

Relationship Between Teachers' Academic Qualification And Retention Rates Of Learners With Intellectual Challenges In Special Units In Public Primary Schools ,Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County, Kenya.

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Abstract : *The failure to achieve education and essential skills for life is a big problem to children with intellectual challenge. The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of teachers' academic qualification on the retention rates of learners with intellectual challenges in the special units in public primary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County. The researcher included all the 8 schools Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County in this study and interviewed all the teachers and the head teachers. The collected data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis approaches whereby both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. This study was guided by the Self Efficacy Theory. The study used a descriptive survey design. The target population for the study included all the public primary schools within Kikuyu Sub-County with special units. The researcher included all the 8 schools in this study and interviewed all the teachers and the head teachers. The collected data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis approaches whereby both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. The findings of the study indicated a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.796$, $P < 0.05$) between teachers' academic qualification and the retention rates of learners with intellectual challenges in the special units in public primary schools. The recommendations of the study were that the ministry of education should train more teachers on special needs education so as to increase the number of teachers with that skill.*

Keywords - *Teachers' Academic Qualification, Retention Rates, Intellectual Challenge, Special Unit, Public Primary Schools*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The education of children with intellectual challenges is increasingly receiving attentions across the world but at varying degrees. In Europe, efforts to support children with special education needs (SEN) are underlined at continental level by the Education and Training 2020 Strategic Framework and the May 2010 Council conclusions on the social dimension of education and training. Both documents Education and Training 2020 Strategic Framework and the May 2010 Council emphasize the imperative position that that education in Europe should provide room for successful inclusion of all learners. The main objective of the two policy documents is to improve the quality of special needs education provision across Europe through collaboration and knowledge exchange (European Commission, 2013). In Africa, according to Tesemma (2011) children with intellectual challenges, like all other children with disabilities in Africa suffer severe impact of discrimination and attitudinal challenges. The children are usually powerless and have limited access to economic resources. They also suffer exclusion from political participation and a cultural image of weakness, dependency and incompetence. This can be changed if they can have an access to education whose quality is equal to that of the normal children in school.

However, the education system, in Kenya, for instance, seems to be unable to provide such quality of education. The problem is compounded by the fact that most dire cases, most of the children with disabilities are poor and live in areas where medical and educational services are scarce if available. In Kenya the group of such people makes about 20 percent of population (Chomba, Mukuria, Kariuki, Tumuti, & Bunyasi, 2014). Only two percent of the children with challenge receive any form of special education. Problems that face children with intellectual challenges include, assessment, identification and referral process, categorization, placement of individuals with intellectual disabilities, protecting individuals with intellectual disabilities, individualizing instruction and funding. Those who are in special school are greatly unable to complete the cycle they enroll for (Chomba *et.al*, 2014). This study wishes to assess how teachers' competences contribute the inability of the learners to complete the primary school education cycle they enroll for.

Teachers' competences can define the classroom experience and will influence the relationship between the teachers and the learners with intellectual challenges in the classroom. It is an important an integral, non-pedagogical component of classroom teaching for children with intellectual challenges. A teacher's competence refers to the totality of qualities and traits as of a character or behavior that is peculiar or unique to the teacher. These are the describable traits embodied in the patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and the teacher's self that are exhibited in a wide range of social and personal contexts (Lennon, 2012). In this study teachers' personal attributes will take three dimensions. These are teachers' experience, teachers' gender and teachers' qualification.

In Kenyan public schools, children with intellectual challenges are enrolled in Class One and have to go through to Class Eight when they sit for their Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) exam. This study adopts the definition by Summerskill (1962) and will consider retention rate as the percentage of children with intellectual challenges who complete the primary education cycle by successfully completing their Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education (KCSE) exams. This is as compared with the number of such children who enroll in class on in a given public school with special units. Special schools are usually organized according to impairment categories leading to titles such as schools for blind or deaf children, for children with learning difficulties, behavior problems, physical and multiple impairments. Separation of normal education from education for disabled children has led to the rise of separate cultures and identities for disabled people. It has also led to isolation from their homes and natural communities. Specialist teachers who manage such children are also accordingly divided into categories. Such teachers undergo additional training regarding the special need they intend to address. Though the cost of special education per child is too high in Kenya, the government recognizes the need to develop a more affordable system which will provide quality education for all children (Save the Children, 2012). It is against this background that this study sought to assess the influence of teachers' academic qualification on the retention rates of learners with intellectual challenges in the special units in public primary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County in Kenya.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Meaning and Concept of Intellectual challenge

The perception of the concept of intellectual challenge is continually changing and the changes can be seen as a reflection of the changing public perception towards individuals with intellectual challenge Wilmshurt & Bruce (2010). Indeed, this is a step in the right direction based on the research done and a clear understanding of the issues involved in defining the concept (Kiarie, 2006). According to American Association on Mental Deficiency (AADM), intellectual challenge refers to significantly sub-average general intellectual functioning existing concurrently with the deficits in adaptive behavior and manifested during the developmental period Gargiullo (2006). A child who is intellectually disabled has limitations in intelligence conditions which usually arise between conception and 18 years.

2.2 Teacher Academic Qualification and Retention Rate

Teacher qualification refers to the academic knowledge and skills acquired by a person to enable him or be allowed to practice in the capacity of a teacher in a learning institution (Tsui, 2003). There are seven main routes into the teaching profession in Kenya. Primary school teachers in Kenya are trained in mixed gender public Primary Teachers Training Colleges and private colleges in a 2-year residential Primary Teacher Education program. Some teachers go to university for teacher education. Primary school teachers, then qualify as Graduate, Approved, Diploma, Primary 1(P1), Primary 2 (P2), Primary 3 (P3), Primary 4 (P4) and untrained. These teachers are assumed to have qualified as teachers due the academic qualifications they hold as shown by their certificates (Tsui, 2003).

Studies done on the effect of teacher's qualification on learner performance have shown a positive relationship. The study by Kunter, Klusmann, Baumert, Richter, Voss, & Hachfeld (2013) investigated how teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, professional beliefs, work-related motivation, and self-regulation impacted instruction and, in turn, student outcomes. The study was done on representative sample of 194 German secondary school mathematics classes. The study used a multiplicity of measures to assess teacher competence, instructional quality, and students' achievement and motivation. The two-level structural equation models used in the analysis revealed that teachers' pedagogical content knowledge, enthusiasm for teaching, and self-regulatory skills on instructional quality positively affected student outcomes. On the contrary, teachers' general academic ability did not affect their instruction.

The study by Wilson, Abbott, Joireman, & Stroh (2002) examined how constructivist teaching and the organization of the learning environment relate to student achievement. The researchers used structural equation modeling in the examination of the relationships among school and teaching attributes and student achievement in areas such as reading, writing and mathematics. The study showed a strong positive relationship between

school attributes and constructivist teaching. Schools that emphasized parental and community involvement with teaching staff who model and expect responsible behavior and mutual respect were more likely to use constructivist teaching methods that improved learner performance.

In another study by Kingdon (2006) in India aimed at establishing the effect of teacher characteristics on pupil learning using the standard cross-section achievement production function. Data analysis procedures allowed the matching of students' test scores in different subjects to the teachers that teach those subjects. The study showed that there were modest grounds for optimism about the effects of teacher policies. Pre-service teacher training and possession by teacher of a Master's level qualification together raised student achievement. Other characteristics such as pay, sick leave taken, unionization significantly reduced student performance.

In the study conducted by Kosgei, Mise, Odera, & Ayugi (2013) the purpose was to establish the relationship between teacher characteristics and students' academic achievement. It was guided by Education Production Function theory (EPF) which connects student academic achievement to teacher characteristics. The study was conducted in the 26 public secondary schools in Nandi District in Kenya. The study used causal comparative research design. Data were collected by means of a self-administered questionnaire. The study established that there was no significant relationship between teacher qualification and student academic achievement. In his study it was expected that higher teacher qualification will improve retention rate.

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To determine the influence of teachers' academic qualification on the retention rates of learners with intellectual challenges in the special units in public primary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County in Kenya

IV. HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant relationship between teachers' academic qualification and the retention rates of learners with intellectual challenges in the special units in public primary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County in Kenya.

V. METHODOLOGY

The study used a descriptive survey design. The target population for the study included all the public primary schools within Kikuyu Sub-County with special units. The researcher included all the 8 schools in this study and interviewed all the teachers and the head teachers. The collected data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis approaches whereby both descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Descriptive statistics that was used in this study include frequencies, means and standard deviations. The Hypothesis was tested using Pearson's moment of correlation coefficient. The qualitative data were presented in the form of narrative and integrated.

VI. Findings And Discussions

Teachers' academic qualification on the retention rates of learners with intellectual challenges

influence of teachers' academic qualification on the retention rates of learners with intellectual challenges in the special units in public primary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County in Kenya. To achieve this objective, the respondents were first required to indicate their professional qualification. The responses were presented in 1.

Table 1 Professional Qualification of Respondents

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
P1	3	30%
Diploma	4	40%
Degree	2	20%
Masters	1	10%
Total	10	100%

Table 1 revealed that majority (40%) of the teachers in the study had a diploma as their highest level of education. This was followed by those with P1 qualification with 30%. The least were those with Degree (20%) and master's degree (10%). These results indicate that all the teachers in the study were qualified to teach in primary schools. The researcher next sought to establish whether the respondents had been trained as a SNE teacher. The results were presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Trained as a SNE teacher

Trained	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	8	80%
No	2	20%
Total	10	100%

Table 2 shows that majority (80%) of the respondents were trained on SNE teacher while 20% had not been trained. This indicates that majority of the respondents were qualified to handle learners with intellectual challenges and also give reliable information on the same. These results are like this because the study was been done on the schools with special units and most teachers trained on special education were teaching in special units.

Table 3 Academic Qualification and Retention of Intellectually Challenged Children

	SA		A		N		D		SD	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Teachers who are more qualified academically handle intellectually challenged children better	5	50.0	3	30	1	10.0	2	20	0	0
Teachers trained on SNE helps intellectually challenged children to perform well	4	40.0	4	40.0	0	0.0	1	10.0	1	10.0
Teachers not trained on SNE do not like teaching intellectually challenged children	3	30.0	3	30.0	0	0.0	2	20.0	2	20.0
Schools should assign Intellectually challenged children to teachers trained on SNE	4	40.0	3	30.0	0	0.0	2	20.0	1	10.0
Mean totals	4	40.0	3	30.0	0	0.0	2	20.0	1	10.0
Standard deviation	0.5		0.3		0.2		0.3		0.2	

Table 3 shows that majority (50%) of the respondents strongly agreed with the statement that, teachers who are more qualified academically handle intellectually challenged children better. This was followed by 40 % who strongly agreed that, teachers trained on SNE helps intellectually challenged children to perform well and Schools should assign intellectually challenged children to teachers trained on SNE. These results agree with Kingdon (2006) who argued that pre-service teacher training and possession by teacher of a Master's level qualification together raised student achievement. However other characteristics such as pay, sick leave taken, unionization significantly reduced student performance.

The researcher further tested hypothesis one using Pearson product moment correlation measure of relationships. The hypothesis stated that; H02: There is no significant relationship between teachers' academic qualification and the retention rates of learners with intellectual challenges in the special units in public primary schools in Kikuyu Sub-County, Kiambu County in Kenya. The results were presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Correlation between teachers' academic qualification and retention rates of learners with intellectual challenges

		Teachers' qualification	academicRetention rates of learners with intellectual challenges
Teachers' academic qualification	Pearson Correlation	1	.796**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	10	10
Retention rates of learners with intellectual challenges	Pearson Correlation	.796**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	10	10

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Results in Table 4.12 shows that, there is a strong positive correlation ($r = 0.796, P < 0.05$) relationship between teachers' academic qualification and the retention rates of learners with intellectual challenges in the special units in public primary schools. On that base, we do reject Hypothesis two. These results disagree with Kosgei, et.al (2013) who argued that there was no significant relationship between teacher characteristics and students' academic achievement.

VII. CONCLUSION

It was concluded that teachers' academic qualification significantly influenced retention rates of learners with intellectual challenges in the special units in public primary schools. This means that the teachers who were trained on special Education were better in retaining learners in special units than those who were not trained

Recommendations

The study recommends the need for the Ministry of Education should train more teachers on special needs education so as to increase the number of teachers with that skill

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