TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS ON THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS’ WORKING CONDITIONS AND PUPILS’ READING ABILITY IN PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

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E55/CE/24392/2012

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES IN THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION OF KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

JUNE, 2019
DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university/institution for consideration. This research thesis has been complemented by referenced sources duly acknowledged. Where text, data (including 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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We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under our supervision as University supervisors.

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DEDICATION

I humbly dedicate this thesis to my family for their support and understanding during the time I was undertaking my studies.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study has been successful through the strength, wisdom and direction God has given me from the beginning to the end; I thank the almighty God for this achievement. The completion of this thesis would not have been successful without the inspiration and support of a number of people. I would like to humbly acknowledge their encouragement and support. Firstly, special thanks go to my supervisors, Dr. Gladwell Wambiri and Dr. Maureen Mweru. Their advice and guidance throughout has been helpful in making this research possible. Secondly, I wish to acknowledge the staff of the Department of Early Childhood Studies Kenyatta University for their support since I enrolled for my master’s studies. Thirdly, my thanks are also due to the head teachers and pre-primary school teachers of Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru, for their generosity in completing the questionnaires which formed an integral part of this thesis. Fourthly, I am indebted to my MEd (ECE) colleagues for their encouragement and advice whenever I required it. Lastly, I am grateful to my husband Henry Kimwomi and children: Lydia, Collins, Janvan and Hilary for their understanding and moral support during my Masters studies; without them I would not have come this far.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.................................................................................................................. ii
DEDICATION.................................................................................................................... iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.................................................................................................... iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS..................................................................................................... v
LIST OF TABLES............................................................................................................... viii
LIST OF FIGURES............................................................................................................ ix
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS................................................................................ x
ABSTRACT....................................................................................................................... xi

## CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY ..........1

1.0 Introduction................................................................................................................... 1
1.1 Background to the Study............................................................................................... 1
1.2 Statement of the Problem............................................................................................ 7
1.3 Purpose of the Study.................................................................................................... 8
1.4 Objectives of the Study............................................................................................... 8
1.5 Research Hypotheses................................................................................................. 8
1.6 Significance of the Study............................................................................................ 9
1.7 Limitations and Delimitation of the Study................................................................. 9
   1.7.1 Limitations of the Study..................................................................................... 10
   1.7.2 Delimitations of the Study............................................................................... 10
1.8 Assumptions of the Study.......................................................................................... 10
1.9 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework..................................................................... 11
   1.9.1 Theoretical Framework.................................................................................... 11
   1.9.2 Conceptual Framework................................................................................... 12
1.10 Operational Definition of Terms............................................................................. 13

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW.............................................................15

2.0 Introduction.................................................................................................................. 15
2.1 Teacher Workload and Pupils’ Reading Ability....................................................... 15
2.2 School Leadership and Pupils Reading Ability....................................................... 24
2.3 School Infrastructure and Pupils Reading Ability................................................... 31
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Classroom Organization and Pupils Reading Ability</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Summary of Reviewed Literature</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.0 Introduction</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Research Design</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Study Variables</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 Independent Variable</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 Dependent Variable</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 Independent Variable</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.3 Research Methodology</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Location of the Study</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Target Population</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.1 Sampling Technique</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5.2 Sample Size</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Research Instruments</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Piloting of Research Instruments</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.1 Validity</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7.2 Reliability</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 Data Collection Techniques</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9 Data Analysis</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION</strong></td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Introduction</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Response Rate</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Descriptive Statistics</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.1 Profiles of Pre-primary schools</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.2 Profiles of Pre-primary school Teachers</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.3 Teacher Working Conditions</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3.4 Reading Ability</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Hypotheses Testing...........................................................................................................61
  4.4.1 Teacher Workload and Pupils’ Reading ability .......................................................61
  4.4.2 School Leadership and pupils’ Reading Ability .....................................................63
  4.4.3 School Infrastructure and Pupils’ Reading Ability ...............................................65
  4.4.4 Classroom Organization and Pupils’ Reading Ability ...........................................67

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .70
5.1 Introduction.....................................................................................................................70
5.2 Summary of the Findings of the Study ........................................................................70
5.3 Conclusion .....................................................................................................................71
5.4 Recommendations of the Study ..................................................................................71
  5.4.1 Recommendations for Policy and Practice .........................................................72
  5.4.2 Recommendation for Further Research ...............................................................74

REFERENCES ..................................................................................................................76

APPENDICES ....................................................................................................................83
Appendix I: Authorization of the Study ............................................................................83
Appendix II: Questionnaire for Head teachers ..................................................................84
Appendix III: Questionnaire for Pre-primary school Teachers .........................................86
Section C: Rating scale for Pupils’ Reading Ability ..........................................................89
Appendix IV: Teacher’s Consent .......................................................................................90
Appendix V: Map of Rongai Sub-County .........................................................................91
Appendix VI: Authorization letter from Graduate School ................................................92
Appendix VII: Research Authorization from NACOSTI ....................................................93
Appendix VIII: Research Permit .......................................................................................94
# LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Population and Sample by Education Zone ................................................................. 43
Table 3.2: Reliability Statistics ........................................................................................................ 46
Table 4.1: Pre-primary School Number of Years in Operation ......................................................... 51
Table 4.2: Number of Teachers in the Pre-primary schools ............................................................ 51
Table 4.3: Distribution of Schools by Pre-primary Class Size .......................................................... 52
Table 4.4: Age Distribution of Pre-primary school teachers ............................................................ 55
Table 4.5 Teaching Experience of Pre-primary School Teachers .................................................... 56
Table 4.6: Frequencies, Means and Standard Deviations of Teachers’ Working Conditions ............... 57
Table 4.7: Frequencies, Means and Standard Deviations of Pupils’ Reading Ability ....................... 59
Table 4.8 Correlation between Teacher Workload and Pupils’ Reading Ability ............................... 62
Table 4.9 Correlation between School Leadership and Pupils’ Reading Ability ............................... 63
Table 4.10 Correlation between School Infrastructure and Pupils’ Reading Ability ....................... 65
Table 4.11: Correlation between Classroom Organization and Pupils’ Reading Ability . 67
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1 Relationships between Teachers’ Working Conditions and Pupils’ Reading Ability. ........................................................................................................................................................................... 12
Figure 4.1: Distribution of Gender of Pre-primary School Pupils........................................ 53
Figure 4.2: Distribution of Gender of Pre-primary School Teachers ................................. 54
Figure 4.3: Professional Training of Pre-primary School Teachers ................................. 55
## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BoM</td>
<td>Board of Management</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDF</td>
<td>County Development Funds</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECD SSGK</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development Service Standard Guidelines for Kenya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECDE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<tr>
<td>FPE</td>
<td>Free Primary Education</td>
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<tr>
<td>KPS</td>
<td>Kenya Pre-primary school Syllabus</td>
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<tr>
<td>NACOSTI</td>
<td>National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NASMLA</td>
<td>National Assessment for Monitoring Learner Achievement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP1</td>
<td>Pre-primary 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PP2</td>
<td>Pre-primary 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

One of the most important factors in realizing reading as a subject in pre-primary schools is teacher working conditions. Literature suggests that working conditions are crucial in teaching of reading and pupils’ reading ability. However, empirical studies that have examined pupils’ reading ability have not focused on the relationship between teacher working conditions and reading ability. Further, the few empirical studies that have examined the relationships have been conducted in primary and secondary schools. Whereas most pre-primary school teachers in Kenya work under unfavourable conditions, past studies have not examined the relationship between working conditions and reading ability of pre-primary school pupils in Kenya. The objectives of the study were to determine the relationship between teacher workload and pupils’ reading ability, establish the relationship between school leadership and pupils’ reading ability, find out the relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability and determine the relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability. The study was based on Herzberg’s two factor theory. The study adopted a correlational research design. The target population for the study was 79 head teachers and 79 pre-primary 2 class teachers in public schools in Rongai Sub-County Nakuru. A stratified sample of pre-primary schools in the four zones in Rongai Sub-county was used for the study. The sample size comprised of 66 head teachers and 66 pre-primary 2 teachers. The questionnaires were filled by the head teachers and pre-primary school teachers. A pilot study was done consisting of four schools which did not participate in the actual study. Data was summarized using descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages, pie-charts, means and standard deviations. To test the hypotheses, Pearson’s Product-moment correlation coefficient was used. The results revealed that there was a significant relationship between teacher workload and pupils’ reading ability, school leadership and pupils’ reading ability, school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability and classroom organisation and pupils’ reading ability. The study concluded that heavy teacher workload, poor school leadership, poor school infrastructure and poor classroom organization affects the reading ability of pre-primary school pupils. The researcher recommended that to improve reading ability, school managements should ensure pre-primary school classes are of reasonable sizes so that teachers do not have a heavy workload, have effective school leadership, improve school infrastructure and classroom organization. The study recommends areas of further.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose and objectives of the study. It also presents the research hypotheses, significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study, and assumptions of the study. The chapter also presents the theoretical framework, conceptual framework and operational definition of terms.

1.1 Background to the Study

Reading ability from early childhood years serves as an essential foundation in a child’s future academic achievement. It is an active process of understanding print and graphic text (Grabe, 1991; Van, 2002). Reading experience affects a learner’s self image and feeling of competence. Reading is an important means of acquiring knowledge, skills and self expression in the modern world of expansion of technology. It is vital in providing the information needed to fully understand how things happen (Aina, Taiwo, Okusaga, & Ogundipe, 2011). Aina et al. (2011) further describe reading as a form of entertainment and an important life skill, which has to be nurtured from the early years of pupils’ development. Further, reading failure is associated to misbehaviour, anxiety and lack of motivation (Van, 2002).

According to Grabe (1991) reading develops through cognitive and social processes that exist in wide social and cultural environments. Grabe further observes that reading involves the ability to decode written words, comprehend what is written in texts and
interpretation skills. This means that readers are not passive during the reading process but instead, understand and construct meaning in the reading process.

Reading is paramount to learning in schools, workplaces and in everyday life; and how well a child is able to read is associated to the child’s academic success (Elley, 1991). Elley further noted that academic achievement was as a result of early comprehension skills, and therefore pupils’ reading ability should develop at an early age to avoid problems associated with reading and comprehending texts in other subjects learnt in school. Lipson and Wixson (1997) argue that reading does not only involve decoding the written word, but also includes mental skills that enable the reader to monitor, understand and assess his own reading methods as he is involved in reading for different purposes. Pupils who spend more time reading are better readers and are active participants in all reading activities rather than passive listeners (Guthrie et al., 2004). Guthrie further links reading ability with the amount of reading an individual engages in; the more a person reads, the better he can perform in other subjects.

A report by UNESCO (2008) shows that a total of 796 million people worldwide were unable to read; 67 million children of school going age did not attend school, and 72 million did not get chances of attending secondary education. UNESCO (2016) reported that, 34 million children in Asia and Africa were out of school. Globally, 20% of children in countries like England, Australia, Canada, America and New Zealand could not read with confidence at the age of 11 years (Davis, 2011). A study by Anderson and Morgan (2008) in the United States showed that over 44% of the fourth grade children nationwide were not able to read the basic or achieve partial mastery level on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) test. The study by Anderson and Morgan
also found that 27% of children in Maine and 62% in Louisiana were not able to read. The study further showed that 59% of the learners were not able to read above the established proficiency level for reading.

An understanding of the working conditions that promote teachers’ efforts in teaching is crucial in supporting pupil’s reading ability. Ingersoll (2001) noted that, lack of professional competence in teachers, intrusion on teaching time, large class sizes, inadequate time to prepare, lack of faculty influence, lack of student discipline, and unsafe environment were the leading causes of teacher dissatisfaction and poor performance. Ye (2016) noted that teachers’ working conditions were important in delivering quality education and teachers who were devoted in their work would always prefer working in environments that could support their teaching.

Studies suggest that teachers’ working conditions have a direct effect on teachers’ thoughts and feelings, and are associated with children’s learning outcomes (Leithwood, 2006). Dolton and Marcenaro (2011) observed that countries with low teachers’ performance were a result of poor working conditions, which led to poor educational outcome. Ranking of countries’ academic performance by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2009) found that students in Switzerland performed above average while those in Israel performed below average. This was because teachers in Switzerland had good working conditions in terms of salaries and work environment.

Once pupils have developed reading skills, they need to be supported in order to reach their full potential. Pupils whose reading skills are not fully developed receive poor grades in other school subjects, have behavioural problems, do not like school and finally
do not develop to their full potential. Good reading habits assist pupils in developing a steady and constructive mind. Large and growing numbers of children in Nigeria, reach upper elementary classes not able to read and understand class level appropriate materials. Most of them are unable to read because they are lazy and accommodate many distractions around them such as television, radio, social activities and inability to do any serious reading (Aina, et al., 2011).

With the introduction of free primary education in almost all countries in Southern Sahara and Asia, there was an increase of pupils in schools and especially lower primary which posed challenges in the instructional methods hence, poor teaching of class subjects such as Language. Lukhele (2007) associated reading problems to poor classroom management, lack of effective teachers to teach language in schools and lack of student and teacher motivation. This shows that teachers’ input is key to pupils’ success in reading let alone academic performance in general.

Nadim, Shahzad, Masood, and Riaz (2010) in a related study noted that a teacher whose working conditions were conducive was highly motivated and therefore could work hard towards achieving performance goals as compared to the ones whose working conditions were poor. Salifu and Agbenyega (2013) also noted that teachers, whose working conditions were conducive, were mostly committed to their work which led to better pupils’ learning outcome.

Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) observed that working conditions in most rural schools across the African Continent were very poor and did not attract and retain qualified teachers. There was high poverty level, poor environment, limited opportunities for
professional improvement and social and geographical isolation. The infrastructures in most schools were very poor as many buildings were built in the late 1950s and early 1960s with mud blocks. The state of classrooms was very poor with floors full of holes, roofs and ceilings broken and pertinent facilities were in a poor state of repair. Windows and doors had shutters and were not often lockable, so schools lacked security.

According to the Kenyan Pre-primary school Syllabus (Republic of Kenya, 2008), the competences in oral activities, vocabulary and comprehension describe reading ability. It is therefore important for teachers to introduce their pupils to early reading strategies since reading is the key to academic achievement and other daily activities (Wambiri, 2014). Moreover, pupils who are good in the above aspects are regarded to be developed in reading ability.

A study carried out to investigate the reading achievement in Kenya by National Assessment for Monitoring Learner Achievement (NASMLA, 2012) revealed that slightly less than half (47.7%) of the pupils attained the desirable levels of class three and four competency in literacy. Further, only about a half (46.1%) of class three pupils demonstrated emergent reading ability which was congruent with class two levels. In addition a study by Uwezo (2011) conducted in Kenya, reported that nationally, only seven out of 100 pupils in class six to eight could comprehend a class two level story even when they could read. Furthermore, eight of them were unable to read a simple English story. A more current study by Uwezo (2015) revealed that learning outcomes were low nationally, with only three out of 10 pupils in standard three being able to do standard two work. The study further revealed that three out of 10 standard three pupils could read standard two English story book, while two out of 10 in the same class could
not read an English word. Karuoya (2015) also showed that in Kenya, a significant percentage of pupils (15.3%) had reading problems and 17.6% of the pupils could not understand what they read. Mwoma (2017) showed that school outcomes and perfect academic performance in all subjects taught, depended on the ability of children to read. Therefore pupils, who are exposed to pre-reading activities at an early age, learn how to read than those who are introduced to it at an older age, and struggle to learn the more advanced reading skills acquired through reading.

In Kenya, it is mandatory for all children to go through pre-primary school education before joining primary schools. This requirement has led to an increase in enrolment of pupils in both public and private pre-primary schools leading to heavy teacher workload (Republic of Kenya, 2006). Working conditions of teachers is therefore strained, thus affecting teaching of reading and pupils’ ability to read. Some of the challenges associated with high enrolment include overstretched facilities, poor health and sanitation and poor quality assurance (Republic of Kenya, 2006). In some counties such as Turkana, children teach themselves as there is a shortage of teachers, classrooms and learning materials (Ng’asike, 2011).

A study by Mwai (2003) found that schools did not have enough furniture such as tables and chairs for the number of enrolled pupils and the few present were ill-adapted to the physical size of pupils and uncomfortable which could cause postural discomfort. The conditions of most classrooms were not good for learning; most buildings were very old and some had no windows, making it hard for children to have enough light and ventilation; floors were made of rough mud and walls were made of iron-sheets which made classroom temperatures to be very high or too low (Ndani & Kimani, 2010).
All public pre-primary schools in Rongai Sub-County are under the management of the respective primary schools’ Boards of Management (BoM). Therefore, all matters pertaining to enrolment, working hours, school leadership, infrastructure and classroom organization are determined by the BoM (Republic of Kenya, 2006). There is need for countries all over the world to improve the conditions that may be hindering people from being able to read, thus the need for this current study. Although there were several aspects of working conditions that might have affected teachers in teaching of reading, this study focused on teacher workload, school leadership, and school infrastructure and classroom organization.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Teacher working conditions could be essential in the promotion of pupils’ ability to read. A teacher, whose working conditions are conducive, may be highly motivated and therefore will work hard towards achieving performance goals. Low reading achievement levels have consistently been reported in Kenya in the last two decades making it necessary to establish the factors behind these low achievements. For example, NASMLA (2012) showed that slightly less than half (47.7%) of pupils attained the desirable levels of class three and four competency in literacy. Uwezo (2011) also reported that nationally, only seven out of 100 pupils in class six to eight could comprehend a class two level story even when they could read.

Most of the studies conducted on teacher working conditions have focused on aspects of classroom and instruction level, and working conditions in primary and secondary schools. Studies that have been carried out on reading in pre-primary schools in Kenya
have not specifically looked at how teachers’ working conditions influence pupils’ reading ability.

In light of the above knowledge gap, this study sought to investigate the relationship between teachers’ working conditions and reading ability of pre-primary school pupils in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between teacher working conditions: teacher workload, school leadership, school infrastructure, classroom organization, and reading ability of pre-primary school pupils in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya.

1.4 Objectives of the Study
The objectives of this study were to:

i. Determine the relationship between teacher workload and pupils’ reading ability.
ii. Determine the relationship between school leadership and pupils’ reading ability.
iii. Establish the relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability.
iv. Establish the relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability.

1.5 Research Hypotheses
This study tested the following hypotheses:

Ho₁ There is no relationship between teacher workload and pupils’ reading ability.
Ho₂ There is no relationship between school leadership and pupils’ reading ability.
Ho$_3$ There is no relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability.

Ho$_4$ There is no relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study may be useful to scholars interested in understanding teachers’ working conditions and pupils’ reading ability. The findings will be documented to enrich literature on teacher working conditions and pupils’ reading ability. The study may also stimulate further research to extend or refine the current study.

The study may also be useful to pre-primary school managers and education policy makers. The findings and recommendations of the study will be useful in enhancing their understanding of the relationship between teacher working conditions and reading ability of pre-primary school pupils; and how teacher working conditions can be managed to enhance reading ability of pre-primary school pupils in Kenya. The results of the study and recommendations may also help trainers to learn the best ways of making their classroom environment conducive for pupils to enjoy learning and therefore leading to improvement of their reading ability.

1.7 Limitations and Delimitation of the Study

This section discusses the limitations of the study and also how the limitations were minimized. The section also presents the delimitation of the study.
1.7.1 Limitations of the Study

The study was conducted on Public pre-primary schools in Rongai Sub-County in Nakuru County, Kenya. These results cannot be generalized to the private schools in Kenya for they may have different working conditions.

The second limitation of this study was, the researcher used teachers’ perceptions to determine the reading ability of pre-primary school pupils. The teachers’ perceptions of working conditions might have had a certain degree of subjectivity. As a result it might have led to difficulty in controlling how teachers could rate their pupils’ reading ability.

1.7.2 Delimitations of the Study

The research focused on pre-primary schools in Rongai Sub-County only and not the whole County of Nakuru, due to limited resources available that were spent in conducting the research. The study also targeted pre-primary 2 teachers and pre-primary 2 class pupils. Pre-primary 1 class pupils were not involved in the study because at their age, their reading skills have not developed. Although there were other factors which could influence pupils’ reading abilities, this study only focused on teachers’ working conditions.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

This study was based on the assumption that one of the contributors of poor reading among pre-primary school pupils was teachers’ poor working conditions. It was upon this that the relationship between teachers’ working conditions and pupils’ reading ability was determined. Another assumption was that the respondents gave honest responses.
1.9 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This section discusses the theoretical and conceptual framework of the study.

1.9.1 Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Herzberg’s (1966) Two-Factor Theory. The theory states that there are certain factors in the workplace that influence employee motivation. The first group of factors include factors external to the job such as working conditions, company policy, salary, and security of the job, supervision and interpersonal relations. Hertzberg called these hygiene factors. The second group include internal or job related factors such as the work itself, responsibility, recognition, achievement, advancement and growth. Hertzberg called these motivation factors.

Hertzberg argued that satisfying the hygiene factors did not motivate people but only removed dissatisfaction with the job. This means that if hygiene factors do not reach certain standards, people feel bad about their jobs and become unhappy. Hertzberg further argued that satisfaction and motivation is created by satisfying higher level needs or job related factors. Positive motivation and a feeling of wellbeing could only be achieved not by just improving these hygiene factors, but by improving genuine motivators. The theory is used in this study because it is expected that achievement of hygiene factors such as working conditions will remove teachers’ dissatisfaction of the job, and also genuine motivators will be improved in order to influence teachers’ feeling of satisfaction, which would in turn make teachers to be motivated in teaching reading and hence improvement in pupils’ reading ability.
1.9.2 Conceptual Framework

In this study the independent variable is teachers’ working conditions and the dependent variable is reading ability. The variables and how they are related is shown in Figure 1.1.

![Figure 1.1 Relationships between Teachers’ Working Conditions and Pupils’ Reading Ability]

As shown in Figure 1.1, the independent variable is teachers’ working conditions. The dependent variable is pupils’ reading ability, the intervening variable is motivation to teach and the moderating variable is individual factors. It is expected that teacher working conditions such as workload, school leadership, school infrastructure and classroom organization influence teacher motivation in terms of drive to teach reading and commitment to teach reading. This in turn influences pupils’ reading ability in terms of oral activities, vocabulary and comprehension. The relationship between teacher working conditions and pupils’ reading ability is moderated by pupils’ individual factors such as home environment and ability.
1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

**Classroom organization:** This is defined as the comfort or feeling in classrooms. It includes cleanliness of walls, class space, ventilation and level of noise from the environment.

**Comprehension:** This refers to understanding what one reads. For example, constructing meaning in a text, answering questions appropriately from a text and making word connections with pictures.

**Oral activities:** These are verbal expressions of language. They include listening, following instructions and news telling.

**Reading ability:** This involves children’s oral activities, reading readiness, vocabulary and comprehension.

**School infrastructure:** Refers to equipments that facilitate learning such as, tables and chairs that are necessary for learning.

**School leadership:** Refers to how teachers concerns are handled by the administrator, their communication with colleagues, recognition by the school administration and management styles.

**Teacher motivation:** Refers to the teacher inspiration towards work such as having manageable teacher workload, good school leadership, suitable infrastructure and a good classroom organization.
Teacher working conditions: This is defined as the needed atmosphere created for teachers at work place to motivate them to greater performance. It includes teacher workload, school leadership, school infrastructure and classroom organization.

Teacher workload: This is defined as including the class size and the number of working hours.

Vocabulary: This involves the ability of the child to read words clearly, asking for clarification of new words, practising using new words, spelling the words learnt clearly and developing new oral words when reading alone.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature on the linkage between teachers’ working conditions and pupils’ reading ability. The chapter also presents a summary of the reviewed literature.

2.1 Teacher Workload and Pupils’ Reading Ability

Teachers’ workload has been a subject in many studies. Teacher workload has been associated with emotional exhaustion (Janssen, Schaufeli, & Houkes, 1999). Bennett, Weigel, and Martin (2002) argued that teaching time, inadequate time to prepare, and large classroom sizes were some of the factors that affected the commitment of teachers in teaching reading. Ingersoll (2001) was of the opinion that less support from school administrators, teachers’ few hours for lesson preparation and large class sizes were some of the reasons that made teachers de-motivated in teaching.

A report on public primary school teachers’ perceptions of their working conditions and job stress in Istanbul and Stockholm by Ozturk (2011) showed that classrooms were full, physical conditions were unfavourable with disturbing noise, tattered classrooms, no administrative support and insufficient teaching materials. They also observed that poor remuneration caused stress among teachers which affected pupils’ academic ability. The study only focused on teachers’ perceptions of working conditions and job stress thus the need of the current study.

According to Nadeem et al. (2011), poor salary, excessive workload, poor infrastructural facilities, lack of library facilities, lack of teaching and learning materials, teacher morale,
and work environment were factors that affected teachers in their work performance. An OECD (2003) report suggested that, in order to make Swedish teachers not to be absent and love teaching pupils, it was important to improve the working conditions of teachers such as raising their salaries, reducing their workload, and adding more resources. The report also revealed that if schools had better school administrators, teachers would have been motivated to stay in their schools longer. These studies were done in developed countries and therefore, there was need to focus on the teacher working conditions in Kenya.

A survey study by Berry, Smylie and Fuller (2008) on teacher working conditions in Chicago schools found that teachers were working longer hours than previous years. Teachers spent 50 hours per week on teaching and 12 hours per week on unpaid school related activities like grading papers, bus duty, student club activities and advising students. In their comparison of schools serving whites and colour students, Berry et al. found that whites had smaller classes which tended to motivate the teachers to teach students well, and especially provide more one-on-one interaction that aimed at meeting individual student needs. Berry et al. also found that overcrowding of students in one class led to increased aggression and less student involvement in all activity areas in the school, thereby, small classes were found to be effective in closing the achievement gap. Berry et al.’s (2008) study further revealed that smaller class size such as 25 students per class performed well in reading than schools with large numbers of pupils. Smaller number meant that the classes were not big and therefore the teacher workload was not heavy, which gave them ample time to do their class work better. Reduction in teacher workload increased teacher satisfaction and that small class size provided room for
individual interaction with pupils. The study dealt with working conditions in Chicago schools, but did not specifically show how these working conditions could affect teachers’ ability to teach reading and the reading ability of pupils, hence the need for the current study.

A study by Ingvarson et al. (2005) on secondary teacher workload revealed that 48% of teachers felt that their workload was heavy; 21% thought of leaving their current schools; 39% felt that they had little time of understanding their students well; 66% had the opinion that very little time was given to colleagues; 28% thought of leaving teaching profession due to heavy workload and 43% felt their workload adversely affected their healthy. Ingvarson et al. (2005) further revealed that what stressed teachers most that led to their dissatisfaction in their work place were paper work, student behaviour and large class sizes. However, workload manageability was not related to the number of working hours per week. The study dwelt on the opinions of teachers on workload only thus, the need for the current study.

Naylor (2001) carried out a survey study comprising 1500 teachers in British Columbia. The study was about what British Columbia’s teachers considered to be the most significant aspects of workload and stress in their work places. The results showed that most of the stressors were additional problems and complexity in teaching and poor relationship with students, large amount of work done in a day and lack of time, support and respect. Naylor (2001) further pointed out that the results of very high workload stress included, excessive working, turning minds to part time work, leaving teaching profession, sickness and negative impacts to family life. The study further showed that most teachers were working for long hours like over 60 hours each week. Some of the
respondents showed that most teachers were of the opinion that there significant additions on teaching work to the core activities of teaching, resulted to unacceptable heavy workload. Stallings (2008) also associated teachers’ decisions of remaining in teaching profession with the work environment in the schools they were teaching.

Bennett (2002) identified some of the conclusions drawn by teachers regarding class size. Some teachers felt that smaller number of children in class resulted in increased teacher student direct contact, while others felt there was no significant for pupils with lower academic ability. According to Bennett (2002) teacher workload impacted negatively to teachers morale, which in turn affected on the way they responded to pupils and thus leading to inability to teach children properly hence poor academic performance. A study by Lemerle (2005) which examined the impact of the school environment on teachers’ health and job commitment in Australian schools revealed that time, workload pressures, tension with staff, administrative and community factors were thought to be stressors among many teachers, leading to many teachers deciding to leave teaching profession. Lemerle’s study was based on work stressors that made teachers decide to quit teaching. The study did not focus on the relationship between teacher working conditions and pupils’ reading ability thus, need for the current study.

Dehaloo (2011) in a study on the motivation and job satisfaction of secondary school teachers in Kazulu- Natal revealed that, very few teachers never complained about their aspect of workload. Majority of the teachers were reported to have pastoral duties other than teaching because they felt that their working conditions were not favourable. Dehaloo (2011) further found that teachers of between 27 to 39 years with work experience of between 6 to 15 years were least motivated in their work places, as
compared to their counterparts of between 40 to 54 years with 6 to 25 years of experience. Dehaloo (2011) also revealed that male teachers were more satisfied than female teachers with school policy, interpersonal relations and schools’ overall organization. Maicibi (2003) noted that increasing hours of work, large class sizes, teaching more subjects and constantly changing the curricular were major factors that affected teachers’ commitment to teach in schools. Buckley, Schneider and Shang (2004) asserted that teachers were dissatisfied with their physical working conditions and were looking for employment elsewhere in schools which had supportive environments.

Richardson (2014) carried out a study on teacher motivation and incentives in low-income developing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia; the results of the study revealed that teachers taught many subjects, worked for long hours in a day, class sizes were large, and the teachers received low remunerations which made them to refuse to introduce new teaching methods and creativity. Richardson further showed that teachers had different teacher workload and the determinant factors were: school size, location and subject areas. Richard (2014) described younger teachers aged 20 to 35 as strong and focused who could perform their teaching well and especially teaching. Richardson concluded that high teaching loads were as a result of small schools, overcrowded curricular with too many specialised teachers, no enough classrooms and subjects taught. The study was a survey in developing countries across sub-saharan Africa and Asia, there was need to carry out a correlation study on pre-primary schools in Nakuru County, Kenya.

Osagio and Okafor (2012) noted that teachers’ workload affected the students’ academic achievement. Orodein and Oloyede (2017) cited that the number of assignments that
teachers gave students were contributors to the heavy workload, for there was no time set aside for marking students’ work. The study therefore suggested that school administrators should supervise teachers on regular basis to ensure that they marked the students’ assignments. These studies specifically focused on secondary schools thus; there was need for the study to look at the effect of teacher workload on pupils’ reading ability in pre-primary schools.

A survey study conducted by Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) to assess conditions of teachers and teaching in rural schools across African countries, found that most schools in Nigeria were faced with unpredictable class size. Classes were full in some seasons and remained empty during the planting, harvesting and market days. The study further revealed that there were differences on how teachers were distributed among different countries in Africa. For example, in Nigeria, the ratio of teacher to children was 1:40 and in Chad, Rwanda and Mozambique the ratio was 1:60. Such disparity in the distribution of teachers among countries determined teacher workload and hence the ability to teach pupils. The study did not focus on teacher working conditions and reading ability of pupils in pre-primary schools and thus; the need for the current study.

UNESCO (2016) in addressing the issue of learning environment in a comprehensive and systematic way showed that schools in Central Africa, Malawi and Tanzania had class sizes of more than 70 pupils per class with one teacher. The study recommended that class size should be of reasonable size to enable the teacher give attention to each individual child, and for large classes, audio-visual aids had to be employed. The study was done in the rural schools only. The study did not take into consideration specific learning activities like language but, looked at general teaching conditions of teachers.
Therefore, there was need for the current study to examine relationship between teacher working conditions and pupils’ reading ability in both rural and urban settings.

Another study in Nigeria by Ataphia (2011) examining the impact of environment on productivity in secondary schools in Nigeria, revealed that the degree of academic concentration of students in overcrowded rooms was always low and that class size dictated the teachers’ teaching approach. Aina et al. (2011) carried out a study examining the role of library in promoting reading habit among students in Nigeria showed that working conditions were not attractive to teachers and pupils in Nigerian primary schools. The classrooms were overcrowded and pupils struggled and wrestled over sitting position. These studies were done on secondary and primary schools in Nigeria, none was done on pre-primary schools and therefore there was need to carry out the current study.

Sichambo (2011) in a study entitled ‘Impact of Burn out on Secondary School Teachers’ Performance’ revealed that teachers’ workload in secondary schools could be decreased by increasing the number of teachers in schools. He was of the opinion that other responsibilities that teachers performed apart from classroom teaching and remedial classes were to be slowed down. Sichambo (2011) further advised that secondary schools had to look for ways of finishing the syllabus in time, in order to do away with remedial lessons, avoid regular transfers and also have some time to relax. The study did not show how workload could affect the reading ability of students and therefore, the need for the current study.

Global Monitoring Report on the introduction of Free Primary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa by UNESCO (2008) revealed that over 100 million children in the world did not
attend school, but instead worked in agricultural farms in rural areas where there were no schools. One of the regions that had children who did not attend schools was in the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). A more serious problem that SSA faced was the expansion of the teaching force, in order to meet the Education for All (EFA) goals for the years 2015 to 2020. The challenges that the Sub-Saharan countries faced in meeting the EFA goals of improving the teacher working conditions included: inability to attract and keep qualified teachers in rural schools, poor quality of education, lack of career opportunities, poor infrastructural facilities, poor monitoring of teachers’ attitude, behaviour and performance in rural schools, and administration bottlenecks which made the teachers in rural schools feel neglected and treated unfairly by the administrators, and also the problem of HIV among teachers. The study focused on rural areas only thus; the need for the current study that dealt with both rural and urban settings.

Mayeku (2009) was of the opinion that understaffing led to heavy workload for the teachers and impacted greatly on the quality of the services offered thus affecting the quality of the programmes. On the other hand, Wawitwa (2009) established that in order to reduce the teacher workload, more teachers had to be deployed so that teachers could have enough time for preparing practical lessons. Waseka, Simatwa and Okwach (2016) did a study on the influence of teacher factors on students’ academic performance in secondary school education found that high teaching loads affected a teacher’s ability to assist students to perform well in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education. They further revealed that schools which were understaffed and teachers overloaded with work, had poor results in National examinations. On the contrary, those schools that had enough teachers had students who performed well in the Kenya Certificate of Secondary
Education. This was attributed to the fact that teachers had more time to spend on coaching the candidate and especially took their time on looking at weaknesses of each individual. Waseka et al. (2016) rated low teacher-pupil ratio as one of the reasons for the enhancement of performance in day secondary schools. They further concluded that reducing teachers’ workload could lead to better quality education provided for students. The above studies focused on the influence of teacher factors on students’ academic performance only, necessitating the current study.

In a study examining teacher factors influencing student academic achievement in secondary schools in Nyandarua Kenya, Kara and Njagi (2013) revealed that teachers’ workload significantly affected the academic achievement of students. The study further revealed that teachers who handled 25 lessons or less had higher mean scores than schools where teachers handled 26 lessons and more.

A study conducted by Crouch, Korda and Mumo (2009) in Malindi, Kenya to examine improvement of reading skills revealed that there were large enrolment of pupils’ in schools against few teachers on the ratio of 1:65. The study reported that such large class sizes made teachers to have difficult times in teaching reading and especially marking pupils’ work hence, teachers gave children few assignments. According to UNESCO (2005), schools with large class sizes have difficulties in reaching individual children, thus affecting academic performance. None of the above studies has focused on the relationship between teachers’ working conditions and preschool pupils’ reading ability, hence the need for the current study.
Marima (2014) carried out a survey of approaches used in teaching of reading in early childhood grades in Dagoretti and Westlands Divisions, Kenya. The study found that challenges faced by class three teachers included lack of teaching and learning resources, heavy workload for the teacher, lack of a strong pre-primary school foundation and inadequate exposure to learning. The results further revealed that lack of resources was the most cited common challenge, followed by failure to take pupils’ through pre-primary school curriculum, then mother tongue interference, forgetfulness, heavy workload for pupils and inadequate exposure to learning. The study only focused on the challenges faced by class three teachers on the teaching of reading and not the teachers’ working conditions and their effect on reading ability, which this study seeks to examine.

2.2 School Leadership and Pupils Reading Ability

Literature suggests that school leadership has an impact upon teachers’ ability to teach reading. School leadership involves guidance, support and behaviours necessary to change the whole performance process and clear personal and professional values. Sergiovanni (2009) argues that for teachers to perform well in teaching reading there should be good school administrators. Sergiovanni further asserts that schools should create environments that facilitate teachers to accomplish their tasks. According to Sergiovanni, teachers have to participate in decision making in matters related to their class work, have reasonable autonomy to execute their duties, share purpose, and receive recognition, treated with respect and dignity by being given ample staff development opportunities so as to develop further. Danielson (2010) associated school leadership as a key factor in the management and shaping the cultural information for supporting students’ academic progress. Danielson was of the opinion that good leadership to take
change must be collective efforts of school principals, teachers, schools and communities, hence good academic performance. Farr (2011) agrees with Danielson’s opinion that school leaders who are serious with their work assist teachers to be good role models and embody values and success in teaching. Farr further noted that excellent teaching emerged from good school leadership which consisted of applying and being capable of transferring knowledge. A survey study by Markel (2004) looking at the condition of teachers in North America, demonstrated that administrative support played a big role in teachers’ decision making, of whether to stay or leave the teaching profession.

Ladd (2011) studied the relationship between the working conditions and teachers’ school transfers. The study found that school leadership, racial discrimination in schools were the reasons of teachers’ moving from one school to the other. A survey study by Johnson, Kraft, and Papay (2012) on working conditions of elementary teachers and how it affects the relationship with workmates revealed that most teachers left their former schools whenever the working conditions were not conducive. The study further showed that school facilities such as furniture and buildings determined the transfer of teachers from one elementary school to the other. However, the results revealed no effects of school leadership on the students’ achievement, thus, the need for the current study.

Lemerle (2005) found that conducive school environment was as a result of higher levels of teacher participation in decision-making processes, administrators’ clear articulate of work expectations, genuine concern for the welfare of the teachers, friendliness, openness and trust among staff. In their study, Berry et al. (2008) found that there was a relationship between teacher decision making and remaining in the teaching profession.
They noted that teachers who were given freedom of expression by their school principals were happy and therefore, carried their classroom activities very well. Further, Berry et al. found that open communication between principals and teachers made teachers satisfied and happy while working with children, unlike the principals who appeared to be harsh and who practised an authoritarian kind of leadership when doing administrative duties. These previous studies focused on decision making and communication by the school principals as determinants of school leadership factors, therefore creating the gap for the current study.

Teachers’ professional development is very important in promoting the reading ability of pupils. A study by Berry et al. (2008) revealed that schools that performed well in academic studies were as a result of taking part in professional development. Berry’s study further revealed that school administrators who were chilly, distant and manipulative had teachers who were not satisfied and committed in their work. On the other hand school administrators who were warm, caring and honest often had teachers who were jolly and committed to their work. Teachers who were free to work with and consult other teachers in both classroom work and researching on their children’s learning abilities, made changes in teaching methods and especially teaching of reading (Johnson, 2006). According to UNESCO’s (2008), school administrators should appreciate the usefulness of in-service education designed to improve the quality and content of education and teaching methods, that should be free of charge to all teachers. UNESCO further recommended that teachers be provided with opportunities to participate in courses and take full advantage of acquiring all required professional tasks.
Allen (2014) conducted a survey of 180 schools, on teachers’ perception of working conditions, looking at the difference between static and improving schools in Kentucky. The constructs looked at were teacher leadership, teachers’ roles in schools and the level of teacher influence on decision making. The results showed that there was no significant relationship between teacher leadership, teachers’ roles in school, level of teacher influence on decision making and working condition in static schools. Jackson (2014) conducted a study on the role of teacher working conditions such as administrators’ support of teachers and teachers’ effectiveness in shaping human capital. The study revealed that teachers’ working conditions affected the learning ability of students, but did not specifically focus on the effect of working condition on pupils reading ability, thus the need of the current study.

Leithwood (2006) carried out a survey study on teacher working conditions that matter and evidence for change in secondary schools. The study variables were: individual teacher efficacy, collective teacher efficacy, teacher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, stress/burnout and morale. The study found that job satisfaction had a strong and direct effect on teacher retention and that school principals determined the morale among beginning teachers by demonstrating good school leadership. Teachers expected principals who could communicate clearly by giving them instructional guidance and resources, rewarding them for good work done and helping in the enforcement of student rules of conduct. Leithwood suggested that the school principals should set direction for the school by being considerate, consultative, and supportive in staff development, managing the instructional program and in day-to-day interactions.
The study was based on teacher working conditions that matter and evidence for change in secondary schools, hence, the need for the current study.

An empirical study by Lukhele (2007) on relationship between reading attitudes, reading ability and academic performance among teacher trainees in Swaziland, revealed that there was a positive relationship between teachers’ motivation and reading among teacher trainees. According to Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011), teachers’ de-motivation to teach across rural African countries was due to lack of administrative support, teacher input in decision making and the school climate. Adeyinka, Asabi and Adedotum (2013) also suggested that it was important for school managers to create working environment where everyone was highly valued, and that school managers should maintain good management skills and make teaching environment conducive for teachers. The study was based on reading attitudes and ability of teacher trainees thus, the need of the current study.

Gwambombo (2013) carried out a study on the effect of teacher workload on students’ academic performance on community secondary schools found that the hours spent by one teacher in teaching, internal tests done, marking load, administrative and non administrative roles done by teachers’ workload and also the students’ school performance in local secondary schools. The study further showed that teachers who were exhausted, embarrassed and had heavy workload performed poorly in teaching and learning processes. Gwambombo (2013) defines heavy teachers’ workload in terms of teachers working above their normal working load. Gwambombo concludes that teachers with heavy workload are not effective and efficient hence, leading to negative effects such as poor student academic performance. The study majorly focused on the effect of
teacher workload on students’ academic performance, therefore creating the gap for the current study.

A study by Kahenu (2005) on the factors that influence motivation and productivity of secondary school teachers in Thika, Kenya revealed that head teachers’ good leadership style, promotion policy and physical facilities resulted in high academic performance in schools. Kiruja and Kabare (2013) conducted a survey in public middle level TIVET Institutions in Kenya, linking work environment with employee performance. The sample size was 315 targeting administrators, heads of department, teaching staff and non-teaching staff. The study revealed that there was no proper job description for most non-teaching staff, poor working tools in most of the institutions; and also the health of employees was not addressed clearly. The study further revealed that there was a positive correlation between work environment and employee performance which was statistically significant. The researcher concluded that there was urgency to improve the working condition of workers in institutions in order to provide better working conditions for employees to perform better. A study by Lusiola (2011) in Kegonga Division, Kuria East District, on the working conditions and their relationship to the level of motivation of pre-primary school teachers, revealed that there was no relationship between professional growth opportunities and motivation of pre-primary teachers. Findings of the study by Lusiola contradicted the finding of a study by Karugu (1980) who found that motivating job factors for Kenya elites included recognition, advancement (professional growth), work itself, responsibility and achievement. The study focused on working conditions and their relationship to the level of motivation but, did not focus on the relationship
between teacher working conditions and pupils’ reading ability thus, the need of the current study.

King’oo (2016) did a study on the factors influencing job satisfaction among teachers in public secondary schools in Machakos town sub-county, Kenya and found that school leadership looked at the number of teachers and their interpersonal skills in order to mentor and lay strong foundations which could later lead to improved academic performance. King’oo further noted that leadership relies not only on an individual, but on the entire school community. Therefore, there was need for the current study to find out the effect of school leadership on reading ability of pre-primary pupils.

In a study examining the influence of selected motivational factors on the performance of secondary school agriculture teachers in Imenti South District, Kenya, Kirimi, Gikunda, Obara and Kibett (2013) found that there was a positive relationship between working conditions and performance of teachers. The study also showed that the teachers worked together in the school without any interference and had no problems in talking with their colleagues, principals and the deputy principals. Further, the research revealed that principals were responsible to the needs of the teachers and therefore team work prevailed. The above reviewed studies examined working conditions and leadership and teacher motivation. There was need therefore to examine the working conditions of teachers and pupils’ reading ability in pre-primary level, thus the need for the current study.
2.3 School Infrastructure and Pupils Reading Ability

School infrastructure is a very important factor in promoting the reading ability of pupils. A survey study of 71 schools in Australia by Scott and Dinham (2003) found that teachers were dissatisfied with school infrastructure among other factors, as the few present were in very poor condition, thus not supporting learning as expected. Low levels of learning among children in developing countries have been associated with poor and inadequate facilities in schools (Beynon, 1997). There is stress and de-motivation when the environment on which teachers work is poor thus reducing teacher effectiveness.

UNESCO (2016) showed that 34 million of children in the world were out of school. The report pointed out that poor infrastructural learning facilities and low quality of education were paramount features that affected learning in African schools. UNESCO therefore recommended that school buildings should be safe and attractive especially in rural areas and ensure that premises were properly maintained for the safety of both teachers and pupils. A report by the Victorian Institute of Teaching (2015) on the effect of the physical learning and teaching showed that all sectors in Victorian schools had building design which suggested that particular architecture and design of learning spaces, contributed to effective teaching and also the conditions of school buildings and quality of school infrastructure significantly affected students’ academic achievements. The report further showed that most classrooms in Victoria had friendly and agreeable entrance areas and private spaces for students to carry on their studies.

An empirical study by Bucholz and Sheffler (2009) in Chicago, USA on creating a warm and inclusive classroom environment and planning for all children to feel welcome, revealed that well arranged classroom furniture such as desks and tables created enough
space for children to move easily from one place in class to the other, thus creating room for active participation in learning, interacting well with each other and created safe studying environment. The study revealed that 40% of teachers who were asked to rate the working conditions on a scale of ‘A’ through ‘F’ graded their working conditions as ‘C’ making some of them start thinking of changing schools or leave teaching profession. The respondents reported that there were inadequate facilities and resources that were out-dated and dilapidated and also, the number of students was high thus, hindering both teaching and learning in a classroom. The teachers identified that many schools were affected by ‘sick building syndrome’ with increased absenteeism and therefore causing performance to drop (Bucholz & Sheffler, 2009). The study focused on classroom environment as determinant of teaching and learning in classroom, thus the need for the current study.

Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) found that school infrastructure in most rural schools were in bad state and more especially in primary schools. Many school buildings in Africa were built in the late 1950s and early 1960s with mud blocks. Since then, no new buildings have been erected making the classrooms to be dangerous places which may cause accidents for both the teachers and the pupils. Adedeji and Olaniyan also found that many schools conducted their classes under trees during the summer periods and when rains came, they crowded themselves in few classes that were in poor conditions, thus becoming hard for both the teachers and pupils to carry on normal studies, especially reading. The study by Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) further revealed that the classroom environment was not good to support learning. Classroom floors had so many holes, and roofs and ceilings were broken. Most of the schools also lacked essential infrastructure
such as lockable doors and windows that would make them to be safe, hence teachers’ commitment to teaching and children’s concentration deteriorated. These previous studies focused on how classroom environment affected learning in primary schools, hence the current study that focused on pre-primary schools.

Gatsinzi, Jesse and Makewe (2014) conducted a survey examining the influence of work and school related variables in teacher motivation in Gasabo District, Rwanda. The work content factors which were studied included professional development, recognition, achievement, responsibility, nature of work, school leadership and policies advancement, noise in the classroom, light in the classroom, ventilation, aesthetic appeal, roof and cleanliness. The results showed that motivation of teachers in public primary school was determined by how work was supervised, how responsibilities were assigned, how teachers’ effort was acknowledged and given due respect. The results further revealed that, teacher motivation, school facilities, aesthetic and cleanliness were related to teacher motivation; and when an employee’s motivation was low, the performance also went low. Gatsinzi et al.’s study further revealed that in Rwanda, the policy of EFA had instructed the government to put more effort in constructing new classrooms, to establish quality standards for school construction. The stakeholders were likely to be ministry of education, districts, international donor agencies, faith based organizations, private contractors, engineers and designers and architects, meaning that the quality of the classrooms was to be high. Gatsinzi et al.’s study examined school related variables, however the study did not look at the relationship between teacher working conditions and pupils’ reading ability, thus the need for the current study.
A study by Ataphia (2011) on the impact of environment on productivity in secondary schools revealed that teachers had no offices to rest and prepares their work. Many schools had no chairs for teachers and students, making some teachers feel very uncomfortable to be associated with their schools. The poor infrastructural facilities negatively affected their job satisfaction and morale to teach. Ataphia (2011) further revealed that teachers worked under relatively fair working conditions, but not good enough for better learning. The teachers were not so much concerned about the students’ academic performance in National examinations, and the poor performance of the students was associated with the poor work environment for both the teachers and the students. The study further found that staff offices were poorly equipped and in some places, did not completely exist. The teachers therefore had low morale and did not need not to be associated with those schools. The teachers in these schools had low job satisfaction hence unwilling to put enough efforts to achieve the goals of education. Deng (2000) argued that a healthy organizational climate led to greater commitment, low tension hence high learning performance.

A report by Kenya Central Bureau of Statistics (Republic of Kenya, 2015) found that the typical primary school teacher had 40 to 50 pupils in class, leading to shortage of infrastructure. Mwai’s (2003) study on quality of learning environment at Early Childhood Centres revealed that most schools had no enough furniture for the number of enrolled pupils and that furniture did not match the physical size and stature of children, making it hard to concentrate in reading. A study by Ng’asike (2011) on children’s rights to education and indigenous knowledge in science teaching in Kenya found that lack of infrastructure such as classroom buildings and furniture like tables and chairs were major
problems to both teachers and pupils. The situation was so much serious that even some schools did not have classrooms and instead children sat under tree shelters and shared one or two desks. A study by Sang (2013) on the effect of classroom environment on academic performance in mathematics of pre-primary school children reported that, private schools had modern and age appropriate, well furnished tables and chairs unlike their public pre-primary school counter parts who had benches and desks for children. The benches and desks occupied the whole space of the classrooms which made it impossible for children to move around smoothly while doing their classroom activities. None of these studies had investigated the relationship between school infrastructures and the reading ability of pre-primary school pupils; hence there was need of this current study.

Karuoya (2015) conducted a survey examining the influence of school related factors on pupil’s reading ability in Ongata Rongai Division, Kajiado County. The school related factors examined were teaching technique, teacher rating of reading ability, socio-emotional support, teaching skills, availability of teaching and learning materials, school policies, classroom elements and school environmental issues. Reading ability was measured in terms of reading letter names, showing phonemic awareness, reading letter sounds, reading familiar words, reading fluency and comprehending reading tasks. The results of Karuoya’s study revealed that teachers’ knowledge in literacy, teaching methods and skills during the teaching session were important in determining the pupils reading ability. The research further showed that 8.8% of the pupils had oral reading problems, 6.5% could not read familiar words and 17.6% could not comprehend what
they read. The results also revealed that all schools had a shortage of teaching and learning materials.

2.4 Classroom Organization and Pupils Reading Ability

Classroom organization is a crucial factor in supporting the reading ability of pupils. It is vital in the learning process of students. Berry et al. (2008) found that classrooms with few outside distractions and enough space was safer in providing conducive environment for learning; and environments with less external noise was associated with higher academic achievement compared to those students who were exposed to more distractions. In another study, Cohen, Evans, Krantz, and Stokols (1980) argued that a number of students who had noise-related reading problems, blood pressure and other health hazards were as a result of exposure to chronic noise which impairs the cognitive functioning. Shield and Dockrell (2008) noted that noise outside the classroom affected the level of internal noise which was determined by the nature of classroom activity and the number of children. They further noted that when the children were fully involved in silent reading, the external noise was heard a lot and brought distraction in the reading process. Dockrell and Shield concluded that noise annoyance was related to the type of noise as some noises were assumed to be more annoying than others. The above studies were done in developed countries, therefore, there was need to study the effect of classroom space and noise in Nakuru County Kenya.

Bennett et al. (2002) found that classroom atmosphere played a significant role in helping the children develop reading skills. Sundstrom (1987) argued that bright colour of walls in the classroom affected the productivity and accuracy while cool colours permitted concentration. This argument suggests that reading wall charts should be hanged in clean
and painted walls to influence the attention and concentration of children during the reading lesson. In another study, McGregor (2004) noted that class atmosphere such as temperature, heating and air quality were important elements for students’ academic success. McGregor further noted that exposure to chronic noise impaired cognitive functions and led to noise-related problems, deficiencies in pre-reading skills and cognitive deficits. Kaplan (2010) suggested that the classroom atmosphere should attract teachers to construct activities which challenge and expand the students’ intelligence and also arouse their interest to learn.

Hamid and Newport (1989) studied the extent to which children’s mood was affected by type of colour in classrooms and found that, children showed more physical strength and positive mood in a pink-coloured room than in a blue coloured room. Engelbrecht (2003) was of the opinion that the end wall of the classroom behind the teacher should be of different colours from the other walls. Bucholz and Sheffler (2009) observed that classroom environment which is created by teachers, creates, encourages or decreases children’s ability to learn and feel comfortable as members of the class. Bucholz and Sheffler further suggested that classroom environment must foster cooperation and acceptance as the methods which a teacher uses.

Gatsinzi et al. (2014) found out that aesthetic appeal of classroom environment was influential in motivating teachers to teach reading. Gatsinzi et al.’s study further revealed that teachers who were pleased on how work was supervised, how responsibilities were assigned, how their effort was acknowledged and respected were motivated to teach. The study was based on the influence of work and school related variables in teacher
motivation but did not focus on the relationship between teacher working conditions and pupils’ reading ability, therefore creating the gap for the current study.

A study by Ndani and Kimani (2010) revealed that most public ECDE centres in Kenya had unfriendly working conditions. The classrooms had very low temperatures and poor ventilation. Sang (2013) showed that classrooms that were not well ventilated and crowded rooms, resulted into accumulation of foul air which negatively affected the health of children hence, inability to learn well. Karuoya’s study also revealed that students who were exposed to natural light progressed 20 percent faster in reading than those who were taught in environments with least amount of natural light. The results showed that lighting in classroom environment was associated with improved teaching. However, none of these studies had focused the relationship between classroom organization and reading ability, hence the need of the current study.

2.5 Summary of Reviewed Literature

Teachers play an important role in improving the quality of education and more especially reading through effective classroom practices. Literature review indicates that there is a relationship between teachers’ working conditions and teacher performance which results to improvement in pupils’ academic achievement. If teachers’ working conditions such as teacher workload, school leadership, and school infrastructure and classroom organization will be improved, the teachers will feel enthusiastic and will be committed to helping pupils become better readers.

Most of the literature in the study focused on secondary and primary schools. There was little literature found by the researcher on pre-primary schools. Further, the reviewed
studies did not bring out the whole picture of teacher working conditions because most of the studies were done in rural regions while a few were conducted in urban regions. Some of the studies done revealed that teachers’ workload in secondary schools could be decreased by increasing the numbers of teachers in schools also, knowledge in literacy, teaching methods during the teaching session were important in determining the pupils’ reading ability. Most of the studies that have been done in pre-primary schools focused on the quality of learning environment at early childhood centres, pupils’ right to education and ingenious knowledge in science teaching in Kenya and effect of classroom environment on academic performance in mathematics of pre-primary school pupils. Review of literature further revealed that past studies had not focused on the relationship between teachers’ working conditions and pupils’ reading ability particularly in pre-primary schools. To bridge knowledge gap in early childhood education studies, this study sought to examine the relationship between teachers’ working conditions and pupils’ reading ability in pre-primary schools in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction
This chapter presents the methodology that was used in the study. This includes research design, location of the study, population and sampling procedures, pilot study, instrument validity and reliability, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Design
The study was a correlational study that sought to establish the nature and strength of the relationship between variables. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) noted that the intention of a correlation study is not to establish a causal connection between the variables being investigated, but merely to see if relationship does exist between the variables and the strength of the relationship. The design was relevant in this study because it sought to examine the relationship between teachers’ working conditions and pupils’ reading ability. The study also adopted cross-sectional survey design in that data was collected across the study units over a short period of time.

3.2 Study Variables
This section describes the study variables. It describes the dependent and independent variables and how they were measured.

3.2.1 Independent Variable
The independent variable, teachers’ working conditions was operationalized to include dimensions of teacher workload, school leadership, and school infrastructure and
classroom organisation. To obtain the numerical value, teachers were asked to indicate how often the statements on the dimensions characterized the working conditions in their schools. Working conditions were measured using a questionnaire (Appendix III Section B) with a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘Never’ (1) to ‘Very often’ (5).

3.2.2 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable, pupils’ reading ability was conceptualized in terms of oral activities, vocabulary and comprehension. A rating scale (Appendix III Section C) was used to rate the pupils reading ability with respect to the four components of reading as spelt out in the KPS guidelines for pre-primary schools. These include oral activities, vocabulary and comprehension. To obtain the numerical value, the teachers were asked to indicate how often on average the pupils in their pre-primary schools did each of the reading ability activities on a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘Never’ (1) to ‘Very often’ (5).

3.2.2 Independent Variable

The independent variable, teachers’ working conditions was operationalized to include dimensions of teacher workload, school leadership, school infrastructure and classroom organisation. To obtain the numerical value, teachers were asked to indicate how often the statements on the dimensions characterized the working conditions in their schools. Working conditions was measured using a questionnaire (Appendix III Section B) with a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘Never’ (1) to ‘Very often’ (5).
3.2.3 Research Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative data approach. Quantitative data approach involves measurement of variables being studied and analysis of the data to test the research hypotheses (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru County. Rongai Sub-County has four zones namely Rongai, Solai, Kambi ya Moto and Ngata. The Sub-County was considered suitable for the study because it covered both rural and urban settings and hence the pre-primary schools’ environments differed with different effects on teacher working conditions.

Having been a teacher in this Sub-County for five years, the researcher found that many pre-primary school pupils attained below average scores in reading tests administered to them as a requirement for transition from pre-primary school to primary school. For example, mean score in these tests was 42% in the year 2012, 46% in 2013, 38% in 2014, 45% in 2015 and 48% in 2016 (Rongai DEO Office, 2017). This had alarmed the researcher and thus necessitated the study on the relationship between teachers’ working conditions and pupils’ reading ability in pre-primary schools.

3.4 Target Population

The target population of this study comprised all public pre-primary schools in Rongai Sub-County. There were 79 pre-primary schools in Rongai Sub-County (Rongai Sub-County Education Office, 2015). The pre-primary schools operated under their respective primary schools.
The study targeted head teachers and PP2 class teachers. PP2 class teachers were included in this study because at this level, pupils’ reading skills are developed compared to PP1 classes. There were 79 pre-primary schools each with one head teacher and one PP2 teacher thus there were 79 head teachers and 79 PP2 teachers.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

This section presents the sampling techniques and sample size of public pre-primary schools and PP2 teachers included in the study.

3.5.1 Sampling Technique

To select the pre-primary schools that were to be included in the sample, stratified sampling technique was used. There are four education zones in Rongai Sub-County namely; Ngata, Solai, Kambi ya Moto and Rongai. Each zone in Rongai Sub-County formed a stratum and proportionate stratified sampling technique was used to ensure each Zone was represented in the sample. The sampling frame was prepared using information provided by Rongai Sub-County Education Office (2015). Table 3.1 shows the total number of schools in each Zone and the sample size.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ngata</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solai</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kambi ya Moto</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rongai</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>79</strong></td>
<td><strong>66</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To select the schools from each zone to be included in the study, simple random sampling technique was used.
3.5.2 Sample Size

A sample of public pre-primary schools was used in this study. All the head teachers and PP2 teachers in the sampled schools participated in the study. To determine the sample size of the pre-primary schools to participate in the study, the statistical formula suggested by Kothari (2003) was used. Kothari’s formula was used because it is commonly used in sample size determination. Kothari observes that sample size depends on how confident the researcher wants to be that the estimate is accurate (the level of confidence in the estimate), how accurate the estimate needs to be (the margin of error) and the proportion of responses expected to have some particular characteristics. Hence, for finite population the following formula to determine the sample size was used:

\[
N = \frac{(z^2 pqN)}{e^2 (N-1) + z^2 pq}
\]

Where:

- \( N \) = the minimum sample size required
- \( N \) = the total population of the schools, which is 79
- \( Z \) = the standard normal deviate that is, 1.96 for 95% confidence level
- \( P \) = the proportion in the target population estimated to be 50% if there is no estimate available of the proportion in the target population assumed to have the characteristic (that is, 1-p).

Substituting the values in the formula gave a sample of 66 schools.

Each pre-primary school was under the respective primary school head teacher and had one PP2 teacher (Rongai Sub-County Education Office, 2015), thus the sampled 66 pre-primary schools had 66 head teachers and 66 PP2 teachers. Hence all the 66 head teachers and 66 PP2 teachers were targeted for the study.
3.6 Research Instruments

To achieve the objectives of the study, primary data was collected using closed-ended questions. The questionnaires were developed on the dimensions of the research variables. In gathering the data, Likert-type questionnaires were used as research instruments. Appendix II contains questions to establish pre-primary school profile; Appendix III is divided into three sections: Section A contains questions to establish profiles of pre-primary school teachers; Section B contains the questionnaire with items on a five point Likert-type scale from 1= ‘never’ to 5= ‘very often’, to measure the teachers’ working conditions. Section C contains rating scale with items on a five point Likert-type from 1= ‘never’ to 5= ‘very often’ to measure the reading ability of PP2 pupils. The respondents to Appendix II were school managers, and the respondents to Appendix III were PP2 teachers.

3.7 Piloting of Research Instruments

To determine the clarity of the research instrument before the final administration of the instruments, a pilot study was conducted.

Four schools which did not participate in the actual study were used for the pilot study. One school from each of the four zones was randomly selected from the list of schools to participate in the pilot study. One head teacher and one PP2 teacher from each school participated in the pilot study to test how the questionnaire was perceived.

The respondents in the pilot study were asked to make comments and suggestions regarding the instructions and, clarity of questions asked. The pre-tests raised no concerns as respondents had no problem understanding and answering the questions.
3.7.1 Validity

To assess validity of the study instruments, this study examined commonly used form of validity test: Face or content validity (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000).

To establish face validity of the research instrument, this study used existing scales that had already been validated by other researchers. Further, the research instrument was subjected to critique by experts in the Department of Early Childhood Kenyatta University, School of Education, who assessed the instrument items and terminology to ensure it was clear and logical. The comments of the critique were used to revise the instrument to enhance face validity. Further, wording and format modifications were made to improve clarity of the questions and the general appearance of the questionnaire.

3.7.2 Reliability

To assess the internal consistency reliability of the measurement scales, Cronbach alpha coefficient was used. Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1; and higher alpha coefficient values are more reliable. The generally agreed lower limit is 0.7 (Hair et al., 2011). A value greater than this lower limit, indicates an acceptable level of reliability. Data was computed in SPSS and the results are shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 shows the results of reliability analysis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Cronbach's Alpha</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher working conditions</td>
<td>0.754</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pupils’ reading ability</td>
<td>0.806</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 3.2, the Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient for teacher working conditions was 0.754 and Cronbach’s alpha coefficient for reading ability was 0.806. Thus, the instrument was considered reliable.

3.8 Data Collection Techniques

The researcher presented a letter of introduction from Kenyatta University and a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) to head teachers. With regular visits to the schools, the researcher created rapport with the respondents. This was advantageous to the researcher for the respondents filled the questionnaires willingly and were free to seek clarification on the items. The questionnaires were self administered to the respondents. This ensured achievement of a good return ratio and helped respondents to get a chance to seek clarification on items which proved to be difficult to understand. To increase the rate of return of questionnaires, phone calls were used to make follow-ups. The questionnaires were collected by the researcher. The respondents in this study were PP2 teachers teaching in pre-primary classes and head teachers of the respective primary schools. The head teachers provided information on pre-primary school profiles (Appendix II) while PP2 teachers provided information on their profiles, teachers’ working condition and pupils’ reading ability (Appendix III). The respondents were considered to be informed about their schools. The process of data collection took a period of two months between April and June 2016.

3.9 Data Analysis

The researcher organized the raw data collected from the questionnaires, then edited and coded for analysis. To summarize the profiles of respondents and schools, frequency
distributions were used. To describe the variables on teacher working conditions and pupils’ reading ability, descriptive statistics: frequencies, means and standard deviations were used.

Fraenkel and Wallen (2000) posit that most samples of data will contain variability around a central value and how much spread there is around a measure of location is a valuable way of capturing the data set as a whole. The most widely used summary of spread is the standard deviation (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). To determine relative dispersion across the variables and hence variability of the data, this study used the standard deviation and coefficient of variation as measures of spread which were paired together with the mean.

To test the research hypotheses, Pearson’s product-moment coefficient was used. The technique is used to examine nature and strength of relationships between variables when the data is collected on an interval or ratio scale (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2000). Hence, the technique was appropriate in this study because the study sought to examine the relationship between teacher working conditions: teacher workload, school leadership, school infrastructure, classroom organization, and reading ability.

Pearson’s product-moment coefficient was used to test the following hypotheses:

- Ho₁ There is no relationship between teacher workload and pupils’ reading ability; Ho₂ There is no relationship between school leadership and pupils’ reading ability; Ho₃ There is no relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability; Ho₄ There is no relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability.
In conducting the analysis, composite scores of the dimensions of the variables: teacher’s working condition and reading ability were used. The composite scores of the variables were computed by dividing the total scores of the respective variables by the total number of the items. The statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data. The research hypotheses were tested at 0.05 significance level.

3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

In conducting this study, logistical and ethical standards were observed. This included obtaining authority to conduct research in the pre-primary schools from Kenyatta University and a research permit from NACOSTI. The researcher then reported to the County Commissioners and the Sub-County Education Officers in order to get approval to conduct research in the schools.

The researcher made appointments with the school managers of the sampled schools to notify and request for permission to carry out the study in their schools. The respondents were informed of what the research entailed and were allowed to ask as many questions as possible to seek for clarification. The participants were further assured of privacy and confidentiality. The respondents were then requested to willingly give consent to participate in the study. The respondents filled the consent form.
CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents data analysis, results and discussion of the results of the study. The chapter begins with discussion of the response rate, and results of descriptive statistics of pre-primary school profiles and demographic information of the teachers. The chapter also presents the results of descriptive statistics of the study variables and test of hypotheses. Finally, the chapter presents discussion of the results of the study.

4.2 Response Rate

This study targeted 66 head teachers and 66 pre-primary school teachers. The head teachers were to provide information on pre-primary school profiles (Appendix II) while pre-primary school teachers provided information on their profiles, teachers’ working condition and the pupils’ reading ability (Appendix III Sections A, B and C). After follow-ups, questionnaires from 59 head teachers and 59 PP2 teachers were completed and returned in the forms usable for analysis, which constituted a response rate of 89 percent. This response rate was considered satisfactory because a response rate of 50 percent is deemed acceptable (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

4.3 Descriptive Statistics

This section presents and discusses results of descriptive statistics of pre-primary school profiles, demographic information of the teachers and study variables.
4.3.1 Profiles of Pre-primary schools

This study examined the relationship between teacher working conditions: teacher workload, school leadership, school infrastructure, classroom organization and reading ability of pre-primary school pupils in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya. Analysis of profiles of the schools and pre-primary school teachers was conducted using frequencies and percentages. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 4.1.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Years in Operation</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 5 years</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10 years</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-15 years</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 20 years</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 20 years</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As shown in Table 4.1, most of the schools (28.8%) had been in operation between 11 to 15 years and 25.4% of the schools have been in operation between 6 to 10 years. However, some schools (16.9%) were established less than five years ago.

The study also examined the number of teachers in the pre-primary schools. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Teachers in the Pre-primary schools</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 teachers</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>27.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 teachers</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>50.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 teachers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.2 shows that most schools (50.9%) had three or two teachers (27.1%). However, there are some schools which had one, four and five teachers. Schools with three teachers meant that each pre-primary school class that is, baby class, PP1 and PP2 had one teacher. This implies that one teacher was supposed to handle all classroom activities alone, which could lead to teacher workload.

The study also examined the number of pupils in the pre-primary schools. The results are presented in Table 4.3.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class Size</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 20 pupils</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 - 25 pupils</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>45.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 - 30 pupils</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>40.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 pupils and above</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 shows that most schools (45.8%) had PP2 class sizes of between 21 to 25 pupils; and 40.7% of the schools had between 26 and 30 pupils. According to the ECDE Service Standard Guidelines for Kenya (Republic of Kenya, 2006), teacher-child ratio for pupils between five and six years should be 1:30. Literature shows that class size should be of reasonable size to enable the teachers give attention to each individual pupil, and for large classes, audio-visual aids needed to be employed (Adedeji & Olaniyan, 2011). The findings of this study show that the teacher-pupil ratio in the schools studied meets the recommended ratio. This suggests that the teachers have no problem with class size that could hinder the teaching of reading.

The study examined the gender of the pupils in the pre-primary schools. Figure 4.1 shows the gender distribution of the pupils.
Figure 4.1 shows that 52.3% of the pupils were girls while, 47.7% were boys. Thus, the results reveal that there were slightly more girls than boys in the pre-primary schools in Rongai Sub-county.

Clark (2012) showed that girls performed well in reading when compared to boys. He further noted that girls also spent more time on reading while boys read different materials other than class work. A study by Ouko (2015) on children’s literacy in class one revealed that girls performed better than boys in literacy skills. The study revealed that the differences in literacy skills were statistically significant and therefore implied that girls were better than boys.
4.3.2 Profiles of Pre-primary school Teachers

The pre-primary school teachers were asked to indicate their gender. The results are presented in Figure 4.2.

![Figure 4.2: Distribution of Gender of Pre-primary School Teachers](image)

Figure 4.2 shows that majority of the teachers were female (79.7%), while men were only 20.3%. These results reveal that there was a big imbalance in the gender of the pre-primary school teachers. Dehaloo (2011) revealed that male teachers were more satisfied in their work place than female teacher. This theory may affect the reading of pre-primary pupils since there are more female teachers as compared to male teachers.

The study also examined the age of the pre-primary school teachers. Table 4.4 shows the results of the analysis.
Table 4.4: Age Distribution of Pre-primary school teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below 25</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 – 30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31 – 35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>23.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36 – 40</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>22.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 40</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 shows that majority of teachers were between the ages of 26 to 30 years. These results show that majority of the teachers in pre primary schools were young. Richardson (2014) described young teachers (ages 20 to 35) as strong and focused and therefore could perform their teaching well and especially reading.

This study also examined the professional training of the pre-primary school teachers. The results are presented in Figure 4.3.

Figure 4.3: Professional Training of Pre-primary School Teachers
Table 4.3 shows that 13.6% of pre-primary school teachers had no any formal training. Most pre-primary school teachers were certificate holders 47.5% and those with diploma training were 30.5%. A few of the teachers 8.5% were trained up to degree level. These results generally show that most of the teachers were professionally trained in early childhood education. Teachers who are well trained help pupils to improve in their academic performance and especially in the teaching of reading (Marima, 2014). The study also examined teaching experience of the teachers. The results are presented in Table 4.5.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 – 5 years</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 – 10 years</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 – 15 years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 16 years</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>59</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5 shows that most pre-primary school teachers (47.5%) had teaching experience of between 0 to 5 years and 44.1% of the teachers had teaching experience of between 6 to 10 years. Thus teachers with teaching experience of above 17 years were few. These results suggest that there is high turnover of pre-primary school teachers. These finding supports the observation by Markel (2004) that working conditions determine whether the teacher would stay or leave the teaching profession; and schools with unfavorable working conditions such as poor infrastructural facilities and school leadership were unable to attract and keep qualified teachers.
4.3.3 Teacher Working Conditions

This study sought to describe the working conditions of pre-primary school teachers. Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency to which the statements on the items on teacher working conditions characterised their pre-primary schools. Each item had a five point Likert-type scale, ranging from ‘never’ (1) to ‘very often’ (5). Data analysis was done using frequencies, means and standard deviations. The results of the analysis are shown in Table 4.6.

| Table 4.6: Frequencies, Means and Standard Deviations of Teachers’ Working Conditions |
|-----------------------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|
|                                      | Never (N (%)) | Rarely (N (%)) | Sometimes (N (%)) | Often (N (%)) | Very often (N (%)) | Mean | Std Dev |
| Teacher workload |                      |              |                   |              |                    |       |         |
| Teachers are expected to mark a large amount of work | 1(1.7) | 6(10.2) | 13(22.0) | 20(33.9) | 19(32.2) | 3.85 | 1.05    |
| The class has many children | 1(1.7) | 13(22.0) | 27(45.8) | 18(30.5) | 3.03 | .83    |
| Teachers work for long hours in a day | 1(1.7) | 1(1.7) | 12(20.3) | 30(50.8) | 15(25.4) | 3.97 | .83    |
| School leadership |                      |              |                   |              |                    |       |         |
| The school leadership addresses teachers’ concerns about professional development | 6(10.2) | 21(35.6) | 30(50.8) | 2(3.4) | 3.47 | .73    |
| There is effective communication between teachers and administration | 2(3.4) | 23(39.0) | 29(49.2) | 5(8.5) | 3.63 | .69    |
| There is recognition such as awards of merit | 1(1.7) | 13(22.0) | 27(45.8) | 18(30.5) | 4.05 | .78    |
| The school administration consults with teachers before making decisions that affect them | 8(13.6) | 17(28.8) | 28(47.5) | 6(10.2) | 3.54 | .86    |
| School infrastructure |                      |              |                   |              |                    |       |         |
| There are adequate chairs and tables | 2(3.4) | 27(45.8) | 23(39.0) | 7(11.9) | 3.39 | .75    |
| The chairs and tables are appropriate for children | 7(11.9) | 19(32.2) | 30(50.8) | 3(5.1) | 3.61 | .77    |
| The classroom building is in good condition | 3(5.1) | 24(40.7) | 20(33.9) | 12(20.3) | 3.38 | .86    |
| Classroom organization |                      |              |                   |              |                    |       |         |
| The classroom is well cleaned | 22(37.3) | 26(44.1) | 11(18.6) | 3.61 | .73    |
| The class environment is free from noise that may distract learning | 2(3.4) | 7(11.9) | 14(23.7) | 21(35.6) | 15(25.4) | 3.38 | 1.09    |
| The class space is big enough to allow social interaction | 4(6.8) | 6(10.2) | 10(16.9) | 25(42.4) | 14(23.7) | 3.66 | 1.15    |
| The classroom is well ventilated | 19(32.2) | 27(45.8) | 13(22.0) | 3.90 | .74    |
| Overall Mean |                      |              |                   |              |                    | 3.58   |         |
As shown in Table 4.6, the overall mean for teachers’ working conditions is 3.58. The overall means for the dimensions of teacher working conditions were: teacher workload is 3.62, school leadership is 3.67, school infrastructure is 3.39, and classroom organization is 3.64. These results indicate that often the teachers had heavy teacher workload; school leadership often recognized teachers, and classroom organization was often good; further, the results show that school infrastructure were occasionally adequate, appropriate and in good condition. The results generally indicate that the classrooms were often well cleaned, free from noise that may distract learning, big enough to allow social interaction and well ventilated. These results were interpreted to mean that the pre-primary schools had good classroom organization. These results generally agreed with Sergiovanni’s (2009) arguments that for teachers to perform well in teaching there should be good administrators who create environments that facilitate teachers to accomplish their tasks.

4.3.4 Reading Ability

This study also examined reading ability of pre-primary school pupils. Respondents were asked to indicate the frequency to which the statements on the items of pupils’ reading ability characterized the reading ability of the pupils in their pre-primary schools. Each item had a five point Likert- type scale ranging from ‘never’ (1) to ‘very often’ (5). The results of the descriptive statistics are shown in Table 4.7.
Table 4.7: Frequencies, Means and Standard Deviations of Pupils’ Reading Ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Oral activities</th>
<th>Never N (%)</th>
<th>Rarely N (%)</th>
<th>Sometimes N (%)</th>
<th>Often N (%)</th>
<th>Very often N (%)</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Listening actively to stories</td>
<td>10(16.9)</td>
<td>14(23.7)</td>
<td>9(15.3)</td>
<td>14(23.7)</td>
<td>12(20.3)</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Following simple instructions</td>
<td>4(6.8)</td>
<td>14(23.7)</td>
<td>20(33.9)</td>
<td>15(25.4)</td>
<td>6(10.2)</td>
<td>3.08</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciting letters of the alphabet</td>
<td>6(10.2)</td>
<td>6(10.2)</td>
<td>17(28.8)</td>
<td>14(23.7)</td>
<td>16(27.1)</td>
<td>3.47</td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News telling of previous events</td>
<td>9(15.3)</td>
<td>12(20.3)</td>
<td>18(30.5)</td>
<td>12(20.3)</td>
<td>8(13.6)</td>
<td>2.97</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in role playing activities</td>
<td>5(8.5)</td>
<td>9(15.3)</td>
<td>21(35.6)</td>
<td>15(25.4)</td>
<td>9(15.3)</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Vocabulary                               | 2.78        |
| Reading hard words clearly               | 8(13.6)     | 26(44.1)     | 16(27.1)        | 7(11.9)       | 2(3.4)           | 2.47   | 1.34    |
| Asking for clarification of new words    | 10(16.9)    | 15(25.4)     | 12(20.3)        | 13(22.0)      | 9(15.3)          | 2.93   | 1.21    |
| Practicing using new vocabulary          | 9(15.3)     | 23(39.0)     | 10(16.9)        | 12(20.3)      | 5(8.5)           | 2.68   | 1.10    |
| Spelling the wordslearnt clearly         | 6(10.2)     | 11(18.6)     | 25(42.4)        | 11(18.6)      | 6(10.2)          | 3.00   | 1.21    |
| Developing oral vocabulary when reading alone | 9(15.3) | 16(27.1) | 7(28.8) | 11(18.6) | 6(10.2) | 2.81 | 1.19 |

| Comprehension                            | 2.52        |
| Constructing meaning in a text           | 11(18.6)    | 29(49.2)     | 8(13.6)         | 5(8.5)        | 6(10.2)          | 2.42   | 1.19    |
| Understanding what he/she reads          | 7(11.9)     | 24(40.7)     | 20(33.9)        | 6(10.2)       | 2(3.4)           | 2.53   | .95     |
| Answering questions appropriately from a text | 9(15.3) | 23(39.0) | 20(33.9) | 5(8.5) | 2(3.4) | 2.46 | .97 |
| Making words connection with pictures    | 10(16.9)    | 18(30.5)     | 16(27.1)        | 11(18.6)      | 4(6.8)           | 2.68   | 1.17    |

As shown in Table 4.7, the mean score for reading ability of pre-primary school pupils was 2.82. The mean score for oral activities is 3.17, the mean for vocabulary is 2.78 and the mean for comprehension is 2.52. All these mean scores indicate that the pupils exhibited ability in oral activities, vocabulary and comprehension occasionally. In general the results reveal that reading ability of pre-primary school pupils was not well developed.
The results are consistent with UNESCO’S (2008) report that showed that a total of 796 million people worldwide were unable to read; 67 million children of school going age were not attending school and 72 million did not get a chance of attending secondary education. The results are also consistent with a study by Davis (2011) which revealed that globally, 20% of Western Countries like England, Australia and New Zealand children could not read with confidence at the age of 11 years.

The results also support the findings of a study by Anderson and Morgan (2008) which showed that 27% of children in Maine and 62% in Louisiana were unable to read and generally 59% of all the learners were not able to read. The results were also consistent with reports by (NASMLA, 2012) which showed that, slightly less than half (47.7%) of the pupils attained the desirable levels of class three and four competency in literacy and about half (46.1%) of class three pupils demonstrated emergent reading ability which was congruent with class two levels.

Lastly, the results also support the report by Uwezo (2011) which revealed that nationally (Kenya) only seven out of 100 pupils in class six to eight could not comprehend a class two level story even when they could read. Results further shows that and eight of these pupils were unable to read a simple English story. Uwezo (2015) also found that learning outcome were low nationally, with only three out of 10 pupils in standard three being able to do standard two work while the recent study shows that the reading ability of pre-primary school pupils was good.
4.4 Hypotheses Testing

This section discusses the results of hypotheses testing. This study sought to determine the relationship between teacher working conditions and pupils’ reading ability as predicted in the following hypotheses:

Ho₁ There is no relationship between teacher workload and pupils’ reading ability.
Ho₂ There is no relationship between school leadership and pupils’ reading ability.
Ho₃ There is no relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability.
Ho₄ There is a relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability.

To test the hypotheses, data was analyzed using Pearson’s Product-moment correlation. The results of the analyses are presented and discussed in the following section.

4.4.1 Teacher Workload and Pupils’ Reading ability

This study sought to determine the relationship between teacher workload and pupils’ reading ability. It was hypothesized (Ho₁) that there is no relationship between teacher workload and pupils’ reading ability. To test the hypothesis, data was analyzed using Pearson’s correlation. The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.8.
### Table 4.8 Correlation between Teacher Workload and Pupils’ Reading Ability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Teacher workload</th>
<th>Reading ability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-.323*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.013</td>
<td>.013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 4.8 indicate $r = -0.323$ and $p < 0.05$. Thus, the hypothesis that there is no relationship between teacher workload and pupils’ reading ability is rejected. Therefore, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between teacher workload and reading ability. The results indicate a negative relationship between teacher workload and pupils’ reading ability. This means that higher workload negatively affect pupils’ reading ability.

These findings suggest that teachers are expected to mark large amounts of work, classes have many children and teachers work for long hours in a day, this would affect teaching of reading and negatively affect pupils’ reading ability.

These findings are consistent with findings of a study by Bennett et al. (2002) which revealed that time, inadequate time to prepare, large classroom sizes were some of the factors that affected teachers in teaching of reading. The results also support the findings of a study by Ataphia (2011) which revealed that the degree of concentration of students in overcrowded rooms was low and that class size dictated the teachers’ teaching approach. The findings are also consistent with Berry et al.’s (2008) study which revealed that smaller classes such as 25 students per class performed well in reading than classes with large number of pupils, which meant that teacher workload was not heavy, thereby
agreeing with the current study that small classes were found to be effective in supporting the reading ability of pupils.

Lastly, the study is consistent with a study by Crouch, Korda, and Mumo (2009) which revealed that large class sizes made teachers to have difficult times in teaching reading and especially reaching individual children, thus affecting the ability of children to perform well in reading. Thus, the findings of the study empirically confirm that teacher working conditions are paramount in the teaching of reading.

4.4.2 School Leadership and pupils’ Reading Ability

The study sought to determine the relationship between school leadership and pupils’ reading ability. It was predicted (H₀) that there is no relationship between school leadership and pupils’ reading ability. Data was analyzed using Pearson’s Product-moment correlation. The results are presented in Table 4.9.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School leadership</th>
<th>Reading ability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.276</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
<td>.038</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results in Table 4.9 indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between school leadership and reading ability (r = 0.276, p < 0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no relationship between school leadership and pupils’ reading ability is rejected; and this leads to conclusion that there is a significant relationship between school leadership and pupils’ reading ability.
These findings suggest that teachers who are given opportunity for professional development seem to promote the academic performance in their respective schools and have skills on how to teach reading well in their pupils. School principals who communicate well and give their teachers instructional guidance, resources and also rewarding them for good work done, motivate them to do their work well and especially the teaching of reading. The results also suggest that teachers who are provided with opportunities to participate in decision making in matters regarding their class work and more especially in the teaching of reading, seem to be happy and therefore can perform their class work well. Teachers who are free to work and consult other teachers in both classroom work and researching on their pupils’ reading abilities, make changes in their teaching methods thereby increase the chances of pupils to learn better.

These findings concur with the findings of Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) who argued that teachers’ de-motivation to teach across rural African Countries was due to lack of administrative support, teacher input regarding to decision making and the school climate. The study is also consistent with the findings of a study by Sergiovanni (2009) which revealed that teachers have to participate in decision making in matters related to their class work, have reasonable autonomy to execute their duties, receive recognition and given ample staff development opportunities to progress further. The study is further in agreement with the study by Leithwood (2006) which showed that teachers expected principals who communicate clearly by giving them instructional guidance and resources, rewarding them for good work done as good school leaders.

The study also supports findings of a study by Lukhele’s (2007) which showed that there was a positive relationship between teachers’ motivation and reading among teacher
trainees. This shows that when teachers are motivated by the school leadership, they are more likely to teach reading well and therefore improve the reading ability of pupils.

Lastly the findings of this study are consistent with the findings of a study by Kahenu (2005) which revealed that Head teachers’ leadership style, promotion policy and physical facilities resulted to high academic performance in schools. Therefore, Head teachers who have good leadership styles such as giving teachers under them chances for professional development will make them more committed in teaching the children well which will result in improving the pupils’ reading ability. Thus the findings of the study empirically confirm the perspective that school leadership determines the reading ability of pupils.

### 4.4.3 School Infrastructure and Pupils’ Reading Ability

The study sought to establish the relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability. It was predicted ($H_0$) that there is no relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability. Data was analyzed using Pearson’s Product-moment correlation and the results are presented in Table 4.10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Infrastructure</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Ability</td>
<td>.263</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School Infrastructure</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
<th>N</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reading Ability</td>
<td>.263</td>
<td>.042</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results in Table 4.10 indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability ($r = 0.263, p < 0.05$). The results reject the research hypothesis that there is no relationship between school infrastructure and children’s reading ability. Thus, it is concluded that there is a relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability.

These findings show that when school furniture such as chairs and tables are adequate and appropriate for both teachers and pupils, and the buildings are in good condition, they motivate teachers to teach well especially reading. Consequently, this improves pupils reading ability.

These findings are consistent with past studies which suggest that there is a relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability. For example, a study by Mwai (2003) revealed that most schools had no enough furniture for the number of enrolled pupils and that furniture did not match the physical size and stature of pupils, making it hard to concentrate in reading. Adedeji and Olaniyan (2011) argued that most African schools lacked essential infrastructure that would make them to be safe, efficient and effective, hence teachers’ commitment to teaching reading deteriorates. Scott and Dinham’s (2003) study found that teachers who were dissatisfied with poor infrastructural facilities in their schools were not motivated to do their work well. The study was also inconsistent with UNESCO (2016) which showed that poor infrastructural features affected learning such as ability to read in most African schools.

A study by Beynon (1997) revealed that low levels of learning among children in developing countries were associated with poor and inadequate facilities in schools and
that teachers were not motivated to work well when the working environment were poor. Bucholz and Sheffler (2009) also found that well arranged class furniture such as desks and tables, creating enough space for pupils’ to move easily from one place in class to the other, create active participation in learning.

Another study by Ng’asike (2011) revealed that lack of infrastructure such as classroom buildings and furniture like tables and chairs were some of the problems that affected both teachers and pupils and therefore led to poor academic performance. Thus, past studies suggest that there is relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability. The findings of this study support findings of past studies that show that most schools have poor infrastructural facilities.

### 4.4.4 Classroom Organization and Pupils’ Reading Ability

The study also sought to determine the relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability. It was predicted that there is no relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability ($H_{04}$). Data was analyzed using Pearson’s correlation. The results were presented in Table 4.11.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classroom Organization</th>
<th>Pearson Correlation</th>
<th>Reading Ability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.293*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>.024</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading ability</td>
<td>Pearson Correlation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td>
<td>.293*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>.024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>59</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).
The results in Table 4.11 indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability \( (r = 0.293, p < 0.05) \). Therefore the results reject the hypothesis that there is no relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability. This indicates that there is positive and significant relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability.

These findings show that when classrooms are well cleaned, free from outside distractions such as noise from the environment, have enough space for social interaction and are well ventilated, it promotes teaching of reading and pupils’ reading ability. These findings are consistent with the findings of a study by Kaplan (2010) who suggested that the classroom organization should attract teachers to construct activities which challenge and expand the student’s intelligence and also arouse their interest to learn. Gatsinzi et al. (2014) revealed that aesthetic appeal of classroom organization was influential in motivating teachers to teach reading. The study is also consistent with the findings of a study by Cohen et al. (1980) which revealed that a number of students who had noise-related reading problems, blood pressure and other health hazards were as a result of exposure to chronic noise which impaired the cognitive functioning, leading to poor academic performance. The findings of this study are also consistent with the findings of Engelbrecht (2003) who argued that bright colour of walls in the classroom affected the productivity and accuracy of pupils’ classroom work and suggested that reading wall charts should be hanged in clean and painted walls to influence and concentration of pupils during the reading lesson.

The findings of this study also support the results of a study by Ndani and Kimani (2010) that demonstrated that most public ECDE centres in Kenya had unfriendly working
conditions such as classrooms with low temperatures and poor ventilation. Thus, the findings of these studies empirically confirm that classroom organization determines the reading ability of pupils in pre-primary schools. Therefore the objective which sought to determine the relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability was achieved.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction
This chapter presents the summary of research findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study. The chapter discusses the summary of findings, conclusions in line with the research objectives. The recommendations are developed from the research findings.

5.2 Summary of the Findings of the Study
This study examined the relationship between teacher working conditions and pupils’ reading ability. The data for the study was collected from 59 pre-primary schools in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru, Kenya.

The first objective of the study was to determine the relationship between teacher workload and pupils’ reading ability. The Pearson’s product moment correlation results showed negative and significant relationship between teacher workload and pupils’ reading ability. The hypothesis that stated that there is no relationship between teacher workload and pupils’ reading ability was rejected. Thus, the findings reveal that there is a negative and significant relationship between teacher workload and pupils’ reading ability.

The second objective of the study was to establish the relationship between school leadership and pupils’ reading ability. The correlation results reveal that there is a positive and significant relationship between school leadership and reading ability. Thus, the hypothesis Ho2 that stated that there is no relationship between school leadership and
pupils’ reading ability was accepted. Hence, the findings demonstrate that there is a positive and significant relationship between school leadership and pupils’ reading ability.

The third objective of the study was to find out the relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability. The correlation results reveal positive and significant relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability. Thus, hypothesis Ho3 that stated that there is no relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability was accepted. Therefore, the findings reveal that there is a positive and significant relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability.

The fourth objective of the study was to determine the relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability. The correlation results show a positive and significant relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability. Hence, hypothesis Ho4 which stated that there is no relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability was accepted. Thus, the findings show that there is a positive and significant relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability.

5.3 Conclusion

Heavy teacher workload, poor school leadership, poor school infrastructure and poor classroom organization affects the reading ability of pre-primary school pupils.

5.4 Recommendations of the Study

Based on the objectives of the study and findings, this study makes the following recommendations for policy and practice as well as further research:
5.4.1 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

i. First, the study revealed a significant and negative relationship between teacher workload and pupils reading ability. When teachers have heavy workload, it affects their teaching of reading. The ECDE service Standard Guideline stipulates that the ratio of teacher to pupils of the ages between 5 and 6 be 1:30. Thus to enhance reading ability, the study recommends that pre-primary school classes should have a reasonable number of pupils to avoid teacher workload, hence teacher commitment to teach reading.

ii. Secondly, the findings revealed a significant and positive relationship between school leadership and pupils’ reading ability. The findings demonstrate that with effective leadership in pre-primary schools, pupils’ reading ability could improve. The researcher recommends that school administrators should practice effective leadership to inspire teachers to be committed to teach reading and improve the reading ability of pupils.

iii. Thirdly, the findings revealed a significant and positive relationship between school infrastructure and pupils’ reading ability. The ECDE Service Standard Guidelines for Kenya outlines that furniture for pre-primary school pupils should be available, adequate, and suitable in size with regards to tables and chairs also in good condition. The researcher therefore recommends that school administrators need to involve all stakeholders in the construction of classes or repair the worn out ones; construct adequate chairs for both teachers and pupils, have chairs and tables that are appropriate to the stature of children. When schools
avail such essential furniture, the teaching environment will be conducive and this will facilitate learning hence, improvement in the reading ability of pupils.

iv. Finally, the findings demonstrated that there is a significant positive relationship between classroom organization and pupils’ reading ability. Thus, the study recommends that school administrators and pre-primary school teachers need to ensure good classroom organization in terms of cleanliness, avoid noise distractive environments, have adequate class space and be well ventilated.

v. The researcher recommends that classrooms should be well cleaned to avoid health related problems, classrooms should be built far from external noise that distracts learning, and the class rooms should be well ventilated to allow fresh air to enter and circulate in the premises. Further, pre-primary school teachers need to organize their classrooms in such a way to provide enough space for pupils to be able to move easily in the classroom. This will allow pupils to participate actively, work cooperatively which is crucial in learning and hence improvement of reading ability.

vi. The County and National Governments through the ministry of Education need to equip all ECDE centres with adequate teachers, put in place good leadership styles, provide enough infrastructures and create good classroom environments to both teachers and pre-primary school pupils. In doing all the above, the teachers could be committed in teaching of reading, hence improvement in the reading ability of pupils.
5.4.2 Recommendation for Further Research

This study has made contribution to knowledge on the understanding of the relationship between teacher working conditions and pupils’ reading ability. However the study makes the following recommendations for further research.

i. The data for this study was collected from 59 pre-primary schools in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru. The study only involved teachers in public pre-primary schools. This research could be replicated with private pre-primary schools to determine if the findings will be similar or different from those of this study.

ii. This study was conducted in Rongai Sub-County, Nakuru. A similar study could be conducted in other Sub-Counties in Kenya to determine if regional differences may influence the relationship between teacher working conditions and pupils’ reading ability. This may enhance the understanding of the relationship between teacher working conditions and pupils’ reading ability.

iii. This study relied on the teachers’ perceptions to determine the reading ability of pre-primary school pupils. The teachers’ views on pupils’ reading ability may be subjective. A similar study can be conducted using an observation guide or a reading test administered to the pupils.

iv. This study focused on the relationship between teacher working conditions and pupils’ reading ability. The study revealed that teacher’ working conditions affect pupils’ reading ability. There is need for further studies to determine the influence of other factors such as teacher and student characteristics on reading ability. This
would help in providing a more comprehensive understanding of the influences of reading ability in pre-primary schools.
REFERENCES


Shield, B. & Dockrell (2008). The effects of classroom and environmental noise on children’s academic performance. 9th international congress on noise as health problem (icben)2008, Foxwoods, CT


APPENDICES

Appendix I: Authorization of the Study

Kimwomi Mary Moraa
Kenyatta University
School of Education (Early Childhood Studies)
P.O Box 438-00100
Nairobi
Tel 0724231035
marymoraa@gmail.com;
24th February, 2016
To Whom It May Concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: REQUEST FOR RESEARCH DATA FROM YOUR SCHOOL

I am a student pursuing a Master of Education (M.Ed.) degree programme in Early Childhood Education at Kenyatta University. To fulfil the requirements of the degree, I am undertaking a research study. Your school was selected to participate in the study, entitled ‘Relationship between Teachers’ Working Condition and Pupils’ Reading Ability in pre-primary schools in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya.

The questionnaire forms an integral part of the study. I am therefore, kindly requesting you to assist in facilitating the completion of the questionnaire. The data required is needed for academic purposes only and will be treated with strict confidentiality.

Your participation is highly appreciated and should you require any clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

Kimwomi Mary Moraa
Appendix II: Questionnaire for Head teachers

Instructions: Kindly fill in the following questionnaire. The information obtained will be used purely for research purposes. Please do not indicate your name anywhere on this questionnaire.

Please provide the following information regarding your school

1. Name of pre-primary school ______________________

2. Number of years the pre-primary school has been in operation (tick as appropriate)
   a) Less than 5 years  [  ]
   b) 6 to 10 years  [  ]
   c) 11 to 15 years  [  ]
   d) 16 to 20 years  [  ]
   e) More than 20 years[  ]

3. Number of pre-primary school teachers (tick as appropriate)
   a) 1 teacher  [  ]
   b) 2 teachers  [  ]
   c) 3 teachers  [  ]
   d) 4 teachers  [  ]
   e) 5 teachers  [  ]

4. Number of pupils in PP2 (tick as appropriate)
   a) Below 20  [  ]
   b) 21 to 25  [  ]
   b) 26 to 30  [  ]
c) 31 to 35 [ ]

d) Above 35 [ ]

6. Indicate the number of male and female pupils

a) Male ___________

b) Female ___________
Appendix III: Questionnaire for Pre-primary school Teachers

Instructions: Kindly fill in the following questionnaire. The information obtained will be used purely for research purposes. Please do not indicate your name anywhere on this questionnaire.

Please tick the appropriate choice or write down your answer.

Section A: Profile of Pre-primary Class Teachers

Please provide the following information by ticking the appropriate choice:

1. Gender of Pre-primary school teacher
   a) Male [ ]
   b) Female [ ]

2. Age of the teacher (tick as appropriate)
   a) Below 25 [ ]
   b) 26 to 30 [ ]
   b) 31 to 35 [ ]
   c) 36 to 40 [ ]
   d) Above 40 [ ]

4. Highest professional training
   a) No training [ ]
   b) Certificate [ ]
   c) Diploma [ ]
   d) B. Ed [ ]
   e) Any other, please specify _____________________
5. Teaching experience in years
   a) 0-5 [ ]
   b) 6-10 [ ]
   c) 11-15 [ ]
   d) 16 and above [ ]

Section B: Teachers’ Working Conditions

The following statements describe aspects of teacher working conditions in pre-primary schools. For each statement indicate how often the statement characterizes the working conditions in your school by circling the appropriate number where: 1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Very often

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher workload</th>
<th>Never 1</th>
<th>Rarely 2</th>
<th>Sometimes 3</th>
<th>Often 4</th>
<th>Very often 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Teachers are expected to mark a large amount of work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 The class has many children</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Teachers work for long hours in a day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School leadership</th>
<th>Never 1</th>
<th>Rarely 2</th>
<th>Sometimes 3</th>
<th>Often 4</th>
<th>Very often 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 The school leadership addresses teachers’ concerns about professional development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 There is effective communication between teachers and administration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 There is recognition such as awards of merit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 The school administration consults with teachers before making decisions that</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principle</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School infrastructure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>There are adequate chairs and tables</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The chairs and tables are appropriate for children</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The classroom building is in good condition</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Classroom organization</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The classroom is well cleaned</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The class environment is free from noise that may distract learning</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The class space is big enough to allow social interaction</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The classroom is well ventilated</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Section C: Rating scale for Pupils’ Reading Ability

The following statements describe aspects of pupils’ reading ability in pre-primary schools. Indicate how often on average the pupils in your pre-primary school do each of the following by circling the appropriate number where: 1= Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5 = Very often.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) Oral activities</th>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Listening actively to stories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Following simple instructions</td>
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<tr>
<td>3 Reciting letters of the alphabet</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4 News telling of previous events</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Participating in role playing activities</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(b) Vocabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Reading hard words clearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Asking for clarification of new words</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Practising using new vocabulary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Spelling the words learnt clearly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Developing oral vocabulary when reading alone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(c) Comprehension</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Constructing meaning in a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Understanding what he/she reads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Answering questions appropriately from a text</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Making words connection with pictures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

89
Appendix IV: Teacher’s Consent

This is to certify that I _______________ a pre-primary school teacher of _______________ have been informed of the purpose of this research activity which is academic and voluntary. I accept to participate in this exercise. I have been assured of confidentiality and anonymity and in turn I promise to be honest and genuine in the whole research process.

Signed

1. Teacher ________________________                  Date _______________________

2. Researcher ________________________                  Date _______________________

3. Witness ________________________                  Date _______________________
Appendix V: Map of Rongai Sub-County
Appendix VI: Authorization letter from Graduate School

KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL

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

P.O. Box 43844, 00100
NAIROBI, KENYA
Tel. 8710901 Ext. 57830

OUR REF: E55/CE/24392/12

Date: 15th March, 2016

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

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION FOR MS. KIMWOMI M. MORAATA REG.NO. E55/CE/24392/12

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

Ms. Moraata intends to conduct research for M.Ed. Thesis entitled, “Relationship between Teachers’ Working Conditions and Children’s Reading Ability in Preschools in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya”.

Any assistance given will be highly appreciated.

Yours faithfully,

MRS. JUZI N. MBAABU
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL
RM/cao

Committed to Creativity, Excellence & Self-Reliance
Appendix VII: Research Authorization from NACOSTI

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 3316571, 22319420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
when replying please quote

Ref. No. NACOSTI/P/16/66523/10639

4th May, 2016

Mary Moraa Kimwomi
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on “Relationship between teachers’ working conditions and children’s reading ability in preschools in Rongai Sub-County, Kenya,” I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in Nakuru County for the period ending 3rd May, 2017.

You are advised to report to the County Commissioner and the County Director of Education, Nakuru 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.

DR. STEPHEN K. KIBIRU, PhD.
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Nakuru County.

The County Director of Education
Nakuru County.
Appendix VIII: Research Permit

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT
MS. MARY MORAA KIMWOMI
of KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 16054-20100
NAKURU, has been permitted to conduct
research in Nakuru County
on the topic: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
TEACHERS’ WORKING CONDITIONS AND
CHILDREN’S READING ABILITY IN
PRE-SCHOOLS IN RONGAI SUB-COUNTY,
KENYA
for the period ending:
3rd May, 2017

Permit No.: NACOSTUP/16/66523/10639
Date of Issue: 4th May, 2016
Fee Received: Ksh. 1000

By Director General
National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation