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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Challenging Roles of Public Primary Teachers in Teaching and Developing Students Reading, Writing and Arithmetic Skills in Nyamagana District, Mwanza-Tanzania

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the challenges faced by public primary school teachers in developing pupils' reading, writing, and arithmetic skills (3Rs) in Nyamagana District, Mwanza-Tanzania. It aimed to examine the difficulties teachers encounter and identify strategies to enhance the effective teaching and development of these skills. Using a mixed-methods approach and an explanatory sequential design, the study sampled 97 respondents, including teachers, head teachers, and Ward Education Officers. Data were collected through questionnaires and interviews, with quantitative data analyzed using descriptive statistics and qualitative data analyzed thematically.Findings revealed that teachers struggled with inadequate professional experience and limited pedagogical skills in teaching the 3Rs. Pupils' lack of confidence and interest in learning, coupled with high truancy and absenteeism rates, further hindered progress. Additionally, shortages of physical facilities, teaching materials, and parental support negatively impacted learning. The absence of school feeding programs also affected pupils' concentration and overall academic performance.To address these challenges, the study suggested several strategies, including educating parents on the importance of supporting their children's learning, enhancing teacher training programs, and ensuring administrative support for both teachers and pupils. Integrating technology and visual aids into instruction and improving school infrastructure were also recommended to create a more conducive learning environment.The study concluded that mastering the 3Rs is fundamental to pupils' academic success, as these skills serve as the foundation for further education. It recommended that the government and education stakeholders invest in teacher training, resource provision, and parental engagement to ensure effective teaching and learning of the 3Rs.

Keywords: Challenges; writing skills; reading skills; arithmetic skills; public primary school

INTRODUCTION

The teaching of reading, writing, and arithmetic (3Rs) is fundamental, as these skills serve as the building blocks for academic success (Rai, 2024). The inability to effectively acquire the 3Rs hinders the education sector's ability to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 4, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all (United Nations, 2018).

Historically, the concept of the 3Rs dates to 1807 in Europe, when it was coined by English politician and banker Sir William Curtis. At the time, mastery of these skills was regarded as essential for personal success and advancement (Curious Historians, 2019). In the

United States, the 3Rs were incorporated into the education system in the 1830s with the introduction of common schools, championed by Horace Mann, to promote literacy, moral development, and productivity among children (Kober & Rentner, 2020). Finland integrates pre-literacy skills into compulsory pre-primary education for six-year-olds to prevent learning difficulties (Virinkoski et al., 2021). In Amsterdam, the Netherlands, reading and arithmetic disabilities often occur in isolation due to a lack of methodological strategies that build cognitive development, which in turn negatively impacts early education (Vanbinst et al., 2020).

In Africa, the challenge of literacy development has deep historical roots. In Nigeria, literacy issues stem from the Universal Primary Education (UPE) initiative, first introduced in 1955 in the Western Region and in 1957 in Eastern Nigeria (Edem et al., 2011). In South Africa, both colonial and post-independence governments recognized the role of literacy in reducing poverty and promoting national development, leading to efforts to expand early childhood education programs in rural areas (Cilliers & Bloch, 2018). Similarly, after gaining independence in 1963, Kenya prioritized literacy education in lower primary levels to combat poverty, lack of empowerment, and low self-esteem among its citizens (Bunyi et al., 2014).

The mastery of the 3Rs is crucial not only for academic achievement but also for strengthening family bonds, promoting children's well-being, and ensuring lifelong success (Maryville, 2023). The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Education for All (EFA) program sought to achieve universal, free, and quality primary education by 2015, leading to increased enrollment in countries such as Sri Lanka, Chile, China, Singapore, and Cuba. However, despite progress, enrollment rates in South and West Asia and sub-Saharan Africa remained lower at 73% in 2007 (Dwivedi, 2015). Effective 3Rs instruction requires participatory teaching methods that encourage active learning, communication, and collaboration, allowing pupils to develop critical thinking skills (Ciobanu, 2018). However, many countries still struggle with pupils failing to acquire basic reading and writing skills in their early years of education, a challenge that worsens as they progress through school (Ssentanda, 2014).

In Tanzania, significant efforts have been made to expand primary education since independence in 1961. Between the early 1970s and mid-1980s, these efforts led to a high literacy rate and mastery of the 3Rs (Mmasa & Anney, 2016). However, the introduction of cost-sharing policies in the 1980s, aimed at economic recovery, led to reduced school enrollment and increased illiteracy (Shukia, 2020). Government interventions, such as the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) in 2005, aimed to reverse this trend but have not fully resolved the issue (Mmasa & Anney, 2016). Many pupils still complete primary education without sufficient competency in reading, writing, and arithmetic (Kumburu, 2011; Ngussa & Mjema, 2017). An analysis conducted by the National Examinations Council of Tanzania (NECTA) in 2020 found that 29.70% of Standard Two pupils had inadequate reading comprehension skills, while 24.88% struggled with reading words. Additionally, 57.83% had difficulties with addition, and 66.43% lacked proficiency in subtraction. By 2021, NECTA reported that 31.9% of pupils failed to meet the set standards in reading, 37.79% in writing, and 39.1% in arithmetic, highlighting persistent challenges in 3Rs education (NECTA, 2022).

In Nyamagana District, the challenges in mastering the 3Rs mirror the national trends. Despite government efforts to improve literacy rates, many pupils in Standard II, III, and even VII still struggle with basic reading, writing, and arithmetic (NDSQAO, 2020). This ongoing issue underscores the need for further research on the challenges faced by public primary teachers in developing 3Rs skills and the strategies needed for effective instruction. The aim of this study was to explore the challenging roles of public primary teachers in teaching and developing reading, writing and arithmetic skills for public primary school pupils in Nyamagana district, and to examine Possible Strategies to be used to ensure effective teaching and development of 3Rs skills.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The body of literature indicates that teachers face some challenges in an attempt to teach 3Rs. According to Fletcher (2018) in his qualitative study in New Zealand, socio-economic status of schools and parents is one of the challenges facing teachers and pupils in developing 3Rs. He argues that the socioeconomic situation of many pupils is a factor which impacts their learning. Pupils from very low socioeconomic schools or families have fewer resources such as access to books, writing materials and digital technologies which limit them from effective learning. However, this depends on the firmness and skills of leadership in enabling teachers to succeed in their teaching. The head teacher as

instructional leader and specialist can assist his subordinate teaching staff in implementing and using effective teaching methods and providing educational and learning materials like websites and textbooks for use with pupils (Tahira et al., 2021). Strong head teachers employ their expertise to mobilize resources he or she may use with fellow teachers to improve learning in spite of the socioeconomic status of the school or parents.

Again, Fletcher (2018) noted the absence of sound relationship between teachers and parents which led to the impact on teachers' performance in teaching reading. Notwithstanding this, the absence of relationship between schools and homes cannot result in too much impact on teachers teaching, especially if the school can mobilise resources required for teaching and pupils learning. The study suggests cooperation between teachers and parents or guardians to ensure learners academic achievements.

Empirical studies also have revealed pupils' lack of competence to be a challenge for teachers' teaching. Adao et al. (2023) in Philippines, reported that learners' low participation in teaching and learning activities like discussion, asking and answering questions due to a lack of confidence and teachers' lack of skills caused difficulty in teachers' teaching. Lack of self-confidence causes pupils to look dull and cannot participate actively in learning. However, some pupils show low self-confidence and scarcely participate in lessons through answering and or asking questions during teaching and learning but when it comes to tests and examinations, they perform highly as an indication of having the ability to learn.

In African context, empirical studies have shown that the difficulties teachers encountered in developing reading and writing in primary schools included students' unreadiness, students' absenteeism, lack of professional experience, students' lack of interest and physical inadequacies (Gündoğmuş, 2018). This causes pupils not to master the 3Rs and fail to learn other subjects effectively leading to low academic performance. Zewdie (2022) reported pupils absenteeism, overcrowded classes with poor quality classrooms, teachers pedagogical knowledge and skills caused by the lack of training. He also reported teachers' bad self-esteem owing to life hardships resulting from poor consideration by the government. Additionally, Zewdie (2022) presented insufficiency of desks or chairs and tables for pupils, shortage of textbooks and lack of support from the district office which causes head teachers to despair.

In Tanzania, Tandika and Kumburu (2018) indicated a number of challenges including shortage of infrastructures like clean and safe water, absence of meals at school, inadequacy of desks; insufficiency of teachers; shortage of teaching and learning materials; regular curriculum change, overcrowded classrooms, and poor family income. Again, the study indicated that teachers did not use teaching techniques which could help pupils to learn effectively. Furthermore, Mmasa and Anney (2016) reported teachers lack adequate skills in teaching literacy which contributed to about 64% of standard two and 54% of standard three pupils having no ability to read, write and do simple numeracy. Other factors that contributed to the literacy problem were the late enrolment of pupils in standard one, the inadequacy of teaching and learning resources, parents' level of education, and the shortage of literacy teachers and teachers with poor literacy teaching skills. Moreover, Mmasa and Anney (2016) found that truancy and absenteeism were other challenges teachers encountered in developing literacy for Tanzanian primary school pupils. Large truancy and absence from school can distract the teachers from planning and provide class work sequentially and organized thus affecting the academic development of all pupils in the class (Henry and Yelkpieri, 2017). Truancy is usually among the first and greatest indicators of failure in academics (Henry and Yelkpieri, 2017). Truancy and absenteeism therefore cause beginners not to master literacy (reading, writing and arithmetic) within the specified time frame.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a mixed research approach where both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used as the combination provides a better understanding of the study. The study was guided by an explanatory sequential research design. Data from quantitative findings were first collected and analysed followed by a successive collection and analysis of qualitative data. Both quantitative and qualitative data were then combined, and the interpretation of the results was done at the same time. The population of this study comprised public primary school teachers, head teachers, the District Education Officer (DEO) and Ward Education Officers (WEOs) who made a total of 2,470 respondents. The sample size included 97 respondents, which was convenient as it provided suitable information for the study. The study employed

both probability (stratified sampling and simple random sampling) to select 86 teacher respondents using lottery method and nonprobability sampling (purposive) to select eight (8) head teachers and three (3) WEOs. Data was collected using questionnaires and interview (face to face) guides. In order to determine validity and reliability of the research instruments the study employed content validity and test-retest reliability (correlation coefficient of 0.80) respectively. Prior to the main study, pilot testing was done with six (6) teachers selected from one school which was not involved in the main study, one (1) head teacher and one (1) WEO. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statics with the help of the computer Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 20. The requirement of ethics concerning research were observed. Proper acknowledgement/citation of all sources of information done throughout this document adhering to APA Manual 7th edition to avoid plagiarism.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Challenges Encountered by Public Primary Teachers in Teaching and Developing Reading, Writing and Arithmetic Skills

A sample of 86 teachers was asked to respond to the statements given as suggestions for the challenges using a five-point scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (SD)-(1), Disagree (D)-(2), Uncertain (U)-(3), Agree (A), Strongly Agree (SA). The statements the respondents were supposed to select their responses from were listed one after the other in the first column of Table 1. Table 1 below indicates the statements and the responses from respondents:

Table 1. Teachers Responses on Challenges encountered by public primary teachers in teaching and developing reading, writing and arithmetic skills.

Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA
Teachers lack enough professional experience in teaching the 3Rs	10 (11.6)	16 (18.6)	6 (7.0)	30 (34.9)	24 (27.9)
Teachers lack enough knowledge and skills to teach 3Rs	10 (11.6)	20 (23.3)	4 (4.7)	24 (27.9)	28 (32.6)
Pupils lack of confidence and interest in learning the 3Rs	22 (25.6)	13 (15.1)	3 (3.5)	26 (30.2)	22 (25.6)
Shortage of physical facilities	0 0	0 0	2 (2.3)	32 (37.2)	52 (60.5)
Low socioeconomic status of schools and parents	12 (14.0)	2 (2.3)	2 (2.3)	38 (44.2)	32 (37.2)
Truancy and absenteeism of pupils	0 0	2 (2.3)	2 (2.3)	38 (44.2)	44 (51.2)
Shortage of teaching and learning resources	4 (4.7)	2 (2.3)	2 (2.3)	42 (48.8)	38 (44.2)
Shortage of teaching and learning	0 0	2 (2.3)	2 (2.3)	40 (46.5)	38 (44.2)

Results from Table 1 indicate that the teacher respondents accepted all the statements given in the table as challenges teachers encounter in the process of teaching and developing 3Rs to public primary school pupils in Nyamagana District. The first challenge mentioned was teachers lacked enough professional experience in teaching the 3Rs (Agree = 30(34.9%), Strongly Agree = 24(27.9%). This indicated that some of the teachers lacked enough professional experience in teaching the 3Rs. When asked to provide their views about teachers professional experience in teaching the 3Rs during the interview, the respondents supported the numerical information diversely. They said that some of the teachers lacked professional experience as they were new to the profession and some others teaching 3Rs in lower classes were not teachers by profession. One head teacher was quoted saying:

> In fact, the teaching of reading, writing and arithmetic is a challenge to a significant number of teachers due to the lack of professional experience. This is because many of those who teach 3Rs are new to the teaching profession. Also, we have other individuals who are not teachers by profession but employed to teach the skills on a temporary basis to cover the gap created by the shortage of teachers (HT3: July 2024).

This implies that teachers' lack of professional experience hinders teachers from effective teaching of the 3Rs. This concurs with Gündoğmuş (2018) who

reported that teachers face the lack of professional experience which prohibit them to teach the 3Rs effectively. As such, inexperienced teachers should be given help, including in-service training to improve their teaching skills.

The second challenge that 86 teacher respondents accepted was teachers' lack of enough knowledge and skills (Agree = 24(27.9%), Strongly Agree = 28(32.6%). Opinions from interview respondents showed that a good majority of the teachers teaching the 3Rs lacked enough knowledge and skills. Specifically, this was said to be caused by inadequate or lack of training in teaching the 3Rs. One of the WEOs had the following to say:

> Lack of enough knowledge and skills in teaching the 3Rs is a problem that challenges many teachers teaching those skills. Teachers trained to teach the 3Rs are very few in schools. Therefore, some of the teachers teaching those skills are trained to teach other subjects at primary school level but they are assigned to teach the skills out of enough knowledge and skills because of the shortage of such teachers (WEO3: July 2024).

The indicates that some teachers teaching 3Rs have not enough knowledge and skills for teaching those skills due to unsatisfactory training. This agrees with Zewdie (2022) who revealed teachers' lack of training and bad self-esteem to be challenges facing teachers in teaching the 3Rs. This means that lack of knowledge and skills in teaching the 3Rs limits teachers from effectively developing the 3Rs using appropriate techniques.

The third challenge which the 86 teacher respondents identified was pupils' lack of confidence and interest in learning the 3Rs (Agree = 26(30.2%), Strongly Agree = 22(25.6%). This implies that a substantial number of pupils seemed to be dull, not ready to ask or answer questions in the classrooms. One of the WEOs had the following opinions during interview:

> Pupils are a challenge and discouraging to teachers. They do not seem to participate in the lesson in any way. Even if you ask them questions in the teaching-learning process, they do not attempt to provide answers. Teachers use a lot of energy to ensure pupils master the skills but their unreadiness retards teachers efforts (WEO2: July, 2024).

This indicates that pupils' lack of interest and confidence in learning hinders teachers' effectiveness in teaching the 3Rs. This aligns with Adao et al. (2023) who unveiled that teacher encountered learners' low participation in teaching and learning activities like discussion, asking and answering questions in the classroom due to the lack of confidence. Acedillo and Saro (2023) comment that pupils tend to lose interest and readiness towards learning, particularly to participate actively in the classroom. This is caused by negative feelings like low confidence, low self-worth, excessive anxiety and teachers' inappropriate handling of pupils during teaching and learning.

Again, the 86 teacher respondents identified the shortage of physical facilities (Agree = 32(37.2%), Strongly Agree = 52(60.5%) as challenge for teachers in developing 3Rs for it causes too big class sizes for teachers to handle during teaching and learning. This implies that the shortage of physical facilities limits the effective teaching and developing 3Rs. This is in line with Ndori (2021) who noted that the inadequacy of physical facilities limited effective curriculum implementation.

When needed to state their opinions about the effect of physical facilities on teaching the 3Rs, the eight (8) head teachers and three (3) WEOs said that the shortage of physical facilities was a big problem in most of the public primary schools in the district. They said that the challenge limited teachers' ability to teach the classes effectively due to difficulty in handling the discipline of those classes during teaching and learning. The respondents added that physical facilities like desks and chairs was problem that hindered teachers' effective teaching and learning. The shortage of desks caused some of the pupils to learn while seated on the floor and the shortage of chair and tables for teachers denied them a place for preparing their lessons and marking pupils work. One of the head teachers had the following opinions:

> The shortage of physical facilities like classrooms causes congestion of pupils in classrooms which hinder the possibility of involving learners in the lesson. The shortage of desks causes a significant number of pupils especially in lower classes to study sitting on the floor (HT1: July 2024).

The above quotation confirms data from numerical information that the shortage of physical facilities poses a big challenge specifically congestion of pupils in classrooms while some of the pupils sit on the floor during teaching and learning because of the shortage of desks. This aligns with Zewdie (2022) whose study

reported overcrowded classes with poor quality classrooms, insufficiency of desks or chairs and tables for pupils and shortage of textbooks to be among the challenges facing teachers in teaching the 3Rs. Likewise, Sakibu and Kamugisha (2022) in Morogoro Municipality found that there was an acute shortage of physical facilities like classrooms, libraries and furniture like desks and chairs which affected the provision of quality education in secondary schools. Also, the findings of this study concur with Owoeye and Yara (2011) who unveiled that school physical facilities like classrooms, libraries, and laboratories; furniture such as desks and chairs are among the factors that threatened the provision of quality education in community secondary schools.

Once again, the 86 teacher respondents accepted the shortage of teaching and learning resources (Agree = 42(48.8%), Strongly Agree = 38(44.2%) as another challenge that faced teachers in teaching the 3Rs. This implies that shortages related to teaching and learning resources like textbooks and teaching aids reduced the ability of both teachers and pupils to engage effectively in the classroom activities. This agrees with Mmasa and Anney (2016) whose study about exploring literacy and numeracy teaching in Tanzanian classrooms reported the shortage of teaching and learning resources to be among the factors that contributed to literacy problem. Similarly, during the interview sessions the respondents provided their opinions on whether teaching and learning resource were among the challenges to teachers in teaching the 3Rs. Respondents opinions indicated support to the quantitative information presented above. They all agreed that the shortage of teaching and learning resources like books and varieties of teaching aids caused both teachers and pupils not to develop effective interaction during teaching and learning. For example, one head teacher said:

> The shortage of teaching and learning resources are a big problem. The shortage of books and teaching aids, for example limits involvement of pupils in the lesson. Pupils enter classrooms to learn with little or without prior knowledge of the lesson as a result of failure to interact with books and therefore, they fail to respond to activities given by their teachers. This forces teachers to opt using lecture method does not help pupils to learn effectively (HT6: July,2 024)."

The above quotation reveals a strong support to the quantitative information that the shortage of teaching and learning resources pose a challenge to teachers by hindering them from effective participation of pupils in the lesson. These findings agree with Kuria and Nyabisi, (2017) who noted that effective teaching relies on the accessibility of teaching and learning resources like textbooks and audio-visual teaching aids. In the like manner, Manguu et al. (2021) asserts that laptops and textbooks are essential in the teaching-learning process that can impact teachers performance in a positive or negative way. Okongo et al. (2015) comment that satisfactoriness of teaching and learning materials decides the efficiency of the education system. Teaching and learning materials like textbooks are crucial instruments for effective teaching and learning. The absence or shortage of teaching and learning materials make teachers handle subjects in an abstract way, depicting it as dry and not exciting.

Once again, in responding to the statements provided in Table 1, the 86 teacher respondents identified the low socioeconomic status of schools and parents (Agree = 38(44.2%), Strongly Agree = 32(37.2 %); poor pupils support from parents (Agree = 40(46.5%), Strongly Agree = 38(44.2%) and truancy and absenteeism of pupils (Agree = 38(44.2%), Strongly Agree = 44(51.2%) as other challenges that faced teachers in teaching the 3Rs to pupils. This implies that the low socioeconomic status of schools and parents has negative contribution to teaching and learning processes. Schools and parents with low socioeconomic status cause pupils to have insufficient teaching and learning resources. This is in line with Oduro-Ofori et al. (2023) whose study found a positive relationship between family environment and pupils performance. The study also unveiled that the socioeconomic status of parents influences pupils self-motivation and academic performance.

During the interview sessions, the 11 interviews had aligning views which supported the quantitative findings. They said that the socioeconomic status of schools and poor pupils support from parents caused pupils to miss school necessities like books, pens and even meals leading to effects on teaching and learning. This also contributed to absenteeism, which was another challenge which denied pupils to learn. This caused teachers to teach with difficulty. This concurs with Fletcher (2018) who notes that the socioeconomic condition of many pupils is a factor which affects their learning, which implied that pupils from very low socioeconomic schools or families have fewer

resources including access to books, digital technologies and wider life experiences.

Strategies Used to Ensure Effective Teaching and Development Of 3rs Skills

The study also sought to suggest the possible strategies to ensure effective teaching and development of 3Rs skills. A sample of 86 teachers was asked to respond to the statements provided by putting a tick against a statement on a five-point scale ranging from "1 = Strongly Disagree (SD), 2 = Disagree (D), 3 = Not sure (NS), 4 = Agree (A) and 5 = Strongly Agree (SA)". The statements from which respondents had to select for their responses were listed in the initial column of Table 2. Table 2 presents the statements and responses from respondents.

Table 2. Teachers Responses on Strategies to ensure effective teaching and development of 3Rs.

Statements	SD	D	U	A	SA
	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)	F (%)
Educating parents on supporting their children	0 0	0 0	0 0	48 (55.8)	38 (44.2)
Providing capacity building to teachers	1 (1.2)	0 0	0 0	49 (57.0)	36 (41.8)
Parents support and encouragement to their children	4 (4.7)	0 0	2 (2.3)	48 (55.8)	32 (37.2)
Support to teachers and pupils from the school administration	0 0	0 0	2 (2.3)	48 (55.8)	36 (41.9)
Use of technology and visual aids in teaching the 3Rs	2 (2.3)	0 0	4 (4.7)	42 (48.8)	34 (39.5)
Improving school physical facilities and resources	2 (2.3)	0 0	0 0	42 (48.8)	42 (48.8)

Source: Field Data, (2024)

Table 2 above indicates that the 86 teacher respondents responded to all the statements to be strategies to ensure effective teaching and development of 3Rs in Nyamagana District. The suggested strategies were discussed below:

In regard to educating parents on supporting their children as a strategy to ensure effective teaching and development of 3Rs, Table 2 indicates that 48(55.8%) of the 86 teachers agreed and 38(44.2%) strongly agreed. None of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed. This implies that all 86(100%) respondents agreed to educate pupils' parents on supporting their children. This aligns with Osorio et al. (2021) when they argue that parents play a crucial role in shaping their children educational experiences and outcomes. This implies that parents should be educated to enable them to play their role of supporting their children learning of the 3Rs.

During the interview sessions, information collected from the 11 interview respondents indicated support on the numerical information that parents need to be given education on the importance of supporting their children learning. The DEO for example had the following views:

> The first person to guarantee that children learn effectively is parents. These have to ensure that their children learn in a supportive environment. If parents neglect the duty of supporting their children, they should be assisted to understand the importance of carrying that responsibility to ensure that pupils learn well (Interview; DEO: July 2024).

The above quotation justifies the quantitative information that parents should be educated on the importance of supporting their children. Through that education, parents can see the value of supporting their children and take steps to implement that significant responsibility. This aligns with Luo and Wei (2023) whose study about the impact of parents involvement in primary school students English Learning unveiled that parents assistance can enhance pupils enthusiasm in learning, develop good learning habits and develop curiosity in learning.

In regard to the provision of capacity building to teachers, Table 2 shows that 49(57.0%) of the 86 teachers agreed and 36(41.8%) strongly agreed that teachers should be provided with capacity building to ensure effective teaching and development of 3Rs. This indicates that a significant number, 85(98.8%), of the teacher respondents agreed with the point of view. This concurs with Ngusa and Mjema (2017) whose study

established that school administrators should support teachers in shaping their knowledge, abilities, and methods of teaching and learning. As a consequence, pupils can be well assisted and enabled to master the 3Rs within a specified time frame.

During the interview sessions with the 11 respondents, the findings indicated support on the numerical information that teachers have to be given capacity building to improve their performance. For example, the head teacher from school B was quoted saying:

> Teachers should be given capacity building. This is because some of the challenges include teachers' lack of knowledge and skills for teaching the 3Rs and lack of training. Therefore, if teachers are provided with capacity building, those challenges can be solved and improve teachers' teaching (Interview; HT2: July 2024).

The quotation above substantiates the view that teachers have to be given capacity building to offset the challenge they encounter during teaching and developing 3Rs. This concurs with Ado et al. (2023) whose study reported that teachers as guides should be provided with capacity building to improve their ability to assist learners to learn and master those three basic skills. Teachers who do not continue learning after their pre-service training will fail to implement their role effectively. Their ability to harmonize content with pedagogy, and technology to effectively produce current pedagogical-technological-content knowledge is limited. Their creativity would wane, and teaching would become uninteresting and tedious (Jusoff et al., 2011).

Based on the parents support and encouragement to their children, Table 2 reveals that 48(55.8%) of the 86 teachers agreed and 32(37.2%) strongly agreed that parents support and encouragement to their children can lead to effective teaching and development of 3Rs. This means that a substantial number, 80(93%) agreed with the argument. Information from the interview with the 11 respondents supported the question of parents encouragement and support for their children. They said that parents should encourage and support their children to motivate them to attend school and participate in learning. The head teacher from school H provided the following views:

> Parents should encourage and provide support to their children. For example, a child who has tattered uniforms feels unhappy to attend school but when he/she is bought knew ones he/she may attend school happily. Parents' encouragement motivates pupils to attend school and learn well. However, there should also be good relationship between teachers and parents for motivating teachers to attend children with an open heart (Interview; HT6: July 2024).

The quotation above implies that parents should also take their part by encouraging children to love school and therefore arouse their readiness and interest to attend school and participate fully in learning. This is in line with Kamala (2022) whose study indicated that the responsibility of helping pupils to learn is in the hands of teachers, parents and pupils themselves. Parents are supposed to encourage their children continuously and by so doing, pupils improve their performance. Therefore, parents should not leave the question of their childrens learning in the hands of teachers alone, but they should work hand in hand with teachers to encourage and ensure that pupils attend school and participate in the learning process actively.

Concerning the support to teachers from the school administration, Table 2 shows that 48(55.8%) of the 86 teacher respondents agreed and 36(41.9%) strongly agreed that support to teachers from the school administration can lead to effective teaching and development of 3Rs. This implies that 84(97.7%) of the teacher respondents agreed with the point of view. Information from the 12 respondents during the interview sessions seemed to support the numerical information that school administration should support teachers and pupils for effective teaching and development of 3Rs. When interviewed, the head teacher from school C exposed that:

> Support from the school administration to teachers and pupils is crucial for ensuring effective teaching and development of 3Rs. For example, school administration can conduct capacity building or in-service training to shape their knowledge and skills (Interview; HT3: July 2024).

The quotation above verifies the notion that the school administration should provide support to teachers and pupils to ensure effective teaching and development of 3Rs. This agrees with Ngusa and Mjema (2017) whose study to examine the factors influencing mastery of reading, writing and arithmetic (3Rs) among learners of primary schools in Ilala District established that school administrators should support teachers in shaping their knowledge, abilities, and methods of teaching and

learning. Consequently, pupils can be well assisted and enabled to master the 3Rs within a specified time frame. In regard to the use of technology and visual aids in teaching, Table 2 indicates that 46(53.5%) of the 86 teachers agreed and 34(39.5%) strongly agreed that the use of technology and visual aids in teaching is among the strategies to ensure effective teaching and development of 3Rs to public primary school pupils. This suggests that 80(93%) teachers agreed with the idea. During the interview with the 11 respondents, the findings supported the numerical information that the use of technology and visual aids in teaching can ensure effective teaching and developing the 3Rs. They also suggested that the government should buy computers and other technological instruments for teaching and learning and install internet in schools for easy searching of teaching aids and materials. On this aspect, one of the WEOs had the following to say:

> Schools should be provided with enough teaching and learning materials and resources including teaching aids of various kinds. At this age of science and technology, schools should be provided with technological instruments like computers, printers and projectors and install internet in schools to enable using technology in teaching. This can improve teaching and simplify mastery of the skills among pupils (Interview; WEO3: July 2024).

This means that teaching materials and resources including teaching aids should be provided in abundance in schools to simplify teaching and learning of the 3Rs. Again, the government should enable the use of technology in teaching by buying technological tools and installing internet in schools. This agrees with Lumadi (2016) who reported that visual materials and technology used effectively may be of benefit to learners in the classroom to serve as strategies for the challenges encountered by teachers in developing literacy. Teachers should have the knowledge and skills to teach reading, writing and arithmetic effectively using teaching aids and various teaching methods and techniques.

Improving school physical facilities and resources is the last strategy identified in this study as Table 2 indicates that 42(48.8%) of the 86 teacher respondents agreed, and in the same way 42(48.8%) strongly agreed with the argument on that strategy. This implies that a substantial number, 84(97.6%), of the teacher respondents agreed with the suggestion. Therefore, it is essential to improve the school physical infrastructure like constructing and rehabilitating classroom and desks and providing schools with sufficient resources for teaching and learning. Information gained from the interview with the 11 respondents supported the quantitative findings presented above. The respondents mentioned such measures as improving the school infrastructure including constructing adequate classrooms, procuring sufficient desks and or tables and chairs for all pupils. The head of school D had the following views:

> Teachers encounter a lot of challenges but the most important is the availability of infrastructure specifically classrooms and desks. Our pupils are too congested to be taught effectively and bad enough, some of them learn while sitting on the floor. Therefore, if enough classrooms are constructed, each classroom may carry an optimal number of pupils which can be effectively handled by a single teacher (Interview; HTD: July 2024).

The above quotations substantiate numerical information on the importance of improving physical facilities and resources as one of the strategies for effective teaching and developing the 3Rs to pupils. This agrees with Kapur (2019) who reports that infrastructural development in schools enables teachers to perform their teaching duties in a well-organized way. Teachers usually get the ability to use computers and technology. Where there are proper infrastructural facilities within the classrooms, then the teachers too are able to carry out their job duties effectually. Again, Yangambi (2023) highlights that school infrastructure has a significant impact on student learning and achievement and suggests consideration of continuous improvement of school infrastructure.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this study highlight the numerous challenges that teachers face in teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic (3Rs) to public primary school pupils. These challenges include teachers' lack of professional experience, knowledge, and pedagogical skills necessary for effective 3Rs instruction. Additionally, pupils often lack confidence and interest in learning the 3Rs, limiting their engagement in classroom activities such as asking and answering questions. The situation is further exacerbated by a shortage of physical facilities, inadequate teaching and learning resources, including textbooks and teaching aids, as well as the low socioeconomic status of schools

and parents. Poor parental support, coupled with pupil truancy and absenteeism, also significantly impacts the learning process by causing students to miss school and essential lessons.

To address these challenges and ensure effective 3Rs instruction, several strategies should be implemented. These include educating parents on the importance of supporting their children's learning, providing teachers with professional development and capacity-building programs, and encouraging parents to actively engage with their children's education. Furthermore, schools should offer adequate support to teachers and pupils, integrate technology and visual aids into 3Rs instruction, and improve school infrastructure and learning resources to create a more conducive learning environment.

Based on these conclusions, it is recommended that school owners, education officers, and head teachers prioritize professional development for teachers to enhance their skills and effectiveness in teaching the 3Rs. Schools should also focus on improving physical facilities to reduce overcrowding in classrooms, thereby enhancing the learning experience. Moreover, education stakeholders must ensure the provision of sufficient teaching and learning materials, including textbooks and teaching aids. Parents should be encouraged to work towards improving their socioeconomic status and provide strong support and motivation to their children to foster a love for school and learning. By implementing these measures, the quality of 3Rs education can be significantly improved, leading to better academic outcomes for pupils.

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