

INTEGRATING LEARNER DISABILITIES IN INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS IN NJORO SUB- COUNTY

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***Sub Theme: Integrating Disability for
Development***

Introduction

- Learners with special needs in mainstream programmes do not perform optimally due to frustrations and withdrawal syndromes imposed on them by dairy complexities and challenges which face them calling for counseling services.
- Poor integration of disabilities is caused by discrimination, inadequate physical facilities, poor administrative policies or incompetence, large class sizes, poor supervision, formative assessment, unadjusted curriculum and poor counseling (UNESCO, 1990).
- Some of the factors that enhance challenges among learners with special needs include teacher heavy workload (Craig et al, 1988) and overstretched facilities due to free education (Njoro sub-county Education Office, 2013).
- Low self esteem make the learners become disenfranchised when their needs are not met (Wooley & Bailey, 2003), develop problems in reading, writing, listening, spelling and computation (Gargiulo, 2006).

- Develop problems when manipulating the environment especially those with psychological and neuron-skeletal challenges (Turnbull et al., 2006).
- Those with emotional disorders have attention deficits, inability to settle on given tasks and presents declining academic performance (Ormrod, 2003).
- Mwaura and Wanyera (2007) attested that unskilled teachers deem the gifted and talented children as bossy, unruly and rude.
- Patterson (2009) postulated that children living under difficult circumstances have poor concentration, suffer mental agony. They are poorly socialized, often traumatized; need families' support and lack parental stimulation.
- It is against this background that the research sought to find out factors hindering integration of learner disabilities in inclusive primary schools in Njoro Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

Objectives

The study was guided by the following objectives:-

- To determine the types of special needs among learners.
- To establish factors which enhance the challenges which face learners with special needs.
- To find out how the challenges affect the learners' performance.
- To suggest ways that these challenges can be mitigated.

Materials and Methods

- The target population of the study comprised all teachers, education officers and pupils in both public and private schools in Njoro Sub-County.
- Purposive sampling procedure was employed to select 20 teachers, 5 education officers and 100 pupils from 3 primary schools.
- Descriptive survey design was adopted since it gives an in-depth description of the performance and displays the phenomena in their existing setting.
- Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data. A pilot study was conducted in the area to validate the instruments prior to the study.
- Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha method was used to determine the internal consistency of the items where a coefficient of 0.702 was computed.
- The data was coded, tabulated and analyzed to generate frequencies and percentages using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program .

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- Table 1 shows the responses of teachers when asked whether they were trained to handle learners with special needs.

Table 1: The % of teachers trained to handle learners with special needs

| Responses | Frequency(f) | Percent (%) |
|------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| Yes | 6 | 30.0 |
| No | 14 | 70.0 |
| Total | 20 | 100.0 |

- Most of the teachers in the Sub-County are not professionally trained to handle learners with special needs.
- This confirms the Kenya Government (1999) report of the Commission of Inquiry into the education system of Kenya which observed that there are inadequate trained personnel.

- The research tried to establish how teachers view the learners' participation in class. The results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Teachers' report on learners' participation in class activities

| Responses | Frequency (f) | Percent (%) |
|------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Active learners | 2 | 10 |
| Passive learners | 17 | 85 |
| Total | 19 | 95 |

- This is a clear indication that this group of learners had intrinsic issues that required immediate interventions so that the individuals can benefit in the teaching and learning process.

- The research sought the opinion of teachers on whether there were major, minor or no adjustments that should be done on the curriculum for handling learners with special needs and the responses are as indicated in table 3.

Table 3: Teachers' responses on the kind of adjustment which ought to be done on the curriculum for handling learners with special needs

| Curriculum amendments. | Frequency(f) | Percent (%) |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| None | 1 | 5 |
| Major | 18 | 90 |
| Minor | 1 | 5 |
| Total | 20 | 100.0 |

- 90% of the teachers asserted that the curriculum used in handling learners with special needs require major adjustments to include the various needs of the learners.
- Totally integrated quality of Education and training which saw the need for the Kenyan Government to adjust the curriculum so that it can favor all learners including those with special concerns.

- Respondents were asked if they had anything that made them not concentrate in class. The responses were as shown in Figure 2.

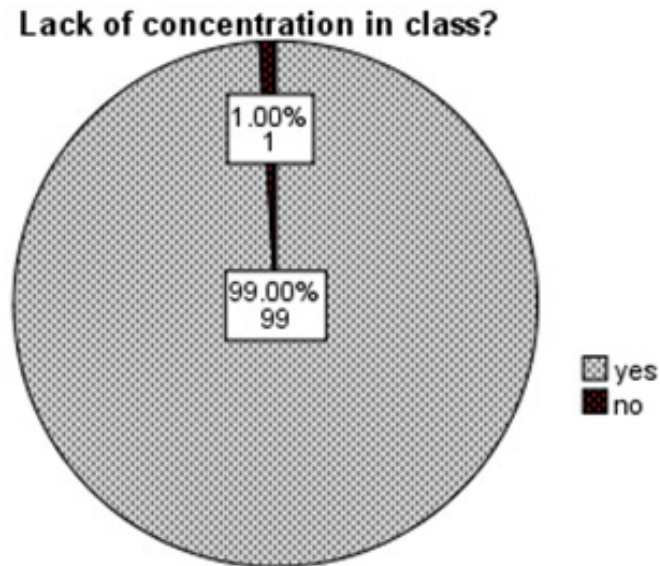


Figure 2: Deterrents to concentration of learners with special needs

- Inclusive learning should be adopted in all regular schools in order to provide psychological services which promote acceptance, comfort, empathy and unconditional positive regard to learners with special needs.

- The research further sought to find out whether there were psychosocial challenges which face learners in a teaching and learning atmosphere. The results are shown in figure 3

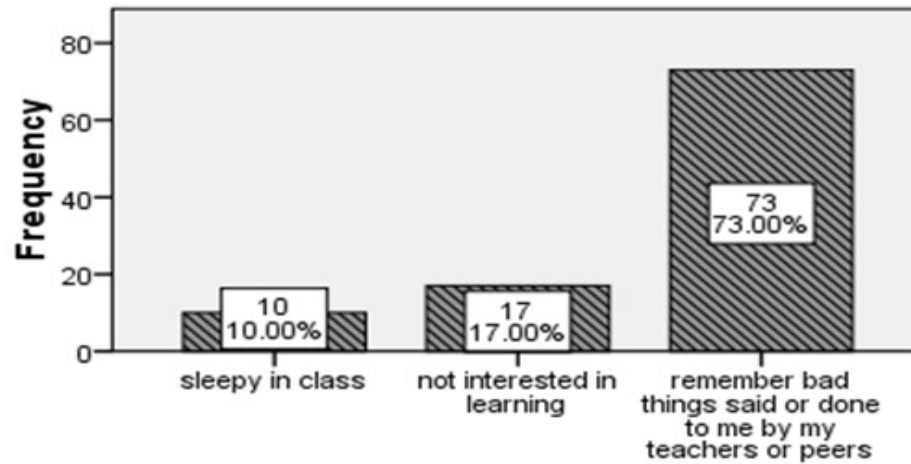
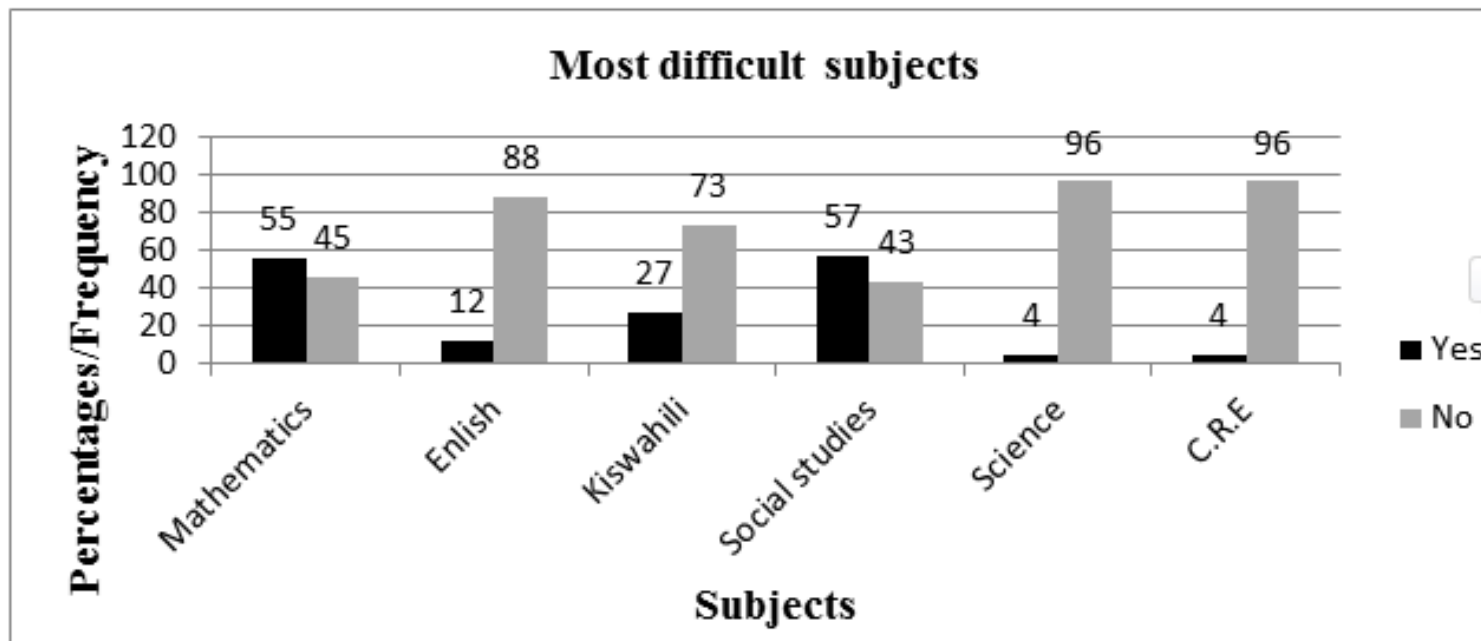


Figure 3: Feelings of the children while reading

- These findings revealed presence of psychosocial challenges in a teaching and learning atmosphere.

- Figure 3 shows the responses of the children when they were asked about the subjects they felt were most difficult during their course of study.



- This study established that there are a good number of children with specific learning difficulties as observed by Gargiulo (2006). This therefore causes intrinsic psychosocial challenges to the pupils which need counseling interventions .

- This study sought to find out other causes of psychosocial challenges among learners with special needs in the area of study. The responses are as illustrated in Figure 5.

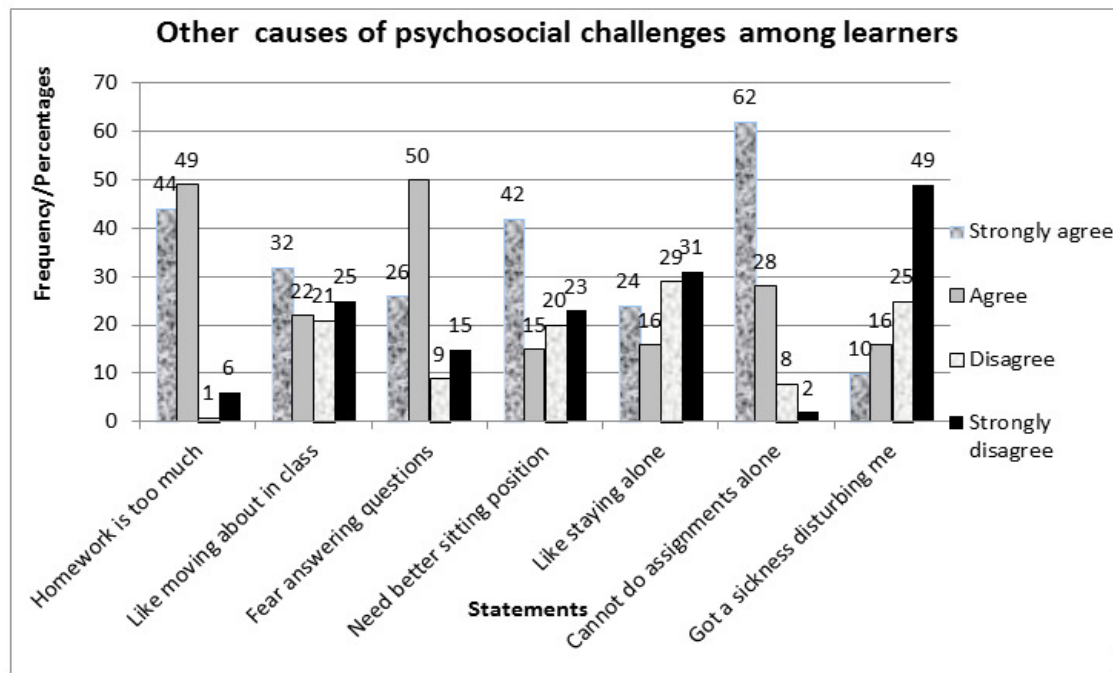


Figure 5: Other causes of psychosocial challenges among learners in Njoro Sub County

- These findings agree with the Kenya Government, (1999) report of the Commission of Inquiry into the needs of learners with special needs in that it lacks clear policy guidelines and legal status on special needs provision.

Conclusions

- The findings of the study revealed that learners with special needs in Inclusive schools in Njoro Sub County face a variety of challenges.
- The special needs include physical and visual impairment, health and hearing problems, communication, emotional and learning difficulties as well as giftedness.
- These conditions interfere with the learning process, and consequently the achievement of their daily lives and study goals.
- The teachers who handle these learners are neither adequate nor properly trained. Their distribution among the inclusive schools is also wanting.
- The effects of the challenges are compounded by inadequate and ill prepared teachers, rigid curriculum, lack of a conducive school environment and poor education policies.
- At the same time, examination style, certification and assessment

Recommendations

The study recommends the following:

- Strengthening of guidance and counseling programmes for learners with special needs.
- Introduction of a diversified curriculum and examinations that accommodate learners with special needs.
- In-service training of teachers in the area of handling learners with special needs
- Motivation of teachers through better remuneration and certification.
- Development of policies and legislations that support learners with special needs.
- Administrative policies within the school environment, including friendly rules and regulations.
- Provision of learning resources and infrastructural facilities that favor learners with special needs.
- Admission of learners into all schools should integrate learner disabilities into the mainstream program.

THE END

Thank You