

## **INFLUENCE OF TEACHER FACTORS ON IMPLEMENTATION OF ENGLISH CURRICULUM IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN JARAJILLA DIVISION, GARISSA COUNTY, KENYA**

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### **Abstract**

*Teachers play a critical role in the implementation of the English curriculum. They ensure that syllabus is adequately covered and that pupils register impressive academic grades in internal and national examinations. This study assessed the influence of teacher factors on the implementation of the English curriculum in public primary schools in Jarajilla Division, Garissa County, Kenya. The study was guided by the instruction and the Curriculum Implementation Theories. It applied mixed methods approach and explanatory sequential design which involved collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative methods. Questionnaires were used to collect data from pupils whereas interview schedules were used to collect data from teachers and head teachers. Data analysis began by identifying common themes from the respondents' description of their experiences. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically along the objectives and presented in narrative forms whereas quantitative data was analyzed descriptively using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation as well as inferentially using ANOVA Test Analysis. The study established that teacher factors positively influenced implementation of English curriculum in public primary schools. It thus recommended that English teachers should undertake refresher courses to acquire emerging strategies on how to implement English curriculum.*

**Keywords:** Teacher Factors, Training, Experience, Attitude, English Curriculum

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### **I.Introduction**

The literature on effective English teachers is extensive but it is only in the last twenty years or so that a specific focus has been put on examining the practices of effective teachers of English. Indicative of the growing interest amongst policy-makers in devising policies aimed at closing the gap in literacy achievement between students in high-poverty settings and their more affluent peers, some researchers have focused on high-poverty contexts, seeking to document the practices of English teachers who have succeeded in helping students to achieve to high levels regardless of socio-economic status. Others have sought to illuminate the practices of effective English teachers in a range of schools in their respective countries (Wong, Fishman, McNamara & Carter, 2006). This increase in the research on effective English teachers has also seen systematic reviews of the evidence. However, little has been done on English teachers' teaching competency in enhancing early acquisition of English skills, especially for English subject English teachers.

The International Reading Association has issued a position statement on exemplary literacy English teachers of literacy (Au, Raphael & Mooney, 2008). It notes that exemplary English teachers have a variety of methodologies at their fingertips and they know when and how to apply and combine them. They are well-versed in the theory and rationale underpinning these methods and understand the complexity and developmental nature of the literacy process. While this is the ideal, Cummins (2001) and Au *et al* (2008) have found that even among exemplary English teachers there are variations in practice and in that study no teacher was deemed to be highly effective on all behaviors. There are, however, many converging

findings across the studies that provide useful insights into how exemplary literacy English teachers differ to their more typical peers. They provide large blocks of time, create a motivating and engaging classroom environment and so have few discipline difficulties, teach skills within a balanced literacy framework, adopt a meta-cognitive approach to instruction scaffolding and coaching students in the use of strategies, utilize a dynamic and flexible range of instructional groupings informed by a range of formative assessment tools and so effectively differentiate according to child need and finally they have expert classroom management (Taylor, Pearson & Pressley, 2002).

In effect, they successfully operate a coherent, systematic and cognitively challenging balanced literacy framework as outlined above. The training of English teachers plays an important role in an educational system, since English teachers are central to the change process. Sifuna (1991) argues that a well-designed and effectively implemented teacher training program is the key element to the successful implementation and institutionalization of change programs. Sifuna (1991) attributes failure of intended educational changes mainly to ineffective teacher training programs. For example, in Kenyan teacher training colleges, the preparation of English teachers to teach English language and literature is done in such a way that English and Literature are taught as separate entities (Wong *et al*, 2006). This therefore means that the major challenges facing English teachers as far as the integrated method is concerned can be traced back to their training. Studies carried out in developed countries indicate that there is an important relationship between the approach to training in English teachers' colleges and how student English teachers and beginning English teachers teach in their classrooms.

Such studies include that by UNESCO (2005) which advocates for improved quality of intake and longer training programs - two to three years. According to Verspoor (2008) a well-designed and effectively implemented teacher training programs the key element in the successful implementation and institutionalization of change programs. No matter how carefully the curriculum and materials are planned, if English teachers are not effectively trained on integration, the program cannot reach its objectives. Good training goes a long way in ensuring that the English teachers of English language and literature are well versed with skills of the integrated method.

All other things being constant, English teachers trained in particular skills perform better than untrained English teachers (Verspoor, 2008). Therefore, one can conclude that, if English teachers of English language and literature are well trained in the use of the integrated method, then they will perform better. However, these attributes are possessed by competent English teachers who are exposed to refresher courses and personal development opportunities; a fact that is yet to be fully embraced by English subject English teachers in Nakuru East Sub-county. Therefore, the study intended to investigate the influence of English teachers' teaching competency on acquisition of English skills amongst secondary school learners.

## **II.Statement of the Problem**

Teachers play a critical role in the implementation of English curriculum. They ensure that the syllabus is adequately covered and that pupils register impressive academic grades in both internal and national examinations. However, in Jarajilla Division, the situation is different and implementation of English curriculum has not been devoid of challenges. Many teachers

have lagged behind in syllabus coverage and pupils continue to register low grades in English subject in both joint and KCPE examinations. For example, in 2015 KCPE examinations, Jarajilla Division registered an aggregate of 33.1% in English subject against the national aggregate which stood at 40.29% (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, 2016). These statistics point to a glaring picture of low grades in English subject amongst pupils. However, it is not yet fully clear how different teacher dynamics influence the implementation of English curriculum; hence the need for this study.

### **III. Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by Instructional Theory of Management which was postulated by Jacob Kounin (1977). Kounin's theory focused on a teacher's ability to impact learner behavior through instructional management that incorporated both the instructional and disciplinary features of the classroom. Kounin (1977) noted that the modeling of a teacher can shape the learners' behavior. Kounin's theory about classroom management was grounded in the belief that there was a significant relationship between teacher-based factors, classroom management and instructional effectiveness; the teacher's preparedness and ability to manage and organize his/her classroom while using proactive behavior and increasing learner participation was related to learner achievement. Kounin (1977) also found that possessing organization and planning skills are vital aspects of preparedness for getting learners highly involved and in being proactive towards learners' behavior.

Kounin and Carter (1990) both agreed that studies of pedagogical content knowledge utilize information processing of subject matter and the structure of explanation as key features of the teacher's knowledge. They proposed that teachers' attitudes, teaching approaches, motivation and social skills and perception of their effectiveness of classroom management affect their view of self-efficacy. Kounin (1977) stated that low-efficacy teachers were less likely to exhibit a sense of "with-it-ness". With-it-ness is when learners perceive the teacher is aware of everything that is happening in the classroom. In a primary school setting, a teacher needs to incorporate all of the aspects of Kounin's philosophy in their teaching practice. The "with-it-ness" that comes with being an effective teacher is most often the fruit of planning and keeps pupils on task. This takes a special ability to diffuse potentially distracting situations in which teachers need to bring pupils back to the task at hand.

In showing pupils the connections between one subject to the next, using previous vocabulary to prepare pupils for learning new vocabulary, a teacher would show overlapping which ties into the momentum aspect. Pupils that feel as though they are learning will make connections between old and new material. This confidence would allow them to contribute to the momentum of the classroom. Thus, the rationale of using this theory is that it underscored the fact that aspects of teacher-based factors such as training, experience, exposure, attitude, teaching strategies, motivation strategies, planning skills and social skills are critical in enhancing implementation of English curriculum in primary schools. This study was also based on The Modern Cognitive Theory which was postulated by Jonathan (2006). This theory infers linguistic patterns from language examples. Furthermore, it makes crucial use of a linguistic memory and is able to deal with mistakes in the input by employing statistical techniques to filter noise. This theory also recognizes the environmental influences on acquisition of English skills.

Just like Skinner (1957), Jonathan (2006) shares the view that acquisition of English skills depends largely on environment. Thus, the role of the school environment is important in acquisition of English skills amongst primary school learners. Teachers and their competency are also important in acquisition of English skills. Relevant activities include review and revision, class vocabulary bags, using a scaffolding approach with young learners, analysis and discussion of language and topics, inductive approaches and learner training. Thus, the rationale of using this theory in this study is that it recognizes the influence of teachers' teaching approaches, competency, instructional materials and play activities on acquisition of English skills. This study was also guided by the curriculum theory by Franklin (1956). According to this theory, human life, however varied, consists in the performance of specific activities. Education that prepares for life is one that prepares definitely and adequately for these specific activities.

However numerous and diverse they may be for any social class they can be discovered. Franklin's (1956) long lists of objectives and his emphasis on order and structure hardly sat comfortably with such forms. Franklin (1956), in particular, has made a lasting impression on curriculum theory and practice. His theory was based on four fundamental questions which borders on the factors which affect implementation of school curriculum. This theory thus rationalizes the fact that school dynamics play critical role in successful implementation of English curriculum.

#### **IV. Research Methodology**

The study applied mixed methods approach, that is, quantitative and qualitative methods and thus applied explanatory sequential design which involves collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative methods to understand a research problem. This research design was relevant in this study since the study involved collecting and analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data. The target population comprised of 37 head teachers, 321 teachers and 1500 pupils all totaling to 1858. Using the Central Limit Theorem, a sample of 10 schools, that is, 27.0% of 37, and 245 respondents, that is, 13.2% of 1858, were selected. Stratified sampling was applied to create five strata based on the number of sub-divisions in Jarajilla Division. From each sub-division, zone, two head teachers and six teachers were selected using purposive sampling considering schools which have registered low performance in English. On the same breath, 40 pupils were selected using simple random sampling. This procedure enabled the researcher to realize a sample of 10 head teachers, 30 teachers and 205 pupils.

Data analysis began by identifying common themes from the respondents' description of their experiences. Relevant information was broken into phrases or sentences, which reflected a single, specific thought. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically along the objectives and presented in narrative forms whereas quantitative data was analyzed descriptively using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation and inferentially using ANOVA Test Analysis with the aid of Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS Version 23) and presented using tables.

#### **V. Results and Discussions**

In this section, the data analysis, presentation and interpretation are reported. The following main question guided the study:

*Influence of Teacher Factors on Implementation of English Curriculum in Public Primary Schools in Jarajilla Division, Garissa County, Kenya*

- i. What is the influence of teacher factors on implementation of English curriculum in public primary schools in Jarajilla Division?

**Respondents' Background Information**

The researcher administered 201 questionnaires to pupils and 200 were successfully filled and returned. At the same time, 8 head teachers and 80 teachers were interviewed. These gave response rates as indicated in Table 1:

**Table 1: Response Rates**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Sampled Respondents</b>	<b>Those who Participated</b>	<b>Achieved Response Rates (%)</b>
Head teachers	10	8	80.0
Teachers	30	26	86.7
Pupils	205	200	97.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>245</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>95.5</b>

From Table 1, head teachers, teachers and pupils registered a response rate of 95.5%. This affirmed the assertions of Creswell (2009) that a response rate above 75.0% is sufficient and of acceptable levels to enable generalization of the results to the target population.

**Teacher Factors and Implementation of English Curriculum in Primary schools**

The study sought to establish how teacher factors influence implementation of English curriculum in public primary schools. Data collected from pupils was organized and summarized and results are indicated in Table 2:

**Table 2: Pupils' Views on the Influence of Teacher Factors on Implementation of English Curriculum in Public Primary schools**

<b>Summary of Test Items</b>	<b>SA %</b>	<b>A %</b>	<b>U %</b>	<b>D %</b>	<b>SD %</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>St. Dev</b>
Teachers' teaching competency enhance English syllabus coverage	71	12.3	1.3	10.1	5.3	4.324	0.936
Pupils' performance in English depends on teachers' English teaching competency	66.9	13.2	2.4	12.7	4.8	4.206	1.278
Teachers' English teaching experience enhances English syllabus coverage	80.5	12.4	1.6	3.3	2.2	4.618	0.908
Pupils' performance in English depends on teachers' English teaching experience	67.4	19.7	3.5	5.3	4.1	4.441	1.006
Teachers' interest in English enhances English syllabus coverage	69.6	13.8	1.6	10.6	4.4	4.441	1.088
Pupils' performance in English depends on teachers' interest in English	61.8	14.5	2.1	15.2	6.4	4.118	1.323

Table 2 reveals that majority of the sampled pupils (71.0%) strongly agreed with the view that teachers' teaching competency enhances English syllabus coverage. At the same time,

*Influence of Teacher Factors on Implementation of English Curriculum in Public Primary Schools in Jarajilla Division, Garissa County, Kenya*

12.3% of the pupils agreed with the statement. However, only a paltry 1.3% of the pupils were undecided, 10.1% disagreed whereas 5.3% strongly disagreed.

The study also revealed that a fair majority (66.9%) of the pupils strongly agreed with the view that pupils' performance in English depends on teachers' English teaching competency as did 13.2% of the pupils. At the same time, 2.4% of the pupils were undecided, 12.7% disagreed whereas 4.8% strongly disagreed. These findings corroborate the assertions of Taylor *et al* (2002) that the training and experience of English teachers play an important role in an educational system, since English teachers are central to the change process. This therefore means that the major challenges facing English teachers can be traced back to their training. The study also revealed that an impressive majority of the sampled pupils (80.5%) strongly agreed with the view that teachers' English teaching experience enhances English syllabus coverage as did 12.4% of the pupils. However, 1.6% of the pupils were undecided, 3.3% disagreed whereas 2.2% strongly disagreed.

A fair majority of the sampled pupils (67.4%) strongly agreed with the view that pupils' performance in English depends on teachers' English teaching experience. 19.7% agreed. However, 3.5% of the pupils were undecided, 5.3% disagreed whereas 4.1% strongly disagreed. These findings lend credence to the assertions of Verspoor (2008) that English teachers trained in particular English teaching skills perform better than untrained English teachers. Therefore, this points to the fact that one can conclude that, if teachers of English language and literature are well trained, then they will perform better. The study also revealed that a fair majority of the sampled pupils (69.6%) strongly agreed with the view that teachers' interest in English enhances its syllabus coverage as did 13.8% of the pupils. On the other hand, 1.6% of the pupils were undecided, 10.6% disagreed whereas 4.4% strongly disagreed.

The study also revealed that a fair majority of the sampled pupils (61.8%) strongly agreed with the view that pupils' performance in English depends on teachers' interest in English as did 14.5% of the pupils. On the other hand, 2.1% of the pupils were undecided, 15.2% disagreed whereas 6.4% strongly disagreed. These findings are consistent with the assertions of Verspoor (2008) that well-designed and effectively implemented training programs on teacher attitude towards English language are the key elements in the successful implementation of English curriculum. No matter how carefully the curriculum and materials are planned, if English teachers are not effectively trained, the English curriculum cannot reach its objectives. This is indicative of the fact that good training goes a long way in ensuring that the English teachers are well versed with skills of teaching English language.

**Inferential Findings on the Influence of Teacher Factors on Implementation of English Curriculum in Primary schools**

To verify the possibility of difference between teacher factors and implementation of English curriculum, data was collected on pupils' average English performance in Terms One, Two and Three mean scores and results are shown in Table 3:

**Table 3: Results of the Frequency of Teacher Training and Pupils' English Performance**

Frequency of Teacher Training	English Performance (Mean Points)		
	Term One	Term Two	Term Three
1	2.1	3.3	4.5
3	3.6	4.6	5.0

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6	5.9	6.9	6.1
9	7.3	8.4	9.8

Table 3 indicates that English teachers' training is critical in enhancing pupils' performance in English. English teachers who have undergone several training programmes have their pupils register impressive grades in English tests in terms one, two and three. These findings are consistent with the assertions of Sifuna (1991) who argues that a well-designed and effectively implemented teacher training program is the key element to the successful implementation of English curriculum. No matter how carefully the curriculum and materials are planned, if English teachers are not effectively trained on the implementation of English curriculum. These results were subjected to ANOVA and results are shown in Table 4:

**Table 4: ANOVA Analysis of the difference between Means of Terms One, Two and Three of Pupils' English Performance**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	f	Sig
Term One	80.237	3	26.746		
Term Two	7.762	3	2.587	4.195	0.041
Term Three	5.551	9	0.617		
Residuals	13.313	12	1.109		
<b>Total</b>	<b>93.549</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>6.237</b>		

Grand Mean = 5.406

From the ANOVA Statistics in Table 4, the processed data, which is the population parameters, had a significance level of 0.041 which shows that the data is ideal for making a conclusion on the population's parameter as the value of significance (p-value of 0.041) is less than 5%, that is,  $p\text{-value}=0.041 < 0.05$ . It also indicates that the results were statistically significant and that there is a significant difference between means of the number of times English teachers have been trained and pupils' English performance in terms one, two and three. These results were consistent with the findings of a study conducted in Kenya by Button (2010) which generated a p-value of  $0.037 < 0.05$ .

**Thematic Analysis of Qualitative Findings on the Influence of Teacher Factors on Implementation of English Curriculum**

Head teachers and teachers were also interviewed. The interviewees indicated that teachers' teaching competency enhances implementation of English curriculum. Headteacher, P1, and Teacher, T1, noted,

*“Pupils' performance in English in my school depends on teachers' English teaching competency”.*

Just like in quantitative findings, this view also corroborates the viewpoints of Button (2010) that in Kenyan teacher training colleges and universities, the preparation of English teachers to teach English language and literature is done in such a way that English and Literature are taught as separate entities. This view also points to the fact that the major challenges facing English teachers can be traced back to their training. The interviewees also noted that teachers' English teaching experience and attitudes enhance implementation of English curriculum. Thus, their views also point to the fact that one can conclude that teachers of

English language and literature are well trained in the use of the integrated method, then they will perform better.

### **VI. Conclusions**

From the study findings, some teacher factors were found to be positively influencing the implementation of English Curriculum in public primary schools in Jarajilla Division of Garissa County. These factors included level of education, experience and attitudes towards English curriculum and were instrumental in English syllabus coverage and ultimate pupils' performance in the subject.

### **VII. Recommendations**

The study recommends that English teachers should undertake modern refresher courses in order to acquire emerging strategies on how to teach and implement English curriculum. Teachers also need to attend seminars and workshops so as to acquire new strategies on how to teach and enhance learners' communicative competency in English. Additionally, English teachers need to manifest social skills such as effective communication and interpersonal relations with education stakeholders as a strategy to enhance cordial relations with learners. This may go a long way in enhancing the learners' academic performance in basic numeracy, language and creativity skills which, in turn, will enhance implementation of English curriculum in primary schools.

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