

**TEACHERS' ATTITUDE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS  
WITH MENTAL RETARDATION IN KANDARA DIVISION  
MARAGWA DISTRICT KENYA**

**BY:-**

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### **DECLARATION**

I, Elizabeth W. Ng'ang'a. declare that this work is original and not a duplication of a similarly published work of any scholar for academic purpose as partial requirement of any university or otherwise. It has never been submitted to any other institution of higher learning for the award of a certificate, diploma or degree in special needs Education.

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20/08/09

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### APPROVAL

This is to certify that this research report has been submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree in Bachelor of Education with my approval as University supervisor.

Jaakiz

DATE 21-08-08

LAAKI

SAMSON

## **DEDICATION**

This work is dedicated to my beloved mother and my Beloved child Victor for their support, patience, encouragement and prayers during the two years study at Kampala International University in Kampala Uganda. May the Almighty God bless them abundantly.

## **Acknowledgments**

Coming up with such a piece of work like this research project is not an easy task. It cannot be an individual's effort but a joint venture from different perspectives. Therefore I'm grateful to all those who made it possible for me to complete this study.

Special thanks go to all the lecturers of Kampala International University and specifically those in the institute of open and distance learning for their dedication in helping students achieve their educational goals. In particular I would like to register my gratitude to Dr. Sumil whose insight in research methodology gave me a strong foundation in the World of research. Her inspiration will always remain. This product is a manifestation of her perseverance.

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Let me also at this juncture thanks my local advisor Mr Jeff for his support and guidance during the data collection process. I won't forget to thank also Mercy Njenga for proof reading some of my work during the period of data collection.

The co-operation of all the respondents and all those who took part in providing information which forms the basis for this study is registered. To them I say thank you very much and let's all work together towards the betterment of Education of learners with special needs in Education.

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## **ABSTRACT**

The topic of this study was 'Teacher's attitude and academic Performance of learners with mental retardation in Kandara Division, Maragwa District. The study was carried out guided by four objectives namely; determining the profile of the respondents, determining the level of teacher's attitudes, determining the level of academic performance of students and determining if there is any significant relationship between teachers attitude and academic performance. In the methodology, the study relied on primary source of data, the questionnaire. The study was based on the theory of Damodar Mohapatra of inclusion. Teachers from regular Primary schools and units were involved as respondents. Thirty teachers responded to the questionnaires. Simple random sampling procedure was used to select the schools and the teachers. The researcher used questionnaires as data collection tools since all the respondents were literate. The respondents revealed negative attitudes towards learners with mental retardation and they said they face various challenges including lack of curriculum guidelines, lack of teaching aids, and, lack of training in special needs Education. These challenges were found to bring about poor academic performance of learners. The researcher concluded the study by stating that there is a significant relationship between teacher attitudes and academic performance of learners with mental retardation, their poor performance stem from a combination of factors beyond their comprehension including negative attitudes, inadequate resources among others. The study recommended that, the issue of curriculum inadequacy should be addressed, curriculum adaptation and review should be done and schools should be provided with educational resources. The researcher also advocated for further research on the best approaches for learners with mental retardation.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Rationale of the Study**

The teachers of Learners with mental retardation have different attitudes towards these learners. Some portray positive attitudes while others are negative. For this reason they need to be sensitised so as to function effectively and improve the academic performance of learners with mental retardation.

These attitudes should be investigated and teachers should know that most learners with mental retardation can never be independent in their intellectual activities. This call for specialists such as psychiatrists and trained teachers in special needs Education. Teachers with little or no training tend to use authoritarian and inefficient methods that make learners see school as a repressive place with little to enjoy.

In the absence of specialist help, patience, firmness and caring, concern may be the only tool that the teachers can use for the benefit of learners with mental retardation. Poor schooling is often overlooked as contributing factor to backwardness, but unsuitable buildings, inappropriate equipment and facilities, inadequate materials for learning and teaching and inefficient teachers can have just as serious effects as physical, mental and emotional causes, moreover, there are occasional clashes of personality that make a pupil and his/her teacher unable to enjoy good returns. If prolonged, this can have a damaging effect on the pupils' progress. The learner with mental retardation needs an environment suitable for their learning needs and they should be given an opportunity to develop in all possible ways.

A child who suffers from a handicap is doubly disadvantaged because he/she has not only to bear his/her handicap but also the prejudices that most societies express towards those who are different. This can be acutely painful

for the child, and can lead to complicated feelings of loneliness, rejection and frustration.

In some cases mental handicap may be so severe that normal education is impossible, but in many they are so slight that they go undetected, this might be taken to mean that such cases are not important. On the contrary, they represent children whose performance is being hindered by factors that with only a little knowledge on the part of the teacher, could be largely overcome, for lack of this, such children are denied the special help they need, or worse, are blamed for things over which they have no control.

Many handicapped children suffer from conditions that cannot be cured, but they can still enjoy education in normal school in some cases, special teaching materials may be advisable, in others, special methods of teaching, but handicapped children can only be helped by teachers who are alert to needs of individual children and are willing to take time and trouble to assist each child to enjoy a better life.

A Learner who is mentally retarded is always disadvantage this is because almost everything we do, whether consciously or unconsciously, is the result of the activity of the mind channelled to the movable parts of our bodies through the nervous system. The learner with mental retardation has problems in coordination for example eye-hand coordination is difficult to some of them. They are unable to retain and recall information .this means that their retaining capacity is very low and also they have short attention span

The researcher realised that memory is very important to the learning process and learning depends on our ability to retain and recall information that we receive. if we are not able to grasp and keep hold of what we learned ;it would be like trying to fill a bottomless bucket.

The reduced capacity of the mentally retarded to retain and recall information both in the short term and long term memory is pronounced especially with regard to abstract material. The learners with mental retardation learn slowly, hence they have significant educational problems. The researcher also found out that they have behaviour and social adjustments problems behavioural adequacy is a way of designating a child as mentally retarded and their low frustration tolerance makes them give up task easily /low frustration tolerance and short attention span also causes the child to have not only educational problems but also personality and social development problems. They manifest temper tantrums as a result of perceiving themselves as being forced to do impossible tasks. They find little pleasure in engaging themselves in non rewarding activities. They need to be encouraged in all activities.

Teaching skills alone are not sufficient the teacher must know about children and how they develop. He/she must be able to recognize those characteristics that are of significance in helping each child to learn more effectively.

### **1.2 Significance of the study**

This study will benefit the following disciplines.

The ministry of education will be able to train teachers in special needs Education.

The district supervisors will be able to motivate teachers so as to assist the learners with mental retardation

The Head teachers will be able to make the school environment barrier free so as to suit the needs of learners with mental retardation and enable them attain optimal development.

The teachers will be able to develop positive attitudes and lessen challenges faced by learners with mental retardation so that these children can attain to their maximum potentials.

The parents will be able to support their children with mental retardation at home by training them in activities of daily living ,give them attention and encourage them thus minimising the challenges they face this will in turn make the teachers work easier in improving their academic achievement.

The pupils will be able to appreciate the efforts put by the ministry, parents and teachers towards making them achieve their maximum potentials. This will make learners wit mental retardation work hard to achieve their best level in academics.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to investigate teacher attitudes and academic performance of learners with mental retardation in regular schools and units in Kandara Division of Murang'a District.

### **1.4 Objectives**

#### **General:**

This study will determine teachers' attitudes and academic performance of learners with mental retardation in regular schools in Kandara Division Maragwa District Kenya.

#### **Specific:**

This study seeks to

1. Determine the profile of the respondents as to:
  - 1.1. socio demographic data
    - 1.1.1. age
    - 1.1.2. gender
    - 1.1.3. qualifications
2. Determine the level of teacher's attitudes in terms of
  - 2.1. educational resources
  - 2.3. teaching methodologies
  - 2.4. classroom management

3. Determine the level of academic performance of learners with mental retardation.

4. Determine if there is significant relationship between the teachers' attitude and the level of academic performance of learners with mental retardation in Kandara Division Maragwa District

### **1.5 Statement of the null hypothesis**

There is no significant relationship between teachers' attitude and academic performance of learner's with mental retardation

### **1.6 Limitations and delimitations**

#### **1.6.1 Limitations**

The researcher used some amount of money in transport using the public means to reach the respondents. Money was also used in production of the final research report document.

The time conducting the research was squeezed with a lot of activities like teaching in the school and administrative duties.

#### **1.6.2 Delimitations**

The researcher had the advantage of being well known in the area of study by the virtue of sharing the same linguistic and cultural background with the respondents.

### **1.7 Theoretical framework**

This study is based on the theory of Damodar Mohapatra (1995) which states that during primitive days the disabled children were treated as burden on parents, families and societies at large. The nature of the society was warfare at that time. The people of most of the society used to change their establishment from place to place frequently due to search of food. Even sometimes they quarrelled among themselves during sharing of food. As the disabled children were not considered as productive members of the society as regarded to food collection and provide protection so they were thrown away from the hills of the mountains or into the rivers.

Gradually the nature of the society changed from warfare to welfare and people became interested to settle once for all after considering the fertility of the land and facility of water supply instead of migrated life forever. So gradually people made up their minds to take responsibility of those children instead of killing them, a symbol of sin. He further adds that during 18<sup>th</sup> century AD, different special educational institutions were developed to meet the needs of the different categories of disabled children with a view to facilitating their learning of daily living skills and vocational skills in a systematic way although the concept had been emerged prior to that in meaningful manner.

Mohapatra states further that during the 20<sup>th</sup> century the educationist had developed a second thought for integrating the disabled with the normal children in regular educational institutions. The concept of the mainstreaming emerged due to the following reasons.

- Special school service increased the distance between the disabled children and the children who are in the mainstream as a regard to the adoption of social skills.
- It creates inferiority complex among the disabled children which leads to the development of negative self concept.

- The enrolment of mild and moderately handicapped children in the special school resulted in antisocial therapy as it drags the children into another world of gestures and postures rather than towards the normal and natural behaviours of the children.

Due to the above facts special schools are developed for severely handicapped children and attempts have been made to enrol the mild and the moderately disabled children in regular school. This concept is known as mainstreaming and the policy decision in practice is known as intergraded education for disabled children. In Kenya, this is what is called inclusive education. The rationale behind the concept is that if a child who is partially blind can be educated in the normal classroom with the normal children with the general teachers with the help of a pair of spectacles then it is not necessary for sending him to a special school.

Mainstreaming is done for the purpose of bringing disabled children to the general schools. In every system of education, a child is considered as the pivot in teaching learning situation. Some attention should be paid to the disabled children who are considered as the main component of mainstreaming.

Teachers are involved in the process of mainstreaming for facilitating the learning of the disabled children. In any educational system, teachers are as one of the major components for teaching learning process. That's why such stress is given to resource teacher who is specially trained for the purpose. However the whole of general teachers are also equally important as general teachers teach the disabled children with the assistance of the resource teacher.

The teacher is the real man who facilitates the process of mainstreaming. Besides the teacher there are some other characters. Children spend more



time with their parents at home so the parents must be trained to assist their disabled children at home properly.

Parents' counselling is required for parents to have faith on disabled children and their education. Psychologists and doctors are also important. They utilise their expertise to assess the children for their placement. Overall awareness of the community measures regarding disabled children is also important.

The function of the mainstreaming programme is related to the curriculum, the methods of teaching and the supportive services. By taking into consideration the degree of disabilities, the curriculum and methods of teaching as per the degree of disabilities, sufficient support should be given to the disabled children for their education. For specific disability, specific aids and appliances are required to meet the special needs of disabled children. Some financial benefit should also be given to such children to meet their special needs.

### **1.8 operational definition of terms**

For the purpose of this study the following terms are defined operationally:

**Retardation:** It is a delay or slowness in a child's mental development.

**Mental retardation:** This is interference in intellectual functioning which occurs during development.

**Learning** refers to a relative permanent change of behaviour due to experience.

**Intelligence:** Good at thinking clearly and quickly at understanding difficult ideas and subjects and at gaining.

**Inclusion** refers to recognising individual difficulties thereby enabling those individuals to obtain a good quality of life in their natural environment.

**Inclusive Education** refers to the process of addressing the learners within the mainstream of education using all the available resources thus creating opportunities for learning in preparing them for life.

**Occupational therapists:** Persons trained to carryout exercises in talking that are designed to help someone who cannot function normally.

**Physiotherapist:** Someone who gives treatment of injuries using special physical exercises.

**Orientation:** Information or training that one is given before starting a new activity.

**Perception:** The ability to notice something by seeing, hearing and smelling.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

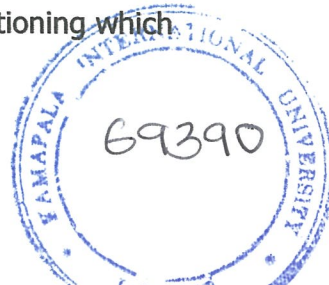
In this chapter the researcher reviewed related literature to the topic 'Teachers attitude and academic performance of learners with mental retardation'. The researcher analysed areas of children with mental retardation its nature, causes and classification. The researcher also discussed the attitudes of teachers and other stake holders towards learners with mental retardation.

#### **2.2 Definition of mental retardation**

The American association on mental on mental deficiency (AAMD) defined mental retardation as a compromise between the needs of those who require statistical objectivity like intelligence quotient (IQ) scores and those who require environmental performance like adaptive behaviour assessment. The 1983 AAMD defines 'mental retardation' as significantly sub average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with deficit in adaptive behaviour and manifested during the developmental period

However Gall (1986) asserts that persons cannot be labelled mentally retarded just because their adaptive behaviour is impaired. there are many other causes other causes other than mental retardation for example delayed maturation and poor progress in school, likewise they cannot be designated mentally retarded solely because they have low IQ (Intelligent Quotient)

In his contribution towards the same Browne(1997) stipulated that mental retardation refers to sub-average general intellectual functioning which



originate during the developmental period and is associated with impairment in one or more of the following; maturation, learning and social adjustments

According to Werner (1996) mental retardation is a delay or slowness in a child's mental development. The child learns things more slowly than other children of his age. He may be late in beginning to move, smile, show interest in things, sit, walk, speak and understand, or he may develop some of these skills more quickly but be slower in others.

The researcher is in agreement with the above writers and adds that some mentally retarded children present substantial difficulties in areas of development namely social, behaviour learning, communication and motor functioning. Furthermore the mentally retarded learners share in common the extremities of diminished mental capacities.

### **2.3 Causes of mental retardation**

There are many factors, which may cause mental retardation. The most common causes originate from damage of the child's brain. This can happen before birth, at birth, or after birth. Infections may occur to the mother during pregnancy; it may even occur to the developing embryo and cause mental retardation.

Infections and intoxication cause mental retardation whether pre-natally or post-natally. Infection occurring during the first trimester of pregnancy due to German measles (rubella), produces abnormalities in 50% of developing foetus. Ndurumo (1993)

Mental retardation resulting from trauma or physical agent is self produced or caused by factors outside the control of the mother. During childbirth complications such as difficult delivery, breach delivery, the use of forceps to bring the head out of the birth canal, or the wrapping of the umbilical cord round the baby's neck may occur.

Trauma refers to accidents or injuries that may occur during prenatal, perinatal and postnatal periods and may cause mental retardation. Injuries may occur due to physical punishment instilled by parents, caregivers, ranging from battering, burning, and even to an extent of bone breaking. Ndurumo (1993).

Intoxication may cause disorders when they enter into the system of the foetus. This may be during prenatal or postnatal period. These foreign substances include nicotine, alcohol, carbon monoxide, drugs, mercury and lead. They may bring about mental retardation depending on the amount of intoxicant introduced into the body system.

Mental retardation can also result from metabolic, nutritional, endocrine or growth dysfunction specifically, they include neuronal lipid storage diseases like: Tay-sach's disease, carbohydrate disorders which interfere with brain metabolism, amino acid disorders such as pheynylketonuria. Ndurumo (1993).

Chromosomal abnormalities may also cause mental retardation. The trait and personality of an individual is determined by genes that are contained in the chromosomes. Chromosomes are found in the cells of human beings, each

contains 46 chromosomes. The 46 chromosomes can be divided into 2 pairs of 23; each pair contains autosomes and sex chromosomes. Autosomes contain the genes that determine development trait and personality of human beings apart from sex, and sex traits of human, which is determined by genes in sex chromosomes.

If there is no evidence of organic or biological disorder in the child, then adverse environmental influences may be the cause of mental retardation. Environmental influences are classified as psychosocial disadvantages and sensory deprivation. The psychosocial disadvantage category was previously described as cultural familial mental retardation. For a child's retardation to fit into the environmental category, one of the parent's should have subnormal intellectual functioning. Another environmental influence is sensory deprivation. Where children are deprived of stimulation by their parents' particularly mental deprivation, they lack opportunity to interact, play, talk or laugh with their mothers. Even worse is prolonged separation from other human during critical years. Separation at this stage not only causes mental retardation, but also severe emotional disorders because interaction with other people is one of the cardinal requirements for emotional growth and development. Ndurumo (1993)

#### **2.4 Classification of mental retardation**

The most widely used classification of mental retardation is the one provided by the American Association of Mental Deficiency of 1973. The classification delineates four levels of retardation namely: mild, moderate, severe and profound. The classification takes into consideration the results of measured

intelligence using intelligence tests. The intelligence test may be that of standard Binet scale or Wechsler Scale.

According to Werner (1997) mental retardation in children can be mild, moderate or severe. Some children never learn to speak, others to talk (and often love talk). Many can learn to read and write. Most of these boys and girls are very friendly and affectionate and behave well with people who treat them well. Even those who are more severely retarded, with the help of good teaching usually learn to take care of their basic needs, and to help out with simple work. They can live fairly normally with their families and communities.

Educationally, mentally retarded children are classified into three categories. These are educable mentally retarded, trainable mentally retarded, severely / profoundly retarded. Children with mental handicap have sub-average general intellectually functioning. Such children score below average in class work and they also fail to meet standards of independence and social responsibility expected of their age. Mentally handicapped children are classified into three categories namely; children with mild mental handicap, children with moderate mental handicap and children with severe and profound mental handicap.

Children who are mildly handicapped have delayed mental development. These children can benefit from academic work and can socially adjust to the point at which they can eventually become independent in the community. It is difficult to identify these children before they are in school, but when this learning ability becomes an important part of social expectations the condition

is then noted. In most instances there are no obvious conditions to account for the mild retardation.

Sometimes you may find a child who has a mental handicap but is able to learn academic skills for functional purposes and achieve some degree of social responsibility. The child may also attain partial vocational adjustments with assistance. Such children are said to have a moderate mental handicap.

There are other mentally retarded children whose mental handicap is severe and who also have other physical conditions such as cerebral palsy. It is difficult to cater for children with severe mental handicap in ordinary schools. The best placement for them is in special schools.

A child who is mentally retarded does not develop in childhood as quickly as other children nor attain the full mental capacities of a normal adult. The handicap may be slight or severe. In most severe cases development does not progress even in adult life beyond the mental capacity of a young child. Such severe handicap is much less common than milder degrees of handicap covering a wide spectrum ranging up to and merging into the "normal". This is according to Farrant (2000).

Mentally handicapped individuals have difficulties in understanding and in adapting themselves to new situations. They may find it difficult to communicate or establish relationships with more than a few people, but they are generally affectionate and respond to affectionate treatment as children do. Many of these with severe mental handicap have physical handicaps as



Positive attitudes, collaboration and participation are preliquisites for inclusion. Positive attitudes may be promoted during interaction between all children that is during the process of inclusion.(Okot Eron and Kutosi 2001).

The researcher concurs with the idea since teachers and children can develop positive attitude after interacting with people with disabilities. With changing attitude learners with mental retardation and the growth of teacher training, the national association of teachers of handicapped evolved. This also led to the growth of ordinary schools. (Shrive 1964).The researcher feels that this can also be applied in Kenya so the children with mental retardation can be assisted in regular schools.

## **2.7 challenges**

Teachers are inadequately prepared by college education. Recent studies prepared to address individual differences in learning abilities within classroom setting. Special Educators themselves do not posses sufficient content and knowledge to address the language and reading needs of the children with mental retardation. Teachers have a tendency of referring children for special assistance because they feel ill equipped to provide the necessary services,(Freiberg 1999)

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

As duly stated in the introductory remarks the purpose of the study was to investigate 'teacher's attitude and academic performance of learners with mental retardation. In view of this the researcher used this section to outline procedures and techniques used in collecting data, selection of the respondents, and other related aspects

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study employed the descriptive survey method to determine the teachers' attitude and academic performance of learners with mental retardation in Kandara Division Maragwa district, Kenya.

#### **3.3 Environment**

The study was conducted in regular schools in Kandara Division. The Division is located in Maragwa District which is near Nairobi, the capital city of the republic of Kenya.

#### **3.4 Respondents**

This study involved teachers in regular schools and units for learners with mental retardation. Forty (40) teachers were targeted to respond to the research tools, that is the questionnaires.

#### **3.5 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques**

The researcher used a simple random sampling method, where forty teachers were randomly picked. These represented all the teachers in Kandara division teaching learners with mental retardation.

### **3.6 Instruments / Tools**

This study utilised a researcher devised instrument which is a questionnaire. The researcher decided to use a questionnaire because the tool is easier and cheaper to use as compared to other tools. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999).

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedures**

Letters were presented to the Head Teachers asking permission to carry out research in their schools on teacher attitude and academic performance of learners with mental retardation. After collecting the data, the researcher presented the data in tables of frequency and percentages and analysed it.

### **3.8 Statistical Treatment of Data**

Tables of frequency and percentages were used to determine the age, gender, and qualification of the respondents among other related aspects.

Formula:      frequency count =  $f/n \times 100$

f – frequency

n – number of respondents

100 – total number of respondents

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

#### 4.1 Introduction

The raw data was collected from teachers of regular schools and units for learners with mental retardation. This was done through the use of questionnaires. These questionnaires were distributed to the targeted teachers by the researcher. Forty respondents were targeted but thirty returned the questionnaires. These assisted the researcher to present data in tabular and graphical form, analyze and interpret the data. This was to make it easy for understanding and interpretation for the meaning of major themes.

**Table 1: Profile of the respondents**

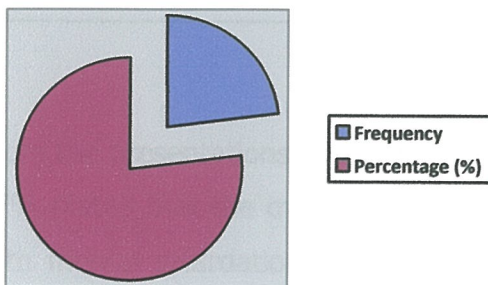
Category	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Age (in years)</b>		
21-30	8	27
31-40	11	37
41-50	7	23
51-60	4	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	10	33
Female	20	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Qualification</b>		
Masters Degree	3	10
Bachelors degree	4	13
Diploma	8	27
Certificate	15	50
Others	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

From the table (1) above it is clear that majority of the teachers (37%) fall between the ages of 31-40 years meaning that they are at their most productive age, Female teachers are the majority (67%) as compared to their male counterparts. As far as the qualifications are concerned majority (50%) of the teachers have certificates in primary teaching implying that they require more training in order to effectively help learners with special needs in education.

**Table 2: Respondents response on teaching learners with mental retardation.**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	23	77
No	7	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Pie chart 1: Response on teaching learners with mental retardation.**



According to the data collected as depicted in table (2) and pie chart (1) majority of the teachers, 23 (70%) teach learners with mental retardation While only 7 teachers which is 23% do not teach these learners. This implies that majority of the teachers were in a position to give information regarding issues related to learners with mental retardation.

**Table 4: Respondents response on use of varied teaching strategies.**

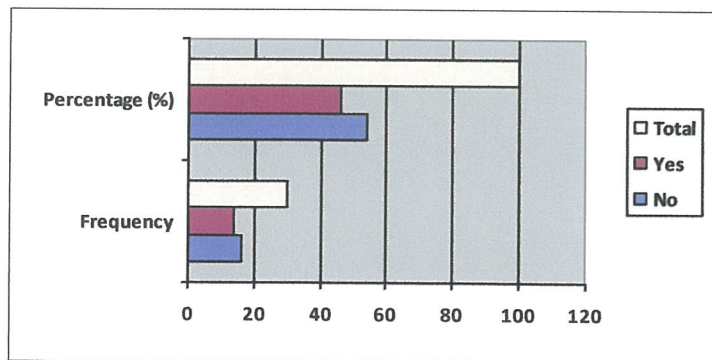
Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	10	33
No	20	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

The table (4) above shows that 67% of the teachers do not use varied teaching methods, only a small percentage (33%) do it. This implies that majority of teachers do not employ varied teaching strategies to cater for learners with mental retardation.

**Table 5: Respondents response on Adaptation of different activities**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	16	54
Yes	14	46
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Bar chart 2: Adaptation of different activities**

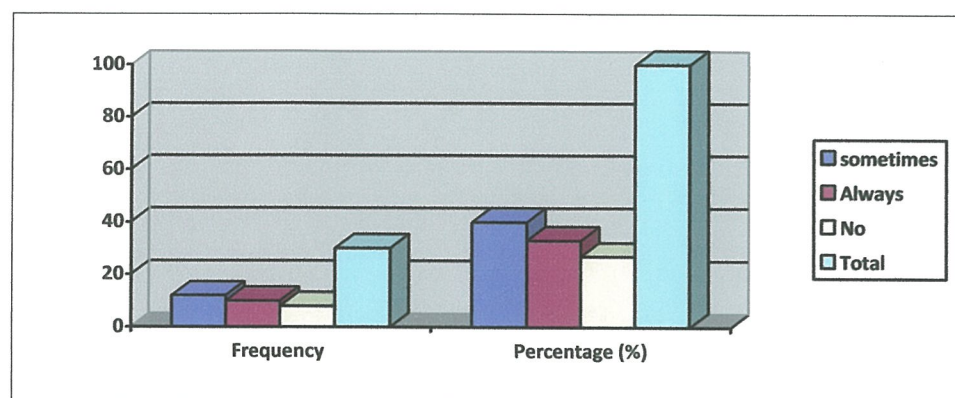


The researcher wanted to know whether teachers adapt different activities to suit the needs of learners with mental retardation. According to the raw data collected it is clear 16 teachers which is 54% do not do this. Only 14 teachers which culminate to 46% adapt different activities to cater for these learners. This implies that majority of the teachers do not effectively assist learners with mental retardation.

**Table 6: Respondents views on lesson presentation**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
sometimes	12	40
Always	10	33
No	8	27
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Bar Chart 3: Respondents views on lesson presentation**



From table (6) and Bar Graph (1) in the item where the researcher was interested in establishing whether teachers present the lessons in a clearly understandable and organized manner to help all pupils as well as those with mental retardation, It is clear that 12 teachers which is 40% do it sometimes while 10 teachers which is 33% do it always and pathetically 8 of them which is 27% do not present the lessons in clear and understandable way. The implications here is that majority of the teachers make little effort to present the lessons well to cater for learners with mental retardation..

**Table 7: Respondents response on availability of resource rooms**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	27	90
Yes	3	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

The researcher wanted to know whether the schools have well-equipped resource rooms which are accessible to learners with mental retardation. It is clear from the data collected that 90% of the respondents lamented that schools do not have resource rooms, only 10% of the respondent's school have the resource rooms. This implies that majority of the learners in the schools do not receive the essential services offered in the resource rooms to minimize their learning difficulties.

**Table 8: Respondents views on conduciveness of Classroom Environment**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	23	77
Yes	7	23
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

The researcher was interested in establishing whether the classroom environment in the schools is conducive for learners with specific learning difficulties. 23 teachers (77%) stated that the classroom environment in their schools is not conducive for these learners while only 7 teachers (23%) cited conducive classroom environment. This implies that majority of the classrooms in the schools are not conducive for learners with mental retardation.



**Table 9: Respondents views on administration of remedial teaching.**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
No	17	56
Yes	13	44
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

Seventeen teachers (56%) stated teachers do not conduct remedial teaching to assist learners with mental retardation. Only Thirteen teachers (44%) agreed that teachers conduct remedial teaching. This shows that a big number of teachers do not conduct remedial teaching to assist the learners.

**Table 10: Respondents Response on Academic performance.**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below Average	28	93
Average	2	7
Good	0	0
Excellent	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Line graph 1: Respondents Response on Academic performance.**

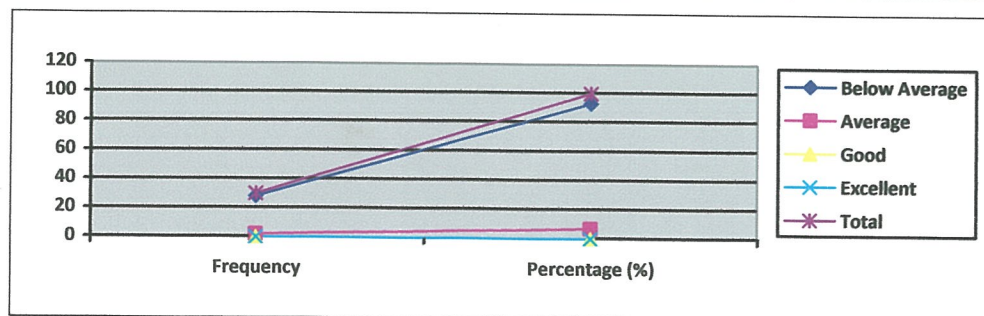
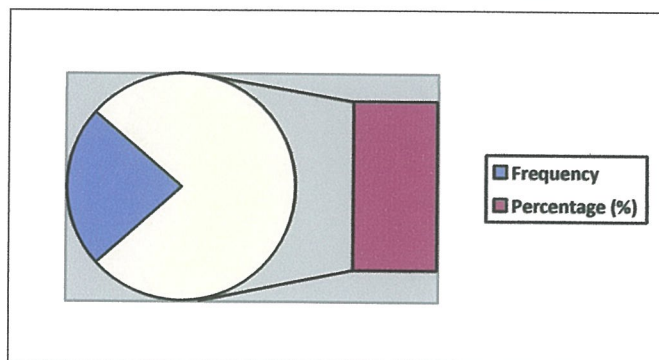


Table 10 and Line graph 1 above show that Twenty eight teachers (93%) said that the performance of learners with mental retardation is below average while two (7%) said that learners performance is average while none (0%) talked of good performance and none (0%) cited excellent performance. This clearly shows that learners with mental retardation perform poorly in academics.

**Table 11: Response on curriculum inadequacy**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	21	70
No	9	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

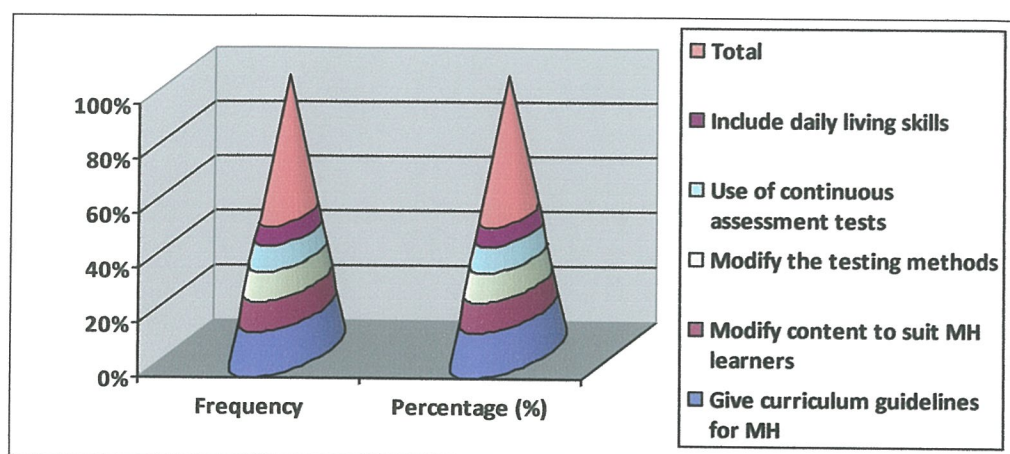
**Pie chart 2: Response on curriculum inadequacy**



From the presentations above in table 11 and pie chart 2, (70%) of the respondents said that the curriculum is inadequate while (30%) did not find it inadequate. The implication here is that majority of the teachers feel that the curriculum is inadequate and unsuitable for learners with mental retardation and does not cater for their special needs.

**Table 12: Suggestions to curriculum developers**

Responses	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Give curriculum guidelines for MH	9	30
Modify content to suit MH learners	6	20
Modify the testing methods	6	20
Use of continuous assessment tests	5	17
Include daily living skills	4	13
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

**Bar Chart 4: Suggestions to curriculum developers**

The table (15) and Bar chart (4) depict the respondent's suggestions to curriculum developers in order to cater for the needs of learners with mental retardation. (30%) cited provision of curriculum guidelines, (20%) suggested modification of content to suit the needs of these learners, another (20%) cited modification of the testing methods and (17%) suggested the use of continuous assessment tests to assess these learners and only (13 %) suggested the inclusion of daily living skills. Therefore majority would like to be provided with curriculum guidelines on how to assist learners with mental retardation.



## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The study aimed at investigating teacher's attitude and academic performance of learners with mental retardation in Kandara Division. The study was guided by the research objectives. The main purpose of this chapter, therefore, is to discuss the research findings as presented. Following the discussions, conclusion and recommendations will follow. Finally suggestions for further research will be made.

#### **5.2 Discussion of the Findings on profile of the respondents**

In order to determine the profile of the respondents, the researcher considered the respondents socio-demographic data of age, gender and academic qualifications. Table (1) in chapter four indicate that majority of the teachers (37%) fall between the ages of 31-40 years meaning that they were at their most productive age. At this age the teachers are active and if well inducted can be of good help to learners with mental retardation. As far as gender is concerned female teachers are the majority (67%) as compared to their male counterparts, this is an indication that these teachers can effectively teach these learners activities of daily living with ease.

Majority (50%) of the teachers have certificates in primary teaching. This does not augur well with learners with mental retardation because in Kenya those with diplomas and degrees in special needs Education are the most qualified to work with learners with special needs in Education. The teachers of Kandara Division require more training in order to effectively instruct learners with special needs in education.

These views are supported by Freiberg (1999) in chapter two (2.7) who said that teachers are inadequately prepared by college education. He also lamented that Special Educators themselves do not possess sufficient content and knowledge to address the language and reading needs of the children

with mental retardation. Teachers have a tendency of referring children for special assistance because they feel ill equipped to provide the necessary services. This was probably why when asked about initial teacher training the respondents in table 3 and bar chart 1, 20 teachers (67%) stated that the training did not equip them with skills to assist learners with mental retardation.

Despite the challenges it is imperative to commend the teachers for their willingness to teach these learners, this is evident in table (2) and pie chart (1) where majority of the teachers, 23 (70%) teach learners with mental retardation While only 7 teachers (23%) do not teach these learners. This also implied that majority of the teachers were in a position to give accurate information regarding issues related to learners with mental retardation.

### **5.3 Discussion of the Findings on teacher's attitudes**

The researcher discusses the findings on the attitudes of teachers of Kandara Division, This was done in line with objective (2) of the study which aimed at determining the level of teacher's attitudes in terms of educational resources, teaching methodologies and classroom management. It is imperative to note that the negative attitudes contribute to poor teaching methods and hence poor academic performance by learners, in agreement with this, Randiki (2002) in 2.2 stated that it is our attitudes that make us believe that learners with mental retardation cannot learn comfortably in regular school.

Table (4) shows that 67% of the teachers do not use varied teaching methods, only a small percentage (33%) does it. This implies that majority of teachers do not employ varied teaching strategies to cater for learners with mental retardation. This is an indication that the teachers have negative attitudes towards these learners. On the same issue table 5 and bar chart 2 it is clear that 16 teachers which is 54% do not adapt different activities to suit the needs of learners with mental retardation do this. Only 14 teachers which culminate to 46% adapt different activities to cater for these learners implying

To support learners with mental retardation in regular schools Conducive classroom environment is paramount and portray positive attitude towards these needy learners. However the findings of this study on this issue indicate otherwise, in table 8, 23 teachers (77%) stated that the classroom environment in their schools is not conducive for these learners while only 7 teachers (23%) cited conducive classroom environment, therefore majority of the classrooms in the schools are not conducive for learners with mental retardation. The change of attitude from negative to positive on the side of teachers is required and in can only come from them. In agreement with this Geary (2000) in chapter two said, *'True change can come only from the volition of people involved. Change of attitude involves an individual and so teachers, children and parents can develop positive attitudes from personal feelings'*

Another worrying trend that depict negative attitude of teachers towards learners with mental retardation is their reluctance to conduct remedial teaching to these learners, looking at table 9 it is evident that it is not done. Seventeen teachers (56%) stated teachers do not conduct remedial teaching to assist learners with mental retardation. Only thirteen teachers (44%) agreed that teachers conduct remedial teaching meaning a big number of teachers do not conduct remedial teaching to assist the learners.

The sentiments expressed by Damodar (1995) in 2.5 shows a true picture of this scenario, he lamented that in some cases, the general teachers do not feel it is part of their duty to look after those disabled children. Some general teachers feel that they are not being paid for those children as a result of which the resource teachers do not get co-operation from general teachers. Even in some cases the general teachers do not have any faith relating to the future of those children.



In view of the above discussions it is imperative to note that learners with mental retardation require positive attitudes from all the stake holders so that they can improve in academics as well as in other aspects. This is supported by Okot Eron and Kutosi (2001) in 2.6 who stated that positive attitudes, collaboration and participation are preliquisites for inclusion. Positive attitudes may be promoted during interaction between all children, during the process of inclusion

#### **5.4 Discussion of the Findings on Academic performance of learners with mental retardation**

The findings show that the academic performance of learners with mental retardation is poor. Table 10 and Line graph 1 show that Twenty eight teachers (93%) said that the performance of learners with mental retardation is below average while two (7%) said that learners performance is average while none (0%) talked of good performance and none (0%) cited excellent performance. This clearly shows that learners with mental retardation perform poorly in academics.

The situation is further aggravated by the belief that these learners cannot perform well by teachers. In agreement Ogonda and Njuki (2000) in 2.5 stated that teachers often compare the performance of learners with mental retardation with that of their peers and describe them as lazy, not serious, and inconsistent. These sentiments are unfortunate and should not be used as an excuse for neglecting these learners.

It is important for teachers to understand what Werner (1997) in 2.4 said, that mental retardation in children can be mild, moderate or severe. Some children never learn to speak, others to talk but many can learn to read and write. Most of these boys and girls are very friendly and affectionate and behave well with people who treat them well. Even those who are more severely retarded, with the help of good teaching usually learn to take care of

their basic needs, and to help out with simple work. They can live fairly normally with their families and communities.

The respondent's views about the curriculum are also discussed and it is important for curriculum developers to find modalities of working on the mentioned issues for the benefit of learners with mental retardation. The challenges faced by teachers because of rigid curriculum also contribute significantly to poor academic performance of learners with mental retardation. The curriculum was found to be inadequate and does not cater for the needs of learners with mental retardation. The respondents gave suggestions to curriculum developers on what they felt should be done in order for it to be inclusive and suitable to these learners.

Looking at table 11 and pie chart 2, (70%) of the respondents found the curriculum inadequate while (30%) found it otherwise.

The table (12) and Bar chart (4) depict the respondent's suggestions to curriculum developers in order to cater for the needs of learners with mental retardation. (30%) cited provision of curriculum guidelines, (20%) suggested modification of content to suit the needs of these learners, another (20%) cited modification of the testing methods and (17%) suggested the use of continuous assessment tests to assess these learners and only (13 %) suggested the inclusion of daily living skills. Therefore majority would like to be provided with curriculum guidelines on how to assist learners with mental retardation.



## **5.5 Conclusions**

It is obvious from the data analysed that there is a significant relationship between teacher attitudes and academic performance of learners with mental retardation and more needs to be done as far as training of teachers is concerned as majority of them needs training in special needs education.

The learner's poor academic performance seems to stem from a combination of factors beyond their comprehension. Majority of the teachers display negative attitudes towards these learners, classrooms are not conducive, and the curriculum is inadequate and does not cater for their specific needs.

Resources should be availed and there is need for all the stake holders to come together and uplift the welfare of learners with mental retardation. The curriculum developers also have a duty of coming up with a curriculum that is inclusive and will cater for all the specific needs of these learners.

## **5.6 Recommendations**

### **Personnel resource training and induction**

Inadequate training and induction of teachers dealing with learners with mental retardation was noted to be a major set back. There is need for the government of Kenya through the Ministry of Education Science and Technology and all the trainers to address this issue seriously as this is the only way of arresting the situation.

### **Curriculum adaptation and review**

It is very important for the curriculum developers to adapt the curriculum of learners with mental retardation and do constant review to suit the specific needs of the learners. This should facilitate the infusion the most appropriate methods and inclusion of daily living skills.

**Proper Funding**

Proper and adequate funding will provide the schools with the finance needed and facilitating seminars and workshops for teachers on regular basis and purchase of learning resources.

**Provision of educational materials**

Learners with mental retardation need learning and training aids like jigsaw puzzles, coloured blocks, cut out letters and a friendly learning environment. The stakeholders should ensure that all these are provided for learners to learn effectively and improve on academic performance.

**5.7 Further Research**

The researcher recommends further research and baseline study on appropriate approaches suitable for learners with mental retardation. This will help the stakeholders such as the government, educators, curriculum developers among others in planning and improving the quality of education and academic performance of learners with mental retardation.

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## Appendix A

### Questionnaire for teachers

Dear staff/respondent,

You are kindly requested to help the researcher by providing information regarding the questions below. You are requested to respond by filling the questionnaires on the theme "Teacher attitudes and academic performance of learners with mental retardation in Kandara Division". The information given will be treated with confidentiality and your cooperation and contribution to this study will highly be appreciated. Thanks in advance for your cooperation.

#### Section A of the Questionnaire

##### Profile of the respondent (Tick where applicable)

Age of respondent:  years

Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

Qualification: degree ☐ diploma ☐ certificate ☐ others ☐

Duration in the field of teaching: over 10 years ☐ 5-10 years ☐  
Less than 5 years ☐

#### Section B of the Questionnaire

1. Do you teach learners with mental retardation? Yes... No .....
2. Did the training you got prepare you in catering for learners with mental retardation? Yes... No.....
3. Do the teachers employ varied teaching strategies to cater for learners with mental retardation? Yes... No....
4. Do the teachers adapt different activities to suit the needs of learners with mental retardation? Yes... No....

5. Do you present the lesson in a clearly understandable and organised manner to help all the pupils with mental retardation?

Always..... sometimes..... No.....

6. Do the school have a well-equipped resource room which is accessible to learners with mental retardation? Yes..... No....

7. Is the classroom environment conducive for teaching and learning to cater for learners with mental retardation? Yes... No....

8. Do the teachers conduct remedial teaching to assist learners with mental retardation? Yes... No....

9. What Is the Performance of Learners with mental retardation compared to their peers without this disability?

Excellent..... Good..... average..... Below average.....

10. Do you find the curriculum inadequate for the needs of Learners with mental retardation? Yes... No....

11. Give suggestions on what should be done by the curriculum developers to cater for the needs of learners with mental retardation-----

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