

Perspectives of parents and teachers on inclusion of learners with mental challenges in selected public primary schools in Rarieda sub county, Siaya County, Kenya

The effect of parental and teachers attitude towards the inclusion of mentally challenged learners could not be over emphasized. Despite the Worlds Education for All and Kenyan government current policy of Free Primary Education, learners with mild and moderate mental challenges still had difficulties in accessing education in regular public primary schools in Rarieda Sub County which might have been due to teachers and parents attitude towards inclusive education.

This concurrent triangulation design was framed from behavioral theory aimed at investigating perspectives of parents and teachers' on the inclusion of learners with mental challenges in public primary schools in Rarieda Sub- County. The objectives of the study would be: to find out how teachers perceive inclusive education of learners with mild and moderate mental challenges in public primary schools, to find out how parents perceive inclusive education of learners with mild and moderate mental challenges in public primary schools, to determine the roles of teachers while including learners with mild and moderate mental challenges in public primary schools, to determine the roles of parents while including learners with mild and moderate mental challenges in public primary schools and to examine the strategies teachers used when dealing with their own attitudinal challenges and parents attitudinal challenges towards the inclusion of learners with mental challenges in public primary schools. The study population would include 835 teachers and 165 parents and 221 parents of female and male learners respectively who are mild and moderate mentally challenged. The study sample comprised of 12 public primary schools, 83 teachers, and 23 parents and 17 parents of male and female mild and moderate mentally challenged learners respectively. Simple random sampling was used to select schools in each zone, systematic sampling to select teachers and cluster sampling to select parents. Data was collected through questionnaires and interview schedules. The study instruments were validated by presenting them to experts from the department of Special Needs Education. To test the reliability of the instrument, the researcher used split half reliability by Spearson Brown with correlation coefficient of 0.675 obtained from the questionnaires. Trustworthiness and authenticity of the qualitative data was achieved by logical coding and analyzing data into appropriate themes for final analysis. The analysis was through selective coding of common themes and concepts and presented basing on each study objectives. Coded data were presented using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 and analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, graphs and tables. The results of the study showed that teachers and parents perceive inclusive education as that education where all students learn together, exposes learners with mental challenges to other learners. Teachers had a role in modify the teaching learning materials while the parents provided the learning and paid school fees. The study concluded that parents of learners with MC have low self-esteem towards their children and there is poor rapport between teachers and learners with mental challenges. Influence of school administration on inclusive education and awareness of teachers on the effectiveness of inclusive education were suggested for further research. The findings of the study might be useful to the various stakeholders in education such as the parents, teachers, MoEST, KNEC, KICD and the County government. The study thus recommended that there was need for sensitizing the parents and community on the importance of inclusive education. The study also recommended in-service training and workshops for teachers who had no training in special needs education to be put in one place.