

Teachers Attitude towards Learners with Learning Difficulties: The Case of
Siakago Zone, Mbeere District, Kenya

By

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DECLARATION

I, **Kenneth Mureithi** declare that this is my original work and is a result of my personal effort that it has never been presented before to any institution of learning for any award.

KK.

Date

05/10/08

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APPROVAL

This is to satisfy that this report I has been submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree in Bachelor of Education Arts with my approval as University Supervisor.

Sign.......... Date.....

Ms. Onego Roseline

DEDICATION

This research is dedicated to **God** Almighty who gave me sound mind and physical strength to undertake and accomplish this project in the prescribed period of time.

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DEFINITION OF TERMS

Anoxia:	A situation where es mild infections.
Dysfunction:	Not working normally or properly.
Dyslexia:	Brain disorders causing reading and spelling problems.
Imbecile:	A person with very low level of intelligence
Imperfect:	Containing faults or mistakes.
Morons:	A very stupid person.
Prevalence:	Something that exists or very common at a particular time or a particular place.
Respondents:	A person who answers questions especially in a survey.
Salicylates:	Food with bitter chemicals found in some plants.

Abstract

The study aimed at understanding teacher's attitudes towards learners' with specific learning difficulties in Siakago zone of Mbeere District. The specific objectives were to identify causes of special learning difficulties in Siakago zone, Mbeere District, to assess the attitude of teachers towards learners with specific learning difficulties in Siakago zone Mbeere District and to discuss the intervention strategies towards learners with specific learning difficulties in Siakago zone, Mbeere District.

The population surveyed was heterogeneous. It consisted of teachers, Children and parents/ guardians. The choice of the teachers depended. On the fact that they are the ones directly involved in teaching the children. Their attitudes and perception towards children with learning difficulties would easily be established. And children were selected as special interest group. The researcher used the quantitative approach which involved Collecting of data using specially prepared questionnaires which was directed to the target group. The data was then presented using tabulation, to arrive at valid and sound information.

It was concluded that the teacher from Siakago Zone still have some negative aspects towards the learners with specific learning difficulties. Some of them were actually trained in special needs education but they were not practicing what they learnt either in applying themselves or by through sensitizing others teacher or issues related to learners with special needs and more especially those with SLDs. A good number of teachers were not trained in this area and therefore lacked the knowledge and tactics to assist learners with specific learning difficulties. It was therefore recommended among others that Teachers should use appropriate teaching approaches, to these learners with special difficulties.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter covers the introductory aspects of the study. It presents the background to the study problem statement of the research problem study objectives and also justification of the study. The scope of the study is also included

1.1 Background to the Study

The first known use of the term learning disabilities was defined by Samwel Kirk (1962) After several definitions, specific learning difficulties were finally described in the public law 94-142 of United States of America as a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, which may manifest itself in an important ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell or do mathematical calculations as perceptual handicaps, brain injury minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia. The term does not include children who have learning problems which are primarily the result of visual hearing or motor handicap or mental retardation or environment cultural or economic disadvantage Due to ignorance, lack of information and primitively of most Africans, children with specific learning difficulties in Africa have undergone various difficulties such as being labeled and given names by their teachers and members of the community such as Morons, Imbeciles, stupid and other such related terms. Little do the teachers know that these children have specific problems in special areas of learning which can be tackled easily by implementing individualism Educational Programmes.

Kenya being in Africa has not been left out and more specifically teachers of Siakago Zone of Mbeere district. In this connection, the researcher intends to find out and identify the attitudes of the teachers towards children with specific needs learning difficulties in Siakago Zone of Mbeere District.

1.2 Statement Of the Problem

There is enough evidence to show that teachers are always attracted to fast learners and achieving students in a class. In the same way the government of Kenya as compared to other governments like Uganda and Tanzania has been investing a lot in the teacher so that they may be motivated to produce quality education through their students in the mainstream system. However the fact still remains that learner with difficulties are still not showing any significant improvement in their academic performance. This research aims at shedding more light on teachers' attitudes on learners with learning difficulties.

1.3 Study Objectives

General Objectives

The key objective of this study is to understand teacher's attitudes towards learners' with specific learning difficulties in Siakago zone of Mbeere District.

1.4 Specific Objectives

- i. To identify causes of special learning difficulties in Siakago zone, Mbere District.
- ii. To assess the attitude of teachers towards learners with specific learning difficulties in Siakago zone Mbere District.
- iii. To discuss the intervention strategies towards learners with specific learning difficulties in Siakago zone, Mbere District.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. What are the causes of special learning difficulties?
- ii. What is the teachers' attitude towards learners with specific learning difficulties?
- iii. How can we best solve the problem of learners with learning difficulties?

1.4 Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in Siakago zone, Mbere District, Kenya. It focused on investigating the teacher's attitude towards children with specific learning difficulties. The area is chosen for this study because it is where piloting was started in the district which sensitized teachers about slow learners. This therefore means that the various views of respondents towards children with learning difficulties could be obtained. Secondly, the area is also accessible and familiar to the researcher.

1.5 Significance of the Study

- The recommendations of the study will help to minimize or to change the negative attitude exhibited by teachers to tackle the problems being faced by these learners in Siakago Zone and bring them to the level suitable in complementing with other learners.
- The study will be useful to the researchers to gain practical experience, this is through observation and information got from various schools and community at large.
- Lastly this study will be useful to personal involvement in the implementation of teacher's attitude towards children with special learning difficulties `

Limitations of the Study

- a) The study was limited to the scope which also affected the validity of research especially when applied to bigger scope like Africa.
- b) The respondents were biased even after having assured them confidentiality and having briefed them about the importance of the study.
- c) Lack of co-operations from the respondent
- d) the researcher was limited to time in carrying out the study alongside the normal classroom work, modules to cover other personal commitments

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the literature pertinent to the study drawn from past research findings, publications and journals. All this have been reviewed concomitantly to fill the gaps for the study at hand. The literature is not exhaustive as less research has so far been carried out on attitudes towards children with specific learning difficulties.

2.1 Causes of Specific Learning Difficulties

Dworetzky (2003) cited that learning disabilities are not caused by environmental factors, mental retardation or emotional disturbances but it's a form of intellectual handicap which are associated with specific disorders in listening, thinking, talking, reading writing, spelling or arithmetic. He continues that learning in disabled children have difficulties in communicating to others what they have seen or heard as stated by Feagans and short (2006).

In the same view, with Ndurumo (2006) cited that the possible causes of learning disabilities can be categorized in four areas namely Organic and Biochemical factors which leads to brain injury. This brain dysfunction leads to dyslexia and developmental aphasia. He continues that genetically factors as well as during prenatal and postnatal are also causes of specific learning difficulties.

Imperfect psychological process according to Ndurumo (2006) causes learning disabilities as a result of psychological disturbances. A child exhibits problems in perceiving how numbers or letters are written or recalling and conceptualizing them, and also understanding directions. Writing proper sentences, organizing a meaningful thought and recalling recently taught concepts or materials.

Though Dworetzky (2003) states that environmental factors do no cause learning disabilities Ndurumo, (2006) cites environmental factors such as nutrition, health, safety, sensory, stimulation language, and emotional and social development are causes of

specific learning difficulties. Though external to the body of the child, environmental factors affect a child in one way or another (Lovit – (2004) Reid & Hresko (2005), Wallace and Mc Loughlin (2005), advocates on the environmental factors as a cause of specific learning difficulties.

Educational factors are assumed to cause learning disabilities (Lovit 2004) whereby inadequate instruction prevents children from mastering the subject matter, Wallance and Mc Loughlin (2005) and Hirsch (2004) state that inappropriate teaching methods are used by some teachers to teach certain subjects. Such approaches may cause the child not to master the subject matters adequately or show little or no understanding, Ogonda (2002) cites that specific learning difficulties are inherited from the parents while others are congenital caused where the foetus is interfered with through use of drugs such as cigarettes, alcohol herbs and other such related drugs.

Maternal diseases according to Ogonda (2002) are also causes of specific Learning difficulties. Rubella (German Measles), Cytomegalovirus, Toxoplasmosis and venereal diseases are good examples.

Anoxia, unusual delivery, unfavourable birth conditions are also likely causes of another specific learning difficulties according to Ogonda (2002). Postnatal causes such as head injuries due to accidents, child abuse, and lack of stimulation, diseases, and food additives and Biochemical problems as cited earlier by Ndurumo (2003) are possible causes of specific learning difficulties.

2.2 Areas of Specific Learning Difficulties

Ndurumo (2006) states that according to Wallace and Mc Loughlin (2005) areas of learning disabilities include perceptual problems, motor problems, spoken language problems, reading problems, written language problems, arithmetic problems and social emotional problems .

Dworetzky (2003) also cited areas of learning disabilities in listening, thinking, talking reading, writing, spelling and arithmetic as it was stated by the National Advisory committee on Handicapped children (2007) in USA. Agonda (2002) states that learners with specific learning difficulties exhibit problems in written language, spelling spoken language, reading comprehension, basic skills and mathematical calculations or reasoning.

The three citations above are closely related though Ndurumo (2006) states that confusion still permeates the field of learning difficulties due to the fact that it is a young field and has not yet achieved a comprehensive and integrated professional approach.

2.3 Prevalence of Specific Learning Difficulties

Dworetzky (2003) estimated that between three and five percent of all school children in USA showed some difficulties, that fact within the definitions of learning disabilities. Ndurumo (2006) cited that the prevalence of learning disabilities depends on the definitions being used by the professionals or organizations serving children with specific learning difficulties. For example, a prevalence of three percent (3%) was proposed by Ndurumo (2006) for Kenya. It's therefore important to exercise discretion when giving prevalence of the children with specific learning difficulties. The number should not be exaggerated or underestimated. It is also important to make people realize that there is a need for service for such children.

2.4 Training and Attitudes of Teachers Towards

Dworetzky (2003) cited that teachers who are aware of learning disabilities are able to tailor materials to each child's needs; this means that if a child has visual problems, work should be modified to auditory format for the child to comprehend. It follows therefore that majority of teachers have no time to modify work for specific children with specific problems. To me, quite a good number of teachers have not acquired the special needs education and therefore they have little knowledge on how to deal with learners with specific learning difficulties like identifying them and giving them the necessary remediation.

2.5 Intervention Strategies for Learners with Learning Difficulties

Koppitz (2004) stated that learning disabilities cannot be corrected or cured by a specific teaching method or training technique. It is imperative that teachers have a wide range of instructional materials and techniques at their disposal and that they are imaginative and flexible enough to adopt these to the specific needs of their learners. We say there are as many teaching methods as there are teachers.

JW Lerner (2007) cited that for teachers to be successful in giving learners with specific learning difficulties proper intervention (remediation) he should possess the following qualities, empathy, kindness, ability, individualized instruction, consistency, knowledge of the field, love of children, diagnostic skills, familiarity with materials, competency in specific skills and other such like related qualities. A teacher with the qualities above is said to be of great help to the learners with specific learning difficulties.

Ndurumo (2006) cited that administration of drugs is a way or an intervention strategy especially to children with hyperactivity behaviours. Hyperactivity can also be managed by diet management where several authors argued that some chemicals found in food including additives and food coloring causes children to become hyperactive. Gearheart (2005) advocated removal of foods containing natural salicylates like apples, cherries, cucumbers, oranges, peaches, teas, tomatoes, food containing colours and flavours, tooth paste / powder any compound containing Aspirin. By so doing, the diet would not stimulate hyperactivity behaviours.

Ndurumo (2003) states that task analysis method of teaching is important as an instructional method since a task is broken down into small manageable bits which are easy for the learner to comprehend. Otherwise Mc Cathy (2006) cited that task analysis has two instructional values where it serves as an effective diagnostic functional level on a specific skill or task and also it provides the basis for sequential instruction which may be tailored to each child's pace of learning.

Precision teaching according to Ndurumo (2006) is a good method for learners with specific learning difficulties where the teacher records the progress of child's

behaviour on a chart and then uses the information to make instructional decisions , type of materials to use and even the mode of teaching to employ.

Kourland and Sindelar (2004) cited that process of precession teaching is an optimistic one. Once responses are precisely defined and recorded, the elements of a self correcting instructional system are in place.

Other intervention strategies are cited by Ndurumo (2006) where he proposes residential schools, day classes, resource rooms and itinerant services among others as a way of helping learners with specific learning difficulties. To solve this tragedy, Ogonda (2002) gives a breakthrough on how to support learners with specific learning difficulties in reading, writing, mathematic and attention related difficulties.

2.6 International Policies

In 1975 United Nations General Assembly adopted and proclaimed a resolution called “Universal declaration of human rights”. It focused on all spheres on human dignity and equal rights for all men, women, and children included, and more so especially handicapped ones. Therefore Education was considered as a human right to all. Education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stage.

On the above view, Dandiki (2002) asserts that a conference was held in Jomtien Thailand in 2002 to address Education issues. This was the world conference on Education. For all (E.F.A) it affirmed the principle that every child has a right to education whether disabled or with learning difficulties the conference noted that many children are excluded from the mainstream education. This included children living under difficult circumstances those discriminated against due to diseases e.g HIV / AIDS as well as dropouts and repeaters.

In relation n to that follow up conferences were held in Dakar Senegal (2004) and in Kisumu, Kenya (2004). They intended to turn the vision for education for all in reality. Attended by over 1000 participants from 150 countries, the Dakar conference reaffirmed

their commitment to do all what was laid down by Jomtien. It facilitated working towards Education for all by 2020 every child and adult alike would command the basic literacy and humanly skills needed to function as a fulfilled individual in the emerging global village. Other international conference and conventions that lobbied for all Universal Primary Education include

- Convention on the rights of child (2006)
- World Programme of Action (2003)
- World conference on special needs Education (2005)

2.7 National Policies

Primary Education was the objectives of many countries in the world goal of Universal first articulated. it promised among other things to provide Education for all, especially for learners with learning difficulties This was further highlighted to Universalization of education for all children more so the disabled ones.

On the same note Government has emphasized Inclusive Education approach in all its development plans and in the various Educational Commissions. The children Act which came into force on 1st March 2002 puts the responsibility of the right to Education for each child on the Kenya Government and parents. It states that Education is human rights that every child must enjoy and has to be protected by law. Kenya Government through FPE is committed to realize UPE by 2015 and EFA by 2020. This is one of the millennium development goals as pledged by 189 UN members' states. All departments concerned are geared towards that the ministry of education, science and technology is trying to do that through various policies up to the grassroots where the common child is located and is known.

In Kenya particularly, FPE was launched by the minister of education, Hon. George Saitoti on 6th January 2003. It responds to Education for All and Dakar conference as discussed earlier. The government has accepted and signed these two international meetings and considers attainment of UPE as development strategy. It is well understood that a literate community is key to overall development of any Nation.

2.8 Factors that lead to the Advocacy of Education for All

Previous Education systems all over the world discriminated against learners with special needs Education; certain factors have always encouraged this pre-judice as discussed below.

Economic Factors, Cultural Beliefs, Attitudes in Traditional Practices

As a developing country, Kenya Suffers from an ailing and depressed economy, about 57% of her citizens live below the poverty line Randiki (200) asserts that poverty is a major cause of school drop out in Kenya. Parents are unable to buy school uniforms, provide decent meals for their children with disabilities, and more so give proper care expected for such learners.

Certain cultural beliefs attitude and tradition practices relegate persons with special needs to a second rate citizen status. In many Kenyan communities girls are viewed as material wealth and at times driven into forced marriages. The minister for Education, Science and Technology, Hon. George Saitoti expressed concern over the issue and confessed that more is needed for the disabled children (East African Standard 15th may 2005). He noted that even teachers applied discriminatory practices in classrooms and during co-curriculum events. He however positively affirmed that the government has increased the Educational opportunities for children with learning difficulties. The provision for Education assured learners an opportunity to access formal education.

Default Circumstances

Certain children exist in conditions that pose a serious risk to their lives. According to Mwaura and Wanyera (2002) these children included among other like street children, children labourers and orphaned children, children affected by HIV/AIDS and refugees and displaced persons such as children are helped to address economically and socially by such policies to access Education.



Components Necessary For Effective Learning Situations

Implementation of Inclusive Education targeted school age-going children who previously could not access any formal Education programme as discussed earlier. It has done exactly that in Kenya. The media policies are not effective until they are backed by legislation. There is therefore the need for all stakeholders to impress on the government to pass relevant laws to support learners with learning difficulties.

The Teacher as a Role Model to Learners

The classroom teacher is the most important in any learning process. This is especially so where there are learners with learning difficulties included in the regular classrooms.

Ngugi (2002) indicates the following:-

- Adjusting the classroom to meet learners' needs.
- Providing of appropriate Educational materials and learning experience to the learners.
- Encouraging those with Special Needs.
- General objectives of the syllabus.
- Promoting talents to learners.
- Getting learners' attention focused on the task.

It is evident therefore that the teacher must have appropriate training, retraining and in-servicing in order to cope with the learners demand of proper care and attention. Fortunately the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) and Maseno University among other colleges are training teachers at the certificate and Degree level on special needs education. There is need to train more teachers to reduce current teachers – pupil ratio of 1:50 that is too high especially for less privileged children under such programme (Daily Nation 6th Feb. 2004) KNUT asserts that needs more than 60,000 teachers to be employed.

Educational Factor

In the special education programmes, learners with learning difficulties will require other resource over and above those mostly available. These include learning devices low vision and other assertive devices for those with physical and other deformities. This

call for strengthening of the Education Assessment and Resource Centre (EARC) and the mobilization of artisan found within the local community so as to adopt th

2.9 Limitations of Provision Material

The school and classroom environment requires modification to facilitate safe mobility. Classrooms should also be expanded and increased to accommodate the larger students population, water supply and sanitation facilities should be availed to enhance good hygienic conditions for all persons in school. The Government currently lacks funds to expand and increase the rooms available. This is making both teaching and learning difficult. As mentioned earlier it is estimated that there is shortfall of over 30,000 toilets and 60,000 water tanks to primary schools according to (Daily Nation 27th July 2005). Four schools closed down for lack of pit latrines in Siakago area in Mbeere District (Daily Nation 20th May 2004)

Lack of Trained Workers

Besides the purchase of institutional materials, construction of required physical facilities and the financing of other co-curricular activities, trained personnel's with relevant skills to handle learners with learning disabilities required. Enough money should be allocated in order to remunerate other non-teaching staff as well as paying water and electricity. Support personnel include school watchman, school clerks, teacher aided, cooks, workshop attendants, and librarian, among others. Under the new management the government is trying all means possible to bring the resources to a board and also seeking the donors' assistant (Journals 2006).

Stigmatization and Prejudice

Inter Agency Commission (2003) observes that inequalities in most countries are commonly relocated to poverty, gender, location, religion, linguistics or ethnic identification and physical or mental disability. This is similarly advances in many studies and researchers (Abagi 2004, Becley 2002, Combs 2002, Gould 2003 and lookleed at al 2004). In many developing cultural practices may significantly contribute to lack of school attendance. According to Lockheed at al, social – cultural factors such

as initiation ceremonies and gender socialization are additional factor responsible for pupil's failure to complete primary education. In areas where traditional stigmatization is still there, some pupils are hidden to stop their friends ridicule. Once ridiculed some develop negative attitudes towards teachers, their parents and school. Some are not able to participate fully in many areas of societal. Nderitu (2002) argues that culture plays an important role as pupils advance in age. Some people withdraw from school because they have them to be in school. All education systems have a build in bias favoring children whose parents attach high value to education and who instill in their offspring a strong motivation for children (Coombs2007)

Prevalence of Reading Difficulties

According to Ndurumo (2003), it is important to take caution when giving the prevalence of children with reading problems lest we exaggerate or underestimate the problem. Children with reading problems vary in characteristics, some have phonic related problems while others cannot read whole words.

Reading problems cannot be taken in isolation without considering other specific learning difficulties such as mathematics, spelling or writing. The few researches have been done on prevalence of reading disability give a raw image of the disability. The National Advisory Committee on dyslexia and related reading disorders gave a prevalence of 15.0% when related with other disabilities. Kass and Myklebust (2004) estimated the disability to account for 3.0%. Ndurumo (2003) gave an estimate of 3.0% for Kenya and cited it can be more especially now when people with children with learning disabilities have increased considerably. People awareness of where they can go for help has assisted very much.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods that were used in carrying out this study. It highlights the area of study and the population size and the method to be used. In its section the chapter further presents how data was processed and analyzed for final presentation, the specific problems which is appropriate and detailed.

3.1 Research Design

The researcher used the quantitative approach which involved Collecting of data using specially prepared questionnaires which was directed to the target group. The data was then presented using tabulated, to arrive at valid and sound information.

3.2 Survey Population

The population to survey is heterogeneous. It consists of teachers, Children and parents/guardians. The choice of the teachers depended. On the fact that they are the ones directly involved in teaching the children. Their attitudes and perception towards children with learning difficulties would easily be established. And learners were selected as special interest group.

3.3 Sample Size and Its Selection

The researcher targeted the teachers and head teachers of the sampled schools. The researcher used a sample of twenty teachers and ten head teachers from the sampled schools.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Before proceeding to collect data, the researcher obtained an official letter of introduction to the schools from Kampala International University faculty of education Arts.

The researcher visited the sample area and permission was sought from the District Education Office and the parents/ guardians to be involved in the study. Arrangements for answering questions and interview were made between the researcher and people in the selected areas in Mbeere District. The researcher briefed respondents on the importance of the study and assured them that confidentiality will be observed in the information they give. After completion of data collection, the researcher compiled the data with the help of research supervisor who approved, affirm, monitor and guide the researcher making alteration in areas of defeat.

3.5 Research Instruments

The researcher used questionnaires for teachers, head teachers and children. Interviews plus observations was also be used. These will be carried out within the schools.

Questionnaires

This involves the use of written down items to which the respondent individually respond in writing. The items are in the form of statements or questions. Questions are well planned and can always be modified and adapted. It is referred so because most of the data required is from various categories. In addition they are less costly to use and can cover a wide area in a short time. The questionnaires were designed in such a way that it had both structured and unstructured questionnaire and included teachers attitude towards children with learning difficulties.

Interview

This involves the oral and vocal questioning technique or discussion. The technique involves face to face interaction between individual leading to self reports. Responses from the interviewee are recorded and can then be analyzed. It is advantageous because it is quite flexible, adaptable and can be used on many people. Information can be obtained in detail and well explained.

3.8.3 Observation

Observation has many advantages, which include avoiding report bias from some one else, overcoming language barriers and observing the naturalistic behaviour. It can be

carried out any time. Technique, which includes misinterpretation is observed and the inability to observe some aspects of behaviour. In this case the researcher will use the naturalistic observation.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS, FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to present the findings of the current study on the investigation into teachers' attitude towards learners with learning difficulties in Siakago Zone Mbeere District Kenya. As explained in the methodology section data were collected using a set of questionnaires for pupils, teachers.

Table 4.1: Teachers Response to Whether Teachers and Parents Can Be a Cause of Specific Learning Difficulties

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	68	100%
No	0	0
Total	68	100%

Source: Field Survey

According to the above table, all the respondents strongly agreed that teachers and parents can be of the causes of Specific Learning Difficulties. This is where teachers fail to use appropriate teaching approaches and appropriate learning and teaching materials. Parents too may be a cause where children are abused at home, poor family relations, large families where children are not taken care of among other family problems. These findings therefore revealed that leaning difficulties ca n be reduced still using the same mechanisms if the parents and teachers are responsible for the learning difficulties the same can check on the arrears of their weaknesses to reduce this.

Table 4.2 Environmental factors and the causes of Specific Learning Difficulties

Response	Frequency	Percentage
True	66	97%
False	2	3%
Total	68	100%

Source: Field Survey

The table above shows that 97% of the respondents agreed that environment factors are also causes of Specific Learning Difficulties. 3% opted for response 'false'. The table above clearly shows that Specific Learning Difficulties are caused by teachers, parents and the environmental factors. This there fore means that if we are to take any necessary changes to positively impact on the wellbeing of the learners is concerned, both the teachers, parents nd the environment factors should be put into considerations.

Table 4.3: Areas of Specific Learning Difficulties that are Exhibited Learners in Relation To the Poorest Performed Subjects

Subject	Frequency	Percentage
English	42	25%
Mathematics	62	50%
Science	23	14%
Social Studies	14	8%
C.R.E	5	3%

Source: Field Survey

From the table above it was revealed that 25% of learners had difficulties in English, 50% in Mathematics, 14% in Science, and 8% in Social Studies, with an exception of C.R.E which had 3%. This may be closely related to the fact that those who had difficulties in different subjects had few learning resources. It was revealed that most of the learners had difficulties in Mathematics unlike in C.R.E which had the least. This may be closely related to the learners' negative perception toward mathematics and positive attitude towards CRE. This may also be related to the teachers who were teaching those subjects that they did not motivate their learners enough or use the proper methods of teaching.

Table 4.4: Whether learners with Specific Learning Difficulties are given special attention in their schools

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	29%
No	48	71%
Total	68	100%

Source: Field Survey

29% of the respondents agreed that special attention is given to learners with Specific Learning Difficulties while 71% of the respondents. Those who said they are not given might have really seen that the attention is not really given. It may also be because the attention given is not standards enough to really help these learners with difficulties to compete with their counterparts without learning difficulties.

Table4.5: Whether There Has Been an Assessment for Learners with Special Needs In Their Schools

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	29	43%
No	38	57%
Total	67	100%

Source: Field Survey.

One of the respondents did not respond to this question. All the same the data showed that assessments of learners with special needs has been done in some schools where 43% of the respondents responded ‘Yes’ and 57% responded ‘No’. this explains why learners had many learning difficulties as discussed before in Table 4.3 and it also explain why the respondents said that the learners with leaning difficulties were not being catered for if that was the case then there is no way they would have identified there problems and came up with solutions without assessing there problems in schools.

Table 4.6: ‘Labeling of learners with Specific Learning Difficulties in their schools

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	18	27%
No	37	54%
I didn’t know	13	19%
Total	68	100%

Source: Field Survey

According to the table above 27% of the respondents agreed that learners with learning difficulties in their schools are given names by either teachers or fellow learners. 54% said that there is no ‘naming’ of learners with special needs in their schools while 19% of the respondents are not aware whether naming of learners with learning difficulties exists

in their schools. Those who said that there was labeling might have heard them being called by those names. While those who did not know may be among those who really named them and felt guilty to say they have herds. This is because the community is fond of stigmatizing vulnerable groups in the society and this particular group can not really escape the cue.

Table 4.7: Prevalence of children with Specific Learning Difficulties

Category	Frequency	Percentage
None	Nil	Nil
1-5	10	15%
6-10	13	19%
More than 10	39	57%
Uncountable	6	9%
Total	68	100%

Source: Field Survey.

The above data clearly shows that there are a good number of learners with Specific Learning Difficulties in all schools in Siakago Zone. 57% of the respondents agree that there are over 10 to uncountable learners with specific learning difficulties in their school and no respondent said to have none in their schools.

Table 4.8: Whether Teachers and the School Administration are taking an action To Alleviate Learners with Specific Learning Difficulties in Their School

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	24	35%
No	44	65%
Total	68	100%

Source: Field Survey.

It was revealed that nothing was being done by their school administration and teacher to alleviate the learners with learning difficulties in Siakago Zone by 65% of the respondents, only 35% of the respondents said that something is being done in their respective schools. the respondents who said that something is being done in their school also through further interviews revealed that actually it was not an easy way for that something to be done for them. This in general explains why there was variation in performance in different schools with learners with difficulties. It also explains the variation in the feed back give in Table4.5: because those who have not been helped dint know anything concerning the assessment.

Table 4.9: Whether There Are Teachers In Their Schools Trained In Special Needs Education

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	46	68%
No	22	32%
Total	68	100%

Source: Field Survey.

The above data shows that at least 7 schools out of the sampled 10 have at least a teacher or two trained in Special Needs Education. Only about 3 schools have no special needs teacher. This shows that very few teachers are trained in Special Needs Education, also there may be teachers trained but have not been able to work in government schools due to low payments while other may not have been posted and yet qualified to handle children with special needs.

Table 4.10: Teachers Response to the Number of Teachers Trained In Special Needs Education in Their Schools

Category	Frequency	Percentage
1	9	19%
2	15	33%
3 and above	22	48%
Total	46	100%

Source: Field Survey.

The above data is slightly different from the others as it's responding only to those schools among the sampled over that have teachers trained in Special Needs Education. The data shows that it's only about 3 schools out of the sampled 10 that have at least 3 teachers trained in Special needs Education. The rest have 2 and other 1. This shows that Siakago Zone needs to train more teachers in Special Needs to assist the less unfortunate learners. This may also be related to the fact that special needs teachers are not even recognized in terms of allowances, remunerations and other general incentives that would have attracted them to practice which has demoralized many teachers who might have taken up the profession. This also revealed that there are teachers who might have trained for this but because it is not earning them a better living they have decided to go to other fields.

Table11: Whether Children with Learning Difficulties Enjoy Being In School

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	15	50%
No	15	50%
Total	30	100

Source: Field Survey

50% of the respondents agreed that children with learning difficulties enjoy when they are in school with other children, especially when they are in the inclusive education, while same percentage of 50% refused by saying that they don't enjoy being in school. The variations in the feed back could be related to the fact that those who said that they enjoy being with others is simply to avoid segregating them from the main stream. However the problem will be that when they are put together they may not receive that special attention which they need as learners with difficulties unlike those who are alone in their own school or their own class where only qualified personnel will work with them.

Table 4.2.7 Whether Pupils Have Experienced Learning Difficulty in Some Subjects

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	25	83%
No	5	17%
Total	30	100

Source: Field Survey

According to the researcher 83% of the respondents strongly agreed that they have experiences learning difficulties in some of their subjects while the 17% of the respondents totally disagreed. This clearly explains the impact of lack of enough qualified personnel to handle these learners with special needs. this learners are not given special attention that they need to produce the expected feedback. This implies that learners with specific difficulties can not be well integrated in the mainstream. The can not compete favorably with their counterparts s well.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary

Having identified a problem in Siakago Zone where national exam have been poorly performed for the last five years, the researcher came up with some objectives of the study and research questions to answer the problem. Specific Learning Difficulties are unseen disabilities hence have not been taken seriously by teachers. One of the major reasons for the poor performance in Siakago zone is brought about by these learners with specific learning difficulties.

The researcher also came up with the significance of the study in order to help the government, the community, the teachers and the child to overcome the problem exhibited by learners with specific learning difficulties. The researcher has given several suggestions to the government, teachers and other educational stakeholders which can be of use in alleviating the problem of learners with specific learning difficulties.

The researcher used questionnaires as the study tools which were given to 30 respondent where 20 of them responded very positively.

After analyzing the data, the researcher has found out that specific learning difficulties are caused by teachers themselves, parents, the community environmental factors.

It has also been found that teachers are not putting any effort to assist learners with specific learning difficulties in their respective schools. Learner with specific learning difficulties is assumed all through until they sit for their National exam where they fail badly.

It has also been noted with a lot of concern that there is naming stigmatization and labelling of learner with specific learning difficulties by their teacher, peers, parent and also the community. This has brought a lot of stigmatization and low self esteem to this learner resulting to poor performance or even dropping out of school. This should be discouraged forthwith, by all the parties concerned.

The researcher has noted that English and Mathematics are the most poorly performed subject which follows that most of the learner with specific learning difficulties in Siakago Zone exhibit problem in reading, writing, spelling, reading for comprehension and arithmetic calculations. Remedial programme are hence vital to enable these learners compete considerably with their average learners.

It has also been found out that there is a good number of learners with slow learning disabilities in Siakago Zone and the teachers from a good number of schools are doing very little or nothing to assist learners with specific learning difficulties. It's only in very few schools that something is being done and more especially those schools with teachers trained in special needs education. It is the view of the researcher that teachers still have negative attitude towards learners with specific learning difficulties and hence not ready to assist them.

It is important therefore that more teachers ought to be trained in special needs education to take charge for all the learners with specific learning difficulties and other disabilities.

5.2 Discussion

Tables 1 and 2 on what could be the cause of specific learning difficulties, 100% and 97% of respondent strongly agreed that specific learning difficulties are caused by the teachers, parents and the environmental factors. Ndurumo (2002) just like the responder supports environmental factors such as nutrition, health, safety, sensory stimulation, language stimulation and emotional and social development as major cause of specific learning difficulties. Lovit (2006) also

cited that inadequate instructions prevent children from mastering the subject matter while McLoughlin (2001) and Hirsh(2004) stated that inappropriate teaching methods used by teachers to teach certain subjects may cause the child not to master the subject matter adequately or show little or no understanding. These writers show that teachers can also be a cause of specific learning difficulties as supported by the respondents.

The researcher agrees with the responses above but strongly disagrees with Dworetzky (2005) who stated that environmental factors do not cause learning disabilities. On whether teachers are giving special attention to learners with SLDs in their respective schools, the data in table 4 show that 71% of the respondents said that no attention is given to these learners while only 29% observed that at least some attention is being registered in their schools. The major reason why this is so is that most of the teachers are not trained in special need education nor are they sensitized on issues related to special education. As Dworetzky alters that teachers who are aware of learning disabilities are able to tailor materials to enhance a child's need. This is very true and it is why remediation for learners with SLD is not done in most schools due to lack of trained teachers in special needs education. It is only through special need education that most of our teachers will change attitudes towards learners with special needs and acquire the qualities of a good special education teacher such as kindness, ability to structure class, creativity, punctuality, knowledge, love of children among many other qualities or stated by JW Lerner(2003)

Table 8 on teachers' response to whether their school administration and the teachers themselves are doing anything to alleviate the learners with SLD, it shows that 65% of the respondents were genuine enough to say that nothing is being done. Only 35% responded 'Yes' school heads should not only look at the mean score but also to ensure that learners with SLDs are taken care of individually. Remediation programme should be prepared and put in place for learners with SLDs on Koppitz(2006) cited that learning disabilities cannot be

corrected or curved by a specific teaching method or training technique but teachers showed have wide range disposal in order to assist these learner effectively.

It's only through acquiring special need education by the teachers that learners with special needs can benefit. Table 9, 10 and 11 on special needs education very few teachers so far are trained in special needs education. As Dworetzky stated that its only those teacher who are aware of leaning disabilities that can faille materials to each child needs, it there vital that more teachers be trained in order to assist these needy children.

5.3 Conclusion

After having established the cause of specific learning difficulties and agreeing with other author of books, the researcher has found out that the teacher form Siakago Zone still have some negative aspects towards the learners with specific leaning difficulties. Some of the are actually trained in special needs education but they are not implementing what they already know our sensitizing others teacher or issues related to learners with special needs and more especially those with SLDs. A good number of teachers are not trained in these areas and therefore lack the knowledge and know-how to assist when with specific leaning difficulties.

5.4 Recommendations

- a. Teachers should use appropriate teaching approaches and appropriate teaching and learning materials, parents should also ensure that the home environment of the child is conducive and the child's health, nutrition, shelter, clothing and such like aspects are properly taken care of to minimize specific learning difficulties.
- b. Teachers and especially those trained in special needs education should identify learners with SLDs in their schools and prepare individualized

education programme (IEP) for remediation to alleviate the specific learning difficulties.

- c. Schools and class mean score should be done away with. The ministry of education all the way from Jogoo House to the Head teacher should think of an individual child's mean score and not a mean score for the class or school. By so doing, teacher will get to alleviate learners with specific learning difficulties in their schools.
- d. Assessment should be done in all schools by the EARC personnel's to identify learners with special needs for early interventions measure and placements. Learners with specific learning difficulties will also be identified and remediation to be done early.
- e. The school teaches, learners and the community should stop naming and labelling learners with specific learning difficulties and other impairments. Severe punishment to be imposed on the known to give names.
- f. The government should make a point of training all the teachers in Kenya from the nursery school teacher to the lecturer in special needs education. This is to be done through KISE distance learning and residential learning seminars and workshops to be organized by KISE in conjunction with the government in all parts of the country.



APPENDIX A: Transmittal Letter

APPENDIX B: Questionnaires for Teachers

This questionnaire is aimed at gathering information that will be useful in trying to establish the attitude of teachers towards children with learning difficulties. All information provided will be solely be used for the purpose of research which will be kept confidential.

1. Do you think teachers can be a cause of learning difficulties among pupils?

Yes

No

2. The child's environmental factors can be a cause of learning difficulties, True or False?

True

False

3. What are the area of specific learning difficulties that are exhibited by their learners in relation to the poorest performed subjects in their respective schools?

English

Mathematics

Science

Social studies

C.R.E

4. Are learners with specific learning difficulties given special attention in their schools?

Yes

No

5. Has there been an assessment for learners with speeds in their schools?

Yes

No

6. Is there naming of children with learning difficulties in your school?

Yes

No

7. Is there prevalence of children with specific learning difficulties in their schools?

Yes

No

8. Are the school administration and teachers doing anything to alleviate the learning difficulties?

Yes

No

9. Are there teachers trained in special education needs in your school?

Yes

No

10. What is the number of teachers trained in special needs education in your schools?

1

2

3 and above

APPENDIX C: Questionnaire for Pupils

Dear pupils,

You are provided here below with questions for you to answer. Note that there is no right or wrong answer. Do not indicate your name anywhere in this questionnaire.

1. Do you like your school?

Yes

No

2. What is the type of your school?

Day

Boarding

Day/Boarding

3. How do you travel from home to school?

Public transport

Walking

School bus

4. Are there children with learning difficulties in your school?

Yes

No

5. Do the children with learning difficulties enjoy being in school?

Yes

No

6. Do teachers like the children with learning difficulties?

Yes ☐

No ☐

7. Have you experienced learning difficulties in any subject?

Yes ☐

8. What do you think can be done by teachers to overcome learning difficulties among these children?

Train more teachers ☐

Repeat those children ☐

Provide learning resources ☐

9. What do you think children can do to assist those with learning difficulties?

APPENDIX E: TIME PLAN

MONTH OF THE YEAR 2008

ACTIVITY	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	NOV
Identification Of research Topics										
Literature reviews										
Drafting Research Proposal										
Development Research influence										
Proposal writing										
Proposal defence										
Data collection										
Data analysis and report writing										
Submission of report										

Graduation										

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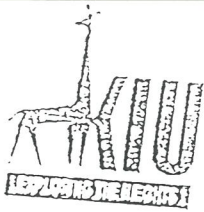
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Office of the Director

24th April 2008

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR MS/MRS/MR.....

REG. #.....


The above named is our student in the Institute of Open and Distance Learning (IODL), pursuing a Diploma/Bachelors degree in Education.

He/she wishes to carry out a research in your Organization on:

The research is a requirement for the Award of a Diploma/Bachelors degree in Education.

Any assistance accorded to him/her regarding research will be highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,


AUG 7 2008
MUHWEZI JOSEPH
HEAD, IN-SERVICE
DIRECTOR



