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**INVESTIGATION OF CAUSES OF LOW READING LITERACY LEVELS
AMONG LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN KISII SUB-COUNTY,
KENYA**

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OCTOBER, 2014

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DECLARATION

This research project report is my original work and has not been presented for degree in any other University.

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DEDICATION

his research work is dedicated to my family members.

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First and foremost I thank God for the free gift of life. A number of people contributed greatly to the completion of this study. My sincere gratitude first goes to my supervisors: Dr. Nyakwara Begi and Dr. Juliet Mugo for doing everything it took; through their guidance and counseling in making this project a success. I wish to express my sincere gratitude and great appreciation to KU administration; my colleagues and friends who supported me in one way or the other. I also thank my friends Elijah Orangi, Godfrey Ayaga and Zachary Gekombe for their support and encouragement. Thank You and God bless you abundantly.

ABSTRACT

Literacy is fundamental for learning in school. It is the ability to read and write and forms the heart of basic education for all. Literacy development is a process that spans through early childhood years and it is one of the most important abilities children acquire as they progress through their early school years. The purpose of the study was to investigate the causes of low literacy achievement among lower primary school pupils in Kisii district, Kisii County. The study was guided by Holdaway's theory of literacy development. The researcher used descriptive survey method because of the nature of the study. The independent variables included availability of literacy materials, type of school, and language of instruction. The dependent variable was pupils' achievement in literacy. The study was conducted in Kisii central District, Kisii County. The target population was all standard three teachers and pupils in lower primary classes. Purposive and stratified random sampling techniques were used to select the sample of the study. The sample of the study consisted of 31 class three teachers from private and public schools, 125 pupils from public schools and 80 pupils from private schools. Nineteen of the schools were public; while the remaining 12 were private primary schools. The researcher used questionnaire for class three teachers, reading literacy test for class three pupils and observation checklist to collect data. The instruments were piloted in two primary schools and the reliability of the instruments which was found to be 0.82 through test re-tests. The data were analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics used were measures of central tendencies; frequency distributions and percentages. The inferential statistics used chi-square to establish whether there was any significant relationship between dependent and independent variables. Data collected was coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Results had revealed that pupils in private schools had a higher level of reading literacy compared to their counterparts in public primary schools. The results had also shown that language of instruction influenced pupils reading literacy levels. The availability of teaching materials had a positive correlation with the reading literacy levels in lower primary schools. It was recommended that school management should provide classroom learning environment that contain adequate literacy materials and teachers should provide adequate activities and methods to develop pupils' literacy skills.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| | | |
|---------------|---|---|
| DEO | - | District Education Officer |
| ECDE | - | Early Childhood Development and Education |
| ECE | - | Early Childhood Education |
| EFA | - | Education for All |
| EQ | - | Education Quality |
| LOI | - | Language of Instruction |
| MDG | - | Millennium Development Goal |
| MoEST | - | Ministry of Education Science and Technology |
| MT | - | Mother Tongue |
| NASMLA | - | National Assessment System for Monitoring Learners Achievement |
| SACMEQ | - | Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for monitoring |

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter discusses the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, and significance of the study, limitations and delimitations of the study, assumptions of the study, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, and operational definitions of terms.

1.1 Background to the Study

Education is perceived as one of the principal motivating factors behind national economic development and it is one of the most effective ways in which individuals can ever hope to achieve better opportunities and a higher standard of living. For these reasons Kenya has invested heavily into its education system over the past twenty years. Since independence in 1963, the government of Kenya has emphasized improving reading ability (Kamau, 2000). Free primary education and adult literacy campaigns have been aimed at giving every Kenyan the right to read (Akhusama, 1984; Nyongesa, 1990).

Literacy is fundamental for learning in school. According to Lewis (2010) literacy is the ability to read and write and the heart of basic education for all. It also has an impact on an individual's ability to participate in society and to understand important public issues (Anderson, 2002). During early years, children develop reading related behaviors that are very important for later reading (Teale & Sulzby, 1986). Children therefore need to

develop appropriate literacy skills in early years to be able to engage successfully in other school levels.

Studies from Europe indicate that about 10% of pupils annually do not reach average reading levels (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998; Rosebrock, 2006; Strickland & Riley-Ayers, 2006). A study done by National Assessment of Education Progress (1995) reports that some American children struggle to read and this results to lack of school success. Queensland Studies Authority, (2005) shows that 3% of Year 3 learners, 16.6% of Year 5 learners and 5.5% of Year 7 learners in the State of Queensland are achieving below the benchmark for reading. This is a clear indication that low reading achievement among pupils is widespread.

Studies done in Africa have shown dismal reading ability among primary school pupils, with over 92% not able to read at class level (National Assessment System for Monitoring Learner Achievement (NASMLA), 2010; UWEZO, 2010). According to the Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education(SACMEQIII 2007) report there is low reading achievement across many parts of Africa and Kenya as a country is not spared. Muindi (2011) reported that Kenyan pupils lag behind their counterparts in Tanzania, Seychelles, Mauritius and Swaziland in reading skills. This report is according to the survey carried out by “The Southern and Eastern Africa Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality study. This suggests that unless the problem is addressed contextually and effectively, the provision of quality education that would ensure equal achievement for all children regardless of their background would continue to pose serious challenges for the education sector. A child who is a poor reader

in first grade is 88% more likely to remain poor in fourth grade (Juel, 1988). From these studies it is clear that reading literacy is a widespread problem.

School language policy influences literacy achievement. Milon (1992) reported that schools which have a language policy adhered to gives the learners an advantage in terms of acquiring language literacy. According to the language of instruction policy, the medium of instruction in rural pre-primary and lower primary schools should be mother tongue; Kiswahili should be the medium of instruction in urban areas of mixed communities, while English should be the medium of instruction in none indigenous communities. Malawi Institute of Education and Save the Children Federation (2000) investigated the role which teachers' home language plays in the implementation of mother tongue instruction policy in two districts in Malawi. Results revealed that pupils who were taught using mother tongue performed better in both English and mathematics. Malawi Institute of Education and Save the Children Federation (2000) found that pupils who were taught using mother tongue performed better in both English and mathematics. This study will try to establish whether language of instruction influences reading literacy achievement.

Studies conducted in Kenya have shown that a good number of children in primary school are not performing. In Kenya a study conducted by Uwezo (2011) in 2030 schools spread across 70 revealed that many children are going to school but they are not learning. The report further reveals that nationally seven out of ten pupils in class three cannot read a class two story, while slightly more than half of them can read a paragraph. It was also found that four out of one hundred pupils in class eight cannot read a class

two story. Hence, this study sought to investigate into the causes of low pupils' reading literacy in the district.

Literacy materials are essential in enhancing the literacy of children. Guthrie (1978) & Miedel (1999) reveal that providing children with literacy materials helps them read better. Ruthiri (2009) who investigated the availability, acquisition and utilization of teaching - learning in English language found that the acquisition of teaching-learning resources were a challenge to most schools due to lack of finances and lack of time for teachers to develop teaching-learning resources. Ogott, Indoshi & Okwara (2010) found that there was acute shortage of language materials due to administrative, physical, and human factors which influenced the selection, development and use of language materials in ECDE centers. This study will investigate whether accessibility of reading literacy materials influences pupils' reading literacy achievement.

Many pupils may continue to perform poorly in reading literacy tests and subsequently in other academic subjects if the factors influencing reading literacy are not checked. The current examination trends where by all subjects test literacy ability underscores the importance of literacy among learners. Additionally, if Kenya is to achieve the Millennium Development Goal(MDG) and Education for All(EFA) goals on eradication of illiteracy, then factors influencing reading literacy in schools need to be addressed, hence the need for this study.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Literacy development is a process that spans through early childhood years and it is one of the most important abilities children acquire as they progress through their early school years. According to Florida Institute of Education (2007), the teacher needs to instill early literacy skills in the learners which will form the basis for future understanding of concepts, phonemic awareness, phonological awareness, knowledge of letters and comprehending stories among others.

Studies in Kenya have found that about half of the pupils cannot read at their class levels. NASMLA (2010) found that more than half (59.8%) of the total number of pupils had repeated a class with Nyanza province having the highest percentage (68.6%) of repeaters while Nairobi Province had the lowest percentage (27.6%). Other studies (SACMEQIII, 2007 and Uwezo, 2011) have mainly looked at reading levels. This study will establish factors influencing low pupils' reading literacy achievement among class three pupils in the district.

Literacy is fundamental in child's education and should be given due consideration by all the education stakeholders. Absence of accurate knowledge on the factors influencing the same will make it difficult to develop relevant strategies to guide in the development of children's literacy. In light of the above discussion, there is need therefore to investigate the causes of low literacy achievement among lower primary school pupils, hence the need for this study.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the causes of low reading literacy achievement levels among lower primary school pupils in Kisii Central district, Kisii County. The factors investigated included language of instruction, availability of reading literacy materials, and type of school.

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i) To establish pupils' reading literacy levels in lower primary schools in Kisii Central Sub-county.
- ii) To explore the influence of language of instruction on pupils' reading literacy levels.
- iii) To find out the influence of the availability of reading literacy materials on pupils' reading literacy levels.
- iv) To investigate the relationship between school type and pupils' reading literacy levels.

1.5 Research Questions

To achieve the above objectives, the study addressed the following research questions:

- i) What is the level of pupils' reading literacy in lower primary schools in Kisii Central Sub-county?
- ii) How does the language of instruction influence pupils' reading in literacy level?
- iii) How does the accessibility of reading literacy materials influence pupils' reading literacy levels?

iv) What is the relationship between school type and pupils' reading literacy levels?

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings of the study may be used to promote reading literacy skills in lower primary schools. Information on factors influencing pupils' literacy may be used by head teachers and school management to improve pupils' literacy by catering for the factors. In addition, the findings may also be used by curriculum developers to develop appropriate literacy programmes to promote literacy skills. Policy makers may also use the findings to develop policies that will support literacy among children in lower primary schools.

1.7 Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

1.7.1 Delimitations of the Study

The study was carried out in Kisii Central sub-county in Kisii County, covering both public and private primary schools specifically considering the lower primary section only. There are several factors that affect pupils' literacy development; this study was delimited to the language used as a medium of instruction, type of school, and accessibility of materials.

1.7.2 Limitations of the Study

The study covered a wide area given that the schools are sparsely distributed which resulted to increased costs and time. The findings of the study may not be generalized to all the primary schools in the country because of the uniqueness of each region. However the research could be used in stimulating further research in other areas of the country.

1.8 Assumptions of the Study

This study was guided by the following assumptions: The investigator assumed that pupils literacy skills vary and are influenced by different factors like language used as a medium of instruction, type of school, and accessibility of materials. It also assumed that pupils in both private and public lower primary schools have different learning experiences which influence their academic achievement.

1.9 Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

This study was guided by Holdaway's theory of literacy development to explore the factors influencing reading literacy among children during the early years.

1.9.1 Holdaway's Theory of Literacy Development

Children learn literacy in the same way they learn language from interacting and communicating with the people around them (Holdaway, 1979). They unconsciously develop ways of knowing, understanding, and communicating within the family, extended family, communities, and society.

This theory was based on observations of home environment where children learned how to read and write without direct instructions (Holdaways, 1979). Holdaways model combines a rich environment and supportive adults who intervene in their children's development for a skill to be induced. A child is to be rewarded and this makes the activity to be repeated leading to acquisition of required skill(s).

Holdaway (1979) has proposed that: Developmental learning is highly individualized and non-competitive; it is short on teaching and long on learning; it is self-regulated rather

than adult-regulated; it goes hand in hand with fulfillment of real life purposes; it emulates the behavior of people- who model the skill in natural use.

According to Holdaway, children develop ability to read through four processes. The processes have a positive correlation to the factors to be addressed in this study, making the theory relevant and more useful to the study. These four processes of literacy development held by Holdaway can be briefly described as observation, collaboration, practice and performance. One could correlate the processes of the theory with steps in a lesson; for instance, the first two processes of observation (of literacy behaviors) and collaboration (with someone who encourages & helps when necessary) are easily related as the "building background" and "presentation" portions of a literacy workshop lesson. Observation and collaboration depends on the Type of school and Language of instruction used in classroom.

The Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education categorizes schools majorly as public and private. Majority of the learners go to public schools. Pupils attending private schools perform better than their counterparts learning in public schools. The foregoing results indicate that the type of school may be influencing reading literacy among children. Thus, good performance in private schools could be attributed to very many factors such as low pupil teacher ratio, low pupil textbook ratio among others. This cannot be the same in public schools with the inception of free primary education.

Language policy requires that in lower primary schools, mother tongue should be used as the language of instruction (up to standard three). English (which is also Kenya's official language) and Kiswahili (the country's national language) are taught as subjects at this

stage of learning and this language policy calls for collaboration between members of a particular school. These members in school may include the head teacher, teachers and other support staff. Schools which have a language policy adhered to gives the learners an advantage in terms of acquiring language literacy. Teachers' role therefore is to ensure a well-established language policy within the school environment. In turn this will enhance literacy development. Teachers' should use home language as a medium of instruction in their school literacy policy. Pupils who are taught using mother tongue performs better in English. The teacher should begin by allowing pupils to observe him/her using a literary behavior. The teacher should model the thinking and processing that would normally occur mentally while reading to allow pupils a "window into the mind" of a mature reader. Next the "practice" stage of the lesson is named identically as a process in Holdaway's theory. The type of school allows the pupils to practice the literacy behavior (for example, reading with a particular strategy) without teacher direction. Independent practice is their chance to try out this skill while self-evaluating their work and this entirely depends on the type of school, and accessibility of Literacy Materials. The school should establish rich literacy environment such as, Labeling key items around the room, Wide variety of high quality reading materials, Meaningful language experiences and use of big books and shared reading. Holdaway highly recommends the use of big books and shared reading to foster natural literacy development. He believes big books can create the same positive feelings about story time that children have when they read at home. He believes that these natural storytelling times build pupil's oral language, print tracking, concept of letters, and words.

1.9.2 Conceptual framework

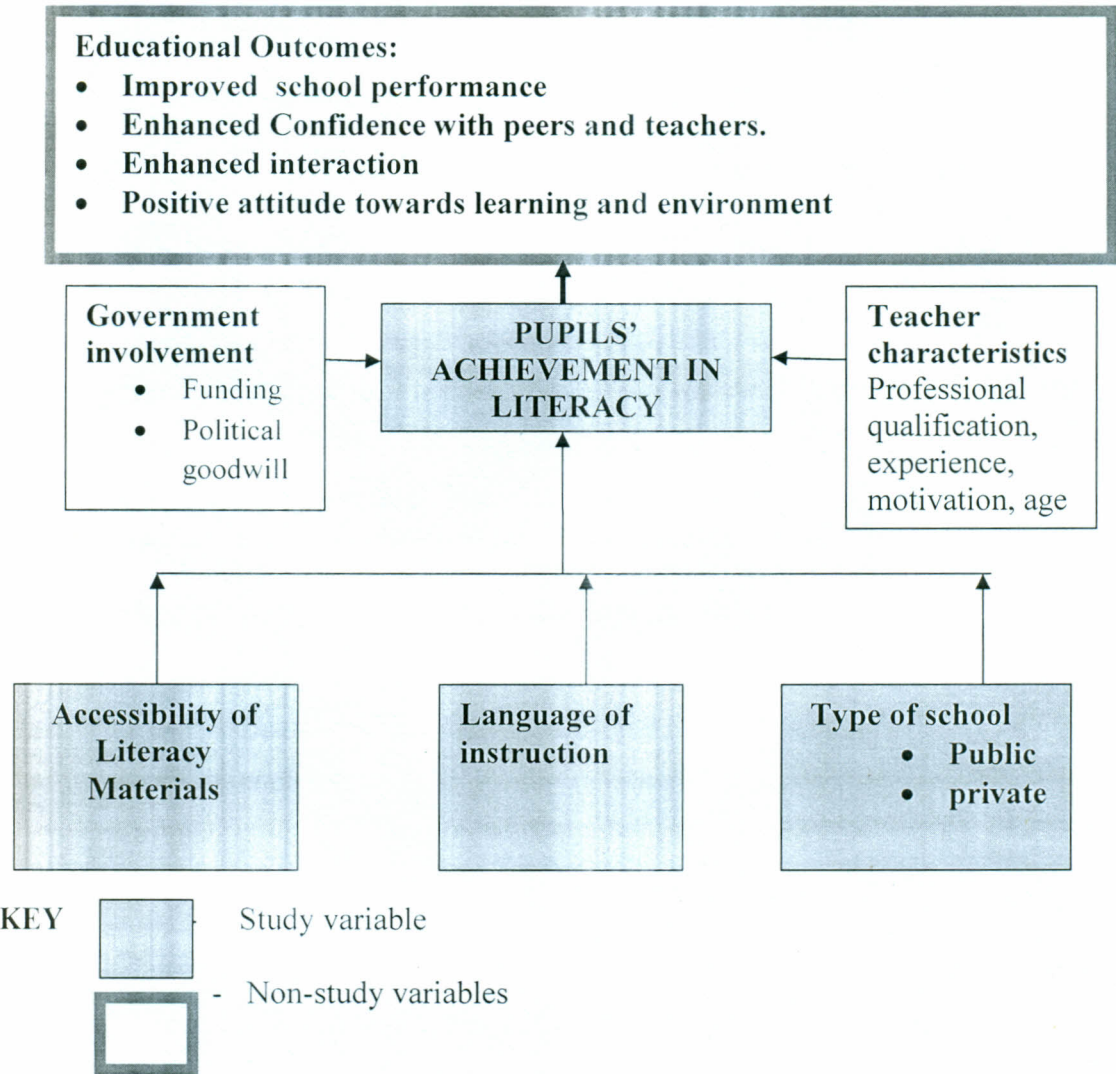


Figure 1.1 Factors influencing pupils' achievement in literacy

Figure 1.1 shows the variables which influence pupils' achievement in literacy including language used as a medium of instruction, type of school and availability of literacy materials.

1.10 Operational Definition of Terms

Accessibility of reading materials: This refers to the resources available to learners containing information that can be read and have opportunity to use them. This includes course books, charts and any other material where information can be extracted.

Achievement in reading literacy: It refers to pupils' average scores in reading test at a given test.

Lower primary: Refers to class three pupils in a formal learning primary school in Kenya.

Reading literacy: Refers to ability of the learner to read.

Type of school: It refers to private or public primary school.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This section gives a systematic identification, location, and analysis of the pertinent and related literature to the problem. This entails a review of literature on language literacy, pupils reading literacy levels, pupils' language of instruction, accessibility of reading literacy materials and summary of literature review.

2.1 Language Literacy

According to Lewis (2010) literacy is the ability to read and write. According to UNESCO (2005) literacy is the heart of basic education for all. Everywhere one will look, one will see words on signs, in training manuals, on buses, and in books. That is why it is so important to get children reading when they are young, long before they become adults. Even though their physical survival may not depend on knowing how to read a book, children do gain skills for coping with life when they learn to read (Denton, 2002).

2.2 Achievement in Literacy in Primary Schools

A study conducted by Goodwin (2000) indicates that children's reading skills are important to their success in school and work. In addition, reading can be a fun and imaginative activity for children, which opens doors to all kinds of new worlds for them. Reading and writing are the important ways in which we use language to communicate (Goodwin, 2000). Literacy is fundamental for learning in school and has an

impact on pupils' ability to participate in society and to understand important public issues (Anderson, 2002). Literacy provides the foundation upon which skills needed in the labour market are to be built. Early childhood literacy begins in pre-school or earlier, when books and pictures are introduced to children with the intention of getting them familiar with letters, numbers, and symbols.

A study conducted by Miedel (1999) indicates that children who fall in love with the experience of reading when they are young are likely to enjoy it when they are older. Early exposure to books, typically through being read to by a parent, grandparent, or other care-giver, instills in children a sense of security and warmth. The positive feelings these children get from books grows into a desire to read books for themselves when they are older.

SACMEQ, a regional research project involving 14 countries in sub-Saharan Africa whose objective is to monitor learning achievement at primary school level was started in 1998 and so far it has produced three reports, SACMEQ I – 1998, SACMEQ II – 2000 and SACMEQ III – 2007).Key among the findings of SACMEQ III indicates that standard one pupils' reading competency level were: Kenya 2.3, Tanzania 1.4, and Uganda 5.8; Standard two percentage pupils' reading at competency level were: Tanzania 2.1, Uganda 14.6;Standard three percentage pupils' reading at competency level were as follows: Kenya 11.8, and Tanzania 6.6. The standard one reading test was based on the pre-reading, standard two was based on emergent reading and standard three reading test was on basic reading. When SACMEQIII conducted studies in Kenya across the eight provinces indicated that standard three pupils' percentage competency levels were:

Central 9.7, Coast 8.0, Eastern 9.1, Nairobi 2.8, North Eastern 9.9, Nyanza 9.6, Rift Valley 14.5 and western 19.7. From the above reading competency percentages, it is clear that there is low reading achievement across many parts of Africa and Kenya as a country not spared.

Another study done by Uwezo (2011) on Kenyan pupils reading competency across counties indicate that only a small percentage of the standard three pupils can read a story, 2.8% of standard three pupils read nothing, 15.7% read letters, 28.5 % read words, 25.8 % can read a paragraph and 27.5 can read a story. Further, this report indicates that Kisii Central District recorded standard three reading competency of 28.07%. In light of the above percentages in reading competency, it is clear that many standard three pupils have low reading ability and Kisii County in particular where this study will be conducted. It is because of this low reading achievement that the researcher will try to investigate the factors causing low reading literacy levels among the standard three pupils.

2.3 Language of instruction and Pupils' Achievement in Literacy

In Kenya, language policy requires that in lower primary schools, mother tongue (MT) should be used as the language of instruction. English (which is also Kenya's official language) and Kiswahili (the country's national language) are taught as subjects at this stage of learning, but from standard four-eight. English is adopted as the language of instruction in all schools (Republic of Kenya, 1976). The use of MT as the language of instruction (LOI) is believed to facilitate the child's development of concepts that enable him/her to easily acquire knowledge in a second or third language, and further help in

exposing the child to the cultures of his/her community (Sifuna, 1980; Parry, 2000; Milton 1992). In a significant way, the LOI is also the means by which learners can express their experiences in the learning process.

According to a study by Adeyemi & Adeyemi (2012) on the Influence of English Proficiency on Junior Secondary School Achievement in Social Studies in Nigeria, the study indicated that Education is perceived as development and language is the major medium of communication through which innovations, ideas, views and opinions are transmitted from one person to another. The medium of instruction in school dictates to a large extent the attainment of knowledge and skills at all levels of the Education system (Gorman, 1974). In Kenya, English was declared the official language when the Government attained self rule in 1963, hence it was to be used in all important Governmental sectors, education inclusive (Ngugi 1986).

According to Christ (1997), there is a positive relationship between the language of instruction and the nature and quality of learning in any learning institutions. Positive attitudes towards language and especially the medium of instruction steer learning beyond the classroom situation through the interactions between learners, and between learners and materials. But negative attitudes affect the learners' attainment of skills and knowledge.

A research in Uganda on the use of Mother tongue as a means of instruction in the lower primary indicate that there is a relative low level of adherence to the language policy in the first three years of primary school (Piper, 2010). On the contrary, mother tongue as a

medium of instruction is quite disregarded in primary schools in both rural and urban areas, and English is still employed as a medium of instruction due to the prestige attached to this language. However, research has indicated that Children learn better and are able to acquire knowledge and skills when they are taught in their mother tongue (Government White paper on Education 1992).

The study by Bunyi, (1997) and Obondo, (1997) indicated that the role of language as a determinant of intellectual and cognitive development of individuals; as a mode of transfer of knowledge and for interaction between teacher and students. Therefore, learners who do not have adequate command of the language of instruction cannot perform well in any subject (Nsibambi, 1999). In such a situation, the teaching-learning process cannot help students acquire the intended knowledge and skills necessary for individual as well as community development.

A study conducted by Milon (1992) reveals that schools which have a language policy adhered to gives the learners an advantage in terms of acquiring language literacy. Teachers' role therefore is to ensure a well established language policy within the school environment. The language used in school assembly by the head-teacher and that used by teachers and counselors in advising pupils in an important aspect in the conceptualization of life skills. Often there is important information, advice or even warning to be communicated to pupils. The language designated in the school should be the one the learners should use to read and write. This study will determine whether school language policy influence pupils' achievement in literacy.

2.4 Accessibility of Reading Literacy Materials and Pupils' Reading Literacy

Literacy materials are essential in enhancing the literacy of children. Studies by Miedel (1999) & Guthrie (1978) have highlighted the importance of literacy materials as they improve children's performance in literacy. Findings from the rigorous studies suggest that providing children with literacy materials helps them read better.

In Kenya, Ruthiri (2009) investigated the availability, acquisition and utilization of teaching - learning of English language. Results revealed that the acquisition of teaching-learning resources was a challenge to most schools due to lack of finances and lack of time for teachers to develop teaching-learning resources. Ogott, Indoshi, Okwara (2010) conducted a study on how teaching and learning of language in Education Early Childhood Development and Education (ECDE) Centers could benefit from effective selection, development and use of materials. The purpose of the study was to determine the range and factors influencing selection, development and use of language materials. The study found that there was acute shortage of language materials in ECDE centers.

2.5 Type of School and Pupils' Reading Literacy

The Government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education categorizes schools majorly as public and private. A study by UWEZO (2010) points out that majority of the learners in East Africa attends public schools. The same report reveals that a significant number of children attend private primary schools. In Kenya 9% of school going children go to private schools, while in Uganda as many as 28% of children attend private schools. Tanzania is the one country in which few children attend private schools (2%). In Tanzania, where children attending private schools almost without exception came from

households in the top two wealth quintiles. In Uganda, private education is also accessed by children from poorer households, though children from wealthier families were still much more likely to attend. Kenya takes an intermediate position.

Pupils attending private schools performed better on the Uwezo tests than those attending public schools. This holds true across the three countries. In Kenya, 60% of children in Standard three private schools passed the English and numeracy tests. This was still a far cry from the expected 100% but twice as good as the performance in public schools. In Tanzania, the difference in performance by standard three pupils between public and private schools was most notable. Whereas less than 10% of children in public schools passed the English test, almost half of those in private schools did. A similar yet smaller difference was found for the numeracy test. Perhaps the more surprising result was from Uganda where private schools did better than public schools, but with only 10% of children in standard three passing the English test, even though English language is ostensibly used in some of these schools. This performance was the worst in East Africa. In Uganda, class three private school children also performed worst on the numeracy test amongst those attending private schools.

Performance on the Uwezo tests by children attending private schools was significantly better than those attending public schools, but far from perfect. In Tanzania and Uganda in particular, pupils attending private schools performed poorly. Even in Kenya, whose private schools performed best, one in three pupils in Standard three failed to pass the Uwezo numeracy and English test. The foregoing results indicate that the type of school

may be influencing reading literacy among children. The better performance of private schools provides an opportunity to explore what drives the better results.

2.6 Summary of Literature Reviewed

The chapter has presented a review of the studies that are related to the proposed study. Reviewed studies have shown that various factors influence literacy achievement among pupils. In addition, pre-school experiences play a great role as far as children's reading literacy is concerned. Equally, school type coupled with availability of literacy materials enhances children's achievement in literacy. The review has also shown that in Kenya, minimal research has been conducted on factors influencing children's reading literacy in lower primary schools hence making it necessary for this study.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology used in this study including the research design, Variables, location of the study, target population, sampling techniques and sample size. Others are research instruments, pilot study, validity, reliability, data collection, data analysis techniques, and ethical and logistical considerations.

3.1 Research Design

The researcher used descriptive survey method because of the nature of the study. Descriptive survey is present-oriented which seeks to establish what is there. Descriptive surveys also provide information about population variables. According to Kothari (2004) descriptive survey in social sciences aim at fact-finding of the state of affairs as they exist. Orodho (2009) adds that descriptive survey design involves collecting, processing and analyzing large data in order to make decisions on a specific phenomenon. Finally the researcher will use descriptive survey because the researcher is not interested in manipulating research variables.

3.2 Study Variables

This study involved three independent variables and one dependent variable.

3.2.1 Dependent Variables

The dependent variable was pupils' achievement in literacy.

3.2.2 Independent Variables

The independent variables were: availability of reading literacy materials in lower primary schools in the district, type of school and language of instruction.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Kisii central Sub-county, Kisii County. The sub-county was purposefully sampled because studies conducted by Uwezo (2011) on Annual Learning Assessment report revealed that children in the County recorded an average of 24.83% which is below the national average of 27.2 %.

3.4 Target Population

The population of the study consisted of all lower primary school teachers and class three pupils in Kisii Central sub-county.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

They are described in the following sections.

3.5.1 Sampling Techniques

In this study, purposive stratified and random sampling techniques were used to select the sample of the study. Purposive sampling technique was used to select Kisii Central sub-county and class three while stratified sampling was used to sample schools to either private or public primary schools. Simple random sampling was used to select schools and pupils to be involved in the study. The researcher randomly selected 15 % of the 205 primary schools in the district in each category.

According to Babbie (1992) a sample of 15 % of accessible population is considered adequate in descriptive studies in social sciences. The researcher then sampled 15 % of class three teachers; the researcher then sampled 15 % of the class three pupils in the sampled schools.

Table 3.1 Sampling Frame

| Subjects | | Total | Sample selected |
|----------|---------|-------|-----------------|
| Schools | Public | 125 | 19 |
| | Private | 80 | 12 |
| Teachers | | 205 | 31 |

3.5.2 Sample Size

The sample of the study consisted of thirty one class three teachers and 30 % of class three pupils in the sample schools in the district. Nineteen of the schools were public, while the remaining twelve were private primary schools.

3.6 Research Instruments

The researcher used the following instruments:

3.6.1 Reading Literacy Checklist

The researcher used a checklist to be administered to standard three teachers. The instrument consisted of two sections. Section A collected background information, while section B measured pupils' reading literacy abilities.

3.6.2 Questionnaire for Teachers

The questionnaire was used to investigate the factors contributing to poor reading literacy levels in lower primary schools in the district. It consists of two sections: Section A collected background information, while section B collected information on the factors contributing to poor reading literacy achievement.

3.6.3 Observation Schedule

The observation was used to determine the availability of reading literacy materials in lower primary schools in the district.

3.7 Pilot Study

The instruments were piloted in two primary schools in the district which were not being part of the main study. The purpose of piloting the instruments was to test the appropriateness and usefulness of the items to the teachers in order to improve the reliability and validity of the instruments.

3.7.1 Validity

Content validity was used to test the validity of the instruments. It was achieved by ensuring that test items covered all objectives and variables of the study.

3.7.2 Reliability

The internal consistency of the research instruments was achieved by using test-retest method within an interval of one week. The results of the first and second administration were then compared. The reliability of the instrument was found to be 0.82.

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

Data was collected in three stages:

Stage I: Check list was administered to teachers to collect information about pupils and literacy achievement.

Stage II: Administer a questionnaire to teachers to establish factors causing poor reading literacy achievement.

Stage III: The researcher observed the availability of literacy materials in schools.

3.9 Data Analysis

Data was both qualitative and quantitative. With qualitative data, the researcher used the analytical technique to determine the recording styles used during data collection exercise. The analytical techniques included; quick impressionistic summary, thematic analysis and content analysis. Quantitative data was coded and entered into the computer for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Data was also analyzed using simple descriptive statistics, including frequency counts, mean, and percentages. Chi-Square was used to test the relationship between dependent and independent variables at 0.05 significant levels. The results were summarized using frequency tables, bar graphs, line graphs and pie charts.

3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained an introductory letter from Graduate school Kenyatta University introducing him to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology. After which, a letter from the District Education Office was obtained that allowed the researcher to carry out the research in that District. After which

the head teachers and standard three class teachers of the sampled primary schools were contacted to give consent in order to conduct the study in their schools. Respondents' confidentiality was ensured through the anonymity principle.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the research findings, their interpretation and discussion of the findings. The organization of the chapter is based on the objectives that guided the study. The results are presented in tables and also illustrated in figures. The chapter starts by providing information on respondents and response rate, then the methods of data analysis, descriptive data analysis, and lastly statistical analysis of hypothesis.

4.1 The Response Rate for the Sample

The number of respondents that were targeted in the study was 356 and Table 4.1 below presents the response rate.

Table 4.1 Respondent Rate

| NO. | Respondents | Sample size | Number of Respondents | Response rate (%) |
|-----|-------------|-------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Schools | 31 | 30 | 97.8 |
| 2 | Pupils | 294 | 288 | 98.0 |
| 3 | Teachers | 31 | 30 | 97.8 |

Table 4.1 shows that 97.8% of schools, 98.0% of pupils and 97.8% of the teachers sampled respondent to the questionnaire and interview schedules.

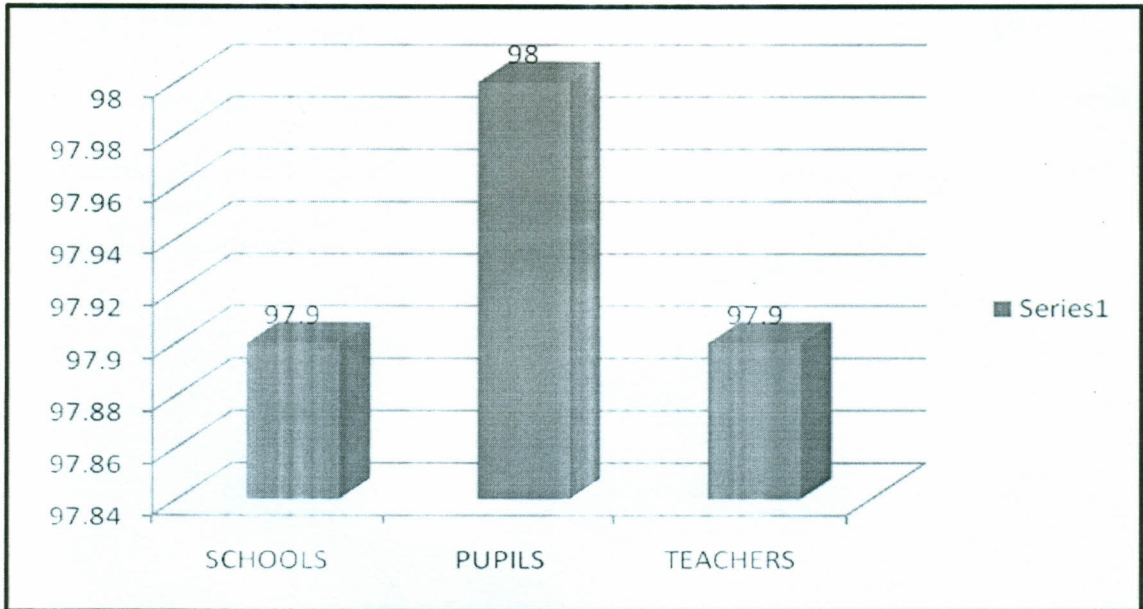


Figure 4.1 Respondent Rate

Figure 4.1 indicates that the average respondent rate was 97.8 % which was a recommendable response.

4.1.1 Schools type Response Rate

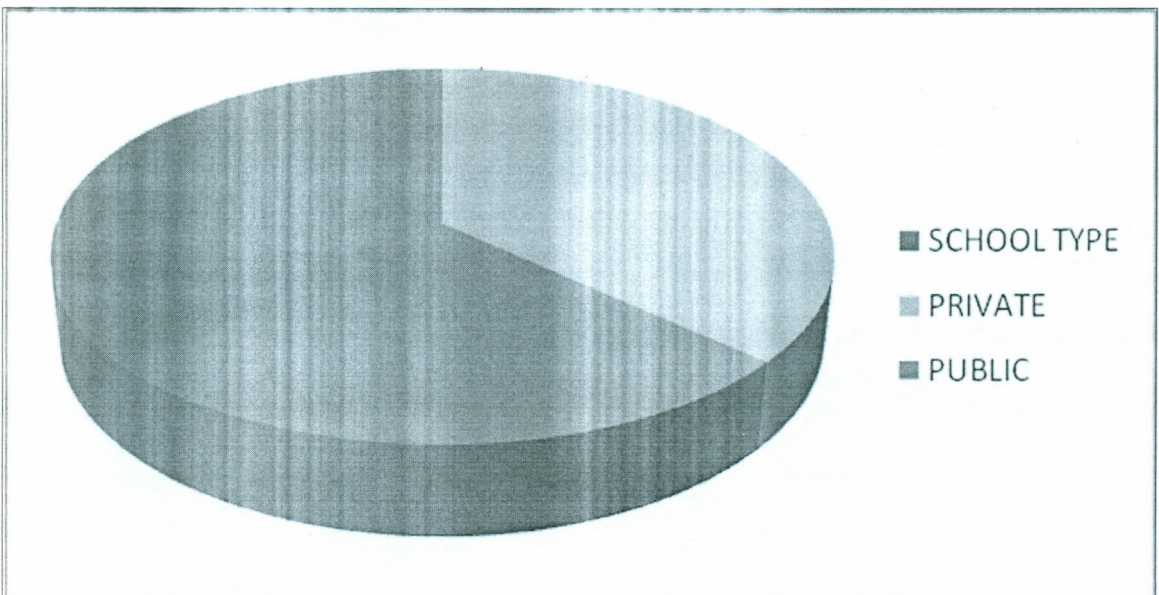


Figure 4.2 School Type Response Rate

Figure 4.1.1 indicates that an average of 63 % of the sampled schools were public school whereas 37% private schools. This indicates that there were more public schools sampled than private schools. This was due to the reason that there are more public schools in the district than private schools.

4.1.2 Pupils' Response Rate

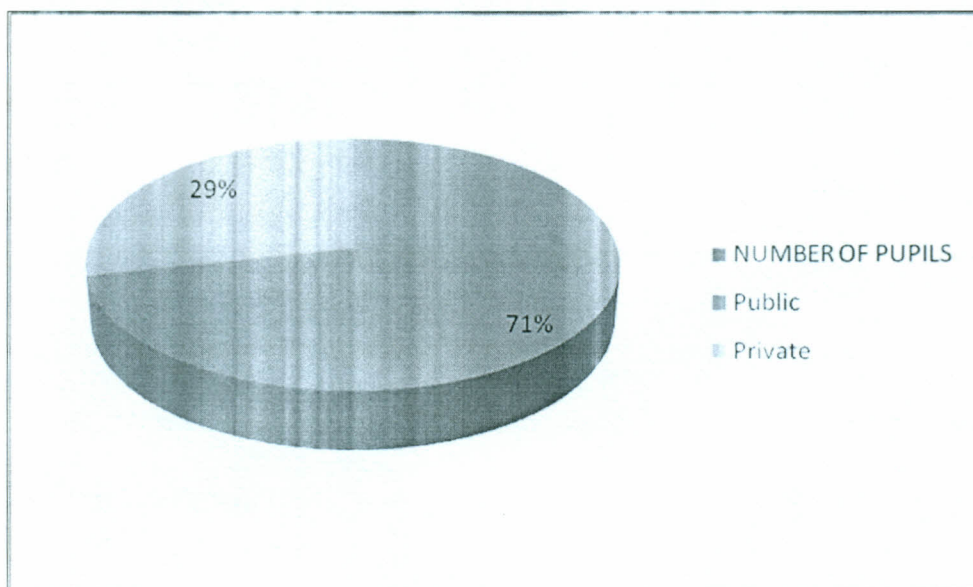


Figure 4.3 Pupil Samples Response Rate

Figure 4.1.1 indicates that 71 % of the pupils who were sampled were from public primary schools whereas 29% were from private schools

Quantitative and qualitative data were collected from 288 pupils and 30 class three teachers from 30 primary schools in Kisii district, Kisii County, Kenya. Some of the questionnaires were incorrectly filled so they were not used during data analysis (2.2%).

4.2 Pupils' Reading Literacy Levels in Lower Primary Schools

The objective to be achieved was to establish pupils' reading literacy levels in lower primary schools in Kisii Central Sub-county. To achieve the objective pupils reading abilities were determined and the results are presented in Table 4.2 – Table 4.5.

Table 4.2 Percentage of Pupils Who Can Identify Letter Sounds (i, d, a, e, p, n)

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent (%) | Cumulative Percent (%) |
|------------|-----------|---------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Valid Able | 178 | 60.4 | 60.4 | 60.4 |
| Attempts | 71 | 24.3 | 24.3 | 84.7 |
| Unable | 45 | 15.3 | 15.3 | 100.0 |
| Total | 294 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 4.2 indicates that 60.4% of the pupils in standard three were able to identify letter sounds, 24.3% attempted and 15.3% were unable to identify the letter sounds.

Table 4.3 Percentage of Pupils who can read Simple Words (dig, good, foot, nose, leg, play)

| | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Valid Able | 150 | 51.2 | 51.2 | 51.2 |
| Attempts | 87 | 29.7 | 29.7 | 80.9 |
| Unable | 57 | 19.0 | 19.0 | 100.0 |
| Total | 294 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 4.3 indicates that 51.2% of the pupils in standard three were able to read simple words, 29.7% attempted and 19.0% were unable to read simple words.

Table 4.4 Percentage of Pupils who can Read a Sentence

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid % | Cumulative % |
|---------|----------|-----------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Valid | Able | 105 | 35.6 | 35.7 | 35.7 |
| | Attempts | 43 | 14.6 | 14.7 | 50.4 |
| | Unable | 145 | 49.5 | 49.6 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 293 | 99.7 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | System | 1 | .3 | | |
| Total | | 294 | 100.0 | | |

Table 4.4 indicates that 35.7% of the pupils in standard three were able to read simple sentences, 14.7% attempted and 49.6% were unable to read simple sentences.

Table 4.5 Percentage of Pupils who can Read a Paragraph

| | | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative % |
|---------|----------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------|
| Valid | Able | 33 | 11.3 | 11.3 | 11.3 |
| | Attempts | 80 | 27.4 | 27.4 | 38.7 |
| | Unable | 180 | 61.0 | 61.3 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 293 | 99.7 | 100.0 | |
| Missing | System | 1 | .3 | | |
| Total | | 294 | 100.0 | | |

Table 4.5 indicates that 11.3% of the pupils in standard three were able to read simple paragraph, 27.4% attempted and 61.3% were unable to read simple paragraph.

Figure 4.4 Reading literacy levels

KEY

- 1- Can identify letter sounds
- 2- Can read simple words
- 3- Can read a sentence
- 4- Can read paragraph

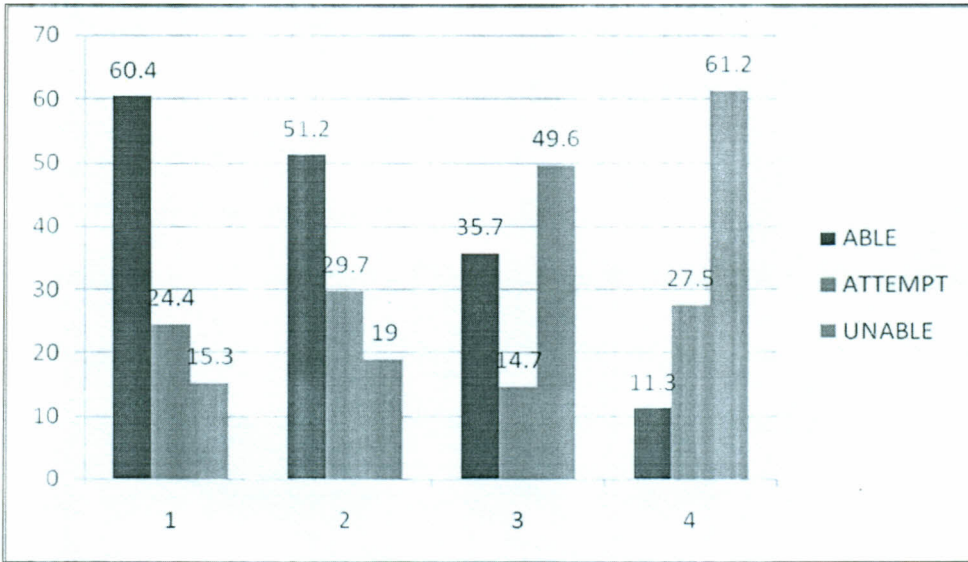


Figure 4.4 Reading literacy levels

From figure 4.4, it is noted that 15.3% of the pupils were unable to identify the letter sounds and 19.0% of the pupils were unable to read simple three-letter words which is a Basic English skills that should be acquired in pre-primary schools. At the same time we note that 49.0% of the pupils were unable to read simple sentences while 61.3% were unable to read simple paragraph.

The current result indicates that reading difficulties are common in most of our schools (78.4%). This findings is supported by a national assessment which found that one-third of 4th graders in the United States failed to demonstrate even "partial mastery of prerequisite knowledge and skills" necessary to read and understand grade-level text (Lee, Grigg, & Donahue, 2007).

The current findings are also supported by another study done by Uwezo (2011) on Kenyan pupils reading competency across counties which indicated that 2.8% of class

three pupils read nothing, 15.7 % reads a letters, 28.5 % reads words, 25.8 % can read a paragraph and 27.5 % can read a story.

The results found that in schools that serve majority of pupils (public schools), 75% of the pupils are unable to read simple sentence and paragraphs. These results are supported by the results in the United States which indicates more than half of the students in some schools cannot read and understand grade-level text at the basic level (Lee et al., 2007). This is a clear indication that reading achievement does not only affect Kenyan pupils but also pupils in other countries outside Africa.

It is also important to note that the current study indicates a higher percentage of reading competency levels when compared with a study by SACMEQ in a regional research project involving 14 countries in sub-Saharan Africa where the main objective of the consortium was to monitor learning achievement at primary school level. It started in 1998 and so far it has produced three reports; Key among these was the findings of SACMEQ III, (2007) which indicates that class three pupils reading percentage competency level in Namibia 25.1 %, Uganda 25.5 %, Tanzania 6.6 % and Kenya was 11.8 %. It can be realized that there is low reading achievement levels across many parts of Africa and Kenya as a country inclusive.

4.3 Language of Instruction and Pupils' Reading Literacy Levels

The objective to be achieved was to explore the influence of language of instruction on pupils' reading literacy levels. To achieve the objective language used as a medium of

instruction in the schools by teachers were was established and Table 4.6 below presents the results.

Table 4.6 Language used as a Medium of Instruction

| | Frequency | Percent (%) | Pupils Percent (%) | Cumulative Percent (%) |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------------------|------------------------|
| English | 10 | 3.4 | 3.4 | 3.4 |
| English/Kiswahili | 199 | 67.7 | 67.7 | 71.1 |
| kiswahili/mother tongue | 44 | 15.0 | 15.0 | 86.1 |
| English/kiswahili/mothe r tongue | 41 | 13.9 | 13.9 | 100.0 |
| Total | 294 | 100.0 | 100.0 | |

Table 4.6 indicates that majority of teachers (67.7%) used a combination of English and Kiswahili as medium of instruction in class three, 3.4% uses only English, 15% uses Kiswahili/ mother tongue while 13.9% use a combination of English/Kiswahili/Mother tongue in teaching standard three pupils. This information can be illustrated as follows.

Figure 4.5 Language used as a Medium of Instruction

KEY:

% OF P – Percentage of pupils

E - English

E/K - English/Kiswahili

K/M -Kiswahili/Mother tongue

E/K/M -English/Kiswahili/Mother tongue

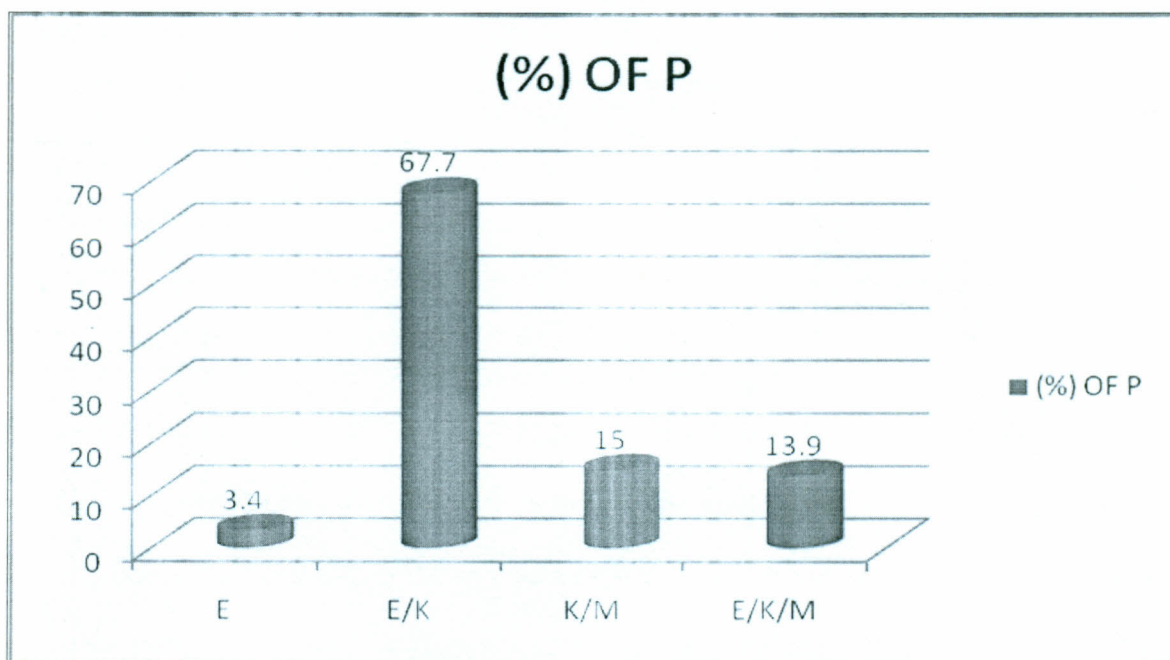


Figure 4.5 Language used as a Medium of Instruction

Figure 4.5 indicate that only 3.4% of teachers used English as medium of instruction as recommended in primary English syllabus.

Table 4.7 Language of Instruction and Identification of Letter Sounds

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 21.158 ^a | 6 | .002 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 22.200 | 6 | .001 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 14.452 | 1 | .000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 293 | | |

Table 4.7 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (21.158), degrees of freedom (6) and associated p-value (0.002). The p-value from the test is 0.002 which means that the test statistic is significant at the 5% level since P-value is less than 0.05. There is therefore evidence to state that there is a significant relationship between language of instruction and identification of letter sounds.

Table 4.8 Language of instruction and the reading of simple words

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 11.105 ^a | 6 | .004 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 11.904 | 6 | .002 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 6.327 | 1 | .000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 294 | | |

Table 4.8 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (11.105), degrees of freedom (6) and associated p-value (0.004). The p-value from the test is 0.004 which means that the test statistic is significant at the 5% level since P-value was less than 0.05. There is therefore evidence to state that there was a significant relationship between language of instruction and pupil's ability to read simple words.

Table 4.9 Language Instruction and the Reading of Sentences

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 10.124 ^a | 6 | .091 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 9.983 | 6 | .125 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 6.870 | 1 | .009 |
| N of Valid Cases | 294 | | |

Table 4.9 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (10.124), degrees of freedom (6) and associated p-value (0.091). The p-value from the test is 0.091 which means that there was a weak relationship between the language of instruction and pupil's ability to read sentences at the 5% level since P-value is less than 0.1 but greater than 0.05 then we note that there was weak evidence in favour of the alternative hypothesis that there was a significance relationship between the language of instruction and the pupil's ability to read a sentence.

Table 4.10 Language of Instruction and the Reading of Paragraph

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 28.432 ^a | 6 | .000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 31.324 | 6 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 15.269 | 1 | .000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 293 | | |

Table 4.10 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (28.432), degrees of freedom (6) and associated p-value (0.000). The p-value from the test is 0.000 which means that the test statistic is significant at the 5% level since P-value is less than 0.05. The results show that there was a significant relationship between language of instruction and the pupils' ability to read a paragraph.

The current findings is supported by a study by Christ (1997), that indicated a positive relationship between the language of instruction and the nature and quality of learning in any learning institutions. On contrary a study by Benson, (2004) indicates that pupil's attitudes towards language and especially the medium of instruction steer learning beyond the classroom situation through the interactions between learners, and between learners and materials. Positive or negative attitudes affect the learners' attainment of skills and knowledge. Other study indicates the learners' first language and in many instances the mother tongue, is paramount in the acquisition of knowledge and skills in school (Gorman, 1974).

The current findings are also supported by a research carried in Uganda on the use of Mother tongue as a means of instruction in the lower primary that indicated that there is a relative low level of adherence to the language policy in the first three years of primary

school (Piper, 2010). On the contrary, mother tongue as a medium of instruction is quite disregarded in primary schools in both rural and urban areas, and English is still employed as a medium of instruction due to the prestige attached to this language. However, research has indicated that Children learn better and are able to acquire knowledge and skills when they are taught in their mother tongue (Government White paper on Education, 1992).

4.4 Availability of Reading literacy Materials and Pupils' Reading literacy levels

The objective to be achieved by the researcher was to find out the influence of the availability of reading literacy materials on pupils' reading literacy levels. The availability of reading materials in the schools was determined and the results are presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 Reading Literacy Materials Available in the School

| SNO | | Percentage of schools with available reading materials | | Percentage of schools without reading materials |
|-----|--------------|--|--------------|---|
| | | Adequate | Not Adequate | |
| 1 | Course books | 45.6% | 54.4% | 0% |
| 2 | Charts | 41.7% | 48.3% | 0% |
| 3. | Story books | 36.2% | 63.8% | 0% |
| 4. | Pencils | 75.4% | 24.6% | 0% |
| 5. | Crayons | 23.8% | 72.1% | 4.1% |
| | Average | 45.54% | 53.64% | 0.82% |

Table 4.11 indicates that 45.6% of schools had adequate course books, 41.7% .41.7% charts, 36.2% story books, 75.4% pencils while 23.8% have adequate crayons.

Table 4.12 Course books and Identification of Letter Sounds

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 2.392 ^a | 2 | .302 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 2.274 | 2 | .321 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 1.838 | 1 | .175 |
| N of Valid Cases | 293 | | |

Table 4.12 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (2.392), degrees of freedom (2) and associated p-value (0.302) are given. The p-value from the test is 0.302 which means that the test statistic is not significant at the 5% level. The results indicate that there was no significant relationship between the availability of course books in schools and pupils' ability to identify letter sounds.

Table 4.13 Course Book and the Reading Simple Words

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|-------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | .212 ^a | 2 | .899 |
| Likelihood Ratio | .210 | 2 | .900 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .091 | 1 | .763 |
| N of Valid Cases | 294 | | |

Table 4.13 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (0.212), degrees of freedom (2) and associated p-value (0.899). The p-value from the test is 0.899 which means that the test statistic is not significant at the 5% level. The reveals that there was no significant relationship between the availability of course books in schools and pupils' ability to read simple English words.

Table 4.14 Course Book and the Reading of a Paragraph

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 1.127 ^a | 2 | .569 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 1.097 | 2 | .578 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .966 | 1 | .326 |
| N of Valid Cases | 294 | | |

Table 4.14 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (1.127), degrees of freedom (2) and associated p-value (0.569). The p-value from the test is 0.569 which means that the test statistic was not significant at the 5% level. The results imply that there was no significant relationship between the availability of course books in schools and pupils' ability to read paragraphs.

Table 4.15 Availability of Course Book and the Reading of Sentences

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 1.500 ^a | 2 | .472 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 1.567 | 2 | .457 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | .166 | 1 | .684 |
| N of Valid Cases | 293 | | |

Table 4.15 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (1.500), degrees of freedom (2) and associated p-value (0.472). The p-value from the test is 0.472 which means that the test statistic was not significant at 5% level of significance. The results clearly show that there was no significant relationship between the availability of course books in schools and pupils' ability to read sentences.

Table 4.16 Availability of Charts and the Identification of Letter Sounds

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 6.657 ^a | 4 | .002 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 5.895 | 4 | .001 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 4.005 | 1 | .000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 293 | | |

Table 4.16 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (6.657), degrees of freedom (4) and associated p-value (0.002). The p-value from the test is 0.002 which means that the test statistic is significant at the 5% level. This implies that there was a significant relationship between the availability of charts in schools and pupils' ability to identify letter sounds.

Table 4.17 Availability of Charts and the Reading of Simple Words

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 18.736 ^a | 4 | .001 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 22.259 | 4 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 11.446 | 1 | .001 |
| N of Valid Cases | 294 | | |

Table 4.17 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (18.736), degrees of freedom (4) and associated p-value (0.001). The p-value from the test is 0.001 which means that the test statistic was significant at the 5% level. The results imply that there was a significant relationship between the availability of charts in schools and pupils' ability to read simple words.

Table 4.18 Availability of Charts and the Reading of Paragraph

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 19.121 ^a | 4 | .001 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 21.239 | 4 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 14.205 | 1 | .000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 294 | | |

Table 4.18 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (19.121), degrees of freedom (4) and associated p-value (0.001). The p-value from the test is 0.001 which means that the test statistic was significant at the 5% level. There is therefore evidence to state that there was a significant relationship between the availability of charts in schools and pupils' ability to read paragraphs.

Table 4.19 Availability of Charts and the Reading of Sentences

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 52.117 ^a | 4 | .000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 58.321 | 4 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 39.935 | 1 | .000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 293 | | |

Table 4.19 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (52.117), degrees of freedom (4) and associated p-value (0.000). The p-value from the test is 0.000 which means that the test statistic was significant at the 5% level. There is therefore evidence to state that there was a significant relationship between the availability of charts in schools and pupils' ability to read simple sentences.

Table 4.20 Availability of Story Books and the Identification of Letter Sounds

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 5.991 ^a | 4 | .200 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 5.860 | 4 | .210 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 1.815 | 1 | .178 |
| N of Valid Cases | 293 | | |

Table 4.20 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (5.991), degrees of freedom (4) and associated p-value (0.200). The p-value from the test is 0.200 which means that the test statistic is not significant at the 5% level. There is therefore evidence to state that there was no significant relationship between the availability of story books in schools and pupils' ability to identify letter sounds.

Table 4.21 Availability of Story Books and the Reading of Simple Words

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 19.031 ^a | 4 | .001 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 19.695 | 4 | .001 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 12.761 | 1 | .000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 294 | | |

Table 4.21 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (19.031), degrees of freedom (4) and associated p-value (0.001). The p-value from the test is 0.001 which means that the test statistic was significant at the 5% level. The results imply that there was a significant relationship between the availability of story books in schools and pupils' ability to read simple words.

Table 4.22 Availability Story Books and the Reading of Paragraph

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 18.399 ^a | 4 | .001 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 19.136 | 4 | .001 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 14.280 | 1 | .000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 294 | | |

Table 4.22 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (18.399), degrees of freedom (4) and associated p-value (0.001). The p-value from the test is 0.001 which means that the test statistic was significant at the 5% level. The results indicate that there was a significant relationship between the availability of story books in schools and pupils' ability to read simple paragraphs.

Table 4.23 Availability of Story Books and the Reading of Sentences

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 80.69 ^a | 4 | .000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 89.049 | 4 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 59.160 | 1 | .000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 293 | | |

Table 4.23 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (80.369), degrees of freedom (4) and associated p-value (0.000) are given. The p-value from the test is 0.000 which means that the test statistic is significant at the 5% level. There is therefore evidence to state that there was a significant relationship between the availability of story books in schools and pupils' ability to read simple sentences.

Table 4.24 Availability of Pencils and the Identification of Letter Sound

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 16.818 ^a | 2 | .000 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 22.488 | 2 | .000 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 15.024 | 1 | .000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 293 | | |

Table 4.24 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (16.818), degrees of freedom (2) and associated p-value (0.000) are given. The p-value from the test is 0.000 which means that the test statistic is significant at the 5% level. There is therefore evidence to state that there was a significant relationship between the availability of pencils in schools and pupils' ability to identify letter sounds.

Table 4.25 Availability of Pencils and the Reading of Simple Words

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 2.987 ^a | 2 | .225 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 5.234 | 2 | .073 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 1.764 | 1 | .184 |
| N of Valid Cases | 294 | | |

Table 4.25 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (2.987), degrees of freedom (2) and associated p-value (0.225) are given. The p-value from the test is 0.225 which means that the test statistic was not significant at the 5% level. There is therefore evidence to suggest that there was no significant relationship between the availability of pencils in schools and pupils' ability to read simple words.

Table 4.26 Availability of Pencils and the Reading of Paragraph

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 4.310 ^a | 2 | .116 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 4.985 | 2 | .083 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 3.607 | 1 | .058 |
| N of Valid Cases | 294 | | |

Table 4.26 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (4.310), degrees of freedom (2) and associated p-value (0.116) are given. The p-value from the test is 0.116 which means that the test statistic was not significant at the 5% level. There is therefore evidence to state that there was no significant relationship between the availability of pencils in schools and pupils' ability to read paragraphs.

Table 4.27 Availability of Pencils and the Reading of Sentences

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 4.502 ^a | 2 | .105 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 4.947 | 2 | .084 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 4.486 | 1 | .034 |
| N of Valid Cases | 293 | | |

Table 4.27 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (4.502), degrees of freedom (2) and associated p-value (0.105). The p-value from the test is 0.105 which means that the test statistic was not significant at the 5% level. The results imply that there was no significant relationship between the availability of pencils in schools and pupils' ability to read sentences.

Table 4.28 Availability of Crayons and identification of letter sounds

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|--------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 7.578 ^a | 4 | .108 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 7.535 | 4 | .110 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 6.041 | 1 | .014 |
| N of Valid Cases | 293 | | |

Table 4.28 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (7.578), degrees of freedom (4) and associated p-value (0.108). The p-value from the test is 0.108 which means that the test statistic was not significant at the 5% level. There is therefore evidence to state that there was no significant relationship between the availability of crayons in schools and pupils' ability to identify letter sounds.

Table 4.29 Availability Crayons and the Reading of Simple Words

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 26.577 ^a | 4 | .200 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 34.843 | 4 | .100 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 19.403 | 1 | .000 |
| N of Valid Cases | 294 | | |

Table 4.29 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (26.577), degrees of freedom (4) and associated p-value (0.200) are given. The p-value from the test is 0.200 which means that the test statistic was not significant at the 5% level. There is therefore evidence to state that there was no significant relationship between the availability of crayons in schools and pupils' ability to read simple words.

Table 4.30 Availability of Crayons and the Reading of Paragraph

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 30.601 ^a | 4 | .313 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 39.012 | 4 | .212 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 24.767 | 1 | .100 |
| N of Valid Cases | 294 | | |

Table 4.30 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (30.601), degrees of freedom (4) and associated p-value (0.313). The p-value from the test is 0.313 which means that the test statistic was not significant at the 5% level. There is therefore evidence to state that there was no significant relationship between the availability of crayons in schools and pupils' ability to read paragraphs.

Table 4.31 Availability of Crayons and Reading of Sentences

| | Value | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
| Pearson Chi-Square | 62.603 ^a | 4 | .128 |
| Likelihood Ratio | 68.415 | 4 | .120 |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 50.313 | 1 | .101 |
| N of Valid Cases | 293 | | |

Table 4.31 shows the result from the Pearson Chi-square test: the Chi-square statistic (62.603), degrees of freedom (4) and associated p-value (0.128) are given. The p-value from the test is 0.128 which means that the test statistic was not significant at the 5% level. There is therefore evidence to state that there was no significant relationship between the availability of crayons in schools and pupils' ability to read sentences.

The current study has evidence showing that the availability of reading materials have a positive relationship with the learners' reading literacy levels in primary schools. The current study is supported by a study by Montagnes (2001) on the influence of textbooks and learning materials on learners' performance in South Africa. The results indicated

that pupils in classes with classroom libraries outperformed those who were in classes without libraries by as much as 189 per cent, and were ahead by 187 months in reading scores and two years in writing scores. The study had also found that the more children read, the better readers they become. Children read more when they have access to engaging, age appropriate books, magazines, newspapers, computers and other reading materials. They read more on topics that interest them than on topics that do not interest them. Many teachers (84.4%) reported a positive impact of books and access to reading materials on reading achievement, creativity, developing language skills.

On contrary a study by Tella (2007) on children's reading habits and availability of books in Botswana primary schools had found out that inadequate books availability was one of the obstacles to developing reading habits. But the study indicated that reading habits had greater impacts on reading literacy levels than the availability of literacy materials.

On contrary a study by Grogan (2006) on who benefits from universal primary education in Uganda found that it was not the availability of reading material that had a positive influence on reading literacy but a pupil-textbook ratio. Hence if the government's effort to improve production and disbursement of textbooks is low, then developing reading in pupils will be a problem.

4.5 School Type and Pupils' Reading Literacy Levels

The objective to be achieved was to investigate the relationship between school type and pupils' reading literacy levels. To achieve the objective the percentage of pupils who were unable to read were determined and the results are presented in Table 4.31.

Table 4.32 Relationship between the Type of School and Literacy Levels

| | Percentage of pupils in: | |
|---|--------------------------|-----------------|
| | Public schools | Private schools |
| Percentage of pupils who are unable to identify letter sounds | 35.7% | 4.6% |
| Percentage of pupils who are unable to read simple words | 46.9% | 7.8% |
| Percentage of pupils who are unable to read a sentence | 67.8% | 14.9% |
| Percentage of pupils who are unable to read a paragraph | 82.8% | 24.5% |
| Average percentage of pupils | 58.3% | 12.96% |

Table 4.32 indicates that private schools have fewer pupils who are unable to identify letter sounds (4.6%), read simple word (7.8%), read sentences (14.9%) and read paragraphs (24.5%) when compared to their counterparts in public schools.

Figure 4.6 Relationship between School Type and Literacy Levels

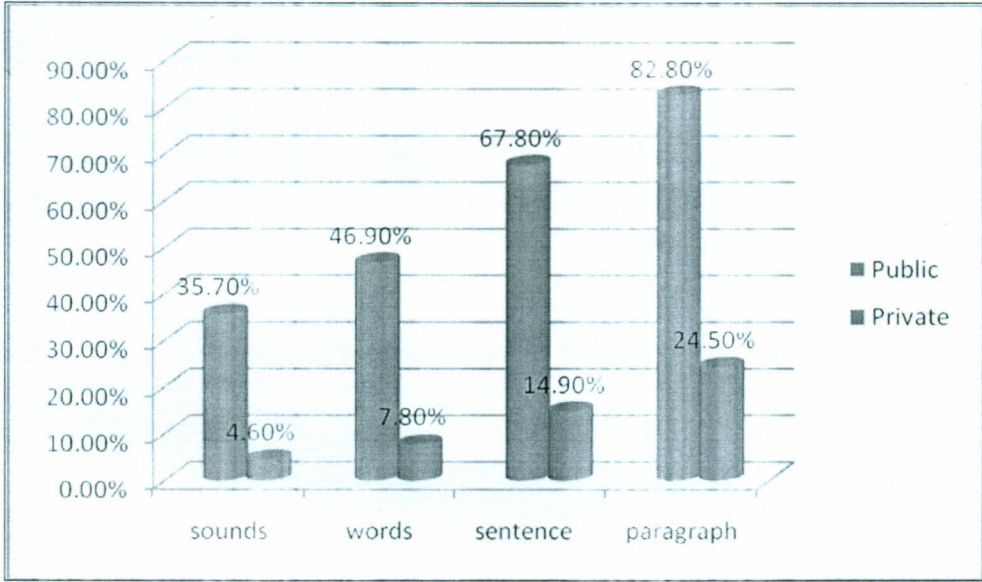


Figure 4.6 Relationships between School Type and Literacy Levels

Figure 4.6 indicates that public schools have more pupils who are unable to identify letter sounds (35.7%), read simple word (46.9%), read sentences (67.8%) and read paragraphs (82.8%) when compared to their counterparts in private schools. This finding is supported

by a study on pupils' Performance conducted by UWEZO (2010) which indicated that children who attend private schools had better results than those attending public schools in Kenya. Although the UWEZO study indicates that 60% of children in Standard three private schools passed the English and numeracy tests and the current study indicate that only 12.96 % of pupils in private schools had a low reading literacy levels (Table 4.31).

On contrary the UWEZO (2010) study indicate that in Tanzania and Uganda, pupils attending private schools performed poorer than those attending public schools. In Tanzania, the difference in performance by standard three pupils between public and private schools was most notable. Whereas less than 10% of children in public schools passed the English test, almost half of those in private schools did. A similar yet smaller difference was found for the numeracy test. Perhaps the more surprising result was from Uganda where private schools did better than public schools, but with only 10% of children in standard three passing the English test, even though English language is ostensibly used in some of these schools. This performance was the worst in East Africa. In Uganda, class three private school children also performed worst on the numeracy test amongst those attending private schools. The foregoing results indicate that the type of school may be influencing reading literacy among children.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter gives a summary of the findings, conclusion, recommendations and suggestions for additional research areas based on the study findings.

5.1 Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study was to establish pupils' reading literacy levels in lower primary schools in Kisii Central Sub-county, and also explore the influence of language of instruction on pupils' reading literacy levels, find out how the availability of reading literacy materials influence pupils' reading literacy levels and investigate the relationship between school type and pupils' reading literacy levels in Kisii Central sub-county, Kisii County.

Pupils in private lower primary schools had higher levels of reading literacy that those in public lower primary schools. Results had revealed that only 12.96 % of pupils in private schools had a low reading literacy levels compared 58.3% of their counterparts in public primary schools. The results had revealed that 15.3% of the standard three pupils were unable to identify the letter sounds and 19.0% of the pupils were unable to read simple three-letter words which are basic English skill that should be acquired in pre-primary schools. At the same time it was noted that 49.0% of the pupils were unable to read simple sentences while 61.3% are unable to read simple paragraph.

Language of instruction influenced pupils' levels of reading literacy. The results had indicated that there was a relative low level of adherence to the use of English as a language of instruction in the first three years of primary school. On contrary, mother tongue as a medium of instruction was quite disregarded in lower primary schools in both rural and urban areas, and a combination of Kiswahili and English was employed by majority of teachers (67.7%) as a medium of instruction due to the prestige attached to these subjects. However, research had indicated that Children learn better and are able to acquire knowledge and skills when they are taught in their mother tongue.

The study had found that availability of teaching materials had a positive correlation with the reading literacy levels in lower primary schools. The study had also established that children who attend private schools had significant better results than those pupils attending public primary schools.

5.2 Recommendations

It is the aim of all educational systems and, indeed, all parents, teachers and all stakeholders in Education at all levels, to seek to improve the reading literacy among pupils. Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made with the view of improving the reading literacy levels in primary schools in Kisii County and Kenya as a whole.

(i) School management should ensure conducive classroom learning environment that contain adequate literacy materials like textbooks books and charts that are of high-quality. The learning environment also should reflect the psychological environment of

the classroom that values all forms of reading and writing and supports risk-taking as the learners explore new literacy practices.

(ii) Teachers should give adequate activities and methods to develop pupils' literacy skills. Results had revealed that only 12.96 % of pupils in private schools had a low reading literacy levels compared 58.3% of their counterparts in public primary schools.

(iii) Parents should provide pupils adequate literacy materials and spare some time to read with or to listen to their children reading for at least 30 minutes every day. This will help to foster the school and home literacy practices which are very critical for early grade reader's success in reading.

(iv) The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology should supply schools with a wide variety of engaging, age-appropriate reading materials, free of stereotypes and compatible with community values, to read for pleasure and information.

5.3 Recommendation for Further Research

In this study a number of issues could not be comprehensively covered because of a wide range of limitations. For instance, Most of the qualitative data greatly depended on the teachers opinions hence the following recommendations are made:

- i. Further studies should be carried out on impacts of pupils' reading literacy levels on pupils' academic achievement.
- ii. Additional research should be conducted in other counties to compare with the findings of this study.

- iii. It is recommended that another study be conducted to expand the current findings by including a more diverse sample of pupils and teachers across the county that will represent a diversity of cultural background, economic status, age and gender.
- iv. This study only investigated the reading literacy levels for class three pupils in primary schools. Future researchers should be extended to include those in upper primary schools.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Checklist for Teachers

Please select or write the appropriate response.

Section A: Background Information

1. Name of pupil _____
2. Name of school _____
3. Type of school
Public { }
Private { }
4. Gender of the pupil
Male { }
Female { }
5. Language used as a medium of instruction _____
6. Pupils score in reading from progress report _____
7. Pupil's scores in reading test _____

Section B: Pupils Reading Literacy Abilities

| | Knowledge skills tested | Able | Attempts | Unable |
|---|--|------|----------|--------|
| 1 | Can identify sounds (i, d, a, e, p, n) | | | |
| 2 | Can read simple words (dig, good, foot, nose, leg, play) | | | |
| 3 | Can read a paragraph My uncle has a shop. It is a big shop. He is happy. He will buy a car. | | | |
| 4 | Can read a simple story and answer Questions. Musa is a good teacher. He teaches us well. He comes to class in the morning. He does not like lazy pupils. All the pupils at my school love him. I love him too. Questions? 1. Who is a good teacher? 2. Which pupils does Musa not like? | | | |

Appendix II: Questionnaire for Teachers

Please select or write the appropriate response.

Section A: Background Information

1. Name of school _____
2. Type of school
Public { }
Private { }

Section B: Factors Contributing to Poor reading Literacy levels

3. Write four reasons why some children in your class are poor in reading:

- (i) _____
- (ii) _____
- (iii) _____
- (iv) _____

Appendix III: Observation Checklist

The researcher will observe the availability of literacy Reading materials in the schools.

1. Name of school

2. Reading Literacy materials available in the school

| SNO | | Available | | Not Available |
|-----|--------------|-----------|--------------|---------------|
| | | Adequate | Not Adequate | |
| 1 | Course books | | | |
| 2 | Charts | | | |
| 3. | Story books | | | |
| 4. | Pencils | | | |
| 5. | Crayons | | | |



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Internal Memo

FROM: Dean, Graduate School

DATE: 21st September 2014

TO: Ayia Charles M. Lwanga
C/o Early Childhood Studies Department.

REF: E55/OL/21604/10

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

=====

This is to inform you that Graduate School Board, at its meeting of 17th September, 2014, approved your Research Proposal for the M.ED. Degree **Subject to**, removing the word 'Kisii District and inserting the word 'sub' between Kisii and county to read "Investigation of Causes of Low Reading Literacy Levels among Lower Primary School Pupils, in Kisii Sub County".

Thank you.


REUBEN MURIUKI
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

c.c. Chairman, Department of Early Childhood Studies

Supervisors:

1. Dr. Nyakwara Begi
C/o Department of Early Childhood
Kenyatta University
2. Dr. Juliet Mugo
C/o Department of Early Childhood
Kenyatta University

RM/rm

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