

## ABSTRACT

While earlier studies indicated that parents of children who are mentally challenged participate less in making decision and are less involved in provision of school requirements, no study was done in Rachuonyo North sub-county that focused on how parental attitude affect their level of involvement in learning of their children who are mentally challenged. This descriptive survey design study framed from Epstein parental involvement perspective focused on the effects of parental attitude on level of involvement in the learning of mentally challenged learners in day special units in Rachuonyo North Sub County. The study objectives were: To establish the attitudes of parents towards the mentally challenged learners in day special units in Rachuonyo North Sub County; To determine level of parental involvement in the learning of mentally challenged learners in day special units in Rachuonyo North Sub County; To examine the relationship between attitude of parents and their involvement with the mentally challenged learners in day special units in Rachuonyo North Sub County; To find out gender differences in parental involvement with the mentally challenged learners in day special units in Rachuonyo North Sub County. The target populations comprised of 43 day special units with mentally challenged learners in Rachuonyo North Sub County. The target population for parents was 950. The sample size for the day special units was thirteen (13), while one hundred (100) parents were selected by purposive sampling techniques. Data was collected using questionnaire and interview schedule. Validity of questionnaires was ensured by special needs expert of Jaramogi Oginga Odinga University of Science and Technology. The reliability of the instrument was ensured and measured by calculating internal consistency of the questionnaires. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient computed was 0.934 indicating a good internal consistency of the items in the questionnaires. Trustworthiness and authenticity of qualitative instruments was also ensured by using two data collection tools. The data was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics. The descriptive statistics was used to describe and summarize the data in form of graphs, percentages and frequencies. The inferential statistics focused on the Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficient which was used to assess the perspectives on relationship between attitude of parents and their involvement with the mentally challenged learners, and use of t-test to determine the perspectives on gender difference in parental involvement .With the mentally challenged learners. The statistical package for social sciences (SSPS) version 20 was used to analyze the data. Qualitative data was analyzed using thematic approach. The findings show that there was a weak negative attitude of the parents towards their mentally challenged children. The study also established that parents were involved in different ways in the education of their children including supervision of homework, goal setting, participating in school decisions, governance and advocacy activities through school committees and through regular communication with the teachers. A correlative analysis found a positive Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient between parental attitudes and their level of involvement with the mentally challenged children. There was no significant difference between genders, in parental involvement with the mentally challenged children. The study recommended that the Kenyan ministry of education should come up with a national policy on parental involvement, for example, patents must be involved in the learning of their mentally challenged children.