

Availability of Instructional Resources in Enhancing Social Skills of Learners with Mild Intellectual Disability in Primary Schools' Units in Siaya County

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assess availability of instructional resources in enhancing the social skills of learners with mild intellectual disabilities in Primary Schools' units in Siaya County. Most learners with mild ID lack social skills, this is exhibited by challenges they face in the community. The study was premised on Vygotsky's social development theory in its theoretical framework. In the study a mixed method approach with a focus on both qualitative and quantitative aspects was employed. The sample size constituted 10% of 24 schools, the total population of schools serving learners with mild intellectual disability. A total of 189 respondents from the research location made up the target population of the study comprised of (137) learners with intellectual disabilities who participated in the study, (12) head teachers were interviewed, 12 deputy headteachers and 29 teachers who completed the questionnaires. The researcher used purposive random sampling to select special units in public primary schools for learners with ID to take part in the study. The main research instruments, which were used, included open-ended questionnaires, interview guides and observation checklists. Validity was ensured through expert consultation from supervisors. Triangulation, piloting and test retest was adopted to increase reliability of qualitative data. After two weeks, the researcher picked up the completed surveys that were given to target schools. In Siaya county, one special unit for learners with intellectual disabilities served as the pilot site. Qualitative data collected was analyzed thematically and presented in narrative form quantitative data was analyzed by use of computer program, the statistical package for social science (SPSS) software version 22 data was presented using descriptive statistic and presented in tables, graphs and charts. Quantitative data was gathered and analyzed thematically and given in a narrative form. From the study findings, it was indicated that the teachers were equipped with knowledge to teach social skills to learners with mild intellectual disability The study established that there is need for the availability of instructional resources to maintain learners' attention, enhanced home practice by learners, increase the frequency of trainings, involve parents and significant others in the training programs, and recommends investment in adaptive technologies, improved teacher training, and partnerships between schools, NGOs, and government agencies.

Key words: Instructional Resources, Social Skills, Mild Intellectual Disability

INTRODUCTION

The term intellectual disability has been the term of choice for individuals with significant limitation on functioning and adaptive behavior for many decades now. The AAID (2020) defines intellectual disability as a disability that is characterized by significant limitation in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior resulting to many everyday social and adaptive skills. This condition usually arises between conception and 18 years of age (Kennedy 2021). Intellectual disability occurs in four levels, mild, moderate, server, and profound (Luckason & Tessa 2021). The study focused on students with mild ID though. These learners may go unnoticed until they are in the early school years because this is when their problem with academic learning starts to show. In conventional classroom context, they also show deficiencies in cognitive, social and adaptive

skills. People who have intellectual disabilities frequently display incorrect social behavior and inadequate interpersonal skills. They are therefore unable to make and keep friends with other people. Poor social skills have been linked to differences in the capacity to form and sustain friendships (Muraya & Doren, 2013).

Learners with ID require access to services not available to other learners (Mwangi, 2013). However, instructional resources should be availed and modified to accommodate various scenarios. To that end, the government established special needs education (KISE) in 1986. This is to train special needs instructors and Education Assessment Centers (EARCS) to assist learner identification, assessment, referral, and placement. However, according to a study conducted by the University of Oslo in Norway, most of these institutions have failed to reach out to the children and appropriately aid them. Furthermore, the government has constructed 1882 primary schools and 15 secondary schools for students with special needs, including those with ID (Kenya School Report, 2013). This figure appears to be too low when compared to Kenya's normal school enrollment of over 70,000 students. This is convincing evidence that, despite previous efforts, few children with mild ID have access to school facilities. As a result, the question of which educational facilities are available to satisfy the various needs of learners with mild ID arises.

According to African Child Policy Forum research, the majority of children with ID who attend school do so in the mainstream. However, the mainstream offering falls short of complete inclusion because it is largely unsupported and inattentive to individual students' learning requirements, leaving a number of students unable to acquire the necessary skills. Findings also show that poor and middle-income nations have a greater population of PWID (Njenga 2009; Manlike & Darmstadt, 2007). However, the conclusions of very few worldwide research have concentrated on improving the outcomes of the areas. The limited studies on children with mild ID conducted in Sub-Saharan Africa tend to determine prevalence rates (Maulik & Darmstadt, 2007). Furthermore, there are still gaps in the social interaction of students with intellectual disabilities, such as poorly equipped workshops and classrooms, a lack of bathrooms in schools, and a lack of tables in classrooms. From the foregoing concerns, there is therefore the need to carry out an empirical study with the aim of exploring the availability of instructional resources in social interactions of learners with mild intellectual disabilities in Primary Schools' Units in Siaya County.

Statement of the Problem

Social skills are an essential component of education for all children, both with and without intellectual disabilities, in order for them to live independently. Most learners with moderate ID in special units continue to struggle with social skills. As a result, they encounter numerous challenges throughout their lives. This learner's failure to develop social skills is a major issue. Child rights entitle learners with ID to free and compulsory education, according to the Kenyan Constitution (2010), so that they can develop lifelong social skills. In most cases, this is not the case, since most of them continue to lack human rights, help, and care, particularly in terms of social skills development. Despite the fact that the Kenyan constitution mandates free and obligatory basic education, most Kenyan communities and parents continue to hide their children owing to stigma and discrimination (Cheshire, 2013). A handful of students with modest intellectual disabilities have limited access to education, and some have been excluded. Those who are given the option to attend school may be identified as early as sixth grade, but they rarely complete their education (Oriado, 2003). This prompted the researcher to conduct an empirical study with the goal of exploring the availability of instructional resources employed in enhancing social skills of learners with mild intellectual disabilities in Siaya County primary schools' units.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to evaluate the availability of instructional resources used in enhancing social skills of learners with mild intellectual disabilities in primary schools' units in Siaya County.

Objectives of the Study

1. To determine the availability of instructional resources in enhancing social skills of learners with mild intellectual disability in primary schools' units in Siaya County.

Research Questions

1. What instructional resources enhance teaching of social skills among learners with mild intellectual disability in primary schools' units Siaya County?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this section, the research approach, design, population, sample size and sampling techniques, methods of data collection and analysis have been addressed.

Research Design

Ogula (2005) defines research design as "a plan, structure, and strategy of investigation to obtain answers to research questions and control variance." The descriptive survey design was used in the research study, which included both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. According to Orodho (2010), this strategy comprises interviewing or administering questionnaires to a sample of people. Because the qualitative approach included the use of observation checklists, open-ended questionnaires, and interview schedules, open-ended questionnaires allowed for probing. The researcher employed quantitative data, which aided in comprehending the theory underpinning the links. The study's design was appropriate since the researcher was able to analyze the availability of instructional resources employed in increasing social skills of learners with mild intellectual disabilities in Siaya County primary schools' units. Similarly, the approach allowed the researcher to obtain data from the respondents, which was then utilized to investigate the school determinants of social skills development among learners with mild intellectual disabilities.

Target Population, Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

The target population included 84 respondents. According to data collected from the Ministry of Education office via the Educational Assessment and Resource Centre (EARC) Siaya County, there are 24 public primary schools with sections for students with intellectual disabilities. This study includes head teachers because of the essential roles they play in everyday school management. The study included students with modest intellectual disabilities. Siaya County was sampled on purpose because a study of this sort has never been conducted in this area. Random sampling was utilized to pick schools to participate from the Sub Counties. To eliminate bias in the selection of schools, the list of schools was received from the Educational Assessment and Resource Centre (EARC) in Siaya County. The researcher wrote the names of the schools on a piece of paper, folded and mixed it thoroughly, and then chose at random. Purposive sampling was utilized to sample the head teachers, deputy head teachers, and teachers of students with modest intellectual disabilities. Purposive random sampling was used to pick learners with intellectual disabilities for this study. Because Siaya County contains six sub-counties, 12 schools having ID units were sampled for the study, with the researcher sampling two schools per Sub County. During the study, 12 primary schools with units for learners with intellectual disabilities were sampled, accounting for 10% of the overall target population. 29 instructors and 12 deputy head teachers who engaged with learners with ID completed questionnaires. A total of 12 head teachers were interviewed, and 137 students with modest intellectual disabilities also took part in the study. The sample size was 10% of the total population of schools that had units for students with intellectual disabilities. According to Mugenda & Mugenda (2003), a sample size of 10% to 30% is a good representation of the complete target population.

Instrumentation for Data Collection

The researcher used questionnaires; interview guides and observation checklist in order to obtain data. There were interview guides for the head teachers, questionnaires for the teacher of learners with ID and observation checklist for the learners with ID. The researcher designed a set of questionnaires for the teachers; this was in accordance with the objectives. Questionnaires were used because of its potential in reaching out to a large number of respondents within a short time Orodho (2012) and ensure confidentiality. Closed ended questions in the questionnaires were used to enable the study be more realistic in its findings. The open-ended questions allowed the respondents to give their view in the study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was based on research objectives. Data collected from the questionnaires was coded and organized processed using statistical package for social science (SPSS) software before being analyzed. Data collected was analyzed using qualitative and quantitative methods. Quantitative data was analyzed by calculating mean score, frequencies that was presented using tables and graphs. Qualitative data from open-ended questionnaires was thematically presented in the narrative form and where possible in the tables and figures. The study employed content analysis, primarily thematic analysis, to detect patterns that arose from texts, by categorizing content into words, concepts, and themes from interviews and open-ended sections of the questionnaires. This was helpful in quantifying the relationship between all of the categorized content and in deducing the meaning of the terms utilized. This was performed by identifying recurring topics in the text. The study also scanned primary data for the most regularly used terms and phrases by respondents. The findings of the interviews and other qualitative data gathering methods were also compared to the findings of the literature review, with differences discussed.

RESULTS

Action Regarding Availability of Instructional Resources for Learners with MID

Objective two of the study sought to determine the availability of instructional resources in education of learners with mild ID in special units in Siaya County. Deputy Head teachers were asked to indicate the level of availability and adequacy of tools, equipment and facilities used in training social skills to learners with mild intellectual disability in primary schools' units in Siaya county, and Table 1 presents the findings.

Table 1: Instructional Resources for Learners with MID

Resources	Availability		Adequacy	
	Not Available	Available	Not Adequate	Adequate
Sewing Machine	66.7%	33.3%	16.7%	83.3%
Equipment (Power Saw)	100%	-	-	-
Carpentry tools	83.3%	16.7%	16.7%	83.3%
Farming tools	83.3%	16.7%	16.7%	83.3%
Facility Workshop	16.7%	83.3%	83.3%	16.7%

The findings in Table 1 revealed that the rate of availability of sewing machines was at 33.3% while 66.7% of the sewing machines were not available; and from the available sewing machine 83.3% was adequate while 16.7% not adequate. The findings also show that power saw equipment was completely not available, only 16.7% of carpentry tools were available even though the adequacy level of the available carpentry tools were at 83.3%, same as the farming tools. On the other hand the availability levels of facility workshop were at 83.3% out of which only 16.7% were adequate. The utilization of instructional materials is required for a successful teaching process. Instructional materials are a range of resources in any format that have an impact on students' learning and teachers' instruction to help students achieve the specified purpose.

The findings from deputy head teachers revealed that only 16.7% of the schools had enough resources for teaching social skills to learners with intellectual disabilities. This was confirmed by teachers who revealed that only 31.6% of the schools were well resourced for teaching and learning social skills to learners with mild intellectual disabilities. These resources included playgrounds where these learners could play football, volleyball, netball, handball and track for athletics. Other class instructional resources included, wall charts, video clips, pictures, realia, symbols and other play materials, and others included information technology equipment such as tablets and mobile phones.

Majority 78.9% of the teachers used instructional resources in every lesson while teaching social skills to learners with mild intellectual disability, 10.5% used instructional resources once a week and another 10.5%

used instructional resources once a term. This was found to be effective as it removed boredom from learners and also boosted the learner’s memory of social skills. These instructional resources were effective as they improved learners’ concentration span and also made learning interesting to them. The learners were also motivated fully and this made them to concentrate and participate. In terms of rating the equipping of teaching and learning resources by teachers, Table 2 presents the findings.

Table 2: Rating the Equipping of Teaching and Learning Resources

Duration	Frequency	Percentage
Poorly Equipped	8	42.1
Averagely Equipped	10	52.6
Well Equipped	1	5.3
Total	19	100

As shown in Table 2 majority 52.6% of the schools were averagely equipped with teaching and learning materials for learners with mild intellectual disabilities. 42.1% were poorly equipped while only 5.3% were well equipped.

DISCUSSION

Teachers used instructional resources to teach social skills to learners with intellectual disability.

Resources in these institutions included playgrounds where these learners could play football, volleyball, netball, handball and track for athletics. Other class instructional resources included, wall charts, video clips, pictures, realia, symbols and other play materials, and others included information technology equipment such as tablets and mobile phones. The Integration of adaptive technologies such as communication tablets, interactive software, and gamified learning platforms enhanced learners’ communication and peer interaction and allowed individualized instruction aligned with learners’ needs. However, the limited supply of adaptive instructional materials, including digital tools and assistive technologies, constrains the full implementation of inclusive pedagogy. Recent global research (Alnahdi, 2020; UNESCO, 2021; Kimani et al., 2022) underscores the transformative role of adaptive technologies in improving social and communication skills among learners with ID. Moreover, Teacher preparedness remains crucial for inclusive education with Insufficient funding, limited training, and fragmented policy enforcement impeding effective instruction. Similar findings by Muriithi (2021) and Ainscow (2019) suggest that inadequate funding and limited professional development restrict schools’ ability to acquire and maintain specialized equipment. The results support the findings of Friend (2008), who discovered that the availability and efficient utilization of instructional materials consistently has a beneficial impact on student attainment. Students with ID have poor recall and a short attention span. Ministry of Education (2009) confirms that effective educational materials keep students’ attention. This aids their ability to pick up new abilities and comprehend lessons. Additionally, the materials’ production, adoption, and selection should take into account the various learning styles, academic levels, and educational requirements of the pupils.

CONCLUSIONS

The utilization of instructional materials is required for a successful teaching process. Instructional materials are a range of resources in any format that have an impact on students' learning and teachers' instruction to help students achieve the specified purpose. Learners who have access to playgrounds could play football, volleyball, netball; handball and run on the track for athletics which help them gain both physically and mentally. Other teaching aids used in classes include wall charts, videos, photographs, realia, symbols, and other playthings. Availability of information technology tools like tablets and smart phones continuously enhances the accessibility and effective use of educational materials because learners with MID have short attention spans and poor recollection. Therefore, availability of Effective instructional resources maintains students' attention, according to the Ministry of Education. This makes it easier for them to learn new skills

and absorb lessons. Additionally, the diverse learning preferences, academic levels, and educational needs of the students should be taken into consideration during the development, adoption, and selection of the resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is need for enhanced home practice by learners, training learners with mild intellectual disability requires a lot of patience, increase the frequency of trainings and involve parents and significant others in the training programs.
2. There is need for availability of information technology tool like tablets and smart phones which continually enhances the accessibility and effective use of educational materials to help mitigate against short attention span poor recollection among learners with mild ID.
3. There should be availability of effective instructional resources to maintain learners' attention. This also makes it easier for them learn new skills and absorb lesson.
4. Schools should invest in physical facilities that improve activities of daily living (ADL) when teaching. These facilities also allow teachers to build positive relationship with their learners influencing social skills and development.

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