

# TEACHERS' ATTITUDE INFLUENCING EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS WITH INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGES IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN BORABU SUB-COUNTY, KENYA

Teresa Nyamisa Onger<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Naftali Rop<sup>2</sup>, Dr. Ruth Jepkemboi Choge

<sup>1</sup>Teresa Nyamisa Onger<sup>1</sup> P.O Box 861Narok.

<sup>2</sup>Lecturers in the School of Education, Department of Special Needs, Maasai Mara University

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.7389715>

Published Date: 02-December-2022

---

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to analyze teachers' attitude influencing educational performance of learners with intellectual challenges in public primary schools in Borabu Sub-County, Kenya. Learners with intellectual challenges were considered socially and physically less capable hence not readily accepted as part of the community and family. Educational performance of these learners with intellectual challenges has been low. The study analyzed teachers' attitude on the educational performance of learners with intellectual challenges in Borabu Sub-County, Nyamira County, Kenya. The study adopted Glasser's choice theory that is combined with the quality school and a conceptual framework adapted on the same principles of factors influencing educational performance of intellectually challenged learners. The study used descriptive survey design with a target population of 614 teachers from 54 public schools in Borabu Sub-County. A sample size of 16 head teachers, 184 regular teachers and 11 SNE teachers together with 1 EARC officer were the respondents of the study. The findings revealed that teacher's attitudes influence the educational outcomes of the mentally challenged learners. Based on the findings, it was recommended that all public primary head teachers should avail enough time and space for the education of learners with intellectual challenges and that the curriculum should be adapted to satisfy all learners. Ministry of Education should plan for regular workshops to enhance the education of the mentally challenged. The EARC would sensitize school teachers and head teachers on the use of the Centre.

**Keywords:** Integration, Teachers' Attitude, Intellectual Challenges and Educational Performance.

---

## 1. INTRODUCTION

As integration of learners with IC in education continue to gain strength, it is important to understand how teachers perceive the educational performance of learners with IC (Forlin, Loreman, Sharm & Earle, 2007). The influence of teachers' attitude is powerful for example negative attitudes and low expectations by teachers can result in reducing opportunities for learners with IC. This in turn may impair the learners' self-belief causing them to reduce their

expectations and leading to deficit cycle (Hastings, Hastings, Hewes, Lock & Witting, 2006). However, they further argue that learners' behaviour or being does not have to cause a loss of instruction time of the teacher instead it can enhance opportunities for them to learn which may improve their expectation and self-esteem (Mwaura, 2004). Teachers do not need to probably make these learners to repeat classes in order to enhance the desired mean grades instead they would step up in providing important life skills which will be empowering learners with IC to face life issues. The idea that these learners with IC are used by being sent for errands which do not add value to the learner should not be held by teachers. Such negative attitudes have had a way of creating a group of dissatisfied and class of people in society (Thomas, 2007). This is due to their low and poor academic scores hence lowering the mean standard score of the school, class and subject and hence the teachers discarding them from society.

Jordan & McGhie (2009), hold that learners with IC were seen as a curse from God or ancestors or a possession of an evil spirit. Others stereotypic believers have feelings that it is improper to waste resources on the learners since they cannot perform. The teachers have lower expectations from these learners and some even object having them in their classes since they lower the mean standard score. These coupled with other cultural beliefs have hindered teachers from integrating learners with IC in their integrated classrooms. This study would establish that among the very factors that influence the education of learners with IC inadequate or lack of teachers committing themselves to such components of learning as integration is scarce in Borabu Sub-County in Nyamira County contrary to the expectations of the Ministry of Education policies on education for all

According to Avramidis et al (2002), the main barriers to the implementation of integrating learners with intellectual challenges have been identified as teacher's attitude. The negative attitudes towards accommodating learners with IC in mainstream classrooms are a consequence of a variety of factors. Many teachers feel that they are not prepared to meet the needs of learners with IC. Teachers may see the learner as a burden in the classroom; a learner who decreases the effectiveness they have in when instructing the rest of the typically developing learners. Teachers have been reported feeling frustrated and guilt due to the time that is taken away from the majority of the learners in order to accommodate the needs of learners with IC (McDermott, 2003). This would influence the overall educational performance in the integrated schools including for learners with IC.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Teachers' attitude is a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour (Eagly & Chaiken, 2003). In his work Agbenyega (2006) describes attitude is an individual's way of thinking, acting and behaving. Thus, the way the teachers would favour some learners by attention and in certain behaviours and actions which show less or more interest in selected individual learner with IC create distance between the teacher and the learner. Such manifestations in the learning processes disenfranchise the teacher and the learner. The teachers' expectations of learners with IC are that the latter performs in raising the standards as would be set, either by teachers themselves or together with the learners with IC. Attitude with a bent towards a comparison of learner with IC's abilities to be on level leads the teacher favouring certain learners at the expense of others. Mwaura (2004) states that such attitude has serious implications on learners; the immediate social group with which the individual learners relates and the entire school system. It causes pupils to cluster as favourites in subjects which the teacher would be handling as learners without IC distance themselves from the rest, especially those with IC (Martin, 2016). It was what the study sought to find out and indeed whether the same applies to Borabu Sub-County for the learners with IC. They are said to have positive, neutral or negative direction.

## 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Research Design

The study used descriptive survey design. The design was appropriate because it enabled the study to collect information that described the status of the target population with respect to one or more variables, (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). In this design, the respondents were observed in a completely natural and unchanged environment. It collected a large amount of data for detailed analysis on teachers' attitudes on educational performance of intellectually challenged learners (Kombo and Tromp, 2009). Both primary and secondary data were used in the study by use of questionnaires, interview

schedule, internet, journals and books. The study ensured that respondents returned all questionnaires by encouraging them that the information collected assisted in the education of intellectually challenged learners. Respondents were assured of total confidentiality.

### 3.2 Target Population

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), define a population as an entire group of individuals, events or objects having a common observable characteristic. Target population in statistic was the specific population about which information was desired. The target population was 705 respondents that comprised of 54 head teachers, 614 non-integrated teachers, 36 special units teachers and 1 EARC Officer drawn from 54 public primary schools.

### 3.3 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

A number of individuals were selected from a population such that the selected group contains elements representative of the characteristic found in the entire group (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). The study used purposeful sampling of 30% to select from 54 schools giving 16 head teachers, 184 teachers from the non-integrated schools and 11 teachers from the integrated primary schools and 1 EARC officer; a total of 213 respondents. This sample provided a better representation of the study characteristics. The findings were expressive of the generalized situation in Borabu Sub – County (Mugenda and Mugenda 2003).

### 3.4 Instruments for Data Collection

Data collection instruments are important tools for eliciting information on variables under study. To achieve the objectives of the study, this study used a set of instruments. These were structured questionnaires and focused group discussions. The questionnaires covered areas of general demographic information and the responses of teachers in line with the objectives of the study. The structured questionnaires had a five point Likert-Scale (Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly disagree). Another method of data collection that was used was focused group discussions with the teachers.

#### 3.4.1 Structured Questionnaire

Questionnaire give respondents freedom to express their views or opinions and also make suggestions. It covered areas of general demographic information which entailed to get information on gender, age, qualification under education discipline and teaching experience in the profession. The study had the questionnaires designed on Likert Scale so that they can bring out the variation in perceptions and understanding of respondents on selected teacher-related factors on educational performance of intellectually challenged learners. Each objective had eight to ten items and open-ended questions were used to capture the opinion and views of the respondents.

#### 3.4.2 Interview Schedule

Interview is one of the research instruments and is defined as an interpersonal face-to-face meeting where the researcher asks in-depth questions to the respondent who helps the researcher to gather more information on a given task (Mohsin, 2010). Although accused of time consuming interviews enables acquisition of enough data and information. This study adapted this tool for data collection from the Head teachers and EARC officer in-charge.

## 4. RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study sought to answer the question: how does teachers' attitudes influence educational performance of learners with IC in public primary schools in Borabu Sub-County? The respondents answered the eight variable items on a five point Likert Scale with 5 – Strongly Agree, 4 – Agree, 3 – Sometimes, 2 – disagree and 1 – Strongly disagree. The questionnaire was scored using the same scale in order to calculate the average mean performance of every item asked. The study responses are presented in the tables 9, 10 and 11 below.

### 4.1 Teachers' Attitudes

The responds to a questionnaire which had eight items on teachers' attitudes toward the education of learners with IC. Their responses were as shown in the table 1 below.

**Table 1: Head/Teachers' Responses on Teachers' Attitudes**

Statement	RES	SA	A	S/t	DA	SD	n	Stat	Ȳ
School makes learners with IC repeat classes	HT	2	3	4	3	4	16	44	2.75
	TR	76	49	15	18	26	184	546	2.97
School call parents to discuss learners with IC	HT	3	4	3	2	4	16	48	3.00
	TR	31	37	28	52	36	184	546	2.97
Learners with IC are enrolled in our school	HT	4	5	1	2	4	16	51	3.19
	TR	8	11	2	92	71	184	507	2.76
Learners with IC are integrated in our school	HT	1	2	3	5	5	16	37	2.31
	TR	12	3	14	51	104	184	532	2.89
Learners with IC are nicknamed demeaning	HT	4	4	3	2	3	16	52	3.25
	TR	93	36	10	15	30	184	584	3.17
Community disregard IC are demonized	HT	1	1	2	7	5	16	62	3.88
	TR	75	78	7	12	12	184	530	2.88
Learners with IC are considered social-out casts	HT	4	5	2	3	2	16	54	3.38
	TR	101	55	6	16	6	184	653	3.55
I am not interested to train in SNE	HT	6	5	1	2	2	16	59	3.69
	TR	88	29	17	30	20	184	488	2.65

**Source: Study 2017**

Table 1 above shows the responses regarding the teachers' attitudes on the education of learners with IC. When the responses were scored in a 5 point Likert scale a mean mark was calculated. The HT and TR mean was found to be 2.75 and 2.97 respectively, a mean score which was closer to 3-sometimes. These showed that learners with IC were sometimes made to repeat classes in most of the schools. Quite a few indicated that the learners with IC would be enrolled in the next classes. It was clear from the findings that regular teachers also did not give the learners with IC a chance in their education by making them to rewind classes in efforts to raise the much needed school mean grades. The parents were not as much involved for meaningful discussion with the teachers regarding the education of the learners with IC. It was seen that the learners with IC were not given any attention although there was some level of concern to enrol this cadre of learners in some schools. Similarly, Forlin, Loreman, Sharm and Earle (2007) found that it is important to understand how teacher's attitude influence educational performance of learners with IC. This can be enhanced more through sensitization programmes integration of learners with IC.

The study inquired whether the enrolled learners with IC were nicknamed and which of these names meant to demean their status. At a mean of 3.88, showed that this was rampant in many schools as most of the respondents agreed to the fact. A few stated that name calling was not practiced thus stating that it was not prudent to so segregate learners with IC. Asked whether the teachers' nickname these learners a mean of 3.17 indicated that learners with IC were sometimes nicknamed. Learners with IC were given quite demeaning names which teachers confessed to be used in a regular basis even in schools, by teachers, peers and sundry. When dealing with learners with IC, a lot of care must be taken for instance in choosing words which are used; some researchers say labelling a learners with IC does more harm than good and what learners are called determines what services they receive and from who (Sacco, 2002). This is echoed in Stainback and Stainback (2006) that labelling is detrimental and leads to de-individualization and stereotyping of learners with IC and, hence it hampers their educational performance.

The head teachers were asked whether learners with IC were enrolled in their schools, their responses were mean score of 3.19 while teachers had a mean score of 2.31. This implies that the head teachers sometimes enrolled learners with IC. However, teachers disagreed to that fact. To the question on how the community perceived learners with IC a mean score of 3.88 the study found that the community disregarded learners with IC which permeates into school. To the inquiry on what the community feels about learners with IC mean score of 2.88 showed that sometimes the community disregarded learners with IC. The community has demonized these learners to the extent that they no longer regard them as contributing positively to the community status and this influence their educational performance. These findings agrees

with Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005) who acknowledge that schools are agents of impeding intellectual and social growth in a growing child so if teachers have a good rapport, learners with IC can easily do well in educational performance.

Learners with IC were considered a social outcast lot that awaited the decision of fate, with a mean 3.38 and 3.55 the head teachers and teachers respectively agreed that learners with IC are regarded as social outcasts and this influence the educational performance of learners with IC. Asked whether the parents of learners with IC were ever called to schools for a discussion on their education head teachers had a mean score of 3.00 while teachers' responses scored a mean of 2.76. This showed that sometimes parents of learners with IC were ever called to schools for a discussion on their education and educational performance would improve. Even if that was the state, it was that most teachers showed a positive response in that they would want to train as special needs education instructors with opportunity offering. For teachers who were not interested in SNE it can be said that, there are some with negative attitudes towards learners with IC in Education concurring with Jordan & McGhie (2009) that learners with IC is a curse from God or ancestors or possession of an evil spirit and cannot learn.

Finally, the study asked the respondents whether personally they were interested in training on special needs education to get a feel of learners with IC. Head teachers' and teachers' responses had a mean score of 3.69 and 2.65 respectively. This implies that head teachers agreed but teachers opined that sometimes interested in the training. This is sufficient evidence that teachers remain the most resourceful and instrumental people who may be relied upon to improve the performance of learners with IC.

The officer in charge of the EARC was engaged in an-depth interview with this researcher led by the objectives. The first question which was posed to the officer sought to understand whether teachers were aware of the presence of the EARC and what it stood for. The responses which were later decoded were both video and tap recorded with permission. This followed an explanation from the researcher that all recordings were meant to facilitated findings on this study for academic purposes. The respondents reported that teachers were an elite group and trainer who should do better than the community by putting into practice what they were taught in training colleges. On whether teachers' attitude influenced educational performance of learners with IC, he was categorical that teachers' attitude has a big impact on the educational performance of learners with IC. EARC, (2017):

*Though teachers' attitudes on educational performance of learners with IC is positive, awareness seminars should be conducted. The teachers' attitudes on educational performance among learners with IC can be improved through close monitoring and interaction with them thus creating a good rapport. This way the educational performance could improve.*

The EARC reported that the start of the emphasis on special needs education has been most recent but it had spread into areas which have been neglected. Educational system has been integration of learners with IC.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

They regard them as social outcasts a term that segregates them from meaningful engagement. Even if that was the state, it was that most teachers showed a positive response in that they would want to train as special needs education instructors with opportunity offering. Learners with IC is a curse from God or ancestors or possession of an evil spirit. They too may be having other stereotypic beliefs for example learners with IC cannot perform thus low expectations from these learners. Schools are agents of impeding intellectual and social growth in a growing child so if teachers have a good rapport, learners with IC can easily realize their goals. This can be enhanced more through sensitization programmes inclusivity of learners with IC in through involvement of the parents and the communities in which learners with IC are found through school outreach programmes and change of attitude.

There was sufficient evidence that teachers remain the most resourceful and instrumental people who may be relied upon to improve the performance of learners with IC. Positive attitudes can enhance opportunities for learners with IC to learn hence improve their expectations and self – esteem “Ability beyond Disability.” labelling is detrimental and leads to de-individualization and stereotyping of learners who are mentally disabled and, hence it hampers their educational advancement and attainment.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Agbenyega, J. (2006). Examining Teachers' Concerns and Attitudes to Inclusive Education in Ghana. Assessed 12/2/2017 <https://www.google scholar.pdf>
- [2] Avramidis, E., & Norwich, B. (2002). Teachers' attitudes towards integration/mainstreaming: A review of the literature. *European Journal of Special Needs Education*, 17, (12) 129-147
- [3] Eagly, A. & Chaiken, S. (2003). *The psychology of attitudes*. Fort Worth, TX: Harcourt. U.S.A.
- [4] Forlin, C., Loreman, T., Sharma, U., & Earle, C. (2007). Demographic differences in changing teachers' attitudes: sentiments and concerns about mainstreaming education. *International Journal of Mainstreaming Education*, 13(2), 195-209.
- [5] Hastings, R. P., Hewes, A., Lock, S. & Witting, A. (2006). Do special educational needs courses have any impact on student teachers' perceptions of children with severe learning difficulties? *British Journal of Special Education*, 23(3), 139– 144.
- [6] Jordan, E. & McGhie, D. (2009). Preparing teachers for mainstreaming classrooms. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 25(4), 535-542.
- [7] Kombo, D. K. & Tromp, D. L. A. (2009). *Proposal and the writing: an introduction*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.
- [8] McDermott, R. (2003). The acquisition of a child by a learning disability. In S. Chaikin & J. Lave (Eds.), *Understanding Practice* (269-305). Cambridge University Press, New York.
- [9] Mugenda, O. & Mugenda, A. (2003). *Research methods: quantitative and qualitative approaches*, Nairobi: Acts Press.
- [10] Mwaura, J. W. (2004). Factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education policy of children with special needs education in public primary schools, kikuyu division, Kiambu, Kenya. Unpublished Med Thesis, University of Nairobi, Kenya. Assessed on: 19/12/2018 from <https://www.arespository.uonbi.ac.ke:8080/xmlui/handle/123456789/18404>
- [11] Thomas, W. L. (2007). *Sociology: the study of human relationships*. Austin: Holt, Rinehard and Winston. USA.