

COUNSELING AND LEARNING ABILITIES AMONG SPECIAL NEEDS

STUDENTS IN KAMPALA DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY OF

KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL

UNIVERSITY

BY

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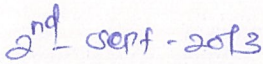
DECLARATION

I Nanteza Betty do here by declare that I personally did this work presented in this research and it is original. It was not submitted either particularly or in total for publication or for any award to any other educational institution before.

I hence forth present it for the award of a Bachelors Degree in Guidance and Counseling.

Sign.....

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Date.....

APPROVAL

This is to certify that the following is a research report of Nanteza Betty and has been under my supervision, it is now ready for submission with my approval.

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Supervisor:

Sign. 

Date. 2nd sept 2013.

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to people who brought me forth into this world and ensured that I live. My Mother Miss Nakazzi Winfred, my Father Dr Vincent.L.Ssinabulya and my sister Nambi Modester who is the source of encouragement and most importantly to my sister Nsubuga Margret who did everything possible for my research to be accomplished.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of counseling on learning abilities among special needs students. This was guided the specific objectives that included 1)to find out the significant relationship between counseling and learning abilities 2)to determine the levels of counseling among special needs students 3)to examine the levels of learning abilities and 4)to explore the types of learning disabilities. The study employed qualitative approach method in collecting data and a sample of 80 respondents were selected. From the findings ,it was revealed that orthographic dyslexia seems to b the leading form of learning disabilities at Kampala international university, majority of the respondents 30(37%) reported medical factors a the leading cause of learning disabilities among learner, 75% agreed that counseling impacts learning disabilities. They argued that counselors can serve a variety of students with special needs, assisting students who are gifted and talented, migrant students, and students with learning disabilities, majority of the respondents suggested individual counseling as the type off counseling they would prefer with 50(62.5%). The study recommended that Parents should be sensitized about the positive impact on counseling on learning disabilities for example the community leaders like social workers, counselors, psychologists should organize meetings in the communities and teach the parents the dangers of abandoning counseling services to a child with learning disabilities like school dropout. Kampala international university should also recruit experienced counselors to help special needs students. Most special needs students need counseling but they find no one to talk to. The government should set design the education policies that favor special needs students, Parents should however always nurture their children in proper ways like giving them the required basic needs like clothes, food shelter to avoid medical complications

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 Introduction

This chapter bears the background of the study, statement of the problem purpose, objectives, research questions, scope, and significance, the study.

1.1 Background of the Study

Since the inception of the profession of school counseling, the role has been redefined and modernized, oftentimes to meet the needs of a changing society or in response to societal events (Beesley, 2004). The role, position, and duties of school counselors have historically been muddled by the many influences that have shaped the very profession itself over the last century.

Consistent with Burnham and Jackson (2000), prior to 2000, 34 articles were published in *Elementary School Guidance and counseling*, a peer reviewed journal published by the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) that were directly related to the topic of school counselor roles. For example, a 1997 study by Coll and Freeman investigated elementary school counselors' self-perception of role conflict as compared to middle/junior and secondary school counselor's perceptions of role conflict. Three years prior, Hardesty and Dillard (1994) explored how the duties performed by elementary school counselors can often be regarded as "less essential" to the day-to-day running of the school when compared to their middle and secondary school counseling counterparts. One may assume that the abundance of attention paid to the role and function of the school counselor would have led to greater clarity and focus for the profession. Yet, the confusion and discrepancies persist. The services provided by school counselors have shifted and changed (Burnham & Jackson, 2000; Chandler, 2006).

The literature that traces the evolution of school counseling is explored Counselor involvement in developmental activities with students in the schools of the United States has been given much lip service (and millions of printed words) for many years. The vocational and moral guidance activities of Jesse B. Davis in the schools of Grand Rapids, Michigan, in the early years of the 20th century could be described as guidance that was of a developmental nature within the socioeconomic and political context of that era. Somewhat later, the writings of William Burnham (1926) and John Brewer (1932) promulgated developmental guidance as a part of

education. In the United States, school counseling as a profession, however, did not expand greatly until the late 1950 and early 1960s. The phenomenal increase in the number of counselors in secondary schools at that time came as a result of the National Defense Education Act (NDEA) of 1958 which mandated states to submit plans to test secondary school students so that academically talented young people could be identified and encouraged to continue their studies in higher education, particularly in mathematics and science.

The National Defense Education Act also provided funds for both short- term and full-year counselor training programs for secondary school counselors. With testing as a major role for these pupil personnel specialists, counselor education departments designed programs with major emphases on the diagnostic framework. The ‘test and tell’ orientation was compatible with the medical models being used in related helping professions; so much of the theoretical framework for school counselor preparation and school counselor role implementation became diagnostic and/or rehabilitative in orientation. The 1964 Amendments to the National Defense Education Act expanded counseling to include elementary and post-secondary schools and offered limited funding to train counselors for these developmental levels. In 1965 the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) designated funds for guidance and counseling of children from disadvantaged homes and placed counselors in elementary schools before counselor education programs could develop and/or revise programs to meet the differing needs of the special populations and younger developmental levels to be served by counselors in the elementary schools. The diagnostic and crisis oriented focuses of the secondary school counseling programs were often transplanted almost directly to the elementary school counseling programs.

In Africa the number of students with mild learning disabilities, higher intelligent quotient, and higher academic competence seeking reasonable accommodations’ continues to increase (Henderson, 1992). According to the National Association for College Admission Counseling, between 1988 and 1994, the fastest growing category of disability among students was ‘learning disabilities.’ In 1994, almost one third of college freshmen with disabilities (32%) reported a learning disability compared to 15.3% in 1988 .This increase may not represent the additional unknown number of students who transfer from one postsecondary college to another, part-time students, adults with learning disabilities, students who choose not to identify themselves, or those freshmen who may be entering college with an undiagnosed learning disability.

In Uganda, Many academically talented students have learning disabilities, with some estimates suggesting that between 120,000 and 180,000 of such individuals currently attend American schools. A major concern is that some educators "...may hold some rather stereotypical notions about learning disabilities and gifted students which, in turn, may cause them not even to consider such children in a program for gifted youngsters. Whitmore and Maker (1985) summarized their view of this population in this way: Many counseling professionals do not know how to develop appropriate intervention programs for students with disabilities due to a limited understanding of approaches (i.e., attitudes, values, beliefs) and inadequate skills to address the needs of this group (glenn,1998). Without appropriate knowledge and understanding of the needs and characteristics of specific groups of students with disabilities, school counselors may not know how to contribute to their academic, career, and personal/ social development.

1.2 Problem statement

Students with special needs wish to achieve financial and personal independence need to be able to access postsecondary education and overcome numerous academic barriers. For this reason the researcher intends to find out the relationship between counseling and learning ability. Access to qualified counselors, appropriate transition services, academic remediation, and accommodations may make a difference to whether or not students are able to achieve postsecondary success. Educators, counselors and community service providers are currently attempting to understand and define their roles, students and educators alike frequently do not understand the confusing Learning abilities label and fail to understand exactly what services are appropriate. How are these special needs students able to pursue postsecondary education successfully when there are so many undefined variables?

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the impact of counseling on learning abilities among special needs students.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- i. To find out the significant relationship between counseling and learning abilities.
- ii. To determine the levels of counseling among special needs students.
- iii. To examine the levels of learning abilities.
- iv. To explore the types of learning disabilities

1.6 Scope of the study

The research took a period of 6 months and it was ready for submission. The study was carried out at Kampala International University which is located along Gaba road in Kansanga 3kilometers from the city center and 2kilometers from the shores of lake Victoria. It is located in southern part of Kampala. The research looked at counseling and learning abilities among special needs students at Kampala International University and how they are treated by both students and the lecturers.

1.7Significance of the study

This study was of importance in this era of universal primary education, especially now that Uganda needs counselors if learning is to be enhanced at this level. The study, therefore, sought to explore possible strategies for improving learning. The study was of importance to the policy makers and open administrators as it identified major impacts, types and causes of learning disabilities among special needs students. If well noticed, their learning would be improved. The study had been undertaken with the explicit objective of enabling the researcher obtain a bachelors degree in guidance and counseling.

It benefited other researchers who referred to the publication in the future

1.8 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Independent variable

Counseling

- Career counseling
- Group and family counseling
- Rehabilitative

Dependent variable

Learning abilities

- Listen and understand information.
- Communicate information and ideas in speaking.
- Read and understand information presented

Intervening variable

- Availability of instructional materials
- Physical infrastructure
- Student supervision

Source: Modified by the researcher

Descriptive model

Figure: Counseling is considered as the independent variable which is studied in terms of career guidance, group and family counseling, and rehabilitative counseling.

On the other hand, learning abilities is considered as the independent variable and is studied as ability to listen and understand information, communicate information and ideas in speaking,

read and understand information presented. Availability of instructional materials, Physical infrastructure, and Student supervision are studied as intervening variable.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the review of the existing literature. It was based on the assessment of various scholars, writers and researchers who have studied this problem before and analyze the accuracy and their appropriateness of their findings as well as assessing the applicability of their conclusions and recommendations.

2.1 Counseling and special needs students

The transition to college life can cause additional stress as you adjust to a new environment and a different way of study. Students with disabilities may also require additional services. Adelphi offers services to help students cope with their problems or meet their specific learning needs.

Special needs students may demonstrate a strong, personal need for excellence in performance and in outcomes that may embody unhealthy perfectionism and intensity of emotions (Silverman, 1993). These characteristics resemble what has been termed oversensitivity (Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977; Daniels, 1983; Olenchak, 1994; Vespi & Yewchuck, 1992), and unrealistic expectations of themselves, as students believe that they should be able to achieve (but cannot) in areas in which they have disabilities (Baum & Owen, 1988; Daniels, 1983; Silverman, 1989). They also may have a tendency to experience intense frustration with difficult tasks (Baum et al., 1991; Olenchak) that may produce a general lack of motivation (Olenchak; Silverman, 1989) as well as disruptive or withdrawn behavior (Baum & Owen), feelings of learned helplessness (Whitmore, 1981; Whitmore & Maker, 1985), and low self-esteem (Baum et al.; Baum & Owen). A comprehensive review of recent research about the characteristics of gifted students with learning disabilities (Reis et al., 1995) found many more negative descriptive characteristics than positive characteristics that describe this population, including high frustration levels, depression, and low self-concept and self-efficacy.

According to ASCA(1999),the primary role of school counselors in regard to special needs students is to serve on multidisciplinary teams that work to identify the educational and

counseling needs of special needs students, to facilitate this process school counselors can develop their own checklists of student behaviors or characteristics(lockhart 2003). The present study suggests that academically talented with learning disabilities may experience some of the difficulties as mentioned below; may exhibit feelings of inferiority, may show an inability to persevere in the accomplishment of goals, may demonstrate a general lack of self-confidence, may exhibit confusion as they struggle to understand why they can know an answer but are not able to say it or write it correctly, which may create social and emotional difficulties for students, Abilities of academically talented students often mask their disabilities, may exhibit an intensity of emotions, may exhibit low self-esteem, may experience feelings of learned helplessness, may have unrealistic expectations of self, may have a tendency to experience intense frustration with difficult tasks that may produce a general lack of motivation ,difficulty with academic skills including reading, writing, speech, and mathematics, difficulty with fine-motor skills such as handwriting and copying, difficulty with long- and short term memory, difficulty with attention (short attention spans, distractibility, hyperactivity, impulsivity) difficulty with sensory Integration , difficulty with organizational skills, extreme gaps in sections on IQ tests (for example, high verbal scores but poor performance scores),difficulty in making and keeping friends .These learners expect to fail. They are then likely to avoid failure rather than to go for success (Brand, 2005).

2.2 Levels of Learning Abilities

These do involve the ability to listen to and understand information and ideas presented through spoken words and sentences, communicate information and ideas in speaking so others will understand, tell when something is wrong or is likely to go wrong. It does not involve solving the problem, only recognizing there is a problem, combine pieces of information to form general rules or conclusions (includes finding a relationship among seemingly unrelated events),read and understand information and ideas presented in writing, communicate information and ideas in writing so others will understand, apply general rules to specific problems to produce answers that make sense, come up with unusual or clever ideas about a given topic or situation, or to develop creative ways to solve a problem, identify and understand the speech of another person, speak clearly so others can understand you.

2.3 The Impact of Counseling on Learning Abilities

School counselors can serve a variety of students with special needs, assisting students who are gifted and talented, migrant students, and students with learning disabilities. There are also specially trained special education counselors in some states.

In many schools, the same school counselors possess a general counseling certification and serve all students. In this case, the school counselor's role for special needs students will be similar to the role for all students: the school counselor will be available to students for personal, ethical, and social advice; to listen to the student's point of view; to deal with any mental health issues that may arise for the student; to help the student deal with transitions; to advocate for the student, and to the degree possible to teach the student to advocate for him or herself. The counselor is also likely to be involved in the student's individualized education programs.

Once a student has been identified as twice exceptional, an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) can be developed, following a fairly standard procedure (Lockhart, 2003). Regular meetings with the school counselor for either individual students or groups of academically talented students with learning disabilities can be integrated into the IEP process to address educational and counseling needs. Counselors also can encourage these students' teachers and parents to emphasize student abilities and talents, as opposed to focusing solely on their deficits. They also can encourage the acquisition and use of compensation strategies to address learning disabilities, such as books on tape and other technological aids, as well as the acquisition of targeted study and learning strategies (Reis, McGuire, & Neu, 2000). Abilities, interests, and talents can be assessed and counselors can encourage the use of sometime both in school and at home that focuses the on the development of students' talents and strengths. When educators view the successful development of talents in these students with optimism and hope, more opportunities for school success may occur. Counselors also can help to encourage both teachers and parents to find enrichment opportunities that will positively engage students, possibly focusing on mentorship and independent study options. Educators and counselors also can help students to learn higher-order problem solving and information processing skills.

School counselors and school counseling team members could determine which of the counseling needs are consistent with developmental competencies associated with the school

counseling program (2003). For example, within the Academic Developmental Domain, Standard A states, "Students will acquire the attitudes, knowledge, and skills that contribute to effective learning in school and across the life span. Within this broad standard, academically talented students with learning disabilities can "acquire skills for improving learning," which would be indicated by students who can "apply knowledge and learning styles to positively influence school performance". In the Personal/Social Domain Standard A, students are asked to acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and interpersonal skills to help them understand and respect their self and others. This is a critical area for this population as suggested by the participants in this study who often experienced a loss of self-respect and confidence. School counselors should strive to help students to "acquire self-knowledge," which would be indicated by students who can "identify personal strengths and assets".

School counselors can help teachers with the social and emotional aspects of their role in educating academically talented students with learning disabilities, particularly as it relates to the student's relationship with self, peers, and the teacher. They also can consult with teachers to ensure that negative comments and behaviors such as those experienced by participants in this study can be eliminated. The eradication of these painful experiences can be accomplished through observations of classroom interactions and informal interviews. Additionally, the school counselor's consultation with teachers can help to establish a safe environment for students to talk with teachers about their social and emotional concerns, such as problems with peers, depression, or low self-confidence. Students may become more successful in approaching their teachers to gain the support they need for both academic and personal success.

Group counseling can be an effective format for addressing the immediate social/emotional problems experienced by talented students with learning disabilities, as it provides the opportunity for students to gain support from others in similar situations. Groups can simulate students' real-world experiences and provide opportunities for practicing coping skills needed in their learning environments. To prevent personal/social and academic problems from occurring, school counselors can provide classroom guidance lessons that are developed with specific personal/social student competencies as the goals. With these goals as the focal point of the guidance lessons, the school counselor does not have to draw attention to any particular student but can focus, instead, on creating a healthy environment for all students. These lessons can

provide students with new cognitive structures and emotional experiences to use in the future. For example, students could have participated in a 6-week unit addressing specific personal/social goals discussed earlier. If two students begin to engage in teasing, bullying, and emotionally hurtful behavior toward talented students with learning disabilities, immediate steps can be taken to address the issue. Because most guidance lessons include an application step, this behavior could be handled within the context of the lesson and the behavior stopped immediately (Kline & Vernon, 1986).

It is important that teachers play a role in the guidance curriculum through observance and/or co-teaching of the guidance lessons (Betts, 1986; Betts & Neihart, 1986), such as eliminating negative behaviors toward talented students with learning disabilities, and all other students as well. Also, once the guidance unit is complete, the teacher can maintain student learning by being more conscious of instances in which students are not, for example, accepting and appreciating individual differences. With this awareness, the teacher may be more likely to respond to a student's social and emotional needs well before problems have a chance to emerge.

A learning disability can be seen as a limitation for a child. Counseling children with learning disabilities will enable them to feel comfortable with whom they are. Through counseling, they can learn coping skills such as improving their self-esteem and behavior. This will help them to be able to deal better with their personal or social difficulties (Myers, 2005). A child does not live in isolation. Building his/her self-concept through counseling could help with improving the child's self-esteem. Counseling that involves the family, and not merely the child, has the potential to improve a child's behavior. The child's learning disability has an impact on the entire family. When counseling takes place with the entire family all family members can benefit (Vaughn, White, Johnston & Dunlop 2005).

In addition to including the family in counseling, emotionally warm relationships among teachers and learners, characterized by open communication, support, and involvement can provide the child with a sense of security within the school setting. This can promote their social, emotional, and academic competencies (Murray & Greenberg, 2006).

When both individual counseling and teacher consultation are implemented, attention can be given to peers who might be involved in behaviors that negatively affect the twice-exceptional

student's personal and social development. Group counseling can help to alleviate the teasing, bullying, and other forms of hurtful behaviors toward these students. Specific goals also could be stated in terms of the ASCA National Standards (ASCA, 2003; Campbell & Dahir, 1997) and include student competencies in the personal/social domain. Students should learn to recognize, accept, and appreciate individual differences; recognize that everyone has rights and responsibilities; and distinguish between appropriate and inappropriate behavior.

Parents of students who are both academically talented and learning disabled often struggle with their role in their children/adolescents' educational development (Hackney, 1981). This struggle can manifest itself in parental pressure on students for high performance and grades. Although it is important that students work to their level, special care must be exercised in making sure that parents do not re-create the kinds of emotional pain experienced by participants in this study. Therefore, school counselors should assist students in gaining support from their parents to enhance their educational development. For example, a school counselor might learn that a student is having difficulty completing homework due to his or her parent's lack of understanding the student's need to use compensatory techniques, such as the use of books on tape or other forms of technology. Consultation with the parents might suggest that parents consider, for example, help with stress management to assist children with their homework while adhering to already identified compensatory strategies. Parent pressure on students can manifest itself in other ways as well, and the school counselor should maintain open communication with the parents of these students to address emerging problems in a timely manner.

2.4 Causes of learning disabilities

Neurobiological investigations indicating structural differences in children with learning disabilities will now be discussed. A further discussion includes indications that genetic heritage might be an important component. Environmental and medical factors, as well as intelligence, are considered to be factors that may play a role in the cause of learning disabilities.

2.4.1 Brain structure

Currently most professionals subscribe to a viewpoint that learning disabilities emanate from some kinds of differences in brain structure or functioning, and the most widely used definition suggests that the causes are neurological rather than environmental (Hallahan, Kauffman, Lloyd 1999; Semrud-Clikeman, 2005; Wong 2004). Neurobiological investigations suggest that there

are subtle structural differences in several regions of the brain among children who are learning to read normally and children with reading disabilities (Wong, 2004). The neurobiological correlates believed to underlie these deficits are centered around the left-temporal-parietal region (Swanson, Harris & Graham, 2003). As concerns symptoms typifying Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), neuro-imaging and neuropsychological studies have implicated the structural and metabolic abnormalities in the prefrontal and frontal regions of the brain (Augustyniak, Murphy & Phillips, 2005).

The issue of learning disability has undergone rather intense scientific study. As a result, professionals in the field feel fairly confident that there are strong relationships between brain dysfunction and learning disabilities (Rourke, 2005).

2.4.2 Genetics

It has been demonstrated in genetic research that the risk in the offspring of a parent with a reading disability is eight times higher than in the general population (Hallahan et al., 1999, Tuttle & Paquette, 1993; Wong, 2004). Neurofibromatosis Type 1 (NF-1) is one of the most common single-gene disorders. Crowe, Schull and Neel found in 1956 that approximately 50% of all cases of NF-1 are familial, inherited in an autosomal dominant manner, with the remaining cases being spontaneous mutations”, a fact that was subscribed to by Cutting and Denekla in 2003. A learning disability is reported in approximately 25% to 61% of children with NF-1

Several studies implicate chromosomes 6 and 15 in reading disabilities (Galaburda, 2005; Miller, Sanchez & Hynd, 2003;). There is a 25% probability that each child of a parent with genes hypothesized to cause dyslexia will inherit those genes (Miller et al., 2003). Although no genes as yet have been reliably identified as associated with learning disabilities, several linkages to chromosomal regions have been found for learning disabilities (Plomin & Kovas, 2005).

The contention that dyslexia occurs in families across generations has been recognized for a long time now (Sawyer, 2006). This researcher would bear this in mind when formulating an interview with parents to determine what support they may need when their child's learning disability is diagnosed. Parents who struggled at school themselves may recognize their child's difficulties.

2.4.3 Environmental factors

The role the environment plays in causing learning disabilities is not excluded. Extremely poor parenting or teaching can put learners at risk to develop learning difficulties (Hallahan et al, 1999). Socio-economic circumstances and the quality of schooling may have an impact on a learner's ability to learn (Fletcher et al 2007). Specifically in South Africa, the Education White Paper 6, Department of Education (2001) considers a number of environmental factors which can contribute to learning disabilities, including inaccessible schools, the curriculum, learning materials and also the language in which a learner is taught.

2.4.4 Medical factors

Medical factors that may play a role in the development of learning disabilities include premature birth, diabetes, meningitis, cardiac arrest and pediatric aids (Hallahan et al 1999). Alcohol and drug abuse during pregnancy may be contributing factors, as well as lead poisoning and a low birth weight (Tuttle & Paquette, 1993). It is possible that if any of these factors are a cause of a learner's learning disability, parents may feel more responsible, thereby causing more guilt. This would have to be explored in the support given to parents whose child has been diagnosed with a learning disability.

2.5 Diagnosis of learning disabilities

The more traditional discrepancy model is discussed, followed by assessment alternatives and the need for a holistic interpretation of a learner's learning disability.

2.5.1 Person-Centered Approach

Person-centered Therapy (also known as Client-Centered, or Rogerian Therapy) is based on the fundamental belief that human beings are essentially trustworthy, social and creative and that given the right conditions can reach their full potential for growth. The counselor, by providing the core conditions of empathy, acceptance and honesty, creates a safe space within which the client can freely express their problems, difficult emotions and feelings. The Person-centered approach takes the view that the client knows best with regard to themselves & their inner world and therefore the counselor's approach is non-directive enabling the client to explore issues and gain self-understanding plus greater self-esteem. The long term aim of this particular approach is the development of inner resources and the ability to perceive oneself as a whole person with the power and freedom to grow & change.

2.5.2 Psychodynamic Approach

Psychodynamic counseling is based on the importance of the unconscious and past experiences and how these can both influence and determine current behaviors, often creating inner conflict and undesirable reactions. The term psychodynamic means pertaining to the laws of mental actions', implying there is a link between mind and action. The counselor therefore encourages the exploration of difficult childhood relationships so that the client becomes aware of how these previous experiences are causing the compulsion to repeat past behaviors. The counselor works in a more analytical style and makes use of the client/counselor relationship in a way that aims to help the client gain insight into current relationship issues and problems. This type of counseling generally tends to be longer term to allow time for the client to work through past issues to a point of awareness and the potential for conscious change

2.5.3 Couples counseling

Couples counseling offers the parties in a relationship to work through their difficulties with a counselor trained in this area of work. Couples counseling is for any couple experiencing conflict in their relationship. This relationship may not necessarily be an intimate relationship - it can for example be between family members, or workplace relationships between colleagues or employee/employer. The counselor acts as a facilitator to help the couples identify areas of conflict and stuck patterns of communication and behavior, providing a safe space where both parties can express their perceptions and expectations of the relationship. The aim is to help the couple come to a mutually suitable outcome, helping the couple to decide on what changes in behavior and communication will help to resolve the problems. If the couple decides to separate or divorce then the counselor can provide emotional support to help the couple negotiate through this painful process.

2.6 Types of learning disabilities

"The majority of learning disabilities are language-based and difficulties using oral and written language remain the single most significant deterrent to educational growth" (Wallach, 2005). Understanding the types of learning disabilities and their possible impact on a child gives parents more tools in their quest for support for themselves and for their child. Various types of learning

disabilities are discussed below. Each one of them can hinder a learner when it comes to keeping up with the class in day to day activities.

2.6.1 Dyslexia

The Orton Dyslexia Society defines dyslexia as follows: “Dyslexia is one of the several distinct learning disabilities. It is a specific language-based disorder of constitutional origin characterized by difficulties in single-word decoding, usually reflecting insufficient phonological processing. These difficulties in single word decoding are often unexpected in relation to age and other cognitive and academic abilities: they are not the result of generalized developmental disability or sensory impairment. Dyslexia is manifest by variable difficulty with different forms of language, often including, in addition to problems with reading, a conspicuous problem with acquiring proficiency in writing and spelling” (Rodis et al., 2001). This deficit leads to a profound disturbance of reading ability that pervades different domains of academic achievement. Comprehension is dependent upon one’s ability to decode rapidly and to recognize single words in an automatic fluent manner (Fletcher et al., 2007). A spelling deficit also occurs in dyslexia in isolation or in context. Slow reading fluency emerges as a central academic skill deficit even when spelling is adequate.

2.6.2 Dysgraphia

Dysgraphia is characterized by a difficulty with learning to write, not attributed to “general cognitive delay, psychiatric or neurological disorder, sensory impairment, or inadequate instruction” (Thomson & Raskind, 2003). Berninger and her associates (in Fletcher et al., 2007), reported that “automaticity in the retrieval and production of alphabet letters, rapid coding of orthographic information, and speed of sequential finger movements were the best predictors of handwriting skills.” Automaticity of handwriting predicted compositional fluency and quality. A deficit of fine motor skills also constrained handwriting, especially in the beginning stages of writing” (Fletcher et al., 2007).

2.6.3 Dyscalculia

Disorders of mathematics involve difficulties with computations and also often with problem-solving. It is associated with a neurological dysfunction (Lerner & Kline, 2006:). Maths disability is associated with “concept formation, procedural learning and visual-motor integration” (Fletcher, Morris & Lyon, 2003). In order to solve a problem a learner must “be able

to master the rules for problem solving, develop categories for sorting problems that require similar solutions, and be aware that novel problems are related to previously solved problems” (Fuchs & Fuchs, 2003). If the above cognitive processes are impaired in learners with learning disabilities in maths, including working memory, language, and inattention, it follows that they might have difficulty with maths.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focused on how data was collected in the study. The chapter looked at the population target, research approach, research design, sample selection and size, tools and instruments of data collection, research reliability, and procedure of data collection, data validity and data analysis.

3.1 Research Design

In this study, the researcher was interested to use qualitative approach method in collecting data. This choice was based on the nature of the data collected which involved description and also the nature of interaction with correspondents, and aimed at giving a detailed account and in depth description of the views, feelings and attitudes description in Kampala International University.

3.2 Target population

The study covered total of 100 respondents which included 80 students, 20 lecturers from faculty of education and special needs.

3.3 Sample size and selection

It was impossible to study the whole of the target population and therefore, the study used a sample of eighty (80) respondents out of the one hundred (100) in Kampala international university. The sampling technique or method was simple random sampling, which involved giving number to subject or member of the accessible population, putting these numbers in list and then picking any number randomly.

Table 1: Determining accessible population and Sample Size

Category of respondents	Population	Sample size
Lecturers	20	10
Students	80	70
Total	100	80

3.4 Sampling procedure:

The researcher used Sloven’s formula to select the respondents of the study from the population using the following formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N (e)^2}$$

Where n is the required sample size.

N is the targeted population size

e is the standard error or level of significance which is popularly known to be 0.05 or 5%

For study N = 100

n = ?

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N (e)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{100}{1 + 100 (0.05)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{100}{1 + 100 (0.0025)}$$

$$n = \frac{100}{1 + 0.25}$$

$$n = \frac{100}{1.25}$$

$$n = \underline{\underline{80}}$$

3.5 Data collection Methods and Instruments

3.5.1 Questionnaires

This was a discussion in written form whereby the responses of the participants are put on paper provided by the researcher, the questionnaire was in two forms, namely:

- Open-ended questionnaire in which the responses by the participants were free to answer according to their understanding.
- The close-ended questionnaires, in which the respondents are expected to give answers within the range given by the researcher of a four linked scale namely; strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree.

The researcher left out questionnaires to mainly the literate group. These included students and lecturers. These had guiding questions which the researcher gave individual respondents to fill.

3.5.2 Interview Guide

This involved face to face interaction between the researcher and the participant through discussion. The interviews were in two ways, namely:

- Structured interview, in which the responses by the participants are brief and specific.
 - Unstructured interview that is where the responses are long, elaborated and not specific.
- The interview were conducted in group, individual.

The researcher carried out interviews on students and lecturers who studied and worked in the university, using the interview guide because it was the most appropriate method which was used study the attitudes, values, beliefs and motives of people. It also had an element of flexibility. These persons were interviewed individually so as to get independent answers.

3.6 Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher used questionnaires which were administered to carefully chosen respondents. Oral interviews with students and lecturers were carried out. The researcher took the questionnaires to respondents proceeded by a briefing about the purpose of the questionnaires and asked them to fill them on their convenience to allow them more time and flexibility. Later the researcher made a follow-up and collects the filled questionnaires. The researcher obtained more information regarding the counseling and learning disabilities of special needs students by

reading newspapers, journals, text books plus the already existing work on internet and magazines.

3.7 Data analysis and Presentation

The data was filled in the questionnaires, copied and analyzed by tallying it and tabling it in frequency tables, identifying how often certain responses occurred and later evaluation was done. The information was later presented in terms of percentages, and frequency tables were used for presentation. The collected data in form of questionnaires were entered in a computer package called MS- Excel and will be analyzed.

3.8.1Editing and Spot Checking

The researcher edited and spot checked during and after each interview with the respondents. This was done in order to ensure that information given was logical, accurate and consistent. Obvious errors and omissions were corrected to ensure accuracy, uniformity and completeness so as to facilitate coding.

3.9Limitations

There was mounting pressure from the administration for students to complete the research on schedule which affects the quality of research.

The study required a lot of time to be dedicated to collect substantial data from one respondent to another making observations, continuous review of literature, data analysis and report writing and this was worked out by devoting more time on the research work by reducing on the leisure time.

Some of the targeted respondents were willing to set aside time to respond to the researcher's questions thus somehow end up frustrating the researcher's efforts to collect substantial data.

The researcher also faced a problem of some rude and hostile respondents, this was as well solved by both seeking prior permission and remaining calm.

3.10Ethical considerations

It is important during the process of research for the researcher to understand that participation is voluntary; participants are free to refuse to answer any question and may withdraw any time.

Personal confidentiality and privacy are very important since the thesis was public. If individuals have been used to provide information, it is important for their privacy to be respected. If private information has been accessed then confidentiality has to be maintained.

Another important consideration, involves getting the informed consent of those going to be met during the research process, which involves interviews and observations bearing in mind that the area bears conflict.

Accuracy and honesty during the research process is very important for academic research to proceed. The researcher should treat the project with utmost care, in that there should be no temptation to cheat and generate research results, since it jeopardizes the conception of research.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study and their subsequent interpretations. The data was collected using both quantitative and qualitative methods, which was then analyzed and processed to make it useful and understandable. Data was collected, tabulated and then analyzed.

4.1: Demographic Characteristics

This section contains results obtained about the response rate and the characteristics of the respondents that were considered relevant for the study. The characteristics of the respondents that were considered relevant for the study include: gender, age, level of education and Length of service in Kampala international university.

Table 1: Showing the number of respondents who were willing to provide relevant data

Response	Target	Actual	Percentage
Number sampled	100	80	80

Source: Primary data

From table 1, among the 100 respondents targeted, 80 provided data relevant to the study. 100 questionnaires were issued, only 80 questionnaires were returned answered. Therefore, the response rate was enough to provide information relevant to the study.

4.1.1 Age of the respondents

Respondents were asked questions related to their age and the results are shown in the table below:

Table 2: Age distribution of respondent

Age group	Frequency	Percentage
20 - 25	25	31
25 -35	30	37
35 -45	15	19
45Above	10	13
TOTAL	80	100

Source: Field study 2013

Table 2 above show that 31% of the respondents were between 20-25 years, 37% were between 25-35years of age, 19% were between 35-45 years of age, 13% % were above 45 years of age. This means that majority of the respondents were between 25-35 years of age followed by those between 20-25years.

4.1.2 Marital Status of the respondents

Another variable which was important in respect to the situation of the people in the area was marital status. Information regarding marital status of the respondents was obtained by asking them whether they were married, single, widowed or widowers.

Table 3: Marital status of the respondents

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Married	40	50
Single	20	25
Widow	8	10
Divorced	12	15
TOTAL	80	100

Table 3 above shows that 50% of the respondents were married, 25% were singles, 10% were widows and 15% were divorced. This means that majority of the respondents were married people followed by singles.

4.1.3 Gender of the respondents

Gender was also another factor which was considered during the study. This is because the researcher was interested in finding out the number of females and males in the whole of the population, and compares the percentage composition of the two.

Table 4: Gender of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	50	62.5
Male	30	37.5
Total	80	100

Source: Field study 2013

Table 4 above shows the sex of the respondents and it was found that 62.5% of the respondents were females and 37.5% were males. This therefore means that there were a greater percentage of female respondents compared to males.

4.1.4 Educational levels of the respondents

Respondents were asked questions related to their educational status and their responses are shown in the table below;

Table 5: Educational level of the respondents

Education levels	Frequency	Percentage
Certificate	5	6
Diploma	30	38
Bachelors	20	25
Others	25	31
Total	80	100

Source: Field study 2013

From table 5, 6 % of the respondents reached certificate and 38% diploma, 25% reached bachelors while 31% attained others. This means that a greater percentage of respondents reached diploma.

4.2 causes of learning disabilities

What are the causes of learning disabilities among special needs students of Kampala International University?

Table 6: showing causes of learning disabilities

Causes learning disability	Frequency	Percentage
Brain structure	20	25
Genetics	15	19
Environmental factors	10	13
Medical factors	30	37
Intelligence as a factor	5	6
TOTAL	80	100%

Source: primary data, August, 2013

From the above table, majority of the respondents 30(37%) reported medical factors as the leading cause of learning disabilities among learners, this was followed by 20(25%) reported brain structure, 15(19%) of the total number of the respondents reported genetics,10(13%) reported environmental factors while 5(6%) reported intelligence factor. This therefore means that medical problems such as complications during birth and chronicle sickness have contributed to learning disabilities.

What are the main types of learning disabilities that exist in Kampala international university?

Table 7: Types of learning disabilities
Source: primary data, August, 2013

Types of learning disability	Frequency	Percentage
Phonological dyslexia	15	19
Dyslexia	15	19
Orthographic dyslexia	10	13
Orthographic dyspraxia	25	31
Dyscalculia	5	6
Dyspraxia	10	13
TOTAL	80	100%

Source: Field survey, August, 2013

From the above table, orthographic dyspraxia seems to b the leading form of learning disabilities at Kampala international university, as this was suggested by majority of the respondents,25(31%) of the respondents. Further still, findings indicate that there was equal distribution of respondents who reported Phonological dyslexia and Dyslexia 15(19%) respectively,10(13%) reported Orthographic dyslexia and Dyspraxia respectively while the least number of the total respondents reported Dyscalculia

4.3 Impact of counseling on learning disabilities
Students with learning disabilities have a strong tendency to experience intense frustration with difficult task that call for counseling.

Table 8: Impact of counseling on learning disabilities

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agree		-
Strongly agreed	50	62.5
Disagree	-	-
Strongly disagree	30	37.5
Total	80	100

Based on the table above, none of the respondents agreed that Students with learning disabilities have a strong tendency to experience intense frustration with difficult task that call for counseling, 62.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that Students with learning disabilities have a strong tendency to experience intense frustration with difficult task that call for counseling, none of the respondents disagreed that Students with learning disabilities have a strong tendency to experience intense frustration with difficult task that call for counseling 37.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed that Students with learning disabilities have a strong tendency to experience intense frustration with difficult task that call for counseling. This means that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that Students with learning disabilities have a strong tendency to experience intense frustration with difficult task that call for counseling.

Table 9: Are there significant impacts of counseling on learning abilities of learners?

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	60	75%
No	20	25%
Total	80	100%

Source: Field survey, August, 2013

The table above indicates that 75% agreed that counseling impacts learning disabilities. They argued that counselors can serve a variety of students with special needs, assisting students who are gifted and talented, migrant students, and students with learning disabilities. There are also specially trained special education counselors in some states. Respondents at 25% disagreed saying that counseling does not have an impact on learning disability saying that it depends on the nature of the disability.

4.4 Levels of Counseling among Special Needs Students

What level of counseling would you prefer?

Table 10: showing what level of counseling would you prefer?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Group counseling	20	25
Individual counseling	50	62.5
Career guidance	10	12.5
Total	80	100

Source: primary data, August 2013

From the above table, majority of the respondents suggested individual counseling as the type of counseling they would prefer with 50(62.5%) of the total respondents, 20(25%) of the total number of respondents reported group counseling while the minority of the respondents 10(12.5%) suggested career guidance

How often do you visit the university counselor?

Table 11: showing how often do they visit the university counselor?

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Very often	50	62.5
Often	20	25
Not at all	10	12.5
Total	80	100

Source: primary data, August 2013

From the above table, majority of that total number of respondents 50(62.5%) very frequently visit the counselor,20(25%) frequently visit the counselor while the least number of the total respondents do not visit the counselor. This implies that the majority of the respondents visiting the counselor are a good sign of implementing effective counseling on learning abilities

Counseling is an important field to the special needs students

Table 12: showing Counseling is an important field to the special needs students

	Important		Not important	
Experience	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)	Frequency (F)	Percentage (%)
Yes	50	63	0	0
No	0	0	30	37
TOTAL	50	63%	30	37%

Basing on the results, 50(63%) percent of the respondents consider counseling as being important, while 30(37%) do not consider counseling as being important. The majority of the total number of respondents agreeing that counseling is important; this is a good improvement in fostering counseling among learners with disabilities in Kampala international university.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0: Introduction

This chapter consists of four sections, one presenting the discussions of the study, the second present's conclusions of the study and the third presenting recommendations and finally the areas for further research.

5.1.1: Findings on causes of learning disabilities

When the researcher asked the causes of learning disabilities, majority of the respondents 30(37%) reported medical factors a the leading cause of learning disabilities among learners, this was followed by 20(25%) reported brain structure, 15(19%) of the total number of the respondents reported genetics, 10(13%) reported environmental factors while 5(6%) reported intelligence factor

5.1.2: Findings on Impact of counseling on learning disabilities

The researcher asked the respondents the Impact of counseling on learning disabilities none of the respondents agreed that Students with learning disabilities have a strong tendency to experience intense frustration with difficult task that call for counseling, 62.5% of the respondents strongly agreed that Students with learning disabilities have a strong tendency to experience intense frustration with difficult task that call for counseling, none of the respondents disagreed that Students with learning disabilities have a strong tendency to experience intense frustration with difficult task that call for counseling 37.5% of the respondents strongly disagreed that Students with learning disabilities have a strong tendency to experience intense frustration with difficult task that call for counseling

5.1.3: Findings on Levels of Counseling among Special Needs Students

On the question of the levels of counseling among special needs students majority of the respondents suggested individual counseling as the type off counseling they would prefer with 50(62.5%) of the total respondents, 20(25%) of the total number of respondents reported group counseling while the minority of the respondents 10(12.5%) suggested career guidance. Further

still, 50(63%) percent of the respondents consider counseling as being important, while 30(37%) do not consider counseling as being important

5.2 Conclusion

The subject matter of this study was counseling and learning abilities among special needs students in Kampala district a case study of Kampala international university. The specific objectives of the study were; To find out the significant relationship between counseling and learning abilities, To determine the levels of counseling among special needs students and to examine the levels of learning abilities, to explore the types of learning disabilities

The study was organized into five main chapters which have made contributions to counseling and learning abilities among special needs students in particular. The first chapter covered the introduction and background of the study, the statement of problem, the aims and objectives of the study, the research question, scope of the study, and significance of the study, Chapter two was about the review of the relevant literature on market segmentation, segmentation variables. Chapter three elaborated on the methodology for the study. The fourth chapter of the study contained the data presentation, analysis of data and discussions on the findings of the study. Finally, chapter five of the study is about the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

According to the study findings, the key informants revealed that the causes of learning disabilities were medical factors, genetic, and environmental factors. On the Impact of counseling on learning disabilities none of the respondents agreed that Students with learning disabilities have a strong tendency to experience intense frustration with difficult task that call for counseling

5.4 Recommendations

Parents should be sensitized about the positive impact on counseling on learning disabilities for example the community leaders like social workers, counselors, psychologists should organize meetings in the communities and teach the parents the dangers of abandoning counseling services to a child with learning disabilities like school dropout.

Kampala international university should also recruit experienced counselors to help special needs students. Most special needs students need counseling but they find no one to talk to.

The government should set design the education policies that favor special needs students. For example, the government should give special needs students more time in doing their examinations. Further still, the government should re-design the curriculum that favours counseling services to be taught to students. This will help them understand their responsibilities in handling the disability.

From the findings, it has been revealed that the leading cause of learning disabilities ,Parents should however always nurture their children in proper ways like giving them the required basic needs like clothes, food shelter to avoid medical complications

5.5 Areas of further research

Further research studies should be carried out on the impact of parenting styles on learning disabilities, influence of counseling on students with learning disabilities in higher institutions of learning.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: Questionnaire

Dear respondent; I am called, Nanteza Betty a researcher pursuing a Bachelor's degree in guidance and counseling at Kampala International University. I am conducting a research on **COUNSELING AND LEARNING ABILITIES AMONG SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS IN KAMPALA DISTRICT: A CASE STUDY OF KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY**. This research will be for purely academic purposes. The finding of this research will benefit the physically retarded students in Kampala, District as well. Please take time to answer for me these questions. All answers will be treated with confidentiality.

Background information

(Please tick in the most appropriate box or write in the most appropriate space)

A. profile of the respondent

1 Age Bracket:

20 - 25 ☐

25 -35 ☐

35 -45 ☐

45Above ☐

2. Gender:

Male ☐

Female ☐

3. Material status:

Married ☐

Single	<input type="checkbox"/>
Widow	<input type="checkbox"/>
Divorced	<input type="checkbox"/>

4 Education Level:

Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Diploma	<input type="checkbox"/>
Bachelor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

Section B

5. What are the causes of learning disabilities among special needs students of Kampala International University?

Brain structure:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Genetics:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Environmental factors:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Medical factors	<input type="checkbox"/>
Intelligence as a factor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Others;	
Specify	

6. What are the main types of learning disabilities that exist in Kampala international university?

Dyslexia:	<input type="checkbox"/>
Phonological dyslexia:	<input type="checkbox"/>

Orthographic dyslexia: ☐

Orthographic dyslexia ☐

Dyscalculia: ☐

Dyspraxia: ☐

Others;

Specify
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

7. Are there significant impacts of counseling on learning abilities of learners?

Yes ☐ No ☐

If yes, what are these impacts?
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

8. What solutions do you suggest for learning disabilities in Kampala international university?

.....
.....
.....
.....

SECTION B:

For each of the following statements, please indicate (by ticking) the extent to which you agree them, using the following scale: (Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and strongly disagree)

1. Is counseling an important factor to special needs students with learning disabilities?

- Strongly Agree ☐
- Agree ☐
- Disagree ☐

2. Students with learning disabilities have a strong tendency to experience intense frustration with difficult task that call for counseling.

- Strongly Agree ☐
- Agree ☐
- Disagree ☐

3. Do you often need counseling especially as you learn?

- Strongly Agree ☐
- Agree ☐
- Disagree ☐
- Strongly disagree ☐

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The following interview questions were used to find out the impact of counseling, the levels of counseling, the learning disabilities, the causes of learning abilities, solutions to learning abilities and other strategies to improve on learning abilities.

Name of respondent:.....

Age:..... Education level.....

Sex:..... Marital status.....

1. Where do you understand by the term counseling?
2. What are the causes of learning disabilities?
3. What are the impacts of counseling on learning abilities?
4. Do you often need counseling especially as you learn YES OR NO.?
5. What are the levels of learning abilities?
6. What levels of counseling do you always prefer?
7. How often do you visit the university counselor?
8. Is counseling an important field to special needs students?
9. What solutions do you suggest for learning disabilities among special needs students?
10. What other strategies would you recommend to be used to improve the students learning abilities?

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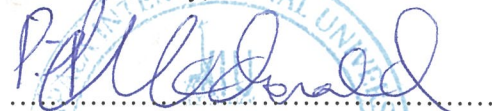
Date: 30th - AUG - 2013

To: THE VICE CHANCELLOR
KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
PO BOX 20000

This is to introduce to you NANTEZA BETT Reg. No. BSC/31536/102104 who is a bonafide student of Kampala International University. He/She is working on a research project for a dissertation, which is a partial requirement for the award of a Degree. I here by request you, in the name of the University, to accord him/her all the necessary assistance he/she may require for this work.

I have the pleasure of thanking you in advance for your cooperation!

Yours Sincerely,



Dr. Imbuki Kennedy (PhD)
Head of Department Psychology

