

ABSTRACT

Attitudes help us understand teachers' relationship towards gifted and talented (GT) learners and may also influence teachers' attitude towards methods of identification of the GT learners. Given that teachers have one of the most significant influences on the educational development of GT learners, it is important to understand that preschool teachers' attitudes are imperative to implement effective identification process for GT learners. The purpose of this study was to investigate the preschool teachers' attitudes towards methods of identification of the GT preschoolers. The study objectives were to find out attitude of preschool teachers on objective method of identification of GT preschoolers; determine the attitude of preschool teachers on subjective method of identification of GT preschoolers; identify the attitude of teachers on the placement programs for the GT and establish attitude of preschool teachers on the intervention strategies employed when teaching the GT. The study used multiple intelligence theory as theoretical framework. The study employed concurrent triangulation design of the mixed method approach. The target population comprised of 315 Head teachers, 315 preschool lead teachers and 945 preschool teachers. Stratified random sampling was used to generate a sample of 32 head teachers, 32 lead preschool teachers and 95 preschool teachers. Questionnaires and semi structured interview schedule were used. Validity was enhanced by undertaking a pilot study in 2 schools which was sampled using purposive sampling. Test retest method was used to establish the instruments reliability. Qualitative and quantitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis and descriptive statistics respectively. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 was used to analyze quantitative data which was presented in the form of frequency distribution tables and bar graphs. The study was significant because the findings may influence policy formulation as well as guidelines on the identification processes, placement programs and intervention strategies for the GT. On the objective methods used in identifying GT learners, the study established that grade tests and aptitude tests were the most commonly used methods with an average score of 4.48 and 4.4 on the Likert scale. When rating of the attitude of the teachers towards its usage, the attitude was very positive. On the subjective methods used in identifying GT learners the study found out that teacher and self nomination were the most commonly used methods with an average score of 4.16 and 3.67 respectively on the Likert Scale. Most schools employed more than one identification method. The attitude of the teachers towards its usage was positive. This was due to high level of biasness in these methods. On the special education placement, the study found out that acceleration and enrichment programs were the most commonly used method with an average score of 4.50 and 4.48 respectively on the Likert Scale. Most schools employed more than one program. The findings indicated that the teachers' attitude was very positive. On the intervention strategies, the study found out that usage of mentors and undertaking independent projects and investigations were the most commonly used strategies with an average score of 4.54 and 4.41 respectively on the Likert Scale. On the rating of the attitude, the findings indicated that it was very positive. This study recommended that GT learners be given proper placement in order to allow full development of their potential. The study also suggested that a research on the suitability of the placement programs for the GT learners at the preschool level be done to expound the understanding of the present study.