

School Physical Environment And Psychological Wellbeing Of Learners In Junior Schools In Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya

Mugambi B; Murithi G. (Phd); Ogembo J. (Phd)

Abstract

The study sought to establish the relationship between school physical environment and psychological wellbeing among learners in Junior Schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. It adopted descriptive survey and correlational research designs. Multistage sampling was used to select 377 respondents comprising of 328 grade 8 learners, 42 grade 8 class teachers and 7 Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. Psychometric test instrument, questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data from sampled respondents. Data was collected from 325 grade eight learners, 41 grade eight class teachers and 5 Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (SQASO) in Tharaka Nithi County giving the study a return rate of 98.41%. Qualitative data obtained was analyzed thematically while quantitative data was cleaned coded and analyzed descriptively and inferentially with the aid of the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27.0 computer software. Frequency and percentages were used to describe the existing relationship between the variables while hypothesis was tested using regression analysis at 95% level of significance. The study established that school physical environment is positively and significantly related with psychological wellbeing of junior school learners. It illustrated that a majority of the sampled schools were inadequately equipped with physical facilities to adequately provide for the needs of the learners. It is recommended that management of public junior school in collaboration with other education stakeholders should put in place strategies aimed at strengthening aspects of school physical environment in order to foster junior school learners' psychological wellbeing.

Keywords: physical environment, psychological wellbeing, junior school, learner, Psychometric test Mental Health.

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I. Introduction

Junior Secondary Schools, play a crucial role in the education system of various countries, serving as a transitional phase between primary and secondary education for learners. This stage of education focuses on providing age-appropriate learning, enhancing learner well-being, and facilitating the smooth transition from primary to secondary education (Li, 2020). Numerous studies have consistently shown that positive physical and psychological environments in schools and classrooms contribute to improved academic and behavioral outcomes and enhanced mental health among learners. In the field of well-being and education, there is a consensus that gaining academic knowledge on its own is not enough for children and young people to become active citizens as adults (Cefai Simões & Caravita, 2021). Education needs to go beyond limited goals such as academic achievement to actively promote children's and young people's well-being. Children should develop the necessary social and emotional competencies to navigate successfully through the challenges and transitions they will meet when growing up into adulthood.

The crucial role of the school environment in shaping learners' development has been emphasized in numerous studies, highlighting its potential to either nurture or impede children's growth. A conducive and supportive school climate fosters active learner participation and bolsters academic achievement, accentuating the paramount importance of the learning environment. Furthermore, learners with robust psychological wellbeing tend to exhibit positive mental health, flourishing interpersonal relationships and favorable attitudes toward others (Baruah, 2022). Research by Khairani (2018) underscores the intricate interplay between psychological wellbeing and academic achievement, encompassing dimensions like interpersonal relationship quality, anxiety.

Statement of the Problem

Junior School stage prepares learners for senior secondary education. The core tenets of CBC system such as imagination and creativity, critical thinking and problem solving and self-efficacy must start manifesting

at this stage. To fulfill their potential, learners at this stage necessitate a conducive environment that supports their holistic development to ensure that the transition is safe, strong and consistent for all learners. There is inadequate understanding regarding how school physical environment impact the psychological well-being of learners in Junior Schools in Kenya. Observations and anecdotal evidence from educators and psychologists indicate that current school physical may not adequately support learners' psychological well-being. The school environment is very crucial to the psychological wellbeing of learners and there is need to ascertain how the school environment influences the Junior School learners' psychological wellbeing. By comprehending the impact of the school environment on the psychological wellbeing, it is feasible to pinpoint areas in need of development and provide well-informed suggestions for establishing a more favorable and encouraging school environment which may in turn enable junior school learners shape their career paths.

Research Objective

To establish the relationship between school physical environment and psychological wellbeing among learners in Junior Schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between school physical environment and psychological well-being among learners in Junior Schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

II. Literature Review

School Infrastructure and Psychological Wellbeing

Research conducted in different parts of the world supports the assertion that learners benefit significantly from schools equipped with modern, well-furnished and aesthetically pleasing facilities. For instance, Smith and Anderson (2018) in the United States revealed positive associations between well-maintained facilities and reduced learner stress. They emphasized that clean, well-lit, and ventilated classrooms create an environment conducive to learning and mental health. The influence of school facilities extends to their functionality. Adequate classroom space, well-stocked libraries, fully equipped laboratories, and accessible recreational areas improve learners' psychological well-being (Ene-Obong, Ibeanu, Onuoha & Ejekwu, 2012). These researchers highlighted that inadequate maintenance of these facilities can lead to feelings of frustration and hinder academic progress, ultimately affecting learners' emotional and mental states negatively.

In Europe, a study by Müller and Klein (2020) in Germany emphasized the importance of school infrastructure on learner well-being. Their research showed that learners attending schools with high-quality facilities reported higher satisfaction levels and a greater sense of security, which positively impacted their mental health. Müller and Klein also argued that the physical environment of a school is a critical determinant of learners' overall happiness and motivation to engage in their studies

The availability of a conducive environment that allows for effective learning and engagement is paramount in reducing stress and anxiety among learners. Modern classroom technology can enhance the learning experience and influence learners' psychological well-being. Lee and Hannafin (2016) collaborate by demonstrating that technology can engage learners and foster a sense of competence and confidence when effectively incorporated. A study by Adeyemo (2020) conducted in Nigeria found a direct correlation between the physical attributes of school facilities and learners' psychological well-being. Learners in schools with well-furnished and visually pleasing facilities reported reduced stress levels, increased overall psychological well-being, and improved academic performance.

Similarly, in North Africa, El-Sayed and Hassan (2020) conducted research in Egypt, highlighting the significance of school infrastructure in shaping students' psychological well-being. Their study found that schools with adequate facilities provided a supportive environment that enhanced students' mental health and academic success. They called for policy reforms to ensure all schools meet basic infrastructure standards. In Zambia, Mubita (2021) looked at the role of schools in providing a safe and secure environment. He discovered that it helps to reduce the impact of stress, anxiety, and trauma on learners' mental health. Learners receiving help and support can positively influence their academic and social performance. When schools prioritize the safety and security of their learners, they create a conducive environment for learning, growth, and emotional development. Hence, schools need to implement adequate physical and psychological safety and security measures that support coping interventions and promote learners' overall well-being within the school environment.

In East Africa, a study conducted by Wangila (2023) in Kenya emphasized the importance of school infrastructure in shaping learners' psychological well-being. Their research showed that learners in schools with modern facilities experienced lower levels of stress and higher academic performance compared to those in schools with inadequate infrastructure. They recommended increased funding for school improvements to enhance learner outcomes.

Muriuki (2022) conducted a study in Nakuru County and pointed out that the government rushed Competency Based Curriculum) (CBC) into schools without first addressing issues such as understaffing, lack of teaching and learning materials, infrastructure; classrooms and laboratories. He further pointed out that there was an unpleasant teaching and learning atmosphere and administration did not first develop efficient communication and consultation mechanisms. These have had a severe influence especially on the pioneer Junior School learners. These challenges directly affect the school environment, which in turn has an impact on the psychological wellbeing of learners.

Learning Resources and Psychological Wellbeing

Learning resources constitute a critical component of the physical environment since they encompass various materials, tools and technologies that support the educational process, ranging from textbooks and reference materials to multimedia resources, laboratory equipment and digital learning platforms. These resources are vital in shaping learners' learning experiences, academic engagement and overall psychological well-being. Various researchers have asserted that learning resources significantly affect the psychological well-being of learners.

In Europe, García-Álvarez, Soler, and Achard-Braga (2021) in Spain explored the impact of learning resources on learners' psychological well-being. The findings revealed that schools with well-equipped libraries and access to various educational materials promoted a positive learning environment, leading to reduced anxiety and improved mental health among learners. They advocated for equitable distribution of learning resources to ensure all learners benefit equally. In Asia, research by Wang, Zhang, Wang, and Li (2021) in China highlighted the importance of learning resources in shaping students' well-being. Their study demonstrated that access to modern educational tools and resources significantly contributed to students' academic success and psychological well-being. They recommended policies to ensure that schools, especially in rural areas, are well-equipped with necessary learning materials.

In North Africa, Bou-Hamad, Hoteit, Hijazi, Ayna, Romani, and El Morr (2023) in Morocco highlighted the significance of learning resources in shaping students' psychological well-being. Their study found that access to diverse educational materials and digital learning platforms contributed to students' academic success and overall mental health. They recommended policy changes to ensure resource allocation is prioritized in educational planning. In Central Africa, Torrente, Aber, Starkey, Johnston, Shivshanker, Weisenhorn, and Tubbs Dolan (2019) examined the role of learning resources in promoting students' well-being. The findings revealed that schools with access to high-quality educational materials and technologies provided a supportive learning environment that enhanced students' psychological well-being. They advocated for community involvement in supporting school resource acquisition. In East Africa, Eze, Eze, and Mbabazi (2022) explored the impact of learning resources on students' psychological well-being in Uganda. Their study indicated that access to diverse educational materials and digital platforms significantly improved students' engagement and overall mental health. They called for international aid to support resource improvements in schools.

In Kenya, Kinuthia (2023) sought to understand the role of technology in Junior Schools and its influence on psychological well-being. Access to diverse and high-quality resources fosters engagement, competence, and autonomy, contributing to learners' well-being and academic success. Similarly, Ochieng (2023) looked at the impact of school facilities on learners' psychological well-being, considering the local challenges and opportunities. He established that the country's unique circumstances, including geographical and economic factors, should be considered. This ensures that equitable access to learning resources is essential for promoting learners' psychological well-being and academic achievement.

Junior secondary education has the potential to develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Learners at this level are at a crucial stage in their cognitive development, and teaching methods that emphasize critical thinking and problem-solving skills can significantly impact their intellectual growth. Project-based learning and group work are effective strategies for developing these skills and can benefit learners inside and outside the classroom. Additionally, integrating technology into education can improve the quality of junior secondary education in Kenya. Technology can enhance learning by providing interactive and engaging resources and facilitating communication between teachers and learners. Successful examples of technology integration in Kenyan junior secondary schools may be achieved through use of tablets and e-learning platforms.

Statement of the Problem

Junior School stage prepares learners for senior secondary education. The core tenets of CBC system such as imagination and creativity, critical thinking and problem solving and self-efficacy must start manifesting at this stage. To fulfill their potential, learners at this stage necessitate a conducive environment that supports their holistic development to ensure that the transition is safe, strong and consistent for all learners. There is inadequate understanding regarding how school physical environment impact the psychological well-being of learners in Junior Schools in Kenya. Observations and anecdotal evidence from educators and psychologists

indicate that current school physical may not adequately support learners' psychological well-being. The school environment is very crucial to the psychological wellbeing of learners and there is need to ascertain how the school environment influences the Junior School learners' psychological wellbeing. By comprehending the impact of the school environment on the psychological wellbeing, it is feasible to pinpoint areas in need of development and provide well-informed suggestions for establishing a more favorable and encouraging school environment which may in turn enable junior school learners shape their career paths.

III. Methodology

Research Design

Both descriptive survey and correlational research designs were used. Descriptive survey according to Ranganathan and Wadhwa (2019) provides quantitative description of trends, attitudes, opinions or behavior of a population by studying a sample of that population. The design was deemed fit because it gave the researcher the opportunity to describe the information about school physical environment and psychological wellbeing as they were without manipulating anything. According to Bhandari (2021), a correlational research design investigates relationships between variables without the researcher controlling or manipulating any of them. Correlation designs are also good for identifying and measuring the strength and direction of relationships between variables. This can help researchers determine if variables are related and the nature of that relationship. This design was deemed appropriate because allowed the researcher to determine the relationship between the independent variables (School Physical Environment) and dependent variable (Psychological wellbeing of learners).

Population of the study

The population for this research encompassed 6,274 grade 8 Junior School learners, 446 class teachers and 7 sub-County Quality Assurance and Standard Officers (SQASO) in Tharaka Nithi County, resulting to 6,727.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The study adopted the Yamane method to determine the sample size of the respondents to take part in the study. The sample size for participating respondents arrived at based on Yamane formula (Nakamura,2012) was 328 grade 8 learners,42 class teachers and 7 Sub county Quality Assurance and Standards Officers totaling to 377 respondents.A multi-stage sampling method was used to select different categories of respondents from the target population. To facilitate a proportionate sample of respondents participating in the study, stratified random sampling was used to get the schools of different categories, with the sub-County as the sampling unit from which a proportionate sample was drawn. Purposive sampling was used to identify Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. Moreover, the researcher employed simple random sampling technique to select the learners and class teachers at the school level.

Research Instruments

The study administered a psychometric test instrument to learners, a questionnaire for teachers and an interview schedule for the Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers. The psychometric test instrument included a Psychological Wellbeing test, a Cope Scale Indicator (CSI) and a School Environment Scale (SES) to collect data from the sampled learners. The researcher also used a questionnaire to collect data from the sampled class teachers and an interview schedule to collect data from Sub County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers.

IV. Data Analysis, Findings And Discussion

Quantitative data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics, facilitated by Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. The research hypotheses was tested at a 0.05 level of significance.

Qualitative data from Sub County Quality Assurances and Standards Officers obtained through interview was analyzed using thematic analysis

The study sought to establish the relationship between school physical environment and psychological wellbeing among learners in Junior Schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. This section presents findings beginning with descriptive findings, hypotheses testing and discussions.

Descriptive Findings on the Relationship between School Physical Environment and Psychological Wellbeing of Learners in Junior Schools

To achieve the purpose of this objective, grade eight learners were provided with psychometric test items on school facilities and learning resources. Their teachers were also provided with questionnaire items on the

school's physical environment. Table 1 present data obtained from the psychometric test administered to grade eight learners on school facilities and how it could be contributing towards their psychological wellbeing.

Table1: School Facilities and Psychological Wellbeing

School Facilities Statements	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
I am not satisfied with the condition of school buildings	27.6	22.4	16.7	20.3	13.0	100.0
My school is usually not clean	62.4	14.2	7.0	11.2	5.2	100.0
The classrooms are well equipped	11.2	9.1	17.0	25.5	37.2	100.0
My school has comfortable desks and chairs	14.8	11.8	14.8	17.9	40.7	100.0
My school has security measures (such as CCTV cameras, Security Guards)	35.1	19.4	14.5	15.5	15.5	100.0
My school has safety measures (such as First AID Kits,)	18.5	13.0	12.4	16.7	39.4	100.0

Data obtained show that only about a third (33.3%) of the sampled grade eight learners were not satisfied with the condition of school buildings, less than a quarter (16.4%) indicated that their school is usually not clean and a majority (62.7%) said that their classrooms are well equipped. At the same time, more than half of the learners (58.6%) were categorical that their school has comfortable desks and chairs, slightly less than this proportion (56.1%) insisted that their school has safety measures (such as First AID Kits,) while less than a third (31.0%) indicated that their school has security measures (such as CCTV cameras, Security Guards). Findings show that less than a half of the sampled grade eight learners (43.02%) confirmed that school facilities as an attribute of the school's physical environment adequately provided for their psychological needs. Data obtained from learners as regards learning resources were as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Learning Resources and Psychological Wellbeing of Junior School Learners

My teachers often teach using;	N	R	S	O	A	Total
Printed resources (such as textbooks, pamphlet, study guides)	6.4	3.6	10.3	7.9	71.8	100.0
Audio resources (such as cassettes, radio, podcast)	40.0	10.6	17.6	15.8	16.1	100.0
Visual resources (such as pictures, models, real objects, maps, projectors, photographs)	12.7	7.3	27.6	13.9	38.5	100.0
Audio visual resources (such as slides, tapes, filmstrips, television, video)	37.0	17.6	19.4	11.5	14.5	100.0
Electronic interactive (such as computers, calculators, tablets)	11.2	7.9	15.1	8.8	57.0	100.0

Results obtained show that more than three quarters of the grade eight learners (81.7%) confirmed that their teacher often or always teach using printed resources such as textbooks, pamphlet and study guides, less than a third (31.9%) use audio resources such as cassettes, radio and podcast while more than a half (52.4%) said they use visual resources such as pictures, models, real objects, maps, projectors and photographs often or always. Findings also showed that only a quarter of the learners (26.0%) indicated their teacher using audio- visual resources such as slides, tapes, filmstrips, television, and video while more than a half (65.8%) said their teacher use electronic interactive such as computers, calculator tablets. Findings therefore show that slightly more than a half (51.56%) of the sampled grade eight learners believed that their teachers effectively utilized learning resources which could have a positive influence on their psychological wellbeing. Data obtained from grade 8 class teachers were as presented in Table 3.

Table3: Physical Environment and Psychological Wellbeing of Learners (Teachers)

In our school,	SD	D	N	A	SA	Total
School facilities influence the psychological wellbeing of learners	-	4.9	4.9	51.2	39.0	100.0
Availability of school facilities positively affects learners learning experience.	2.4	-	4.9	48.8	43.9	100.0
Access to adequate learning resources positively influences learner academic achievement and understanding of subjects	2.4	7.3	4.9	34.2	51.2	100.0
Equitable distribution of learning resources among learners promotes a fair and inclusive learning environment	2.4	7.3	9.8	34.2	46.3	100.0

Information obtained from class teachers show that a significant majority believe that school facilities influence the psychological wellbeing of learners (90.2%) and that availability of school facilities positively affects learners learning experience (92.7%). Similarly, most of the class teachers (85.4%) indicated that access to adequate learning resources positively influences learner academic achievement and understanding of subjects and that equitable distribution of learning resources among learners promotes a fair and inclusive learning environment (80.5%). Results from grade eight class teachers therefore confirmed the belief of a significant majority (87.2%) that physical environment has a contribution on learners' psychological wellbeing.

Hypothesis Testing

The study sought to establish whether there existed a significant relationship between school physical environment and psychological well-being among learners in Junior Schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. The study thus tested the following null hypothesis;

H₀: There is no statistically significant relationship between school physical environment and psychological well-being among learners in Junior Schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya.

Since normality test showed that data obtained from all study variables were non-normal, logistic regression was used for the test. Table 4 and 5 presents the findings.

Table 4: Relationship between Physical Environment and Psychological Wellbeing of Junior School Learners (Model Summary)

Step	-2log likelihood	Cox & Snell R ²	Nagelkerke R ²	χ^2	df	Sig.
1	200.716 ^a	.215	.254	1.287	1	.382

a. Estimation terminated at iteration number 5 because parameter estimates changed by less than .001.

Independent variable in the model was school physical environment. The model was significant χ^2 (1) =141.469, p<0.001 and the Hosmer and Lemeshow Test confirmed model fit, χ^2 (1) =1.287, p=0.382. Cox & Snell R square predicted a variance of 21.5% while Nagelkerke R square predicted 25.4% variation in psychological wellbeing of the junior school learners explained by the model. The model with independent variable explained 90.2% of psychological wellbeing, an improvement from the initial 85.1% initially predicted. Table 5 presents information on variables in the equation.

Table 5: Relationship between Physical Environment and Psychological Wellbeing of Junior School Learners (Regression Coefficient)

Step 1		B	SE	Wald χ^2	df	Sig.	Exp(B)
	Physical Environment	1.130	.381	8.787	1	.003	3.095
	Constant	-3.726	.579	41.454	1	.000	.024

a. Variable(s) entered on step 1: Physical Environment.

Regression analysis illustrated that school physical environment positively and significantly predicted psychological wellbeing of junior school learners, Wald χ^2 (1) =8.787, p=0.003, Exp (B) = 3.095. Findings mean that school physical environment is positively and significantly related with psychological wellbeing of junior school learners implying that when school physical environment is improved, psychological wellbeing of junior school learners improves. Therefore, the hypothesis which stated that there is no statistically significant relationship between school physical environment and psychological well-being among learners in Junior Schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya was rejected.

Qualitative Findings on the Relationship between School Physical Environment and Psychological Wellbeing of Learners in Junior Schools

Qualitative data was sought from SQASO on the contribution of school physical environment to psychological wellbeing of junior school learners within their areas of jurisdictions. To begin with, as regards the quality and adequacy of the school’s facilities interviewees observed that;

- P1: *Quality is good but not adequate for all learners as some important ones like laboratory are not available.*
- P2: *Facilities are inadequate because laboratories and workshops are yet to be built. In most schools, buildings are old and need renovation especially the semi-permanent buildings.*
- P4: *In most public schools the facilities available such as class rooms are not only of poor quality but are also inadequate. The classrooms are mostly incomplete with uncemented floors.*

Findings show that generally, public schools in Tharaka Nithi domiciling junior school have poor quality physical facilities which in some cases are also inadequate. According to the interviewees, most schools lack laboratories and workshops considered significant for implementation of the curriculum. In some schools, classrooms were said to be either old and dilapidated or incomplete.

Discussions on Findings of the Relationship between School Physical Environment and Psychological Wellbeing of Learners in Junior Schools

The objective sought to investigate the relationship between school physical environment and psychological wellbeing among learners in Junior Schools in Tharaka Nithi County, Kenya. To achieve this, quantitative data was sought from sampled grade eight learners from the study area, their class teachers through questionnaires and qualitative data from sub-county quality assurance and standard officers through interview. Information was sought on adequacy of school facilities and learning resources. Data obtained illustrated that less

than a half of the sampled grade eight learners (43.02%) felt that school facilities as an attribute of the school's physical environment adequately provided for their psychological needs implying that a majority of the sampled schools were inadequately equipped with physical facilities to adequately provide for the needs of the learners. Muriuki (2022) conducted a study in Nakuru County and pointed out that the government rushed CBC into schools without first addressing issues such as understaffing, lack of teaching and learning materials, infrastructure; classrooms and laboratories. He further pointed out that there was an unpleasant teaching and learning atmosphere and administration did not first develop efficient communication and consultation mechanisms. These have had a severe influence especially on the pioneer Junior School learners. These challenges directly affect the school environment, which in turn has an impact on the psychological wellbeing of learners.

Information on adequacy of learning resources and their effective use showed that slightly more than a half (51.56%) of the sampled grade eight learners believed that their teachers effectively utilized available learning resources which could have a positive influence on their psychological wellbeing. This means that even though a slight majority of the respondents reported effective use of learning resources, a significant proportion were experiencing ineffective use of available resources which could impact negatively on their psychological wellbeing. Onori, Lavau, and Fletcher (2018) in Australia found out that school infrastructure, particularly the availability of outdoor recreational spaces, played a crucial role in promoting students' psychological well-being. Their study indicated that access to well-maintained playgrounds and sports facilities helped reduce stress and improve overall mental health among learners. They advocated for policies that prioritize the development and maintenance of school infrastructures to support student well-being.

Information from class teachers as regards the contributions of a school's physical environment on learners' psychological wellbeing confirmed the belief of a significant majority (87.2%) that physical environment has a contribution on learners' psychological wellbeing. This means that a significant majority of the sampled class teachers believed that conducive physical environment promotes positive psychosocial wellbeing with the converse also being true. Tanji and Kodama (2021) in a study in Japan found that schools with modern, well-maintained infrastructures significantly contributed to the overall psychological well-being of learners. The researchers further pointed out that students in these environments exhibited lower levels of anxiety and higher levels of academic performance compared to their peers in less favorable conditions.

Inferential analysis based on regression analysis illustrated that school physical environment positively and significantly predicted psychological wellbeing of junior school learners, $Wald\chi^2(1) = 8.787, p = 0.003, Exp(B) = 3.095$. Findings mean that school physical environment is positively and significantly related with psychological wellbeing of junior school learners implying that when school physical environment is improved, psychological wellbeing of junior school learners improves. Müller and Klein (2020) in a study in Germany emphasized the importance of school infrastructure on learner well-being. Their research showed that learners attending schools with high-quality facilities reported higher satisfaction levels and a greater sense of security, which positively impacted their mental health and academic outcomes. The researchers also argued that the physical environment of a school is a critical determinant of learners' overall happiness and motivation to engage in their studies. Moyo and Sibanda (2023) also support the positive impact of school infrastructure on learner well-being. Their study demonstrated that learners in schools with adequate facilities experienced lower levels of stress and anxiety, which in turn contributed to better academic performance and overall well-being. They emphasized the need for government intervention to improve school infrastructures in underserved areas.

Qualitative analysis showed that generally, public schools in Tharaka Nithi domiciling junior school have poor quality physical facilities which in some cases are also inadequate. According to the interviewees, most schools lacked laboratories and workshops considered significant for implementation of the curriculum. In some schools, classrooms were said to be either old and dilapidated or incomplete. Findings therefore imply the poor physical facilities and inadequate teaching and learning resources could be impacting negatively on learners' psychological wellbeing. Ene-Obong et al. (2012) in their study observed that adequate classroom space, well-stocked libraries, fully equipped laboratories, and accessible recreational areas improve learners' psychological well-being. On the contrary, the study highlighted that inadequate maintenance of existing facilities and resources can lead to feelings of frustration and hinder academic progress, ultimately affecting learners' emotional and mental states negatively.

Findings therefore showed that a majority of the junior schools lack adequate facilities and that those resources available were not adequately being used which could be having a negative effect on the junior school learner's psychological wellbeing. It was also generally illustrated that school physical environment is significantly related with learners' psychological wellbeing. Previously, studies have shown that a supportive school climate not only fosters active learner participation but also bolsters academic achievement, underscoring the paramount significance of the learning environment. Conversely, an unsupportive or hostile environment can impede learners' psychological health and hinder their academic progress (Baruah, 2022). Phuntsho and Dendup (2020) from Bhutan in Asia carried out research on the relationship between school climate, learner engagement and academic achievement in higher secondary school. Their study emphasizes the significance of a nurturing

school climate in fostering active learner engagement and enhancing academic achievement. Their findings were collaborated by López et al., (2021) from the US.

V. Conclusion And Recommendation

The findings of this study showed that school physical environment positively and significantly predicted psychological wellbeing of junior school learners implying that school physical environment is positively and significantly related with psychological wellbeing of junior school learners. It can therefore be concluded that school physical environment is positively and significantly related with psychological wellbeing of junior school learners. The study recommends that strategies aimed at improving the quality and quantity of junior school physical facilities and learning resources be put in place in order to provide a more conducive school physical environment for learners' improved psychological wellbeing. All the classrooms should be decorated with visual teaching aids like maps, charts, posters and murals to increase the interest, attentiveness and motivational level of the learners.

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