

**EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EARLY GRADE
READING PROGRAMME ON LEARNERS' ACQUISITION OF READING
SKILLS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BUNGOMA
NORTH SUB-COUNTY, KENYA**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CONFERMENT OF
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN EDUCATIONAL
TECHNOLOGY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ELDORET, KENYA**

DECLARATION

Declaration by the Candidate

This thesis is my original work and has never been presented for the award of an academic degree in any other university and should not be copied, or reproduced in any format without written authority from the author and/ or the University of Eldoret.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my children for their support and prayers throughout my study period.

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ABSTRACT

English is one of the official languages of communication in Kenya. It is also one of the compulsory and examinable subjects in the Kenyan primary and secondary school Competency Based Education. In the Competency Based Education curriculum, learners are expected to be taught reading skills through the Early Grade Reading programme in the Early Childhood Development level. Studies have shown that the performance of learners in reading skills in ECD level is low. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to evaluate the implementation of the Early Grade Reading programme on learners' acquisition of reading skills in English subject. The specific objectives of the study are; to establish the effect of teacher training on learners' acquisition of reading skills, to determine the effect of teacher instructional guidelines on learners' acquisition of reading skills, to examine the effect of supplementary instructional materials on learners' acquisition of reading skills and to assess the effect of monitoring systems on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub County. The study was guided by the Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development advanced by Vygotsky (1978). A descriptive research design involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches was the research design for the study. The study was conducted in 108 public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub County. A descriptive survey research design was used in this study. The target population involved 108 head teachers, Grade 1 – 3 learners from 108 schools, and 346 lower primary school teachers from which a sample size of 32 head teachers, 12 schools (Grade 1 – 3) and 104 teachers were selected through stratified and simple random sampling methods. Questionnaire, interview schedule and Early Grade Reading Assessment [EGRA] reading task were used as instruments of data collection. Validity and reliability of the instruments were checked prior to administering the instruments in the field. Quantitative data analysis involved use of descriptive and inferential statistics. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic content analysis method. The study found out that there existed significant positive effect of; teacher training ($r=0.314, p<0.05$), instructional guidelines ($r=0.331, p<0.05$), provision of supplementary resources ($r=0.251, p<0.05$) and monitoring system ($r=0.221, p<0.05$) of the Early Grade Reading programme and learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub County, Kenya. The study found out that the correlation values were positive implying a positive influence of the Early Grade Reading programme on learners' acquisition of reading skills in schools. The study concluded that the implementation of the Early Grade Reading programme had resulted to substantial increase in learners' reading competencies in lower primary schools in Bungoma North Sub County. The study recommends that teachers need to be regularly trained in early grade reading teacher development programmes, there is need for schools to set up infrastructure to support Information and Communication Technology use, there is need for the curriculum developers to provide Early Grade Reading materials in soft form and regular monitoring and assessment by curriculum support officers needs to be done in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub County.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

APBET	Alternative Provision of Basic Education and Training
ASER	Annual Status of Education Report
CBC	Competency Based Curriculum
CBE	Competency-Based Education
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CSOs	Curriculum Support Officers
EGR	Early Grade Reading
EGRA	Early Grade Reading Assessment
EGRIC	Early Grade Reading Instruction Curriculum
ELLs	English Language Learners
ICT	Information Communication Technology
KCPE	Kenya Certificate of Primary Education
KICD	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KNEC	Kenya National Examination Council
LMICs	Low- and Middle-Income Countries
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NASMLA	National Assessment System for Monitoring Learner Achievement
PLP	Primary Literacy Programme
PRP	Primary Reading Programme
PSSP	Primary School Support Program
RARA	Reading and Access Research Activity
RTI	Research Triangle Institute
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children Education Fund
USAID	United States Aid
ZPD	Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Overview

The chapter contains the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, justification of the study, scope and limitation of the study. The chapter also presents assumptions of the study, review of the theoretical framework, the conceptual framework and operational definitions of terms.

1.2 Background to the Study

Reading proficiency forms the foundation for learners' academic achievement and lifelong skills development. Without achieving essential early literacy competencies, children struggle to comprehend classroom content, participate meaningfully in learning activities, and transition successfully to higher levels of education (Nguru & Ally, 2025). Mastery of reading skills in the early years serves as the cornerstone of subsequent learning, as learners who fail to acquire foundational reading fluency and comprehension are at heightened risk of falling behind in all subjects (UNESCO, 2023).

Despite global commitments to equitable education, foundational literacy remains critically low in many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). UNESCO (2023), estimates that nearly 250 million of the world's 650 million primary school-aged children are not attaining basic reading skills. For instance, 65% of Grade 3 pupils in India cannot read a Grade 1 text (ASER, 2022), more than 50% of Grade 2 learners in The Gambia cannot read a single word, and approximately 30% of Grade 3 learners in Guyana demonstrate zero literacy skills (Graham & Kelly, 2018). The World Bank (2022) labels this widespread challenge "learning poverty," noting that millions of

pupils in low-income countries complete primary school without basic reading competence, undermining their future educational and occupational prospects (World Bank, 2022; Palani, 2021).

Early childhood and lower primary years are particularly critical for literacy development, as foundational language exposure, phonological awareness, print familiarity, and decoding skills established at this stage influence lifelong academic trajectories (World Bank, 2021; Amwayi, 2016). Due to persistent shortcomings in traditional instructional models, many countries have transitioned to Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) approaches that emphasise learner agency, problem-solving, communication, and the demonstration of practical competencies over rote knowledge (Mwaga, 2024).

Reading is central to this pedagogical shift. Under competency-based frameworks in East Africa, including Kenya and Tanzania, literacy competencies encompass phonological awareness, listening comprehension, oral language development, print knowledge, alphabet fluency, and emergent writing skills (Nguru & Ally, 2025; Diana, 2020). Tanzania's 3Rs initiative demonstrated both the urgency and the challenge of improving foundational literacy: an EGRA study indicated that only 8% of Grade 2 pupils could read with comprehension (RTI International, 2017; Karamage et al., 2023), prompting the state to establish compulsory pre-primary education and targeted reading reforms (Ngussa & Mjema, 2017).

To strengthen literacy outcomes, many LMICs have adopted Early Grade Reading (EGR) interventions. These programmes target Grades 1–3 and employ structured, evidence-driven instructional approaches, including systematic phonics, guided oral reading, vocabulary scaffolding, and comprehension development (Graham & Kelly,

2018; Thuo, Ronoh & Tanui, 2024). Monitoring tools, such as the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), support implementation by diagnosing learners' reading skills phonemic awareness, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension independent of teaching method (RTI, 2020). International experience affirms the efficacy of EGR initiatives. In North Macedonia, a UNICEF-supported literacy program emphasising teacher preparation improved learners' foundational reading outcomes significantly (UNICEF, 2023; Nityasanti et al., 2025). Ghana's mother-tongue literacy programme similarly enhanced early reading by combining local-language instruction with sustained teacher capacity development (TSC, 2018). Comparable gains have been reported in South Africa's large-scale READ initiative and Malawi's Primary School Support Programme, which blended direct instruction with print-rich classrooms and community reading clubs.

Ethiopian research emphasizes that strong teacher linguistic knowledge and instructional skill in early grades are critical precursors to later English literacy success (Kuche et al., 2024). Likewise, despite multiple literacy reforms in Tanzania, significant proportions of learners continue to struggle with reading (Nguru & Ally, 2025), underscoring the need for continuous, structured support for foundational literacy teaching.

Kenya's education system positions English as the primary language of instruction and assessment from upper primary onwards (KICD, 2017), making English reading fluency essential for academic progression. The introduction of the CBC in Kenya reinforced early literacy as a core competency required for communication, collaboration, and self-directed learning (UNESCO, 2018; Wafula, 2024). Yet national data have revealed substantial gaps. Approximately 50% of Kenyan lower-primary

learners previously scored below average in letter-sound recognition, sentence reading, and comprehension (Ngure, Mwoma & Buma, 2019). To address these deficits, the Ministry of Education implemented the Early Grade Reading Instruction Curriculum (EGRIC) in 2012 and subsequently scaled EGR nationally through the Tusome programme in 2015, supported by USAID (RTI, 2020).

Tusome targeted 5.4 million Grade 1 and 2 pupils across more than 22,600 schools and trained over 60,000 teachers, supplying structured teacher guides, learner readers, and regular coaching. By 2017, programme reach expanded to all 47 counties and Alternative Provision of Basic Education and Training (APBET) institutions (RTI, 2020). Tusome has demonstrated substantial improvements in early literacy outcomes and is now recognized globally as a model of large-scale reading reform grounded in coaching, structured materials, and real-time data (UNICEF, 2023; World Bank, 2022). However, despite national-level progress, sub-county-level disparities persist, particularly in rural areas.

Bungoma North Sub-county presents literacy gaps that mirror inequities seen nationally, where school-based resources, teacher preparation, and implementation fidelity vary. Understanding the impact of EGR reforms at this localized level is necessary to ensure equitable learning outcomes and inform CBC-aligned literacy policies. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the implementation of the Early Grade Reading programme on learners' English reading acquisition in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County. Findings will support policy refinement, strengthen classroom practice, and contribute to evidence-based strategies for accelerating foundational literacy within CBC implementation.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The introduction of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) in Kenya sought to improve learners' acquisition of key skills and competencies including foundational literacy. However, despite ongoing reforms in Kenya's education sector, literacy levels among early-grade learners remained a significant concern. For example, national survey data from the Uwezo Kenya Learning Assessment (2016) revealed that 8 % of Standard Eight learners could not perform literacy tasks meant for Grade Two learners highlighting substantial learning deficits persisting across the country. Additional evidence from the Kenya National Examinations Council (KNEC) (2020) National Assessment System for Monitoring Learner Achievement (NASMLA) reported that 58.8 % of learners did not attain the minimum required Level 4 competencies in English, which include reading with comprehension and making inferences.

In response to these persistent literacy challenges, the Ministry of Education, in collaboration with development partners, launched the Tusome Early Grade Reading Activity (2015-2019) to improve literacy outcomes through structured teaching materials, teacher training, and monitoring systems. The programme distributed over 26 million textbooks and trained more than 80 000 teachers, reportedly benefiting over 10 million learners nationwide. Independent evaluation findings indicated significant improvements in reading fluency and comprehension, including a sharp drop in zero-word readers and a rise in Grade Two English fluency from 12 % to 27 % during the implementation period.

Despite these national gains, the implementation and outcomes of EGR programmes at sub-county and rural levels remained under-explored. Specifically, in Bungoma North Sub-County public primary schools, various contextual barriers had been documented:

rural schools were found to contend with long travel distances to school and related absenteeism challenges (Wangoywa, Simotwo & Kirwok, 2024); in the broader Bungoma County context, studies reported overcrowded classes, delayed funding releases, and teacher shortages as impediments to effective teaching and learning in schools (Wafula, 2024). Hence, although the EGR programme achieved measurable national-level improvements, the translation of those reforms into consistent, high-quality literacy acquisition in all localities including Bungoma North was unclear. Therefore, this study addressed the problem of whether and how the EGR programme was associated with learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to evaluate the implementation of Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme and its effect on learners' reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County. The study focused on how teacher training, instructional guidelines, supplementary instructional materials, and monitoring systems influenced learners' acquisition of foundational reading competencies in the early grades. By examining these components within a rural context, the study generated evidence to guide literacy policy implementation and strengthen early reading interventions in similar settings across Kenya.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the implementation of the Early Grade Reading programme on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub County. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. To determine the effect of EGR teacher training on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County.
2. To examine the effect of EGR instructional guidelines on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County.
3. To assess the effect of EGR supplementary instructional materials on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County.
4. To establish the effect of EGR monitoring and support systems on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County

1.6 Research Hypothesis

The null hypotheses for the study are:

- H01: There is no statistically significant effect of EGR teacher training on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County.
- H02: There is no statistically significant effect of EGR instructional guidelines on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County.
- H03: There is no statistically significant effect of EGR supplementary instructional materials on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County.

H04: There is no statistically significant effect of EGR monitoring and support systems on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County.

1.7 Justification of the Study

Reading is a fundamental right and a critical skill that underpins all other forms of learning. The ability to read fluently and comprehend text is essential not only for academic success but also for lifelong learning and participation in a knowledge-based economy (Mulatu & Regassa, 2022). Learners who fail to master basic reading skills in the early grades often fall behind academically and are at greater risk of poor educational and life outcomes. In Sub-Saharan Africa, including Kenya, foundational reading outcomes remain alarmingly low (Karamage et al., 2023; Thuo et al., 2024). Challenges such as limited availability of age-appropriate reading materials (Kulwenza, 2021), inadequate teacher training on reading instruction (Wawire, 2020), and a rigid focus on curriculum completion over competency acquisition (Venketsamy & Sibanda, 2021) further exacerbate the literacy gap.

In response to these challenges, many African governments, including Kenya, have adopted Competency-Based Education (CBE) to ensure learners acquire both knowledge and skills. One of the key strategies introduced to support literacy under this framework is the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme. While the programme has been widely implemented, limited empirical evidence exists on its effectiveness in improving learners reading skills, particularly in rural settings such as Bungoma North Sub County. This study, therefore, seeks to fill that gap by investigating the extent to which EGR programmes influence reading skills acquisition among learners in public primary schools.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be valuable to multiple stakeholders in the education sector. For teachers, the study will enhance understanding of the importance of integrating EGR strategies in lower primary classrooms (Grades 1–3) and inform professional development in literacy instruction.

For school administrators, the research will highlight the need to support effective implementation of EGR programmes through resource allocation, supervision, and teacher support.

For learners, the study offers insights into how improved teaching methods and learning materials can enhance their reading development and overall academic achievement.

For the Ministry of Education and the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), the study provides feedback on EGR implementation, which can be used to refine curriculum design and inform policy decisions as Kenya transitions from the 8-4-4 to the CBE model.

For future researchers, the study serves as a reference point for further investigation into the impact of literacy interventions on learning outcomes, offering a basis for comparative studies and policy evaluations.

1.9 Scope of the Study

This study focused on examining the implementation of the Early Grade Reading programme on learners' acquisition of reading skills in the English subject among learners in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County, Kenya. Specifically, the study targeted lower primary grades Grade One to Grade Three where foundational literacy development is emphasized. The research was limited to teachers employed by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC), who are actively engaged in teaching reading to early learners.

The study was structured around four core dimensions of the EGR programme: teacher training, instructional guidelines and supervision practices, provision of supplementary instructional materials, and the presence and effectiveness of programme monitoring systems within schools. Data were gathered using a mixed-methods approach that involved the administration of questionnaires to teachers, interviews with school heads, and the use of EGRA reading tasks assessment for learners. The study was conducted between April and July 2025.

1.10 Limitations of the Study

Several limitations were encountered during the study. First, the availability of some teachers was constrained by their instructional duties, which required the researcher to extend the data collection period from one month to three months in order to accommodate their schedules. Secondly, arranging interviews with head teachers also proved challenging as some were not present on the initially scheduled dates. This resulted in repeated rescheduling and contributed to delays in the fieldwork timeline. Despite these logistical constraints, the researcher ensured that data collection was conducted rigorously and comprehensively, and all targeted respondents were eventually reached.

1.11 Assumptions of the Study

The study was based on several key assumptions. Firstly, it was assumed that the sample selected was representative of the larger population of early grade teachers within the Sub-County. Secondly, it was assumed that the research instruments used; questionnaire, interview schedule and EGRA reading task, were valid and reliable tools capable of measuring the intended constructs effectively. Thirdly, the study assumed that all respondents provided honest and accurate responses. Finally, it was presumed

that participants were literate and possessed a basic understanding of the Early Grade Reading programme and its implementation in their respective schools.

1.12 Theoretical Framework

The study was anchored in Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory of Cognitive Development, with particular emphasis on the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky (1978) posited that learning is inherently a social process, where cognitive development is mediated through interactions with more knowledgeable others such as teachers, parents, and peers. According to this theory, learners are capable of achieving higher levels of understanding and performance when provided with appropriate guidance and support within their ZPD.

In the context of early grade reading, this framework is highly relevant. Learners in the foundational phase of learning are still in the process of acquiring essential literacy skills and therefore require structured scaffolding from their teachers to progress. As argued by Venketsamy and Sibanda (2021), teachers play a crucial role in supporting learners' literacy development through interactive instructional strategies such as guided reading, modelling, and questioning. These approaches enable learners to move from basic decoding of text to more complex skills such as reading fluency and comprehension.

Moreover, peer interaction is an important element in Vygotsky's theory and it is one of the recommended methods of learning under competency based education. Vygotsky suggested that learning can be significantly enhanced when more competent learners are paired with those who are less skilled (Munna & Kalam, 2021). In literacy instruction, this could take the form of paired reading, group reading sessions, and peer-assisted learning, where learners engage socially and collaboratively to build reading

competence (Le, Janssen, & Wubbels, 2016). Such practices are particularly beneficial in multilingual and resource-constrained contexts like Kenya, where teacher support may be limited.

Additionally, Mudzielwana (2020) emphasized that a literacy-rich environment characterised by the availability of storybooks, print materials, and interactive reading activities stimulates learners' engagement and promotes the development of reading skills. Teachers who actively participate in reading with learners and model effective reading strategies contribute significantly to improving learners' literacy outcomes. This aligns with Kadhka (2024), who highlights that foundational reading skills are best acquired through interactive, learner-centred teaching within a supportive and stimulating learning environment.

Despite its contributions towards learners' acquisition of required competencies and knowledge in learning, the ZPD has received significant criticisms from scholars. Vygotsky did not provide much about the effective use of ZPD in classrooms (Pathan et al., 2018). Piaget (1995) argued that participation in an activity for which a child is not well prepared with a teacher (more knowledgeable other) could result to imposition of teachers views and will not influence the structure of child actions. It has been claimed that most social cultural studies of language development within ZPD have mainly dwelt on morpho syntactic features or individual lexical items as found in conventional grammar teaching methods (Margolis, 2020). ZPD also presents a limited scope of learning process and decreases learners' role as passive and dependent on the knowledgeable other. Nevertheless, socio-cultural theory has made a great effect on learning and teaching languages. This theory regards learning second language as a

semiotic process where participation in socially mediated activities is very important (Pathan et al., 2018).

In summary, Vygotsky's sociocultural theory and the ZPD concept provide a powerful lens through which to understand the implementation and potential impact of the Early Grade Reading programme. The framework supports the notion that learners' acquisition of reading skills is enhanced through teacher guidance, peer collaboration, and access to meaningful literacy experiences. This theoretical foundation was therefore instrumental in guiding the present study's investigation into how the EGR programme affects early reading outcomes in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County.

1.13 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework model for this research illustrates the relationship between independent and dependent variable. Figure 1.1 shows the research conceptual model. The early grade reading programme is the independent variable in this study which is broken down into four components. The first one is teacher training on early grade reading programme which is measured through attendance of training programmes specific units on reading skills, regular in-service training on EGR and training programmes on assessment of EGR. The second aspect is provision of instructional guidelines on EGR based on interactions with internal curriculum supervisors, having scripted lessons and observations on how EGR is implemented in schools.

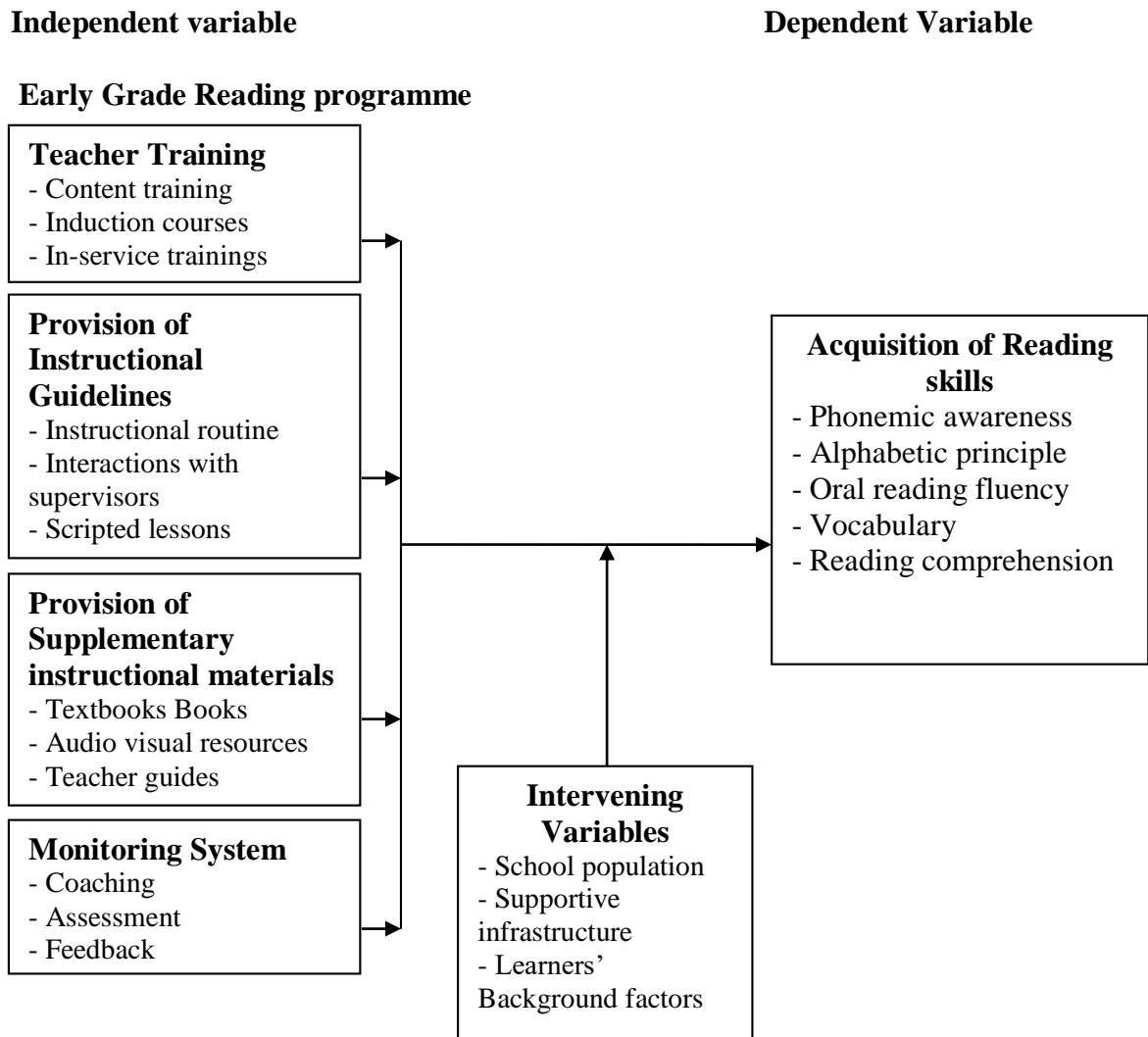


Figure 1.1 Conceptual Framework

Source: Reviewed Literature (2024)

Thirdly, it is the provision of supplementary instructional materials to guide teaching of EGR in English subject in schools. Some of these support materials could be in print, audio, video or can be found online. Fourthly, is the monitoring of EGR implementation in schools by teachers conducting regular EGRA assessment of learners, giving feedback to learners and also evaluating the progress learners make with respect to acquisition of reading skills. The dependent variable is learners' acquisition of reading skills in English which was measured through identifying their phonemic awareness, alphabetic principle, oral reading fluency, vocabulary and reading comprehension. It was assumed that there existed significant positive relationship between

implementation of EGRA programme and learners' acquisition of reading skills in lower primary schools in Bungoma North Sub County. However, their relationship could be influenced by intervening variables; population of the schools, availability of infrastructure and learners background factors.

To control the intervening variables, the study targeted public lower primary schools' teachers and learners where demographics are similar across many schools. The second is that the implementation of EGRA requires schools to be connected to the grid and this has been achieved in many schools in the sub county. At times the instruction of this programme does not require internet infrastructure. Lastly, the research questioned learners' reading competency but not other background factors that may influence their level of reading skills. It was assumed that the intervening variables did not play significant role in the relationship between implementation of EGRA and learners' acquisition of reading skills in English subject in lower primary schools in Bungoma North Sub County, Kenya.

1.14 Operational Definition of Terms

Acquisition of reading Skills: Reading skills refer to a learner's ability to decode written text, comprehend its meaning, and use the acquired information for communication and learning. In this study, the term specifically applies to the reading competencies expected of learners in lower primary school, including fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension.

Early Childhood Development (ECD): refers to the foundational stage of education that targets children aged between four and six years, typically in pre-primary and lower primary school levels (Grades One to Three). At this stage, critical foundational skills in literacy, numeracy, and social interaction are developed. In this study, ECD specifically focuses on learners in Grades One to Three, who are the primary subjects of the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme.

Early Grade Reading is a structured literacy intervention targeting Grades 1-3, designed to build foundational reading skills phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension through evidence-based instructional methods, teacher training, and continuous assessment (RTI International, 2020; UNESCO, 2023).

Learners: for the purpose of this study, learners are defined as children enrolled in Grades One to Three in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County. These learners are at the foundational stage

of acquiring literacy skills through the Early Grade Reading programme.

Monitoring System: A monitoring system in the context of this study refers to a structured process of observing, supervising, assessing, and adjusting reading instruction to ensure the effective development of learners' reading skills. It includes regular evaluation of learners' reading progress, identifying areas of strength and weakness, and implementing appropriate interventions to support continuous improvement.

Supplementary Instructional Materials: These are additional educational resources used to complement standard course books in the teaching and learning process. They include materials such as storybooks, flashcards, phonics charts, levelled readers, and workbooks that are designed to enhance learners' literacy development in areas such as vocabulary acquisition, grammar, and reading comprehension.

Teacher Instructional Guidelines: These refer to the curriculum support documents and teaching manuals provided to teachers to assist them in planning, delivering, and assessing Early Grade Reading instruction. They offer structured approaches to lesson planning, instructional strategies, and assessment methods aligned with curriculum expectations.

Teacher Training: Teacher training refers to pre-service and in-service professional development programmes aimed at equipping teachers with the knowledge, skills, and pedagogical strategies necessary for

effectively implementing the Early Grade Reading instruction. It encompasses workshops, seminars, continuous professional development (CPD) sessions, and other capacity-building initiatives.

Tusome: refers to a literacy programme introduced by the Government of Kenya with support from development partners with the aim of improving learners reading skills at foundation level from ECD to Grade 3 in primary schools. The programme entailed undertaking teacher training, providing instructional guidelines and materials for reading, teaching early grade reading lessons and assessment of the early grade reading programme among learners.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a comprehensive review of literature related to the implementation of Early Grade Reading programmes and acquisition of reading skills among learners in lower primary school. The literature review is organized into several thematic areas aligned with the study objectives. These include teacher training and its role in the implementation of EGR, provision of instructional guidelines, access to supplementary instructional materials, and the role of monitoring systems. The chapter concludes with the identification of research gaps that justify the present study.

2.2 Concept of Acquisition of Reading Skills by Learners

Reading is widely recognized as a fundamental cognitive process that enables learners to decode and construct meaning from text, forming the foundation for both academic achievement and lifelong learning (USAID, 2023). It extends beyond simple word recognition to include comprehension, interpretation, and engagement with written material (Pretorius & Spaul, 2016). Early literacy acquisition provides children with essential tools to access knowledge, participate meaningfully in classroom activities, and engage in self-directed learning, thereby facilitating holistic development (Piper, Destefano, & Kinyanjui, 2022).

Evidence shows that core early reading skills such as letter recognition, phonemic awareness, vocabulary acquisition, and reading fluency predict later academic success, and children who do not acquire these foundational skills by Grade 3 are at risk of experiencing persistent learning deficits across multiple subjects (RTI International, 2021). Beyond academic outcomes, reading supports cognitive, social, and emotional

development, nurturing critical thinking, creativity, empathy, and problem-solving abilities (Abadzi, 2017; Nation, Dawson, & Hsiao, 2022).

Effective teaching of early grade reading integrates structured, evidence-based instructional strategies. Research indicates that systematic phonics instruction and phonemic awareness activities are critical for developing decoding skills, while guided and shared reading sessions allow teachers to model fluent reading and comprehension strategies in small groups (UNESCO, 2023; Piper et al., 2022). Storytelling and rich oral language experiences further expand learners' vocabulary and comprehension, and classrooms that provide a print-rich environment through levelled readers, charts, and other instructional materials reinforce literacy development (Nation et al., 2022; USAID, 2023). Additionally, differentiated instruction, which tailors learning activities to individual reading levels, ensures mastery of foundational competencies and accommodates diverse learner needs (RTI International, 2021). These strategies are central to Early Grade Reading (EGR) programmes, which emphasise teacher preparation, structured instructional materials, and continuous classroom support.

Assessment of early reading skills is equally critical to successful literacy outcomes. Formative and summative assessments, including tools such as the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA), running records, oral reading checks, and teacher observation checklists, enable educators to monitor learners' decoding, fluency, comprehension, and engagement in real time (USAID, 2023; Piper et al., 2022). Peer and self-assessment strategies are also employed to promote reflection and collaborative learning. Such assessments align with competency-based educational approaches by providing actionable data to guide differentiated instruction, remediation, and the monitoring of learner progress.

In the Kenyan context, the Tusome Early Grade Reading Activity (2015–2019) represents a major national initiative aimed at improving literacy among Grades 1–3 learners. The programme provides structured teaching guides, learner workbooks, leveled readers, and intensive teacher training, coupled with regular school-based coaching to ensure fidelity of implementation (RTI International, 2020).

Despite these national gains, studies show that literacy outcomes in rural areas remain uneven, with challenges including limited teacher proficiency in structured literacy instruction, insufficient instructional materials, and inconsistent use of assessment tools (Uwezo, 2022; USAID, 2023). These findings highlight the need to examine EGR implementation at sub-county levels, particularly in rural contexts such as Bungoma North Sub-County. Investigating how teacher training, instructional guidelines, supplementary materials, and monitoring systems influence learners' acquisition of reading skills provides critical evidence to inform targeted interventions and strengthen early literacy outcomes

2.3 Early Grade Reading Programmes in Schools

Early Grade Reading (EGR) programmes have become a cornerstone of literacy reforms in many low- and middle-income countries, aiming to ensure that young learners master foundational reading skills in the early years of schooling, typically from Grades 1 to 3. These programmes focus on the systematic development of phonemic awareness, phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency, and comprehension, supported by structured teacher training, instructional materials, and continuous assessment using tools such as the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) (RTI International, 2021; USAID, 2023). The primary goals of EGR programmes are to accelerate early literacy acquisition, reduce learning poverty, and ensure learners

acquire the competencies necessary to succeed in subsequent grades (UNESCO, 2023). Key attributes of effective EGR programmes include curriculum alignment with competency-based frameworks, learner-centred pedagogies, scaffolded instructional materials, regular monitoring of learners' progress, and ongoing teacher mentoring (Kalenga, 2016; Piper et al., 2022).

In Kenya, the Tusome Early Grade Reading programme has been a flagship intervention, implemented to improve reading outcomes among learners in Grades 1–3. Tusome provides structured teaching guides, levelled readers, learner workbooks, and teacher coaching, emphasising phonics-based instruction, comprehension strategies, and frequent formative assessments (Cherobon & Chepsiror, 2022; RTI International, 2020). The programme targets measurable learning outcomes, including improvements in letter-sound recognition, word decoding, reading fluency, and comprehension. Tusome also fosters positive reading habits, engagement with texts, and learner confidence in using English as a medium of instruction. Studies have shown that learners exposed to Tusome from the early grades achieve higher literacy outcomes in upper primary compared to their peers who do not participate in such structured interventions (Cherobon & Chepsiror, 2022; USAID, 2023).

Apart from EGR, other interventions have been implemented in Kenya to improve language acquisition in the early years. These include the Tayari programme, which integrates pre-primary and lower primary literacy activities with community support; the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) initiatives on literacy guidelines for the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC); and various non-governmental organisation (NGO)-led literacy clubs and reading corners in schools (Uwezo, 2022; KICD, 2022). While these interventions have contributed positively to

literacy awareness and engagement, the EGR programmes stand out because of their systematic, evidence-based design, focus on early grades, intensive teacher training, provision of scaffolded instructional materials, and alignment with both national education policies and international best practices (RTI International, 2021; UNESCO, 2023). Moreover, EGR interventions such as Tusome employ continuous monitoring through EGRA and in-class observation, which allow for timely remediation and data-driven instructional improvements elements that are less consistently implemented in other literacy initiatives.

Recent evaluations of EGR interventions in sub-Saharan Africa indicate that literacy outcomes improve significantly when learners are taught in familiar languages, supported by phonics instruction, and exposed to structured reading exercises and ongoing assessments (RTI International, 2021; USAID, 2023). The sustainability and scalability of such programmes depend heavily on teacher competence, access to high-quality instructional resources, and consistent supervision and mentoring. In the Kenyan context, these factors have contributed to Tusome's success relative to other early literacy interventions, particularly in rural and low-resource areas, highlighting the programme's pivotal role in bridging foundational literacy gaps and enhancing learners' acquisition of reading skills in the early grades.

2.3.1 Teacher Training on EGR and Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills

The effectiveness of Early Grade Reading programmes is closely tied to the competencies of the teachers tasked with implementing them. However, in many low-resource contexts, teachers are often under qualified and lack training specific to literacy instruction. According to UNESCO (2022), more than one-quarter of teachers in sub-Saharan Africa do not meet national training standards. This inadequacy in

teacher preparation poses a significant barrier to effective reading instruction, particularly in the early grades.

Teacher training must therefore move beyond traditional workshop-based models and embrace sustained, practical, and context-relevant capacity development. Mitchel et al. (2024) argue that sporadic, lecture-style workshops are largely ineffective compared to embedded, ongoing professional learning that integrates classroom-based coaching and mentorship. Similarly, the World Bank (2021) emphasizes that effective literacy instruction must align with students' current capabilities rather than rigid curricular expectations often imported from Western education systems. When curriculum goals outpace learners' actual abilities, both teachers and learners struggle to achieve meaningful progress (Kulwenzu, 2021).

Research also supports the idea that literacy instruction must follow a specific developmental sequence, with foundational skills such as phonemic awareness and decoding preceding higher-order comprehension tasks. Al Roomy (2022) highlights the importance of aligning teacher training with findings from cognitive science, noting that literacy acquisition is a cumulative process that varies by language and script. Olifant et al. (2020) echo this, stressing that reading strategies effective in alphabetic languages like English may not apply directly to syllabic or agglutinative languages common in African contexts.

In Ethiopia, Kuche, Demissie and Wanna (2024) investigated English language teacher educators' knowledge and skills on early grade reading instruction. Majority of English language teacher educators were at low level of knowledge and skills; they scored the skills test better than the knowledge one. Moreover, English language teacher educators in the current study had significantly low level of early grade reading knowledge and

skills compared to participants' early grade reading knowledge and skills in the hypothesized population, indicating that there are substantial differences on early grade reading knowledge and skills between the two groups. In Tanzania, Rwezaura (2016) investigated the implementation of competence-based English curriculum in Kinondoni municipal primary schools' in Dar es Salaam region. Findings indicated that school inspectors, heads of schools and teachers were familiar with the concept of competency based curriculum.

In Kenya, several localized studies have demonstrated the positive impact of targeted teacher training. Amwayi (2016) assessed the Aga Khan Foundation's early literacy and numeracy programme in Mombasa County and found that structured teacher training significantly enhanced learners' outcomes in foundational literacy. Similarly, Wawire (2020) evaluated how Kenya's teacher preparation curriculum equips pre-service teachers to handle reading instruction and identified several gaps in content delivery and practical application. Thuo et al. (2024), working in Kiambu County, found that capacity-building interventions grounded in Vygotsky's sociocultural theory led to statistically significant gains in learners' reading abilities. They concluded that building teachers' pedagogical content knowledge particularly in phonics, vocabulary development, and guided reading was instrumental in improving student performance. However, this study, like others mentioned, was conducted outside Bungoma County. The current research addresses this geographical gap by examining teacher training impacts on reading outcomes in Bungoma North Sub County. Overall, the literature affirms that effective teacher training must be sustained, localized, and evidence-based, and that such training has a measurable influence on learners' reading acquisition in the early grades.

2.3.2 Provision of Instructional Guidance to Teachers and Learners' Reading Skills

Effective reading instruction requires more than teacher training alone. It requires ongoing, clear, and practical instructional support. Where teacher capacity is limited, comprehensive instructional guidance can be critical in helping teachers establish structured and consistent literacy routines (Olifant et al., 2020; Al Roomy, 2022). Such guidance is most beneficial when it includes step-by-step directions, is visually accessible, and avoids overly technical language (Al Roomy, 2022; Graham & Kelly, 2018). Increasingly, instructional materials incorporate interactive elements such as video tutorials, which have proven useful in countries like Spain (Sole-Llussa, Aguilar & Ibanez, 2022), and mobile-delivered micro-learning, as seen in recent trials in sub-Saharan Africa (USAID, 2023).

High-quality instructional guides often include scripted lessons for each teaching day, which not only provide structure but also help standardize instruction in under-resourced settings (Kim et al., 2016; RTI International, 2023). However, even the most well-designed materials require accompanying teacher training and follow-up support to be implemented effectively. As emphasized by RTI International (2017), teachers benefit significantly from ongoing mentorship, classroom observations, feedback, and peer collaboration.

Support structures for teachers must be context-sensitive and leverage multiple actors within the educational ecosystem including head teachers, curriculum support officers, district education officials, and experienced peers. Collaborative professional development and in-school peer coaching have been found to be particularly effective in improving literacy instruction (Hill, Charalambous & McDonald, 2022). A study in

Ghana, for example, showed that structured peer-learning communities significantly improved early grade reading outcomes (Sabates et al., 2022).

In examining how technology can support instructional delivery, Carstens et al. (2021) found that teacher-led demonstrations and peer collaboration in the use of educational technology led to higher adoption rates and improved student outcomes. Crum (2017) similarly demonstrated that technology-enhanced instruction grounded in Mayer's multimedia learning theory produced significantly better vocabulary acquisition among English Language Learners (ELLs) compared to traditional textbook methods.

Technology, when used strategically, can support differentiated instruction and boost engagement, particularly for struggling readers. Ahmed and Nayyar (2022) and more recently Mwangi and Barasa (2023) found that integrating digital tools in reading and writing instruction enhanced learners' motivation and improved literacy outcomes. These tools also facilitated increased parental involvement, another critical factor influencing reading development.

Parental involvement remains a potent lever in early literacy development. Wood (2015) found that interactive workshops for parents on early literacy and social development not only supported children's reading skills but also improved broader academic competencies such as phonological awareness and processing speed. Recent research from Kenya by Mureithi and Ndung'u (2023) reinforces this finding, emphasising the importance of home-school collaboration in early grade reading improvement.

In Algeria, Boukhentache (2020) observed that since the introduction of competency-based teaching into the English language syllabuses in 2005, teachers have been

supplied with a big deal of theory about this instructional model, without practical applications for day-to-day classroom instruction. In Tanzania, Nguru and Ally (2025) explored the strategies adopted by teachers to enhance pre-reading skills among pre-primary students within the framework of the competency-based approach, as well as the values they associated with these strategies. The study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design. The teachers used pictures, songs, plays, dances, role-playing, flashcards, grouping and talking classrooms to develop pre-reading skills. It was revealed that the values they put on these strategies include the development of creativity and confidence, connecting sounds and meaning, embodying social roles, fostering active participation and retention, and improving independent learning skills.

Regarding teacher provision of instructional guidelines and preparedness in Kenya, Bartilol (2017) observed that despite the national rollout of Kenya's early grade reading programme, many lower primary school teachers reported feeling underprepared. Mwaga (2024) determines the influence of professional documents on the implementation of language activities. The study was premised on constructivism theory whose proponent is Vygotsky. The study found that teacher preparedness had a 26.1% variation to explain and predict implementation of language activities while majority of teachers were not satisfied with the level of preparedness to implement the curriculum. More recently, Masaba and Muthee (2024), studying Bungoma County, noted that while remedial instruction showed promise, its effectiveness varied widely depending on the nature of the instructional strategy and the support provided to teachers. Overall, instructional guidance must be comprehensive, accessible, and accompanied by continuous professional development. It should be reinforced through in-school support mechanisms and enhanced with culturally relevant digital content where appropriate. Without these components, even well-intentioned reading

programmes may fall short of significantly improving literacy outcomes. Research examining the provision of instructional guidelines on learners' acquisition of reading skills in Bungoma North is lacking which necessitated this study.

2.3.3 Provision of Supplementary Instructional Materials on EGR and Learners Acquisition of Reading Skills

Reading instruction is significantly hampered in environments where children lack access to essential instructional materials such as books. A well-resourced classroom, particularly with age-appropriate and culturally relevant reading materials, is critical to foundational literacy development (Munna & Kalam, 2021; Hicks, 2023). Yet, in many developing contexts, the availability of such supplementary materials remains limited, and inconsistent (Graham & Kelly, 2018). as Kim et al. (2016) and updated findings by Mugo, Waweru and Kamau (2023) discovered that effective use of these materials is contingent on adequate teacher training. Teachers must be equipped not only to access the materials but to integrate them meaningfully into reading instruction.

It is not enough to distribute books without attention to learners' reading levels or teachers' pedagogical strategies. Instructional resources must align with learner needs and support differentiated instruction, especially in early grade reading contexts (Nicholas et al., 2024). Additionally, structured use of decodable readers, storybooks, and phonics-based materials has shown measurable improvements in early literacy outcomes when deployed effectively (RTI International, 2021).

Recent studies highlight that digital materials and ICT tools, when thoughtfully implemented, can supplement traditional reading resources. For instance, Watts and Andreadis (2022) found that tablet use in classrooms encouraged a shift toward learner-centered instruction, though impacts varied depending on teacher attitude and training.

Innovative teachers used tablets to create engaging, multimedia reading environments, while others merely replicated textbook instruction in digital format.

Technology also plays a critical role in expanding access to reading content, particularly where printed materials are scarce. A study by Mrutu and Kulwenz (2024) in Uganda demonstrated that students using interactive e-books and phonics apps improved in reading fluency and comprehension more than those relying on textbooks alone. However, these benefits were most pronounced when teachers received training on how to integrate ICT into literacy lessons effectively.

Despite such promise, research warns against over-reliance on technology without cost-benefit analysis or contextual appropriateness. Piper et al. (2018) reported that the Kenya PRIMR study found no significant literacy gains from e-readers or tablets compared to low-cost print-based interventions, emphasizing the importance of matching technology choices to instructional goals and local realities. Moreover, learner engagement with materials matters. Prince (2017) highlighted that ELL students exposed to iPad-based vocabulary games were more motivated and exhibited improved word recognition than peers using paper-based worksheets. These findings suggest that multimedia elements such as visuals and audio support can enhance vocabulary acquisition and overall reading engagement especially for learners facing language barriers.

In terms of traditional instructional materials, their effective use hinges on parental involvement and teacher support. The Education Development Centre (2023) found in Rwanda that improvements in literacy stemmed from both improved teaching materials and home support for reading. Similarly, Long and Szabo (2016) showed that while e-

readers did not significantly outperform print books in reading comprehension, they supported similar outcomes with increased student motivation.

Finally, Palani (2021) emphasised the importance of cultivating reading habits amidst the growing influence of mass media. This reinforces the need for engaging, accessible, and culturally resonant reading materials whether digital or print to counter declining interest in traditional literacy resources. In sum, supplementary instructional materials both print and digital can significantly influence learners reading skills, but only when aligned with learner needs, delivered with teacher training, and integrated into pedagogically sound instructional routines. In Machakos, Mulei, Kebaya and Ndivo (2023) showed how children's storybooks foster fundamental skills in reading that are necessary for improving oral reading fluency and comprehension among learners in early years education. Therefore, a holistic approach that combines materials, teacher support, and parental engagement is essential for effective literacy development in early grades. The review of the literature has shown that inadequate empirical studies have been undertaken to examine the association between provision of instructional materials in EGR and learners acquisition of reading skills which was the focus of this research.

2.3.4 Monitoring Systems on EGR and Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills

Effective early grade reading (EGR) interventions extend beyond initial teacher training to include ongoing monitoring, feedback, and in-classroom coaching. These components are critical to ensure that instructional practices learned in training are sustained and implemented with fidelity. Research shows that without continuous support, teachers often struggle to retain and apply new knowledge Darling-Hammond et al.,(2017); Ahmed & Nayyar,(2022). In contrast, instructional coaching particularly

when it includes classroom modelling and real-time feedback has been shown to significantly improve teacher adherence to evidence-based practices (Mitchell et al., 2024; Arkorful & Osei-Poku, 2023).

Kim et al. (2016) emphasize that coaching embedded within the school context enables teachers to contextualize instructional strategies and receive targeted feedback, which enhances their confidence and effectiveness. More recent meta-analyses confirm that coaching leads to greater gains in student literacy outcomes when compared to standalone workshops (Zhao & Reardon, 2022).

Assessment plays a parallel role in supporting both instruction and accountability. Because literacy development follows a sequential pattern, teachers must know where each student is on the developmental continuum to adjust instruction accordingly (Gelfuso, 2018). Ongoing formative assessment enables teachers to identify gaps and provide differentiated support. EGR programmes must therefore train teachers not only in reading pedagogy but also in assessment literacy how to collect, interpret, and use student performance data to inform instruction (Mugo et al., 2023).

Assessments are also critical for strengthening accountability mechanisms within education systems. Verger et al. (2024) argue that effective systems are those that balance autonomy, assessment, and accountability, enabling schools to better respond to the needs of their learners. Transparent reporting of assessment results allows for collaboration between teachers, parents, and school leaders, fostering shared responsibility for students' reading development (Levy-Feldman, 2025). When implemented correctly, such systems result in more instructional time, improved teacher preparation, and more focused teaching (Rufina, 2020).

The World Bank (2020) evaluated two low-cost randomized interventions in Tonga aimed at improving early grade reading. One focused on direct reading instruction and yielded gains of 0.3 to 0.7 standard deviations in reading outcomes, depending on the domain assessed. The second intervention, which involved community-based play activities, also produced measurable gains in school readiness and literacy, although to a lesser extent (approximately 0.2 SD). These findings suggest that both classroom-focused interventions and community engagement can be effective when monitoring and evaluation systems are in place to guide improvement.

In Nigeria, RTI International (2015) evaluated the Reading and Access Research Activity (RARA) using a randomized controlled trial across eight Local Government Authorities. The intervention comprising teacher training, monitoring, and feedback led to significant improvements in teachers' instructional practices and student reading outcomes in Hausa. Learners in treatment schools showed marked progress in phonemic awareness, decoding, and fluency, while control groups showed minimal gains. These results underscore the effectiveness of integrated EGR systems that combine training, coaching, and performance tracking.

Despite the success of such programmes in countries like Nigeria and Tonga, there is limited empirical evidence from Kenya regarding how ongoing monitoring systems affect learners' reading acquisition. While several donor-funded programmes have introduced EGR initiatives in Kenya, robust research that isolates the impact of monitoring mechanisms such as coaching frequency, feedback quality, and use of assessment data on student reading outcomes remains sparse. This represents a significant gap in the literature and justifies the current study's focus on the Kenyan context.

2.4 Research Gap

The review of empirical and conceptual literature has shown that inadequate focus has been given on the association between EGRA and learners' acquisition of reading skills. There are also several methodological, geographical, conceptual and contextual gaps identified which the present study sought to fill. Onuorah (2021) study on how reading comprehension by learners was influenced by reflective instructional method which was experimental while this study was non-experimental. Another departure from this study is that teacher librarians were used to teach reflective instructional technique while the present study relied on teachers' instruction to measure learners EGRA scores. Mulatu and Regassa (2022) research from Ethiopia was conducted in secondary level (Grade) learners reading skills while the present study focused on identifying the reading skills of lower primary schools' learners. Karamage et al. (2023) research compared reading comprehension levels between Grade 3 learners of public schools and those from private schools. The present study determined learners reading comprehension within public school setting.

Another study by Mrutu and Kulwenza (2024) investigated methods teachers used to teach reading in lower primary classes. It was purely qualitative research which collected data from teachers, head teachers and education officers. The present study was mixed method research which involved collection of qualitative and quantitative data. Masaba and Muthee (2024) research examined how remedial instruction helped Grade 3 learners acquisition of reading competency. This study determined how the EGR reading programme influenced learners reading skills which was not only restricted to being applied as a remedial approach to teaching in classroom. Thuo et al. (2024) research examined influence of teachers' capacity-building interventions on reading abilities of early grade learners in public primary schools in Kiambu County.

The study was conducted in Kiambu county while the present study was conducted in Bungoma North Sub County, showing existence of geographical gap. Among the four independent variables reviewed, the literature has shown that most research on EGR monitoring systems and learners' acquisition of reading skills has been conducted outside Kenya. The lack of Kenya and Bungoma North Sub County specific research evidence with regard to the contribution of EGR on learners' acquisition of reading skills presented a critical research gap, which this study sought to fill.

2.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter has reviewed empirical and theoretical literature on the assessment of early grade reading (EGR) programmes and learners acquisition of reading skills. The review highlighted that effective EGR programmes combine teacher training with ongoing classroom monitoring, coaching, and assessment. These components ensure sustained application of instructional strategies and promote data-driven teaching. The next chapter presents the research methodology used to collect and analyse data.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the procedures and strategies used to collect and analyse data for the study. The purpose of the research was to evaluate the implementation of the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools. The chapter covers the area of study, research design, target population, sampling procedures, and sample size. It also describes the data collection methods employed, as well as the processes used to ensure the validity and reliability of research instruments. Additionally, the chapter presents the techniques used for data analysis and discusses the ethical considerations observed throughout the study.

3.2 Research Design

A research design serves as a blueprint that guides the entire research process, detailing the procedures for data collection, analysis, and interpretation. It ensures coherence between the research questions, methodology, and the strategies employed to achieve the study objectives (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Research methodology, on the other hand, refers to the systematic plan, approach, or strategy that a researcher adopts to address the research problem, collect relevant data, and generate meaningful findings (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen, & Walker, 2019). In this study, the research design was informed by the specific objectives and hypotheses, which aimed to examine how teacher training, instructional guidelines, supplementary instructional materials, and monitoring systems influence learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub County.

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme's implementation and its effects on reading skill acquisition. The quantitative component allowed for statistical testing of the hypotheses and measurement of relationships between variables, while the qualitative component provided in-depth insights into teacher practices, challenges, and contextual factors that influence programme effectiveness. Mixed methodology was considered appropriate because it leveraged the strengths of both approaches, enabling triangulation of findings to enhance the validity and reliability of the results (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Field, 2022).

A descriptive survey research design was specifically employed to collect detailed information from a representative sample of teachers and head teachers. Descriptive surveys are particularly suitable for studies that aim to explore the characteristics, perceptions, and practices of a population without manipulating the variables under study (Ary et al., 2019). This design aligned closely with the research objectives, which sought to determine how various EGR interventions—such as teacher training, instructional guidelines, provision of supplementary materials, and monitoring systems affect learners' acquisition of reading skills. Data were collected using structured questionnaires for quantitative analysis and semi-structured interviews to capture qualitative insights, enabling a comprehensive description of the phenomenon as it exists naturally in the participating schools.

Furthermore, the descriptive survey research design facilitated triangulation of data sources, which strengthened the credibility and richness of the findings. Triangulation allowed the researcher to compare and integrate quantitative results with qualitative

narratives, providing a more nuanced understanding of the effect of EGR interventions on reading outcomes (Field, 2022). This approach was particularly useful in an educational setting, where complex interactions between instructional practices, learner characteristics, and resource availability can influence programme effectiveness. Overall, the combination of mixed-methods approach and descriptive survey design ensured that the study captured both measurable outcomes and contextual factors, providing robust evidence to inform policy and practice regarding early grade literacy interventions in Kenya

3.3 Study Area

The study was conducted in Bungoma North Sub-County, which is one of the administrative sub-counties of Bungoma County in western Kenya. Bungoma North is predominantly rural and comprises six administrative divisions (Republic of Kenya, 2019). The area is situated within the agricultural highlands of western Kenya, with an economy largely driven by smallholder farming. Major food crops include maize, beans, cassava, and vegetables, while coffee and sugarcane serve as the principal cash crops, contributing significantly to household incomes. The sub-county is home to 108 public primary schools, with approximately 32,163 learners enrolled in lower primary classes (Republic of Kenya, 2024), reflecting a high demand for basic education services in the region.

Despite the high enrolment figures, Bungoma North Sub-County continues to experience persistent challenges in literacy development, particularly in the early grades. Analysis of data from the Sub-County Education Office (2024) reveals that learners' performance in English reading tasks over the past three years has consistently fallen below expected levels, with scores generally averaging in the "approaching

expectation” range. This trend indicates stagnation in reading achievement among early grade learners, raising concerns about their ability to master foundational literacy skills. Since English is both a subject and the medium of instruction for other core subjects including Mathematics, Religious Education, Environmental Activities and Creative Activities poor reading proficiency in English has far-reaching implications, negatively affecting learners’ overall academic performance.

This persistent underperformance in English literacy formed the basis for selecting Bungoma North Sub-County as the study site. The researcher focused on investigating the implementation of the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme, a national intervention designed to enhance foundational literacy among learners in Grades 1–3. Given the central role of reading competence in broader academic success, the study sought to provide evidence-based insights into how EGR interventions—such as teacher training, instructional guidelines, supplementary materials, and monitoring systems—impact learners’ acquisition of reading skills in lower primary classes. By examining these dynamics in a context characterized by ongoing literacy challenges, the study aimed to inform educational strategies and policy interventions that could be applied in similar rural settings.

3.4 Target Population

A target population refers to the entire group of individuals or entities to which a researcher intends to generalize the results of a study. As Terrell (2022) explains, clearly defining the target population is essential for guiding sampling decisions, determining the scope of data collection, and ensuring the efficient use of research resources. The target population should align closely with the research objectives and the context under investigation (Ary et al., 2019).

This study targeted public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County, located in Bungoma County, Kenya. The sub-county has a total of 108 public primary schools, which formed the institutional basis of the study. Within these schools, the primary respondents included 108 head teachers, one from each public primary school and 346 lower primary school teachers, specifically those teaching Grades 1 to 3 and Grade 1-3 learners from 108 schools.

The selection of these two groups was purposeful. Lower primary school teachers were targeted because they are directly involved in the delivery of the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme and are best positioned to provide insights into its implementation, challenges, and outcomes. According to UNESCO (2021), teachers in the early grades are critical actors in promoting foundational literacy, as they play a direct role in shaping learners' early reading experiences, instructional practices, and learning outcomes. Head teachers, on the other hand, serve as internal instructional leaders and curriculum supervisors within their respective schools.

They are responsible for overseeing the implementation of educational programmes, including EGR, ensuring adherence to policy, and supporting teacher development. As Fullan (2020) notes, school leadership plays a pivotal role in creating an enabling environment for curriculum implementation and in fostering a culture of instructional improvement. The Grade 1 – 3 learners were targeted as way of measuring their performance in EGRA reading tasks. By focusing on head teachers, lower primary teachers and Grade 1 – 3 learners, the study captured both policy implementation and impact dimensions of EGR programme, making it possible to understand how institutional leadership and classroom practice intersect to affect learners' acquisition of reading skills.

Table 3.1 Target population

Respondents	Target population
Head teachers	108
Teachers	346
EGRA reading tasks	108
Total	454

Source: Sub County Director of Education

3.5 Sampling Procedure and Sample Size

Sampling plays a critical role in research, particularly when the entire population cannot be studied due to constraints such as time, financial resources, and logistical challenges. According to Babbie (2021), researchers select a sample to gain insights from a manageable subset of the population, allowing them to generalise findings to the broader group.

3.5.1 Sample Size

To determine the appropriate sample size, the study followed Fink's (2023) recommendation that, where population sizes are moderate and no fixed formula is required, selecting approximately 10- 30% of the target population can yield a statistically meaningful and manageable sample. Accordingly, 30% of the 346 lower primary teachers were selected, resulting in a sample of approximately 104 teachers. For Grade 1 – 3 learners who were involved in data collection (through EGRA reading assessments / tasks), 11.1% of schools to act as the sample size for conducting EGRA reading tasks.

3.5.2 Sampling Procedures

Creswell and Creswell (2023) emphasise that sampling procedures refer to the systematic strategies used to identify and select a portion of the population for study,

ensuring that the data collected is relevant and representative. Fink (2023) also underscores the importance of both sample size and sampling methods in enhancing the credibility and generalizability of research findings.

This study targeted 108 public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County, along with their respective head teachers, lower primary school teachers (Grade 1 – 3) and Grade 1-3 learners from the said schools. A stratified random sampling approach was adopted to ensure a representative and unbiased sample across the sub-county. In the first stage, stratified sampling was used to categorise schools based on the six administrative divisions within Bungoma North Sub-County Ndalú /Tabani, Tongaren, Soysambu/Mitua, Milima, Naitiri/Kabuyefwe and Mbakalo (See Table 3.2 for the breakdown). This stratification was necessary to ensure geographical representation and to capture any contextual differences that might influence the implementation of the EGR programme. From each division, a proportional number of schools were selected using simple random sampling. This method ensured that each school within each division had an equal and independent chance of being chosen, thereby minimising selection bias and enhancing representativeness.

Following the selection of schools, head teachers from the sampled schools were automatically included in the study since there is typically only one head teacher per school. For the selection of lower primary teachers, stratified and simple random sampling was again employed. For example, 15 out of 51 teachers were to be selected from Ndalú/Tabani Divisions, therefore the researcher wrote the 51 codes of teachers in a piece of paper, mixed it thoroughly and started drawing one paper each until the required number (15) was attained. This process was repeated for the other 5 divisions in order to get the total sample size of 104 teachers. This approach ensured that the

sample included teachers with varying levels of experience and classroom exposure to the EGR programme.

Table 3.1 Sampling size distribution

Division / Ward	Head teachers		Teachers		Grade 1 – 3	
	N	S	N	S	N	S
1 Ndalu/Tabani	16	5	51	15	16	2
2 Tongaren	17	5	55	17	17	2
3 Soysambu/Mitua	26	7	83	25	26	3
4 Milima	13	4	43	13	13	1
5 Naitiri/Kabuyefwe	20	6	63	19	20	2
6 Mbakalo	16	5	51	15	16	2
Total	108	32	346	104	32	12

Key: N-Target, S-Sample Size

The combination of stratified and simple random sampling increased the likelihood that the findings would be generalizable across the sub-county.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

This study employed three primary data collection instruments: questionnaire, interview schedule, and EGRA reading task. The use of multiple instruments allowed for methodological triangulation, which enhanced the validity and reliability of the findings by enabling the researcher to compare and corroborate data obtained from different sources (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2018). These instruments were carefully designed to align with the research objectives and to capture both quantitative and qualitative data relevant to the implementation of the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme and its effect on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools.

3.6.1 Questionnaire for Teachers

Questionnaires were the principal tool used to collect data from lower primary school teachers. As Creswell and Creswell (2023) explain, questionnaires are widely used in

educational research to gather information about respondents' practices, experiences, perceptions, and attitudes in a structured and efficient manner. They allow researchers to reach a broad population quickly and generate both standardized and nuanced data depending on the type of questions included. Booth, Colomb, and Williams (2022) also emphasise that questionnaires are a cost-effective means of collecting data from large samples, particularly when resources are limited.

The questionnaire used in this study was structured into both closed-ended and open-ended questions. This format was intended to yield both quantitative data for statistical analysis and qualitative data for deeper insight into teacher experiences and perspectives. The items were designed to reflect the four main objectives of the study and were organized into distinct sections for clarity and focus. Section A collected demographic data such as age, gender, academic qualifications, years of teaching experience, and grade level taught. Sections B to E comprised statements aligned with the specific research objectives. These were rated using a five-point Likert scale ranging from *Strongly Disagree (1)* to *Strongly Agree (5)*. This design enabled the quantification of teacher attitudes and perceptions regarding the implementation and effectiveness of the EGR programme. The questionnaire was piloted prior to full administration to ensure clarity, relevance, and internal consistency of the items.

3.6.2 Interview Schedule for Head teacher

To supplement the questionnaire data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with head teachers of selected schools. Interviews are particularly effective for gathering in-depth, context-specific insights from participants, especially where personal experiences, leadership practices, and implementation strategies are involved (Rubin & Rubin, 2022). Semi-structured interviews strike a balance between structure and

flexibility, allowing the interviewer to probe further based on participant responses while still maintaining consistency across interviews (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

The interview schedule contained open-ended questions focused on the implementation of the EGR programme, school-level support mechanisms, teacher training, monitoring and evaluation practices, and perceived outcomes on learner performance. The qualitative data collected through interviews helped to contextualize the survey findings and provided richer explanations of the factors influencing programme implementation. A total of 32 head teachers were interviewed, representing schools from across the sub-county's administrative divisions.

3.6.3 EGRA Reading Task for Learners

In addition to questionnaires and interviews, Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) was carried out in selected schools to assess learners' competency in reading activities in class. EGRA is mainly administered at school by independent trained assessors. Since teachers were part of respondents in the study and they were using EGRA to assess their learner acquisition of reading skills, it was administered by classroom teachers themselves and in some cases the researcher. A total of 12 EGRA tasks involving Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3 learners from 12 public primary schools were undertaken by the research. The reading activities that were tested involved; letter naming, familiar words, non-words (numeracy) and oral reading fluency (correct reading) which were measured per minute. The teacher was also asked to rate their learners' reading and listening comprehension abilities which were on a maximum score of 5 and 3 respectively. The outcome of the EGRA tasks, are presented in the next chapter.

3.7 Validity, Piloting and Reliability of the Research Instruments

Ensuring the validity and reliability of research instruments is critical for enhancing the credibility, accuracy, and generalizability of research findings. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), validity refers to the degree to which an instrument measures what it is intended to measure, while reliability refers to the consistency of measurement across respondents and time. In this study, a systematic approach was adopted to establish both the validity and reliability of the questionnaires, interview schedules, and EGRA reading tasks.

3.7.1 Validity

Validity indicates how accurately an instrument reflects the specific concept or variable it is intended to measure (Booth, Colomb, & Williams, 2022). In this study, content validity was emphasised, ensuring that all items in the questionnaires, interview schedules, and EGRA tasks aligned closely with the research objectives and variables—namely, teacher training, instructional guidelines, supplementary materials, monitoring systems, and learners' acquisition of reading skills.

To establish validity, the instruments were submitted to expert review by the researcher's supervisors and academic staff from the Department of Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Eldoret. The experts assessed the instruments for clarity, relevance, coherence, and appropriateness in addressing the research questions. Based on their feedback, the researcher refined the instruments by removing ambiguous or redundant items, restructuring poorly worded questions, and ensuring a logical sequence of items. This process enhanced construct validity ensuring that the tools effectively measured the intended variables and were suitable for the target population (Robson & McCartan, 2016).

3.7.2 Piloting

Prior to the main study, a pilot study was conducted to test the practicality, clarity, and suitability of the research instruments. The pilot involved three public primary schools in Likuyani Sub-County, a neighbouring area with socio-economic and educational characteristics similar to Bungoma North Sub-County. The schools selected for piloting were not included in the main study sample to prevent contamination of data.

A total of 24 lower primary school teachers were randomly selected to participate in the pilot. During the pilot, the questionnaires and interview schedules were administered, and a sample of EGRA tasks was conducted with learners in Grades 1–3. This process helped the researcher identify any ambiguities, procedural challenges, or time constraints associated with administering the instruments. The pilot also allowed the researcher to observe how teachers conducted the EGRA reading tasks, including letter naming, familiar word reading, non-word decoding, and oral reading fluency assessments, as well as the teacher-led ratings of reading and listening comprehension.

3.7.3 Reliability

To establish reliability, the test–retest method was employed. The instruments were administered twice to the same respondents over a two-week interval, and the consistency of responses was analysed using Pearson’s correlation coefficient. A reliability coefficient of 0.7 or higher was considered acceptable for educational research (Fink, 2023). In this study, a coefficient of 0.7460 was obtained across the five key variables, indicating high reliability.

Table 3.3 Reliability Output Result

	Variable	No. of items	Benchmark	Cronbach's Alpha	Decision
1	Teacher training	5	0.7	0.732	Reliable
2	Provision of instructional guidelines	6	0.7	0.769	Reliable
3	Provision of supplementary materials	5	0.7	0.737	Reliable
4	Monitoring systems	5	0.7	0.751	Reliable
5	Acquisition of reading skills	5	0.7	0.741	Reliable
	Average	26		07460	Reliable

This result confirmed that the instruments produced consistent and dependable data, thereby enhancing their reliability (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Fink, 2023).

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

The data collection process followed a systematic and ethically sound approach to ensure smooth access to the study sites and cooperation from participants. The researcher began by obtaining a formal approval letter from the University of Eldoret, which authorized the research as part of an academic requirement. This approval was used to apply for a research permit from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI) the statutory body mandated to regulate research activities in Kenya.

Upon receiving the NACOSTI permit, the researcher sought permission from the Sub-County Director of Education in Bungoma North Sub-County to conduct research in public primary schools under their jurisdiction. After receiving consent, the researcher made prior arrangements to visit each of the 32 sampled public primary schools for familiarization and to officially request access from the respective head teachers.

During each school visit, the purpose of the study was clearly explained to the head teacher and teachers involved, and their informed consent was sought before any data collection began. The researcher ensured confidentiality, anonymity, and voluntary participation throughout the process. Questionnaires were administered to lower primary teachers teaching Grades 1 to 3, and the respondents were given ample time to complete them without interruption to their instructional schedules.

In parallel, interview sessions were scheduled and conducted with the head teachers in quiet office settings to ensure focus and depth. These interviews were recorded with participant consent and supplemented by handwritten notes for backup. Additionally, with the assistance from class teachers (3) from the 12 schools, they were asked to administer the EGRA reading task to their learners during English subject lessons and rate their performance from Grade 1 to 3 in the last three years (2022, 2023 and 2024). The period of data collection took three months.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedures

The data analysis procedures for this study involved both quantitative and qualitative analytical techniques in line with the mixed-methods approach adopted. According to Creswell and Creswell (2023), mixed-methods research enables the researcher to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem by integrating both statistical trends and participants' perspectives.

Quantitative data, which was obtained primarily through closed-ended items in the questionnaires, underwent systematic preparation prior to analysis. The first step involved data screening and cleaning to eliminate incomplete or inaccurately filled instruments. The researcher used spreadsheet sort functions to identify and remove such responses, ensuring only valid data were analysed. The data was then coded and entered

into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27, a robust tool that facilitates complex statistical analysis (Field, 2022).

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and describe the features of the dataset. These included frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, which provided insights into patterns and trends within the responses. For inferential statistics, Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to assess the degree of relationship between the independent variables (dimensions of the Early Grade Reading programme implementation) and the dependent variable (learners' acquisition of reading skills). This statistical method was selected because it is effective in identifying linear relationships between interval and ratio-scale variables (Fink, 2023). The correlation statistics were also used to test the null hypotheses at 95.0% confidence level. The results were then presented using tables, charts, and graphs to enhance clarity and accessibility.

Qualitative data, derived from open-ended questionnaire items and interview schedule responses were analysed using thematic content analysis. Braun and Clarke (2021) describe thematic analysis as a flexible method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within qualitative data. The researcher transcribed the qualitative responses and organized them into broad thematic categories based on the research objectives. This involved familiarization with the data generating initial codes, searching for recurring patterns, and finally defining overarching themes. These themes were then interpreted in conjunction with the quantitative results to provide a more holistic understanding of the influence of the Early Grade Reading programme implementation. Qualitative data were presented in narrative form, with direct quotes from participants used to support key findings. By triangulating data from multiple

instruments and analytical methods, the study ensured greater validity, depth, and reliability in addressing the research questions (Cohen et al., 2018).

3.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are central to the integrity and credibility of any research undertaking. Ethics refer to the norms and principles that guide appropriate conduct in research, especially when human subjects are involved (Babbie, 2021). This study adhered to established ethical standards throughout all phases of the research process, from design to data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Before data collection began, the researcher obtained formal ethical clearance from the University of Eldoret, which approved the research proposal. A research permit was subsequently acquired from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI), authorizing the study in Bungoma North Sub-County. Additional permissions were secured from the Sub-County Director of Education and individual school head teachers, allowing access to school facilities and respondents.

The study prioritized informed consent, anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Each participant was informed about the purpose of the study, the use of the data, and their right to withdraw at any point without consequence. This information was clearly articulated in an introductory letter and participant information sheet, and written consent was obtained before data collection began.

To ensure confidentiality, no personal identifiers were collected, and all responses were treated with strict privacy. The data was securely stored and used solely for academic purposes. Additionally, the researcher avoided any form of coercion or deception and ensured that all interactions with participants were conducted with dignity and respect,

particularly given the sensitive nature of assessing teaching practices and student performance (Fink, 2023).

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings derived from the analysis of data collected on the effectiveness of the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme on learners' acquisition of reading skills in lower primary schools within Bungoma North Sub-County, Kenya. The data collection process involved the use of three primary instruments: questionnaires administered to lower primary teachers, semi-structured interviews with head teachers, and EGRA reading task assessment used by the researcher to establish the reading performance of learners. These tools were selected to allow for triangulation, enhancing the depth and credibility of the findings.

The data were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative methods, in line with the mixed-methods research design employed in the study. Quantitative data, obtained predominantly from the closed-ended items in the teacher questionnaires, were analysed using descriptive statistics (including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations) and inferential statistics, specifically Pearson's correlation coefficient, to determine the strength and nature of relationships between variables. This statistic was also used to test the hypothesis for the study. The statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27.

Qualitative data, collected through open-ended questionnaire responses and interviews schedule were analysed using thematic content analysis. This involved the identification of recurring patterns and themes that aligned with the study's objectives and research questions. According to Braun and Clarke (2021), thematic analysis

enables the researcher to capture complex meanings and provide rich, detailed accounts of qualitative data.

The structure of this chapter aligns with the specific research objectives of the study. It begins with the demographic characteristics of respondents and the response rate, followed by a detailed presentation and interpretation of findings based on each of the four research objectives. Each subsection presents the results of both quantitative and qualitative analyses in an integrated manner, ensuring a holistic understanding of the influence of the EGR programme on reading skill acquisition among lower primary learners. Where applicable, direct quotes from participants, tables, and graphs; are used to illustrate key findings, followed by an in-depth discussion of results in light of existing literature.

This chapter aims to respond to the central research question: *How does the implementation of the Early Grade Reading programme affect the acquisition of reading skills among learners in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County?*

4.1.1 Response Rate

This section presents the response rate obtained from the data collection process involving lower primary school teachers, head teachers, and classroom observations. Three data collection instruments were employed: a questionnaire for teachers, a semi-structured interview schedule for head teachers, and Early Grade Reading Assessment reading task to assess the implementation of the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme in selected classrooms. The instrument returns and participation rates are summarised in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Instrument Return Rate

Respondents	Sample size	Return	Response rate
Head teachers	32	22	68.8
Teachers	104	104	100.0
EGRA Reading Task	12 (schools)	12	100.0
Total	148	138	89.6

As shown in Table 4.1, the study recorded an overall response rate of 89.6%, which is considered excellent for educational research. The teacher questionnaire and EGRA reading test both recorded a 100% return rate, indicating full participation from the sampled teachers and successful implementation of EGRA reading task in all 12 selected schools. However, only 22 out of the 32 head teachers participated in the interview, yielding a response rate of 68.8%. The remaining 31.2% of school heads were unavailable at their respective workstations during the data collection period, largely due to official commitments, transfers, or personal leave. Despite this, the overall response rate meets and exceeds the minimum threshold recommended by Mugenda and Mugenda (2019), who suggest that a response rate of 50% or above is adequate for descriptive studies, and rates above 70% are considered very good. Similarly, Babbie (2021) affirms that high response rates reduce the risk of non-response bias and enhance the reliability and generalizability of findings. In conclusion, the response rates obtained were sufficient to proceed with the analysis and support valid inferences about the implementation of the Early Grade Reading programme in Bungoma North Sub-County.

4.1.2 Demographic Information of Respondents

The study collected demographic information from teachers to provide context for the analysis of Early Grade Reading (EGR) implementation in Bungoma North Sub-

County. Respondents were categorised based on gender, age, and teaching experience in lower primary classes. Figure 4.1 presents the results of teachers' gender.

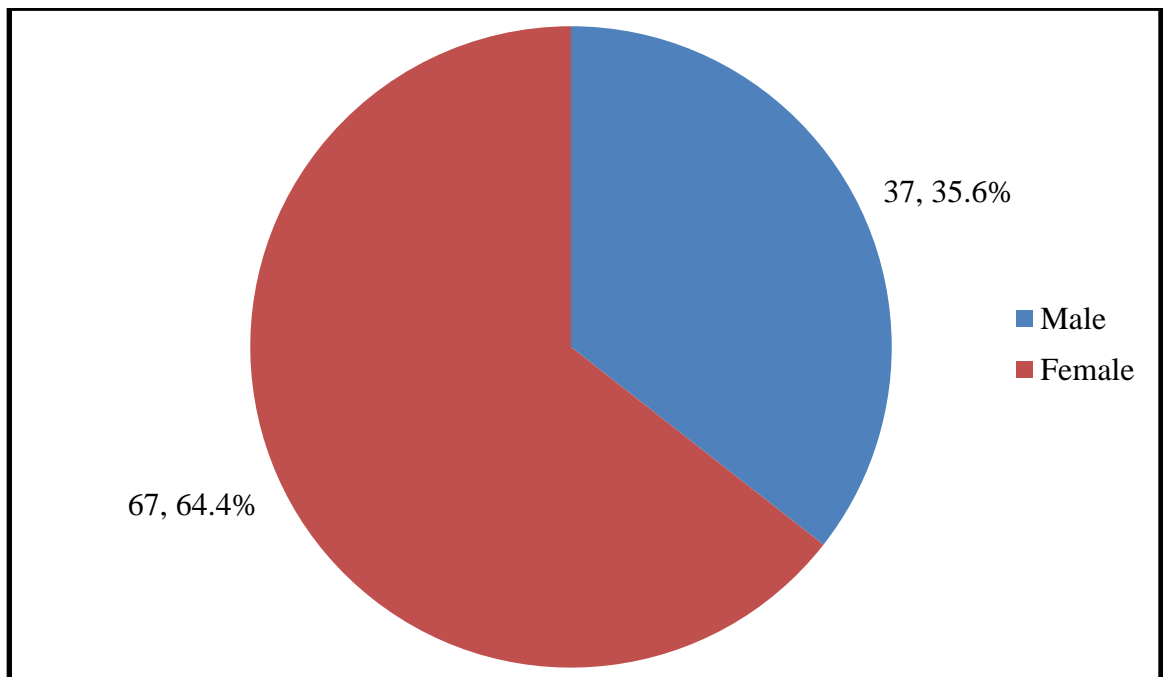


Figure 4.1 Teachers Gender

Findings indicate that a majority of teachers in lower primary classes were female. Specifically, 67 respondents (64.4%) were female, while 37 respondents (35.6%) were male. This distribution suggests that although both male and female teachers participated in the study, lower primary classes were predominantly staffed by female teachers. These findings align with national trends in Kenya, where early grade education tends to employ more female teachers, a pattern attributed to cultural and policy factors that influence teacher placement in lower grades (KICD, 2017; Nguru & Ally, 2025). The predominance of female teachers in early primary classes may have implications for instructional practices and the implementation of literacy programmes, as prior studies indicate that teacher gender can influence teaching style, learner engagement, and classroom interactions in foundational literacy (Piper et al., 2018).

The study also examined the age distribution of lower primary teachers in Bungoma North Sub-County. Results are given in Figure 4.2.

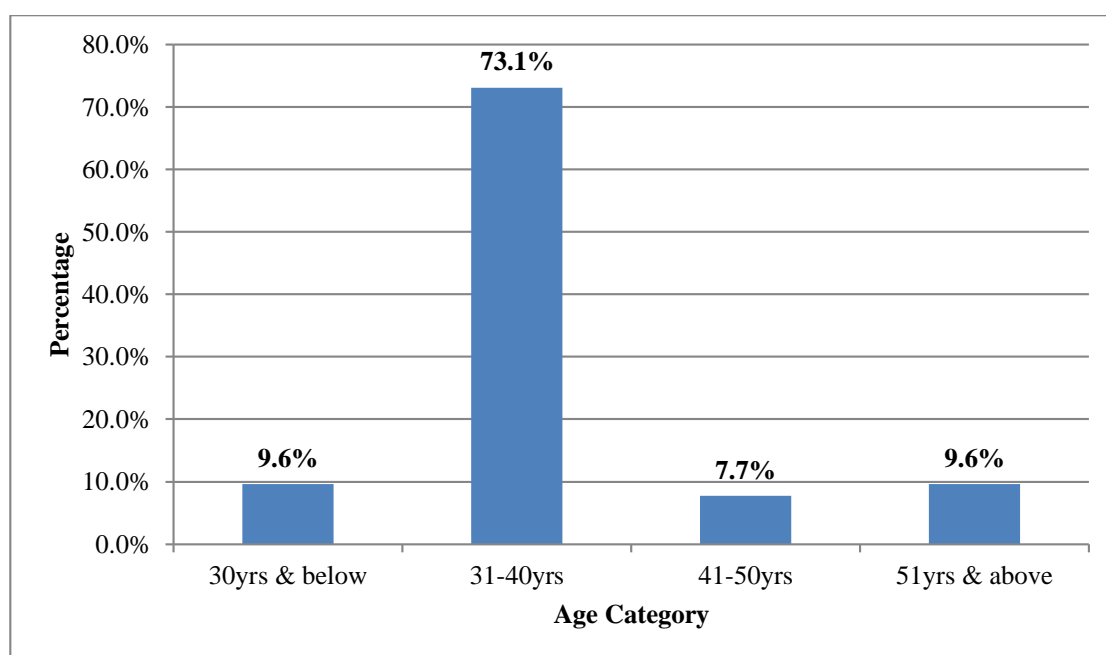


Figure 4.2 Lower Primary Teachers Age Category

Findings showed that 10 teachers (9.6%) were aged 30 years and below, 76 teachers (73.1%) were between 31 and 40 years, 8 teachers (7.7%) were aged 41 to 50 years, and 10 teachers (9.6%) were 51 years and above. These results indicate that the majority of lower primary teachers fall within the 31–40 years' age bracket, suggesting a predominance of middle-aged educators in early grade classes. This trend may reflect administrative preferences for teachers perceived to have both sufficient professional experience and the energy required to engage effectively with young learners in Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) and lower primary settings

The study further examined the teaching experience of lower primary teachers in Bungoma North Sub-County. Their responses are summarised in Figure 4.3.

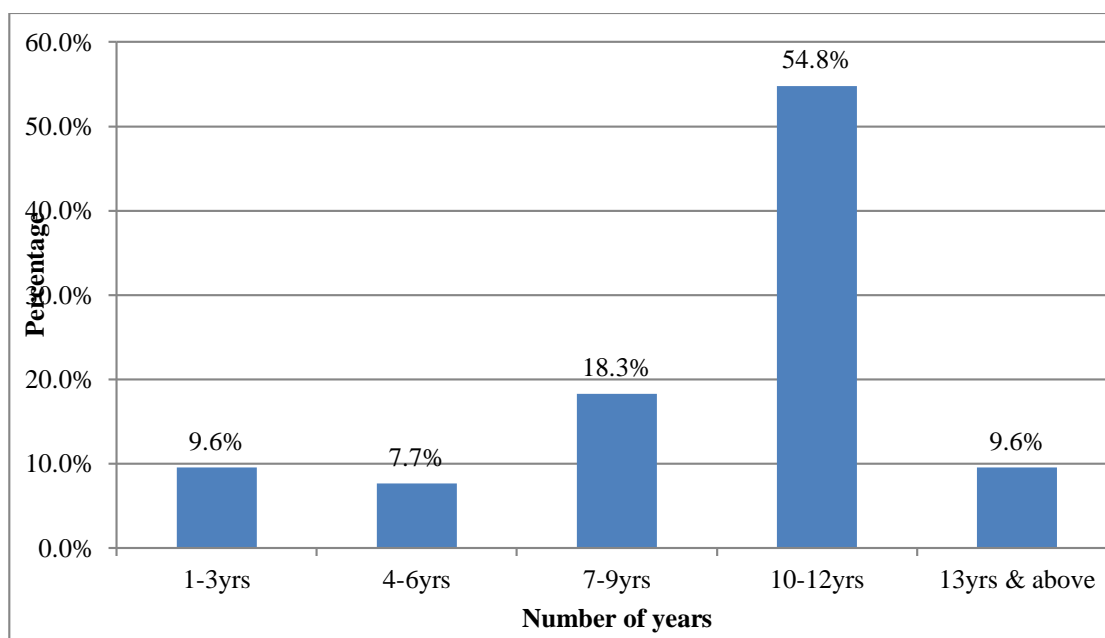


Figure 4.3 Distribution of Teachers According to Work Experience

Results indicated that 10 teachers (9.6%) had taught for 1–3 years, 8 teachers (7.7%) for 4–6 years, 19 teachers (18.3%) for 7–9 years, 57 teachers (54.8%) for 10–12 years, and 10 teachers (9.6%) had more than 13 years of teaching experience. These findings suggest that the majority of lower primary teachers have substantial professional experience, with over half having between 10 and 12 years in the classroom. Experienced teachers are likely to have a solid understanding of the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme and its implementation strategies.

4.2 Teacher Training and Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills

The first objective of the study was to evaluate the effect of **teacher training** on learners' acquisition of reading skills in lower primary classes. Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews, and the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) tasks to provide a comprehensive understanding of learners' reading competencies.

4.2.1 Learners' Performance in Reading Tasks

Teachers were asked to rate their learners' level of reading skill acquisition following the implementation of the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme using a five-point

Likert scale (Very High = 5 to Very Low = 1). Table 4.2 summarises the ratings across key reading skill areas. The results are given in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Teachers Rating of Learners Level of Acquisition of Reading Skills .

	Very High	High	Average	Low	Very low	M	SD
Phonemic awareness	10 (9.6%)	44 (42.3%)	28 (26.9%)	13 (12.5%)	9 (8.7%)	3.3173	1.0907
Alphabetic principle	19 (18.3%)	42 (40.4%)	26 (25.0%)	7 (6.7%)	10 (9.6%)	3.5096	1.1575
Oral reading fluency	7 (6.7%)	29 (27.9%)	44 (42.3%)	11 (10.6%)	13 (12.5%)	3.0577	1.0778
Vocabulary	8 (7.7%)	18 (17.3%)	55 (52.9%)	14 (13.5%)	9 (8.7%)	3.0192	.9851
Reading comprehension	6 (5.8%)	27 (26.0%)	50 (48.1%)	12 (11.5%)	9 (8.7%)	3.0865	.9765
Average scores						3.1981	1.0575

Results indicated that 42.3% of teachers rated learners' phonemic awareness as high, while 9.6% rated it as very high. The mean score was 3.32 (SD = 1.09), suggesting moderate proficiency. These findings align with studies in Kenya and other LMICs, which report that phonemic awareness is often the first reading skill to show improvement following structured teacher training in early grade reading programmes (RTI International, 2021; Piper et al., 2018).

Alphabetic principle scores were slightly higher, with a mean of 3.51 (SD = 1.16). Teachers rated 18.3% of learners as very high and 40.4% as high in this skill. This suggests that EGR teacher training effectively improved learners' ability to connect letters to sounds, a critical precursor for fluent reading. Similar findings were reported by Cherobon and Chepsiror (2022), who noted that structured literacy instruction in lower primary grades enhanced learners' decoding skills.

Teachers' ratings of oral reading fluency were moderate, with a mean score of 3.06 (SD = 1.07). Only 6.7% of learners were rated very high, and 27.9% high, while 42.3% were rated average. The relatively lower fluency compared to alphabetic principle indicates that while learners could decode words, speed and automaticity had not yet fully developed.

Vocabulary acquisition was rated as average (M = 3.01, SD = 0.98), with most learners falling in the average category. This finding is consistent with evidence from Kenyan schools where limited exposure to reading materials and interactive language experiences constrains vocabulary growth (Uwezo, 2022; Abadzi, 2017). Teacher training is crucial for promoting effective vocabulary teaching strategies, including explicit word instruction, use of context, and interactive read-alouds. According to ZPD theory, learners acquire new vocabulary more effectively when teachers mediate the learning by providing explanations, examples, and prompts, highlighting the importance of guided teacher support in vocabulary development

Finally, reading comprehension was generally rated as average (M = 3.08, SD = 0.97). Although 26% of learners were rated high, 48.1% fell in the average category. These results mirror national findings showing that reading comprehension remains a major challenge even after foundational literacy skills are acquired (Masaba & Muthee, 2024; KNEC, 2020). ZPD theory suggests that comprehension develops when learners are guided through texts slightly beyond their current level of understanding, with teachers scaffolding through questioning, summarizing, and clarifying meaning. The moderate comprehension scores indicate that while teacher training provided strategies for scaffolding, learners may still require sustained support, repeated exposure, and richer reading experiences to achieve higher levels of understanding.

Taken together, the composite mean score across all five reading skill areas was 3.19 (SD = 1.05), indicating that teachers overall perceived the reading skills of lower primary learners to be moderate. This provides a foundation for further investigating how specific elements of the Early Grade Reading programme have influenced learners' reading development in public primary schools within the sub-county.

To measure accurate reading outcomes, the researcher with the help of teachers from 12 public primary schools administered Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) reading activities test to Grade 1, 2 and 3 learners. Table 4.3 shows the proportion of learners falling in the various categories that were used earlier in EGR reading programmes.

Table 4.3 Proportion of learners' reading at various categories

Category	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Average
Emergent readers	30.8	20.3	11.9	21.0
Beginning readers	35.6	26.2	16.9	26.2
Transitional readers	26.2	39.8	44.9	37.0
Fluent readers	7.4	13.7	26.3	15.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The EGRA results indicate a clear progression in learners' reading abilities from Grade 1 to Grade 3. In Grade 1, 30.8% of learners were classified as emergent readers, a proportion that decreased to 11.9% by Grade 3. This reduction suggests that the implementation of the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme in Bungoma North Sub County had a positive impact on foundational reading skills. The gradual increase in the proportion of transitional and fluent readers reflects the cumulative benefits of structured early literacy interventions, consistent teacher support, and scaffolded learning activities provided through the EGR framework.

These findings are aligned with prior studies in Kenya and other sub-Saharan African contexts. For instance, Cherobon and Chepsiror (2022) found that learners exposed to Tusome-supported reading programmes exhibited significant gains in fluency and comprehension by Grade 2, particularly when instruction was scaffolded and supported by teacher guides and levelled reading materials. Similarly, RTI International (2021) reported that EGR interventions, when consistently implemented, significantly reduce the proportion of learners who cannot read basic words, while increasing the proportion of transitional and fluent readers across early grades.

Despite these gains, less than 26.3% of learners were classified as fluent readers across all grades, indicating that a large proportion of pupils still struggle with reading fluency. This aligns with national assessment data from Uwezo Kenya (2022), which reported that a significant number of learners in early primary grades were unable to read fluently with comprehension even after multiple years of schooling. The persistence of low fluency levels may reflect challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, limited access to supplementary reading materials, and uneven teacher capacity in implementing EGR instructional practices (Ngure, Mwoma, & Buma, 2019).

The findings can also be interpreted through the lens of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory, which posits that learners can achieve higher levels of competence when supported by a more knowledgeable other (Vygotsky, 1978). In the context of this study, the gradual improvement from emergent readers to transitional readers illustrates the role of teacher scaffolding, structured reading tasks, and continuous feedback in enabling learners to move beyond their current independent reading level. The relatively low proportion of fluent readers suggests that some learners may not yet have received sufficient instructional support or opportunities for

guided practice to reach full reading proficiency, highlighting the ongoing need for targeted interventions.

Hence, the EGRA results provide evidence that the EGR programme contributes positively to early literacy acquisition, particularly in reducing the number of learners with emergent reading skills and increasing transitional reading proficiency. However, the findings also underscore the importance of reinforcing instructional quality, providing additional reading materials, and offering sustained teacher support to ensure that more learners progress to fluent reading, thereby laying a stronger foundation for lifelong literacy and academic success

4.2.2 Teacher Level of training on EGR

The study investigated the extent to which lower primary school teachers in Bungoma North Sub-County had received training in implementing the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme, and how this training related to learners' reading skill acquisition. This was measured using a five-point scale: Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Often (4), and Always (5), providing insight into how teacher preparedness may correlate with learner outcomes in reading proficiency. The results of the analysis are given in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4 Teacher Level of Training on Early Grade Reading Programme

Training areas	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	M	SD
Attendance of monthly Early Grade Reading meetings	6 (5.8%)	22 (21.2%)	31 (29.8%)	18 (17.3%)	27 (26.0%)	3.3654	1.2390
Training on specific subjects	3 (2.9%)	10 (9.6%)	25 (24.0%)	19 (18.3%)	47 (45.2%)	3.9327	1.1597
Training on literary instructions from Kenyan context	19 (18.3%)	19 (18.3%)	30 (28.8%)	10 (9.6%)	26 (25.0%)	3.0481	1.4237
Training on instruction based on cognitive research	12 (11.5%)	10 (9.6%)	29 (27.8%)	16 (15.4%)	37 (35.6%)	3.5385	1.3648
Training on learners assessment	6 (5.8%)	17 (16.3%)	15 (14.4%)	29 (27.9%)	37 (35.6%)	3.7115	1.2670
Average						3.5192	1.2908

Teacher attendance at monthly EGR meetings was examined first. Results indicated that 29.8% of teachers sometimes attended these meetings, while only 26.0% reported always attending, producing a mean score of 3.36 (SD = 1.23). Interviews with head teachers revealed that formal EGR training sessions often occur once or twice a year, limiting teachers' opportunities for consistent engagement. This moderate level of participation may influence the teachers' capacity to provide timely instructional support. In line with Venketsamy and Sibanda (2021), who noted that teachers in South Africa lacked sufficient professional support despite possessing literacy knowledge, the findings suggest that inconsistent training may hinder teachers' effectiveness in

scaffolding learners' reading development. From a Vygotskian perspective, teachers serve as mediators within the learners' Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), providing the scaffolding necessary for progressing from what learners can do independently to what they can achieve with guidance. Irregular attendance at EGR meetings may therefore limit opportunities for effective scaffolding and, by extension, learners' reading development.

Training on specific literacy objectives under the EGR programme was reported to be more consistent, with 45.2% of teachers indicating that they always attended such sessions and only 9.6% reporting rare attendance. The mean score of 3.93 (SD = 1.15) suggests that most teachers frequently participated in targeted training designed to support classroom instruction. Research by Thuo et al. (2024) in Kiambu County, Kenya, supports this finding, demonstrating that teacher capacity-building interventions improved learners' reading abilities. Within the ZPD framework, teachers who are well-prepared through objective-specific training are better equipped to scaffold learners from emergent reading stages toward fluent reading, providing structured guidance and feedback that optimally supports skill acquisition.

The study also explored the contextual relevance of EGR training, particularly the extent to which instruction reflected the Kenyan context. Responses were mixed, with 28.8% of teachers indicating occasional incorporation and 25.0% reporting consistent inclusion, while 18.3% suggested it was rarely or never included. The mean score of 3.04 (SD = 1.42) indicates variability in perceptions regarding local contextualization. Cherobon and Chepsiror (2022) argue that literacy instruction is more effective when learners can relate new concepts to familiar cultural and linguistic experiences. Within the ZPD, localized training enables teachers to provide scaffolding that is meaningful

and accessible to learners, facilitating comprehension and engagement. The inconsistent incorporation of Kenyan contexts may, therefore, partially constrain the effectiveness of instructional scaffolding in lower primary classrooms.

Training that incorporated principles from cognitive research received moderate emphasis, with 35.6% of teachers reporting that it was always included and a mean score of 3.54 ($SD = 1.36$). Given that lower primary learners are between six and ten years old, the critical years for cognitive development, understanding developmental principles is essential for teachers to design instruction that is developmentally appropriate. Abadzi (2017) emphasizes that reading instruction aligned with cognitive development enhances phonemic awareness, comprehension, and fluency. From a ZPD perspective, teachers equipped with cognitive knowledge are better able to calibrate instructional support, ensuring that tasks are neither too easy nor too difficult, thereby fostering optimal progression in reading skills.

Finally, training on learner assessment was reported to be consistently provided, with 35.6% of teachers indicating always receiving such guidance and a mean score of 3.71 ($SD = 1.26$). Effective assessment enables teachers to identify learners' current capabilities and areas requiring support, allowing them to tailor instruction and scaffolding accordingly. RTI International (2021), highlights that formative assessment is critical in identifying gaps in literacy acquisition, and designing targeted interventions. In the context of ZPD, frequent and accurate assessment allows teachers to determine the appropriate level of challenge for each learner, facilitating gradual movement from supported to independent reading.

In examining teacher training on the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme, head teachers were asked whether teachers in their schools underwent training on various

aspects of the programme and, if so, how frequently. Most head teachers confirmed that teachers received regular professional development on literacy instruction, learner assessment, and cognitive research-based methods. One head teacher noted No, 14 said that:

“Most teachers in my schools only receive training once every year,”

This highlighting, that while training exists, its frequency may not fully meet programme expectations. Another head teacher No 9 explained that:

“Teachers attend workshops on reading instruction, but sometimes sessions are missed due to heavy workloads and school activities,”

This points to logistical challenges that affect consistent participation. These qualitative insights complement the quantitative findings from teacher questionnaires, which indicated that teachers frequently engaged in targeted EGR training ($M = 3.51$, $SD = 1.29$). While training on specific objectives was often attended, sessions incorporating the Kenyan context were less consistently reported, suggesting that some instructional materials may not fully reflect local needs. The present study demonstrates that regular, targeted, and contextually relevant teacher training strengthens the teachers’ capacity to scaffold learners within their ZPD, enhancing reading skill acquisition in the early grade

The first null hypothesis stated that:

H₀₁ There is no statistical significant effect of teacher training on learners’ acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub County

To test this, a Karl Pearson correlation analysis was conducted using ordinal data derived from teacher responses on various training indicators and the average teacher

ratings of learners' reading skill levels. The analysis was performed at a 95% confidence level. Results of analysis are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Effect of Teachers Training on Learners Acquisition of Reading Skills

		Training on EGR	Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills
Training on EGR	Pearson Correlation	1	.314**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001
	N	104	104
Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills	Pearson Correlation	.314**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	
	N	104	104

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results indicated a significant positive correlation ($r = 0.314$, $p = 0.001$), suggesting that increased teacher participation in Early Grade Reading (EGR) training forums was associated with higher levels of reading skill acquisition among learners. Consequently, the null hypothesis was rejected, leading to the conclusion that teacher training has a statistically significant effect on learners' literacy outcomes. These findings are consistent with previous studies, such as Thuo et al. (2024) in Kiambu County, which demonstrated that teacher capacity-building initiatives significantly enhanced learners' reading abilities. The results imply that professional development, particularly when it is frequent, targeted, and contextually relevant, equips teachers with the skills necessary to scaffold learners' reading development effectively. This aligns with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory, which posits that learners achieve higher levels of competence when guided by more knowledgeable others. In this context, teachers who have received comprehensive EGR training are able to identify learners' current reading levels, provide appropriate support, and gradually extend their capabilities to more advanced literacy tasks. The positive relationship observed between teacher training and learners' reading outcomes underscores the importance of structured and continuous professional development within the EGR programme. It

suggests that for learners to progress from emergent to fluent readers, teachers must not only be trained in the technical aspects of reading instruction but also supported in applying cognitive development principles and localized teaching strategies. These insights reinforce the need for regular, context-sensitive training to maximize the impact of literacy interventions in early grades, particularly in areas facing persistent underperformance in English reading skills.

4.3 Teacher Instructional Guidelines and Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills

The second objective of the study sought to examine the extent to which teacher instructional guidelines for the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme influenced learners' acquisition of reading skills in lower primary classes within public schools in Bungoma North Sub-County, Kenya. Data for this objective were collected from lower primary teachers and head teachers using questionnaires and interview guides.

Teachers were asked to indicate how frequently they had received instructional guidelines intended to support the implementation of the EGR programme in their schools. Responses were recorded using a five-point Likert scale: Very High (5), High (4), Average (3), Low (2), and Very Low (1). The results of analysis are given in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Teacher Instructional Guidelines on Learners' Reading Skills

Training areas	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	M	SD
Instructional routine	5 (4.8%)	11 (10.6%)	20 (19.2%)	21 (20.2%)	47 (45.2%)	3.9038	1.2269
Interactions with curriculum support officers	9 (8.7%)	23 (22.1%)	21 (20.2%)	15 (14.4%)	36 (34.6%)	3.4423	1.3853
Having scripted lessons on daily basis in a term	11 (10.6%)	14 (13.5%)	21 (20.2%)	21 (20.2%)	37 (35.6%)	3.5673	1.3707
Instructional guideline in ICT form	17 (16.3%)	28 (26.9%)	25 (24.0%)	10 (9.6%)	24 (23.1%)	2.9615	1.3999
Lesson preparation	5 (4.8%)	7 (6.7%)	17 (16.3%)	23 (22.1%)	52 (50.0%)	4.0577	1.1727
Tools to conduct assessment	5 (4.8%)	7 (6.7%)	18 (17.3%)	25 (24.0%)	49 (47.1%)	4.0192	1.1657
Average						3.6586	1.2869

With regard to the provision of instructional routines, 45.2% of teachers reported that they always received structured guidelines to support the delivery of EGR lessons, while only 4.8% indicated that they had never received such routines. The mean score of 3.90 (SD = 1.23) suggests that most teachers are frequently provided with instructional routines, which helps to maintain consistency in lesson delivery. This finding aligns with Mulatu and Regassa (2022), who noted that structured reading routines, combined with immediate feedback, improve learners' ability to articulate and recognize words accurately. From the perspective of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), providing clear instructional routines equips teachers to scaffold learners' reading skills effectively, guiding them from their current level of competence to higher levels with structured support.

Interactions with Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) were variable among teachers. While 34.6% reported always engaging with CSOs, 8.7% indicated no interaction, and others reported intermittent contact. The mean of 3.44 (SD = 1.38) reflects occasional engagement overall. These interactions are critical for reinforcing instructional quality, as CSOs provide expert feedback and monitor adherence to programme guidelines. Limited engagement may therefore hinder consistent implementation of instructional support, ultimately affecting learners' literacy development.

The availability of scripted lesson plans also influenced classroom instruction. About 35.6% of teachers always received scripted lessons, while 10.6% reported never receiving them. The mean score of 3.57 (SD = 1.37) indicates that teachers frequently receive guidance for daily lessons, ensuring that learning activities are aligned with programme objectives. Scripted lessons serve as scaffolding tools, allowing teachers to focus on learners' immediate reading challenges and extend their skills systematically, which is consistent with ZPD principles emphasizing guided support.

In contrast, access to instructional guidelines in ICT or soft copy form was inconsistent. Only 23.1% of teachers always received soft copies, while 16.3% reported never receiving them, with a mean of 2.96 (SD = 1.39). This suggests that reliance on printed materials remains high, potentially causing delays in lesson preparation and affecting the timeliness of literacy instruction.

Lesson preparation was generally strong among teachers, with 50% always preparing lessons and a mean score of 4.06 (SD = 1.17). Similarly, 47.1% of teachers reported always receiving assessment tools to monitor learners' progress, resulting in a mean of 4.02 (SD = 1.16). These findings indicate that teachers are largely equipped to plan and evaluate literacy activities, supporting the systematic development of learners' reading

skills. This aligns with Onuorah (2021), who found that reflective instructional techniques improve reading comprehension outcomes by allowing teachers to adjust instruction based on learners' performance.

Overall, the composite mean score of 3.65 (SD = 1.28) indicates that teachers frequently receive instructional guidelines and support necessary for effective implementation of the EGR programme. By providing structured routines, lesson plans, assessment tools, and engagement with CSOs, teachers are able to scaffold learners' reading development effectively.

In exploring the role of teachers in providing specific and active instruction for learners' word recognition, head teachers indicated that teachers play a critical role in guiding learners through systematic reading activities. Head Teacher 5 noted that:

"Teachers regularly conduct guided reading sessions where they explicitly teach letter-sound relationships and help learners blend sounds to form words. They also provide immediate feedback on mispronunciations."

Similarly, Head Teacher 12 emphasized the importance of scaffolding learners' reading development:

"Teachers identify words that learners struggle with and repeatedly model correct pronunciation, gradually reducing support as learners gain confidence. This hands-on approach ensures that learners actively participate in learning new words."

These responses indicate that teachers do not merely provide passive instruction but engage learners in targeted word recognition activities, consistent with Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). By offering scaffolding through modeling, guided practice, and corrective feedback teachers help learners move from their current

reading level toward independent word recognition and fluency. The findings align with studies by Masaba and Muthee (2024), which showed that active, teacher-led word recognition exercises enhance early reading proficiency among primary school learners.

The second null hypothesis was:

H₀₂ There is no statistical significant effect of teacher instructional guidelines on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub County

To examine the effect of teacher instructional guidelines on learners' acquisition of reading skills, a Karl Pearson correlation analysis was conducted using ordinal data from instructional guideline indicators and average teacher ratings of learners' reading abilities. The confidence level was set at 95.0%. The results are presented in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Teacher EGR Instructional Guideline Provision and Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills

		Teacher Instructional Guideline	Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills
Teacher Instructional Guideline	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 104	.331** 104
Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.331** .001 104	1 104

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The results (Table 4.7) indicated a significant positive relationship between the provision of instructional guidelines and learners' reading skills ($r = 0.331$, $p = 0.001$).

This suggests that consistent and timely access to instructional materials and guidance significantly enhances learners' reading outcomes. Consequently, the second null

hypothesis (H02) was rejected, confirming that teacher instructional guidelines have a statistically significant effect on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public lower primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County. Similar results have been reported by Onuorah (2021) and Mulatu and Regassa (2022), who found that structured instructional guidance and active teacher-led support significantly improve reading skills in early grades. In general, the data indicate that teacher instructional guidelines are critical for the successful implementation of the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme, as they directly influence the quality of classroom instruction and, consequently, learners' reading proficiency.

4.4 Supplementary Instructional Materials Provision and Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills

The third objective of the study sought to investigate the influence of supplementary instructional materials provided under the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme on learners' reading skills in lower primary classes. Data for this objective were gathered from lower primary school teachers and head teachers using questionnaires and interview guides. Specifically, teachers were asked to indicate the frequency with which they received supplementary instructional materials to support the implementation of the Early Grade Reading programme in their schools. Responses were recorded using a five-point scale: very high (5), high (4), average (3), low (2), and very low (1). The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8 Supplementary Instructional Materials and learners Reading Skills

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	M	SD
Resources							
Textbooks	0 (0.0%)	3 (2.9%)	4(3.8%)	8 (7.7%)	89 (85.6%)	4.7596	.6609
Audio-visual resources	7 (6.7%)	30 (28.8%)	32 (30.8%)	22 (21.2%)	13 (12.5%)	3.0385	1.1310
Teacher guides	0 (0.0%)	5 (4.8%)	21 (20.2%)	10 (9.6%)	68 (65.4%)	4.3558	.9646
Computers e.g. e-readers	31 (29.8%)	39 (37.5%)	11 (10.6%)	10 (9.6%)	13 (12.5%)	2.3750	1.3379
Tablets for teachers	15(14.4%)	21 (20.2%)	36 (34.6%)	21 (20.2%)	11 (10.6%)	2.9231	1.1881
Average						3.4904	1.0565

Data collected from teachers and head teachers revealed that textbooks were the most consistently supplied instructional resource. A majority of teachers (85.6%) reported always receiving textbooks, resulting in a mean score of $M = 4.76$ ($SD = 0.66$). This finding was corroborated by head teacher interviews, all of whom indicated that textbooks were the most commonly provided material for supporting reading instruction. The consistent provision of textbooks indicates that the government has prioritized ensuring that foundational literacy materials are available in public schools, a finding consistent with Mulatu and Regassa (2022), who reported that in Ethiopian schools, teachers heavily relied on textbooks to teach language skills.

The provision of audio-visual resources, however, was less consistent. Only 12.5% of teachers indicated they always received such resources, while a combined 66.3% reported receiving them never, rarely, or sometimes ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 1.13$). Limited

access to audio-visual resources may be attributed to infrastructural constraints, such as lack of electricity, internet connectivity, and teacher capacity to integrate digital tools into reading lessons. Inadequate use of audio-visual materials can hinder the multisensory engagement required for early reading development, particularly in supporting phonemic awareness and word recognition (Wafula, 2024).

Teacher guides were reported to be relatively well-provided, with 65.4% of teachers stating they always had access to them ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 0.96$). These guides offer structured instructional support, enabling teachers to deliver reading lessons systematically and in alignment with the EGR programme's objectives. Their availability is crucial for scaffolding learning within Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), as teachers can guide learners through tasks that they would not be able to perform independently, enhancing reading fluency and comprehension.

In contrast, access to digital resources such as e-readers and tablets was inconsistent. About 29.8% and 14.4% of teachers reported never receiving e-readers and tablets, respectively, with many teachers noting that devices had to be shared, limiting simultaneous classroom instruction. The mean scores of $M = 2.38$ ($SD = 1.34$) for e-readers and $M = 2.92$ ($SD = 1.18$) for tablets reflect occasional rather than consistent provision. These findings mirror Wafula (2024), who reported that although governments provide textbooks and guides, ICT and audio-visual tools are often insufficiently distributed, limiting the effectiveness of innovative teaching strategies in early literacy.

The composite mean score for the provision of supplementary instructional materials was $M = 3.49$ ($SD = 1.05$), indicating occasional access. These results suggest that while foundational resources like textbooks and teacher guides are reliably supplied,

gaps remain in the provision of digital and audio-visual materials. Such inconsistencies may affect the quality of instruction and limit learners' exposure to diverse literacy experiences, which are crucial for developing phonemic awareness, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. By ensuring regular and equitable provision of supplementary materials, teachers can more effectively scaffold learners' reading development, consistent with the ZPD framework, where guided support helps learners achieve competencies just beyond their independent abilities.

Data from interviews with head teachers confirmed the quantitative findings on the provision of supplementary instructional materials. All 22 head teachers indicated that such materials were largely unavailable in their schools to support learners' reading tasks. Head teacher No. 4 explained that:

“Because of budget constraints as a result of decreased capitation grants from exchequer, it has become impossible task for head teachers to provide the required supplementary reading materials to learners in schools.”

Similarly, head teacher No. 15 noted:

“The school management does not have adequate funds to procure additional reading materials for learners in lower primary. To address this issue, we recommend and encourage parents and other well-wishers to support the school in purchasing the required materials.”

These qualitative responses highlight that despite government efforts to supply core resources such as textbooks and teacher guides, financial limitations restrict schools' capacity to provide additional reading materials, such as magazines, newspapers, and storybooks, which are critical for enriching learners' reading experiences. These findings align with Mulatu and Regassa (2022), who observed that the absence of supplementary reading materials in Ethiopian schools limited opportunities for learners

to practice reading beyond the textbook, thereby affecting the development of word recognition, fluency, and comprehension skills. From a theoretical perspective, Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) underscores the importance of scaffolding learners' reading experiences through varied and accessible resources. Without sufficient supplementary materials, teachers face constraints in providing scaffolded support, limiting learners' ability to progress from what they can achieve independently to higher levels of reading competence with guidance. Consequently, both teacher capacity and the availability of instructional resources are critical determinants of effective reading instruction in lower primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County.

The third null hypothesis was:

H₀₃ There is no statistical significant effect of supplementary instructional materials on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub County

To test the hypothesis between supplementary instructional materials provision on learners' acquisition of reading skills under the EGR programme, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted at 95.0% confidence level. The results are presented in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9 Supplementary Instructional Materials Provision and Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills

		Supplementary Instructional Materials	Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills
Supplementary Instructional Materials	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	1 104	.251* .010 104
Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) N	.251* .010 104	1 104

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

The result in Table 4.9 indicate a statistically significant positive effect between provision of supplementary instructional materials for the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme and learners' acquisition of reading skills in lower primary sections of public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County ($r = 0.251$, $p=0.010$). the third null hypothesis is rejected ($p<0.05$) resulting to the conclusion that there is statistical significant effect of supplementary instructional materials on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub County.

This finding suggests that the adequate and consistent supply of supplementary materials such as textbooks, teacher guides, audio-visual aids, and digital resources positively influences the development of learners reading competencies. The result is in line with Mulatu and Regassa (2022) observed that supplementary reading materials motivated learners to gain interest in learners in addition to encouraging them to use language in the classroom in Ethiopia. Further in Uganda, Etoru and Ijangu (2025) established that revealed that instructional materials resources when properly utilised in the teaching of reading skills made it easier for the learner to excel in academic performance. Hence, to enhance the effectiveness of the EGR programme, it is essential

for the government and relevant stakeholders to ensure the timely and sufficient provision of both print and electronic supplementary instructional materials. Strengthening resource availability will improve instructional delivery and support learners in acquiring foundational reading skills during the early years of learning.

4.5 Monitoring Systems on EGR and Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills

The fourth objective of the study sought to examine the effect of monitoring systems on learners' acquisition of reading skills through the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme in Bungoma North Sub-County. To achieve this, data were collected from head teachers and lower primary school teachers through questionnaire and interview schedule.

The study further examined the role of monitoring activities in supporting the implementation of the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme in lower primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County. Teachers were asked to indicate the frequency with which various monitoring activities were conducted, using a five-point Likert scale ranging from Very Low (1) to Very High (5)..The results of the analysis are presented in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10 Monitoring System on EGR

Monitoring system	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	M	SD
Receiving feedback from curriculum support officers	19 (18.3%)	29 (27.9%)	13 (12.5%)	17 (16.3%)	26 (25.0%)	3.0192	1.4812
Assessment by curriculum support officers	12 (11.5%)	25 (24.0%)	29 (27.9%)	10 (9.6%)	28 (26.9%)	3.1635	1.3661
Coaching by curriculum support officers (modelling)	22 (21.2%)	23 (22.1%)	12 (11.5%)	11 (10.6%)	36 (34.6%)	3.1538	1.5996
Involving parents in assessment	36 (34.6%)	21 (20.2%)	17 (16.3%)	18 (17.3%)	12 (11.5%)	2.5096	1.4142
Average						2.9615	1.4653

The analysis reveals that feedback from Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) was provided only occasionally, with 19 teachers (18.3%) reporting never receiving feedback, 29 teachers (27.9%) rarely receiving it, 13 teachers (12.5%) sometimes, 17 teachers (16.3%) often, and 26 teachers (25.0%) always receiving feedback. The mean score for feedback provision was $M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.48$, suggesting moderate irregularity. This inconsistency may limit teachers' awareness of areas requiring instructional improvement, thereby hindering the overall quality of reading instruction. Similar challenges were observed by Wafula (2024) in Nairobi, where curriculum supervision was infrequent and poorly coordinated, limiting teachers' access to professional guidance.

Assessment by CSOs was also conducted intermittently. While 12 teachers (11.5%) reported never being assessed, and 25 teachers (24.0%) rarely assessed, 29 teachers (27.9%) sometimes received assessments, 10 teachers (9.6%) often, and 28 teachers (26.9%) always. The mean score of $M = 3.16$, $SD = 1.36$ indicates that classroom assessments by CSOs were moderately frequent. Irregular assessment can affect curriculum fidelity, as teachers may not receive timely feedback necessary for refining instructional practices.

Coaching or modelling by CSOs showed similar patterns. Twenty-two teachers (21.2%) reported never receiving coaching, 23 (22.1%) rarely, 12 (11.5%) sometimes, 11 (10.6%) often, and 36 (34.6%) always. With a mean score of $M = 3.15$, $SD = 1.60$, coaching was moderately implemented. Effective coaching is known to enhance teachers' instructional confidence and competency, enabling them to adopt best practices in literacy instruction. Regular mentorship is thus critical for sustaining high-quality teaching in EGR classrooms.

Parental involvement in assessment was the least frequent activity. Thirty-six teachers (34.6%) reported never involving parents, 21 (20.2%) rarely, 17 (16.3%) sometimes, 18 (17.3%) often, and only 12 (11.5%) always involved parents in monitoring reading progress. With a mean of $M = 2.51$, $SD = 1.41$, these findings indicate that parental engagement was generally low, contrary to curriculum expectations. Lack of parental involvement may limit reinforcement of reading skills at home and reduce learners' motivation and progress. Kulwenza (2021) similarly found in Uganda that minimal parental engagement in reading monitoring weakened learners' literacy development, recommending that parents should be actively involved in school-based monitoring.

The composite mean score for all monitoring activities was $M = 2.96$, $SD = 1.46$, indicating that the monitoring system under the EGR programme was moderately implemented. Overall, the findings suggest that feedback provision, assessment, coaching, and parental involvement were irregular, which may compromise the effectiveness of the programme. To ensure the EGR programme achieves its intended outcomes, it is critical that monitoring activities are conducted regularly and systematically, providing teachers with timely data and guidance to improve instruction and support learners' acquisition of reading skills.

Qualitative data were collected to provide deeper insight into the implementation of monitoring activities under the EGR programme. Head teachers were asked about the frequency and nature of monitoring by Curriculum Support Officers (CSOs) and the involvement of parents in learners' reading progress. The responses indicate that monitoring is often irregular and inconsistent across schools. For instance, Head Teacher No. 7 noted:

"CSOs visit our school occasionally, usually at the end of the term, and provide feedback only to some teachers. There is no structured follow-up to ensure that all teachers apply the suggestions."

Another head teacher (No. 12) highlighted challenges in parental involvement, stating:

"We try to involve parents in assessing learners' reading at school, but most parents are not available or lack the skills to support their children effectively. This makes it difficult to get meaningful parental participation."

These qualitative insights corroborate the quantitative results, which showed moderate and irregular monitoring across feedback, assessment, coaching, and parental involvement ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 1.46$). The interviews reveal underlying factors affecting monitoring, including limited CSO visits, inadequate parental engagement, and

logistical constraints, which may hinder teachers' ability to improve reading instruction. The findings align with Kulwenza (2021), who observed that weak parental involvement and irregular supervisory visits negatively affect literacy outcomes in Ugandan primary schools.

The fourth null hypothesis stated that:

H₀₄ There is no statistical significant effect of monitoring systems on learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub County

To test the hypothesized relationship between monitoring systems and learners' reading skills, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted. The significance level was set up at 95.0%. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11 Monitoring Systems on EGR and Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills

		Monitoring System	Learners Acquisition of Reading Skills
Monitoring System	Pearson Correlation	1	.221*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.024
	N	104	104
Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills	Pearson Correlation	.221*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.024	
	N	104	104

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

Results (Table 4.11) revealed a significant positive effect ($r = 0.221$, $p = 0.024$) between the EGR monitoring system and learners' acquisition of reading skills. Consequently, the fourth null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that systematic monitoring contributes positively to reading outcomes. These findings suggest that consistent feedback, coaching, and parental involvement reinforce instructional quality and help teachers identify areas needing improvement, ultimately enhancing learners' reading

competencies. This aligns with Kulwenz (2021), who observed that weak monitoring and limited parental engagement negatively affect literacy outcomes in primary schools. Therefore, consistent monitoring and feedback mechanisms should be strengthened to support effective implementation and improve learning outcomes in early literacy.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the key findings of the study on the effectiveness of the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme on the acquisition of reading skills among lower primary learners in public schools in Bungoma North Sub-County, Kenya. The chapter also presents conclusions, implications, critical comparisons with related studies, and practical recommendations for future implementation and research.

5.2 Summary of Findings

5.2.1 Effect of Teacher Training on EGR and Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills

The study found that most lower primary school teachers frequently attended EGR training sessions, particularly on reading instruction, learner assessment, and cognitive development, with an overall mean score of 3.51 (SD = 1.29). Teachers noted, however, that the training was not always contextualized to the Kenyan classroom setting, limiting practical application. Head teachers confirmed that training sessions were provided termly, though some schools only accessed training once per year due to scheduling constraints. Correlation analysis showed a significant positive relationship between teacher training and learners' reading skill acquisition ($r = 0.314$, $p = 0.001$). The findings indicate that continuous professional development enhances teacher competence and contributes to improved learner outcomes. Nonetheless, irregular refresher sessions and limited coaching may moderate the overall impact on reading proficiency.

5.2.2 Effect of Provision of Instructional Guidelines on EGR and Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills

Teachers frequently received scripted lesson plans and instructional guidelines to support EGR implementation, with a mean score of 3.66 (SD = 1.29), though access to digital copies was inconsistent. Interaction with curriculum support officers was occasional, limiting ongoing guidance and instructional support. Teachers reported that lesson preparation and availability of assessment tools were high, supporting structured classroom delivery. Correlation analysis indicated a significant positive effect of instructional guidelines on learners' reading outcomes ($r = 0.331$, $p = 0.001$). Head teachers confirmed that guidelines were provided, but limitations in digital materials constrained lesson flexibility. Overall, consistent provision of instructional support improves reading skill acquisition, although gaps in digital access and support may reduce effectiveness.

5.2.3 Effect of Provision of Supplementary Instructional Materials on EGR and Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills

Textbooks and teacher guides were consistently available, while access to audio-visual aids, e-readers, and tablets was irregular, resulting in a mean provision score of 3.49 (SD = 1.05). Teachers indicated reliance on printed resources due to inconsistent electronic material availability, while head teachers highlighted budget constraints as a barrier to supplementary resource provision. Correlation analysis revealed a significant positive effect of supplementary instructional materials on learners' reading skills ($r = 0.251$, $p = 0.010$). The findings suggest that adequate and diverse materials enhance reading instruction, but reliance on textbooks alone may limit engagement and comprehension. Ensuring timely and sufficient provision of both print and digital

resources is essential for effective EGR implementation. The study shows that resource gaps may hinder optimal learning outcomes despite the availability of core materials.

5.2.4 Effect of EGR Monitoring Systems and Learners' Acquisition of Reading Skills

Monitoring activities, including feedback, assessments, and coaching by curriculum support officers, were conducted irregularly, with an overall mean score of 2.96 (SD = 1.46). Teachers reported that parental involvement in monitoring was minimal, further limiting instructional support. Despite these gaps, correlation analysis indicated a significant positive effect of monitoring systems on learners' reading skills ($r = 0.221$, $p = 0.024$). Head teachers noted that limited visits and budget constraints reduced the consistency of monitoring and feedback. The findings imply that systematic supervision, timely feedback, and parental engagement are crucial for enhancing learner outcomes. Strengthening monitoring mechanisms is therefore necessary to maximize the effectiveness of the EGR programme in developing foundational reading skills.

5.3 Conclusions

This study investigated the implementation of the Early Grade Reading programme on the acquisition of reading skills among lower primary learners in public primary schools within Bungoma North Sub-County, Kenya. The study focused on four main variables: teacher training, instructional guidelines, supplementary instructional materials, and programme monitoring.

Teacher training under the EGR programme had a significant positive effect on learners' reading skills ($r = 0.314$, $p < 0.05$). Most teachers had attended training in reading instruction, learner assessment, and cognitive development, though sessions

were infrequent and not fully contextualized to the Kenyan classroom environment. Head teacher interviews revealed that training was often limited to once or twice per year, restricting practical application. EGRA tasks showed moderate improvements in learners' alphabetic knowledge and decoding skills where teachers had received training. Overall, continuous, practical, and localized teacher training is essential to enhance reading outcomes in lower primary classes.

Provision of instructional guidelines significantly influenced learners' reading outcomes ($r = 0.331$, $p = 0.001$). Teachers reported regular access to printed lesson plans, scripted routines, and assessment tools, which supported consistent lesson delivery. However, access to digital copies and ICT-based resources was limited, constraining flexibility in lesson planning, as confirmed by head teacher interviews. EGRA results indicated improved learner performance in classes where guidelines were effectively used. Ensuring timely, accessible, and user-friendly instructional materials is critical to improving reading skill acquisition.

Supplementary instructional materials had a significant but moderate effect on learners' reading skills ($r = 0.251$, $p = 0.010$). Textbooks and teacher guides were consistently available, while audio-visual resources, e-readers, and tablets were rarely provided, as noted in both teacher and head teacher responses. Limited diversity of materials reduced opportunities for multimodal engagement, which is important for vocabulary, comprehension, and reading motivation. EGRA assessments indicated that learners with access to more resources performed better in reading tasks. Expanding the availability and variety of supplementary materials is necessary to strengthen literacy instruction.

Monitoring of the EGR programme significantly influenced learners' reading skills, though the effect was weak ($r = 0.221$, $p = 0.024$). Teachers reported inconsistent visits from curriculum support officers, limited feedback, and minimal parental involvement. Head teacher interviews corroborated these gaps, highlighting weak coordination and resource constraints. EGRA results showed that learners in schools with more frequent monitoring had higher reading proficiency. Strengthening structured, consistent monitoring and feedback mechanisms, including parental engagement, is essential to improve EGR programme effectiveness and learners' reading outcomes.

The study concludes that the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme in Bungoma North Sub-County has positively influenced the acquisition of reading skills among lower primary learners, particularly in alphabetic knowledge, decoding, and comprehension. Teacher training, provision of instructional guidelines, supplementary materials, and monitoring systems all demonstrated statistically significant positive effects, though the magnitude of the impact varied across variables. Key implementation gaps including infrequent and insufficiently contextualized teacher training, limited access to digital instructional materials, inadequate diversity of supplementary resources, and weak monitoring and feedback mechanisms constrain the programme's full potential. Evidence from teacher questionnaires, head teacher interviews, and EGRA tasks consistently indicates that addressing these gaps is critical for enhancing literacy outcomes. Overall, while the EGR programme has established a foundation for improving early reading competencies, sustained and systemic interventions are required to ensure equitable, consistent, and effective literacy development in lower primary schools.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations are proposed to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the Early Grade Reading programme in Bungoma North Sub-County and similar contexts.

1. The Ministry of Education, in collaboration with teacher training institutions and development partners, should provide regular, continuous, and contextually relevant professional development programmes for lower primary school teachers. Training should focus on practical classroom strategies, be localized to reflect Kenyan linguistic and cultural realities, and incorporate reflective teaching practices. In addition, coaching and mentoring models, as used in the Tusome programme, could be replicated to provide ongoing support and reinforcement.
2. Instructional guidelines should be provided in both printed and digital formats. The Ministry of Education should develop user-friendly platforms that allow teachers to access soft copies of teaching materials on-demand. In addition, the development and distribution of assessment tools should be aligned with the local school environment, ensuring feasibility and sustainability. Teachers should be trained not just to use these tools but to adapt them to suit their learners' needs.
3. The government should prioritize investment in a wide array of supplementary instructional materials, including e-readers, tablets, and audio-visual aids. Schools should partner with NG-CDF committees to ensure infrastructural readiness such as electricity and internet access for the integration of ICT in instruction. Additionally, synchronizing the content on digital devices with the EGR programme will enhance coherence and improve learning outcomes.

4. The monitoring and evaluation framework for the EGR programme must be strengthened. This can be achieved by increasing the number of curriculum support officers, ensuring that school visits are frequent and systematic, and providing timely, constructive feedback to teachers. Furthermore, teachers should be encouraged and trained to engage parents in monitoring their children's reading progress through regular communication, home reading activities, and school-based literacy events.
5. In conclusion, for the EGR programme to realize its full potential, a comprehensive, multi-stakeholder approach is needed. Efforts must go beyond initial programme rollout and focus on building sustainable systems of support, accountability, and innovation at school, community, and policy levels. Such an approach will not only improve early literacy in Bungoma North Sub-County but also serve as a model for similar educational contexts across the country.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Studies

In light of the findings and conclusions of this study, several avenues for future research are proposed to deepen understanding and broaden the scope of the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme implementation in Kenya:

1. Learner-centred research on the EGR Impact: future studies should consider investigating the perceptions and experiences of learners regarding the influence of the Early Grade Reading programme on their reading skill development. Such studies could adopt an experimental or quasi-experimental design to measure the actual impact of the EGR programme on learners' reading performance, thereby providing direct insight from the primary beneficiaries of the initiative.

2. Teacher preparedness for the EGR implementation: there is a need for further research focusing on the preparedness of teachers to effectively implement the EGR programme. Such research could examine teachers' pedagogical competencies, access to professional development, and familiarity with instructional materials and curriculum content. This would help identify gaps in teacher readiness and inform targeted training and capacity-building interventions.
3. Comparative studies across Sub-Counties: a comparative study should be undertaken in other sub-counties within Kenya to determine whether the findings from Bungoma North Sub-County are consistent across different contexts. Such comparative research could explore regional variations in programme implementation, resource allocation, teacher training, and learner outcomes. These findings would contribute to the generalizability of results and inform nationwide policy adjustments.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of the Study: Effectiveness of Early Grade Reading Programme on Acquisition of Reading Skills by Learners in Public Primary Schools in Bungoma North Sub-County

Researcher: Florence Wanyama
Master of Education Student,
University of Eldoret

Purpose of the Study:

You are invited to participate in a study that aims to assess how the Early Grade Reading (EGR) programme influences learners' acquisition of reading skills in public primary schools in Bungoma North Sub-County. The study seeks to collect information through questionnaires, interviews, and classroom reading assessments.

Procedures:

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to respond to a questionnaire and, in some cases, participate in an interview. The activities are expected to take approximately [not more than 15 minutes].

Voluntary Participation:

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw at any time without any consequences.

Confidentiality:

All information you provide will be treated with strict confidentiality. Your name or any identifying information will not appear in any report or publication resulting from this study. The data collected will be used solely for academic purposes.

Risks and Benefits:

There are no known risks associated with participation in this study. The potential benefits include contributing to knowledge that may improve teaching practices and literacy outcomes in early primary education.

Consent:

By signing below, you indicate that you have read and understood the information above, and that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Researcher Contact:

For any questions or clarifications regarding this study, you may contact:
Florence Wanyama – [flobahati3@gmail.com] / [+254 716 111940]

APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender

Male [] Female []

2. Age in years

Below 30 [] 31 - 40 [] 41 – 50 [] Above 50 []

3. Teaching experience

1 - 3 [] 4 – 6 [] 7 – 9 [] 10 – 12 [] 13 – 15 []

Over 15 []

Section B: Teacher training and pupils reading skills

4. Indicate the extent to which you have receive the following kind of training to enhance your learners' reading skills through Early Grade Reading programme

Training areas	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Attendance of monthly Early Grade Reading meetings					
Training on specific subjects					
Training on literary instructions from Kenyan context					
Training on instruction based on cognitive research					
Training on learners assessment					

Section C: Teacher instructional guidelines on learners reading skills

5. Indicate whether you have been provided with the following instructional guidelines to assist you in implementing Early Grade Reading programme in schools

Guideline	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Instructional routine					
Interactions with curriculum support officers					
Having scripted lessons on daily basis in a term					
Instructional guideline in ICT form					
Lesson preparation					
Tools to conduct assessment					

Section D: Supplementary instructional materials and learners reading skills

6. Kindly indicate the availability and adequacy of supplementary materials in implementation of Early Grade Reading Early grade reading programme in your school

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Textbooks					
Audio-visual resources					
Teacher guides					
Computers e.g. e-readers					
Tablets for teachers					

Section E: Monitoring system and pupils reading skills

7. Indicate the extent to which monitoring is done by curriculum support officers on implementation of Early Grade Reading programme in your school

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always
Receiving feedback from curriculum support officers					
Assessment by curriculum support officers					
Coaching by curriculum support officers (modelling)					
Involving parents in assessment					

Section F: Pupils Acquisition of Reading Skills

8. What can you say on the level of learners acquisition of reading skills after the implementation of Early Grade Reading programme?

	Very High	High	Average	Low	Very low
Phonemic awareness					
Alphabetic principle					
Oral reading fluency					
Vocabulary					
Reading comprehension					

The End

Thank You

APPENDIX III: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR HEAD TEACHERS

1. (a) Are teachers in your school undergoing training on various areas of Early Grade Reading programme?

(b) If yes, kindly indicate the frequency

.....

(c) If no, what are the reasons for not undergoing.....

2. What can you say on the role of teachers in providing specific and active instruction to learners' word recognition?

.....
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.....

3. Are instructional support materials adequate to support implementation of Early Grade Reading early grade reading programme in your school?

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

4. What is your role during implementation of Early Grade Reading early grade reading programme?

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

5. What are the challenges that have been bedevilling the effective implementation of Early Grade Reading early grade reading programme in your school?

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

6. How can early grade reading programme be improved in your school?

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

The end
Thank you for your time

APPENDIX IV: READING TASK ASSESSMENT

Grade	Task	Description	Scoring / Measurement
1	Letter Naming	Learners identify and pronounce 26 letters shown on flashcards	Number of correct letters per minute
1	Familiar Words	Learners read a list of 20 common words (e.g., “cat,” “sun”)	Number of correct words per minute
1–3	Non-Words	Learners read a list of 10 pseudo-words (e.g., “mip,” “tav”)	Number of correct non-words per minute
1–3	Oral Reading Fluency	Learners read a short grade-level passage aloud	Words read correctly per minute
2–3	Reading Comprehension	Learners answer 5–10 questions based on the passage	Rated 1–5 by teacher
1–3	Listening Comprehension	Learners respond to 3 oral instructions / short story questions	Rated 1–3 by teacher

Example of EGRA results summary

	Letter naming (per min)	Familiar words (per min)	Non-words (per min)	Oral reading fluency (per min)	Reading comprehension (max score 5)	Listening comprehension (max score 3)
Overall mean						
Children scoring zone						

APPENDIX V: UOE LETTER



P.O. Box 1125-30100,
ELDORET, Kenya
Tel: 0774 249552
Fax No. +254-(0)53-206311 Ext 2232
deansoe@uoeld.ac.ke

UNIVERSITY OF ELDORET
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION/ EDUCATIONAL
PSYCHOLOGY

DATE: 28th September 2018

The Executive Secretary,
National Council for Science Technology & Innovation
P.O.BOX 30623-00100,
NAIROBI.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RESEARCH PERMIT FOR WANYAMA FLORENCE NAFULA
EDU/S/PGET/002/15

This is to confirm that the above-named Post Graduate Student has completed Course work in Master of Philosophy Educational Technology. She is currently preparing for field work to collect data on the thesis title: "***influence of Tusome Programme on Pupil's Reading Skills in Public Primary Schools in Bungoma North Sub County.***" The proposal was examined and approved by academic board of examiners of the school of education on 21st February, 2018.

Any assistant accorded her to facilitate acquiring research permit for data collection will be highly appreciated.

Thank you

Head Department
Curriculum & Instruction
UNIVERSITY OF ELDORET

DR. AGNES M. OSEKO
HEAD, DEPARTMENTS OF CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION/
EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Cc.

DVC(ASA)
Ministry of Higher Education
Dean, School of Education

APPENDIX VI: RESEARCH PERMIT




REPUBLIC OF KENYA
 National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
Ref No: 790590
RESEARCH LICENSE


This is to Certify that Ms. Florence WANYAMA Nafusa of University of Eldoret, has been licensed to conduct research as per the provision of the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 (Rev.2014) in Bungoma on the topic: INFLUENCE OF TUSOME PROGRAMME ON PUPILS READING SKILLS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BUNGOMA NORTH SUB-COUNTY for the period ending : 29/July/2026.

License No: NACOSTI/25/4177477
790590
Applicant Identification Number

Ag. Director General
NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION
Verification QR Code


NOTE: This is a computer generated License. To verify the authenticity of this document, Scan the QR Code using QR scanner application.
See overleaf for conditions

APPENDIX VII: LETTER OF APPROVAL



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR BASIC EDUCATION

When Replying please quote
e-mail: bungomaede@gmail.com

Ref No: BCE/DE/19/VOL.V/33

County Director of Education
P.O. Box 1620-50200
BUNGOMA

Date: 10th April, 2019


TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: AUTHORITY TO CARRY OUT RESEARCH

EDU/S/PGET/002/15.

This is to confirm that **Ms. Florence Wanyama Nafula of University of Eldoret** has been authorized to conduct research on **"Influence of TUSOME Programme on pupils reading skills in Public Primary Schools in Bungoma North Sub County in Bungoma County, Kenya"** for the period ending 8th April, 2020.

Kindly accord her the necessary assistance


 CHRISTINE OWINO
 FOR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
 BUNGOMA COUNTY



APPENDIX VIII: SIMILARITY INDEX REPORT



University of Eldoret

Certificate of Plagiarism Check for Thesis

Author Name	Wanyama Florence Nafula EDU/S/PGET/002/15
Course of Study	Type here...
Name of Guide	Type here...
Department	Type here...
Acceptable Maximum Limit	Type here...
Submitted By	titustoo@uoeld.ac.ke
Paper Title	EVALUATING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EARLY GRADE READING PROGRAMME ON LEARNERS' ACQUISITION OF READING SKILLS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BUNGOMA NORTH SUB- COUNTY- KENYA
Similarity	10%
Paper ID	4609817
Total Pages	120
Submission Date	2025-11-02 14:25:38

Signature of Student

Signature of Guide



Head of the Department

Director of Post Graduate Studies