

Perception of Teachers on Inclusive Education in Public Regular Primary Schools in Homa Bay Town Sub County, Homa Bay County, Kenya

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Abstract— Perception of teachers of inclusive education is vital due to the fact that their perspective determines to what extent teachers practice inclusive education. Despite the progress in providing quality inclusive education to learners with special needs, total inclusive education is yet to be embraced. The purpose of the study was to examine the perception of teachers on inclusive education in public regular primary schools in Homa Bay Town Sub County, Homa Bay County, Kenya. The study aimed at finding out the perception of teachers on potential challenges facing them while implementing inclusive education in public regular primary schools. The study sampled six regular primary schools from a total of 20 with a total of 99 teachers and 2 Educational Assessment Resource Centre Coordinators (EARC). Using 30% of the target population, a sample size of 30 teachers was selected through simple random sampling technique and 2 EARC coordinators through saturated sampling technique. Data collection instruments used were Interview schedules and focus group discussion guides. Trustworthiness of qualitative instruments was enhanced by data triangulation, member-checking, and external auditors.

Keywords—Inclusive education, Perception of teachers, public regular primary schools, special education.

I. INTRODUCTION

The perception of teachers on inclusive education determines how teachers prepare their school for inclusion; their possible roles and functions in an inclusive program and the impact of inclusive programs on pupils. There is little evidence to suggest that policy reforms focused on improving instruction have had any significant impact on teachers' actual classroom performance (Stainback, 2009). Although teachers are making instructional decisions in a context which includes new policies, new ideas about learning, instruction, assessment and many programs that claim to reflect these new ideas, the very multiplicity and diversity of messages about improving classroom practice confounds the decision-making process for teachers. Teachers interpret these messages in very different ways depending on their experiences, beliefs, learners and school culture. Thus, the way a particular reform idea is implemented will vary greatly from teacher to teacher and may be quite different from the expectations of the performers (Ainscow, 2009).

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In a study in the U.S.A, Codrington (2012) on "Misappropriate placement of African American children in special education." Using a sample population of 10 participants, the study generally looked at the challenges hindering parents from participation in the education of their children with special needs. The study found out that among the challenges parents face as they participate in their children's education, three are major; alienation from formal education because of cultural, historical and systematic forces, teachers' attitudes towards parents which causes parents to feel left out in the education of their children and racism which by design denied Africans quality in education. In Tanzania, a study carried out by Mwakyeja (2013) in one of the secondary schools located in southern part of the county using a qualitative case study design with four (4) general teachers teaching in classes having pupils with visual impairments revealed that general teachers have little knowledge about inclusive education and how it should be practiced not only for pupils with visual impairment but for all pupils investigated. The study further established that general teachers were not using the little knowledge of teaching in inclusive classroom they have due to many challenges surrounding the whole inclusive teaching in the school like scarcity of resources and a rigid curriculum. A study conducted in Kenya by Buhere, Ndiku & Kindiki (2014) on inclusive education and school cultures assessed the effectiveness of school administrative support in the implementation of inclusive education for special needs learners in mainstream primary schools. The findings revealed that integration of inclusive education has not been accompanied by supportive cultural features and practices that make inclusive education work.

General Objective

To determine the perception of teachers on inclusive education in public regular primary schools in Homa Bay Town Sub County, Homa Bay County, Kenya.

Specific Objective

To find out the perception of teachers on potential challenges facing them while implementing inclusive education in public regular primary schools in Homa Bay Town Sub County.

Research Question

How do teachers perceive potential challenges facing them as they implement inclusive education in public regular primary schools in Homa Bay Town Sub County?

Study Limitations

The study was limited to 6 public regular primary schools, 30 teachers and 2 Educational Assessment Resource Centre Coordinators (EARC) in Homa Bay Town Sub County due to vastness of the sub county that presented a challenge with resources and allocated time for the research.

III. STUDY METHODOLOGY

Study Design

The study adopted a case study design which is a systematic subjective approach used to describe life experiences and give them meaning (Labaree, 2013). The purpose of the design was to provide depth and detail, since it is deeper than analyzing ranks and counts by recording attitudes, feelings and behaviours. (Choy, 2005). The design was found appropriate for this study as it stimulated people’s individual experiences. A detailed picture was therefore built up about why people act in certain ways and their feelings about these actions.

Study Population

The study population was 30 teachers and 2 EARC officers from Homa Bay Town Sub County, Homa Bay County, Kenya.

Study Sample Size Determination

The target population for the study was 99. According to Mugenda (2003), for descriptive studies 10% to 30% of the accessible population provides a sufficient sample size. The researcher took 30% of the target population, coming to 30 teachers from 6 school across the 4 wards of Homa Bay Town Sub County.

Sampling Technique

Multi stage sampling was used to select respondents to the study. In stage one, 30% of 20 regular primary schools in Homa Bay Town Sub County constituting 6 schools were selected from the 4 wards of the sub county. In stage two, from the 6 schools that had 99 teachers, 30% constituting 30 teachers were selected. In stage three, from the 99 teachers, 30% of the total number of teachers were selected from each school.

IV. RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Interview Schedule

The study used an interview schedule that had two sections; the demographic section and the perception section.

Interview schedule was used on both the teachers and EARC Officers moderated by the researcher.

Focus Group Discussion Guide

The FGDs of participants was guided by the researcher as the moderator assisted by 2 note takers for about 45 minutes - 1 hour spent each session.

V. DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS

Data Collection Process

Data collection was purely through qualitative methods using the interview schedule and FGD guide. The researcher facilitated the data collection using the interview schedule to all the teachers and the EARC officials. The researcher moderated the FGD sessions assisted by 2 note takers.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was done by way of thematic analysis that involved the identification, analysis of themes within data and described the data set in detail interpreting various aspects of perception of teachers on potential challenges facing them while implementing inclusive education in public regular primary schools.

Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained approval to conduct the study from Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University for Science and Technology ethical approval committee to conduct the study. Permission was also sought from the Homa Bay County and Homa Bay Town Sub County Education Officers as well as Head Teachers of the sampled schools.

VI. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

TABLE 1: Respondents by professional grade, gender and length of service

Professional Grade	Frequency	Gender		Length of service	
		Male	Female	6-8 years	11+ years
P1	11 (37%)	5 (17%)	6 (20%)	2 (7%)	6 (20%)
Diploma	7 (23%)	4 (13%)	3 (10%)	2 (7%)	2 (7%)
Graduate	8 (27%)	4 (13%)	4 (13%)	3 (10%)	12 (40%)
Post Graduate	4 (13%)	2 (7%)	2 (7%)	1 (3%)	2 (7%)
Total	30 (100%)	15 (50%)	15 (50%)	8 (27%)	22 (73%)

Lack of Teaching and Learning Facilities

The study sought to find out perception of teachers on potential challenges facing them while implementing inclusive education in public regular primary schools. The study found out that lack of teaching and learning facilities in schools ranked highest in the list of challenges facing inclusive education....we do not have sufficient teaching and learning aids in this school, they are hardly bought despite the Free Primary Education being given to schools” as reported by one of the teachers of class 6 during a FGD. This concurs with the situation in Uganda according to Nakitende (2015).

Teachers' Lack of Knowledge in Special Needs Education

According to the study findings, most in teachers' in regular primary schools agreed to the fact that their professional training was inadequate to take full charge and impart knowledge and skills to pupils with special education needs. *...with my masters degree in curriculum studies, I cannot effectively handle learners with special needs. I need some in-service and seminars to be conducted to help people like me.* (Class 4 teacher). Lack of adequate knowledge in special needs education among teachers as a challenge was also agreed on by the EARC Officer who said *"...our office is planning to organize in-service and seminars to be conducted in schools in Homa Bay Sub County with support of teachers that are already trained in special needs education. Some teachers are currently undertaking post graduate studies in special needs education or have completed. They will therefore assist us in helping the other teachers so that they handle the learners with special needs"*.

Time Consuming

The study showed that inclusion in regular primary schools is time consuming yet no additional time is given to compensate for lost time. *"inclusion is time consuming and it makes class control difficult; disabled children have low self-esteem; syllabus coverage is very difficult; heavy work load on the part of teachers* (Class 1 teacher).

VII. DISCUSSION

Lack of teaching and learning facilities is a common problem across in public regular primary schools as most teachers acknowledged that as at the time of study, their schools lacked teaching and learning facilities in their schools. The situation is similar to findings from a study done in Embu County, Kenya (Nthia, 2012). Further, the study revealed that lack of adequate knowledge in special needs education by teachers in public regular primary schools was a hinderance to inclusion in public regular primary schools. The findings concur with a study in Tanzania that revealed that general teachers have little knowledge about inclusive education,

(Mwakyeya 2013). Inclusion in regular primary schools is more demanding in terms of time makes class control difficult; disabled children have low self-esteem, Jerishanos & Kudakwashe (2013).

VIII. CONCLUSION

The study found that teachers in regular public primary schools in Homa Bay Sub County, Homa Bay County, Kenya faced a number of challenges ranging from lack of teaching and learning facilities, limited knowledge by teachers in special education needs of pupils and management of time allocated in providing inclusive education.

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