

Influence of Teachers' Attitude on Inclusion of Learners with Visual Impairment in Public Primary Schools in Nyatike Sub County, Migori County, Kenya

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Abstract Inclusion of learners with visual impairment is necessary for ensuring that the learners' academic goals and objectives are met. Teachers and stakeholders have to identify any barriers that can deter the learners from achieving their goals. Generally, guiding learners with visual impairment (VI) is complex and requires a combination of strategies by the instructor. Besides, the learners also need a better performance to motivate their learning process. Visually impaired learners generally have been noted to perform below average in academics. The objective was to examine the influence of attitude of teachers on inclusion of visually impaired learners in public primary schools in Nyatike Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory was used to explain the roots of inclusion of visually impaired learners. The study employed mixed methodology with a descriptive survey research design. The population of study involved 46 (forty six) head teachers and 52 (fifty two) classroom teachers in public primary schools with visually impaired learners. A sample size of 98 (ninety-eight) respondents were selected using saturated and purposive sampling techniques. Reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained. The study established that teachers' attitude accounted for 45.8% of variation in inclusion of learners with visual impairment in regular primary schools. From the findings, the study concluded that teachers' attitude, influence inclusion of visually impaired learners in public primary schools. The study finding may be useful to policy makers and school administrators by providing information on how teachers' attitude influences inclusion of learners with visual impairment in regular public primary schools.

Keywords Teacher's Attitude, Inclusion, Visual Impairment

1. Introduction

In the last quarter of the twenty first century, factors influencing inclusion of learners have been one of the most discussed areas in the field of education because of the need of accommodating all children in school irrespective of their mental or physical status. The center of agreement for most studies has been that inclusion remains an important element in influencing performance of learners with visual impairment in a school set up. Increasingly, the government has underscored the critical role of inclusion of learners in classroom environment, especially learners with visual impairment. In response to this, the government of Kenya has formulated a number of policies such as the Basic Education Act, 2013, Special Needs Education Policy Framework of 2018, Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees

with Disabilities all with a view of improving the performance of these learners with disabilities. Despite the adoption of these policies, low performance of VI learners still persists in the inclusion set ups.

However, most of the studies done as per the reviewed literature have focused on the other factors affecting learners' performance largely ignoring areas involving inclusion of learners with VI in public primary schools in Kenya. Therefore, there was need to find out factors influencing inclusion of learners with VI which could lead to poor performance of these learners. Records from the Nyatike Sub-County education office show that learners with VI perform poorly in KCPE yearly where by their mean score remains below 10% compared to regular learners. Various studies have also identified several factors to be influencing inclusion of learners. Nyakundi (2012) for instance, outlined some of these factors to include: professional training, developmental and work situation, the rewards that determine the attitudes of the learners with VI and involvement of teachers of visually impaired learners. Their inclusion in the current study would therefore broaden the

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Received: Dec. 5, 2022; Accepted: Jan. 8, 2023; Published: Jan. 18, 2023

Published online at <http://journal.sapub.org/ijpbs>

range of factors that had been considered so far leading to even far reaching implications to the outcome results.

2. Literature Review

According to Adewunmi (2000) parents who opt for the specialized school prefer small classes than the others who choose integration. This shows that in the integration this might happen due to lack of classmates with visual impairment at the mainstream. Therefore teachers and school administrators should prompt parents opposed to the integration rather than sending their children to specialized schools. Porter and Hacey (2008) on the other hand record that even in special schools there are very few teachers with specific qualification for teaching learners with visual impairment and do not understand how VI affect the access to learning process. However, integration in the mainstream school may have positive and permanent effects in social terms to stay together with sighted learners (Donald, 2021). Hence inclusion program of visually impaired learners is necessary in the curriculum. In this note, the inclusion in the curriculum will influence the attitude of teachers to adopt the integration process.

According to Controy (2008), access to learning process by visually impaired learners involve establishing of learning and modification of learning session while strategizing for teaching learners with visual impairment. Administrators should have a well elaborate strategy through improvising of mass media that usually influences the attitude of the teachers while initiating the integration process. Controy (2008) further elaborates that coordination of the internal and external is vital in maintaining the continuous process of assessment. In this case therefore lack of cohesion and corporation of the administrators and the professionals causes a negative attitude to the teachers which will later become a barrier to the integration process.

According to Bernaus and Akyeam (2009), teachers are highly motivated to teach all students. A variety of intrinsic factors such as love for teaching process influences the attitude of the teachers in handling learners with visual impairment and inclusivity hence emulating their performance. Korir (2015) argues that learners with a disability require extra assistance to help achieve their goal. Korir further records that attitude is the psychological tendency that people express through the evaluation of a particular entity with some or disfavor. It is very clear from the definition that there is a relationship between the attitude and the evaluation by the individual who finally judges on whether to integrate the learners or not. In the traditional days, people had negative connotations towards any individual who has a visual impairment factor (Boer, Piji & Minnaged, 2011). However, every child regardless of the condition has a right to get access to education and achieve the best while at the high level of learning standards. The present study tends to say that attitude is one of the greatest impediments towards the inclusion of learners with visual

impairment in schools.

Norwich and Avramidis (2010) indicated that the process of integrating learners is complex and requires positive attitude by the teachers. Various factors may also influence the attitude of the teacher to swing from negative to positive. The Norwich and Avramidis (2010) further noted that factors such gender of the teacher, age, experience, contact with disabled and the personality of the teachers influence the perception of the integration process. On the other hand Norwich argued that female teachers have a positive attitude towards the integration process of learners with visual impairment compared to most male teachers. The study noted that most female teachers have sense of motherliness and will feel sorry to the disability hence supporting the learners of that category with motherly care and love.

Visually-impaired learners are equally noted to develop positive attitude toward such teachers because the teachers are part of them. However, teaching experience, which is a teacher-related variable, is a great determinant on the integration process. According to Galaterou (2017), young teachers tend to support the process because they are at ease with the operation of digital devices that are useful in the integration of VI learners. The youthful teachers tend to believe that learning without technology is not a successful leaning and therefore, they do embrace technology with a lot of positivity. Galaterou and Antoniou (2017) in their work records that, besides age, gender and experience; the stress arising from the various surrounding of the teacher determine the attitude of the teacher towards the integration process. Hamlett (2019) states that stress can also originate from within the institution to develop negative attitudes towards the inclusion program. As to the present study, the internal stress within the organization is dangerous and can lower the performance of the teachers since the stressed individual is less productive hence likely to do very little in support of the VI learners included with others.

3. Research Methodology

The study employed mixed methodology with descriptive survey and correlation research designs to achieve the study objectives. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2007), no one design can exist in isolation; it therefore follows, that a combination of different designs in a study can be used to spur up its validity. This study makes use of both descriptive survey and correlation research designs to uncover the influence of attitude of teachers on inclusion of learners with visual impairment in regular primary schools in Nyatike Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya. As Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) observes, descriptive research design is appropriate since it attempt to address the issues of questioning in study and describe the influence of teachers' attitude on inclusion of VI learners in schools as it has already occurred and therefore cannot be manipulated by the researcher. The research hypothesis was that teachers' attitude has no significant relationship with inclusion of

learners with VI in public primary schools.

Sample Size and sampling Techniques

The population of study included 46 head teachers and 52 classroom teachers in public primary schools with visually impaired learners in Nyatike Sub-County. A sample size of 98 (ninety-eight) respondents of 46 head teachers and 52 classroom teachers was selected using purposive and saturated sampling techniques.

Research instruments

The instruments of data collection used included questionnaire and interview guide administered to teachers and head teachers respectively. Face and content validity of the instruments were ascertained by expert judgment of the two supervisors. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach's Alpha and reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained using test-retest technique of the research instruments.

4. Result and Discussion

To realize the objective of the study, views of teachers were sought on the following statements of attitude, analyzed and the results presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Attitude of Teachers on Inclusion of Learners with Visual Impairment

Statement	Disagree	Neutral	Agree
I enjoy teaching the visual impairment.	21(40.4%)	0(0.0%)	31(59.7%)
I dislike learners with visual impairment.	52(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)
Combining visual impairment learners in regular class makes teaching easier.	12(23.0%)	3(5.8%)	37(71.2%)
Learners with visual impairment should be placed in special schools only.	22(42.3%)	0(0.0%)	30(57.7%)
Learners with visual impairment are nuisance in class.	45(86.6%)	4(7.7%)	3(5.8%)
Teaching learners with visual impairment requires extra efforts.	0(0.0%)	0(0.0%)	52(100.0%)
Teaching the visual impairment learners is a burden	38(73.0%)	0(0.0%)	14(27.0%)

Table 1 indicates that majority 31(59.7%) teachers agreed that they enjoy teaching the visually impaired learners while 21(40.4%) teachers disagreed. The result suggests that teachers manifest different attitude in teaching learners with visual impairment. However, the fact that more teachers enjoy teaching visually impaired learners in regular classes, points out that visually impaired learners gained from positive teachers' attitude and hence promoted inclusion in regular schools. The finding concurs with Hwang and Evans (2011) who reported that more teachers had positive attitude

towards inclusive education. In addition, the study noted during face to face interviews with head teachers that; teachers who expressed positive attitude towards integration of learners with visual impairment showed empathy and willingness to support learners with disabilities. A head teacher made this sentiment in support of the finding:

“When you enjoy teaching as a profession, the learners become intimate, happy and enjoy the lesson as you interact with them individually. This makes those learners with disabilities to develop a feeling of oneness with the rest of the pupils, hence promote inclusiveness in class.”

Similarly, another head teacher in an interview asserted that;

“I believe that inclusive education provide learners with equal opportunities for education as long as the teacher is aware and ready to address the needs of learners regardless of their individual challenges.”

The excerpt indicates that teachers influence learners' psychological attachment with the school depending on the attitude they project to learners either through verbal or non-verbal channels of communication. Thus, when a teacher expresses joys in teaching, he/she inspires positive attitude in learners and makes learners enjoy the lesson or being in such school. The finding is consistent with Parasuram (2006) who posit that attitudes guide and influence people's behavior in their daily lives and affects their interaction with others.

Similarly, as regards to the construct, “I dislike learners with visual impairment”, 52(100%) teachers affirmed that they like learners with visual impairment. The result implies that both special and regular teachers who participated in the study like learners with visual impairment in regular schools. The result shows that teachers create an academic atmosphere which fosters inclusiveness for learners with visual impairment in regular primary school. This corroborates the interview finding that teachers strive to create warm school environment to make visually impaired learners feel welcomed and motivated to be in school. The findings agree with Bernales and Arteam (2009) who argues that teachers are highly motivated to teach all students, however, depending on a variety of intrinsic factors such as love for teaching profession which influences the attitude of the teachers in handling learners.

With regard to whether combining visual impairment learners in regular class makes teaching easier, 37(71.2%) teachers agreed that integration of learners with visual impairment in regular classes makes teaching easier while 12(23.0%) teachers disagreed and 3(5.8%) teachers neither agreed nor disagreed. This indicates that teachers develop positive attitude towards teaching regular and special needs learners without viewing presence of visual impairment learners as posing more workload in preparation for lessons. The positive perception of teachers enhances inclusion of learners with visual impairment though focusing on provision of individualized instructions to meet the needs of

all learners. According to Korir (2015) learners with disability require extra assistance from teachers, parents and peers to help them achieve their goal. Therefore, the positivity of teachers imparts inclusivity among learners and hence builds integration in classroom and school environment.

On whether learners with visual impairment should be placed in special schools, 22(42.3%) teachers disagreed while 30(57.7%) teachers agreed. This means that, although teachers had varied views as regards to placement of learners with visual impairment in regular schools, majority of teachers were not accepting to integration of learners with visual impairment. The finding was in agreement with the finding of a study by Boer, Pijl and Minnaert (2011) which show that majority of teachers adopted neutral or negative attitudes as regards inclusion of special needs learners in regular schools. This demonstrates that as much as teachers display positive attitude towards visually impaired learners in regular primary schools, they are reluctant and insecure in implementation of inclusive education.

In regard to the construct, 'learners with visual impairment are a nuisance in class', 45(86.6%) teachers showed contrary opinion while 4(7.7%) teachers neither agreed nor disagreed and 3(5.8%) teachers had the same opinion. This suggests that teachers have positive attitude towards learners with visual impairment since they do not view learners with disabilities as causing inconvenience in their planned activities. The positive perception foster inclusion of learners and make school life enjoyable to learners. This corroborates interview findings where head teachers acknowledged that integration of learners in regular schools was beneficial in the social and emotional development of learners with visual impairment. This was noted in the sentiments of interviewees who remarked that;

"Inclusion of special needs learners enables the pupils to consider their peers as role models for academic, social and behavior skills. This makes those pupils to the social and emotional needs of the society."

However, few teachers during the interview indicated that visual impaired learners were nuisance during teaching process and advocated for special schools.

"It becomes difficult to move fast and cover much content because the visual impairment learners tend to slow down the pace of teaching since they require more time and individualized attention; so we sometimes complain for them to be separated from the rest of pupils to make us finish the syllabus in good time."

This implies that teachers perceive presence of visual impairment learners in regular primary schools as a possible reason for not clearing the syllabus in time. The finding concurs with Dave, Nowicki, and Felimban (2017) who established that teachers had concern that inclusion of learners with visual impairment in regular classes slowed down the pace of academic coverage.

Furthermore, Table 1 indicates that 52(100%) teachers affirmed that teaching learners with visual impairment

requires extra efforts. This means teachers acknowledge and appreciate the needs of inclusive education and therefore suggests readiness to give the best to visual impairment learners through different instructional techniques. According to Manzi (2011), inclusive education accommodates all children with varied physical, intellectual, social, emotional and linguistic conditions and that inclusive education requires appropriate modifications in curriculum, teaching methods, or educational resources in order to cater for the individual differences in learning. These adjustments in pedagogical approaches call for extra effort from teachers in their preparation and delivery of teaching.

Nevertheless, majority 38(73.0%) teachers indicate that teaching visual impairment learners is not a burden while 14(27.0%) teachers considered teaching visual impairment learners a burden. This suggests that teachers uphold professionalism and attend to learners with commitment and diligence. Avramidis, Bayliss and Burden (2000) supports the finding while asserting that teachers who hold positive and open attitude towards learners with disabilities create an environment of inclusion for inclusion to take place in the classroom and school set up.

To establish the influence of teachers' on inclusion, the null hypothesis: H_{01} : *Teacher attitude has no significant influence on the inclusion of learners with visual impairment in public primary schools in Nyatike Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya* was tested using a Pearson's Product-Moment Correlation and simple regression analysis. The result of Coefficient of Correlation is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Teachers' Attitude and Inclusion of Learners' with Visual Impairment

		Integration of VI learners
Teachers' attitude	Pearson Correlation	.677
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.008
	N	52

The result in Table 2 shows that attitude of teachers has strong positive and significant relationship with inclusion of visually impaired learners, ($r=0.677$, $p<.05$) in regular primary schools. This means that positive teacher attitude strengthens inclusion of learners with visual impairment in regular public primary schools in Nyatike Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya. The finding aligns to Hwang and Evans (2011) finding indicating that teachers' attitude towards learners with special needs affects delivery of instruction and influences implementation of inclusive practices. Consequently, the study holds that positive attitude of teachers towards learners with visual impairment significantly enhance the success of inclusive education and should be inculcated into school systems to foster integration of visual impairment pupils in regular primary schools. Avramidis and Norwich (2002) add in support to the finding that successful implementation of inclusive policy is dependent on the educators being receptive and positive in attitude.

Consequently, simple regression analysis was conducted to test the hypothesis and the results of the analysis presented in Tables 3 to 5.

Table 3. Regression Model Summary of Teachers' Attitude on Inclusion of Learners

Model	R	R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.677 ^a	.458	3.239

The result in Table 3 reveals that teachers' attitude explained for 45.8 percent of the variation in inclusion of learners' with visual impairment in regular public primary schools. This means that teachers' attitude has moderately contributed to inclusion of learners with visual impairment in regular public primary schools; hence the fitted model is good.

To further ascertain the goodness of the fitted model, the study further tested the significance of teachers' attitude on integration of learners with visual impairment using Analysis of Variance. The ANOVA result for the test is shown in Table 4.

Table 4. ANOVA Output: Teachers' Attitude on Inclusion of VI Learners

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	443.202	1	443.202	42.240	.007 ^a
1 Residual	524.489	50	10.480		
Total	967.691	51			

a. Predictors: (Constant), Teachers Attitude

b. Dependent Variable: Inclusion of Learners with Visual Impairment

From Table 4, it can be observed that teachers' attitude has significant ($F(1, 50) = 42.24, p < 0.05$) linear relationship with integration of learners with visual impairment in regular public primary schools. Therefore, the fitted model is good, since the p-value = .007 is less than the chosen level of significance, $\alpha = .05$.

Lastly, to establish influence of teachers' attitude on inclusion of visually impaired learners, the coefficient of regression was computed and the result presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Influence of Teachers' Attitude on Inclusion of VI Learners

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-1.253	4.105		-.304	.762
Attitude	3.411	1.487	.677	2.296	.008

a. Dependent Variable: Inclusion of Learners with Visual Impairment

Teachers' attitude as indicated from the results in table 5 has significant influence on inclusion of learners with visual impairment in regular public primary schools. Therefore, the null hypothesis, "Teacher attitude has no significant influence on the inclusion of learners with visual impairment in regular public primary schools in Nyatike Sub-County, Migori County, Kenya" is rejected and the study conclude

that, at 5 (five) percent level of significance teachers' attitude significantly influence integration of learners with visual impairment in regular public schools.

5. Conclusions

In view of the results and findings, the study concluded that teacher's attitude significantly influence ($r = 0.677, p < 0.05$) inclusion of learners with visual impairment at the 95% level of confidence. Therefore, the study rejected the null hypothesis that attitude of teachers has no statistically significant influence on the inclusion of learners with visual impairment in regular public primary schools. The findings show that teachers' attitude are important in influencing inclusion of learners with visual impairment in regular primary schools in Nyatike Sub-County Kenya. Moreover, teachers' attitude accounted for 45.8% variation in inclusion of learners with visual impairment and that teachers' attitude is a significant predictor of students' academic performance where a unit positive change in attitude of teachers' improves inclusion of learners by 3.239 units. The findings of this study reveals that regular primary schools with teachers who have positive attitude towards visually impaired learners 'strongly foster inclusion of sighted learners and learners' with visual impairment through guidance of learners and effective delivery of instructions.

6. Recommendations

Teachers should enhance professionalism in handling learners with visual impairment in regular public primary school to foster inclusion. There should be mutual and amicable understanding between the VI children and their teachers for enhancement of successful inclusion; this could effectively be achieved when teachers have positive attitude on VI children learning together with regular pupils. The ministry of education could mount awareness creation to the teachers handling such students through regular seminars and capacity building trainings.

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