

**TEACHERS' CHARACTERISTICS INFLUENCING PUPILS' READING  
READINESS IN LOW-COST PRIVATE MULTI-GRADE PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS  
IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR  
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION (EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION)  
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## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis my original work and has not been presented in any other university/institution for consideration. This research thesis has been completed by referenced sources duly acknowledged. Where text, data or tables have been borrowed from other sources, including the internet, these are specifically accredited, and reference cited in accordance and in line with anti-plagiarism regulations.

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## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved children, Ian, Adrian, and Neema. Your love, encouragement, and unwavering support inspire me every day. May this achievement serve as a testament to your dreams and a foundation for your bright futures. I am endlessly proud of each of you and grateful to have you in my life.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>DECLARATION.....</b>	<b>ii</b>
<b>DEDICATION.....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENT .....</b>	<b>iv</b>
<b>TABLE OF CONTENTS .....</b>	<b>v</b>
<b>LIST OF FIGURES .....</b>	<b>ix</b>
<b>LIST OF TABLES .....</b>	<b>x</b>
<b>ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION .....</b>	<b>xi</b>
<b>ABSTRACT.....</b>	<b>xii</b>
<b>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of the Study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem .....	4
1.3 Purpose of the Study.....	5
1.4 Objectives of the Study.....	5
1.5 Research Hypothesis.....	6
1.6 Significance of the Study.....	6
1.7 Limitation and Delimitations of the Study .....	7
1.7.1 Limitation of the Study .....	7
1.7.2 Delimitation of the Study .....	7
1.8 Assumptions of the Study.....	8
1.9 Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Framework .....	8
1.9.1 Theoretical Framework .....	8
1.9.2 Conceptual Framework .....	11
1.10 Operational Definition of Terms .....	13
<b>CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE .....</b>	<b>14</b>
2.1 Introduction .....	14
2.2 The Concept of Multi-Grade Teaching / Learning.....	14
2.3 Influence of Teachers’ Characteristics on Pupils’ Reading Readiness .....	15
2.3.1 Teachers’ Training and Pupil’s Reading Readiness.....	19
2.3.2 Teachers’ Experience and Pupil’s Reading Readiness .....	23

2.3.3 Teachers' Attitude and Pupil's Reading Readiness .....	25
2.4 Summary of Reviewed Literature.....	27
<b>CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>28</b>
3.1 Introduction .....	28
3.2 Research Design .....	28
3.2.1 Variables of the Study.....	28
3.2.2 Research Methodology.....	29
3.3 Study Location.....	29
3.4 Target population.....	30
3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size.....	30
3.5.1 Sampling Techniques .....	30
3.5.2 Sample Size.....	30
3.6 Research Instruments.....	31
3.6.1 Questionnaires for Pre-Primary Schoolteachers .....	31
3.6.2 Interview Schedule for Head Teachers .....	32
3.6.3 Observation Schedule.....	32
3.7 Pilot Testing.....	32
3.7.1 Validity.....	33
3.7.2 Reliability .....	33
3.8 Data Collection Techniques.....	33
3.9 Data Analysis.....	33
3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations .....	34
3.10.1 Logistical Considerations .....	34
3.10.2 Ethical Considerations .....	34
<b>CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION .....</b>	<b>36</b>
4.1 Introduction .....	36
4.2 Demographic Information .....	37
4.2.1 Response Rate .....	37
4.2.2 Gender of Participating Teachers.....	38
4.2.3 Age of Participating Teachers .....	39
4.3 Relationship Between Teachers' Training and Pupils' Reading Readiness.....	40

4.3.1 Whether the Preschool Teachers Were Trained .....	40
4.3.2 Whether Teachers Attended Refresher Courses.....	43
4.3.3 Exposure of Teachers to Other Teaching Scenarios Through Benchmarking .....	44
4.3.4 Whether Teachers were Adequately Trained to Enhance Reading .....	45
4.3.5 Whether the School and the Government Supported In-Servicing of Teachers .....	46
4.3.6 Observation on Teacher Training.....	47
4.3.7 Regression Analysis on Relationship Between Training and Preschool Pupils’ Reading Readiness .....	47
4.4 Relationship Between Teachers’ Experience and Pupils’ Reading Readiness .....	48
4.4.1 Number of Years in Employment as a Teacher .....	49
4.4.2 Use of Day-to-Day Encounters by Teachers to Enhance Pupils Reading Readiness ...	50
4.4.3 Teachers’ use of Other Colleagues’ Feedback to Improve Self.....	51
4.4.4 Teachers Views on Successful Completion of the Reading Readiness Teaching Syllabus .....	52
4.4.5 Teachers’ Views on Students Performance in Reading Readiness Activities .....	53
4.4.6 Whether Teachers Enjoyed Working and Learning from Teammates.....	54
4.4.7 Observation on Teacher Experience .....	55
4.4.8 Regression Analysis on Relationship Between Teachers’ Experience and Pupils Reading Readiness .....	55
4.5 Relationship Between Teachers’ Attitude and Pupils’ Reading Readiness .....	56
4.5.1 What Teachers Liked or Disliked About Teaching Multi -Grade Pupils.....	57
4.5.2 Whether Teachers Found Their Involvement in enhancing Pupils’ Reading Readiness Satisfying.....	57
4.5.3 Whether Teachers Found Supporting Pupils’ Reading Readiness Interesting .....	58
4.5.4 Whether Teachers Enjoyed Preparing Multi-Grade Pre-primary School Pupils to Read .....	59
4.5.5 Whether Teachers Respondents Felt Well Remunerated to Live Decently .....	60
4.5.6 Whether Teachers’ Job Gave Them Chance to Do Things They Were Best At.....	61
4.5.7 Whether There Were Prospects for Teachers’ Promotion and Advancement .....	62
4.5.8 Observation on Teacher Attitude .....	63
4.5.9 Regression Analysis on Relationship Between Teachers’ Attitude and Preschool	

Pupils' Reading Readiness .....	63
<b>CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>65</b>
5.1 Introduction .....	65
5.2 Summary.....	65
5.3 Conclusions .....	67
5.4 Recommendations .....	68
5.4.1 Policy Recommendations.....	68
5.4.2 Suggestions for Further Studies .....	69
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>77</b>
Appendix 1: Letter of Introduction.....	77
Appendix II: Questionnaire for Pre-Primary School Teachers .....	78
Appendix III: Interview Schedule for Head Teachers.....	83
Appendix IV: Observation Guide.....	84
Appendix V: Research Permit .....	85
Appendix VI: Map of Kasarani Sub-County.....	88

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Influence of Teacher Characteristics on Pre-Primary School Pupils’ Reading Readiness in Multi-Grade Classrooms .....	11
Figure 2 Percentile Distribution of Teachers by Gender .....	38
Figure 3 Percentile Distribution of Teachers by Age .....	39
Figure 4 Status of Training .....	41
Figure 5 Distribution of Teacher Participants by Professional Qualification.....	42
Figure 6 Distribution of Teachers’ Attendance for Refresher Courses Termly.....	43
Figure 7 Benchmarking Opportunities to Expose Teachers to Other Teaching Scenarios.....	44
Figure 8 If Teachers Felt Adequately Trained to Enhance Reading Readiness .....	45
Figure 9 Teachers’ Views Whether the School and Government Effectively Supported In-Service Training .....	46
Figure 10 Percentile Distribution of Teachers by teaching experience .....	49
Figure 11 Percentile of Teachers Day-To-Day Encounters to Enhance Pupils’ Reading Readiness .....	50
Figure 12 Use of Other Teacher Colleague’s Feedback, for Self-Improvement .....	51
Figure 13 If Teachers Considered Themselves Successful in Completing Reading Readiness Syllabus .....	52
Figure 14 Students’ Performance in Reading Readiness Activities According to Teachers.....	53
Figure 15 Teachers’ Responses on whether They Enjoyed Working and Learning from Teammates .....	54
Figure 16 If Teachers Found Their Involvement in Enhancement of Pupils’ Reading Readiness Satisfying.....	57
Figure 17 If Teachers Found Supporting Pupils’ Reading Readiness Interesting.....	58
Figure 18 If Teachers Enjoyed Preparing Multi-Grade Pre-Primary School Pupils to Read .....	59
Figure 19 If Teachers Felt Well Remunerated to Live Decently.....	60
Figure 20 Teachers’ Responses if Their job Gave Them Chance to do Things, They Were Best at .....	61
Figure 21 If There Were Prospects for Teachers’ Promotion and Advancement.....	62

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Sampling Frame.....	31
Table 2 Response Rate of Headteachers and Pre-Primary School Teachers .....	38
Table 3 Relationship Between Teacher Training and Preschool Pupils' Reading Readiness .....	48
Table 4 Relationship Between Teacher Experience and Pupils Reading Readiness .....	56
Table 5 Relationship Between Teachers' Attitude and Pupils' Reading Readiness.....	64

## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION**

ARAN	Alphanumeric Rapid Automatized Naming
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
KACE	Kenya Advanced Certificate of Education
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KCSE	Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
LSK	Letter-Sound Knowledge
NACECE	National Centre for Early Childhood Education
PA	Phoneme Awareness
PTTCs	Primary Teacher Training Colleges
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

## ABSTRACT

Reading is the bedrock of all learning, and each subject area depends on it for comprehension of information. To be able to prepare pupils for reading, job experience, training, and attitude of a teacher among other factors is of paramount importance. Despite this knowledge, poor reading performance has been noted worldwide which causes concern. Here in Kenya, low levels of reading preparedness among preschool children were noted in Nairobi while 50% of grade three learners in primary schools were below average in reading of letters and letter sound recognition but the study did not explore what role teacher characteristics played in this dilemma. Moreover, other previous studies that have been done on the subject exhibited contextual, conceptual, and methodological gaps. Accordingly, this study assessed what specific influence teachers' attributes had on pupils' reading readiness, since this is the foundational level of education and life-long learning. Additionally, it was important to ascertain how teachers handled the mixed groups of children of different abilities and age, in low-cost private multi-grade preschools. Although there are many factors that can influence pupil's reading readiness, this study focused on teachers work experience, their training, as well as attitude towards pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani Sub-County of Nairobi City County, Kenya where reading performance was reported to be one of the worst, among other counties nationally. Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory guided this correlational design study. A sample size of 15% (50) schools, teachers, and head teachers out of 350 was selected using simple random sampling, in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary schools. Data were collected through questionnaires and interview schedules. Furthermore, validity of the instruments was ensured by strictly basing the entire research content on the study's objectives while Split half technique was used to determine their reliability, at 0.7 coefficient. Data were analysed both qualitatively and quantitatively because the two methods supplement each other. To test the three hypotheses, inferential statistics comprising Pearson's Correlation Coefficient and multiple regression were used. The findings from the study show that teacher characteristics had statistically significant relationship with pupils' reading readiness training at ( $r = 0.014$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ), experience ( $r = 0.023$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) and attitude ( $r = 0.042$ ,  $P < 0.05$ ) respectively. In conclusion, the study recommended that the school management should liaise with the government to regularly train multi-grade pre-primary school teachers and in addition, offer them better remuneration.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

The chapter covers the background of the study, the research problem, study's purpose, research objectives, research questions, study hypotheses, significance of the study, limitation as well as the delimitation of the study. It also includes study assumptions, the theoretical as well as the conceptual frameworks and operational definition of terms.

#### **1.2 Background of the Study**

Reading comprises taking in the meaning of letters and symbols through sight or touch (Merriam-webster, 2022). Clayton, et. al. (2020) in their longitudinal study of early reading development, describes reading as the ability to notice, recognize, distinguish, and make meaning of symbolic and graphical representations of meaning in language. They further stress that reading is the foundation to writing and all other literacy related communication. Consequently, reading is an important component, essential for the success of learners in school and thereafter in life (Alsaadat, 2020). Thus, readiness or preparation to read needs to be handled with care particularly in multi-grade classrooms, to ensure a firm foundation during early or preschool years which is the focus of the study.

Extra care appears to be necessary in multi-grade teaching, also known as multi-level or mixed-age teaching, an approach where a single teacher must bear with the overload of instructing students from different grade levels within the same classroom (Little, 2015). This educational approach is particularly or frequently used in small schools, and rural areas where it is impossible to establish separate classrooms for each grade due to resource constraints and student demographics. Despite the shortcomings in multi-grade classrooms, students gain from

individualized instruction and cooperative learning opportunities. Tantawy (2020) adds that to fulfill the unique requirements of individual students, the teacher must competently balance a variety of curriculum, instructional strategies, and assessment procedures. The current study thus sought to investigate how successful or not the entire instructional processes were achieved under such conditions.

Moreover, UNESCO (2023) posits that in the whole world, at least 763 million adults still cannot read and write, while 250 million children are failing to acquire basic literacy skills. In Anglophone countries, a fifth of the children reach aged 11 without learning to read, as Herbert et al. (2018) similarly affirmed. This suggests that the inability of children to read is indeed alarming. Thus, this study sought to establish whether teachers' characteristics could be influencing reading readiness of pupils in pre-primary schools.

In India, Mahana et al (2019), studied reading problems of secondary school students in English language, and revealed that class IX learners' reading capabilities were equivalent to those of class V and VI. This implies that their reading problems may have started way back in preschool but unfortunately opportunities by teachers to address them may have been missed and hence the need for the current study. Tantawy (2020) in his study in United Arab Emirates (UAE), reports that training during professional development courses, is an important factor in enhancing student's learning preparedness. However, the study used a very small sample of three English teachers two of whom were from elementary school while the third one was from high school. The present study however, involved 50 preschool teachers in Kasarani Sub- County Nairobi, Kenya.

In Norway and Sweden, Trude et al. (2020), demonstrated that teachers may make a difference in reducing equity through their competence and instruction which can be achieved by way of professional development.

Nkebe (2020) in a study in Nigeria, in the western part of Africa, found over 40% of school going children incapable of performing basic reading. Additionally, studies conducted in East Africa by Uwezo (2016) in Kenya, 2017 in Tanzania, and 2018 in Uganda also paint a gloom picture of children's learning in East Africa, particularly in reading. Similarly, in Nairobi County, Kenya, Ngure et. al. (2019), in their investigation on the level of reading skills among grade three pupils in primary schools point out that 50% of them were below average in reading of letter and letter sound recognition. This therefore called for a study to find out what exactly are the causes of this poor reading performance. Hence the study intended to examine whether some of the causes could be teacher related since they are the persons charged with the responsibility to ensure that pre-schoolers are well prepared with pre-reading skills which are the building blocks for advanced reading in other class levels.

Subsequently, given that early education of minors' pivots on reading and reading preparedness as Alsaadat (2020) notes, the personal characteristics of the teacher who prepares the children are vital. The above characteristics as Jumba (2019) propose include teacher training, teacher experience and teacher attitude. Possessing these characteristics is important, they are a reflection of what they are or what they will pass to learners. A teacher endowed with experience, correct and up to date training, and armed with the right attitude will prepare pupils in a certain way. Teacher training, experience and attitude have a relationship with pupil learning preparedness, and it is this relationship that this study sought to explore.

Finally, the social pillar of Kenya Vision 2030 envisaged a country founded on four pillars, with the social economic pillar pivoting on education and training. Ultimately, the framers of the 2030 vision saw education and training as the panacea to the problems facing the country. Evidently, this education and training begins at an early age, with all pupils, including those in multi-grade institutions where the teacher deals with pupils of different ages, grades, and abilities in the same classroom as Little (2015) reveals. Furthermore, in multi-grade structure, it is usually one teacher teaching the same pupils the entire day. Accordingly, since the pupils are at different levels of learning and understanding, multi-grade learning could be a cause to low reading levels, and a challenge to both the learners and teachers, which the present study investigated.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Teacher characteristics like training, work experience and attitude are crucial and significant predictors in preparing pupils to read as reviewed studies have suggested worldwide. However, it was important to find out how instruction in multi-grade classrooms where pupils of different age, ability and grade were taught, to see how teachers confronted this challenge in one classroom.

Besides, Nairobi City County in Kenya, has posted poor reading performance in primary school which may mean that, the problem could have started in pre-school. Therefore, it was necessary to find out how teachers handled reading readiness activities in low-cost multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms as a foundation for later reading and learning. Additionally, studies on reading readiness appeared to be scanty in multi-grade contexts, a situation that was of concern in this study.

Furthermore, without information on reading readiness and teacher related characteristics influencing reading particularly in multi-grade classrooms in Nairobi where the teacher deals with

children of mixed age and ability, the problem may increase in complexity and persist throughout other academic levels. Thus, the current study bridged this gap by focusing on teacher characteristics, training, work experience and attitude and their influence on reading preparedness of pupils in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary schools in Nairobi City County, Kenya

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

This study's purpose was to determine the relationship between teachers' characteristics and pupils' reading preparedness in multi-grade preschool classrooms in Nairobi City County, Kenya in order to unravel how teachers tackled the challenge of instructing children of different ages, and abilities, in one classroom thereby possibly enhancing their reading preparedness.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

- i. To examine whether teacher training influences pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi City County.
- ii. To determine whether teachers' experience influences pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi City County.
- iii. To assess whether teachers' attitude influences pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi City County.

## **1.5 Research Hypothesis**

HO1: There is no significant relationship between teacher training and preschool pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi City County.

HA1: There is a relationship between teacher training and preschool pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi City County

HO2: There is no significant relationship between teachers' experience and pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi City County.

HA2: There is a relationship between teachers' experience and pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi City County.

HO3: There is no significant relationship between teachers' attitude and pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi City County.

HA3: There is a relationship between teachers' attitude and pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi City County.

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study findings might be useful to the many Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) stakeholders including teachers, parents, academicians and policy makers. The teachers may learn their personal strengths and weaknesses that may negatively influence children's

reading readiness and adjust accordingly, leading to more effective teaching. The parents may learn how to enhance their relationship with multi-grade teachers and how to support them so they know the teacher characteristics that may influence reading readiness among their children. The policy makers might benefit since these conclusions might form the basis for a truly viable policy for early childhood education. Finally, to scholars, this study offers excellent theoretical framework on which future research can be moored.

## **1.7 Limitation and Delimitations of the Study**

The limitations and delimitations of the study are presented in the following section.

### **1.7.1 Limitation of the Study**

This research anticipated that some respondents may be unwilling to disclose some information. At the same time data collection was an issue to the researcher since she is in full time employment. However, to mitigate these limitations, the researcher endeavoured to protect both the identity of the respondents by assuring them that the information sought was only used for study purpose or for what it was sought. Permission to go out for data collection was also sought from the researcher's employer, by applying for leave and scheduling meetings with some of the head teachers on Saturdays.

### **1.7.2 Delimitation of the Study**

This study delimited itself to multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani Sub- County of Nairobi City County, Kenya. It also confined itself to teachers' characteristics that may impact reading readiness of pre-primary school children.

## **1.8 Assumptions of the Study**

Firstly, the study assumed that teachers in multi-grade classrooms in Kasarani Sub- County utilized multi-grade strategies to enhance pupils' reading readiness. Another assumption was that the respondents would be willing participants in the study. Finally, the study assumed that majority of all multi-grade learners were taught by trained teachers.

## **1.9 Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Framework**

This section presents the theoretical and conceptual frameworks.

### **1.9.1 Theoretical Framework**

The social learning theory by Bandura (1977) guided this study. This theory traces its lineage to B.F Skinner who posited that to offer a holistic experience and fully benefit the learner, learning approaches must consider the interaction between the individual and his social environment. In addition, learning does not happen in a vacuum; instead, the learning experience pivots on a myriad of social variables, which had immense impact on the learner.

Bandura (1977) developed Skinner's theory further and borrowed heavily from modelling stimuli. The theory emphasizes that new behaviours can be acquired through observing and imitating a model or others. The social learning theory by Bandura has four steps as follows. The first step of Bandura's social learning theory is attention, where learners must pay attention in observing the modelled behaviour. If they are distracted it will mean that they cannot learn efficiently that which they should learn.

The second step is retention, where learners need to try making use of multiple ways that suit them to enhance their learning, or what has been taught, through practical ways or behaviour and so on, in order to remember the features and characteristics of learning content before they can reproduce

it. Step three is reproduction, which means that learners must be able to implement the behaviour before they can say they have really learnt it. The final step is motivation, which must necessarily exist in an observer or learner before he can follow through on the preceding stages.

Several scholars have critiqued the theory. Pierce, & Cheney (2017), aver that while the theory effectively explains simple behaviours, it struggles to fully address the development of complex skills or behaviours that require more than mere observation, such as moral reasoning or problem-solving abilities. Cherry (2022) noted that the theory prioritizes observational learning, potentially downplaying other critical factors such as innate biological influences, cognitive development stages, or individual learning styles. However, this theory was found vital for this study since the research concerns itself with the nexus between teacher characteristics and reading readiness of multi-grade pre-primary school pupils whereby the four steps must come into play. Accordingly, the social environment which includes the teachers, the individual learner and his fellow pupils automatically plays a role, since a key plank of the theory is the importance of social variables in learning.

Furthermore, the theory was considered for use in the current study because it helps in identification of different aspects or factors amongst teachers influence and their effectiveness in teaching multi-grade preschool pupils. In addition, it also suggests that reading readiness, and therefore learning, is a confluence of factors, with pivots on the social superstructure in which both students and teachers cohere or fuse together. In addition, the theory was instrumental in enabling the understanding of different roles played by teachers in pre-primary school pupils' education.

Accordingly, the theory allowed for a holistic analysis of the education process, with the emphasis on influence of teachers' characteristics on learners. In short, multi-grade pupils must observe and

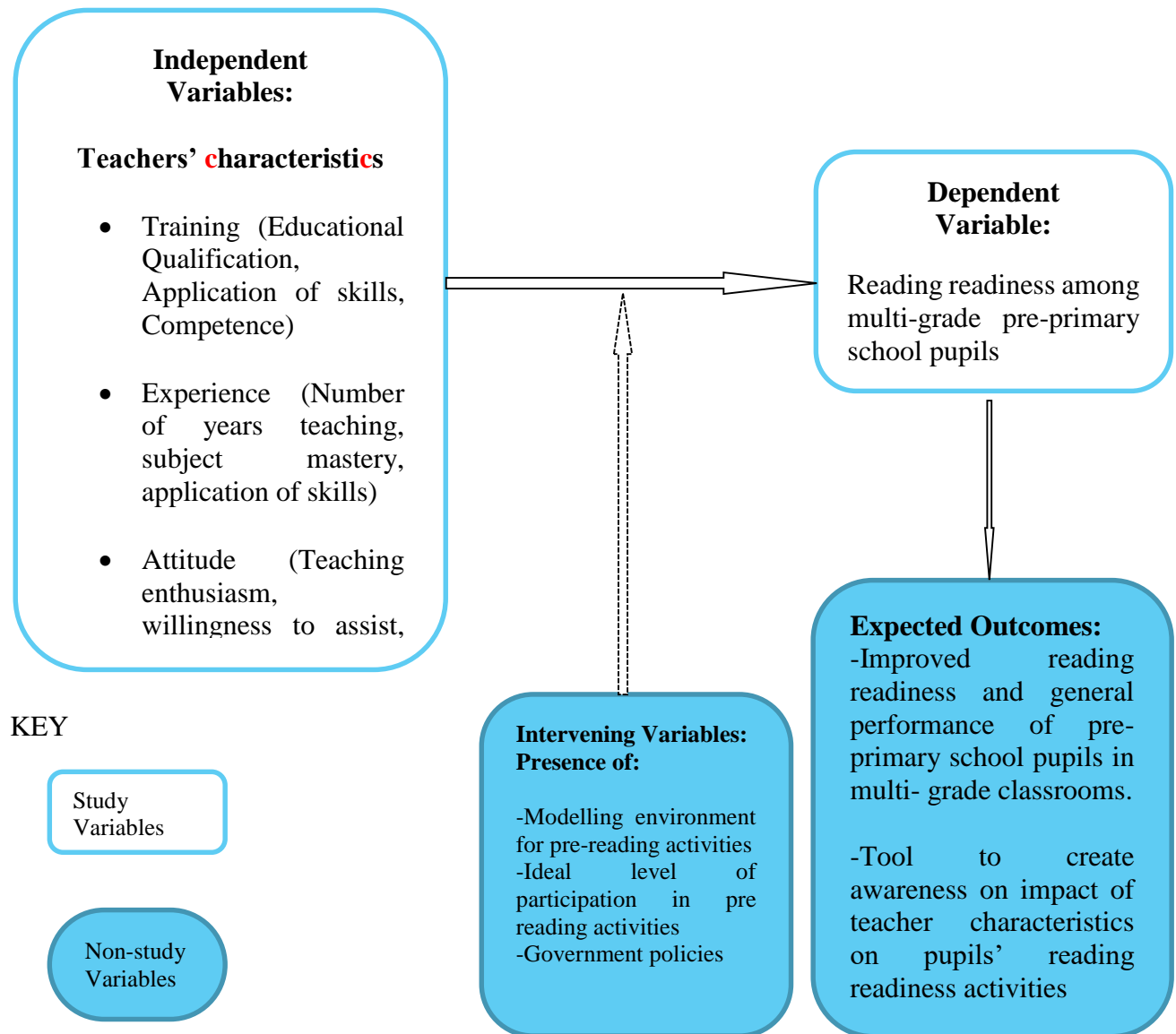
imitate their teachers, who in turn should have adequate training, work experience and a positive attitude. As the process unfolds, multi-grade pupils will, through observation and imitation, recall what they have been exposed to, reproduce it, and be motivated to keep learning, which dovetails perfectly with the social learning theory.

### 1.9.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework (Figure 1.1) diagrammatically represents the relationship between the independent variables (teacher characteristics) and the dependent variable (reading readiness).

**Figure 1:**

#### **Influence of Teacher Characteristics on Pre-Primary School Pupils’ Reading Readiness in Multi-Grade Classrooms**



Teachers’ training, job experience and attitude were the independent variables for the study while

reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school pupils were the dependent variables. The presence of the intervening variables; modelling environment for pre-reading activities, ideal level of participation in pre-reading activities and government policies in the study environment, could increase or decrease the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

However, to minimize their interference, the research objectives were structured in such a way that they targeted only influence of teachers' attributes on pre-primary school pupil's reading readiness.

## 1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

- Attitude:** A set of emotions, beliefs, and behaviours of sampled teachers towards multi-grade teaching/ learning.
- Experience:** Practical participation of preschool teachers in their work over the years.
- Multi-grade classrooms:** Several grades taught simultaneously in the same classroom by a single teacher in the sampled pre-primary schools.
- Pre-primary school:** Sampled educational institution also referred to as preschool that cares for early childhood learners.
- Preschool teacher:** Person facilitating care of learners in the sampled pre-schools.
- Reading performance:** Ability by learners in sampled pre-schools to comprehend written materials.
- Reading readiness:** Degree of preparedness of learners in sampled pre-schools for formal reading instruction
- Reading readiness activities:** Tasks to foster preparedness of learners in sampled preschool learners for formal reading instruction.
- Teacher characteristics:** Aspects including training, experience, and attitude that affect the performance of facilitators in the sampled pre-primary schools.
- Training:** Act of increasing knowledge and skills of pre-primary schoolteachers sampled.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Here, literature review on issues related to multi-grade teaching from global, continental, to local perspective is portrayed. It is arranged in sub-themes which include the concept of multi-grade teaching/ learning, teacher factors influencing multi-grade teaching/ learning and a summary of reviewed literature.

#### **2.2 The Concept of Multi-Grade Teaching / Learning**

Multi-grade proponents such as Khanal (2022) posit that multi-grade teaching does not observe normal age, grades, or abilities differentiation. Instead, instruction occur in the same classroom. This means that in a school, the teacher handles two or more curriculum grades. Akdas and Kalman (2021) aver that that all this contrasts with mono-grade teaching where teachers are responsible within a specified period for instruction of a mono set instructional guide.

Multi-grade teaching is practiced not only internationally but also regionally and locally. Multi-grade teaching has a long history in the world especially in the United States of America dating back to the 1800s, but it was not until after the industrial revolution that pedagogues started to think of teaching in terms of putting classrooms in grades. Many educators look at learning institutions organized around the concept of grades. However, multi-graded classroom is still in existence both in rural and urban set ups (Akdas & Kalman, 2021). Further, multi-graded classrooms played a crucial role in education in the 1970s and they are still a driving force in education in many learning institutions.

Regarding the efficacy of multi-grade teaching, Ashfaqardin (2018); Bacane (2021) established that learners in multi-grade classes academically perform as well as learners in mono-graded classrooms. It is however not clear under what situations pupils in multi-grade settings learn in one classroom to the extent of being able to perform as well as those in mono-graded classrooms, which prompted the need for the current study. It is also obscure how the teacher can attend to pupils from different ages and abilities in one classroom and therefore the study investigated the teacher factor. Moreover, studies by Uwezo (2018) revealed that over 90% of Ugandan school children, were unable to read in English, while over 80 % of Mainland Tanzanian children were same wise afflicted. Prior to that, Uwezo (2016) had similarly reported that in Kenya roughly 50% of pupils were unable to read at their class level in lower grade primary school. In addition, Ngure et al. (2019) in her study also shows that quite a good number of learners all over the world had difficulties with reading and their low performance in acquisition of the skill was of concern to educationists. It was therefore important to find out how curriculum implementation particularly for reading was carried out under a multi-grade environment.

### **2.3 Influence of Teachers' Characteristics on Pupils' Reading Readiness**

The ability to read is a significant step in a learner since it helps in the development of thinking skills such as imagination, creativity and most importantly, it is an important function in our world today to be able to communicate our thoughts as well as getting to understand other people's ideas. According to merriam-webster.com (2022) reading involves taking in the meaning of letters and symbols through sight or touch while Clarke (2014) in his study in UK, sees reading readiness as a developmental process composed of skills and factors, most of which can be taught and must be mastered by pupils early enough so that they can adequately handle upper classes as seen in 13% of high schoolers who could not do elementary reading. Teachers are crucial in preparing pupils

to read and hence there was need to find out how preschool teachers confront the problem before it got worse in later years. It was similarly unclear how their personal characteristics like job training, work experience and attitude could influence pre-school pupil's reading readiness. Hence there was need to find out how preschool teachers confronted the problem before it got worse in later years.

UNESCO (2023) noted great progress that has been made in literacy with the most recent statistics showing that more than 86% of world's population can read and write compared to 68% in 1979. Despite this advancement worldwide, at least 763 million adults still cannot read and write, while 250 million children are failing to acquire basic literacy skills. In Anglophone countries, a fifth of the children reach age 11 without learning to read, as Herbert et al. (2018) similarly affirmed. The literacy data was collected through population censuses or household surveys in which the respondent or head of household declared whether they could read and write with understanding a short, simple statement about one's life in any written language. Some surveys required respondents to take a quick test in which they were asked to read a simple passage or write a sentence. This suggests that the inability of children to read, let alone write in the greater population, is indeed alarming. Thus, this study sought to establish whether teachers' characteristics could be influencing reading readiness of pupils in pre-primary schools.

Alsaadat (2020)'s study on importance and significance of reading in children's educational lives, in Saudi Arabia, describes readiness to refer to the state of being able to obtain new learning at any given level. The study further refers to it as the basics skills that are required for any learning to take place. The study stresses that reading readiness is an important time that a child must pass before being able to read and cautions teachers and parents to be careful when a child is experiencing this stage, as they affect the child either positively or negatively, depending on the

methods and approaches they use at this stage. The researcher therefore stresses that they should give a good conceptual view about reading in the period of readiness. The present study sought to find out what tactics' teachers of multi-grade pupils in Kenya used to enhance reading readiness. Clayton, et. al. (2020) in their longitudinal study examined the predictive relationship between a range of key phonological language skills on early reading development in a sample of 191 children in their first year of school. The study also surveyed the theory that a failure to institute automatic associations between letters and speech sounds is a proximal cause risk factor to obstacles to learning to read. In their findings, it was established that automatic Letter-Sound association are established early but do not predict variation in reading development. In contrast Phoneme Awareness (PA), Letter-Sound Knowledge (LSK), and Alphanumeric Rapid Automatized Naming (ARAN) were all strong autonomous predictors of reading development. Additionally, both phoneme awareness and RAN displayed a reciprocal with reading, such that the growth of reading projected improvement in these skills. The above information with regard to reading is important, however, current study investigated teachers 'characteristics that influence reading readiness in multi-grade Pre-School classrooms.

Mahana et al (2019) conducted a study in Khurdha and Cuttack districts of Odisha, India, on reading problems of secondary school students in English language. The study involved 210 class IX<sup>th</sup> students, as well as 6 teachers and headmasters. The selection of schools was done by convenient and batch sampling for the first and second phase respectively. Mixed research method design and concurrent triangulation was used during the study. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected concurrently where classroom language interaction checklist, focused group discussions, questionnaire for students and field note diary tools were used in data collection. The study established that IX<sup>th</sup> class students were still at the beginner stage of reading development

stage. Most students were still at the stage of V<sup>th</sup> and VI<sup>th</sup> class even after reading English for 5 years. The study however was in foreign context and focused upon older learners in class IX<sup>th</sup>. Thus, there was need for the current study conducted in Kenya, and whose focal point was relationship between teachers' characteristics and pre-primary school pupil's reading readiness.

In a related study in Nigeria, Nkebe (2020) performed a thorough indictment of education, where over 40% school pupils in Ikom Education Zone, Cross River State were found unable to perform basic reading. The study however focused on "Emergent literacy instruction in acquisition of reading readiness skills among primary school pupils in Nigeria. The current one however, focused on relationship between teachers' characteristics and pre-primary school pupil's reading readiness in Kenya.

Notably, Ngure, et. al. (2019), study established that over 50% of class three pupil were below average in reading of letter and letter sound recognition in Nairobi County, Kenya. Sempele et al. (2018) opined that poor attitude on the part of the teacher was to blame for poor performance by pupils. Further, they argued that poor attitude, emanating from feelings of superiority creates a wedge between the teacher and the pupils, and thus hindering learning. Other times, the wrong attitude was fed by dissatisfaction in the workplace, where the teacher felt that they were underpaid. In that case, the teacher could develop wrong attitude in their work and hence poor performance. This therefore means these students will struggle in reading in upper classes. Waswa et al. (2019) opined that children who are ready for reading are less likely to experience behavioural and emotional problems and tend to score high in reading mathematics, and fine motor skills than those who are not ready. For this reason, the study sought to focus on three teacher factors mainly their level of training, work experience and attitudes towards teaching and learning of pupils in multi-grade classroom thereby providing up to date data.

### **2.3.1 Teachers' Training and Pupil's Reading Readiness**

According to Curran (2023), teacher training and professional development is a continuous never-ending process which promotes the skills required by teachers in the classroom to deliver the most effective and highest standards of teaching possible to their students. Conversely, the government of China as Herbert et. al. (2018) indicated, made provisions on job training of teachers, to propel them to higher heights and enhance multi-grade teaching. The study further reveals that, while teacher-school ratio was 4:2 in 2016, an improvement was registered with the introduction of the in-service training. However, it was not clear whether the effort significantly correlated with positive curriculum implementation outcomes, nor was it directed at improving reading in multi-grade classrooms. The current study specifically targeted teacher training to fill this gap on pre-primary school pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade classrooms.

Duong et al. (2019) conducted a related study on influence of teacher training on student behaviour and student-teacher relationships in public middle schools in United States of America using a sample size of 20 teachers and 190 students. Learners academically engaged time as well as disruptive behaviour, and quality of relationship between them and their teachers were investigated upon. However, although results indicate that there were notable improvements in student-teacher relationships, academically engaged time and disruptive behaviour, more research was needed to test the impact of teacher training on student achievement. The findings in this study were therefore inconclusive with regard to influence of teacher training on student's academic performance in public middle schools. Moreover, the study was in foreign context and neither on learners' reading readiness in multi-grade schools. Thus, the current study purposed to confine its investigations on influence of teacher training on pupil's reading readiness in multi-grade schools in Kenya.

In a related study in Saudi Arabia, Alfai, and Elhassan (2020), on exploring the role of In-Service training in teachers' development, it was noted that the diversity and the continuity of these programs were crucial as well as the educational and personal needs of teachers. The study employed a descriptive analytical method, and data was collected using questionnaires. Five hundred teachers from public government schools in Saudi Arabia were involved in the study. Data was analysed using the statistical packages for social sciences (SPSS) programme using percentage and mean. The findings revealed that most of the In-Service training programs focused on a single side of teachers' development related to the teacher's specialization of profession. Furthermore, the study also uncovered that these programs did not contribute the teachers' personal and educational needs. The study suggested that in-service training programs should take into consideration the teachers personal and educational needs to make the programs effective and should be diverse and continuing. The study was not in Kenyan context and focused on the role In-service training of teachers in Secondary schools in Saudi Arabia. The current study however, focused on the triple sub variables of teacher training, experience, and attitude, and how they relate with pupil reading readiness.

Trude et al. (2020), investigated the aspects of teacher quality and their instruction that may reduce the relationship between socio economic status and students' achievement in the Nordic countries where eighth grade students from Norway and Sweden were selected. They employed multi-group, multi-level (students and classes) structural equation models with random slopes to investigate which aspects of teacher quality moderate the relation between socio-economic status and students' science achievement via instructional quality. The findings showed that teacher professional development and specialization, reduce the relation between socio-economic status and science achievement via instructional quality in Sweden, while there were no significant

findings in Norway. The above study stresses that teachers may make a difference in reducing inequity through their competency and instruction which can be achieved through professional development. Furthermore, it focused on teachers' role in reducing equity, while the current study investigated teachers' characteristics that influence reading readiness in multi-grade classrooms.

Tantawy (2020) in a study in the United Arab Emirates investigated influence of teachers' professional development on their performance and career progression. The participants in the study were three teachers in schools: a female middle school one, a high school male and lastly, an elementary (early years) school male teacher. Data analysed indicated that all of them concurred that professional development helped in raising the level of the teachers' performance, content knowledge, awareness of current classroom strategies, as well as teaching methodologies, classroom management skills, and student's outcomes. Additionally, Tantawy argued that the teacher characteristic of training is the essential ingredient in pupils reading readiness and all other variables pivot on it. Consequently, he recommended training, and then retraining once a year, which is a major prong in the present study.

To further accentuate this, Maebana et al. (2023), in their study on teacher experiences of in-Service training programmes on curriculum differentiation and modification in inclusive primary schools of Capricorn District, Limpopo province, South Africa, indicated that teachers felt inadequately trained to implement various strategies that may accommodate learners with diverse needs in their classrooms with school managers not providing feedback to their teachers after attending In-Service training due to time limitation. The study posited that In-Service programme on teacher's empowerment on curriculum differentiation and modification was ineffective, and therefore better strategies should be put in place to equip teachers in that field. Another study by Herbert (2018) in Ghana suggested that there is need for developing countries such as Kenya to

improve on the teachers training to enhance the quality of education not only in pre-primary but in the entire education sector, which motivated the researcher to conduct the present study.

Fiaki (2017) examined the impact of in-service training on the students in Grade 8 in Congo, and discovered, that in-service training lifted reading performance of students in Grade 8. Although the study showed a significant relationship between teacher training and French reading performance of learners, it focused on the general teacher training on multi-grade classroom teaching. In addition, the study targeted older primary school pupils in grade 8 as opposed to the current study that targeted children in pre-primary school.

The importance of training as the Vision 2030 document which anchors Kenya's development cannot be gainsaid. The document underscores the value of education by encouraging adequate training and retraining of teachers and instructors. This is because the framers of the Vision 2030 saw quality education, which can only come about through trained tutors and teachers, as providing the foundation for the other pillars (<https://vision2030.go.ke/> 2010). Waweru (2018: 7) posits that training "is the process of cultivating in oneself or others, skills or knowledge or fitness that relates to specific useful competencies". In his study carried out in Nyandarua North Sub-County, Kenya, Waweru further indicated that the teachers sampled were not prepared in implementation of the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC). He therefore suggested that Ministry of Education should prioritise holistic training in all aspects of teaching so that teachers can enter the classroom ready to handle the pupils competently. Waweru's study, although helpful, did not cover teacher experience and teacher attitude sub variables, that this present study has focussed on. Moreover, his study did not focus on multi-grade classrooms, unlike the present study, and additionally, it was in a different geographical context. Training readies teachers and without it, they stand unarmed, or helpless in imparting knowledge. Evidently, training is the indispensable as well as

essential component of effective teachers.

Shawer (2017) however, disagrees with Waweru's sentiments and posits that teacher training though important, does not always result in a better quality of education. This is an indication that despite teacher training being a critical factor in influencing curriculum implementation in multi-grade learning classrooms, it does not solve all the classroom problems. Still, in-service training is paramount in upscaling the performances of unqualified teachers. Ngure et al. (2019) however, warns that too much training can drive teachers to succumb to rote, where pupils are reduced to automatons, endlessly repeating concepts they don't understand. The studies reviewed in this section are however inconclusive since they portray two opposite sides of the coin. Thus, there was need to conduct the present study to come up with conclusive findings and more relevant information regarding influence of teacher training on pre-primary school pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade classrooms.

### **2.3.2 Teachers' Experience and Pupil's Reading Readiness**

Generally, experience is the skill and expertise one gets from doing an activity for a lengthy period. All things remaining constant, it is safe to assume that, as teacher's skill increases the more experience they garner (Waweru, 2018). However, some scholars break away from that conclusion. For instance, Irvine's (2019) relooking of teacher experience vis a vis education policy in Canada points out the multi-faceted nature of the imperatives for teacher effectiveness. On the other hand, Berger et. al. (2018) attempted to link experience and upscale of skills in Germany, as did Klassen and Chiu (2010) in USA. The trio celebrate job experience as a key factor to teacher effectiveness.

To further accentuate the global perspective, a study by Bacane (2020) showed that teachers experience rapid productivity improvement early in their career is likely attributable to quick gains in experience. Bacane further found that experience is the integral part in teacher efficaciousness in terms of handling students in the right way. However, the study was in foreign context and most importantly, did not address the other sub variables of teachers' training and attitude. The present study filled this gap by examining the relationship between teacher characteristics of training, experience as well as attitude, and pupils' reading readiness.

In an associated study in South Africa, Adewumi and Mosito (2019) indicated that challenges were rife in implementing strategic frame works that behoved learners. The bottlenecks included, but were not limited to lack of parental participation, heavy workload, inadequate training for teachers, multi-grade challenges, and lack of resources. Further, Alonge (2020) reviewed teachers' teaching experience and educational qualification as correlates of academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Ekiti State, Nigeria. The study concluded that despite low levels of teaching experience, the teachers were able to exhibit sophisticated instructional practices. The fact that some elements of good teaching practices were traced back to the teachers implies that teaching experience was not necessarily an ingredient for individuals to perform well in their work. The above study however broadly focused on effective teaching while the current study delved into factors that influence pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms.

Machira (2017) studied the determinants of pre -primary children's reading readiness in Mathira, Nyeri County and posits that experienced teachers are better placed to facilitate pre reading skills because they have gained the skill over the years and how they utilize it to new learning. On the other hand, Jumba (2019) in Kenya revealed that attitude, teaching experience, gender and training greatly influenced a teacher's level of job satisfaction. Jumba (2019 however, centred on job

satisfaction while the present study focussed on preschool pupil's reading readiness in multi-grade classrooms and teacher factors influencing it. Imonje and Wandera (2019) also in Kenya conducted a study on the Influence of teaching experience on pupils' performance at Kenya Certificate of Primary Examination in the subject, English. They discovered that the pedagogy adopted by teachers pivoted on the social environment and that the sub variables under study played a key role in the orientation pursued by the teacher. However, their study was not in a multi-grade environment, thus the proposed study aimed at filling this gap. Harkening back to the social learning theory of Skinner, Imonje and Wandera posited that experience was a moving target, and one can never really have enough, which therefore motivated the researcher to investigate the subject.

Mageka and Ogochi (2020) analysed the influence of teacher experience on school academic performance in Kenya certificate of secondary education (KCSE) in Kisii central sub-county, Kenya. The study concluded that teaching experience truly marks out the efficacious teacher, with flexibility being the intervening variable. That is, however, experienced a teacher was, they always had to be flexible in dealing with extraneous issues in the classroom. However, the act is, that if the teachers are inexperienced, it hampers their delivery and evaluation. During the current study, efforts were made to find out how teachers' experience influenced their learners' reading readiness in multi-grade classrooms.

### **2.3.3 Teachers' Attitude and Pupil's Reading Readiness**

The Merriam-Webster (2023) online dictionary defines attitude as a feeling or mental position regarding, or toward a fact or state. It is also the belief that one has towards people and surroundings. In the context of the present study, it may thus be conceptualized as the belief pre-

primary schoolteachers hold, towards implementation and acquisition of reading readiness skills by pre-primary school pupils in multi-grade classrooms which may be positive or negative.

A study by Mahmood (2017) in Iraq indicated that, instructors who chose to teach in a multi-grade setting did so because of the benefits it conferred to them. These teachers felt more satisfied, more human, and more alive when they taught in such settings. They felt they were better as teachers and dispensed more with the gift of teaching in them. The study, however focused on the benefits of multi-grade teaching to teachers. The present study however centred on teacher characteristics, attitude being among them.

In a related study in USA, Falode (2018) enunciated that instructors most serene and settled in their jobs were also likely to have positive attitude towards their instructional organization. Falode, however, did not focus on multi-grade pupils, unlike the present study. Tang and Hu (2022) evaluated the impact of teacher attitude and teaching approaches on student demotivation in China and discovered that attitude was a major pivot in motivating school children to study. Teachers who approached their jobs with antipathy and trepidation, having already concluded the job was hard and onerous, will quite simply demotivate the children. However, the study was conducted in China, where the form of education is different from that of Kenya in that education is compulsory for children from the age of five to 16. Most children In Kenya begin their education at age four.

Ismail (2022) studied the effect of teachers' attitude on the academic performance of senior secondary school students' in Ringim education zone, Jigawa state, Nigeria. He concluded that the attitude of the teacher towards his students and the subject he teaches is crucial in the academic performance of the learners. Weveti (2017) in an associated study in Kenya, investigated Influence of teacher's characteristics on pre-school children performance in visual discrimination of words in English in Karuri Zone, Embu County, Kenya. She observes that preschool children improve

their performance in class when teachers adopt a positive attitude. Weveti stresses that a positive attitude has the innate effect of motivating teachers to use the most effective skills and resources during a lesson. She posits that pre-school learners exposed to teachers with positive work attitude improves their learning readiness because they get the most from their learning experiences. This study centred on public pre-school learners while the current study focused on multi-grade preschool learners in low-cost private schools.

In Kenya, Sempele et. al. (2018) conducted a study on teacher trainees' attitude towards objectives of home science education and revealed that their attitude towards home science education significantly contributed towards achievement of course objectives. The study however was conducted in primary teacher training colleges (PTTCs) and primary schools while the proposed one targeted preschool.

## **2.4 Summary of Reviewed Literature**

The study investigated how teachers' characteristics; training, experience, and attitude affect pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools, focusing on a local context. While prior research highlights the importance of ongoing teacher training for effective teaching, it often lacks clarity and focuses on foreign settings or older students. Besides teacher training, this study provided clearer, locally relevant insights by examining teacher experience with young learners and attitudes toward preschoolers' reading readiness, addressing gaps in previous studies that targeted older students or broader educational levels.

## CHAPTER THREE

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

This section entails research design, study locale, sampling techniques and sample size. It also covers and highlights the data collection instruments, piloting, validity and reliability of the instruments, and data analysis procedures. The ethical considerations are also highlighted herein.

#### 3.2 Research Design

The correlational research design was used in the present study because it has most utility in studies that are explorative, correlational, and cross sectional in nature as Saunders et. al. (2019) affirms. It can further be used to determine and report the way things are, without manipulating the variables (Kapaya, 2017). A descriptive survey design, employing structured questionnaires or interviews, was selected for this study (Cohen et al., 2018). This method promotes objectivity by reducing subjective bias in data interpretation. Additionally, this design enables the systematic examination and comparison of strategic management practices and their performance outcomes across different banks. Furthermore, this design allows for the identification of current trends, patterns, and correlations within the data, making it well-suited for the research objectives.

##### 3.2.1 Variables of the Study

The study examined both independent and dependent variables.

**Independent variables:** these were teacher characteristics namely, training, teaching.

experience and attitude which could influence pre-primary pupil's reading readiness in multi-grade preschool classrooms.

i) Teacher training was measured by administering to participating teachers, questions that related

to teacher training, categorized using a scale of 1 to 4, where strongly agree (SA) = 1, agree (A) = 2, disagree (D) = 3 and strongly disagree (SD) 4.

ii) Teacher's experience was determined by obtaining information on how long they had been working in schools and were categorized as follows: below 1 year; 1-5; 6-10; and 11-15 years.

iii) Teacher's attitude was measured by obtaining information on their opinions on multi-grade teaching and were rated on a scale of 1-4 as follows; strongly agree (SA) = 1, agree (A) = 2, disagree (D) = 3, and strongly disagree (SD) = 4.

Similarly, observations were made by the researcher on the above teacher factors' influence on pre-primary school pupil's reading readiness using a 1 – 3-point rating scale where always = 1, sometimes =2, never = 3,

**Dependent variable:** this involved children's reading readiness in multi-grade preschool classrooms in terms of activities like recognizing letter sounds, words, book and print awareness and ability to answer simple questions on reading.

### **3.2.2 Research Methodology**

Mixed methods approach was utilised to help in explaining quantitative and qualitative aspects of information as Saunders et. al. (2019) advice.

### **3.3 Study Location**

The study was conducted in Kasarani Sub- County of Nairobi City County, Kenya. The county was purposively chosen because of it being reported to have had dismal performance in reading (Ngure *et. al.*,2019), as well as nationally as per Uwezo (2018) report, while Kasarani sub county was randomly selected. Kasarani sub-county was selected using nonprobability sampling because it is a high-density area which has a mix of urban and peri-urban populations, with many families

relying on low-cost private schools due to accessibility or affordability issues. Also, the sub county represents a microcosm of the challenges faced by low-cost schools, including high pupil-to-teacher ratios and limited instructional materials. Also, from literature search, it appeared that no study of this calibre and scope had been conducted in Kasarani sub county before.

### **3.4 Target population**

The population for this study comprised 350 private low-cost multi-grade pre-primary schools, their head teachers as well as an equal number of teachers in the sampled pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county of Nairobi City County, Kenya.

### **3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size**

The techniques of sampling and the study's sample size are delineated below.

#### **3.5.1 Sampling Techniques**

The study employed purposive sampling to select Nairobi City County as the research area (refer to Section 3.3 for justification). Kasarani Sub- County was selected from the 17 sub-counties within Nairobi City County. The study population included all low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary schools, their head teachers, and multi-grade teachers in the selected sub-county. To determine the sample size, each sub-county, preschool classroom, head teacher, and teacher was assigned a unique identifier within their respective categories. Subsequently, 15% of each category was selected using a rotary method, with participants chosen randomly while blindfolded to eliminate any potential bias in the selection process.

#### **3.5.2 Sample Size**

Section 3.5.2 describes the study's sample size and illustrated on Table 1 comprising private multi-grade pre-primary schools, their head teachers, and pre-primary schoolteachers.

**Table 1**

**Sampling Frame**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Target population</b>	<b>Sample size (15%)</b>
Schools	350	50
Head teachers	350	50
Pre-primary schoolteachers	350	50

As shown in Table 1, the study's sample size comprised 50 (15%) low-cost private pre-primary schools/ head teachers out of the targeted group of 350 and 50 (15%) of the 350 low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary schoolteachers (one per school). According to Mugenda (2008); Cohen et. al. (2018) a sample size of 10 – 30% of total target population is adequate in social science studies where mixed methods approaches are used. Furthermore, Saunders, et. al. (2019) assert that simple random sampling method gives equal chance for all the participants to be selected.

**3.6 Research Instruments**

Questionnaires, interview schedule, and observation were used as instruments for data collection in the study.

**3.6.1 Questionnaires for Pre-Primary Schoolteachers**

The questionnaires were used to gather data from pre-primary schoolteachers in the low-cost private multi-grade schools. The instrument was deemed appropriate for use because it gave the teacher respondent's malleability to dispense with what they real feel, and moving forward, to enunciate what they felt was best, even as Kapaya (2017) asserts. The questionnaires consisted of two parts; part 1 had three items on bio data of teachers. Part 2 had section 1 with questions that

explored information on influence of teacher training on preschool pupils' reading readiness. Section 2 contained information on influence of teacher experiences on preschool pupils' reading readiness and section 3 contained information on influence of teacher attitude on preschool pupils' reading readiness.

### **3.6.2 Interview Schedule for Head Teachers**

In addition, an interview schedule was used with head teachers where the researcher interacted with the respondents for about 30 minutes or so to get more information which was likely to enrich the study as Kapaya (2017) notes. The interview guide for the head teacher consisted of 8 questions on influence of teacher characteristics on preschool pupils' reading readiness.

### **3.6.3 Observation Schedule**

Observations were made by the researcher using a 1 – 3-point rating scale where always = 1, sometimes =2, never = 3, during reading lessons to establish whether teachers' characteristics influenced pre-school pupil's reading readiness skills in multi-grade classrooms and during a 30-minute lesson per school.

### **3.7 Pilot Testing**

Preliminary testing through a pilot study was carried out so that the researcher could iron out various inconsistencies existing in the questionnaire items. Such inconsistencies could include time needed to answer questions, whether the questions were clear enough, concerns about confidentiality, and other such feedback. The research instruments were administered to 5 respondents from 5 schools to receive adequate feedback as to their suitability. The pilot participants did not participate in the final study.

### **3.7.1 Validity**

Content validity of the questionnaire items and the interview schedules used in the study, was ensured through strictly linking them to the research objectives as Harris (2020) advises. Experts' advice of supervisors was also incorporated to ensure that information gathered was well grounded.

### **3.7.2 Reliability**

To ensure that the questionnaires items and the interview schedules yielded consistent results, the split half reliability technique at 0.7 coefficient was employed whereby the items were split by categorising them into odd and even numbers (Cohen et. al. 2018). The internal consistency test was obtained by comparing the results of one half of the test with the results from the other half. Since the two provided similar results, then the test was deemed to be reliable as (Harris 2020) advice.

## **3.8 Data Collection Techniques**

To begin with, observations were conducted to find out whether teachers' characteristics influence pre-school pupil's reading readiness skills in multi-grade classrooms. Thereafter, face to face interviews were administered by the researcher on headteachers at a pre-arranged period or their convenient time. Questionnaires for teachers were then distributed for them to fill in, and any necessary clarifications given. The questionnaires were then collected after one week.

## **3.9 Data Analysis**

Data analysis process involved mixed method approaches. Qualitative data was thus analysed using NVivo software. Specifically, the researcher used this software to identify common terms and phrases, search for specific keywords or phrases across all data, and to examine patterns by

analysing data coded at specific nodes. In this way, the study was able to identify patterns, themes, and insights. For quantitative data, descriptive statistics in form of frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to summarize information. The results from the data analysis were presented in tables, bar graphs and pie charts. For inferential data, Pearson's Product moment correlation statistical test was used to determine the relationship between the independent and dependent variables at 95% level of significance using SPSS version 25, for the null hypotheses (HO1 – HO3) that state, "There is no significant relationship between teachers' training, their work experience as well as attitude respectively, and pupils' reading readiness.

### **3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations**

The protocols that were observed during the study are hereby described.

#### **3.10.1 Logistical Considerations**

Clearance was first sought from Graduate School of Kenyatta University to be eligible to go out for data collection. After this was granted, permission to collect data was sought from the National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovations (NACOSTI). Finally, permission to access the pre-primary schools was sought from the Nairobi City County Director of Education and from the head teachers at the selected schools. The researcher also liaised with the school heads on best time to garner information from them.

#### **3.10.2 Ethical Considerations**

The researcher ensured that every research participant has a right to privacy. Respondents were therefore asked to fill the questionnaires anonymously. They were also assured that their data would be treated confidentially. The researcher similarly explained to the head teachers and preschool teachers the purpose and method of data collection to enable them to make the decision

to participate voluntarily. The participants were also allowed to sign the informed consent form before data collection.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

The study examined the relationship between teachers' characteristics and pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade preprimary school classrooms in Nairobi city county, Kenya. Data was collected using questionnaires, interviews, and observation schedules. Qualitative data were analyzed thematically and involved explaining information on characteristics of teachers and their relationship with pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools. Quantitative analysis included use of descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, and graphs while inferential statistics involved use of Pearson's Product moment correlation to test HO1 – HO3 to determine if there existed any significant relationships between teachers' characteristics (training, work experience, attitudes) and pre-primary school pupils' reading readiness at 0.05 significant level. The specific objectives that guided the study were as follows.

- i. To examine whether teacher training influences pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi City County.
- ii. To determine whether teachers' experience influences pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi City County.
- iii. To assess whether teachers' attitude influences pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi City County.

The statistical/ null hypotheses tested were.

HO1 There is no relationship between teacher training and preschool pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County.

HO2 There is no relationship between teachers' experience and pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County.

HO3 There is no relationship between teachers' attitude and pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County.

First and foremost, results pertaining to the participating teachers are based on the number of responses received back, and the demographic information (gender, age, education level) are presented in the following section.

## **4.2 Demographic Information**

The demographic information consisted of the age, gender, and education level of respondents. This section shall analyse the response rate, then analyse the other sub variables that make up the demographic information.

### **4.2.1 Response Rate**

This section presents the response rate of head teachers and pre-primary schoolteachers as Table 2 shows.

**Table 2**

**Response Rate of Headteachers and Pre-Primary School Teachers**

Category	Sample size	Response Rate	Percentage %
Schools	50	50	100
Headteachers	50	50	100
Pre-primary schoolteachers	50	50	100

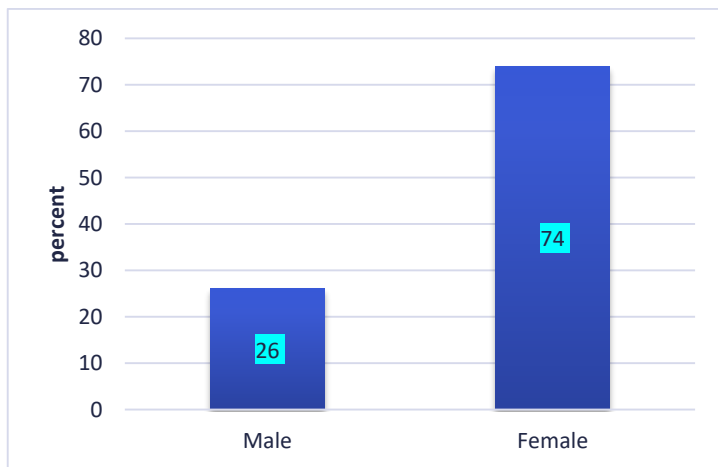
As shown on Table 2, the participating teachers who filled in questionnaires in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county as well as the head teachers interviewed indicate a 100 % response rate. Success can be attributed to the researchers’ diligence in strictly taking care of technical logistics during the study.

**4.2.2 Gender of Participating Teachers**

The sub-variable under study, as Figure 2 shows, concerns the gender of the participating teachers.

**Figure 2**

**Percentile Distribution of Teachers by Gender**



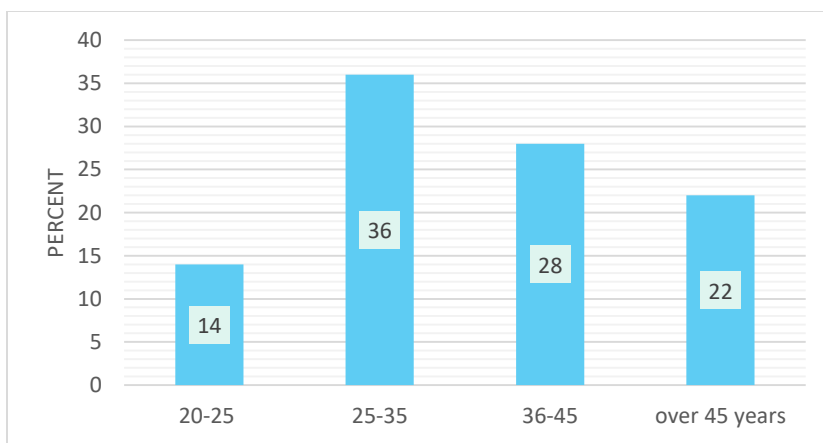
With respect to the gender of the teacher respondents, 37 (74%) were women, while 13 (26%) were men. This is in harmony with Alyaha and Mbogo (2017) who reveal that there were more female teachers in their study (85.3%) compared to (14.7%) males. Indeed, Alyaha’s and Mbogo’s sentiments that men might be apprehensive about teaching as a career could be true. Gatuura (2016) in her study in Tharaka South Sub- County, Kenya posts similar results in her study, with 80% of the participants being female. She also decried that teaching has been viewed as a job for females and not males even though the situation is slowly changing. Regarding the head teachers in the current study, they were evenly split, with both male and female administrators registering 25 (50%) of the total group of participants which was contrary to reviewed studies by Gatuura (2016); Alyaha and Mbogo (2017 that majorly showed number of female respondents being higher than that of males.

#### 4.2.3 Age of Participating Teachers

The age range of teacher respondents are tabulated in Figure 3 and encompasses four different age brackets.

**Figure 3**

**Percentile Distribution of Teachers by Age**



Turning to age of the respondents, 18 responders, or 36% of them, were in the 25–35 age range. They were followed by the 36-45 age group, which included 14 members (28%), 11 respondents (22%) who were 46 years or older, and 7 (14%) who were under 25. Jumba (2019) shows that (over 75%) of teachers in her study were between 18 to 35 years and almost in line with 26-35 in the current study, an age bracket that Jumba considered as youth and energetic. Teaching in multi-grade classrooms as revealed, is a difficult task and may explain why there were more youthful teachers who are able to cope with its demands. At the same time, it can be concluded that majority of the participating teachers (64%) were also mature enough to handle learning in the sampled private low-cost multi-grade pre-primary schools.

### **4.3 Relationship Between Teachers’ Training and Pupils’ Reading Readiness**

Objective one of the study sought to analyze the relationship between teacher training and preschool pupils’ reading readiness in private low-cost multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County, Kenya. This involved finding out teachers’ qualifications as well as whether they attended refresher courses to boost their teaching expertise, and the following were the results.

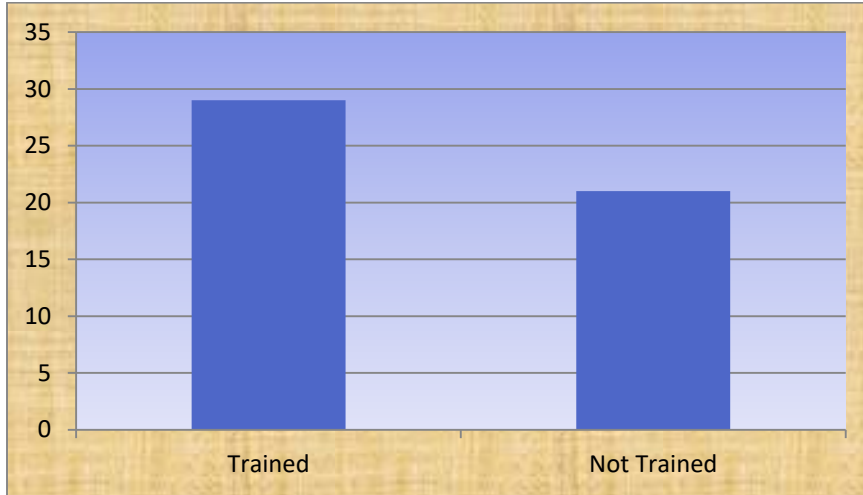
#### **4.3.1 Whether the Preschool Teachers Were Trained**

The study sought to explore whether or not preschool teachers were trained to undertake teaching in early childhood classrooms, and also their professional level of training. The results are shown in figure 2.

Out of the 50 teachers sampled 29 were trained and 21 were not as Figure 4 indicates.

**Figure 4**

**Status of Training**



As per the data above, more than half, represented by 29 (58%) of the respondents, either agreed, or disagreed that they had a certificate, or a diploma, in early childhood education. This indicates that they were trained. This ties with the data from the head teacher’s interviews. During the interview schedule 30 head teachers said that their multi- grade teachers in their schools had a certificate or a diploma in ECD, while 20 had Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education certificate, indicating they were not trained. One head teacher averred:

*“My school strictly hires qualified and well-trained personnel, because only then can*

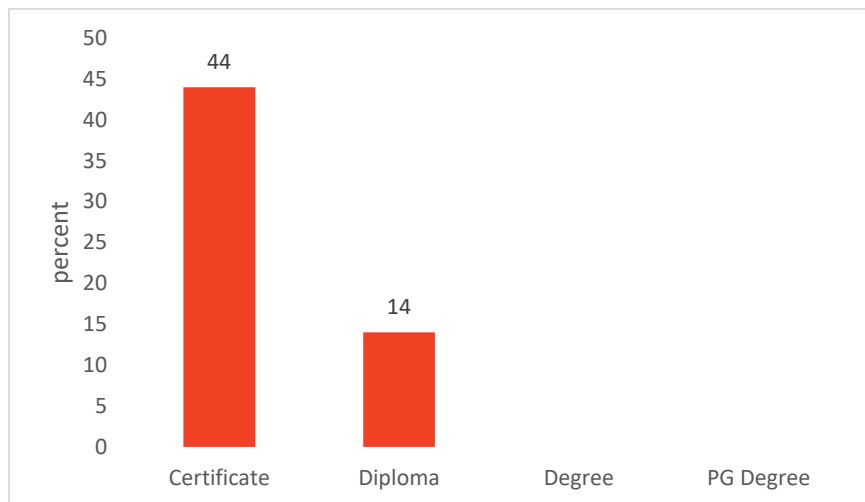
*We are sure that they will deliver on the key performance indicators ”.*

The study further sought to know, the teachers’ professional levels by training

As figure 5 indicates.

**Figure 5**

**Distribution of Teacher Participants by Professional Qualification**



In terms of professional training, 7 (14%) teacher respondents were holders of a diploma certification, and therefore, could respond to the questionnaire items appropriately while 22 (44%) respondents had a certificate of professional qualification. This shows that from the teachers sampled, the majority had basic certificates, meaning that they were assistants. According to the National Pre-primary Education Policy Standard Guidelines by Republic of Kenya (RoK) of 2018, and by extension, Ministry of Education, a pre-school teacher should possess a minimum qualification of Diploma in Early Childhood Education from a recognized institution, while the assistant teacher should have a minimum professional qualification of a certificate in ECDE/ECE. Thus, in order to be of good service, they need to upgrade to the next level.

Regarding training levels, most of respondents reported having a certificate or diploma as their highest academic qualification, indicating that most view training as essential for effective teaching. This corroborates Tantaway's (2020) findings that teacher training is key for preparing

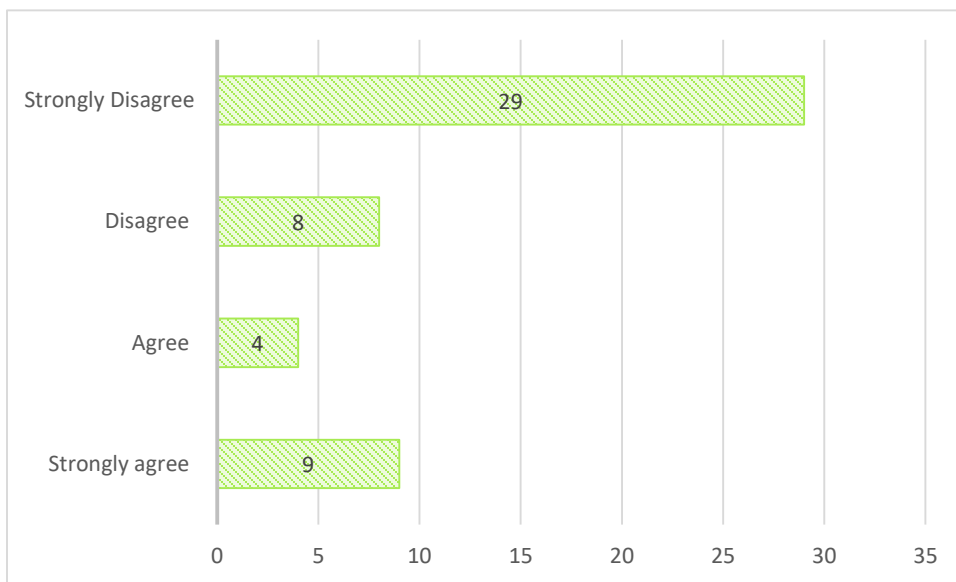
pupils for reading readiness, but breaks with Shawer (2017), who warned against viewing training as a panacea to all the classroom challenges.

### 4.3.2 Whether Teachers Attended Refresher Courses

The study also sought to establish whether teachers attended refresher courses, and the responses are presented in figure 6 below.

**Figure 6**

**Distribution of Teachers' Attendance for Refresher Courses Termly**



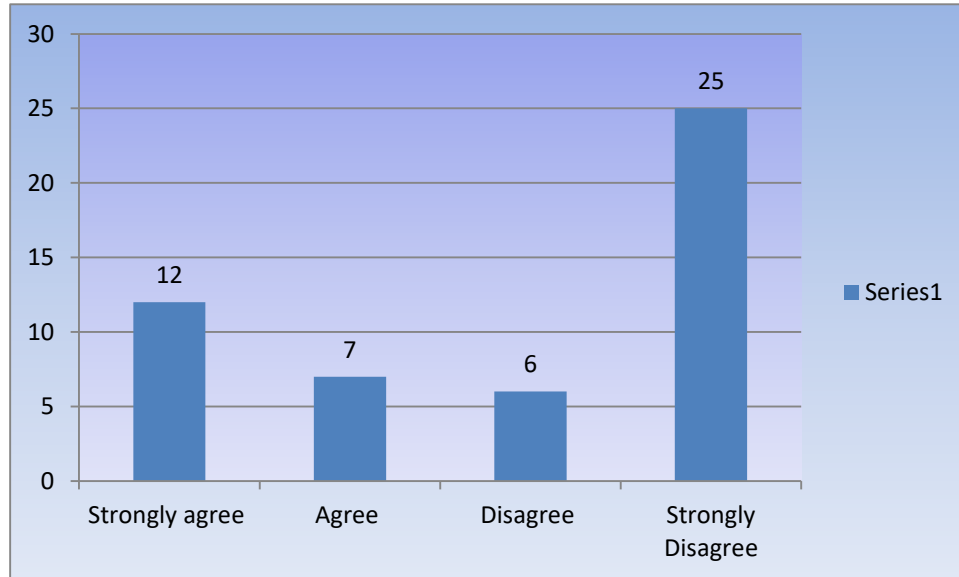
In response to the statement, 'I go for a refresher course once a term', the findings show that most of the respondents (74%) of the respondents indicated that they do not attend refresher courses once a term. This dearth of training is in line with Herbert's (2022) conclusions, where he decried the lack of adequate training for teachers in third world countries such as Kenya. Refresher courses are pivotal for teachers to keep in touch with updated or current information on teaching in multi-grade pre-primary schools, a trend that causes concern and may need further interrogation.

### 4.3.3 Exposure of Teachers to Other Teaching Scenarios Through Benchmarking

Additionally, the study sought to determine whether the schools in Kasarani sub-county organized benchmarking opportunities for teachers, and the results are presented in figure 7 below.

**Figure 7**

**Benchmarking Opportunities to Expose Teachers to Other Teaching Scenarios**



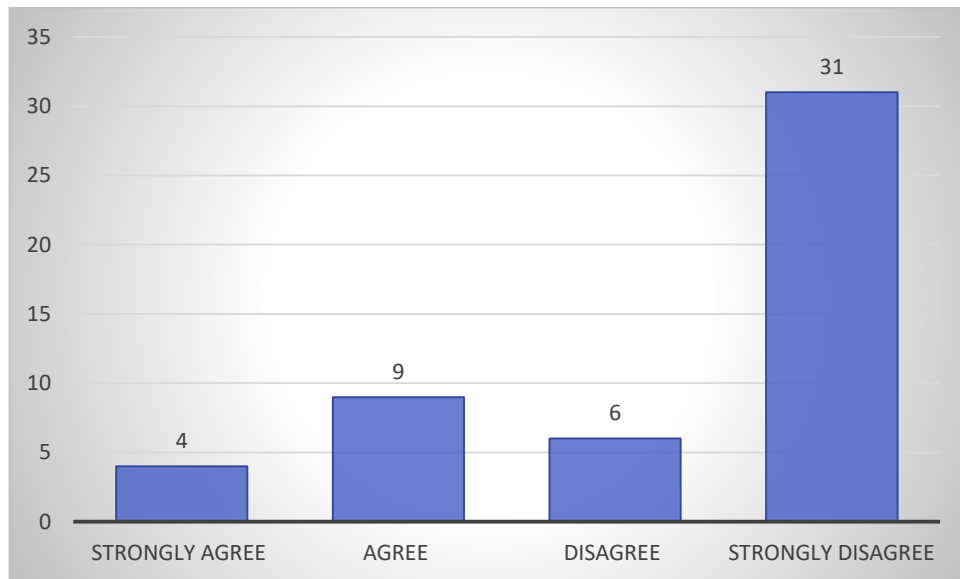
In terms of this question, the findings indicate that most of the teacher respondents (62 %) do not attend benchmarking to get exposure to other teaching scenarios. Benchmarking is crucial in terms of exploring other dimensions of teaching and offering opportunities to engage with other professionals about areas of common interests. Furthermore, Duong et al (2019) reveals that teacher training was important on improving student behaviour and learners' academically engaged time or involvement. Although training has been cited as crucial in student outcomes, sadly, Kunje (2022) reported from his Malawi study, there is a lack of support by head teachers on teacher professional development initiatives. Thus, school heads need to support not only teacher development programs which provide benchmarking opportunities to get exposure as they interact with other colleagues.

#### 4.3.4 Whether Teachers were Adequately Trained to Enhance Reading

The study also found out from teachers whether they felt adequately trained to enhance pupil's reading readiness, and the results are shown on figure 8 based on 4-point Likert type responses; strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree.

**Figure 8**

#### **If Teachers Felt Adequately Trained to Enhance Reading Readiness**



The bar graph indicates that the majority (74%) of the respondents were of the view that they are not adequately trained to enhance reading readiness in multi-grade pupils. This speaks to the inadequacies in the teaching faculty of Kasarani sub-county multi-grade schools. These findings mirror Waweru's (2018) study in Nyandarua, which established that teachers there were not adequately trained to handle certain aspects of the new CBC curriculum.

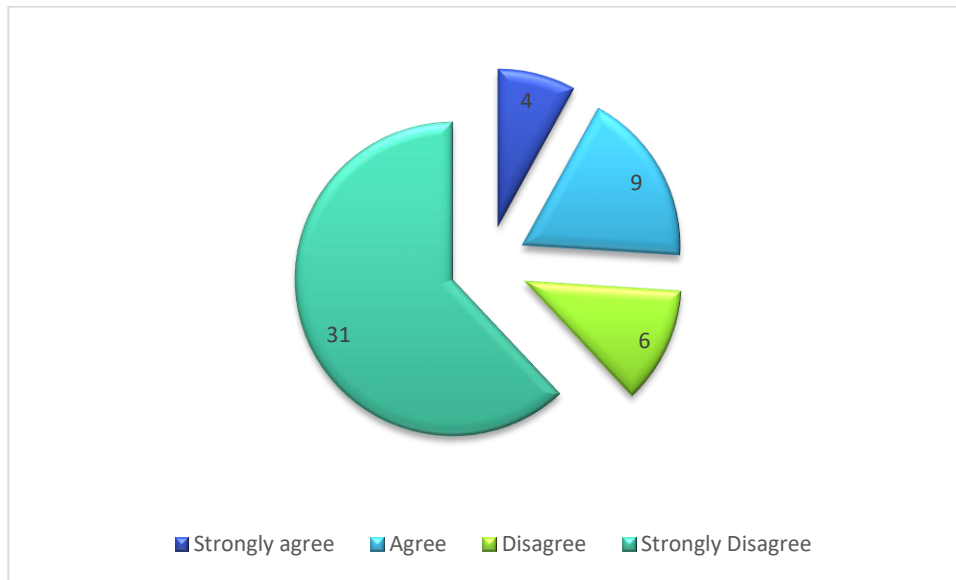
The study also observed teachers while preparing learners to read. The study showed that 92% always or sometimes exhibited knowledge consistently using varied techniques to enhance reading lessons, 8% always or sometimes used variety of learning resources to enhance reading in the classroom.

### 4.3.5 Whether the School and the Government Supported In-Servicing of Teachers

The study also sought to investigate whether the school and the government does its best to support the in-servicing of teachers to be effective in their work, and the results are presented in Figure 9.

**Figure 9**

**Teachers' Views Whether the School and Government Effectively Supported In-Service Training**



The data results show that the majority 74% of the respondents were of the view that neither the school nor the government were doing their best to support multi-grade teachers to be effective in their work. During the interview schedule, all the 50 head teachers were of the view that the government gave little or no support-to-support teachers in multi-grade settings. One head teacher said.

*“The government does not offer any training to multi-grade teachers. It is up to the individual schools to ensure their own teachers are trained. And this does not always happen, because our resources are limited”.*

The findings corroborate with recent research by Chen et al. (2023), which concluded that there was a dearth of national policies on multi-grade teaching and/ or training and although Ngunjiri et

al (2019) warn that too much training could lead to teachers over relying on rote teaching/ learning, it is important to strike an acceptable level of training opportunities for teachers.

#### **4.3.6 Observation on Teacher Training**

The researcher had opportunity to observe teachers as they taught and interacted with pre-primary learners. The researcher observed pre-primary teachers effectively structuring learning experiences and providing adequate time for engagement. Teachers encouraged collaborative learning through group activities, promoting hands-on learning and social skills development. These findings highlight the importance of teacher training and intentional teaching practices in early childhood education.

#### **4.3.7 Regression Analysis on Relationship Between Training and Preschool Pupils' Reading Readiness**

The study sought to establish the correlation analysis between teacher training and preschool pupils reading readiness. The Pearson's Product moment correlation, which is a non-parametric measure of the strength and direction of association that exists between two variables, was used at 0.05 level of significance as Table 3 demonstrates.

**Table 3****Relationship Between Teacher Training and Preschool Pupils' Reading Readiness**

<b>Symmetric Measures</b>					
		Value	Asymptotic Std Error <sup>a</sup>	Approximate T <sup>b</sup>	Approximate Significance
Ordinal by	Pearson correlation	0.014	.033	-2.448	.014
Ordinal	Kendall's tau-c	0.078	.032	-2.448	.014
N of Valid Cases		50			
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.					
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.					
c.** Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$					

As reflected by the Pearson's Product moment correlation results described in Table 6, teacher training showed a positive, significant relationship with pupil reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County, with a coefficient of  $r = 0.014$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . This implies that teacher training plays a vital role in pupil reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County. Accordingly, this study rejects the null hypothesis, which stated, there is no significant relationship between teachers' training and pupils' reading readiness', and assert that, according to the results, there is a significant relationship between teacher training and pupils reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County.

**4.4 Relationship Between Teachers' Experience and Pupils' Reading Readiness**

In objective two, the study explored the relationship between teachers' experience on pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County, Kenya by exploring how long they had been in the teaching service, whether their day-to-day encounters with the pupils helped them become better teachers and if they sought

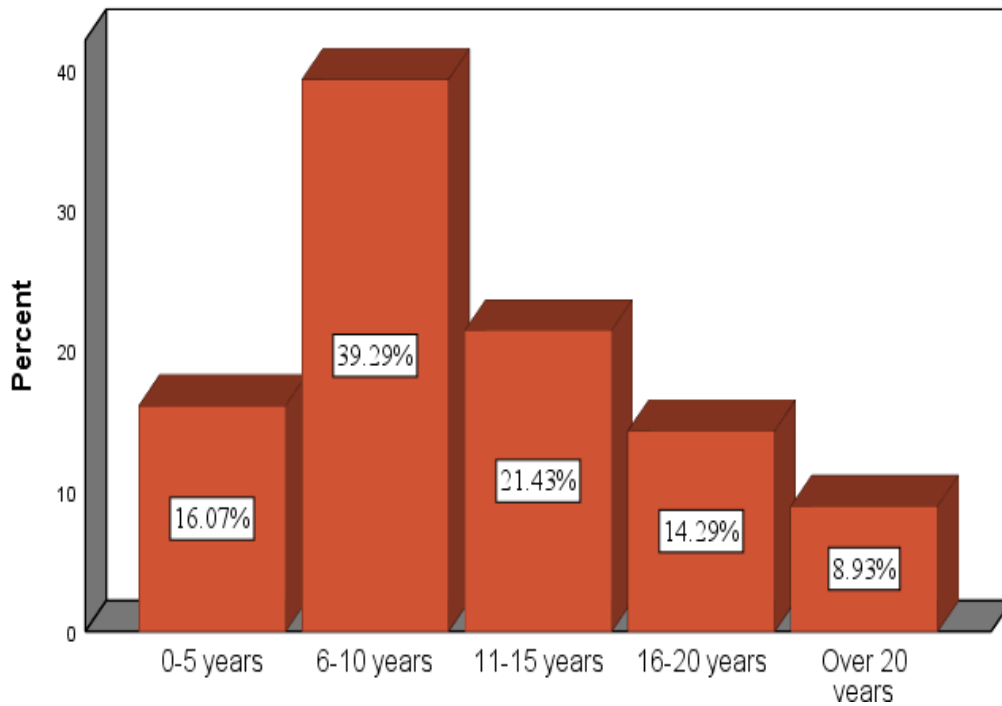
feedback from their fellow staff members to improve their effectiveness in facilitation of reading readiness, and the following were the results.

#### 4.4.1 Number of Years in Employment as a Teacher

The study sought to find out the number of years the respondents had been employed as teachers, and the results are presented in Figure 10 below.

**Figure 10**

**Percentile Distribution of Teachers by teaching experience**



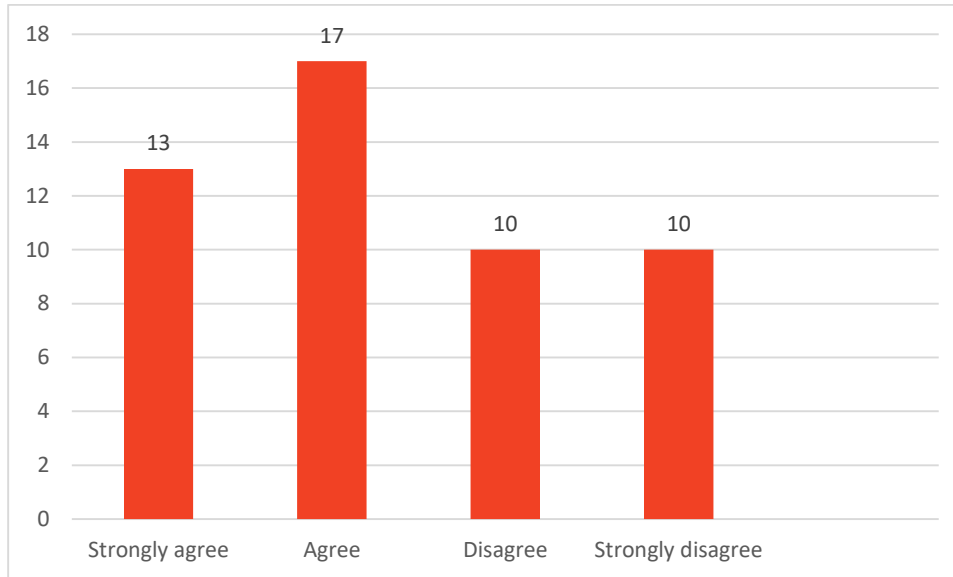
From the study, nearly all the respondents (80%) had teaching experience of more than 5 years. This is crucial, and is in harmony with Waweru, (2018) who revealed that a teacher's skill increases the more experience he gains.

#### 4.4.2 Use of Day-to-Day Encounters by Teachers to Enhance Pupils Reading Readiness

The study sought to find out whether teachers use their day-to-day encounters with students to enhance their teaching, and the results are presented in figure 11 below.

**Figure 11**

**Percentile of Teachers Day-To-Day Encounters to Enhance Pupils' Reading Readiness**



Findings suggest that (60%) of the respondents used their day-to-day encounters with the pupils to help them become better in enhancing pre-primary school pupils' reading readiness. During the interview with the head teachers, all the 50 head teachers pointed out that even if one does not have the training, experience garnered through interacting with students and other teachers could help one handle students better. This dovetails with research from Tang and Hu (2022), who established that experience is pivotal in teaching, and usually supplements training.

This also agrees with previous research by Berger et. al. (2018) whose conclusions showed that teaching pivoted on experience, and hence it formed an essential part for teacher effectiveness.

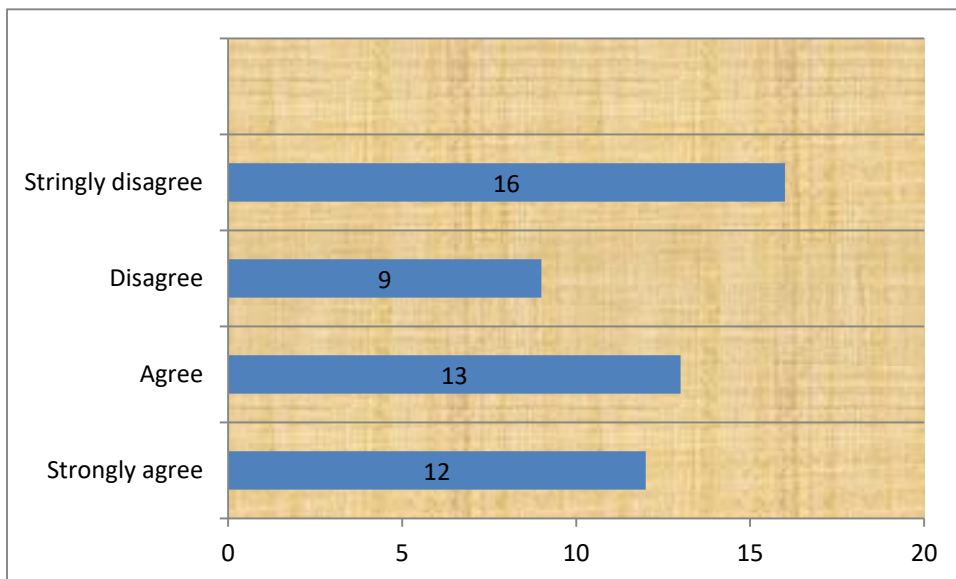
The study also observed teachers while teaching, and found out that in terms of job experience, 37 (74%) followed up progress of each child, 42 (84%) gave tasks commensurate to the learner's ability and 39 (78%) created an enabling environment that motivates children to learn.

#### 4.4.3 Teachers' use of Other Colleagues' Feedback to Improve Self

The study sought to find out whether the respondents used their fellow teachers to improve effectiveness, and the results are shown in Table 12 below.

**Figure 12**

#### **Use of Other Teacher Colleague's Feedback, for Self-Improvement**



In terms of this question, half of the teachers (50%) ask their fellow teachers for feedback. During the interview, the head teachers noted that experience garnered through interacting with others is crucial in enhancing effectiveness in handling students.

On seeking fellow teachers' feedback for self-improvement and growing their teaching experience to better their effectiveness in enhancing learners' reading readiness in private multi-grade pre-primary schools, one teacher participant had this to say.

*“Feedback is important because it reveals strengths as well as shortcomings, and points out areas where I may need to improve to further grow my teaching experience and promote my effectiveness in enhancing learners’ reading readiness in my classroom”*

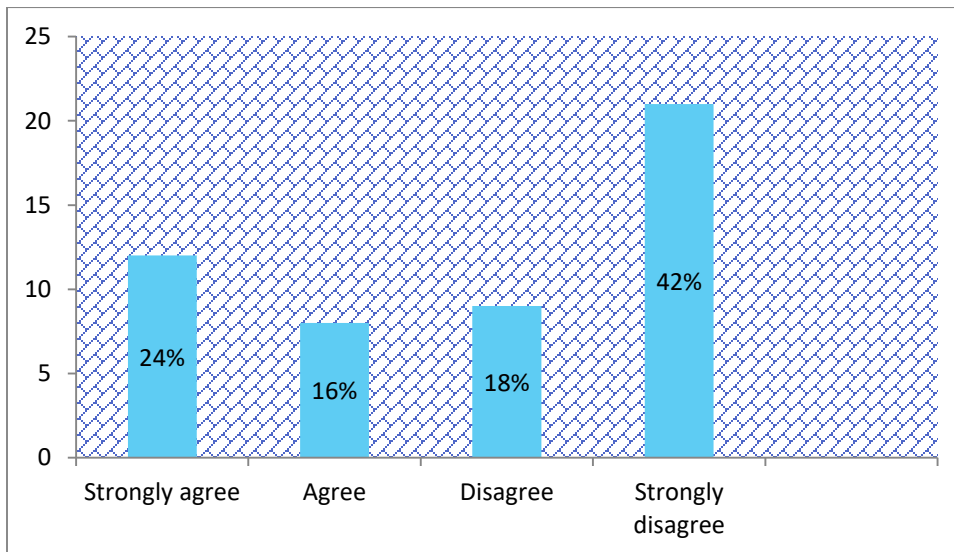
Indeed, as Mageka and Ogochi (2020) posited that experience was a moving target, and one can never really have enough. Hence, one must bring out experience through feedback.

#### **4.4.4 Teachers Views on Successful Completion of the Reading Readiness Teaching Syllabus**

The study also examined whether teachers considered themselves successful in completing the reading readiness syllabus, and the results are shown in figure 13 below.

**Figure 13**

#### **If Teachers Considered Themselves Successful in Completing Reading Readiness Syllabus**



In terms of this question, 40% of the respondents did not successfully complete the reading readiness teaching syllabus.

Accordingly, most teachers did not consider themselves successful in the completion of the reading readiness teaching syllabus. This breaks with findings reached by Mageka and Ogochi (2020)

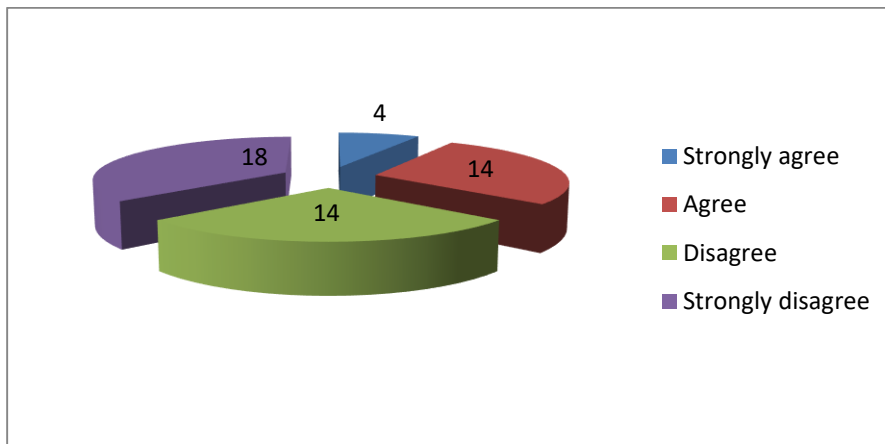
study, who found out that completing and implementing a school curriculum, was key to efficacious teaching, and played a major role in preparing learners.

#### 4.4.5 Teachers' Views on Students Performance in Reading Readiness Activities

The study sought to establish teachers' views on the performance of students in reading readiness activities, and the results are shown in figure 14 that follows herein.

**Figure 14**

#### Students' Performance in Reading Readiness Activities According to Teachers



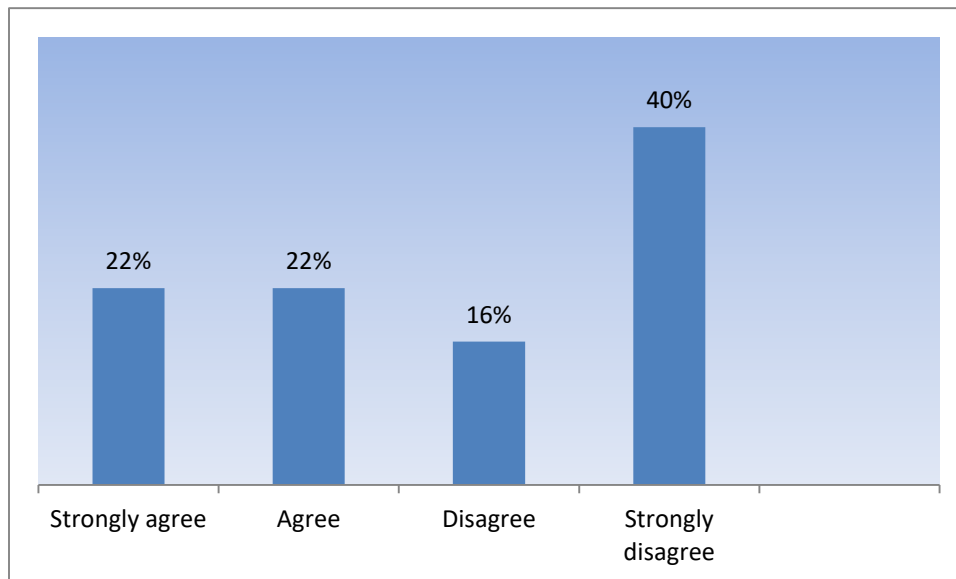
The reaction of teachers on the statement, 'All my students perform well in reading readiness activities' indicates that of all the participating teachers, only 36% of them agreed that their students performed well in reading readiness activities. This shows the sad state of events in the sampled schools, where only about 40% of learners performed well in reading readiness activities. However, it is in line with previous research by Ngure, et. al. (2019) in Nairobi City County, which revealed that 50% of class three pupils were below average in reading of letters and letter sound recognition.

#### 4.4.6 Whether Teachers Enjoyed Working and Learning from Teammates

The study also sought to establish whether teachers enjoyed working and learning from their colleagues, and the results are shown in Figure 15 below.

**Figure 15**

**Teachers' Responses on whether They Enjoyed Working and Learning from Teammates**



Relative to the statement, 'I enjoy working and learning from my teammates to enhance reading readiness of my learners', less than half (44%) of the respondents enjoyed working and learning from their teammates to enhance reading readiness of learners. Learning from each other is crucial, for it is one of the ways that people learn and so enhance their skills and experience. This finding aligns with Papay and Kraft (2015), who argued that the rapid productivity gains teachers often experience early in their careers are largely attributable to learning from the experiences of others.

#### **4.4.7 Observation on Teacher Experience**

To assess the experience and effectiveness of the teachers, the researcher conducted direct observations of their interactions and engagement with the pupils. The researcher observed that teachers assigned tasks to the pupils that were tailored to align with their individual abilities, ensuring that each child could engage meaningfully with the learning activity. Additionally, the teachers closely monitored the progress of each child, tracking how they responded to the tasks and how effectively the teachers facilitated their learning. This follow-up not only allowed for a detailed evaluation of the pupils' progress but also highlighted the teachers' ability to provide personalized support, adapt teaching techniques, and address the unique needs of each learner. This concurs with earlier findings from the teachers and the head teachers, that teachers is paramount in teaching pupils reading readiness.

#### **4.4.8 Regression Analysis on Relationship Between Teachers' Experience and Pupils Reading Readiness**

The study sought to establish the correlation between teacher experience and preschool pupils reading readiness. The Pearson's Product moment correlation, which is a non-parametric measure of the strength and direction of association that exists between two variables, was used at 0.05 level of significance, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4****Relationship Between Teacher Experience and Pupils Reading Readiness**

Symmetric Measures					
		Value	Asymptotic Std Error <sup>a</sup>	Approximate T <sup>b</sup>	Approximate Significance
Ordinal by	Pearson correlation	0.023	.0216	-2.448	.023
Ordinal	Kendall's tau-c	0.018	.062	-2.448	.023
N of Valid Cases		50			
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.					
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.					
c. ** Correlation is significant at $p < 0.05$					

As reflected by the Pearson's Product moment correlation results described in Table 4, teacher experience showed a positive, significant relationship with pupil reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County, with a coefficient of  $r = 0.023$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . This implies that teachers play a vital role in pupil reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County. Accordingly, this study rejects the null hypothesis, which stated, 'there is no significant relationship between teachers' experience and pupils' reading readiness' because, according to the results, there is a significant relationship between teacher experience and pupils reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County.

#### 4.5 Relationship Between Teachers' Attitude and Pupils' Reading Readiness

The third study objective sought to analyze the relationship between teachers' attitude on pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County, and the following are the results from the data.

#### 4.5.1 What Teachers Liked or Disliked About Teaching Multi -Grade Pupils

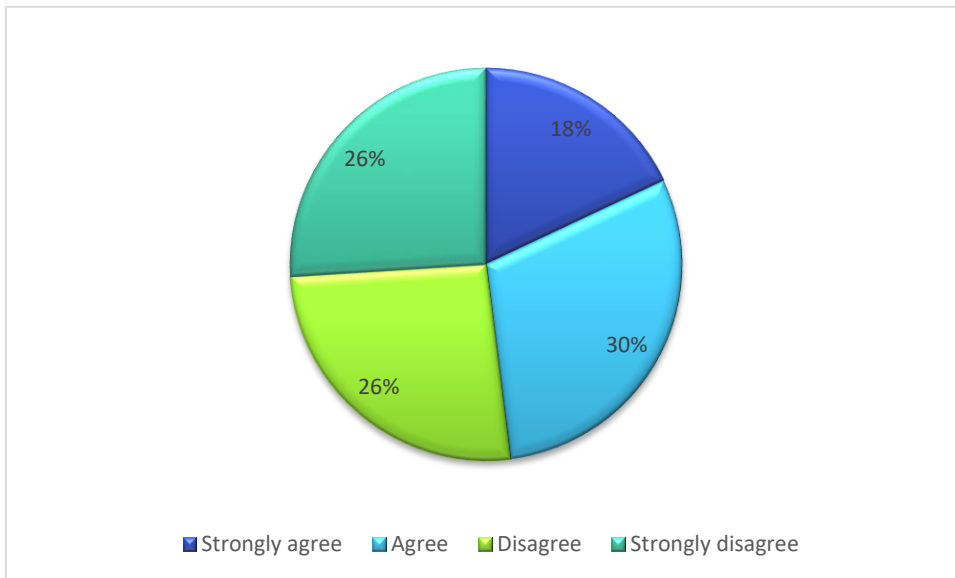
Teachers' views reveal that all the teacher respondents hated multi-grade teaching. They averred that they liked nothing about it and that they were being coerced by the school administration to teach. The reasons they gave for hating multi-grade teaching ranged from the work was too much, the students did not easily grasp the required concepts, majority of the students were troublesome, and they did not feel respected by them.

#### 4.5.2 Whether Teachers Found Their Involvement in enhancing Pupils' Reading Readiness Satisfying

The study sought to determine whether the respondents found their job involving enhancement of pupils' reading readiness satisfying, and the results are shown in Figure 16 below.

**Figure 16**

#### **If Teachers Found Their Involvement in Enhancement of Pupils' Reading Readiness Satisfying**



From the responses to this question, only about half (48%) of the respondents found their job fulfilling. This is not surprising; considering all the teachers said they disliked teaching. Most said

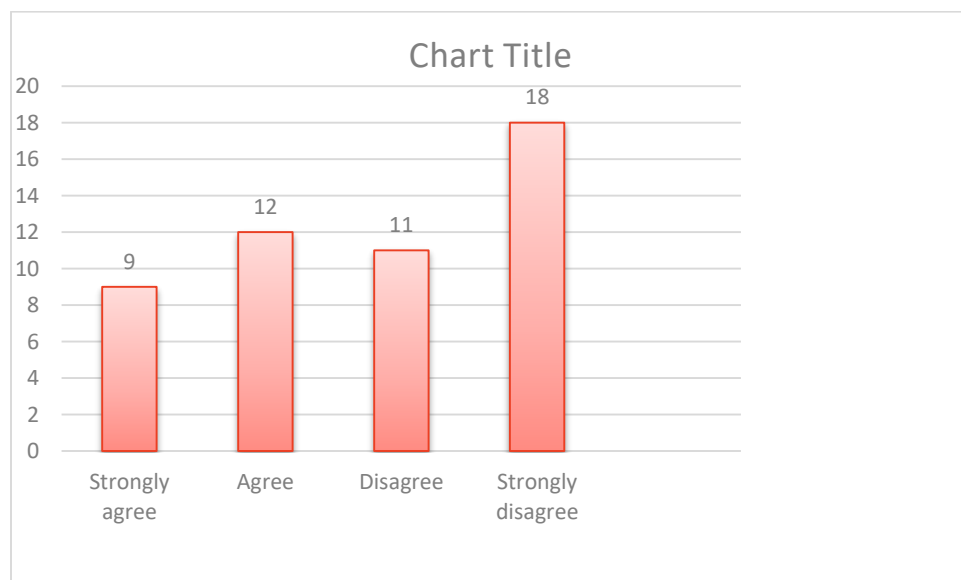
they were coerced to teach. Additionally, most pointed out the challenges in teaching, which included disrespect from pupils, lack of materials, low pay, the huge workload, and the fact that some students are very troublesome.

#### 4.5.3 Whether Teachers Found Supporting Pupils' Reading Readiness Interesting

The study also sought to find out whether teachers found supporting pupils' reading readiness interesting and the results are shown in Figure 17.

**Figure 17**

#### **If Teachers Found Supporting Pupils' Reading Readiness Interesting**



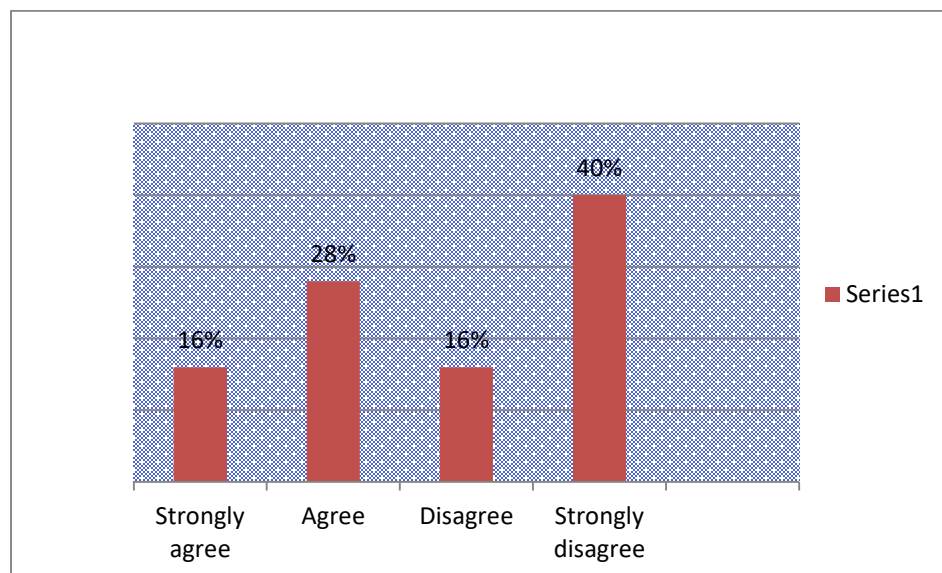
Results from Figure 14 show that less than half (42%) of the respondents found supporting pupils' reading readiness interesting. This suggests that there is an attitude problem in the multi-grade schools in Kasarani Sub-County of Nairobi. Attitude is pivotal to effective teaching, even as Sempele et al. (2018) discovered. The trio established that the teacher's attitude towards the students and the study materials significantly contributed towards the achievement of course objectives.

The study also observed children’s reading readiness skills, by observing the teachers at work. Relative to whether teachers found supporting pupils’ reading readiness interesting, the observation results showed that nearly three quarters (74%) appreciated every child’s effort during the lesson, and two thirds (66%) collaborated well with parents to cater for children’s needs in reading.

#### 4.5.4 Whether Teachers Enjoyed Preparing Multi-Grade Pre-primary School Pupils to Read

In addition, the study sought to find out whether teachers enjoyed preparing multi-grade pre-primary school pupils to read, and the results are shown in Figure 18 below.

**Figure 18**  
**If Teachers Enjoyed Preparing Multi-Grade Pre-Primary School Pupils to Read**



The findings indicated that only about half (44%) of the respondents enjoyed working with multi-grade preschool pupils while preparing them to read. During the interview schedule, all (100%) of the head teachers were emphatic that a positive attitude plays a significant role in effective teaching. One head teacher used the following words.

*“Attitude is everything. It is very important that the teacher thinks positively of the students and the teaching content ”.*

It follows that slightly more than half (56%) of respondents do not like working with students. The difficulties of poor salary, absence, truancy, and a lack of resources seem to be depressing the instructors' attitudes. However, as shown by Falode (2018), teachers who are most at ease and content in their work are more likely to have a favorable attitude toward their students.

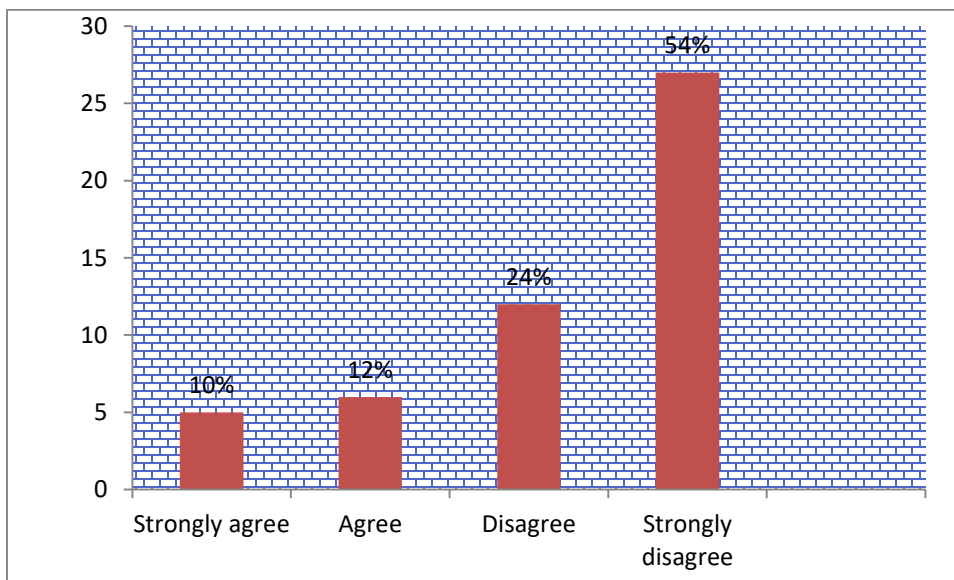
The researcher also observed children’s reading readiness skills, by observing the teachers at work. Relative to attitude, it was observed that nearly three quarters (72%) attended to individual child’s reading readiness needs, and majority (74%) ensured teamwork and ensuring children take turns or share in- learning materials.

#### **4.5.5 Whether Teachers Respondents Felt Well Remunerated to Live Decently**

The study sought to assess whether the teacher respondents felt they were paid enough to live decently, and the results are shown in figure 19 below.

**Figure 19**

#### **If Teachers Felt Well Remunerated to Live Decently**



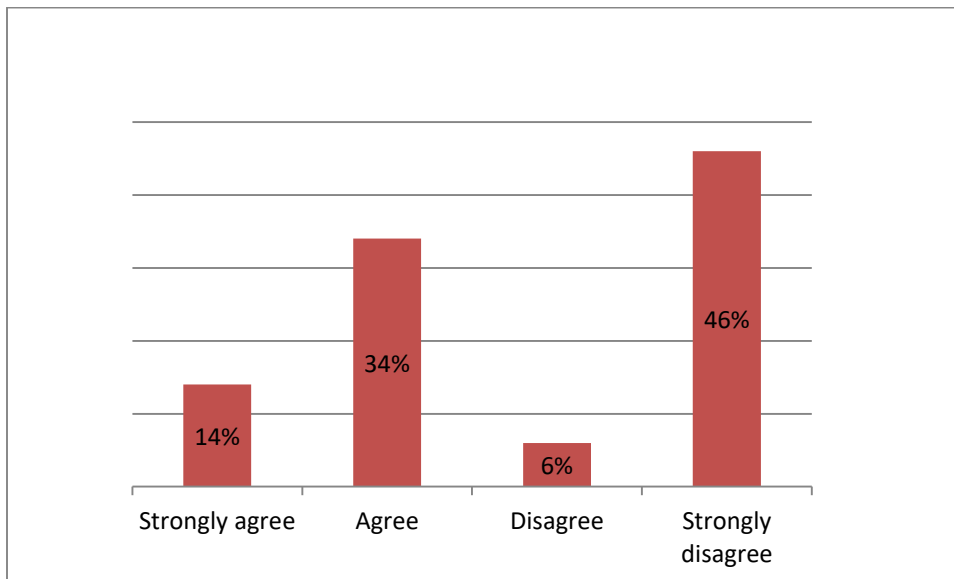
From Figure 16, we have another key as to what may be dampening the mood of the teachers. The majority (78%) of the respondents felt that their job as teachers did not pay enough for them to live decently. It seems that the model of low pay to multi-grade teachers in Kasarani sub-county breaks with research by Mahmood (2017) in Iraq which indicated that teachers who chose to teach in a multi-grade setting did so because of the benefits it conferred to them. These benefits include high wages. Accordingly, if teachers are paid low or inadequate wages that are not enough for them to meet their needs, their motivation to teach would naturally plummet or nosedive.

#### 4.5.6 Whether Teachers' Job Gave Them Chance to Do Things They Were Best At

Additionally, the study sought to find out whether teachers' job gave them chance to do things they are best at, and the results are shown in Figure 20.

**Figure 20**

**Teachers' Responses if Their job Gave Them Chance to do Things, They Were Best at**



The results indicate that 48% are of the view that their teaching job gives them a chance to do the things they are best at. If only 48% are of the view that their job gives them a chance to do the

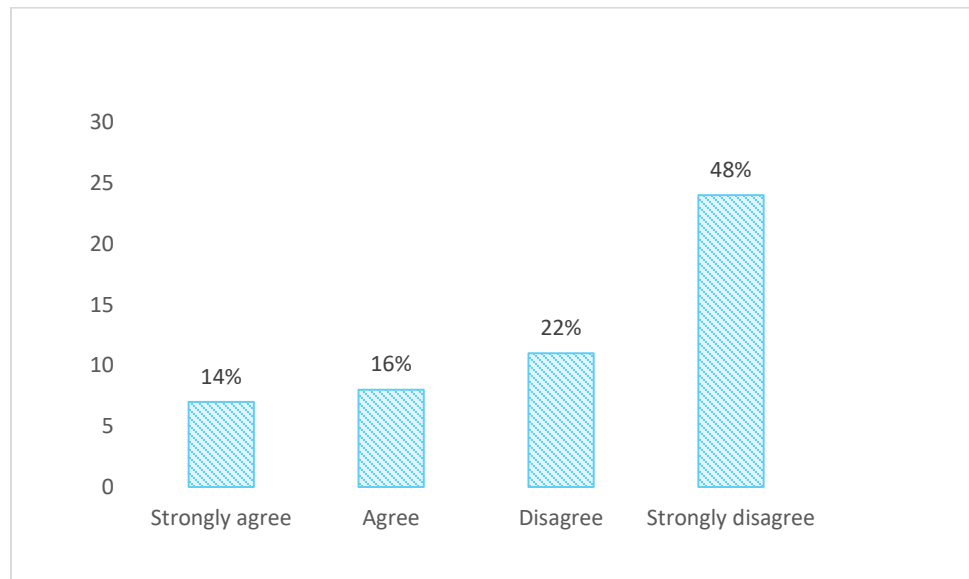
things they are best at, this implies that 52% of teacher respondents did not view their jobs as allowing them to do so. The significant thing about this is that multi-grade pupils in Kasarani sub-county were taught by teachers who felt that they were out of position and so were unlikely to fulfil their potential and be truly happy. Such teachers were unlikely to adequately prepare the pupils sufficiently in terms of reading readiness. As Ismail (2022) observes, teachers approach their job with antipathy, and trepidation, when they feel out positioned, underpaid, and demotivated due to several factors. The result is despondency, which seems to be the case in Kasarani sub-county.

#### 4.5.7 Whether There Were Prospects for Teachers' Promotion and Advancement

Moreover, the study sought to find out whether the teachers felt that there were prospects for promotion and advancement in the workplace, and the results are as Figure 21 shows.

**Figure 21**

#### **If There Were Prospects for Teachers' Promotion and Advancement**



The results show that a minority (30%) of them were of the view that there were prospects for promotion and advancement in their job. The results imply that the majority, 70% of the respondents, were of the view that there are no prospects for promotion and advancement in the job. According to Iqbal et al. (2021), opportunities for promotion, as well as a clear pathway of advancement in the job, impacts on the attitude of the teachers. Where clear paths are lacking, despondency sets in, as seems to be happening here.

#### **4.5.8 Observation on Teacher Attitude**

The researcher observed teachers actively engaging with pupils in the learning environment, focusing particularly on their attitudes and interactions. A positive teacher attitude was evident in the emphasis placed on fostering teamwork and collaboration among the children. The teacher skillfully facilitated group activities, ensuring that every child had an opportunity to participate, take turns, and share learning materials equitably. This approach not only encouraged inclusivity but also helped to build social skills, such as patience and cooperation, among the pupils. Furthermore, the teacher consistently acknowledged and appreciated each child's efforts during the lesson, regardless of the level of achievement. This reinforcement created a supportive and encouraging atmosphere, boosting the children's confidence and motivation to learn. By modeling fairness, empathy, and positivity, the teacher cultivated an environment where pupils felt valued and engaged, highlighting the critical role of teacher attitude in shaping effective learning experiences.

#### **4.5.9 Regression Analysis on Relationship Between Teachers' Attitude and Preschool Pupils' Reading Readiness**

This section presents the correlation analysis between teacher attitude and pupils' readiness. The Pearson's Product moment correlation, which is a non-parametric measure of the strength and

direction of association that exists between two variables, was used at 0.05 level of significance, and the results are presented in table 5 below.

**Table 5**

**Relationship Between Teachers’ Attitude and Pupils’ Reading Readiness**

Symmetric Measures					
		Value	Asymptotic Std Error <sup>a</sup>	Approximate T <sup>b</sup>	Approximate Significance
Ordinal by Ordinal	Pearson correlation	0.042	.0256	-2.448	.042
	Kendall's tau-c	0.0783	.0673	-2.448	.042
N of Valid Cases		50			
a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.					
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.					
c. ** Correlation is significant at p<0.05					

As reflected by the Pearson’s Product moment correlation results described in Table 5, teacher experience showed a positive, significant relationship with pupil reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County, with a coefficient of  $r = 0.042$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . This implies that teachers play a vital role in pupil reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County. This study therefore, rejects the null hypothesis, which stated, ‘there is no significant relationship between teachers’ attitude and pupils’ reading readiness’ owing to the fact that, according to the results, there is a significant relationship between teacher’s attitude and pupils reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms in Kasarani-sub county, Nairobi County.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter handles the summary, conclusions, and recommendations from the study.

#### **5.2 Summary**

The study sought to examine relationship between teachers' characteristics and pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary schools in Nairobi city county, Kenya. Data was gathered from instructors and head teachers as well as from observations of how learners were being taught. Questionnaires, interview schedules, and observations were used to gather data. The study also used both qualitative and quantitative methods. The Statistical Program of Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used to code the data and do computations on it. The results were summarized using descriptive statistics, which were then shown as graphs, tables, and charts. Emerging themes were used to show qualitative data and relate them to the analysis's descriptive data. Several significant conclusions have been drawn based on the research questions and data analysis in chapter four. The study's findings are detailed in the section below.

The specific objectives that guided the study were as follows.

- i. To examine relationship between teacher training and preschool pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County.
- ii. To assess the influence of teachers' experience on pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County.
- iii. To analyse the relationship between teachers' attitude and pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County.

The statistical / null hypotheses tested were:

HO<sub>1</sub> There is no relationship between teacher training and preschool pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County.

HO<sub>2</sub> There is no relationship between teachers' experience and pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County.

HO<sub>3</sub> There is no relationship between teachers' attitude and pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County.

The first study objective examined the relationship between teacher training and preschool pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County.

The study established that teacher training has a positive, significant relationship with preschool pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County. This is denoted by a coefficient of  $r = 0.014$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . Additionally, approximately two thirds (60%) of the teachers indicated that they were trained in ECD, and all the head teachers (100%) averred that training plays a major role in making an effective teacher. However, in a finding that points to a disconnect with this conclusion, nearly three quarters (74%) of the teachers averred that they do not attend refresher courses, and 31 (62%) posited indicated that they do not attend benchmarking programs. Finally, majority 74% of the respondents were of the view that neither the school nor the government were doing their best to support multi-grade teachers to be effective in their work in terms of training.

Objective number two sought to assess the influence of teachers' experience on pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County. The study established that teacher experience has a positive, significant relationship with preschool pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi

County. This is demonstrated by a coefficient of  $r = 0.023$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . Moreover, more than three quarters (80%) of the respondents had a teaching experience of more than 5 years. Additionally, most (60%) of the respondents used their day-to-day encounters with the pupils to help them become better in enhancing pre-primary school pupil's reading readiness, half (50%) asked their fellow teachers for feedback. However, of all the participating teachers, less than half 36% of them agreed that their students performed well in reading readiness activities.

The third objective investigated the relationship between teachers' attitude and pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County. The study established that teacher attitude had a positive, significant relationship with preschool pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county, Nairobi County. This is symbolized by a coefficient of  $r = 0.042$ ,  $P < 0.05$ . Moreover, Majority (100%) of teacher's respondents revealed that they hated multi-grade teaching, and almost half (48%) of the respondents found their job fulfilling, while less than half (42%) of the respondents found supporting pupils' reading readiness interesting. To further accentuate this, less than half (44%) of the respondents enjoy working with multi-grade preschool pupils while preparing them to read. Moreover, the majority, 37 (78%) of the respondents felt that their job as teachers did not pay enough for them to live decently. Finally, in terms of attitude, almost half (48%) were of the view that their job gave them a chance to do the things they were best at, implying that more than half (52%) of teacher respondents did not view their jobs as allowing them to do so.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

From the findings, it can be concluded that the teacher characteristics of training, experience and attitude play a significant role in pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary schools in Nairobi city county, Kenya. In relation to the first objective, the study

finds that teacher training has a positive and significant impact on pupil reading readiness in Kasarani Sub-County.

Furthermore, regarding the second objective, the study concludes that teacher experience is positively and significantly correlated with pupil reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary schools within Kasarani Sub-County, Nairobi City County.

Lastly, regarding teacher attitude, the study concludes that a positive teacher attitude plays a significant and beneficial role in enhancing student reading preparedness in the same region.

In sum the teachers, and the head teachers from whom data was obtained concurred that teacher training, experience, and attitude are crucial pivots on which students' reading readiness is anchored. However, challenges remain. These include a lack of refresher courses, benchmarking, and government assistance, as well as unfavourable attitudes among teachers towards their jobs, the subjects they teach, and the learners. This is largely because of a dearth of infrastructure and low pay.

## **5.4 Recommendations**

It is evident from the findings of this study that the teacher characteristics of training, experience and attitude influenced pupil reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade preschools in Kasarani sub-county, of Nairobi County. The recommendations are dichotomized according to policy, and those for further studies.

### **5.4.1 Policy Recommendations**

- i. The research recommends that the school management become engaged in funding, providing staff, and other resources for teacher training.

- ii. The national government and other stake holders should establish and put into practice refresher courses, benchmarking programs, and in-school training support, to improve teacher training.
- iii. The national government, which oversees policy setting up in non-government schools and enforcing regulations, should be meticulous when registering schools to ensure that only those with adequate facilities and the ability to pay instructors are permitted to operate in a bid to motivate working morale of teachers in multi-grade schools.

#### **5.4.2 Suggestions for Further Studies**

The results of this study have raised important questions that call for more investigation and among the topics suggested for more study are as follows:

The current study only explored relationship between teachers' characteristics and pupils' reading readiness in low-cost private multi-grade pre-primary schools in Nairobi city county, Kenya.

- i. Thus, a follow-up investigation might look at how teachers' traits may affect students' reading preparedness in different sub counties, such as rural counties. Additionally, the study's backdrop focuses on affordable private multi-grade pre-primary institutions. The subjects of another study may be children attending public primary schools. Further research could be done to see how different or not, the results of this study may be, in other geographical settings in Kenya or elsewhere.
- ii. Additionally, the present study, which was both qualitative and quantitative, only collected data from teachers and head teachers. Further studies could collect data from teachers, pupils, parents, and all stakeholders to present an all-rounded view of the reality of multi-grade teaching and its effects on learners. Also, with the introduction of the competency-

based curriculum, where learning is based on the needs and potential of learners, a future study can utilize a comparative approach, using panel data analysis. The aim would be to compare the relationship between teachers' characteristics and pupils' reading readiness in preprimary schools, before and after the introduction of the competency-based curriculum and hence determine if the competency-based curriculum has had an impact on reading readiness.

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**APPENDICES**

**Appendix 1: Letter of Introduction**

Dear respondent:

I am a student at Kenyatta University undertaking a Master of Education (Early Childhood Education) degree. As part of the requirements of my programme, I am carrying out a study on “Relationship between Teachers’ Characteristics and Pupils’ Reading Readiness in Multi Grade Preschool Classrooms in Kasarani Sub-County, Nairobi City County, Kenya”.

To achieve this, you have been invited to participate in this academic research by filling out the questionnaire with relevance to your school. The information obtained will be used for academic purposes only and will remain confidential. The results obtained from the survey will be presented in summary form and will not disclose any individual’s or institutions information.

Thank you for your participation.

Respondent’s signature.....

Date.....

## Appendix II: Questionnaire for Pre-Primary School Teachers

### Part 1: Demographics

1. What is your gender?

Male

Female

2. From the under listed responses, which option indicates your approximate age?

Below 25

25 to 35

36 to 45

46 and above

3. a) Are you a trained ECDE teacher? Yes  No

b) What is your highest professional qualification?

Certificate

Diploma

Bachelor's Degree

Post-graduate Degree

**Part 2: Relationship Between Teacher Characteristics and Preschool Pupils’ Reading Readiness**

**Section A: Teacher Training**

4. On a scale of 1 to 4, Where strongly agree (SA) = 1, agree (A) = 2, disagree (D) = 3, and strongly disagree (SD) = 4, please rate the following statements on how teacher training influences preschool pupils reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary classrooms in Kasarani sub-county.

Statement	SA	A	D	SD
I go for refresher courses once a term.				
The school organizes benchmarking opportunities to expose us to other teacher training scenarios				
In my opinion, I am adequately trained to enhance reading readiness in multi grade pre-primary school pupils				
In my view, I feel the school and the government does its best to support in-servicing of teachers to be effective in their work.				

5. In what other way does teacher training influence preschool pupils reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary schools in Kasarani sub-county? Please briefly explain.

.....

.....

.....

.....

**Section B: Teachers' Experience**

6. For how many years have you been a teacher?.....

- 0 – 5 years [ ]                      6 – 10 years [ ]                      11 – 15 years [ ]  
 16 – 20 years [ ]                      Over 20 years [ ]

7. On a scale of 1 to 4, where strongly agree (SA) = 1, agree (A) =2, disagree (D) = 3 and strongly disagree (SD) 4, please rate the following statements on the influence of teachers' experience on pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms.

Statement	SA	A	D	SD
I usually use my day-to-day encounters with the pupils to help me become a better teacher in enhancement of reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school learners.				
I ask my fellow teachers for feedback, so I improve my effectiveness in enhancing reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school learners.				
I consider myself a teacher who successfully completes the reading readiness teaching syllabus.				
All my students perform well in reading readiness activities.				
I enjoy working and learning from my teammates to enhance reading readiness of my learners.				

8. In which other ways do you feel teachers' training influences pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

**Section C: Teachers' Attitude**

9. What do you like about teaching multi grade pupils in preschool?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

11. What don't you like about teaching multi grade pupils in preschool?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

12. On a scale of 1-4, where very great extent (VGE) = 1, great extent (GE) = 2, little extent (LE)= 3 and very little extent (VLE) = 4, rate the following statements on the influence of teachers' attitude on pupils' reading readiness in multi-grade pre-primary school classrooms

<b>Statement</b>	<b>VGE</b>	<b>GA</b>	<b>LE</b>	<b>VLE</b>
I find my job involving enhancement of pupils' reading readiness satisfying.				
I find supporting pupils' reading readiness interesting.				
I enjoy working with multi-grade preschool pupils while preparing them to read.				
My job as a teacher pays me enough to live decently				
My job gives me a chance to do the things I am best at.				
There are prospects for promotion and advancement in this job.				

Thank you for participating.

### **Appendix III: Interview Schedule for Head Teachers**

The following questions guided the discussion with head teachers.

1. How many multi-grade pre-primary schoolteachers do you have in your school?
2. In your opinion, are they well trained?
3. In what way do you think that the experience of your teachers helps them in handling pre-reading skills among their pupils?
4. Briefly describe the attitude of your multi-grade pre-primary schoolteachers towards pupil's reading readiness.
5. Do you feel teachers' characteristics can impact either positively or negatively, their ability to teach multi-grade preschool pupils? Please explain.
6. In your opinion, does the government give schools enough resources to support preschool learning?
7. How well would you say multi-grade pupils in your school read after completing pre-primary school?


Thank you for participating.

## Appendix IV: Observation Guide

Observation of children's reading readiness skills was done through ticking in the appropriate box, teachers' characteristics could possibly influence reading readiness in multi-grade pre-school pupils.

Teacher's Characteristics	Frequency of Observations		
	Always	Sometimes	Never
<b>A. Teachers' Training</b>			
i) Exhibits knowledge in;-consistently using varied techniques to enhance reading lessons			
ii) Uses variety of learning resources to enhance reading in the classroom			
iii) Provides adequate teaching time for children to assimilate learning.			
vi) Gives children time to manipulate reading materials in groups			
<b>B. Teachers' job experience</b>			
i) Follows up progress of each child.			
ii) Gives tasks commensurate to the learner's ability.			
iii) Creates an enabling environment that motivates children to learn.			
<b>C. Influence of Teachers' Attitude</b>			
i) Attends to Individual child's reading readiness needs.			
ii) Ensures teamwork and ensuring children take turns or share in- learning materials			
iii) Appreciates every child's effort during the lesson.			
iv) Collaborates well with parents to cater for children's needs in reading			

**Appendix V: Research Permit**

 <b>REPUBLIC OF KENYA</b>	 <b>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &amp; INNOVATION</b>
Ref No: <b>304130</b>	Date of Issue: <b>12/January/2023</b>
<b>RESEARCH LICENSE</b>	
	
<p><b>This is to Certify that Miss.. VIOLET Akinyi OKETCH of Kenyatta University, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Nairobi on the topic: RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TEACHERS' CHARACTERISTICS AND PUPILS' READING READINESS IN MULTI-GRADE PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI CITY COUNTY, KENYA for the period ending : 12/January/2024.</b></p>	
License No: <b>NACOSTI/P/23/23041</b>	
<b>304130</b> Applicant Identification Number	 Director General <b>NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY &amp; INNOVATION</b>
	Verification QR Code 
<p><b>NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.</b></p>	
See overleaf <sup>89</sup> for conditions	

## **THE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ACT, 2013 (Rev. 2014)**

Legal Notice No. 108: The Science, Technology and Innovation (Research Licensing) Regulations, 2014

**The National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation**, hereafter referred to as the Commission, was established under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act 2013 (Revised 2014) herein after referred to as the Act. The objective of the Commission shall be to regulate and assure quality in the science, technology and innovation sector and advise the Government in matters related thereto.

### **CONDITIONS OF THE RESEARCH LICENSE**

1. The License is granted subject to provisions of the Constitution of Kenya, the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, and other relevant laws, policies and regulations. Accordingly, the licensee shall adhere to such procedures, standards, code of ethics and guidelines as may be prescribed by regulations made under the Act, or prescribed by provisions of International treaties of which Kenya is a signatory to
2. The research and its related activities as well as outcomes shall be beneficial to the country and shall not in any way; i. Endanger national security
  - ii. Adversely affect the lives of Kenyans
  - iii. Be in contravention of Kenya's international obligations including Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO), Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN).
  - iv. Result in exploitation of intellectual property rights of communities in Kenya
  - v. Adversely affect the environment
  - vi. Adversely affect the rights of communities
  - vii. Endanger public safety and national cohesion
  - viii. Plagiarize someone else's work
3. The License is valid for the proposed research, location and specified period.
4. The license any rights thereunder are non-transferable
5. The Commission reserves the right to cancel the research at any time during the research period if in the opinion of the Commission the research is not implemented in conformity with the provisions of the Act or any other written law.
6. The Licensee shall inform the relevant County Director of Education, County Commissioner and County Governor before commencement of the research.
7. Excavation, filming, movement, and collection of specimens are subject to further necessary clearance from relevant Government Agencies.
8. The License does not give authority to transfer research materials.
9. The Commission may monitor and evaluate the licensed research project for the purpose of assessing and evaluating compliance with the conditions of the License.
10. The Licensee shall submit one hard copy, and upload a soft copy of their final report (thesis) onto a platform designated by the Commission within one year of completion of the research.
11. The Commission reserves the right to modify the conditions of the License including cancellation without prior notice.
12. Research, findings and information regarding research systems shall be stored or disseminated, utilized or applied in such a manner as may be prescribed by the Commission from time to time.
13. The Licensee shall disclose to the Commission, the relevant Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee, and the relevant national agencies any inventions and discoveries that are of National strategic importance.
14. The Commission shall have powers to acquire from any person the right in, or to, any scientific innovation, invention or patent of strategic importance to the country.
15. Relevant Institutional Scientific and Ethical Review Committee shall monitor and evaluate the research periodically, and make a report of its findings to the Commission for necessary action.

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## Appendix VI: Map of Kasarani Sub-County

