



Original Article

ENHANCING IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED PUPILS IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KERICHO COUNTY, KENYA

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish how to enhance the implementation of inclusive education for physically challenged pupils in public primary schools in Kericho County, Kenya. The study was based on Lev Vygotsky Social-Cultural Constructivism Theory. The study used a descriptive survey design. The objective of the study was to explore the possible solutions to the challenges facing inclusive education of the physically challenged pupils in public primary schools in Kericho County Kenya. Mixed research methods were employed. The target population was composed of 214 teachers and the County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer CQASO). A sample size of 42 teachers and one CQASO were used. CQASO was sampled purposively and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the teachers. The instruments for data collection was the questionnaire and interviews guide. Spearman rank order correlation was then used to compute the correlation coefficient in order to establish the reliability of the instrument. The instrument got a coefficient of 0.85. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme and presented using tables frequencies and percentages to form part of the descriptive statistics. The study recommended that the government should provide in-service training to all the teachers teaching in public primary schools on SNE and facilities for the physically challenged pupils like ramps, transport and boarding facilities.

INTRODUCTION

The National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD, 2003) argue that no person with disabilities shall be denied the right to

admission to any course of study by reason of disabilities. Kenya Constitution (2010) states that a person with disabilities should be treated with dignity, respect, and is entitled to access

educational institutions. World Bank (2004) observed that well-trained professionals are important for the provision of meaningful educational services to children with special needs in regular schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mednick (2004) observed that inclusive education makes it necessary to review how people are treated and encompasses equal opportunities and equal rights issues, as well as making society confront the notions of what is ordinary and normal. Inclusion attempts to meet the needs of every pupil, valuing and respecting diversity and difference. Opertti (2009) observed that there is a need to reposition the EFA engagement to ensure that inclusive education is perceived as the core of EFA and must be an integral part and a crosscutting dimension of education reforms, from vision to practices. A competency-based approach may be understood as a powerful tool.

United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF, 2003) advocates that pre-service training and in-service training of the teachers should address the issue of education of children with special needs to equip teachers with different teaching methodologies. United Nations Children Education Fund (UNICEF, 2013) contends that when teachers and personnel are trained to consider disability-related issues, they look upon children with disabilities more positively. Peter and Nderitu (2014) in their study found out that there are inadequate SNE trained teachers as a challenge to inclusion. The study suggested that this can be mitigated by in-service training of all teachers in primary schools to sensitize them on the ways to cater for pupils with special needs and schooling in the regular schools. They also suggested that the training will also make head teachers and teachers understand the different needs of pupils with SNE in inclusion programmes. The study further suggested that increasing government funding

towards special needs programmes so as to reduce the burdens to the parents. These funds will also help in acquiring materials.

Reiser (2013) observed that in-service training can contribute to successful IE. Developing committed school leaders and administrators, followed by frequent and ongoing staff training is the best practice of IE. He further mentioned that, given the large classes and low resource levels that exist in many parts of the world, the inclusion of children with disabilities is not possible without mobilizing the pupils in the class to help. A similar intervention was also indicated in UNESCO (2004) which stated that there is a need to capacity build teachers to adapt reflective teaching methodologies and that teachers should also share their experiences.

Konza (2008) stressed that weekly seminars or peer coaching sessions may be effective in implementing change. He further pointed out that teachers need to work together to implement new strategies and get verbal feedback. Benoit (2013) and Mednick (2004) affirm that good practice is concerned with the delivery of differentiated teaching and learning and this helps to raise educational achievement for all pupils. Pupil participation and learning can be enriched and enhanced by maximizing peer support, referring to the pupil's concrete experiences and having high realistic expectations.

Deku et al. (2013) stressed that teacher's classroom practices influence how pupils relate to one another. In grouping children for various assignments, cooperative learning and peer tutoring bring learners together thereby promoting healthy relationships among them. Ogot (2008) argued that teachers can change the sitting arrangement to encourage cooperative learning where there is a sharing of knowledge and skills. Children will support their peers hence there will be learning. Ogot further mentioned the use of people with disabilities as role models example as teachers

will enhance the self-esteem of young disabled learners.

Marzano, Perking and Heflebower (2011) posit that teacher-learner and peer relationships can be improved if the teacher ensures that the learner feels that the teacher like and respect them. The teacher should ensure fair and equitable treatment to all learners by stopping hurtful behaviours and making classrooms safe. Teachers can show interest and affection towards learners by attending to them. Identifying and using positive information about learners also communicate a powerful message to the learners.

Nyende (2012) and Nguyet and Ha (2010) observed that inclusive education should be an integral part of teacher training in the curricula of pre-service training of teachers in colleges and universities. This will enable teachers to have fundamental knowledge and skills of inclusive education. These include understanding the needs and abilities of children with special needs and pedagogical skills like instructional accommodation and activity differentiation. Practicing teachers already should be provided with skills and techniques for inclusive education. A study was done by Mwangi and Orodho (2014) and Odongo (2012) revealed that teachers needed additional ongoing training and expressed concern of lack of personal professional experience. Teachers mentioned that unless they understand the disability and how to deal with it, they may experience frustration and guilt of not being able to do their best in the inclusive classroom. The length of time of contact with children with disabilities and experience with inclusion was significant predictors towards the inclusion of children with disabilities.

Allen and Abend (2001) suggested that there should be the provision of versatile classroom spaces to allow flexibility for both teaching and learning. Mednick (2004) wrote that classroom layout should be simple enabling pupils to be

independent and feel at ease in the room. UNESCO (2009) observed that the classroom should be set in such a way to allow free movement of children who use wheelchairs, calipers or crutches. Children must not just have physical access to their own desk; they should also access other parts of the classroom for group activities or just to fetch something from a shelf or cupboard, or to paste a drawing on the wall. Torreno (2012) accepts that larger desk may help a student balance books, papers, and classroom supplies. According to the recommendations of the MOE (2010), every school compound, there should be one special toilet cubicle for the physically challenged girls and boys which should be the first priority for all schools.

Doulkeridou et al. (2010), the inclusion of children with disabilities and Special Educational Needs (SEN) in general physical education classes enable children with disabilities and SEN be led into a more active way of life which is going to affect not only their health but also the development of their personalities. Other children will also acquire knowledge about people with disabilities and develop understanding and acceptance of them and thus they learn how to behave towards them. A study was done by Ajwang, Wamukukoya and Simiyu (2010) in Joyland special school revealed that physical education is effective in improving the health-related fitness of pupils with physical disabilities.

Mungala et al. (2012) pointed out that the Kenya government under FPE programme is enabling the provision of additional grants to facilitate the implementation of inclusive education for learning and sports materials, assistive device and modification of school structures. Kakui (2003) observed that the inclusion of learners with special needs in physical activities demand a lot of creativity. The teacher should promote a positive attitude in all the interactions with children with special needs. This can be done by having planned interaction experiences, and from a structured

environment like having equal status relationships with learners with special needs and cooperation rather than competition or individual activities in the social setting.

UNESCO (2009) point out that, children in the class should be encouraged to help and assist their classmates with disabilities as part of their own social, emotional and academic development, which is mutually enriching. Through physical education, children can learn how to include their peers with disabilities in after-school activities, as well. This is one of the most important points in inclusive education. A study done by Masha (2013), Kilimani primary school, Nairobi County, revealed that there was a lot of interaction between regular pupils and the special needs pupils. This indicated that regular learners have a positive attitude towards special needs pupils.

Joel, Edwards, Eric and Janet (2012) contends that to promote positive attitudes of regular pupils to special needs pupils, teachers need to use strategies like sharing the same desks, tables while eating, joint group discussion and using same textbooks. This will enable them to have social interaction while in class and in the process, they develop a positive attitude towards each other. Ngugi (2007) argue that pupils with special needs in regular classes do better academically than those in the non-inclusive setting because of being challenged by their peers. Their self-esteem is also improved because of reduced fear of human difference, increased comfort and increase in self-awareness. The regular pupils develop warm and caring friendships.

Murungami (2009) observed that impairment should be seen as part of the human condition rather than a characteristic diminishing one humanness and that disability is a human right and a social issue. A Person with a disability is entitled to the enjoyment of human rights and the acquisition of dignity through these rights. Developing strong self-identity and positive self-concept empowers persons with disability. Combating stereotyping and prejudice through

campaigns promote self-awareness of contributions of persons with disabilities and empower them. Melgosa (2013) observed that the social environment plays an important role in self-esteem. The school-age years teach a child how to mould his or her self-esteem, especially for the SNE. Schoolmates are often ridiculing the victim. Teachers should teach the children the values of self-respect and cooperation with everyone.

Stubbs (2008) observed that activists' contributions to inclusive education are raising awareness on the rights of people with disabilities and demanding inclusive education as a right as observed in the international communities and the constitution of Kenya. They also contributed to acting as role models and advocating for the participation of people with disabilities in education at all levels, as teachers, managers, policy-makers.

Muga (2003) contends that the Educational Assessment and resource center in Kenya have some of the objectives like equalizing education opportunities for children with special needs and facilitating their full integration into the school system and the community. Another objective is also sensitization, counselling and training of disabled children and their caretakers. It also creates public awareness on disability, handicap, early intervention and integration of these children in the school system. Providing links with other service providers to support some of the children in need like getting wheelchairs. Ngugi (2007) observed that to effectively teach a learner with physical disabilities, teachers should encourage peers to interact with the learner so as to assist as they learn. The physically challenged learner should be trained to use the functional parts for writing and performing other activities. The learner should acquire basic skills for self-care and good relationship with others, trained to use a mobility device, given extra time to complete a task and maintain a good sitting posture to prevent secondary deformities.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The objective of the study was to explore the possible solutions to the challenges facing inclusive education of the physically challenged pupils in public primary schools in Kericho County Kenya. To achieve this objective, research question, “Which are the possible solutions to the challenges facing inclusive education of the physically challenged pupils in public primary schools in Kericho Municipality Zone?” was generated. To answer the research question, the teachers and CQASO were asked an open-ended question on the possible solutions to the challenges facing implementation of inclusive education of the physically challenged pupils in public primary schools. Their responses are summarised below.

COMPETENCE OF THE TEACHERS

The results in Table 1 show teachers’ responses on how to improve the teachers’ competence with the required skills so as to cater for the physically challenged pupils.

Table 1
Responses on how to help the Physically Challenged Pupils (n=42).

Responses	Number of Teachers	Percentage
In-service training	28	66.0
Separate schools	11	26.9
No opinion	03	7.1
Total	42	100.0

Source: Author (2019)

The findings in Table 1 reveal that, a majority of the teachers 28 (66.0%) mentioned that they required in-service training to acquire skills to be able to handle physically challenged pupils,

a good number, 11 (26.9%) said that these learners should be taken to separate institution for the special needs children where they can be given maximum attention. They also mentioned that the teachers in special needs institutions have the required skills to handle physically challenged pupils. However, a few, 3 (7.1%) teachers did not give any opinion on the matter. The CQASO said that there is a need to provide seminars and in-service training to the practicing teachers on SNE so as to make the primary schools inclusive. He also mentioned that pre-service teachers need to undertake a course on SNE. This will help teachers to improve their skills so as to make the teacher more competent to cater for the physically challenged pupils.

These findings mirror the study done by Peter and Nderitu (2014), Mwangi and Orodho (2014) and Odongo (2012) which revealed that the majority of the teachers pointed out that they needed specialized training in specific cases of disabilities especially in areas of great challenges. This will sensitize the teachers on the needs of the special needs pupils. This was also echoed by Gathumbi et al. (2013) who contended that one’s experience is achieved by attending in-service and other forums but not only years of experience to improve TPD. World Bank (2004) study stressed that well-trained professionals are important for the provision of meaningful educational services to children with special needs in regular schools. The teachers who did not give any opinion and those who mentioned that special needs learners need to be taken to separate institutions may be having a negative attitude towards SNE.

Those who wrote that the physically changed learners should be taken to separate institutions indicated that these learners require more time to be taught than the regular pupils.

Table 2
Teachers' responses on Classroom Management (n =42)

Responses	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Manipulation of classroom environment	17	40.5
Making individual lesson plan	08	19.0
Different teaching methodologies	07	16.7
Inclusive curriculum	10	23.8
Total	42	100.0

Source: Author (2019)

The findings in Table 2 shows that a good number of the teachers, 17 (40.5%) were of the opinion that the training on SNE will enable them to manipulate the classroom environment to enable special needs pupils to interact with their peers hence learn from them socially and problem-solving skills. These results agree with the findings of Ogot (2004), who mentioned that teachers should change sitting arrangement to encourage cooperative learning where there is a sharing of knowledge and skills. The manipulation of the classroom environment will also enable regular pupils to support physically challenged pupils. The findings also concur with Deku et al. (2013) who emphasized that classroom practices influence how pupils relate to one another. This means that if there is a lot of interaction in the classroom, both regular and physically challenged pupils will relate to each other positively because they will understand the likes and dislikes of one another.

On the opinion of making an individual lesson plan, a few, 8 (19.0%) teachers said that the training will enable them to learn how to make an individualized lesson plan. The results on the use of different teaching methodologies revealed that a few 7 (16.7%) agreed that the training will enhance their skills on the use of different teaching methodologies. These findings concur with studies were done by UNICEF (2003), Mednick (2004), UNESCO (2004), Mwangi and Orodho (2014), Benoit (2013) and Peter and Nderitu (2014) on the

need to capacity build teachers to adopt differentiated teaching methodologies. Teachers responses on Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) making inclusive curriculum shows that a few 10 (23.8%) said that the curriculum should be modified to cater for special needs education. This is because they miss school to attend clinics sometimes. They are also disadvantaged when performing certain activities because of their disability.

AVAILABILITY OF FACILITIES

Table 3
Possible Solutions to the Availability of Facilities (n = 42)

Responses	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Government funding	30	71.4
Parents funding	09	21.5
No opinion	03	7.1
Total	42	100

Source: Author (2019)

The results in Table 3 shows that a majority of the teachers, 30 (71.4%) were of the opinion that there is need to improve the facilities like provision of ramps, modification toilets and designing better physical education facilities for the physically challenged pupils in the

public primary schools. They further mentioned that this would improve the enrollment of the physically challenged pupils in public primary schools. They also mentioned that government funding can be done by increasing the funds allocated to FPE for inclusive education. These results mirror with the findings of Peter and Nderitu (2014) who suggested that increasing government funding towards special needs programmes will reduce the burden on the parent.

During the interview with the CQASO, he reported that some special units' schools get financial support to avail facilities for the physically challenged pupils through the Kenya government through FPE, Kenya

Association of the Disabled and initiative of the head teachers. When he was asked to clarify his information, he mentioned that special units' schools are schools with special needs pupils. He also mentioned that there is a need for the government to ensure that all public schools have facilities for the special needs pupils so that they can be inclusive to special needs pupils. The results in Table 3 also reveals that a few of the teachers, 9 (21.5%) mentioned that parents should be sensitized over the importance of IE during parents' days and public 'barazas' so that they may develop a positive attitude and contribute towards the funding for the facilities for the special needs learners in public primary schools.

Table 4

Teachers responses on the Accessibility of the Schools (n =42)

Responses	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Transport	22	52.4
Provision of lunch	15	35.7
Boarding unit	02	4.8
No opinion	03	7.1
Total	42	100

Source: Author (2019)

The findings in Table 4 reveal that a majority, 22 (52.4%) teachers were of the opinion that the government should provide transport for the physically challenged pupils. They mentioned that this is because the roads to school at times are impassible during the rainy days and to reduce the time taken by pupils who come from a far distance from the school walking to school. Only 5 (35.7%) mentioned that these learners should be provided with lunch at school to reduce time wasted when going home for lunch by physically challenged pupils. This will then increase their time spent at school, therefore, improving their performance. Specifically, there were only 2 (4.8%) teacher who mentioned there is need to provide a boarding unit for the physically

challenged pupils in public primary schools to reduce movement of these pupils to and fro their homes. A teacher who did not give their opinion were only 3 (7.1%). This may be because they did not have any knowledge of inclusive education. The CQASO mentioned that most schools are inaccessible to the physically challenged pupils. He further mentioned that there is a need for the MOE to ensure that transport for physically challenged pupils is provided to enable these pupils to access the schools without much challenge.

THE ATTITUDE OF THE PUPILS

Table 5

Possible Solutions on Attitude towards
Physically Challenged Pupils (n = 42)

Response	Number of Teachers	Percentage
Learners to be sensitized	39	92.9
No opinion	03	7.1
Total	42	100.0

Source: Author (2019)

The results in Table 5 indicate that a majority of the teachers, 39 (92.9 %) were of the opinion that the regular learners should be sensitized on the importance of cooperative learning especially when performing tasks which are difficult to the physically challenged pupils so as to improve their self-concept. Teachers also mentioned that learners, teachers and community members need to be sensitized through guidance and counselling on the dangers of stigmatizing the special needs learners so as not to affect their self-esteem. Teachers who did not give their opinion were only 3 (7.1%). The results concur with UNESCO (2009) and Ngugi (2007) who observed that children should be encouraged to assist their classmates who are physically challenged. Murungami (2009) also contended that a person with a disability is entitled to the enjoyment of human rights and acquisition of dignity through these rights. Strong self-identity and positive self-concept should be developed for these persons so as to be empowered and that stereotyping and prejudice should be combated through campaigns.

The CQASO during the interview mentions that regular pupils need further sensitization through guidance and counselling on the dangers of stigmatizing and stereotyping physically challenged pupils. This also should be done to the teachers and the parents of these

pupils so that they can provide them the necessary support to develop their self-esteem.

CONCLUSIONS

The study found out that high percentage of the teachers advocated for the need of pre-service and in-service training teachers on SNE so as to acquire the required skills on how to handle the physically challenged pupils and improve their classroom management. The findings on the availability of the facilities indicate that majority of the teachers were for the idea that the government should increase the funding allocated to SNE through FPE. They mentioned that this would make all public primary schools inclusive to special needs pupils. The findings of the study also revealed that majority and the teachers were for the idea of sensitization of the pupils on the importance of group work and helping the physically challenged pupils for this would improve their self-esteem. This will also develop a positive attitude of the regular pupils towards physically challenged pupils. Most teachers also mentioned that teachers, pupils and community members should be sensitized on the dangers of stigmatization of physically challenged pupils as this affect their self-concept.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. In-service training of teachers to acquire skills on how to prepare an inclusive lesson plan to cater for the physically challenged pupils
2. There is a need for Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development to modify the curriculum to cater for physically challenged pupils
3. There is a need to improve the facilities in public primary schools to cater for physically challenged pupils.
4. There is a need to sensitize regular pupils to reduce stigmatization of physically challenged pupils.

5 There is a need to help physically challenged pupils to develop a positive self-image by approaching life positively

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