Influence of Teachers' Characteristics on Learners' Literacy Outcomes of Early Years of Education in Bungoma Central Sub-County, Kenya.

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ABSTRACT

This study has been undertaken to investigate the determinants of teachers' characteristics on learners' literacy outcomes of early years of Education in Bungoma Central Sub-County, Kenya. Teachers efforts coupled with stimulative learning environment had a high impact on performance of learners in education in primary schools. It becomes more imperative for learners' in early years of education because they lay the foundation for later education success. Using both quantitative and qualitative methods the study collected and analysed data presented in exhaustively descriptive design. The study obtained primary data from 85 participants comprising of 48 learners of grade three, 24 teachers of grade three, 12 head teachers, and Sub-County Education Officer. Data was collected from semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and criterion test. Data was analysed using Pearson coefficient model and correlation analysis using descriptive statistics of frequencies, tables, bars, graphs, percentages, and standard deviation. The model of Brenfonbrenner (2001) was adapted and from the findings Cronbach's alpha value revealed reliable results of teachers of grade three (α=.801) questionnaires, which was above a threshold of 0.7 values. According to the model, a positive and significant correlation between learners' literacy outcome and teachers' characteristics that include teacher time management, competency, ICT Knowledge and beliefs (r=.469, p<.05) was found. Based on this finding

the study recommended that teachers of grade three should individualize teaching based on assessment results, embrace use of class library and whole-class curriculum materials, and recognize individual differences in order to improve on learners' literacy achievement.

Key words: Teachers' characteristics, learners' literacy outcomes, early years of education.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Literacy-rich classrooms influence classroom activities and set the stage for genre interactions. International Reading Association (2019), defines literacy as reading, writing, and language proficient. Literacy involves deciphering written codes using letters and sounds. Literacy teaches early learners reading and writing skills to help them excel in other classes. It aids communication and learning. Literacy as a set of skills gives students a head on life skills (Alta Mann, 2015). Learners need literacy skills to read, write, respond, and use written language in many contexts Skills Rica et al, (2016). Literacy skills, including the ability to read, write, respond, and use written language in several circumstances, are critical for students' success Allen (2017). Teachers' role in the learning process is critical to students' achievement and holistic development (Sammons, 2002). However, the lack of literacy skills can have a serious impact on students' performance and one of the most noticeable effects is on teachers' characteristics. Murunga (2020) states that children learn language and literacy from birth. Further, students who lack print awareness, alphabetic principle, and phonemic awareness need further education to stay up with their peers

For years, educators have worked to meet the Common Core's nonfiction and informational literature requirement. Literacy-rich environments promote speaking, listening, reading, and writing in real print and digital media and support Common Core standards (Higgins, et al, 2002). Literacy-rich environments help students' master specific topics and early literacy skills. Early literacy skills deficits are affecting students' performance (UWEZO, 2015). Depending on ability and content, physical, emotional, social, and supportive factors can create a literacy-rich environment. The learning environment is merely one factor, (Rebecca, 2014).She comments that the classroom's layout, supplies, and modelling of material use also affect how students use literacy in it. The classroom environment is a critical part of effective and successful teaching and learning process. Rebecca (2014) states that many classrooms discourage reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills. She says that schools with limited books and learning materials won't help students learn or satisfy the new requirements. Further, she suggests that students should have easy access to engaging print and online reading. Well-designed classroom libraries help students read more, spend more time reading, have

a favourable attitude toward reading, and do better on reading tests, according to Lameed (2002). School libraries promote balanced literacy. Without engaging books, learners will never fulfil their literacy potential (Hitchens et al., 2010). Reading and writing help learners achieve in all disciplines. It improves communication and learning. Literacy aids lifelong learning.

However, poor learning conditions in Bungoma county schools continue to lower literacy outcomes. Tusome Early grade literacy program's efforts to train Grade three teachers in pedagogy have failed. Parents and caregivers expect lower-class children to read at this level and judge educational quality by their children's English proficiency. For a child to learn literacy and pre-literacy, their first language must be developed enough. Bilingual children do better academically. Laura (2019) states that teachers must remember that students must study bilingually. This improves pronunciation and cognitive growth. Allen (2017) reports that effective classroom learning environment which initiates with well –organized and various materials and activities, helps students to learn. Further, he states that physical arrangement provides students with effective instruction and promotes smooth teaching and learning process. The well- organized classroom provides students with opportunities to social while learning literacy skills. Students perform well in safe and secure classroom atmosphere in which they interact with many different kinds of prints age –appropriate books, labels displayed on the wall, vocabularies on wall charts and stories in reference books Maddock (2020). In the same vein Mege (2012) states that a well-designed classroom benefits both the teacher and the students' as respect for boundaries between learners' area and teachers' working areas where activities to occur in their specific areas. Higgins et al (2002) comments that students' behaviour is monitored by the teacher even the peers when, learning materials are readily accessible by both teachers and learners. These was achieved by following the order of sequence of activities in the classroom

Current developments in Primary teachers Education (PTE) show that teachers' shortcomings in teaching and professional record-keeping, according to the teachers' employer. The researcher agrees but urges on teaching and learning concerns like Grade three teachers who do not have responsive interactions with their students. High staff turnover, adult-directed activities, and rote learning methods, in which adults choose what children do and when and how they do it, are considered as terrible learning environments. Throughout their early

schooling, children interact with their surroundings and gain a variety of intellectual tools to help them succeed in challenging settings. This shows critical thinking and action (Roskos and Neuman, 2013). Ecological models show that sufficient print and library supplies can improve learning and accomplishment. However, crowded classrooms and high student densities often reduce student achievement and disposition.

According to UNESCO (2005), Bungoma County student achievement was influenced by teacher qualifications. Grade 3 teachers are qualified. The government has trained Grade three teachers in Tusome Early Grade Literacy and Early Grade Mathematics (EGMA) programs to improve teacher professional development and equip them with new and appropriate literacy and mathematics methods, but learning environment factors still need to be addressed, which may affect future performance. This study sought to establish the influence of teachers' characteristics on learners' literacy outcomes of early years of education

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NEED OF THE STUDY.

The Government of Kenya (GOK) has a strong commitment to education, as evidenced by sessional paper no. 1 of 2005, which states that every learner has the right to a high-quality education that is relevant to their lives. The government has made significant investments in education, particularly in public elementary schools, as a result of the introduction of free primary education (FPE). However, the performance of primary school pupils continues to drop. According to the Uwezo (2016) survey report, the majority of students do not acquire basic competences during the first year of primary school, as required by the National curriculum requirements. In East African specifically in Kenya,   two out of three third-grade learners failed to complete second-grade assessments in English, Kiswahili, and mathematics. Moreover, only 32% of third-grade children were able to pass a second-grade reading test in Kiswahili, while only 16% were able to do so in English. Thus, a staggering 84% cannot read in English, and 68% cannot read in Kiswahili. Classroom library, teacher characteristics, and supportive learning settings influence specific learners' classroom outcomes, which must be addressed or performance will continue to deteriorate in the county. Despite this, previous studies have not paid attention to the physical learning environment components except for the inclusive settings for learners with disabilities. If a learner is having problems with literacy skills, school curriculum

and future human capital development may be embedded. Therefore, this study sought to establish the influence of teachers' characteristics on learners' literacy outcomes of early years of education.

Literature View

2.1. Teachers' Competency and Learners' literacy Outcomes

Competence are the set of demonstrable characteristics and skills that enable and improve the efficiency of performance of a job. Basic education framework Act (2016) defines competence as the ability to apply appropriate knowledge, skills and attitudes to successfully perform a function per Competency based curriculum (CBC) while (Selv,2020) competency as the ability to use knowledge, skills, and talents necessary to successfully do crucial work in a specific work context He believed that teacher competencies will affect their values, communication, aims and practices. These are also found to support professional development and curricular studies. Most researchers (Mwosi, Seruigi, Mfeka, and Stanton& Nassipbayeva 2012) have focused on teacher competency on students' literacy and teachers' information technology as a supportive variables of students' literacy achievement. In particular, Mfeka, (2016) stresses on teachers' preparedness and time management as major predictors of students' success in literacy outcomes. In the same vein, Mwosi, (2019) views literacy achievement as being embedded in syllabus coverage. There is relatively a dearth of literature on teachers' characteristics on students' literacy outcomes in early year's education many researchers focus on teacher competency and teachers' information technology knowledge viewed as determinants on acquisition of learners' literacy. Indeed, what is required from all the Grade three teachers is to make sure that learning environment is conducive in schools as professional development is taken over by Teacher professional Appraisal Development (TPAD).

Natasha (2011) articulated of more comprehensive knowledge based for teacher education. He reveals that teachers need to improve knowledge and skills to enhance improvement and explore their teaching practices. The findings of Natasha are important to Teacher training college as teacher education is vital in the Kenyan education system. Currently, results that Grade three teachers in Bungoma county are releasing is not they very best, equally they need to come up with measures to mitigate cases of learning environment because there is a lack somewhere in the system.

Tiede (2015) reported in a descriptive survey study which qualitative method was employed to collect data on the pedagogical and media use to preserve teacher competences. Further, teachers competency imparted inter cultural and education of teacher- learners in relation to assessment of reading comprehension of grade four learners. This was found that educational programme partial included interactional of teacher-learner as part of a learning programme for studies specifically for those pursuing language. However, literacy had a role to play in the teachers' competency. Language here was perceived as a primary vehicle of education through which different elements of culture is found to be transmitted. Further, the researcher noted that literacy involves acquisition of specific culture. Therefore, teachers' Competency was perceived as key to success on a group of teachers. The findings of this study are very important to the Grade three teachers in the country as pedagogical and technology are some of the components of preserving teacher competencies for quality education. Tiede &Grafer (2015) and the present study seem to be similar however, the researcher only utilized qualitative method to collect data. The current study employed mixed method both qualitative and quantitative to collect data. The current study sought to investigate the influence of teachers' characteristics on learners' literacy of primary schools in Bungoma central sub-county Kenya. Literacy should be seen as an important tool for personal growth and the betterment of society.

In primary schools of Uganda, a study was conducted by Poro et al (2019) on Teachers' performance. According to the findings, teachers who were competent in their subject matter were more effective. The study sampled respondents from the population of primary schools in Nwoya , district, Northern Uganda. The findings revealed that was a correlation co-efficient of (r=.575), between a low level of performance of learners in lower classes in primary schools. Therefore , the recommendation showed that teachers be encouraged to develop their pedagogical skills for effective delivery in the classroom, though, kyeyune, (2004) Challenge of using English as a medium instruction was noted.Teacher Appraisal performance contract (TPAD) was reported to be have taken care of teachers developing pedagogical skills for better teacher performance.

Atieno (2014) agreed that learning materials enhanced learners' learning experience which eliminate distraction in the classroom. Here the learning materials are found to help them focus on their lesson and sustain their interest. However, Hussein (2020) comments that Information Technology (IT) played a major

role in Education, Business, space, aeronautical engineering daily life and in Government sector. In this regard, Grade three teachers should support integrating of IT in classroom learning process and improving on learners imaginative and creativity skills identified as gaps in acquisition of learners' literacy skills which need to be addressed immediately for better performance.

Mfeka (2016) conducted a study on teacher competency. This study was carried on learner - teachers who were practicing teaching on grade four and five learners in the implementation of effective reading practices. His findings revealed that South Africa was experiencing a decline in the standards of teaching and learning due to major changes that had taken place. A longitudinal study was conducted in two consecutive years on assessing learners' comprehension reading skills. The second results came out as 78 % of learners could not read for meaning in any language after three years of schooling. Among the recommendations made, one was that to strengthen the teaching and learning of literacy skills. Teachers should be trained in pedagogical content knowledge across all languages . The results of this study were vital in Kenya because teacher competency is important in teacher practice. Mfeka and the present study seem to be similar however, Mfeka longitudinal study conducted was carried for two year, which may disadvantage the respondents. Therefore the current study employed descriptive method for data collection studying within the shortest time possible.

Kabombwe & Mlenga(2019) responded to the evidence of poor learner performance due to teachers' insufficient understanding of knowledge and inability to adequately convey the content knowledge in Competency –based curriculum where they are teaching of History. This reveals that 67% of the teachers of History do not understand the concept of competency –based or outcomes –based curriculum. The finding of this study revealed that competency based curriculum was still at its infancy stage with needs lots of time to develop. The study observes that there existed significant differences between performance of learners taught by CBC and those taught with the tradition system. The study points out that those learners who were taught with problem solving and critical thinking skills achieved significantly higher score compared to those who were taught using the teacher centred methods.

2.2 Teachers' Beliefs and Learners' Literacy Outcomes

Matsumoto & Tsuneda (2018) in the study investigated the characteristics of early literacy beliefs and teachers' culture .They noted that there was a relationship between teachers' beliefs and learners' literacy in early childhood education and culture settings. A sample of 349 early childhood education and culture children (ECEC) and 45 primary school teachers were used to determine teachers Literacy and pedagogical beliefs. Teachers' believe that exploratory factors like direct classroom instruction and social interaction influence learners' literacy. The study implies that effective practice by Grade three teachers on use of traditional resources such as textbooks, Workbooks and supplementary books when well used in the classroom facilitate introduction of   new concepts in learners.

Dalton & Mckenzie (2012) findings demonstrated that teachers' cultural practices and beliefs are shaped by their underlying values and attitudes, which influence the pedagogical decisions they make in the classroom. As the foundation of CBC's basic skills, values play a critical role in the Kenyan curriculum. Researchers have concluded that teachers' opinions of culture and their learners' linguistic proficiency influence how education is delivered. For instance, Grade three teachers may or may not encourage learners to use their native language in class. It was discovered that teachers who have a higher understanding and respect for their culture can provide a more nurturing environment in which kids are encouraged to study English while being supported on the growth of their native language. Teacher attitudes and cultural practices, according to the study, had a good impact on teachers' training and professional growth since they inform them of the best practices. It was also considered that the first language is crucial in the classroom since it aids in the acquisition of the second language and raises the academic performance curve of learners. Seeming, Wilkinson study addressed language policy and teacher culture and beliefs. The current study focused on Technology as one of the factors that have influenced learning environments on learners' literacy in primary schools in Bungoma central sub-county, Kenya.

Another study is conducted by Foster (2016) on teaching tolerance in the classroom by both learners and teachers. The study focused on Teachers' culture in the classroom and how stereotype was perceived by teachers. To overcome this phenomenon on stereotype in the learning process. It was revealed that teachers need to know their learners interest and academic abilities individually rather than relying on ethnic or prior

experiences with other learners of similar background. It was found that if a teacher does not have self-control in the classroom process and teaching tolerance he or she   was   likely to fail to recognize how positive stereotype is built. The study also showed that culture was relevant to curriculum. The findings of the study was important in helping educators in curriculum mending policies and implementation. Seemingly, Foster's study was similar to the present study however, Foster addressed how to overcome the phenomenon of stereotyping in the classroom while the current study equally focused on classroom arrangements.

Similarly, Flavin(2018) reported on the importance of Teaching Tolerance in inclusive classroom. The study was carried out on preschool teachers who indicated that culture respond to pedagogy were found to use culturally relevant teaching methods to connect with learners. The study revealed that strategies for creating an inclusive classroom need to be developed. Although, Authors who wrote history worthy studying, books worthy reading and text selection that included myriad voices are found to come from diverse culture. This strongly affirmed that when learners read learning materials published by Authors from different backgrounds, it had a positive impact on our learners and motivates them to create time to read more which make them become good readers. The findings are similar to the present study in that culture forms the pillar of learning of CBC. The current study sought to establish the influence of learning environment on learners' literacy of grade three learners of primary schools in Bungoma central sub county, Kenya. This study focused on teachers' beliefs and culture while Flavin study addressed preschool teachers.

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2.3 Teachers' Digital Knowledge and Learners' Literacy Outcomes

The notion that teachers are literately learned but illiterate in computer knowledge sound bitter but the truth must be said and also not all schools received the dispatch. Subramanian (2015) urges that computer literacy knowledge was a necessity to all teachers because of the role they play of imparting IT knowledge to learners. Moreover, these skills will be essential to learners in their academia, in the work force and in everyday activities. However, currently technology is found to have drastic changes the culture, norms and behaviour of people. Further, encouraged bullying, hazing and also high frequency use of technology has been reported to have negative effects on mental health among youngsters. Likewise, excessive use of technology

is revealed to post risk for mental health issues in young adults. Nevertheless, with today's technological society, basic computer literacy was emphasized in every institution's requirement. Therefore, Grade three teachers are argued to be computer literate competency. This was experienced at present during COVID- 19 pandemic where learning globally have gone digital. It was found that use of ICT instructional resources have made learning in the country easier. The role and perception of the Grade three teachers has become highly relevant and highlighted as crucial players in the process of ICT integration in education.

Pantic, (2009) conducted a study on teachers' implementing of information in Technology literacy on high school learners. He reports that ICT had great impact on the future of learners, as discussed early in introduction the roles of IT but apart from these learners use   the computers in a wide way. These experiences revealed an existing style of learning and teaching of IT both formally and informally was which is currently found to have impact on the learners' life in future. The study highlights the importance of teachers' acquiring computer skills and being literate in IT. Educators and learners need to be sensitized on the importance of training so as to build their IT literacy skills. This was found to be the only way that could influence learning and teaching in future. However, teachers are noted to have commonly faced with several obstacles when they are found attempting to use technological teaching techniques. Though, institutions are reported to have advanced for the integration of IT in the learning and teaching   process.

According to (Simiyu, 2019) emphasis on the use of ICTs in classroom practices as fundamental. This is reported to have a slow owing to existence of some challenges in implementing quality education. Further, ICT is found to help individuals to realize their highest potential by preparing them for the future challenges in life. The findings of this study is important to Kenya as implementation is digital technology where learning being blended both online and physical because of COVID 19. In this regard the current study seeks to investigate the influence of learning environment on learners' literacy of Bungoma central Sub-county, Kenya. The current study also focused on Grade three teachers' competency in integrating digital literacy not only in literacy but in all subjects however, Crawford's study addressed only the importance of implementing teaching and learning in secondary schools using ICT. .More importantly, digital literacy materials are

revealed to facilitate in the instruction of other activities areas taught in a classroom, and also learning becomes real and enjoyable.

Johnson & soto (2016) report on the challenges and solutions when Grade three teachers use technologies in the classroom. They study is conducted in Arizona state University where many Grade three teachers are found to have increased their level of technology in the classroom by being provided with hard gadgets such as tablets and computers. The study is conducted on 218 secondary school Grade three teachers. Although, reports show that Grade three teachers generally appreciate the benefits of educational technologies, they often found challenging during implementing processes. Some of the findings reveal that factors such as extrinsic of the teacher as he or she access the electrical devices , teacher training , and support from the administration are revealed as the most burning and challenging issues which need to be addressed immediately for better integrating of IT in the classroom .

Marsh (2019) notes that some teachers who are found not implementing IT skills in the classroom are not literate, have the skill, yet they intent to use the skills for personally gains. The current study determined the influence of learning environment on learners' literacy of early year's education from primary schools in Bungoma central sub-county. The study focused on the Grade three teachers' use of learners' laptop as mentioned early as government initiative project to issue out laptops to all learners in public primary schools. The need of Grade three teachers to be human and change their attitude to substitute and use their smartphones and even personally computers to impart digital literacy in the classroom to enhance better performance is noted. This is found to blend learning both online and face to face where learning becomes real and enjoyable.

2.4 Teacher Time Management and Literacy Outcomes

Time management is viewed as the maximum use of time for the productivity and achievement, it is a technique for effective use of time to accomplish the tasks required, and also is the time used for planning and allocating activities. It's also a process of managing time accorded to the needs and requirement of work

and activities in order to be accomplished. Teachers' time management is found out as an important asset which guides on how activities are planned and allocated in order to make use out of it.

Zafarullah Sahota (2016) from Sindh, Pakistan characterizes time as a priceless and essential resource, as well as a gift from the creator to the world. Each and every problem in a system and a country is resolved with the passage of time. Sahota conducted research on the significance and impact of time management on teachers' professional lives and the academic achievement of primary school learners in Hyderabad's district. A sample of 30 primary teachers were interviewed, a parcel of 10 experts of the field (author) and others were used. A qualitative research design was employed. The researcher revealed that Teachers' time management included the construction and implementation of profession documents such as preparation of personal time table, lesson planning, distribution of subjects, total number of periods taken by that teacher, regularity and punctuality of same teacher in school and class. The same teacher should set extra time for advance planning of class activities, guidance and counselling program and preparation of Co-curricular activities for learners which is an advantage to learners' academic performance.

Sahota (2016)'s research, learner performance can improve if teachers were able to teach content in a way that meets the needs, requirements, and interests of their learners. It is also noted that teachers time management in and out of school need to be monitored because everything in the school involved the teacher including learner' performance. This is why the current study sought to determine and address factors that influence teachers' characteristics on learners literacy of early years education in primary schools in Bungoma central sub county Kenya with a lot of concern. The researcher focused on teachers' time management as a gap among the variables that influence learners' literacy in grade three children. Therefore, when time is properly managed and maximally utilized has productive and achievable outcomes.

Didinya(2018) conducted a study on teaching standards and learners' progress through teacher performance Appraisal development and identified teachers' time management as a key factor that leads to a person's success at all levels in life. It is found that time is a resource that affect all human endeavours therefore, it is extremely limited in supply in all 'sectors. They urge that a good teacher make effective use of his or her time so as to have good plans as well as succeed in life. The study reveals that teachers' economic

use of time include staff time, pupil's time and time needed to control of the time table which aid in syllabus coverage. The current study will seek to investigate time management as addressed in the Teacher performance and Appraisal Development (TPAD) though Teachers' attitude toward personal appraisal is still under discussion.

Subramanian (2016) from the University of Madrid wrote a journal on time management and academic achievement of higher schools learners from India. Time management is viewed as a resource consisting of concepts, practices, skills, tools, and systems that operate in concert to help teachers gain more value from their time in order to improve their quality of life. Time is the most valuable resource, and how well you use it will determine whether or not your endeavour is a success. Time management requires a feeling of balance, which he describes as the key reason for managing time as giving one's life order and, hence, peace of mind. The ability to select priorities and the ability to focus on a single task at a time are two important factors that affect how much time one has available.

Another study was conducted to investigate the effects of time management on academic performance of distance learners in the University of Nairobi. Shahani et al (2013) reported a very high rate of failure 63 %, and the ever increasing time taken to graduate is a chronic problem. This is noted and keen observation done that many learners failure to score a total of 40 % in a given course and re –sat the failed units. One of the reasons why learners have performed poorly is lack of quality time in reading. It is therefore, worthy knowing how efficiency in distance learning could enhance academic performance. The learners' failure result reveals that demographic variables affect they academic performance. When viewed on the side of lecturers, the educational level of the lecturer which is closely linked to qualification in terms of methodology application affected learners' academic performance (Shahani, 2014).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Population and Sample

The study was conducted in public primary schools in Bungoma Central Sub- county in Bungoma County in Kenya. Bungoma Central Sub-County was chosen for the study because of its performance that is on decline as compared to her neighbour Sub-Counties. Furthermore, Grade three teachers had very little time to engage their learners in acquiring literacy skills for better academic achievements. This is because most of Grade three teachers are found to fail in effective lesson delivery to teach learners how to read and write while in early year education classroom, additionally, there are a lot of reported cases of absenteeism (Uwezo, 2015). The Population was drawn from all public primary schools in Bungoma Central Sub-county. The study comprised of 72 primary schools with their head teachers were targeted. Other participants from the target population were`4316 grade 3 learners, 144 Grade three teachers, and 1 County Education Director. .

3.2 Data and Sources of Data

The study adopted the descriptive survey design. Simple random sampling technique was used to select schools. Grade three learners, head teachers and grade 3 teacher were sampled from the selected schools. First Bungoma Central was purposively selected from the 9 Sub Counties in Bungoma County due to its low performance compared to other Sub –Counties. To determine the number of schools in the Sub-County, the study was guided by Kothari(2005) that 10% to 30% in social science form a viable representative study sample .Therefore, simple random sampling was used to select a sample of 20% of the schools from the 3 zones by writing down their names on pieces of papers and putting them in the basket while blind fold to eliminate bias. Four schools were selected from each zone to totally up to 12 schools. 2 Grade three learners were selected according to their reading ability to total up to 48 learners.

3.3 Theoretical framework

Empirical review

This study aims at investigating the influence of teacher characteristics both in terms of competency, Information Technology knowledge, time management and lastly beliefs. Currently, Education policy makers are tasked with hiring Grade three teachers who are the best fit and most capable of improving learner

achievement. Educators have a vital role as role models for learners, and they have a significant impact on how learners' strengths, aspirations, and knowledge are shaped, created, and established. As a result, it is critical to understand the traits, abilities, and values that a teacher brings to a classroom and how those qualities, skills, and values influence learners during the learning process. Effective Grade three teachers should engage in activities that motivate learning. Grade three teachers are expected to be a head of the learner because they are teaching 21st century students, Jabuku, (2017).

However, teachers' characteristics and child development require a framework that incorporates developmental theory within context in order to be fully understood. Therefore, this study adapts Urie Brenfonbrenner (2001) which posited that child development is influenced by bio ecological system model which leads to further cognitive development. His model emphasizes cognitive abilities like decoding and listening. He views the acquisition of literacy skills as a social process that take places in the home, at school, and in the community, with children from various socio economic backgrounds, races, and genders all participated. Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological development model reveals that, a teacher must analyze the environment in which his or her learners are growing in order to comprehend their learners' growth. As a result of this theory, learners can develop their reading culture and craft their literacy ecology with the help of their teachers and peers. It also showed how to develop learners' literacy experiences comprehensively and believed that children learn about themselves through interactions with others. The microsystem (innermost circle) depicts the relationships within the environment in which the child spends a lot of time (Brenfonbrenner 2001). From the findings, teachers of grade three, who are part of the microsystem, have a significant impact on how well learners learn to read. Accordingly, the focus of this research is the individual learner and their relationship with their teacher in a classroom setting.

This study established Grade three teachers' characteristics in relation to as a factor to aid the teaching and learning of literacy. Currently, teachers' characteristics is viewed as effective teachers' delivery and time management in terms of timely syllabus coverage and lastly teachers' beliefs regarding the introduction of national language policy on use of indigenous language as a medium of instruction in lower grades in the country.

3.4 Statistical tools and bio-ecological development model.

This section elaborates the proper statistical and Bronfenbrenner's bio-ecological development model which are being used to forward the study from data towards inferences. The detail of methodology is given as follows. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview schedules.

3.4.1 Research Instruments

The instruments validity was assessed based on the response from the pilot test. To reduce the threat to content validity experts in the field of study were asked to give their opinion on the instruments so as to judge the appropriateness while reliability was set at Cronbach's coefficient alpha which was used to measure the reliability in relation to operationalization of the constructs. In this regard, the resulting alpha coefficients of (α=.801) for Grade three teachers' questionnaire was above the recommended threshold value of 0.7, implying that the study questionnaires were reliable. Three primary schools in the sub county were picked for the piloting test. The participants who were involved in the test -retest study included 10 grade three teachers with their grade three learners. The researcher sought permission from the National Commission of Science Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) , through the Directorate of Post Graduate Studies (DPGS) of Masinde Muliro University (MMUST). After acquisition of the research permit, the researcher proceeded to get a gate pass from the authorized personals from the Sub county and the Head teacher. First, the researcher visited the sampled schools in Bungoma central sub county for the purpose of familiarizing with the respondents and schools besides getting their consent. The researcher then contacted the head teachers of the selected schools to get permission for data collection. The head teachers were appointed for the interview and assured that the data collected would be used for research purpose only and the responses was to be kept confidential.

The study explained to the respondents that the study was after investigating the influence of teachers' characteristics on learners' literacy outcomes in early year's education. Questionnaires were distributed to the Grade three teachers to answer the questions. Secondly , a face to face semi- structured interview was conducted with the head teachers on the same day. Thirdly, a criterion test on literacy skills and Grade three teachers were asked to administer it to the learners which assessed four levels of literacy skills namely; Oral language thus listening and speaking, reading comprehension and guided writing. This criterion test was

important for establishing the acquisition of literacy skills of Grade three learners. Class registers and KCPE examination results for the last 4 years was used to analyse and evaluate learners' attendance and performance respectively. Lastly, the SCDE was interviewed on a different day after arrangement for convenient day and time.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Learners' ability in areas like oral language, letter sound recognition, word recognition, paragraph reading, story reading and comprehension, and guided writing are evaluated in order to determine the impact that Grade three teachers' individual qualities have on their learners' literacy development in public primary schools. The first step was questionnaires were administered to Grade three teachers to assess teaching competencies across several items in each 5 domains (planning, personal characteristic, mentoring of learners instruction, classroom management and ICT knowledge).The Teachers' questionnaires were completed by two (2) Grade three teachers from the sampled 12 schools. These two Grade three teacher were a class teacher and the English language teacher. Each rater responded to each item using a four (4) point liker scale ranging from Exceeding to below Expectation.

Additionally, there was no possibility for observation and thus no choice of action. Although a total score of 16 (total TQ) corresponded r= 0.801 with the domain scores. Consequently, we retained TQ scores as the dependent variable in subsequent analysis
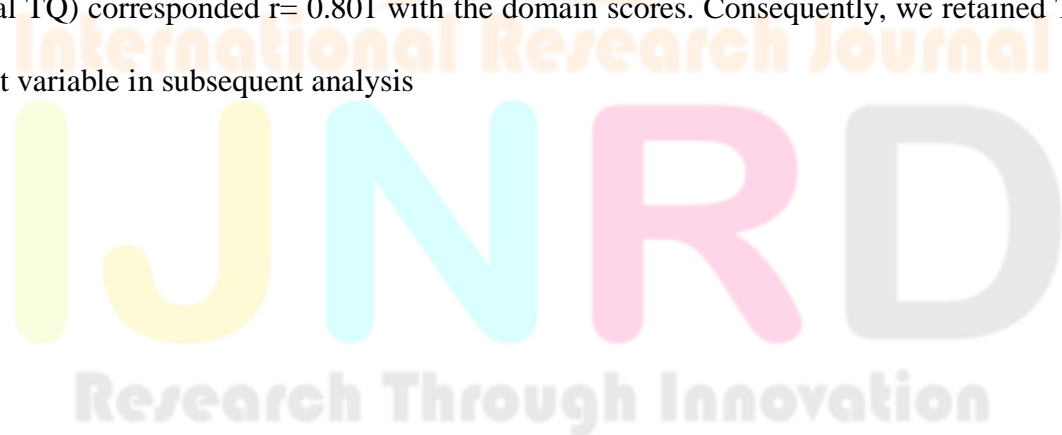
Table 4. 1: Influence of teachers' competency on Grade three learners' literacy outcomes

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	MEAN	STD DEV
Teachers of grade three influence on mastery of subject content to enhance acquisition of Grade three learners' literacy	11 (68.75%)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	52.08	27.95
Teachers of grade three' influence of good scheming to enhances acquisition of Grade three learners' literacy skills	10 (62.5%)	4 (25%)	2 (12.5%)	0	0	46.88	27.3876
Teachers of grade three' influence of classroom management enhanced acquisition on Grade three learners' literacy skills	11 (68.75%)	2 (12.5%)	3 (18.75%)	0	0	52.34	28.9386
Teachers of grade three' influence of use of pedagogical approach to enhance on acquisition of Grade three learner/s literacy skills	10 (62.5%)	2 (12.5%)	2 (12.5%)	1 (6.25%)	0	45.42	26.1017
Teachers of grade three' influence on learners' involvement and Communication on acquisition to enhance Grade three learners' literacy skills	12 (75%)	2 (12.5%)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	0	58.59	30.6176

(SA - Strongly Agree A -Agree U - undecided D- Disagree SD- Strongly Disagree)

The results displayed mean and standard deviation as variables of the study. The descriptive statistics indicated that the mean values of the variables were 52.08, 46.88, 52.34, 45.42 and 58.59 respectively. The standard deviations for each variable indicated that data were widely spread around respective mean. This results answers the research question that to what extend does teachers' characteristics influence learners' literacy outcomes of early years education children? From the findings, it was noted that mastery of subject content and good content delivery enhances acquisition of learners' literacy skills. For this case the study explains mastery of subject content as the teacher's knowledge in implementing letter sounds, reading

development, phonological awareness and phonic skills. This study found out that Grade three teachers are competent, but they lack preparedness of effective content delivery .

The study observed that Grade three teachers rarely participate in professional development training. . This was contrary to what the Grade three teachers alleged. Similarly, it was noted that few Grade three teachers have improved their competency skills and merely 1% of the teaching staff have enrolled for professional development program in the school. This may be due to age factor, financial constraint, time constraint, mode of learning and worse of all lack of motivation from the Government. These was ascertained by one head teachers who echoed these sentiments:

The majority of Grade three teachers at my school earn meagre salaries, according to their proof of income. Since leaving TTC, they rarely attend training to advance their professional growth knowledge. They mostly concentrate on what is documented in textbooks.

These results are consistent with those of a South African study on teacher competence conducted by Mfeka (2015), who concluded that training teachers in pedagogical content knowledge across languages is necessary to improve both teaching and reading literacy. Bossibori et al (2015) affirm that teachers competency supports inclusive education on early years programmes. These findings affirm that, when Grade three teachers are encouraged to train pedagogical content knowledge and in keeping with literacy skills, they become effective and build sufficient understanding of knowledge to convey content to competency based curriculum (CBC) program..

Almost two-thirds of the Grade three teachers surveyed (62.5 %) believed that Grade three teachers' failure to finish syllabus content could influence Grade three learners' literacy learning. Some 4 (25 %) of the sampled Grade three teachers agreed that Grade three teachers failure to cover syllabus which influenced learners' literacy acquisition skills. Whereas only 2 (12.5 %) Grade three teachers disagreed.

Similarly, the study findings in Table 4.1 implies that majority of the Grade three teachers vary their teaching methods. This suggests that majority of the learners have not acquired literacy skills, even if their Grade three teachers vary teaching techniques. However, the study, established contrary views and reported that Grade three teachers rarely vary teaching approaches that enhance the acquisition of learners literacy skills. This findings is in harmony with Katane & Kristovska (2015) comment on Grade three teachers' competency. The findings revealed that Grade three teachers 'competences were viewed as Grade three

teachers' methods of teaching per the new approaches in teacher education and change of attitude from traditional perception to the modern way of curriculum implementation.

Slightly more than half, 12(75%) of the Grade three teachers strongly agreed with the views that Grade three teachers use learners involvement and communication to influence Grade Three learners' literacy skills. Some 2(12.5%) of the sampled Grade three teachers agreed .Whereas 1(6.25%) of the sampled Grade three teachers are undecided, 6.25% of the sampled Grade three teachers disagreed that learner involvement and communication does not influence learners' literacy skills. This implies that Grade three teachers do not involve their learners in factors related to interaction in the classroom during a literacy lesson. Grade three learners need to be encouraged and able to talk to each other to do well in class. They also need to be able to ask questions when they don't understand something, think critically and find their own solutions to problems, and be given chances to learn on their own. Learning becomes fundamentally interesting when children learn among themselves because this creates an opportunity of social interaction and mutual understanding as learners learn to read.

This is reflected in the interviews with the head teachers on this issue. This was confirmed in the words of one head teacher who says…

> *Use of peers to assist and rewarding performers in literacy lesson have improved Grade Three learners' acquisition of reading skills.*

The study affirms the fact that lower primary level learners listening to peer conversations and giving corrective feedback in simple English words have a positive influence on Grade three learners' literacy outcomes. That is scaffolding and repetitive use of new words when used in a conversation enhances learners' communication skills. This is consistent with the findings of Leyster (2012), who noted that peer interaction and corrective feedback in the classroom during literacy instruction have a good effect on the learning of literacy skills by learners. This suggests that when Grade three teachers facilitate peer interaction in the classroom, there are opportunities for children to improve their language skills with their Grade three teachers. Learners are said to have learned how to correct each other without getting angry.

Grade Three Teachers' view on influence of Grade three teachers' Belief strategies on acquisition of Learners' literacy skills

The findings are summarized in the Table 2

Table 4. 2: Grade Three Teachers' view on influence of Grade three teachers' Belief strategies on acquisition

of Learners' literacy skills

Statements	SA	A	U	D	SD	Mean	Std Dev
Grade three teachers' use of direct classroom instruction to enhance Grade three learners acquisition of literacy skills	10 (62.5%)	2 (12.5%)	2 (12.5 %)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	42.97	26.22
Grade three teachers' use of classroom social interaction with learners to enhance Grade three learners' acquisition of literacy skills	12 (75 %)	4 (25%)	0	0	0	62.5	31.62
Grade three teachers 'use of resource materials to enhance Grade three learners' acquisition of literacy skills	10 (62.5%)	3 (18.75%)	2 (12.5 %)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	42.28	26.81
Grade three teaches; use of pedagogies skills to enhance Grade three learners' acquisition of literacy skills	9 (56.25%	4 (25%)	2 (12.5 %)	1 (6.25%)	0	39.84	25.25
Grade three teacher use of language practice to enhance Grade three learners' acquisition of literacy skills	12 (75%)	2 (12.5 %)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	0	58.59	30.61

(SA - Strongly Agree A -Agree U - Undecided D- Disagree SD- Strongly Disagree)

From Table 4.2 indicated mean, standard deviation and frequency number of respondent in percentages. The descriptive statistics revealed that the mean value of variables index use of direct classroom instruction, resource materials, social interaction, pedagogies and language practice were 42.97, 62.5, 42.28, 39.84 and 58.59 respectively. The standard deviation for each variable indicated that data were widely spread around their respective means. Table 4.1shows that when Grade three teachers give instruction to their learners during a literacy learning lesson the skills are acquired among their learners. Although the Grade three teachers were in favour of learner centred approach a teaching method that enhances critical thinking and problem solving skills during the lesson.

However, the study pointed out that Grade three teachers hardly ever employ a learner-centred strategy to improve their learners' literacy development. This went against what the Grade three teachers said. In confirming this, one head teacher remarks…

The majority of Grade three teachers at my school focus mostly on content from textbooks. Rarely do they permit their learners to acquire additional abilities, such as critical thinking and problem-solving, to improve their reading outcomes.

The study also found that Grade three teachers employed storytelling as a teaching strategy on a limited number of occasions, which may account for the poor levels of listening and speaking abilities.

These findings are consistent with those of Matsumoto and Tsuneda (2018), who found a favourable association between teachers' beliefs and early childhood education and care learners' literacy outcomes. These findings indicate that when children are encouraged to use an audio instructional package, they perform significantly better than when Grade three teachers use an expository method. This is due to the fact that by writing and telling their own stories, learners develop their creativity and adaptive skills. As learners share tales from many areas, they get an appreciation for variety and an understanding of other people and cultures. T refuted the notion that Grade three teachers create an environment suitable to teaching literacy instruction. A participant in the interview observed:

Grade Three Grade three teachers are harsh and unfriendly during teaching lesson which is (sic) just short social interaction, but not as a technique which can help pupils improve their literacy skills.

Similarly, the classroom setting was not conducive to the development of literacy abilities. No prints or library resources are affixed to the walls of classrooms. The inability to improvise classroom learning materials could indicate that the acquisition of reading skills was unquestionably hindered. In addition, a majority of 10 (62.5%) of the Grade three teachers strongly agreed that the teachers use resources to improve their learners' literacy acquisition skills, whereas only 3 (18.75 %) agreed. At the same time, 2 (12.5%) of the Grade three teachers were unsure of their position, and 1(6.25%) of the Grade three teachers were against it. None of the respondents strongly disagreed. These findings are consistent with Tety's (2006) who noted that the utilisation of learning materials promotes the acquisition of oral language, which has a favourable association with the literacy outcomes of learners. In addition, children who fell behind in spoken language and literacy

development in the years preceding formal schooling were less likely to be successful readers, and low achievement was reported to persist beyond the primary grades.

However, the result findings of Nyongesa et al (2015) affirmed that vocabulary development, reading achievement, phonological awareness and phonic skills are acquired through the use of learning resources that is, learning resources and print materials are really useful for learning language due to their capturing learners' interest and motivation which are found to enhance lower primary school learners' skills.

About 56.25% of the teachers surveyed agreed that Grade three teachers regularly employ strategies designed to improve learners' reading and writing abilities. About four of the sampled Grade three teachers concurred. Additionally, 12.5% of the sampled Grade three teachers are unsure. None of the sampled Grade three teachers strongly disagreed. 6.25 % of the sampled Grade three teachers disagreed. These findings indicate that use of look and say, thumb up and thumb down enhances acquisition of literacy skills among Grade three learners.

However, Grade three teachers rarely use a variety of approaches while teaching literacy skills. UNESCO (2005) and UWEZO (2015) in the majority of Eastern African countries, including Tanzania, Uganda, and Kenya, in which the Tusome programme for early Grade reading emphasised the need for Grade three teachers to be trained with new and appropriate techniques in literacy acquisition abilities. Similarly, teacher profession development programme on the webinar online programme focuses on use of appropriate methodologies in teaching -learning process. Similarly, more than half 12(75%) of the sampled Grade three teachers strongly agreed that language practice in English enhances Grade three learners; literacy acquisition, whereas 2(12.5%) of the sampled Grade three teachers view agreed that use of Oral language enhances Grade three learners' literacy acquisition literacy. Some 6.25% of the sampled Grade three teachers are undecided that English language practice enhances Grade three learners' literacy acquisition. At the same time 6.25% Grade three teachers disagreed. These study findings show that when Grade three teachers engage their learners in practice of language helps to acquire literacy skills, they improve academically. This in consistence with the findings of Dalton & McKenzie (2012) noted that when Grade three teachers use scaffolding as a teaching method learners' literacy skills is acquired. Children are reported to develop scheme through repeated and patterned experiences in the world which enable them filter future experiences.

Influence of Grade three Teachers' ICT Knowledge and Learners' Literacy Outcomes

The findings on Grade three teachers' ICT Knowledge is presented in Table 2

Table 4.3**: Grade three Teachers' ICT Knowledge on Learners' Literacy Outcomes**

Grades	Frequency	Percentage	Means	SD Deviation
Grade One	4	25	0.25	0.5
Grade two	10	62.5	0.625	1.9764
Grade three	1	6.25	0.127	0.22
ECDE	1	6.25	0.127	0.22

Table 4.3 findings show that a quarter, 4 (25%) of the sampled Grade three teachers strongly agreed with the view that Grade three teachers are ICT complaint thus were trained while in Grade two with a mean of 0.25 and standard deviation of 0.5. They use ICT knowledge to enhance Grade Three learners' acquisition of literacy skills. Some 10(62.5%) of the sampled Grade three teachers agreed that they have little knowledge on integrating digital literacy in classroom lesson They expected to have acquired training while in Grade two but all was in vain. A smaller portion 1(62.5%) of the Grade three teachers strongly agreed that learners should be introduced to IC T devices while in Grade2 to enhance in integration of digital literacy skills in classroom lesson. whereas introduction of ICT devices while in Grade 1was agreed by 4(25%). However, only a smaller portion 1(6.25%) are undecided whether ICT integration was done in ECDE nor Grade 3. Although the Grade three teachers are in favour of introducing ICT devices to the learners while in Grade Three during their lessons.

However, the study reported that Grade three teachers of children in grade three rarely made use of technology like tablets and laptops to aid in the development of their learners' literacy abilities. This contradicted what the Grade three teachers claimed. This is determined by one head teacher who says…

 My school's majority of Grade three teachers focus mostly on what is documented in textbooks. As a means of enhancing their reading abilities, they rarely allow their learners access to ICT gadgets during class time.

The study observed that Grade three teachers used their mobile phones and learners' laptops as teaching aids on a limited number of occasions, which may have contributed to the low levels of literacy acquisition abilities because learners' interest was not aroused. One possible explanation for this is that these head teachers may not have seen their Grade three teachers' frequency and hence provided unverified data .

Theft and inadequate storage in schools may have also been a contributing factor in the removal of the learners' digital devices (LDD).

These findings are in line with the findings of the study on imparting IT knowledge to the learners through use of computer conducted by Subramanian (2015) who ascertained that Grade three teachers have a role to play in imparting IT knowledge to the learners because the skills was essential to them in academia, work place and even in their everyday activities. These findings affirms that, when children access digital devices at an early age literacy acquisition skills are enhanced making learning easier in the country by use of ICT instructional resources. Through technology children learn that the culture, norms and behaviour of people have changed with time.

This is also in agreement with the study findings from interview schedule with the Education Officer which revealed that digital devices are mentioned as some of the major factors that influenced the acquisition of literacy skills in the Sub -County. The inability to adapt instructional strategies could indicate that the learning of reading skills was severely impeded. This was validated when the education Officer reiterated these sentiment…

> *The Government has trained Grade three teachers of ICT and supplied digital gadgets to all schools in lower primary grade in the Sub-County, however, due to school breakages and stealing of the gadgets which are not easily replaced the government have withdrawn them back to the container to be secured in the District Commissioner's Office (DCC) custody until further notice. This implies that in case of any loose of a gadget the school administration and the Board of management (BOM) was to take charge.*

Grade three Teachers' views on use of time management on acquisition of learners' literacy skills **literacy skills**

The findings tabulated in table 4.4, indicates results on teachers 'view on use of time management on acquisition of learners' literacy outcomes.

Table 4. 4: Teachers 'views on use of time management on acquisition of learners' literacy skills

Statements	SA	A	U	SD	D	Mean	Std Dev
Teachers of Grade three use of timely planning of lessons to enhance acquisition of literacy skills	10 (62.5%)	2 (12.5%)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	42	26.22
Teachers of grade three influence of report to class on time to enhancing acquisition of Grade three learners literacy skills	12 (75%)	4 (25%)	0	0	0	62.5	31.68
Teachers of grade three influence to leave class on time to enhance acquisition of Grade three learners' literacy skills	10 (62.5%)	3 (18.75%)	2 (12.5%)	1 (6.25%)	1 (6.25%)	42.28	26.81
Teachers of grade three influence on marking learners tests on time to enhance acquisition of learners' literacy skills	9 (56.25%)	4 (25%)	2 (12.5%)	1 (6.25%)	0	39.84	25.25

1Strongly Agree 2Agree 3 Undecided 4 Strongly Disagree 5 Disagree

The results indicated that majority 10(62.5%) of the teachers strongly agreed with the views that Grade three teachers use time well in planning their lessons to enhance Grade three learners acquire literacy skills as 2(12.5%) who agreed. However, only a smaller portion 2(12.5%) are undecided while 1(6.25%) strongly disagreed From the findings, it was noted that when teachers use time well during a literacy learning lesson right from planning of the lesson, reporting to as well as leaving class and lastly time spend on assessment enhances acquisition of literacy skills

However, the study pointed out that Grade three teachers rarely manage their time well to improve their learners' literacy …

Most of the Grade three teachers does not(sic) observe time. They spend most of their on petty issues that lays ground for gossips. Rarely do they organize for remedial lessons for disadvantaged learners on their own to improve on the reading skills.

The study found that Grade three teachers employed remedial tutoring as a teaching strategy on a limited number of occasions, which may account for the poor levels of reading and speaking abilities

A majority of 12 (75%) of the sampled Grade three teachers strongly agreed that Grade three teachers report to class for a lesson on time to improve their learners' literacy acquisition skills, whereas only 4 (25 %) agreed. None of the respondents strongly disagreed and were undecided with the views that Grade three teachers report to class on time to facilitate the literacy development of Grade three learners. Majority 10(62'5%) of the Grade three teachers strongly agreed that they do not leave class while teaching before the accorded time to enhance acquisition of literacy skills while 3(18.75%) agreed. However, only a smaller portion 2(12.5%) are undecided whether they are good time managers. Out of the sampled teachers 1(6.25%) strongly disagreed while the same 1(6.25%) Grade three teachers disagreed to leave teaching literacy lessons before time.

However, the study reported that Grade three teachers of children in grades three rarely miss attending to their lessons and in many occasions they do not leave their classes. They always manage their classes from inside for the development of their learners' literacy abilities. This concurs with what the Grade three teachers claimed. This is determined by one head teacher who says…

Grade three teachers in my school are highly respected by their pupils .This is a sign of love to their teachers. Young children are always honest unlike the senior pupils in upper classes

Slightly, more than half,9 (56.25%) of the Grade three teachers Strongly agreed with the view that Grade three teachers make learners tests on time to motivate they learners acquire more literacy skills whereas 4(25%) who agreed. However, only a portion 2(12.5%) are undecided. 6.25% disagreed whereas none strongly disagreed. From the findings, it implies that teachers have a passion for their work. The study findings indicate that when Grade three teachers manage their time well as accorded to the needs and requirement of the work and activities in order to accomplish then they are good classroom managers, hence this was found to have an impart on their literacy skills and performance.

Similarly, the study observed that Grade three teachers strictly adhered to time for the construction and implementation of their professional documents, such as personal times tables, lesson planning, lesson distribution, schemes of work, learner progress records, and total number of periods taken by the teacher. Further, the study found that Teachers' time management have been shown to have positive impact on learners' learning and learners' outcome. The above study findings are in agreement with Subramanian (2016) from the University of Madrid noted that a teacher who is a good time manager should have the ability to

select priorities and have the ability to focus on a single task at a time Further, classified factors affecting time management for learners as time planning, time attitude and time wasting . These opinions underline the importance of time management in ensuring that Grade Three learners are well-prepared, organised, and focused to manage their daily lives and finish academic assignments on schedule. Nonetheless, this is a skill that must be taught and practised.

These findings are in line with the findings of the study on Seruigi (2013) who noted that using percentages scores on reading and numeracy examination as a measure of learners and teachers academic achievement and competency was critical. These findings affirms that, when children are assessed both in formative and summative evaluation in a systematic manner, with clear objectives and chances for active participation in classroom activities. These clearly indicate the Teachers' ability to measure the quality of instructional methods as well as the capability of the learners.

This is also in agreement with the study findings from interview schedule with the Education Officer which revealed that one way to analyse learning environments in schools is to look at a wide range of school indicators such as resources, personal and activities that influence learners outcomes. Assessment is a tool for measuring learning and progress. This was confirmed in the words of one head teacher, who says *"To understand the learning processes within my school, teachers must subject learners to assessment exams. These will influence what and how learners learn*. ". Additionally, another head teacher, says…

Time is a crucial resource that are(sic) strictly observed in my school. Grade Three Grade three teachers do manage their time by organizing the day by priorities, strategically plan homework assignments, avoid loaded activities during the day , plan for potential changes and set a side personal time

These opinions underline the importance of teachers observing their time in ensuing that Grade three learners acquire literacy skills.

Table 5: Rating of literacy skills among Grade three learners

Literacy skills (%)	Exceed expectation (%)	Meet expectation (%)	Approach Expectation (%)	Below Expectation (%)
Listening	2.08	79.17	10.42	4.17
Speaking	4.17	29.17	25	41.67
Reading	10.42	16.67	20.83	45.83
Writing	4.17	16.67	27.83	52.08

From the study findings in the Table 5.38(79.17%) of the Grade three learners were competent Met expectation in listening skills, 5 (10.42%) Approached expectation whereas 2 (4.17%) were below expectation and 1(2.08%) recorded as Exceed expectation. This suggests that the degree of listening skills among Grade three learners was inadequate. In talks with head teachers, similar emotions are expressed. One head teacher says…

Most Grade three learners in my school cannot respond to questions when asked in English, they want the teacher to interpret in mother tongue. The learners is(sic) enable to listen every well to the conversation but struggle to answer in English.

During the listening task process, the study also observed that children cannot hold a conversation with the teacher for 2 minutes'. The views of the head teachers are also in line with Allen (2015) who advocated for literacy skills should be acquired well because it is critical for a learners' success.

Table 4.4 further indicates that 2(4.17%) of the learners recorded Exceed expectation in speaking skills, 14(29.17%) meeting expectation, 12 (25%) Approaching expectation and 20 (41.6%) recorded below expectation in speaking skills. This was an indication that the performance in speaking skills was not encouraging. In addition, the majority of learners' below-average performance suggests they lacked the skills necessary to successfully complete grade three activities.

Additionally, 5 (10.42%) of the Grade learners were good at reading sentences and paragraphs out loud, so they exceeded expectations, and 8 (16.67%) met expectations while 10(20.83%) were rated as approach expectation and 22 (45.83%) were rated as below expectation. Results revealed that Grade three learners in Bungoma Central Sub-County had low reading proficiency. The study found that 20 learners (41.60%) in grade three had significant difficulty with word fluency inside sentences, making it difficult for them to read even a short paragraph. Only 8 (16.67%) of them had difficulties reading, for instance; "*some insects live and work together in large groups. These insects are able to survive by sharing a home, a job, and food. They're known as social insects. Such insects include honeybees, ants, and wasps.*'' The findings of the current study was identical to those of UNESCO (2005) and UWESO (2016), found that two-thirds of third-grade children in East Africa could not read work from the second grade.

The study also observed that 6% of Grade three learners read words more quickly without spending as much time decoding words. However, they were unable to detect letter sounds when reading words and

struggled greatly with phonics patterns and exercises. When reading aloud, they frequently stumbled and walked quickly. These results revealed that 40% of Grade three learners struggled with sound letter recognition. Due to difficulties with word recognition and blending, it was difficult to read sentences and paragraphs. It may also be an indication of bad reading practises among learners.

These findings verify the claims of that fluency is typically judged through oral readings, despite the fact that proficient readers also exhibit this ability when reading aloud. The development of fluency results from reading practise. Frequent oral reading is the most effective technique for youngsters to develop fluency. These findings indicate that fundamental skills such as listening, speaking, and reading must be mastered prior to the development of more complex abilities. The findings demonstrate that early acquisition of literacy skills provides a solid basis for future academic achievement. This suggests that the successful acquisition of literacy skills in the early grades of primary school is a good predictor of later academic success. In interviews with head teachers, similar emotions are expressed. One head teacher said,

The majority of Grade three learners at my school are unable to read non-fiction texts such as insect and plant life. Hive, kind, queen, stray, work, typically silk, threads, as well as numerous others

During the reading procedure, the study demonstrated that learners are unable to read words such as bug, kind, hive, queen, remain, work, typically, ant, silk, thread and several others. The perspectives of the head teachers aligned with those of Bean and More wood (2011), who called for careful monitoring and assessment of reading skills.

From the study findings in Table 5, 2(4.17%) of the Grade three learners could not write words from blended consonants, copy words and sentences from the broad correctly and rearrange words and write independently about a given theme. thus 2% exceed expectation while 8(16.67%) met expectation in writing skills. 13 (27.83) of the Grade three learners are not good in sentence and paragraph writing whereas 25(52.08%) are below expectation. This implies that Grade three learners are below average in writing skills. Based on these findings, the Grade three learners in the research area lacked adequate literacy abilities in sound recognition while in the previous Grade two.

These findings are consistent with the assertions of Ranaweera (2013) that word recognition plays a crucial role in written language and is necessary to understand the text. This implies that word recognition lead to better comprehension skills and sound recognition that are likely to experience writing problem.

CONCLUSION

The primary objective of the study was to prove that Grade three teachers in public elementary schools performed slightly low in teaching reading skills. The vast majority of learners perform slightly low in listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and had difficulty identifying literacy skills outcomes. The inability of the majority to distinguish between letters and sounds impeded their ability to read and write words, phrases, and paragraphs, leading in a deterioration in their reading skills. This demonstrated that learners in the Grade three learners had low reading levels. In contrast, the study investigated the extent to which a variety of teacher characteristics (quality, knowledge of subject content mastery, information technology (IT), classroom management, and oral language proficiency) and language instruction are related to learners' literacy outcomes when classroom learning environment was considered. The most noteworthy findings regarding classroom observations are the high positive influence links of teacher-quality evaluations to learner engagement and the substantial negative influence relations of teacher quality to non-instructional time. The role of classroom learning environment (both within and between classes), language of instruction, and language of quantifiable results in predicting literacy outcomes for learners. Teacher quality was connected with word reading and speaking skills, but teacher competency in either language had no influence on the literacy results of these children.

This study also reveals that teacher preparation and professional growth have a higher influence on language development results than experience. After engaging in high-quality professional development, Grade three teachers enhance their approaches to literacy education. Professional development must be continual and rigorous in order to be effective, allowing Grade three teachers to incorporate what they have learned into their teaching practises while receiving support along the way. Grade three teachers will be able to instruct pupils more successfully the better they understand the cognitive development of their learners' reading skills. Therefore teacher characteristics have influence on Grade three learners' literacy outcomes.

Recommendation

It is worth to conclude that teacher characteristics are important for the learners ability to become literate in their English languages. Their time management, proper planning, syllabus coverage, beliefs, competencies among other factors are found to be paramount for learners literacy outcome. The researcher's conclusion, it can be opted that teacher characteristics had a positive influence on learners literacy outcome.

From the findings of this study the following suggestion was made by the researcher for further research. A further study should be conducted to evaluate the effect of class size on grade three learners' literacy outcomes. Other studies should replicate other areas not covered in this study.

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