

**LEARNING ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL ADAPTATION OF LEARNERS IN  
SPECIAL INSTITUTIONS IN NYAMIRA DISTRICT, KENYA**

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**A Thesis**

**Presented to the  
School of Higher Degrees and Research  
Kampala international university  
Kampala, Uganda**

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**In partial fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree  
Master in Special Needs Education**

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**AUGUST, 2012**

### DECLARATION A

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a Degree or other academic award in any University or Institution of higher Learning.

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MARTIN N. OMURWA

Name and signature of the candidate

17<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2012

Date

## DECLARATION B

I confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under my supervision.

Dr (Mrs) Anumaka, Jeane B.

Name and Signature of Supervisor



17.09.12

Date

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my beloved husband Mr. Charles and entire family for their continuous support and co-operation and other friends whose assistance made this work successful.

## **ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The researcher is indeed grateful to God the father almighty for his gracious support and guidance. The researcher's gratitude goes to the school of higher Degrees and research, faculty of Education for the wholesome direction and Organization. The researcher is indebted to Dr. Emanuel and Novembrieta Sumil and Dr. Injoma whose instructions, comments deserve commendation.

### **ABSTRACT**

The study surveyed on learning environment and social adaptation of learners with special needs in special schools/units in Nyamira District Kenya. This research determined further the following (1) profile of respondents (teachers) as to age, gender, academic qualifications and teaching experience (2) the level of conduciveness of learning environment (3) the level of social adaptation (4) the significant relationship between the level of conduciveness of learning environment and level of social adaptation of learners with special needs. The researcher used the researcher made questionnaires to collect data. The researcher used means, percentages and frequencies in data analysis. Researchers' findings established a positive significant relation between variables that is learning environment and social adaptation relationship between the two variables was rejected having a mean of 0.554 based on the findings. The recommendations were divided to the following aspects (1) teachers to prepare thoroughly (2) the ministry of education to conduct seminars to sensitize and motivate teachers and train more teachers on special needs (3) policy makers to formulate policies to favour learners and persons with disabilities (4) the future researchers to conduct similar research and fill the gaps that the researcher might has out.

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**LIST OF ACRONYMS/ ABBREVIATIONS**

- SNE- Special Needs Education
- NGOS- Non Government Organization
- EARCS- Education Assessment and Research Centers

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **THE PROBLEM AND IT'S SCOPE**

#### **Background of the study**

The most obvious cause of retardation of learners in schools is bad teaching or inappropriate education stimulation as asserted by Collin (1961) special needs children include learners with mental retardation, learning disabilities, visually impaired hearing impaired, physically handicapped, emotional and behavioral difficult.

A French physician Jean –Marc-Haspard 1775-1835 was the founder of special education. He begun by educating a boy of about 12 years who has been roaming naked and wild in the forestry of France. Even though he did not eliminate Victor's disability, he dramatically improved the child's wild behavior through patient systematic educative procedure (Italy 1962). He later moved to the United States in 1948. Before that, he had become famous as an educator of the so-called idiotic children even though most thinkers were convinced that such children cannot be taught anything of significance.

The government of Kenya has laid emphasis in educating all learners despite of their diversities and education is free. Learners with special needs, given a conducive learning environment, can learn the social skills for adaptation in the environment Ndurumo (2002). Also it was noted that cultural tools can be passed from one individual to another to initiate learning through internalizing instructions of the instructors and use them to regulate oneself and collaborate learning as a process, as quoted by Thomasell, Krugger and Ratner (1993).

Learning environment is the place in which pupils can obtain some knowledge and skills. It includes the school, its buildings, facilities materials and the surrounding environment.

Some learners with motor and sensory impairments comfortably and independently. The entrance to narrow doors slippery or very rough paths are barren to a wheel chair bound or a learner who is blind, wide doors, ramps with non-skid surfaces are desirable adaptations for this. Too high door knobs toilets, switches, storage facilities and other hindrances for such learners.

To include learners with special needs, the following should be done in the classrooms. The appropriate seating arrangements which allows learners with visual impairments should be seated near the teacher the chalkboard and in a location with reduced glare on desks and the chalkboard (Lambert 1994). Learners with hearing impairment should be given preferential seating to allow maximum aural receptivity. Aural receptive means placing them with the better ear towards the source of sound in the room rather than towards a wall. They also need optimal visibility of both the chalkboard and teacher's face to allow speech reading.

Those with wheelchairs or with crutches should be seated near the door with ample room for movements (Ross 1982). For learners with intellectual and learning difficulties destructors should be reduced. They can focus attention more easily and are less distracted by others when desks are placed near teachers facing the board and away from windows and doors. Separating desks also reduces learner's interaction and increases attention to learning tasks.

Classroom furniture and equipment should be modified and adapted to meet the needs of learners with motor and sensory impairment. Examples are desks storage shelves and the chalkboard. (Hiuhu, 2002 Farrant, 1997).

Social adaptations refers to the eradication or reduction of social barriers which make persons with special needs remain isolated or segregated from other people in the society. The social barriers to be adapted include negative attitudes of the community towards people with special needs, communication problems which make the deaf and the blind people to be oftenly excluded during meetings and many community services. Persons with special needs are also oftenly denied equal

opportunities in education and employment (Ross, Bracket and Maxon 1991). They get segregated further when they do not perform tasks and activities competitively like their peers.

People with special needs are also not catered for when the community structures its environment, cultural beliefs on the other hand often keep people with special needs out of mainstream society. In conclusion social barriers result in discrimination and isolation of persons with special needs (Hiuhu, 2002).

### **Statement of Problem**

There are special needs children in all parts the world. However, attention for their care and education is usually taken for granted by parents, teachers and government. The researcher therefore endeavours to establish the significance of learning environment and social adaptation of learners in selected special institutions in Nyamira division, Nyamira district (Kenya). The researcher will further investigate the importance of conducive learning environment in relation to social adaptation of learners with disabilities.

### **The Purpose of the Study**

The reasons for this study were as follows:

- i) To test the hypothesis of no significant relationship between learning environment and social adaptation of learners in special institutions in Nyamira District, Kenya
- ii) To validate the theory of Vygotsky(1993)
- iii) To bridge the gaps identified on the previous related studies
- iv) To generate new information from the existing body of knowledge.

### **Research Objectives**

#### ***General Objectives:***

The study intended to determine the relationship between learning environment and social adaptation of learners in special institutions in Nyamira District Kenya.

## **Specific Objectives**

The study sought to:

- i) Determine the demographic characteristics of the respondents as to: gender, age, educational level and teaching experience of teachers
- ii) To investigate the level of learning environment.
- iii) To determine the level of social adaptations of learners with disabilities
- iv) To determine if there was a significant relationship between the level of conduciveness of learning environment and level of social adaptation of learners with disabilities.

## **Research Questions**

The study sought to answer the following research questions

- i) What are demographic characteristics of respondents as to gender, age, educational qualification and teaching experience?
- ii) What are the level of learning environment of learners with disabilities?
- iii) What is the level of social adaptation of learners with disabilities?
- iv) Is there a significant relationship between level of conduciveness of learning environment and level of social adaptation?

## **Null Hypothesis**

There is no significant relationship between the level of learning environments and level of social adaptations of learners in Nyamira District (Kenya).

## **Scope**

### ***Geographical Scope:***

The study was conducted in twenty four special institutions in Nyamira District. The 24 institutions have about 50 registered specialized teacher.

### ***Content Scope:***

The study intend to examined the level of learning environment and level of social adaptation and the significant relationship or difference between learning environment and social adaptation of learners with disabilities.

### ***Time Scope***

The study was conducted between April to August 2012.

### **Theoretical Scope**

The study was based on Vygotsy's socio- cultural theory of Human learning (1993) that describes learning as a social process and the origination of human intelligence in society.

### **Significance of the Study**

The research findings will help and benefit **the teachers** in regular and special institutions, **learners, parents, curriculum developers** and **policy makers** thus made them realize that disability was inability as far as academic excellence is concerned.

On the side of **teachers**, the study will help the teachers to change attitude accept and accommodate learners with disabilities and not to segregate them as non-performers.

**Parents** will benefit from the study for they will accept their children disabilities and they will not be biased towards children with disabilities. If it is house chore, the parents will involve all the children without ignoring the one with a disability and they should have positive attitude to these children with disabilities and avoid labeling them due to their disability.

**Learners** will benefit for the learning environment is favourable for them since the society will mainstream learners with disabilities in societal activities such as theatres, include them in various ceremonies such as circumcision ceremonies, include them in different clubs in the society, participate in various roles in the church. Their self-esteem will be improved and will get motivated and fully recognized.

The **curriculum developers** will benefit because from the study, they will develop a curriculum which is adaptive to inclusive goals catering for both disabled and "normal" learners.

The **policy makers** such as the ministers for education, education officers, politicians among others will benefit for they will formulate policies which will favour

learners and persons with disabilities. The **government** will train teachers on special education lines so that teachers on special education lines will have skills on how to handle learners with disabilities.

The **future researchers** will utilize the findings of this study to work on a related study.

### **Operational Definition of Key Terms**

1. **Learning environment:** refers to the physical environment such as classrooms and individuals such as teachers whom the learners have the opportunity to interact.
2. **Social adaptation:** refers to the association or interaction and how the learners understand and relate what they learn to their social development
3. **Special needs learners:** refers to Learners with disabilities who cannot cope with the average learners in a school setting.
4. **Demographic of the respondents:** are attributes considered for this study in terms of gender, age, educational qualifications and number of years teaching experience.



## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **Learning Environment**

According to learner's dictionary environment is defined as the surroundings or the condition that affect a person or things or it is the condition or influence that affects growth and development.

#### **Learning Environment**

For education in school to be effective, the school learning environment needs to be conducive to learning. The learning environment is where all of the many forces acting on exceptional children interact and influence each other. Or learning environment is the place in which pupils can obtain some knowledge and skills. It includes the school, its buildings, facilities materials and the surrounding environment.

Environment is of fundamental importance to the success of any organization. To be effective, managers must have a clear understanding of their environment, how environment influences their work, and how they can control and change their environment. An analysis of the organization is an essential process used to develop the education manager's strategy. Some managers even call the education systems "a global enterprise" which must be to support sustained economic growth (Shaw, 2005) also emphasizes globalization's significant role in sustainable social development.

An educational institution is an open-system organization (Griffin, 1990). Such organizations input resources (e.g. material resources) from the external environment and output the products of their operation (knowledge, skills, and competencies) into the external environment.

The external environment of the system can be categorized in two basic segments: the general environment and the task environment (Griffin, 1990). The general environment includes such aspects as economic, socio-cultural, political-legal, and

technological. Stoner (1978) calls them “variables” because they are constantly changing. The task environment (or the direct-action environment) is comprised of several specific elements of the organization’s surroundings that directly influence activities: customers (students and employers), suppliers, partners (educational institutions and financial organizations-sponsors), and competitors. The general environment t subsystems are depicted in Figure 1. It should be mentioned that the external educational environment is not a separate element of the general environment but an integral part and a core component.

### The Internal Environment of an Educational Organization

Material Resources	Human Resources	Instructional Environment
<p>- physical environment units: buildings, lecture rooms and lecture halls, library, laboratories, canteens, etc</p> <p>Technological environment: laboratory equipment, computers, Internet resources</p>	<p>- managers of all levels</p> <p>- teachers</p> <p>Attending/supporting staff</p>	<p>documents which regulate the learning process and determine its content (academic programs, curricula)</p> <p>teaching materials, which serve as an auxiliary tool ensuring the educational process.</p>

When the external environment undergoes serious changes, the internal environment must change as well. Changes in the external environment make the educational organization adjust to the new situation in the global market. Educational institutions provide their students with the opportunity to obtain professional knowledge and professional skills.

Educational experts are currently concerned with the educational environment, which is influence of globalization and the accompanying international cooperation, demographic, and socio-cultural changes. A student-friendly environment plays and

increasingly important role as strategic component in today's education. Creating an effective educational environment has always been a challenge for education experts.

Globalization has had a major effect on educational environments. More than ever, people rely on "innovation and new technologies to drive the growth of the economy, jobs and living standards," (Gillespie & Nakatomi, 2002). An emerging knowledge-based society poses new challenges to educational organizational. It is clear that technological progress stimulates economic growth and that the development of modern society is directly related to the quality of a country's educational system.

The last year of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have brought an astonishing change to the global educational system, which is in a state of non-stop evolution. As living standards improve, people realize the value of raising the level of education and emphasize life-long learning. Education has become a long-term investment that can determine a person's future.

The best learning environment is one of high challenge and low stress, ritualized and patterned positive teacher behavior influences performance, constant and varied exposure to new material encourages quicker and deeper learning.

Differentiated structures are necessary for effective individualized learning. The use of individualized educational programs enhances learning for special needs learners.

Constant and varied exposure to new material encourages quicker and deeper learning, music can be used to improve recall as well as create the chosen learning environment and incorporate a range of teaching strategies within planning to cater for individual needs of learners.

Ensures resources are appropriate, accessible., identifiable and relevant to children's learning needs. The use of support services and devices enhances learning among the special needs. Environment should support pupils to become independent and active learners. By ensuring total elimination of barriers to facilitate mobility and accessibility.

## **Social Adaptation**

Social adaptation refers to the eradication or reduction of social barriers which make persons with special needs remain isolated or segregated from other people in the society.

All students should have equitable access to learning, opportunities for achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their educational programs. (Policy Document: special Education: <http://www/bced.gov.bc.ca/policy/policies/special.ed.htm>). Adaptations are teaching and assessment strategies especially designed to accommodate a student's needs so he or she can achieve the learning outcomes of the subject or course and to demonstrate mastery of concepts. Essentially, adaptations are "best practice" in teaching. A student working on learning outcomes of any grade or course level may be supported through use of adaptations.

Adaptations do not represent unfair advantages to students. In fact, the opposite could be true. If appropriate adaptations are not used, students could be unfairly penalized for having learning differences, creating serious negative impacts to their achievement and self-concept.

## **Examples of Adaptations**

Accommodations in the form of adaptations occur when teachers differentiate instruction, assessment and materials in order to create a flexible learning environment. For example, a student could be working on below grade level learning outcomes in language Arts and at grade level in all other subjects or courses, some of which require reading materials at the lower reading level.

Adaptations include, but are not limited to: Audio tapes, electronic texts, or a peer helper to assist with assigned readings access to a computer for written assignments (e.g use of word prediction software, spell-checker, idea generator), alternatives to written assignments to demonstrate knowledge and understanding advance organizers/graphic organizers to assist with following classroom presentations extended time to complete assignments or tests, support to develop and practice study skills; for example, in a learning assistance block, and use of

computer software which provides text to speech/speech to text capabilities, pre-teaching key vocabulary or concepts; multiple exposure to materials and working on provincial learning outcomes from a lower grade level.

Best practice in teaching suggests that a record of successful adaptations of any student should be kept within a student's life to both document current practice and support future instructional needs. In the case of a student with special needs who has an individual educational Plan (IEP) or English as a second Language student who have Annual instructional plans, successful adaptations are recorded in these plans to document how the student is being supported currently and also so other teachers will know what works well for that student.

For students with special needs, adaptations that are used for tests and exams must be included in their IEPs in order for them to be considered for adaptations to the provincial exam conditions (adjudication).

### **Grading and Reporting when there are Adaptations**

Grading for student who have been provided with adaptations should be in relation to the outcomes of the curriculum. If the learning outcomes that a student is working toward are from the curriculum of a grade level lower than the current grade placement, this should be indicated in the IEP or learning plan and in the body of the student's progress report.

### **Theoretical Perspective**

According to Vygotsky's social cultural theory of human leaning, he describes learning as a social process and the origination of human intelligence in society or culture. The major theme of Vygotsky's theoretical framework is that social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development of cognitive.

Education in schools to be effective, the environment needs to be conducive to learning, allowing the space and time to interact within the learning and teaching process. Creating and maintaining stimulating learning environment can be achieved through effective classroom organization, interactive and whole school displays and climate of innovation.

Vygotsky believed that everything is learned on two levels first, through interaction with others and then integrated into the individual's mental structure. Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level and later, on the individual level, first between people and then inside the child.

The second aspect of Vygotsky's theory is the idea that the potential for cognitive development is limited to a "zone of proximal development" (ZPD). This "Zone" is the area of exploration for which the student is cognitively prepared but requires help and social interaction to fully develop (Brinier, 1999).

A teacher or more experienced peer is able to provide the learner with "scaffolding" to support the student's evolving understanding of knowledge or development of complex skill. Collaborative learning, discourse, modeling and scaffolding are strategies for supporting the intellectual knowledge and skills of learners and facilitating learning.

Vygotsky's social cultural theory is widely cited by educators even today, as they formulate plans on how to get the most from students challenging them to reach their highest potential. Vygotsky believed that social interaction leads not only to increased levels of knowledge but that it actually changes a child's thought and behavior. Since it is the goal of parents and educators alike to help children become high achievers in learning.

Vygotsky believed that learning begins at birth and continues throughout all of life. Successful learning takes place, teachers and other educators should employ the following strategies.

- (1) Scaffolding: Scaffolding requires that an instructor shows by example how to solve a problem, while controlling the learning environment so that students can take things step by step, expanding their base of knowledge without excessive frustration.

**Reciprocal Teaching:** A highly successful teaching method, reciprocal teaching provides an environment of open dialogue between students and teacher which goes beyond a simple question and answer session. By alternating turns leading discussions

students soon find themselves capable of assuming a leadership and instructional role.

## **Related Studies**

### **Learning Environment and Social Adaptation**

The assessment techniques so far have focused on the student problem behavior, self concepts, acceptance by peers, interests and attitudes towards school. Although this is a necessary part of the assessment process, it is also important to consider the characteristics of the classroom and the other environments where the students must function (Feagans, 1972), Rhodes 1967) in the ecological approach to assessment, both student and environmental characteristics are of interest.

Ecological assessment studies the match or mismatch between the behaviors of students and the constraints imposed by the environment. Thurman (1977) has identified three factors to consider a). The student's deviant or nondeviant behavior b). The student's functional competence and c). The tolerance of the microecology such as classroom for deviant or incompetent student behavior. Smith, Neisworth and Greer (1978) also recommended comprehensive assessment of the learning environment. In addition to evaluation of students performance, they identified four major environments for assessment; Instructional (Curriculum, methods and materials), social services within the school and classroom and physical. The next sections describe strategies for assessing school learning environment. Included are techniques for gathering information about the expectation teachers hold for behavior, the instructional demands placed upon the students in the classroom learning environment, interactions between students and teachers and physical characteristics of the environment.

Observations, interviews and other informal procedures are typically used to assess the classroom learning environment. One published system for this purpose is the instructional environment scale (Ysseldyke & Christenson, 1987s) this term is made up of three components, a classroom observation, a structured student interview and a structured teacher interview. The system describes learning environment.

In terms of twelve factor identified as critical for students learning: The factors are instructional presentations, classroom environment, teacher expectations, cognitive emphasis, Motivational strategies, relevant practices, academic engaged time, informal feedback, adaptive instructions, progress evaluation, instructional planning and student understanding.

Teachers differ in the behavioral expectations they hold for students. The same student behavior may be considered by one teacher but inappropriate by another. Thus consideration of the teacher's standards for classroom conduct is necessary in the investigation of student behavior problem. So in many classrooms, the rules for behavior are stated explicitly so students understand which behaviors are acceptable and which are not.

The instructional demands in the learning environment especially in the classroom can have an influence upon student's behavior. If students are faced with academic expectations that they are unable to fulfill, they may react by displaying inappropriate classroom behavior. It is important to consider not only the behavior itself but also the instructional events and conditions that precede it. Clarizio and McCoy (1983).

The school curriculum has major impact upon the instructional condition of the classroom because curriculum dictates what learners are taught. The curriculum specifies not only the particular skills and information learners should learn but also the scope of these skills and the sequence of instructions.

Interactions between teacher and learner are one of the key factors in the classroom learning environment. Teachers can influence students conduct and academic performance by how they react to learners appropriate and inappropriate behavior for example if a learner volunteers to answer questions in class but is repeatedly ignored by the teacher, the learner may stop attempting to participate or may resort to inappropriate behavior to gain the teacher's attention (Brophy & Good, 1969)

Physical conditions can influence the effectiveness of the classroom learning environment. A noise room, poorly arranged surroundings and uncomfortable



temperatures can impair both learners and teachers ability to perform at their best. Reynolds and Birch (1977) have developed a system for evaluating the physical conditions of classrooms including factors such as space and facility accommodations, teaching learning settings, and instructional materials.

### **Summary of Gaps Identified in the Literature**

A lot of research has been carried out on learning environment and social adaptation. However, none has been done in Nyamira district-Kenya.

The researchers key theory of Vygotsky on social cultural 1993 firm the basis of the research. However, the time-gap to 2012 is long. Many factors have changed since then and the country where Vygotsky took his study have a different culture and technology.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Research Design**

This study employed the descriptive survey design specifically the descriptive correlational strategy. The study determined the relationship between learning environment and social adaptation of learners in special institutions in Nyamira District.

#### **Research Population**

The study involved 100 teachers teaching special needs children in 24 special units in Nyamira District.

#### **Sampling Size**

The number of teachers handling learners in special institutions were 100. The researcher decided to use universal sampling where all the target population was used because they were few and no rational need for sampling.

The table below shows the respondents of the study, number of schools target population and sample size.

**Table 1**  
**Sample size**

<b>Schools</b>	<b>Target population</b>	<b>Sample size</b>
NRC	10	10
NMR	6	6
OMO	6	6
GES	2	2
NCR	4	4
GG	2	2
KIB	2	2
GUC	4	4
NKR	6	6
EN	2	2
KEB	4	4
KEN	2	2
TN	6	6
GET	4	4
MAT	4	4
MAR	4	4
RYG	4	4
RM	2	2
GCR	2	4
BN	4	4
OMS	6	6
EKR	4	4
RT	4	4
YMR	4	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>100</u></b>	<b><u>100</u></b>

### **Sampling Procedure**

The purposive and universal sampling procedures were utilized to select the respondents based on:

- i) Male or female teachers as respondents in the special institutions.
- ii) Teachers with teaching experience ranging from one year and above.
- iii) From the list of qualified respondents, the researcher involved all of them since every institution for special needs children had less than fifteen teachers.
- iv) Qualified trained both male and female were selected.

## Research Instruments

The researcher used the:

Face sheet to gather data on the respondents demographic characteristic in terms of gender, qualification and teaching experience.

The researcher made questionnaire was used to determine the learning environment and social adaptation of learners with special needs in special institution in Nyamira District. Twenty indicators were used to determine the learning environment and then items to determine social adaptations.

## Data Analysis

The frequency and percentage distribution was used to determine the demographic characteristics of the respondents.

The mean and rank were applied for the learning environment and social adaptation of learners with special needs.

For the relationship between the variables the Pearsons linear correlation co-efficiency was used to determine the difference between the two means to rule out on the null hypothesis. For the regression analysis the (SPSS) was used to rule out on the null hypothesis.

The rating guide below was used.

Mean range	Response mode	Interpretation
3. 26-400	Strongly agree	Agree with no doubt
2.51 -3.25	Agree	Agree with some doubt
1.76 -2.50	Disagree	Disagree with some doubt
1.00 -1.75	Strongly disagree	Disagree with no doubt at all

## Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

### Validity

The researcher made questionnaire was subjected to three experts and was proved valid at 0.83 refer to appendix v

$$CVI = \frac{CVI_1 + CVI_2 + CVI_3}{3}$$

$$V = \frac{RQ}{TQ}$$

Legend =TQ=Total Questionnaire

RQ= relevant questions

### **Reliability**

The test-retest technique was used to determine the reliability of the researcher devised instruments to some respondents who were not be included in the actual study. In this test-retest technique, the questionnaires were administered twice to the same subjects. The test was reliable and the trails being measured were stable, the results were consistent and essentially the same in both time

### **Data Gathering Procedures**

#### **Before the Administration of the Questionnaires**

The researcher got authority letter from College of Higher Degrees and Research for the researcher to solicit approval to conduct the study from respective selected school institution.

When approved, the researcher was secured a list of the qualified respondents from the school authorities in charge and selected all qualified teachers because each of the school involved had less than 15 teachers.

The respondents were explained about the study and were requested to sign the informed consent form (appendix 3).

The researcher reproduced more than enough questionnaires for distribution.

Selected research assistants who would assist in the data collection were briefed and oriented in order to be consistent in administering the questionnaires.

#### **During the Administration of the Questionnaires**

The respondents were requested to answer completely and not to leave any part of the questionnaire unanswered.

The researcher and assistants emphasized retrieval of the questionnaires within five days from the date of distribution.

On retrieval, all returned questionnaires were checked if all are answered.

### **After the Administration of the Questionnaire**

The data gathered was collected, encoded in to the computer and statically treated using the statistical package of social sciences (SPSS) in tables to show mean, frequency percentage and rank.

### **Ethical Considerations**

To ensure confidentiality of the information provided by the respondents and to ascertain the practice of ethics in this study, the following activities were implemented by the researcher:

1. The researcher ensured privacy of respondents when filling questioners.
2. The respondents and schools were coded instead of reflecting the names.
3. The respondents were requested to sign the Informed Consent Form (Appendix 3),
4. Authors quoted in the study were recognized through acknowledgement, citation and referencing.
5. Presentation of findings was generalized.

### **Limitations of the Study**

The researcher claimed an acceptable (0.05 level of significance) 5% margin of error in view of the following anticipated threats to validity with relevance to this study:

1. Testing: Differences in conditions and time when different persons obtained the data from respondents on different days at different hours. This was minimized by orienting and briefing the research assistants on the sampling techniques and data gathering procedures.
2. Extraneous variables, which were beyond the researcher's control such as respondents' honesty, personal biases and uncontrolled setting of the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter presents the data, statistical analysis in tables and interpretation of data after the tables.

The data in the table are in answer with this aspect of specific objectives (1) demographic characteristics of respondents as to age, gender, educational and teaching experience (2) level of conduciveness of learning environment (3) level of social adaptation (4) significant relationship between learning environment and social adaptation with learners with disabilities.

**Table 2**

#### **Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

<b>category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Gender</b> Male	33	33
Female	67	67
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Age</b> 20- 29	13	13
30- 39	30	30
40- 49	40	40
50 and above	17	17
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
Certificate	12	12
Diploma	60	60
Bachelors	18	18
Masters	10	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Number of years teaching experience</b>		
1- 3 years	14	14
4-7 years	56	56
8- 10 years	22	22
Above 10 years	8	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Primary data

As indicated in table 2 above, the majority respondents were females (67%) and male were (33%)

In terms of age, the majority of the respondents ranged (40-49) years. This comprises of 40%. This was closely followed by the ones in the age brackets of (30-39) years (30%). 13% of the respondents were in the age bracket of (21-29) years and finally those above 50 year wee represented by 17%.

From the findings the majority of teachers are diploma holders (60%) followed by degree holders (28%). Finally certificate holders were founds to be the minority (12%).

According to teaching experience, it was found that most teachers handling learners in selected special school/units ranged (4-7) year teaching experiences (56%). This was closely followed by teachers with teaching experience (8-10) year represented by 22%. Teachers with teaching experience of (1-3) years were found to be second last with a percentage of 14% and those above 10 years teaching experience were the minority (8%)



**Table 3 (a)**

**Level of learning environment**

**Internal environment**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Teachers are trained in special needs education	3.55	Very high	1
Health notice boards are available	3.20	Very high	2
Availability of learning materials and equipments	3.13	High	3
Classrooms are spacious with enough lighting	2.90	High	4
Use of visual aids to highlight concepts and ideas	1.80	Low	5
Display of pupils work in classrooms and public areas	1.65	Very low	6
Adaptive curriculum	1.56	Very low	7
"Sun trap? Room are available for the visual impaired	1.48	Very low	8
Acoustically treated rooms are available	1.36	Very low	9
Use of modern technology	1.34	Very low	10
<b>Average mean</b>	<b>2.197</b>		

Key

3.26 – 4.00	very high
2.51 – 3.25	High
1.76 – 2.50	Low
1.00 – 1.75	Very low

## **Level of learning Environment**

**Table 3(a) above shows the findings on the (independent variable) level of learning environment.**

The indicator on teachers are trained in special needs education has a mean of 3.55 which is equivalent to very high and ranked first on the likert scale closely followed by availability of health notice board with a mean of 3.20 equivalent to very high. This was followed by availability of learning materials and equipment with a mean of 3.13 and it is ranked third.

Classrooms are spacious with enough lighting at a mean of 2.90 which is high and ranked a fourth. Use of visual aids to highlight concepts and ideas represented by a mean of 1.80 equivalent to low indicates that learners with special needs are not well catered. Display of the pupils work in classroom and republic areas with a mean of 1.65 equivalent to very low and ranked sixth.

Adapted curriculum for special needs learners is ranked seventh with a mean of 1.56 this calls for a curriculum of favour learners with disabilities. "sun trap" rooms for the visual impaired was ranked eighth with a mean of 1.48 and acoustically treated rooms for the hearing was ranked ninth with a mean of 1.36 both are very low not conducive for learning.

Finally we get that learners with disabilities of any nature need to be exposed to modern technology like computers was ranked tenth with a mean of 1.34 which was very low and being the least.

Generally, the level of learning environment was found low at a mean of 2.197.

**Table 3 (b)****Level of Learning Environment****External Environment**

<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Games teachers are trained in skills for new games and safe use of playground equipments	3.66	Very high	1
Availability of adapted games equipments for play and interaction	3.56	Very high	2
Playgrounds surfaces are painted to create meaning on the game	3.15	Very high	3
Environment is barrier free for mobility	1.94	Low	4
Availability of clean water for drinking and washing	1.85	Low	5
Installation of benches and tables	1.70	Very low	6
Dangerous areas are painted in bright colours	1.60	Very low	7
Wide gates, doors and ramps are available for mobility	1.45	Very low	8
Use of bliss symbols and graphics	1.45	Very low	9
Use of adapted latrines or toilets.	1.38	Very low	10
<b>Average mean</b>	<b>2.194</b>		

**Key for interpretation**

3.26 – 4.00	very high
2.51 – 3.25	High
1.76 – 2.50	Low
1.00 – 1.75	Very low

The indicator, games teachers are trained in skills for new games and safe use of play ground equipment was ranked first with a mean of 3.66 which was very high followed by availability of adapted games equipments for play and interaction at a mean of 3.56 also very high. The play ground surfaces are painted to create meaning on the games was ranked third with a mean of 3.15 also very high. Environment is barrier free for mobility was ranked fourth with a mean of 1.94 equipment to low on the likert scale. The indicator availability of clean water for drinking and washing was ranked fifth with a mean of 1.85 equivalent to low. Schools need to provide learners with clean water for drinking and washing after visiting the toilets.

Installation of benches and tables to avoid accidents with a mean of 1.70 which was low and ranked sixth. Dangerous areas are painted in bright colours was ranked seventh with a mean of 1.60. Availability of wide gates, doors and ramps was very low with a mean of 1.45 having a tie with use of bliss symbols and graphic.

Use of adapted latrines or toilets was ranked last with a mean of 1.38 very low on the likert scale.

Generally the average mean on this was found to be low.

**Table 4**

**Level of Social Adaptation**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Interpretation</b>	<b>Rank</b>
Learners interact with peers	3.65	Very high	1
Are very free in class	3.50	Very high	2
Follow simple instructions	3.30	Very high	3
Pay attention to teachers	3.20	High	4
Discuss their problems with teachers	2.95	High	5
Plays at play time	2.80	High	6
Communicate adequately in class	2.10	Low	7
Motivation and reinforcement	2.05	Low	8
Come to school regularly	1.85	Low	9
Availability of role models	1.00	Very low	10
<b>Total Average mean</b>	<b>2.640</b>		

**Key for interpretation**

3.26 – 4.00	very high
2.51 – 3.25	High
1.76 – 2.50	Low
1.00 – 1.75	Very low

This table represents the third objective which was set to determine the level of social adaptation to learners in special institutions in Nyamira District.

From the analysis, the indicator on learners interact with peers was very high on the likert scale with a mean of 3.65. This was closely followed by the indicator on are

very free in class with a mean of 3.30 which also very high. The indicator on learners follow simple instruction is ranked very high. This was closely followed by the indicators on pay attention to teachers with a mean of 3.20 which is high. Learners discusses their problems with teachers was ranked fifth at a mean of 2.95 also high. The indicator plays at play time is ranked sixth with a mean of 2.80 which is high an equivalent to agree with most respondents.

Communicate adequately in class was ranked seventh with a mean of 2.10 which was low on the likert scale. This was closely followed by motivation and reinforcement ranked eighth with a mean of 2.05 also low. The learners come to school regularly was ranked second last with a mean of 1.85 which was low. The last was on the availability of role models for motivation with a mean of 1.00 which was very low and in tenth rank.

As a summary, the level of social adaptation of learners with special needs in special institutions in Nyamira District was high with an average a mean of 2.640. This showed that most respondents agreed that the social adaptation of special learners is high.

**Table 5**

**The Relationship between Learning Environment and Social Adaptation of learners in Special Institutions in Nyamira District**

Learning Environment vs Social Adaptation	r. value	Sig.value	Interpretation	Decision on Null hypothesis
2.1855 2.640	0.554	0.05	Positive Significance	Rejected

Results in table 5 indicates that the relationship between the level of learning environment and level of social adaptation to learners with special needs in Nyamira District special schools/units has a positive significance that is the learning environment play much to the development and acquiring of new knowledge of children. Children develop and acquire new knowledge by reaching to their surroundings (till 1995).

The positive significance in table 5 conquered with the vygotsky's social cultural theory which explains that education in schools to be effective, the environment needs to be conducive to learning allowing pupils space and time to interact within the learning and teaching process.

**Table 6**

**Regression Analysis between the dependent and independent variables**

Variables regressed	Adjusted R-Square	F-Value	Sig.	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
Social adaptation Vs Learning environment	-0.331	0.004	0.951	There is no significant relationship between DV and IV	Accepted

The regression results in table 6 reveals that there is no significant relationship between dependent variable and independent variable. Regression analysis reveals that significant value is greater than F-Value (F-value 0.004 and significant value 0.951.)

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **FINDINGS**

The main purpose of this study was to establish the level of learning environment and level of social adaptation of learners in special institutions in Nyamira District., Kenya. Objective one of the study was to determine the demographic characteristics of the respondents in terms of gender, age educational qualification and number of years teaching experience. Objective two was to determine the level of learning environment and objective three was to determine the level of social adaptation while the last objective was to determine if there is a significant relationship between learning environment and social adaptation.

#### **Profile of Respondents**

In terms of gender, the majority of the respondents were female 67% . Only 33% were male. 40% of Special Needs Teachers are between the ages of 40-49, followed by 30% in the ages of 30-39, only 17% of the teachers were above 50 years. The youngest teachers were 13% in the ages of 20-29.

Most of the Special Needs Teachers had Diploma in Special Needs Teachers totaling to 60%. 18% had Bachelors, 12% had Certificates and only 10% had masters in Special Needs Teachers.

In terms of teaching experience, 56% of Special Needs Teachers have an experience of 4-7 years. 22% have an experience between 8-10 years. 14% of teachers have an experience of 1-3 years. Only 8% have an experience above 10 years.

#### **Level of Learning Environment**

On the level of learning environment, the findings showed that, some indicators such as use of modern technology, acoustically treated rooms, "such trap" room for the visual impaired, adapted curriculum, and Display of pupils work in classroom and public areas were very low. Indicator on use of visual aids to highlight concepts and



ideas were also low while classrooms are spacious with enough lighting and availability of in special needs education.

Learning materials and equipments were ranked high while the indicator on teachers are trained on special needs education was leading equivalent to very high followed by availability of health notice board also very high.

On external environment the following were very low; use of adapted latrines or toilets, use of bliss symbols and graphics that had a tie with wide gates, doors and ramps available for mobility, and dangerous areas are painted in bright colours. These were followed by availability of clean water for drinking and washing were low. The indicators on games teachers are trained in skills for new games and safe use of playground equipments, availability of adapted games equipments for play and interaction, and playground surfaces are painted to create meaning on the game were very high based the findings.

Generally, the level learning environment for learners with special needs in special institutions in Nyamira Districts.

Had an average mean of 2.186 equivalent to low on the likert scale.

### **Level of Social Adaptation**

From the results of the data analysis the level of social adaptation was generally high at a mean of 2.640. The following indicators were ranked very high.

Learners interact with peers, learner are very free in class, and follow simple instructions. They were closely followed by indicators on pay attention to teachers, Discusses their problems with teachers and play at play time that were high on the likert scale. Communicate adequately in class, motivation and reinforcement and learners come to school regularly were low while availability of role models for encouragement and motivation for learners with special needs was very low.

## **Relationship of Learning Environment with Social Adaptation**

From the analysis there was a significant relationship between learning environment and social adaptation in special institutions in Nyamira District.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the purpose of the study, the following conclusions were drawn; The null hypothesis of the study was rejected. There was a significant relationship between the level of learning environment and level of social adaptation in special institutions in Nyamira District after correlating the two variables.

The study proved Vygotsky's theory of social-culture which state that human learning describes learning as a social process and the origination of human intelligence in society or culture. It also states that learners should be provided with socially rich environment in which to explore knowledge. The study therefore validated the theory beyond any doubts.

There is still a lot to be done in this area of study. This is especially in line with creating a rich environment for a lot of information on what is to be done is available, implementation spirit and availability of resources is still wanting.

## **Recommendations**

To bridge the gap between gender disparity between male and female teachers, the male gender to be motivate and priotized for training.

Policy on improvement of environment for special needs educational learners to be implemented fully to bear fruit. Especially, infrastructure of special need educational institutions. This calls for more funding from the government and NGO's for implementations.

Accessibility to Modern games, and training of special need education teachers on use of games for social adaptation to be enhanced.

Medical staff and EARC make regular visits to schools for checks and assessments and counseling services.

Use of modern facilities specially designed for special need education learners to be made available such as graphics, use of bliss symbols, ramps, wide gates and door.

Creation of peaceful atmosphere both at home and school for free-socialization to take-place.

Kenya government to set a standard of comparable to those in Western countries living that aims to take good care of the under privileged in the society.

### **Area of Further Research**

Survey to be done on factors affecting the level of learning environment on special needs learners in special institutions.

Survey to be done on factors affecting the level of social adaptation of learners with special needs in special institutions and how best the learning environment can be improved to increase the social adaptation of learners with special needs in special institutions in Nyamira district.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1A



Ggaba Road - Kansanga  
P.O. Box 20000, Kampala, Uganda  
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Fax: +256- 41- 501974  
E- mail: admin@kiu.ac.ug.  
Website: www.kiu.ac.ug

#### OFFICE OF THE COORDINATOR OF EDUCATION SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH (SPGSR)

August 23, 2011

Dear Sir/Madam,

**RE: REQUEST FOR MARY .N. OMURWA MSE/18153/111/DF  
TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR ORGANIZATION**


The above mentioned is a bonafide student of Kampala International University pursuing a Masters of Education in Special Needs Education. She is currently conducting a field research of which the title is "**Learning Environment and Social Adaption of Learners in Selected Special Institutions in Nyamira Division, Nyamira District Kenya.**"

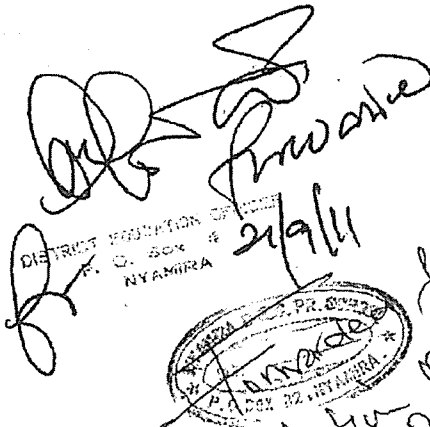
Your organization has been identified as a valuable source of information pertaining to her research project. The purpose of this letter is to request you to avail her with the pertinent information she may need.

Any information shared with her from your organization shall be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Any assistance rendered to her will be highly appreciated.

Yours truly,

  
Ms. Kyolaba Sarah  
Coordinator Education; (SPGSR)

  
2/9/11  
District Education Officer  
P.O. Box 4  
NYAMIRA  
23/9/2011

"Exploring the Heights"

## **APPENDIX 1B**

### **TRANSMITTAL LETTER FOR THE RESPONDENTS**

Dear Sir, Madam,

Greetings!

I am a Masters student in Special needs education of Kampala International University. Part of the requirements for the award is a thesis. My study is entitled, learning environment and social adaptation in selected special institutions in Nyamira District, Kenya. Within this context, may I request you to participate in this study by answering the questionnaires. Kindly do not leave any option unanswered. Any data you will provide shall be for academic purposes only and no information of such kind shall be disclosed to others.

May I retrieve the questionnaire within five days (5)?

Thank you very much in advance.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs. Mary N. Omurwa.



## APPENDIX 11

### CLEARANCE FROM ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date.....

#### Candidates' Data

Name.....

Reg.#.....

Course.....

Title of study.....

#### Ethical Review Checklist

##### The study reviewed considered the following.

- Physical safety of Human Subjects
- Psychological safety
- Emotional Security
- Privacy
- Written Request for Author of Standardized Instrument
- Coding of Questionnaires/Anonymity/Confidentiality
- Permission to Conduct the Study
- Informed Consent
- Citations/Authors Recognized.

##### Results of ethical review

- Approved
- Conditional (to provide the Ethics Committee with corrections)
- Disapproved/Resubmit proposal

##### Ethics Committee (name and Signature)

Chairperson.....

Members.....

### **APPENDIX III**

#### **INFORMED CONSENT**

I am giving my consent to be part of the research study of Mrs. Mary N. Omurwa that will focus on learning environment and social adaptation. I shall be assured of privacy, anonymity and confidentiality and I will be given the option to refuse participation and right to withdraw my participation anytime. I have been informed that the research is voluntary and that the results will be given to me if I ask for it.

Initials:.....

Date:.....

## **APPENDIX IV A**

### **Research Instrument**

#### **FACE SHEET: DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS (TEACHER)**

Gender (please tick)

☐ Male

☐ Female

Age

☐ 20-29

☐ 30-39

☐ 40-49

☐ 50 and above

Qualifications under education discipline (please specify)

☐ Certificate

☐ Diploma

☐ Bachelors

☐ Masters

Number of years teaching experience (please tick)

☐ Below 1 year

☐ 1-3 years

☐ 4-7 years

☐ 7-10 years

☐ above 10 years

## APPENDIX IV B

### QUESTIONNAIRE TO DETERMINE THE LEVEL OF LEARNING ENVIRONMENT FOR LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (FOR TEACHERS)

**INSTRUCTIONS:** please indicate the most appropriate rating to the items below.

Rating	response mode	Descriptions
4	Strongly agree	Agree with no doubt at all
3	agree	Agree with some doubts
2	disagree	Disagree with some doubts
1	Strongly disagree	Disagree with no doubt at all

#### Learning Environment

##### The Internal Environment

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Classrooms are spacious with enough lighting
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Teachers trained special needs education.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Display of pupils work in classroom and public areas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. availability of learning materials and equipments
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. use of modern technology like computer
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. use of visual aids to highlight concept and ideas
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. adapted curriculum
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. "sun trap" rooms are available for the visual impaired
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. acoustically treated rooms are available
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. health notice boards are available

##### The External Environment

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. play ground surface are painted to create meaning on the game
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Availability of adapted games equipment for play interaction

2004-2010 Nyairicha special for mentally handicapped

2010- date teacher Nyamira special unit.

### **EXTRA CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES**

Games

Best in athletics

### **CLUBS**

I used to be active member of christain union and drama in high school and college

### **LEADERSHIP**

Class teacher in-charge

Chair lady guidance and counseling in school

Group secretary such as Kenya women finance

Dormitory prefect in secondary

Class monitor class 6-8 in primary

### **HOBBIES**

Singing

Watching movies

Socialization

### **REFEREES**

Charles Mongare

Health Administrator

P.O Box 3

Nyamira

philis Keragia

Teacher, Wangu primary

Tel. 0722918479