved learners’ performance in reading skills depends on the recruitment of quality teachers</td>
<td>80.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher behavioural traits are relatively stable traits that influence, the way teachers practice their profession</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionally qualified teachers are likely to foster pupils’ reading skills</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>6.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced teacher has a lot of knowledge on the subject matter which helps in giving insight and ideas to pupils</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced teachers apply different teaching approaches to teach different topics in reading</td>
<td>67.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils taught by female teachers tend to perform better as they tend to provide a more positive classroom atmosphere</td>
<td>88.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional male teachers are believed to be good at math and females are good at reading</td>
<td>70.0</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>12.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.10 reveals that the majority (80.5%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that improved learners’ performance in reading
skills depends on the recruitment of quality teachers as did 8.5% who agreed. However, only a paltry 1.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 5.5% of the Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 4.0% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. The head teachers also echoed similar views. The head teachers noted,

“Quality teachers are important if any, meaningful acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils is to be realized”.

These findings corroborate the assertions of Harris and Sass (2011) that teachers on in-service courses were highly efficient in classrooms when compared to teachers who had no further training. These findings also support the assertions of (Akinsolu, 2010; & Richardson, 2008) reported a significant positive correlation between teacher’s qualification and pupil performance. These findings are indicative of the fact that the teaching and learning of reading is a complex and highly skilled professional activity that demands high quality literacy teachers.

This further means that professionally qualified teachers are likely to foster high pupils’ overall academic achievement including reading skills. Besides, the teaching and learning of reading is a complex and highly skilled professional activity that demands high quality literacy teachers. In other words, professionally qualified teachers are likely to foster high pupils’ overall academic achievement including reading skills.

The study also found out that majority (78.5%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that teacher behavioural traits are relatively
stable traits that are related to, and influence, the way teachers practice their profession. At the same time, 14.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. However, 2.5% of Standard III teachers were undecided, 3.0% of the Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 1.5% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. Head teachers also supported the view that teacher’s behavioural traits are relatively stable traits that are related to and influence the way teachers practice their profession. The head teachers noted,

“Teachers’ attitudes, conduct and communicative competency serve to enhance learners’ acquisition of reading skills”.

These findings are consistent with a report by UNESCO (2004) which indicated that the teachers’behavioral traits are relatively stable traits that are related to and influence the way teachers practice their profession. The study also revealed that the majority (69.5%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that professionally qualified teachers are likely to foster high pupils’ acquisition of reading skills. On the same breath, 12.0% of the Standard III teachers agreed. However, 2.0% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 10.0% of the Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 6.5% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed.

Head teachers also expressed similar views during the interviews. These findings lend credence to the assertions of Rockoff, 2004; Rivkin et al, 2005; Aaronson et al, 2007) Aaronson et al (2007) who noted that the most essential school-based factor that determines learners’ accomplishment is the quality teachers. Therefore, these findings are in agreement with the fact that the quality of any education system relies on the quality of its teachers. In addition,
teachers are significant for the development and success of any education system. The majority (74.5%) of the sampled Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that experienced teacher has a lot of knowledge on the subject matter which helps in giving insight and ideas to pupils on the subject learned. 17.0% of the Standard III teachers agreed. At the same time, 2.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 3.5% of the Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 2.5% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed.

In the same breath, majority (67.0%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that experienced teachers apply different teaching approaches to teach different topics in reading. 11.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. At the same time, 5.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 8.5% of the Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 7.0% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. During the interviews, head teachers also responded in favour of the view that an experienced teacher has a lot of knowledge on the subject matter which helps in giving insight and ideas to pupils on the subject learned. One head teacher from a private primary school remarked,

“Teachers with long experience in teaching reading skills have their learners manifesting excellent reading skills. For example, in my school, Standard III teachers who have taught reading skills for over 5 years have their learners perform well in reading test scores compared with their counterparts with little experience”.

These findings corroborate the assertions of Rivers and Sanders (2002) and Ferguson (1991) reported that learners taught by more experienced teachers score highly. They also indicate that these teachers had mastery of subject
content and had gained classroom management skills which helped them handle students with care. These findings affirm the fact that experienced teachers have a lot of knowledge on reading skills and are thus able to apply different teaching approaches to teach different topics also to suit different learners.

The majority (88.5%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that pupils taught by female teachers tend to perform better as they tend to be more supportive and provide a more positive classroom atmosphere. A paltry 2.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. At the same time, 1.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 4.5% of the Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 3.0% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed.

The majority (70.0%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that traditional male teachers are believed to be good at math and females are good at reading. 10.0% of the Standard III teachers agreed. At the same time, 3.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 14.5% of the Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 12.0% of Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. During interviews, Head teachers also responded in favour of the view that gender of Standard III pupils plays a critical role in enhancing the acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils. One head teacher observed,

“In my school, learners taught by female teachers manifest a good grasp of concepts in reading skills than their male counterparts”.

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These findings lend credence to the views held by assertions of Eccles and Wigfield (2002) that the teacher’s gender plays a major role in shaping pupils' ability of self-concepts. Eccles and Wigfield (2002) assert that, in primary education, pupils instructed by women teachers tend to perform better. This was also consistent with the assertions of Laird (2011) that women teachers are more supportive, offer a more positive classroom environment, and are more likely to use pupil-oriented methods of instruction emphasizing the significance of stimulation.

These findings thus attest to the fact that the presence Female teachers in primary schools will enhance both girls’ enrollment and educational success. These findings further affirm the fact that there is a positive association between teacher’s gender and enrollment and success of learners, particularly for female learners.

**Inferential Findings on the Influence of Teachers’ Characteristics on Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Standard III Pupils**

To verify the possibility of variance between teachers’ characteristics and Standard III pupils’ acquisition of reading skills, data was collected on how many times teachers have undergone professional training on how to teach reading skills, their teaching experience and Standard III pupils’ performance in reading skills from the sample pupils’ test. The results are shown in Table 4.11:
Table 4.11: Teachers’ Characteristics and Standard III Pupils’ Performance in Reading Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency of Training</th>
<th>Experience in Years</th>
<th>Reading Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>FR (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.11 indicates that teachers’ professional training as does their teaching in enhancing pupils’ acquisition of reading skills. It is evident that the more the teacher is professionally trained and experienced, the fairer the performance of their Standard III learners in reading skills. These results further corroborate the findings of Coonen (1987) that teachers on in-service courses and with enough teaching experience were highly efficient in Classrooms when compared to teachers who had no further training. These findings also are in agreement with Kirembu (2012) that learners taught by teachers with high academic and professional training qualifications performed better than those taught by teacher with lower qualifications. These results were subjected to ANOVA to analyse such variance and the results are shown in Table 4.12:
Table 4.12: ANOVA Analysis of the Difference between the Means of the Teachers’ Characteristics and Standard III Pupils’ Performance in Reading Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ Characteristics</td>
<td>660.000</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>132.000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluent Reading Dictation</td>
<td>1897.286</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>316.214</td>
<td>33.760</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Naming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixing of Letters and Sounds</td>
<td>281.000</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9.367</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2178.286</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>60.508</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2838.286</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>69.226</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Grand Mean = 9.57**

From the ANOVA Statistics in Table 4.12, the processed data, which is the population parameters, had a significance level of 0.001 which shows that the data is ideal for making a conclusion on the population’s parameter as the value of significance (p-value of 0.001) is less than 5%, that is, p-value=0.001<0.05. It also indicates that the results were statistically significant and that there is a significant difference between the frequency of teachers’ professional training and experience and Standard III pupils’ acquisition of reading skills. In other words, despite significant relationship between training, experience and reading skill acquisition, this is not the case in the Kenyenya Sub - county.

These results were consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Krueger (2003) which generated a p-value of 0.013<0.05. Thus, the Null Hypothesis, \( H_0 \): “There is no significant influence of teachers’ characteristics on acquisition of reading skills among Standard III pupils” is rejected.
4.5 Teacher/Pupil Ratio and Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Standard III Pupils

The fourth research objective sought to establish how the teacher-pupil ratio influences acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils. Data was collected on the number of learners per Standard and per teacher from 23 schools and results indicated in Table 4.13;

Table 4.13: Teacher/Pupil Ratio in Standard III

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher/Pupil Ratio</th>
<th>Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 21-30</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 31-40</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 41-50</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 51-60</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Between 61-70</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 70</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Data in Table 4.13 indicates that 8.7% of the Standard III teachers indicated that they had a teacher/pupil ratio of 1:21-30, 13.0% indicated a ratio of 1:31-40, 17.4% indicated a ratio of 1:41-50, 7 teachers indicated a ratio of 1:51-60, 17.4% indicated a ratio of 1:61-70 whereas (13.0%) of the Standard III teachers indicated that they have a ratio of 1: Over 70 learners. Head teachers also indicated that most of their lower levels, especially Standard III, are very large. One head teacher from a public primary school noted,

“My Standard III size is quite large. It has well over 89 pupils and sometimes becomes a problem to their Standard teacher”.

The researcher also observed similar challenges with most Standard III in public primary schools being very large.
These findings lend credence to the assertions of Krueger (2003) that large Standard size affects pupils’ test scores in the short run as well as their long-run human capital formation. These findings, hence attest to the fact that Standard size is another important determinant of pupils’ outcomes and the effects of Standard size on achievement are most likely to occur if Standard size is linked to instruction.

Table 4.14: Standard III Teachers’ Views on the Influence of Teacher/Pupil Ratio on Acquisition of Reading Skills among Standard III Pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Test Items</th>
<th>SA %</th>
<th>A %</th>
<th>U %</th>
<th>D %</th>
<th>SD %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class size is a determinant of pupils’ learning outcomes in reading</td>
<td>78.0</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When teachers have smaller classes, the atmosphere is better in the class, pupils can receive more individualized attention and teachers have more flexibility to use institutional approaches and tasks.</td>
<td>69.5</td>
<td>25.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A school in which the teacher/pupil ratio is low shows the best acquisition of reading skills</td>
<td>74.5</td>
<td>19.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High PTR impact negatively on pupils’ acquisition of reading skills</td>
<td>67.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smaller classes in the early grades can boost pupils’ achievement in reading test scores</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A class size of no more than 18 pupils per teacher is required to produce the greatest benefits</td>
<td>75.0</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A lower pupil-to-teacher ratio can encourage greater participation in reading in the Standard</td>
<td>63.5</td>
<td>24.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils in a smaller Standard feel more accountable or more comfortable participating in Standard discussions</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>17.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.14 reveals that a majority (78.0%) of the sampled Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that Standard size is a determinant of pupils’ learning outcomes in reading. 11.0% of the sampled Standard III teachers agreed. However, only a paltry 2.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 5.5% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 3.0% of Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. During the interviews, head teachers also responded in favour of the view that Standard size is a determinant of pupils’ learning outcomes in reading. These findings lend credence to the assertions of Krueger (2003) that Standard size is another important determinant of pupils’ outcomes. These findings thus point to the fact that large Standard size affects pupils’ test scores in the short run as well as their long-run human capital formation.

The study revealed that a majority (69.5%) of Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that when teachers have smaller classes the atmosphere is better in the Standard, pupils can receive more individualized attention and teachers have more flexibility to use institutional approaches and tasks. 25.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. However, 1.5% of Standard III teachers were undecided, 2.0% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 1.5% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed.

Head teachers also indicated that smaller and well-conditioned Standard is appropriate for learners’ acquisition of reading skills. These findings are concurrent with the Krueger (2003) that, with smaller classes the atmosphere is better in the Standard, students can receive more individualized attention and
teachers have more flexibility to use instructional approaches and tasks. These findings are thus indicative of the fact that small classes might perform well due to many reasons. These may include better teacher-pupil contact and more personal relationships between teachers and pupils. The study also revealed that the majority (74.5%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that a school in which the teacher/pupil ratio is low shows the best acquisition of reading skills. On the same breath, 19.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. However, 1.5% of Standard III teachers were undecided, 3.2% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 1.3% of the sampled Standard III teachers strongly disagreed.

In the same vein, the majority (67.5%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that high PTR impact negatively on pupils’ acquisition of reading skills. A small proportion of 23.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. In the same breath, 2.0% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 4.0% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 3.0% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. The study also found out that majority (77.5%) of Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that small classes in the early grades can boost pupils’ achievement in reading test scores.

A small proportion of 14.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. At the same time, 1.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 4.0% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 2.5% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. The study also found out that three-quarters (75.0%) of Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that a Standard size of no more than 18
pupils per teacher is required to produce the greatest benefits. A small proportion of 14.0% of the Standard III teachers agreed. At the same time, 3.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 4.5% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 3.0% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. During interviews, head teachers also expressed similar views. They noted,

“Pupil/teacher ratio is very important in handling learners. Any class in which the teacher/pupil ratio is low shows the best acquisition of reading skills”.

These findings corroborate the findings of a study conducted by the Asimov Premji Foundation (2006) which revealed that a PTR lower than 30:1 had a high connection with the greater school achievement. Azim Premji Foundation (2006) also found that PTR above 40:1, schools seemed to have less than 2% chance of high performance. In other words, schools with a PTR of between 10 and 20 showed excellent performance.

The study also found out that majority (63.5%) of Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that a lower pupil-to-teacher ratio can encourage greater participation in reading in the Standard. A small proportion of 24.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. At the same time, 2.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 2.0% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 7.5% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. The study also found out that majority (70.5%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that pupils in a smaller Standard feel more accountable or more comfortable
participating in Standard discussions. A small proportion of 17.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed.

At the same time, 3.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 7.0% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 1.5% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. Head teachers also responded in favour of the view that pupils in a smaller Standard feel more accountable or more comfortable participating in Standard discussions. These findings support the findings of a study carried out in the Olkalou Division by Kiumi, Kibe, and Nganga (2013) which revealed that high PTR impacted negatively on pupils’ progression through the primary school curriculum and leading to poor performance in KCPE examination. They reported that the PTR had an impact on pupils’ performance in KCPE examination.

Particularly, pupils in high PTR schools were less likely to perform better in KCPE examination matched with learners from low PTR schools. Hence, these findings attest to the fact that Standard size is an important determinant of pupils’ outcomes. It affects pupils’ test scores since with smaller classes the atmosphere is better in the Standard, students can receive more individualized attention and teachers have more flexibility to use instructional approaches and tasks.

Inferential Findings on the Influence of Teacher/Pupil Ratio on Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Class III Pupils

To verify the possibility of variance between teacher/pupil ratio and Standard III pupils’ acquisition of reading skills, data was collected on the number of
Standard III pupils per Standard and their corresponding performance in reading skills from the sample pupils’ test. The results are shown in Table 4.15:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher/Pupil Ratio</th>
<th>Reading Skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FR (25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.15 indicates that public primary schools with smaller teacher/pupil ratio (PTR) have their Standard III pupils manifesting excellent reading skills. That is, such learners manifest fluent reading of letters, perform well in dictation, comprehension, letter naming and register few cases of mixing of letters and sounds. These results further lend credence to the findings of Krueger (2003) that, with smaller classes the atmosphere is better in the Standard, learners receive more individualized attention and teachers have more flexibility to use instructional approaches and tasks.

These data further lend credence to the findings of the Azimv Premji Foundation (2006) also found that PTR above 40:1, schools seemed to have less than 2% chance of high performance. In other words, schools with a PTR of between 10 and 20 showed excellent performance. This means that small
classes perform well in reading skills. These results were subjected to ANOVA to analyse such variance and the results are shown in Table 4.16:

Table 4.16: ANOVA Analysis of the Difference between the Means of the Teacher/Pupil Ratio and Standard III Pupils’ Performance in Reading Skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher/Pupil Ratio</td>
<td>30.472</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.094</td>
<td>14.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluent Reading</td>
<td>7908.139</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1581.628</td>
<td>14.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dictation</td>
<td>7908.139</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1581.628</td>
<td>14.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>7908.139</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1581.628</td>
<td>14.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter Naming</td>
<td>2656.361</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>106.254</td>
<td>14.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixing Letters and Sounds</td>
<td>2656.361</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>106.254</td>
<td>14.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10564.50</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>352.150</td>
<td>14.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10594.97</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>302.713</td>
<td>14.885</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Mean = 17.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the ANOVA Statistics in Table 4.16, the processed data, which is the population parameters, had a significance level of 0.000 which shows that the data is ideal for making a conclusion on the population’s parameter as the value of significance (p-value of 0.000) is less than 5%, that is, p-value=0.000 < 0.05. Hence, the Null Hypothesis, $H_0$: There is no significant influence of teacher/pupil ratio on acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils, was rejected. It also indicates that the results were statistically significant and that there is a significant difference between teacher/pupil ratio and Standard III pupils’ acquisition of reading skills.

These results were consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Krueger (2003) which generated a p-value of 0.013 < 0.05. These findings further affirm the fact that, with smaller classes the atmosphere is better in the
Standard, Standard III pupils can receive more individualized attention and teachers have more flexibility to use instructional approaches and tasks. This further points to the fact that schools with a small PTR manifest excellent reading skills. In other words, small classes perform well in reading skills.

4.7 Schools’ Strategies for Promoting Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Standard III Pupils
The fourth objective intended to find out different strategies Standard III teachers in primary schools employ to promote reading skills amongst Standard III pupils. This was measured by how often teachers use such strategies and the effectiveness of such strategies in promoting reading skills amongst Standard III pupils.

4.7.1 Frequency of Using Strategies for Promoting Reading Skills
Data was collected from Standard III teachers on the frequency of usage of such strategies and results are shown in Table 4.17.
Table 4.17: Frequency of Use of Different Strategies for Promoting Reading Skills amongst Standard III Pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Strategies</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct instruction method</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the phonics method</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look and say teaching method</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>67.9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The whole word teaching method</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>57.1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language experience teaching approach</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School culture of reading</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher training</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21.4</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisions of extra time for slow readers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Involvement of parents in helping pupils in reading</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>25.0</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.17 indicates that majority (71.4%) of the sampled Standard III teachers that they frequently use the direct instruction method to teach reading skills, 17.9% indicated that they rarely do whereas 10.7% indicated they never use direct instruction method. Head teachers concurred with these findings and admitted that most of Standard III teachers treat all learners to direct method without any special consideration. These findings lend credence to the assertions of Estyn (2007) that direct instruction of early reading skills in many child care centers and primary schools. This means that directed oral reading is critical in enhancing reading skills amongst pupils.
However, the majority (60.7%) of the Standard III teachers admitted that they rarely use phonics approach while teaching reading skills, 35.7% indicated that they frequently use phonics while 3.6% indicated that they do not use phonics while teaching reading skills. The head teachers also echoed similar sentiments. One head teacher remarked,

“Most Standard III teachers are direct instruction teachers. They rarely go into details while teaching reading skills such as phoneme identification, substitution and other aspects of phonological awareness”.

These findings corroborate the assertions of Foorman et al (1998) that acquisition of reading competence is fostered by instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies. These findings affirm the fact that early reading skills are promoted by coaching in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies. The study also revealed that the majority (67.9%) of Standard III teachers indicated that they frequently use look and say method while teaching reading skills, a quarter (25.0%) indicated that they rarely do while a paltry 7.1% indicated that they never use look and say method of teaching reading skills. The Head teachers also responded in favour of the view that most of their Standard III teachers use look and say method. One head teacher noted,

“The most common method of teaching reading skills is look and say. The teacher points at an object with a corresponding name and then learners read aloud”.

In the same breath, slightly more than half (57.1%) of the Standard III teachers indicated that they frequently use the whole word method of teaching reading skills, 35.8% indicated that they rarely do whereas 7.1% noted that they never
use the whole word method of teaching. These findings were supported by the views from the head teachers. These findings were inconsistent with the assertions of Foorman et al (1998) that providing quality classroom reading instruction can make a big difference for struggling readers. This points to the fact that many of the reading problems can be prevented when pupils are in the lower primary. In other words, the school needs to be provided with quality classroom reading instructions in addition to early interventions.

Slightly less than a third (32.1%) of the Standard III teachers indicated that they frequently use the language experience teaching method of teaching reading skills, the majority (64.3%) indicated that they rarely do whereas 3.6% noted that they never use the language experience teaching method. During the interviews, Head teachers noted that most Standard III teachers rarely use language experience teaching method. The study also revealed that 28.6% admitted that there is frequently any school culture for reading, half (50.0%) indicated rarely whereas 21.4% indicated that there is no school culture of reading. However, head teachers discounted this view. The interviewees stated,

“We do have joint reading school cultures which are often conducted every week with neighbouring schools, both public”.

These findings are consistent with the assertions of Estyn (2007) who noted that the growth of better quality pre-school provision, early intervention and broader support to families as a component of hard work to advance school reading culture and societal inclusion. All instructors are required to study each approach, practicing it in the classrooms with peer support and ultimately
assume the duty of delivering future staff development. A small proportion (21.4%) of Standard III teachers indicated that they frequently undergo professional training on how to teach reading skills.

Slightly more than half (57.1%) indicated that they rarely undergo such training while 21.4% indicated that they have never undergone such professional training. Head teachers also concurred and noted that most Standard III teachers have not undergone any professional training on how to teach reading skills. These findings corroborate the assertions of Douglas et al (2002) that teachers require ongoing professional progress to enhance growth of skills across departments coupled with years of teaching experience.

The study also revealed that 17.9% of the Standard III teachers indicated that they frequently provide extra time for slow learners, 39.3% indicated that they rarely do, whereas 42.9% indicated that they never provide extra time for slow learners. Head teachers confirmed the same sentiments.

One head teacher stated,

“Due to congested school timetable and work overload, sometimes Standard III teachers find it is very difficult to create extra time to teach slow learners’ reading skills”.

These findings lend credence to the assertions of Rasinski (2003) that amongst the essential strategies include sufficient time dedicated to reading each day and to developing the strategies that build oral language, fluency, comprehension, and motivation. A quarter (25.0%) of the Standard III teachers indicated that they frequently involve parents in helping pupils in reading, the
majority (60.7%) indicated that they rarely do whereas 14.3% admitted that they never involve parents.

During interviews, head teachers also affirmed the view that parents are rarely involved in helping pupils with reading. These findings support the assertions of the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation (2014) which also reported that in-school mentoring and community engagement in learning improve reading achievement among pupils. These findings affirm the fact that higher quality child care was related to higher measure of cognitive and language development and communication skills across time even after adjusting for selected child and family characteristics.

Besides, these findings are further indicative of the fact that classrooms that met professional recommendations regarding child-adult ratios tended to have children with better language skills. Classrooms that met recommendations regarding teacher education tended to have children with better cognitive and receptive language skills.

4.7.2 Effectiveness of Strategies for Promoting Reading Skills amongst Standard III Pupils

The study also sought to assess the effectiveness of strategies for promoting reading skills among Standard III pupils and results are indicated in Table 4.18:
Table 4.18: Views of Standard III Teachers on Effectiveness of Strategies for Promoting Reading Skills among Standard III Pupils

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Test Items</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit instructions improve learners’ reading skills</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community engagement in learning improves reading achievement among Standard III pupils.</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning reading competence is fostered by instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies.</td>
<td>51.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>22.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ training on teaching reading enhances Standard III pupils’ acquisition of reading skills</td>
<td>68.5</td>
<td>15.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher modelling and regular monitoring improve learners' reading skills</td>
<td>78.5</td>
<td>14.5</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of evidence-based practices promote high rates of reading achievement among learners when used by Standard III teachers with diverse instructional styles</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient time dedicated to reading each day to build oral language, fluency and comprehension skills</td>
<td>57.5</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of teaching and learning materials as do real objects enhances the acquisition of reading skills</td>
<td>59.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.18 reveals that a fair majority (59.5%) of the sampled Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that explicit instructions improve learners’ reading skills. 15.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. However, only a paltry 4.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 11.5% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 9.0% of Standard III teachers strongly
disagreed. During the interviews, head teachers also stated that explicit instructions improve learners’ reading skills. Most interviewees concurred,

“Explicit instruction which is systematic, direct, engaging and success oriented, promotes reading achievement for all Standard III pupils. However, Head teachers noted, “This highly practical and accessible resource which gives special and general education teachers the tools to implement explicit instruction in any grade level or content area in lacking amongst most Standard III teachers in primary schools”.

The Head teachers further observed that, in explicit instruction, the teachers are leading experts who provide clear guidelines for identifying key reading concepts, strategies, skills, and routines teach; designing and delivering effective lessons; and giving students opportunities to practice and master new material. The head teachers further noted,

“Sample lesson plans, lively examples, and reproducible checklists and teacher worksheets enhance the utility of the volume and thus provides opportunities for promoting learners’ reading skills”.

These findings thus corroborate the assertions of Paris, Wasik, and Turner (1991) indicated that explicit instructions, teacher modelling and regular monitoring improve learners' reading skills. These findings point to the fact that quality reading program that include explicit, systematic instruction in the alphabetic within a print-rich classroom environment. The study revealed that slightly more than half (56.5%) of Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that community engagement in learning improves reading achievement among Standard III pupils. 23.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. However, 2.5% of Standard III teachers were undecided, 9.5% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 8.0% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. Head teachers also admitted,
“Involvement of members of the community is critical in enhancing reading skills amongst Standard III pupils”.

These findings thus lend credence to the assertions of Turner (1991) indicated that explicit instructions, teacher modelling and regular monitoring improve learners' reading skills. Thus, this means that improved instruction, strong teacher training and in-school mentoring and community engagement in learning improves reading achievement among pupils. The study also revealed that slightly more than half (51.5%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that beginning reading competence is fostered by instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies.

On the same breath, 8.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. However, 7.0% of Standard III were undecided, 22.5% of Standard III teachers and 21.8% of the teachers disagreed whereas 10.5% of the sampled Standard III teachers as did 7.9% of the teachers strongly disagreed. The head teachers also indicated,

“To develop reading competence amongst early learners is determined wholly through effective instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies”.

These findings are consistent with the findings of a study conducted by Pressley (2001) which indicated that early reading skills are promoted by coaching in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies. These findings thus affirm the fact that acquisition of reading competence is fostered by instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies. In the same vein, the majority (68.5%) of the sampled Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that
teachers’ training on teaching reading enhances Standard III pupils’ acquisition of reading skills.

A small proportion of 15.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. In the same breath, 3.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 8.5% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 4.0% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. During interviews, head teachers also noted that teachers’ training of teaching of reading skills enhances Standard III pupils’ acquisition of reading skills. These findings lend credence to the assertions of Mc Ewan (2013) who also noted that interventions with teacher in-service training are consistently correlated with better pupil learning. This implies that, with the professional training of Standard III teachers, they are able to adapt a variety of teaching techniques to reach the diverse learning levels is exceedingly effective in advancing pupils intellectual realization.

The study also found out that majority (78.5%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that teacher modelling and regular monitoring improve learners' reading skills. A small proportion of 14.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. At the same time, 2.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 3.0% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 1.5% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. These findings corroborate the assertions of Turner (1991) teacher modelling and regular monitoring improve learners' reading skills. This attests to the fact that improved instruction, strong teacher training and in-school mentoring has improved reading achievement among pupils.
The study also found out that majority (60.5%) of the Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that implementation of evidence-based practices promotes high rates of reading achievement among learners when used by Standard III teachers with diverse instructional styles. A small proportion of 16.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. At the same time, 4.0% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 12.0% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 9.0% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed.

Head teachers also concurred with the views of the teachers. These findings are thus in agreement with the views expressed by Collins et al (1989) that successful efforts to improve reading achievement emphasize identification and implementation of evidence-based practices that promote high rates of achievement in reading. The study also found out that slightly more than half (57.5%) of Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that sufficient time dedicated to reading each day to build oral language, fluency and comprehension skills. A small proportion of 21.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed.

At the same time, 6.5% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 9.5% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 7.0% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. During the interviews, Head teachers also alluded to the view that sufficient time dedicated to reading each day to build oral language, fluency and comprehension skills. These findings are consistent with the views expressed by Rasinski (2003) that sufficient time dedicated to reading each day help build pupils’ oral language, fluency and comprehension skills. These
findings thus attest to the fact that the quality of time is an important factor for positive effects on language and literacy skills.

The study also found out that slightly more than half (59.5%) of Standard III teachers strongly agreed with the view that the use of teaching and learning materials as do real objects enhances the acquisition of reading skills. A small proportion of 8.5% of the Standard III teachers agreed. At the same time, 7.0% of the Standard III teachers were undecided, 16.5% of Standard III teachers disagreed whereas 8.5% of the Standard III teachers strongly disagreed. Head teachers also responded in favour of the view that the availability and effective use of language teaching and learning materials enhance learners’ acquisition of reading skills. One head teacher remarked,

“Effective use of teaching and learning materials for reading has seen an improvement in reading skills amongst Standard III learners in my school”.

These findings corroborate the assertions of Foorman et al (1998) that the use of teaching and learning materials enhances the acquisition of reading skills. These findings also corroborate the assertions of Karuoya (2015) that real objects are the best placed to teach young children. This is because children learn best through hands on experiences with materials. Karuoya (2015) further noted that teachers should provide real objects in all reading activities when teaching. These findings thus point to the fact that teaching and learning materials or real objects enhance the use of all senses, which is recommended in teaching young children as it provides holistic growth and development. In other words, such materials also make the pupils more active as they not only
motivate them, but also encourage learning because they are engaging during the reading process.
5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the main research findings, conclusions, recommendations and suggestions for further research as discussed under the research objectives.

5.1 Summary of Research Findings

This section provides a summary of the research findings based on the objectives of the study. The research objectives were to assessing the levels of reading skills among Standard III pupils; establishing the influence of school literacy environment, teachers’ characteristics and teacher/pupil ratio on the acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils. It also entailed finding out the different strategies that schools have put in place to promote the acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils.

5.1.1 Reading Skills acquisition amongst Standard III Pupils

The study established that most of Standard III pupils in public primary schools manifest good, fluent and fast reading of words. However, the majority of the pupils had a difficult time when figuring out the sounds and letters nor were they able to differentiate between letters and sounds. It was also evident that most of Standard III pupils in primary schools could write the words though with a lot of spelling mistakes and at the same time found it difficult to explain the functions of most items written.
The study also revealed that Standard III pupils in primary schools’ manifest dismal compression skills as does majority who mix letters and sounds. These findings affirm the fact that skills such as letter-sound, letter combinations and the making of sense and association of words need to be acquired first before the reader can read more complicated comprehension skills.

5.1.2 School Literacy Environment and Reading Skills Acquisition amongst Standard III Pupils

The study established that, in most public schools, there are various dynamics which influence the Standard III pupils’ ability to acquire reading skills. These include the physical design and literacy environment.

Physical Environment and Reading Skills Acquisition amongst Standard III Pupils

The study established that most public primary schools have no lighting system at all, nor do they have the appropriate furniture for reading and writing. Chairs, desks and classroom tables are in a dilapidated state and thus not conducive to learning. From the study findings, it is also evident that in most public primary schools wall material-soft boards are missing and the few that were there, they were not in good condition. Classrooms were characterised by poor physical layout and classroom room organization though fairly good ventilation.
Literacy Environment and Reading Skills Acquisition amongst Standard III Pupils

From the study findings, it is also evident that teaching and learning materials in most public primary schools were inadequate. This indicates that most of the Standard III pupils lack access to classrooms libraries and resource centres with reading materials of sufficient quantity, quality and variety which serve a considerable role in successful early grade reading literacy acquisition.

Use of technology is still a pipe dream and its use in teaching reading skills has not been fully embraced. In general, the study established a statistically significant (p = 0.002.) relationship between school literacy environment and reading skills acquisition among Standard three pupils.

5.1.3 Teachers’ Characteristics and Reading Skills Acquisition amongst Standard III Pupils

The study also established that Standard III teachers have numerous characteristics which impact on acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils. These include; level of education, gender, behaviour and experience. Female teachers had a positive influence on pupils’ acquisition of reading skills. Pupils taught by professionally qualified teachers performed better in reading skills. Further, teachers’ experience has a momentous influence on pupil’s achievement in reading skills. The study established that there was a statistically significant difference between teachers’ characteristics and reading skills acquisition among Standard three pupils.
5.1.4 Teacher/Pupil Ratio and Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Standard III Pupils

The study established that teacher-pupil ratio in most public primary schools was high. The number of pupils’ enrolment in Standard III in public primary schools is quite large with well over 60 pupils. From the study findings, there was a statistically significant difference between teacher/pupil ratio and reading skills acquisition among Standard three pupils.

5.1.5 Schools’ Strategies for Promoting Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Standard III Pupils

The study established that most strategies adopted by Standard III teachers are not effective in enhancing reading skills. Most of the Standard III teachers commonly use look and say and whole word method without any special consideration to phonics. The Standard III teachers rarely use teaching methods such as the Direct Instruction Model, phonics approach and the language experience teaching method. Due to congested school timetable and work overload, sometimes Standard III teachers find it is very difficult to create extra time to teach slow learners' reading skills.

5.2 Conclusions

Drawing from the above findings, it is evident that reading is one of the best indicators that measure a pupil’s educational success since it more often than not reflects a minimal level of successfully completed schooling. Despite the importance of reading, developing children’s skills in reading remains a major
challenge. The study concluded that well-designed classrooms equipped with age-appropriate furniture and literacy materials promote the acquisition of reading skills among pupils.

Teachers’ characteristics such as level of education, gender, behaviour and experience impact on acquisition of reading skills amongst Standard III pupils. Teacher-pupil ratio also influences how pupils learn and develop reading skills. Further, the use of different strategies such as: the use of appropriate instructional methods by teachers, professional development of teachers especially on methods and techniques of teaching reading, availability of quality and sufficient teaching-learning materials, access to resource centres with reading materials of sufficient quantity, quality and variety, and developing a reading culture among pupils enhance the development of reading skills among pupils. Finally, the use of technology is still a pipe dream and its use in teaching reading skills has not been fully embraced.

5.3 Recommendations

The following are the recommendations of the study:

i. Objective one on reading levels; the study found out the most of the Standard III pupils had a difficult time when figuring out the sounds and letters nor were they able to differentiate between letters and sounds. The study recommends that pupils in lower grades be taught using phonics and how to blend letters into words. These sub-skills form the basis upon which other reading skills such as vocabulary and comprehension are built.
ii. On objective two (school literacy environment), the study established that physical environment in public primary schools is not conducive to the acquisition of reading skills nor is classroom literacy materials adequate and relevant. The study recommends that stakeholders in the education sector, such as the Ministry of Education, KICD, community and school administrators should ensure that primary schools have quality school-literacy materials that comprise of age-appropriate books, language appropriate materials and school libraries.

iii. On objective three, the study established that there was a statistically significant difference between teachers’ characteristics and reading skills acquisition among Standard three pupils. The study also established that most Standard III teachers have limited training on teaching reading skills as well as little experience in teaching reading. The study thus recommends that the Ministry of Education should train and retrain teachers on teaching reading skills through regular teacher professional training and in-service courses, workshops and seminars to ensure that teachers have the necessary skills to teach reading at lower levels.

iv. On objective four, the study established that most primary schools have larger teacher-pupil ratios. The study thus recommends that the Ministry of Education should strive to lower teacher-pupil ratio in the country in order to promote academic excellence in primary education including the adequate acquisition of reading skills and
v. Finally, on objective five, the study established that most strategies adopted by class III teachers are not effective in enhancing reading skills. Therefore, the researcher recommends that: the provision of a good school literacy environment by the stakeholders; the use of appropriate teaching strategies by teachers such as the Direct Instruction Model and phonics approach, teacher training on how to teach reading, introducing reading cultures, the establishment of resource centers in schools, and use of technology as strategies to be put in place in primary schools to enhance the acquisition of reading skills

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

The study recommends that:

i. Further studies should be conducted to establish how adequate pupils at higher primary and secondary have acquired literacy reading skills. This will provide a basis conclude that poor reading skills at earlier stages in education affect the entire academic life of a person.

ii. Further studies should be conducted on the effects of the poor acquisition of reading skills in school life and after school. This will help in ensuring that pupils adequately acquire reading skills at the early age of the educated.
REFERENCES


Geers, A. E., & Hayes, H. (2011). Reading, writing, and phonological processing skills of adolescents with 10 or more years of cochlear implant experience. *Ear and Hearing, 32*(1), 49S.


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APPENDIX I

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: PERMISSION TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

I am a student undertaking a course in doctorate studies in Early Childhood Education at Kenyatta University. I am required to submit, as part of my research work assessment, a research thesis on “Influence of School Contextual Dynamics on Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Standard Three Pupils in Kenyenya Sub-county, Kenya”. To achieve this, your school has been selected to participate in the study. I kindly request for permission to conduct the study. This information will be used purely for academic purpose and your name will not be mentioned in the report. The findings of the study, shall, upon request, be availed to you.

Your assistance and cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you in advance.

Yours sincerely,

Teresa Binsari Ogetange
APPENDIX II

RESPONDENTS’ INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Dear Esteemed Respondent,

The researcher is a student undertaking a course in doctorate studies in Early Childhood Education at Kenyatta University carrying out a research on Influence of School Contextual Dynamics on Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Standard Three Pupils in Kenyenya Sub-county, Kenya. For this study I will request you to give me some time as you will be asked some questions. I will maintain your privacy and confidentiality about your information. Your name will not be written on any of the materials, and only the researcher will have access to your information. Your participation is totally voluntary and you may change your mind and withdraw at any time before and during the study. We will not pay or give any incentives for this participation. If you want to take part to participate in this research, please sign the form below.

Participant:

---------------------------------  ------------------  ---------------
Code of Participant  Signature  Date

Researcher:

---------------------------------  ------------------  ---------------
Name of Researcher  Signature  Date
APPENDIX III

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STANDARD III TEACHERS

Please Sir/Madam tick (√) the most appropriate response of those provided in each number. Remember that this information will not be disclosed to any other party and only be used exclusively for the purpose of this study. Thanks a lot for your time and willingness to participate in this study.

Section A: Background Information

1. What is your Gender: Male [ ] Female [ ]
2. School Category Boarding [ ] Day [ ]
3. What is your level of education?
   P1 Certificate [ ] Diploma [ ] Bed [ ]
   MEd [ ] Any Other [ ]
4. Head teachers’ leadership experience
   1-5 years [ ] 6-10 years [ ] 11-15 years [ ]

Section B: levels of Reading Skills amongst Standard III Pupils

1. How would you rate the reading levels amongst your learners?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reading Skills</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Fair</th>
<th>Below Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decoding (fluent and fast reading)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary (Dictation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter naming</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluent letter and sound recognition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixing of letters and sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Section C: School Literacy Environment**

1. Rate the levels of availability of reading instructional materials

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Availability of Reading Materials</th>
<th>Non</th>
<th>Few</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Plenty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pupil book ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence and Use of Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age appropriate books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charts on the walls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on the influence of school literacy environment on acquisition of reading skills amongst your learners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Test Items</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The literacy environment that comprises of books, language appropriate materials, school libraries are necessary for literacy development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability and organization of reading materials in the Classroom affect learning and improve the attainment of reading and writing skills by Standard III pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy environments of low quality may impair pupils’ literacy learning ability and can contribute to negative attitudes that interfere with successful literacy development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A quality literacy environment that provides many opportunities and materials promote language and literacy development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literacy-rich Classroom setting equipped with age appropriate furniture and sufficient lighting is necessary acquisition and development of reading skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The physical setting of a school motivates the acquisition of literacy skills as well as influencing the development and functioning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A good-looking, well-structured and an engaging environment at the school encourage interactions between pupils and can hasten literacy development and support good reading behavior and practice.

The appropriate physical arrangement of furniture, material selection, and the attractive, informative appearance of the Classroom offer a setting that contributes to teaching and learning.

### Section D: Teachers’ Characteristics and Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Standard III Pupils

1. Rate how teacher characteristics influence your learners’ acquisition of reading skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teachers’ Characteristics</th>
<th>VO</th>
<th>O</th>
<th>S</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching Experience</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: VO-Very Often; O-Often; S-Sometimes, N-Never; f-Frequency.

2. Rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on the influence of your characteristics on your learners’ acquisition of reading skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Test Items</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved learners’ performance in reading skills depends on the recruitment of quality teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher behavioral traits are relatively stable traits that are related to, and influence, the way teachers practice their profession</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionally qualified teachers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
are likely to foster high pupils’ acquisition of reading skills

Experienced teacher has a lot of knowledge on the subject matter which helps in giving insight and ideas to pupils on the subject learned

Experienced teachers apply different teaching approaches to teach different topics in reading

Pupils taught by female teachers tend to perform better as they tend to be more supportive and provide a more positive Classroom atmosphere

Traditional male teachers are believed to be good at math and females are good at reading

| Strongly Agree-5, Agree -4, undecided-3, Disagree-2, Strongly Disagree-1 |

Section E: Teacher/Pupil Ratio and Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Standard III Pupils

1. Tick the size of your Standard from the list below

   Between 21-30 [ ]
   Between 31-40 [ ]
   Between 41-50 [ ]
   Between 51-60 [ ]
   Between 61-70 [ ]
   Over 70 [ ]

2. Rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on the influence of Teacher/Pupil Ratio on your learners’ acquisition of reading skills
Section F: Schools’ Strategies for Promoting Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Standard III Pupils

1. Mark how frequently you use the following strategies to promote reading skills amongst your learners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching methods</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct instruction method</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using the phonics method</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look and say teaching method</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The whole word teaching method</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language experience teaching approach</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Identify the strategies that you use in Standard to enhance the acquisition of reading skills among the Standard III pupils.

| School culture of reading |  |
| Teacher training |  |
| Provisions of extra time for slow readers |  |
| Involvement of parents in helping pupils in reading |  |

3. Rate the extent to which you agree with the following statements on the effectiveness of school strategies for your learners’ acquisition of reading skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Summary of Test Items</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>U</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit instructions improve learners’ reading skills</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community engagement in learning improves reading achievement among Standard III pupils</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beginning reading competence is fostered by instruction in phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, and comprehension strategies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers’ training on teaching reading enhances Standard III pupils’ acquisition of reading skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher modelling and regular monitoring improve learners’ reading skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation of evidence-based practices promote high rates of reading achievement among learners when used by Standard III teachers with diverse instructional styles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sufficient time dedicated to reading each day to build oral language, fluency and comprehension skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of teaching and learning materials as do real objects enhances the acquisition of reading skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Thanks, Teresa Binsari Ogetange
APPENDIX IV

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE GUIDE FOR HEADTEACHERS

Section A: Background Information

1. Gender of the head teacher
2. What is the category of your school?
3. What is your highest level of education?
4. For how long have you been in a position of leadership?

Section B: Reading Skills amongst Standard III Pupils

1. How would you rate the reading levels amongst your Standard III pupils?

Section C: School Literacy Environment

1. What is level of availability of reading instructional materials?
2. How does school literacy environment influence acquisition of reading skills amongst your learners?

Section D: Teachers’ Characteristics and Acquisition of Reading Skills Amongst Standard III Pupils

1. How do teachers’ demographic characteristics influence your learners’ acquisition of reading skills?

Section E: Teacher/Pupil Ratio and Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Standard III Pupils

1. What is size of Standard III in your school?
2. What is the influence of Teacher/Pupil Ratio on your learners’ acquisition of reading skills?
Section F: Schools’ Strategies for Promoting Acquisition of Reading Skills amongst Standard III Pupils

1. State some of the school strategies your Standard III teachers adopt to promote reading skills amongst your learners

2. Explain how effective the stated school strategies are in enhancing your Standard III learners’ acquisition of reading skills

Thanks,

Teresa Binsari Ogetange
APPENDIX V

STANDARD III READING TEST

SECTION A: DECODING LETTER NAMES AND SOUNDS

a). Read the following letters

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>V</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>W</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Y</td>
<td>G</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>O</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>J</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>U</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

b). Read the following sounds

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>g</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>H</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>J</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>l</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>Q</td>
<td>K</td>
<td>s</td>
<td>t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>y</td>
<td>a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ch</td>
<td>Sh</td>
<td>Tch</td>
<td>Ar</td>
<td>ea</td>
<td>ee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ai</td>
<td>Ng</td>
<td>Ay</td>
<td>Oo</td>
<td>th</td>
<td>oy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SECTION B: DICTATION

Girl     house     baby     teacher
school   umbrella  bicycle  woman
blackboard pencil

SECTION C: FLUENCY

Read the following

ball     desk     basket     duster
baby     mother   pencil     tree
river    school

The cat is under the table
The baby is crying
My mother s washing cloths
The teacher is writing on the blackboard
The cow is eating grass

SECTION D: COMPREHENSION

Last week Mr. Kusahau was running to work. He turned right to cross the road. There was a Zebra crossing, but there were no vehicles. Although he saw a donkey coming, he thought he will cross fast. Bang!! The donkey hit Mr. Kusahau. He fell down and he was run over by the donkey cart. He was scratched and bruised all over his body. He was bleeding. He was taken to a hospital where the doctor checked for his injuries. “No broken bones! She told Mr. Kusahau.” She cleaned Mr. Kusahau’s wounds with an antiseptic. “This will keep your wounds clean, she said. She covered Mr. Kusahau’s wounds and wrapped a bandage round his head. You can now go home. “Remember to keep the wounds clean. She said. Mr. Kusahau turned left from the hospital and went home. When Mr. Kusahau got home, he was tired to remember what the doctor had told him. Ah! He said and wrote, Donkeys should be kept clean.

Answer these questions.

1. Where was Mr. Kusahau running to?__________________________
2. Why did Mr. Kusahau run in front of the donkey?______________
3. What did the doctor use to clean Mr. Kusahau’s wounds?________
4. What did the doctor tell Mr. Kusahau?_______________________
5. What did Mr. Kusahau write down when he got home?____________
1a). Category of school: Boarding/Day

**Section A: Levels of Reading Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Able (√)</th>
<th>Not able (×)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decoding</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners are able to read letters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners are able to read sounds</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners take a short time when figuring out the sounds and letters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners able to differentiate letters from sound</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vocabulary</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners able to spell the words correctly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners able to write the words first</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner not able to write the words the correctly</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners not able to write the words at all.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fluency</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner reads faster and does not spend so much time figuring out words.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners able to recognize letters when reading words</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners have a high degree of difficulty with phonics patterns and activities.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners have trouble reading and spelling phonetically</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners stumble a lot and loses his place when reading something aloud</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners seem to have a weak vocabulary.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comprehension</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners were able to answer comprehension questions well</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners took a shorter time to answer comprehension questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners have problems in answering comprehension questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners not able to answer comprehension questions at all</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Section B: School Literacy Environment

#### Physical Classroom Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Good</th>
<th>Average</th>
<th>Poor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lighting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate furniture for reading and writing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wall materials-soft boards</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ventilation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Layout of Classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Section C: Classroom Literacy Environment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Non</th>
<th>Few</th>
<th>Adequate</th>
<th>Plenty</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presence of Books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupil book ratio</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classroom library</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource Centre</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presence and Use of Technology</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age appropriate books</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charts on the walls</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing Opportunities and Instruction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognizing Diversity in the Classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX VII
SUBJECT AVERAGE SCORES BY YEAR

Subject average scores by year
Source: KNEC

Score (%)

English Swahili Math Science Ssr

2011 2012 2013 2014

elimuonline.com
APPENDIX VIII

AUTHORIZATION FROM THE POSTGRADUATE STUDIES OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

E-mail: dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke
Website: www.ku.ac.ke

OUR REF: 184/30996/15

Date: 9th November, 2016

The Director General,
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation
P.O. Box 30623-00100,
NAIROBI

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR MS. TERESA B. OGETANGE REG. NO. E83/25709/11

I write to introduce Ms. Ogetange who is a Postgraduate Student of this University. She is registered for Ph.D. Degree programme in the Department of Early Childhood Studies in the School of Education.

Ms. Ogetange intends to conduct research for Ph.D. Thesis entitled, “Influence of School Contextual Dynamics on Reading Skills Acquisition among Standard Three Pupils in Kisii County, Kenya”

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

MRS. LUCY N. MBAABU
FOR DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

Committed to Creativity, Excellence & Self-Reliance
APPENDIX IX

AUTHORIZATION LETTER FROM NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION, (NACOSTI)

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Date: 6th December, 2016

Ref: No NACOSTI/P/16/57364/14883

Teresa Binsari Ogetange
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “Influence of school contextual dynamics on reading skills acquisition among standard three pupils in Kisii County, Kenya,” I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Kisii County for the period ending 6th December, 2017.

You are advised to report to the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Kisii County before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit two hard copies and one soft copy in pdf of the research report/thesis to our office.

BONIFACE WANYAMA FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Kisii County.

The County Director of Education
Kisii County.
APPENDIX X

RESEARCH PERMIT FROM NACOSTI, FRONT AND BACK PAGE

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:  

MS. THERESA BINSARI OGETANGE 
of KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 519-605 

has been permitted to conduct research in Kisii County  

on the topic: INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL CONTEXTUAL DYNAMICS ON READING SKILLS ACQUISITION AMONG STANDARD THREE PUPILS IN KISII COUNTY, KENYA  

for the period ending: 6th December, 2017  

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/16/57364/14883  
Date Of Issue : 6th December, 2016  
Fee Received : Ksh 2000

Applicant’s Signature

Director General 
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation

CONDITIONS
1. You must report to the County Commissioner and the County Education Officer of the area before embarking on your research. Failure to do that may lead to the cancellation of your permit.  
2. Government Officer will not be interviewed without prior appointment.  
3. No questionnaire will be used unless it has been approved.  
4. Excavation, filing, and collection of biological specimens are subject to further permission from the relevant Government Ministries.  
5. You are required to submit at least two (2) hard copies and one (1) soft copy of your final report.  
6. The Government of Kenya reserves the right to modify the conditions of this permit including its cancellation without notice.

Republic of Kenya
National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
RESEARCH CLEARANCE PERMIT
Serial No : A12157

CONDITIONS: see back page
APPENDIX XI

RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION LETTER FROM COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, KISII

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION.

Following your research Authorization vide your letter Ref. NACOSTI/P/16/57364/14883 to carry out research in Kisii County, this letter refers.

I am pleased to inform you that you can carry out your research in the County on “Influence of school contextual dynamics on reading skills acquisition among standard three pupils in Kisii County, Kenya”, for a period ending 6th December, 2017.

Wish you a successful research.

Dr. William Sugut
County Director of Education
KISII COUNTY.
APPENDIX XII

THE MAP OF BOMACHOGE BORABU CONSTITUENCY SHOWING KENYENYA SUB-COUNTY, LOCATION OF STUDY

Source: IEBC (2012)