Quest Journals
Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science
Volume 7 ~ Issue 1 (2019)pp.:71-80

ISSN(Online):2321-9467 www.questjournals.org



**Research Paper** 

# Attitude Factor influencing Regular Pupils towards the Physically Challenged Pupils in Primary Schools in Kericho County

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**ABSTRACT**: The purpose of this study was to assess the attitude factor influencing regular pupils towards the physically challenged pupils in primary schools in Kericho County. This study was based on Lev Vygotsky Social-Cultural Constructivism Theory. The study used descriptive survey design. The objective of the study was to investigate the attitude factor influencing regular pupils towards the physically challenged pupils in primary schools in Kericho County. Mixed research methods was employed. The target population was composed of 214 teachers, 2395 pupils, 14 head teachers and one District Quality Assurance and Standards Officer (DOASO). A sample size of 360 pupils, 42 teachers, five head teachers and one DQASO were used. Purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to select the study sample. The instruments for data collection were the questionnaire, interviews and observations guide. Spearman rank order correlation was then used to compute the correlation coefficient in order to establish the reliability of the instrument .The instrument got a coefficient of 0.85. Data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer programme and presented using tables, pie charts, bar graphs, frequencies and percentages to form part of the descriptive statistics. The study found that the majority of the pupils have a positive attitude towards the physically challenged pupils since the findings revealed that 327 (90.8%) of the regular pupils agreed that they help physically challenged pupils feel good about themselves. Therefore, recommendation is that regular pupils need to be sensitized on the dangers of stigmatization of the physically challenged pupils. This will make them aware of the dislikes of the physically challenged pupils. This will therefore make public primary schools inclusive to all learners.

**KEYWORDS:** Attitude, Regular Pupils, Physically challenged pupils and inclusive education, Public Primary Schools.

Received 15 February, 2019; Accepted 28 February, 2019 © the Author(S) 2019. Published With Open Access At www.Questjournals.Org

#### I. INTRODUCTION

Stubbs (2008) points out that the most universally excluded persons from education are people with disabilities. According to UNICEF (1989), declaration on the States Parties on respecting and ensuring the rights of each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination was emphasised. Kenya (2010) posit that a person with any disability is entitled to be treated with dignity, respect, to be addressed and referred to in a manner that is not demeaning. UNESCO (1990) Education for All (EFA) conference held at Jomtien in Thailand, recognised education as one of the fundamental human right). According to UNESCO (1994), during the Special Needs Education (SNE) conference held in Salamanca, Spain, major reforms need to be made to the ordinary school to accommodate special needs pupils. UNESCO (2000) revealed that the World Education Forum in Dakar, Senegal, gave a report that many countries were far from having reached the goals established at the World Conference on EFA.

#### Objective of the study

The main objective of this study was to investigate the attitude factor influencing regular pupils towards the physically challenged pupils in primary schools in Kericho County.

#### II. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Lei (2009), the education system itself is often a primary barrier to CwDs participation in education. Lewis and Bagree (2013) observed that disability is often a more significant factor in relation to exclusion from education than gender or geographical location. Doulkeridou, Evaggelinou and Kudláček (2010)

in their study assert that inclusion is guided by the fundamental principle of valuing diversity. Belonging, acceptance, and a sense of being supported are essentials of an inclusive environment. According to Ndani and Murugami (2009) inclusive education promotes social development through interaction of learners with and without special needs. This enables all learners to develop virtues, such as accommodation, acceptance, cooperation, patience, humility and need to be supportive.

Makhakha (2012) hold the view that it is important to appreciate that making primary schools meaningfully inclusive require efforts from everybody as it ensures better schools for all. Lewis (2006) asserts that some children have trouble feeling good about themselves because of experiencing failure and infrequently experiencing success. They may observe that the peers are able to do things they are not able to do and not able to express themselves or participate in social situations as others. Peers and adults may react to them in negative ways. Lane (2008) contends that our self-concept is influenced when we engage in social comparison with others because this provides knowledge about ourselves in terms of how we measure to others. This affects the self-perception since we tend to respond negatively when others perform better than we do. In education systems they are seen as person with learning difficulties or special needs.

Sitienei and Mulambula (2012) observed that physically challenged children find it very hard to fit into the world of non-disabled people. People's attitude towards the child's social status with his/her peers; functionality of the affected body part can also affect the child's psychological development. Physically challenged children may react negatively to their disabilities leading to development of poor self-concept. Squires and McKeown (2003) affirms that children do not like to be seen as different from their peers especially when they reach adolescence as this makes it difficult to acquire friends. Reiser (2006) wrote that many of the children with disabilities internalise negative views of themselves. This will further affect the way others view them creating in them a cycle of dependency and exclusion.

According to Murungami (2009), unfinished explorations coupled with uncalled for generalizations have rendered persons with disabilities slots in society, which are stereotypes. It assigns persons with disabilities a group identity rather than allowing individuals to formulate a healthy self-concept based on their individuality and uniqueness. UNESCO (2007) observed that poverty and gender discrimination are the main contributors to the negative attitudes towards children with disabilities and aggravate the situation. Person with disability is often not respected as a person but subjected to different meanings and prejudices in all aspects of their lives.

Idrees and Llyas (2012) stressed that instead of bringing or holding people together, prejudice and discrimination push them apart. Attitude of peers and teachers have tremendous impact on the life of an individual with handicap. Disabled learner self-perception is largely based on the attitude of the society. A study done by Kurumei (2012) in Elgeyo district Elgeyo Marakwet County indicated that few learners discriminate their colleagues who are disabled. A study done by Masha (2013), Kilimani primary school, Nairobi County, revealed that there was a lot of interaction between regular pupils and the special needs pupils.

This situation was actualized through playing, sitting position in class and group discussion. Slikker (2009) did a study in Ghana which showed that people with disabilities are given unfair treatment. People have negative attitude towards those with disabilities by insulting, ignoring or giving them names. Thus, these children are excluded from full participation in activities in the society in which they find themselves.

UNICEF (2013) argue that in societies where children with disabilities are stigmatized and their families exposed to social or economic exclusion, many children with disabilities are not even able to obtain an identity document. Discrimination against and exclusion of children with disabilities renders them disproportionately vulnerable to violence, neglect and abuse. Some forms of violence are specific to children with disabilities. It may be perpetrated in the guise of treatment for behaviour modification, for example, using electric shocks or drugs. Girls with disabilities in many countries are subject to forced sterilization or abortion. Abosi (2003) mentioned that children with disabilities are normally hidden from the rest of the society.

According to Chege and Mwanza (2007) cultural stigma of disability is high and this contributes to a large number of neglected disabled children. What was presumed to be care and protection of the disabled child culminates into abuse like locking up of a mentally handicapped child. There is mistreatment and abuse by the public due to ignorance or low regard and the rights of the persons with disability. Some are disinherited by the able bodied relatives rendering them more vulnerable and poor. Kiarie (2004) argued that people with disabilities have been seen to be helpless and hopeless.

Baffoe (2013) study revealed that it emerged that myths, superstitions and negative labels attached to disabilities in Ghana contribute significantly to the social exclusions of persons with disabilities. This exclusions results in their inability and difficult in participating meaningfully in activities in society that will earn or ensure them a good quality life. They are tagged with negative labels. This study established the attitude of the pupils towards the physically challenged pupils in public primary schools in Kericho Municipality Zone.

#### Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The sample was 408 respondents consisting of five head teachers, 42 teachers and 360 pupils.

The study adopted purposive sampling technique to select the respondents included in the study. To select primary schools included in the study simple random sampling was used to select the five schools used in the study. The study used purposive of class six and seven to capture information from more informed group of learners. Simple random sampling techniques were used to select the study sample (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2011). Simple random sampling was used to pick the males and females teachers, boys, and girls from each stratum. Lottery method was applied to choose teachers and pupils of either gender.

#### **Research Finding**

The objective of the study was to investigate the attitude factor of the regular pupils towards physically challenged pupils in public primary schools in Kericho Municipality Zone, Kericho County. To achieve this objective, research question was generated. "What is the attitude of the regular pupils towards physically challenged pupils in public primary schools in Kericho Municipality Zone?' The teachers and pupils were asked to respond to a number of items in the questionnaire. These included whether the physically challenged pupils liked public primary, if regular pupils help physically challenged pupils perform activities they are not able to do, if physically challenged pupils are stigmatized by regular pupils. Lastly, a question was also asked whether regular pupils help physically challenged pupils feel good about themselves. The summary of the presentations is given in the following sub- section.

## Physically Challenged Pupils like Public Primary Schools

Pupils' responses on whether physically challenged pupils like public primary schools was sought. The results of the findings are in Table 1.

Table 1
Physically Challenged Pupils like Public Primary Schools (n =360)

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Responses	Number of Pupils	Percentage
Agree	312	86.7
Undecided	07	1.9
Disagree	41	11.4
Total	360	100.0

Source: Author (2018)

The findings in Table 1 indicate that a majority, 312 (86.7%) of the respondents agreed that physically challenged pupils liked the public primary schools, a few, 7 (1.9%) were undecided, a few, 41 (11.4%) also disagreed. These findings revealed that, the physically challenged pupils like learning with the regular pupils. This may be because the regular pupils have positive attitude towards special needs pupils as it was observed by Masha (2013). The researcher further sought from the head teachers the number of the physically challenged pupils enrolled in their schools. The total number of physically challenged pupils in the five schools visited were 24.

This is contradicting the findings of the regular pupils in Table 1, which revealed that physically challenged pupils like learning in regular schools. This low enrollment of the physically challenged pupils may be due to low number of SNE teachers who have the required skills to handle the special needs pupils. The learning environment may also be unfriendly due to lack of facilities for the special needs pupils. The other reason may also be that there are few physically challenged pupils in Kericho Municipality Zone or that parents with physically challenged pupils are not willing to take physically challenged pupils to public primary schools. The stake holders therefore need to be sensitized on the importance of educating physically challenged pupils in inclusive schools. Public primary schools need also to be made inclusive to all learners so as to enable physically challenged pupils to interact, socialize and learn from the regular pupils. This will help them to develop problem solving skills and positive self-concept as it was indicated in the theory that underpinned this study.

## Helping Physically Challenged Pupils do Activities they are not able to do

Further analysis was carried to find out if regular pupils help physically challenged pupils perform activities they are not able to do. The results from the teachers and pupils are recorded in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2.

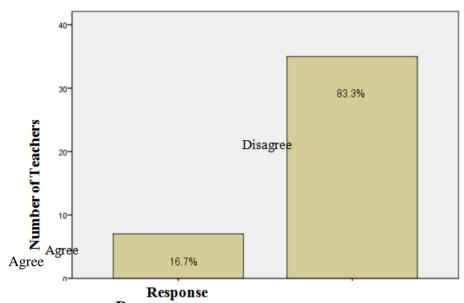


Fig. 1 Helping Physically Challenged Pupils Perform Activities (n = 42)

The findings in Fig. 1 reveals that a few, 7 (16.7 %) teachers agreed that regular pupils help physically challenged pupils to perform activities they are not able to do, a majority 35 (83.3%) disagreed and none was undecided.

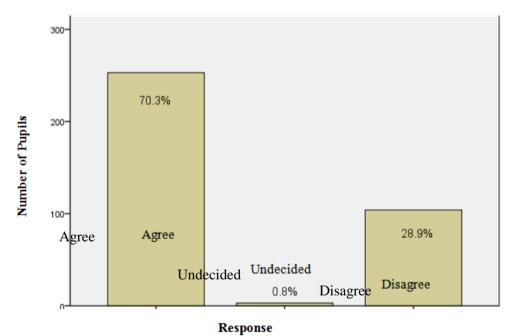


Fig. 2 Helping Physically Challenged Pupils Perform Activities (n = 360)

The findings in Fig.2 show that a majority, 253 (70.3%) of the pupils respondents agreed that regular pupils normally help physically challenged pupils perform activities they are not able to perform. Those who were undecided was only 3 (0.8%) and also a good number, 104 (28.9%) disagreed. The findings on Fig. 1 and Fig. 2 tallies with what Joel et al. (2012) who showed that when special needs pupils share e.g. books and have joint group discussion with the regular pupils, it leads to promotion of positive attitude, cooperation and being supportive towards each other.

This was also echoed by Ndani and Murugami (2009) by stressing that inclusive education promotes social development through interaction of learners with and without special needs. It is also important to take into consideration the pupils who disagreed as they form a reasonable percentage 104 (28.9%). This shows that some regular pupils have negative attitude towards helping the physically challenged pupils thus affecting their self-esteem.

The regular pupils need to be informed of the importance of having a positive attitude towards the special needs pupils so that they do not to damage the self-concept of these pupils. The findings on Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, revealed that majority of the pupils agreed whereas majority of the teachers disagreed. This implied that the two groups of respondents held divergent views on whether regular pupils help physically challenged pupils or not. Further study of these divergent views of the teachers and the pupils will help to reveal these differences. During the interview with the head teachers, 4 (80.0%) of the head teachers said that regular pupils are supportive to the physically challenged pupils whereas 1 (20.0%) head teacher said sometimes they are supportive. These findings concur with the responses given by the DQASO of the Kericho Sub County who said that regular pupils help physically challenged perform activities they are not able to perform.

#### Physically Challenged Pupils are normally Stigmatized by Regular Pupils

Teachers and pupils responses on whether physically challenged pupils are normally stigmatized by regular pupils are posted on Fig. 3 and 4.

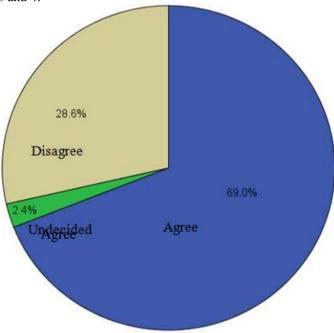


Fig. 3 Physically Challenged Pupils are Stigmatized by Regular Pupils (n = 42)

Fig. 3 show that a majority of the teachers, 29 (69.0%) agreed that physically challenged pupils are normally stigmatized by regular pupils, only 1 (2.4%) was undecided and a good number, 12 (28.6%) disagreed. The pupils responses on whether physically challenged pupils are normally stigmatized by regular pupils are in Fig. 4.

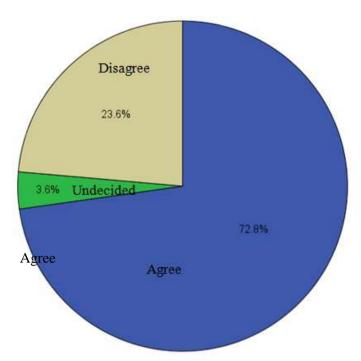


Fig. 4 Physically Challenged Pupils are Stigmatized by Regular Pupils (n =360)

The findings in Fig. 4 indicate that majority of the pupils, 262 (72.8%) agreed that physically challenged pupils are normally stigmatized by the regular pupils, a few 13 (3.6%) were undecided and a good number, 85 (23.6%) disagreed. The results of Fig. 3 and Fig. 4 reveals that the majority of the regular pupils in public primary schools still stigmatized the physically challenged pupils making them to have a poor self-image and therefore making public primary schools unfriendly to the physically challenged pupils.

This findings contradicts UNICEF (1989), declaration on the States Parties respecting and ensuring the rights of each child within their jurisdiction without discrimination. It also contradicts the Kenya constitution which states that a person with any disability is entitled to be treated with dignity and respect and to be addressed and referred to in a manner that is not demeaning.

They are supposed to access educational institutions and facilities for persons with disabilities that are integrated into society to the extent compatible with the interests of the person. It is important to take into considerations what Sitienei and Mulambula (2012) stressed, that people's attitude towards a child social status and functionality of affected body parts can affect the child psychological development. Murungami (2009) also pointed out that stereotype assigns persons with disability group identity rather than allowing individuals formulate a healthy self-concept based on their individuality and uniqueness. Kiarie (2004) also mentioned that people with disabilities are seen as helpless and hopeless. All these studies shows that the society reacts very negatively to persons with disabilities therefore escalating poor self-perception and even aggressiveness of people with disabilities towards those seen as 'normal'.

## Helping Physically Challenged Pupils feel good

The pupils' findings on whether regular pupils help physically challenged pupils feel good about themselves are summarized in Fig. 5.

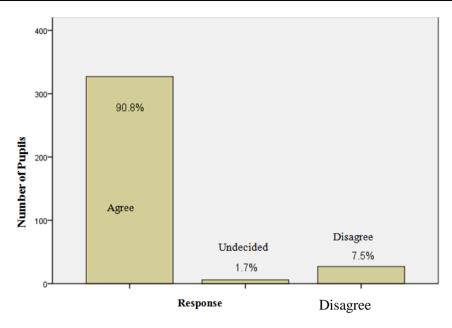


Fig. 5 Helping Physically Challenged Pupils feel good about themselves (n = 360)

As presented in Fig. 5, a majority of the pupils, 327 (90.8%) agreed that they help physically challenged pupils feel good about themselves, a few, 6 (1.7%) were undecided, a few also 27 (7.5%) disagreed. These findings show that a higher percentage of the pupils were friendly to the physically challenged pupils making them to like the public primary schools. This findings echoes with what Makhakha (2012) stressed, that, it is important to appreciate that making primary schools meaningful and inclusive require effort from everybody as it ensures better school for all.

## Physically Challenged Pupils feel bad when they are not understood

Pupils responses on the what the physically challenged pupils feel when other pupils do not understand them are summarized in Fig.6.

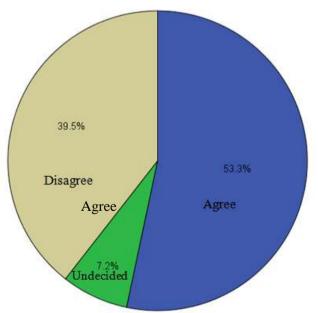


Fig. 6 Physically Challenged Pupils feel bad when they are not Understood o(n = 360)

The results of Fig. 6 reveal that, a majority,192 (53.3%) of the regular pupils agreed that physically challenged pupils feel bad when other pupils do not understand them, a few, 26 (7.2%) were undecided ad a good number 142(39.5%) disagreed. The findings shows that 192 (53.3%) of the regular pupils agreed that physically challenged pupils feel bad when they are not understood, showing that a higher percentage of the

regular pupils are aware about the likes and dislikes of the physically challenged pupils. However, 142 (39.5%) regular pupils disagreed that physically challenged pupils feel bad when they are not understood. This shows that a good number of regular pupils are also still not aware that physically challenged pupils feel bad when they are not understood; showing that they are not aware of their likes and dislikes.

Idrees and Llyas (2012) wrote that prejudice and discrimination push people apart instead of holding them together and that disabled learners self-perception is largely based on the attitude of the society. In this case, the society affecting the physically challenged pupils is the regular pupils within the school environment. It is also important to put into consideration the observation made by Makhakha (2012) who held the view that, making primary schools meaningfully inclusive require efforts from everybody as it ensures better schools for all. This therefore calls for proper guidance of the regular pupils so that they can understand the likes and dislikes of each individual learner so as to be accommodative to the physically challenged pupils. The physically challenged learners should also learn to co-exist with the regular pupils and not to be insensitive to their needs. Teachers should take the initiative to teach the learners to learn the likes and dislikes of the other pupils in the class.

## Physically Challenged Pupils feel bad when People react to them Negatively

Pupils responses on how physically challenged pupils feel when other pupils react to them negatively are summarized in Fig. 7.

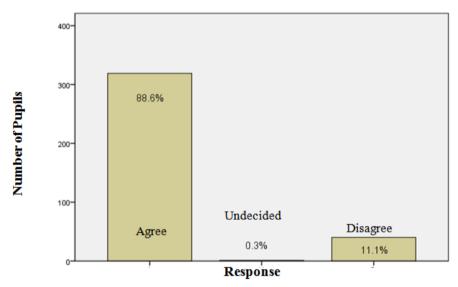


Fig. 4.12 Feeling of the Physically Challenged Pupils to negative reactions (n =360)

The findings in Fig. 7 shows that a majority of the pupils, 319 (88.6%) agreed that physically challenged pupils feel bad when regular pupils react to them negatively, only 1 (0.3%) was undecided and a few 40 (11.1%) disagreed. This indicates that majority of the regular pupils are aware that physically challenged pupils feel bad when they react to them negatively. According to the findings in Fig. 7, the regular pupils seems to be aware about what Sitienei and Mulambula (2012) observed, that physically challenged children find it difficult to fit in the world of non-disabled and that they can react negatively about their disabilities leading to development of poor self-concept. Reiser (2006) also echoed that many of the children with disabilities internalize negative views of themselves and this will further affect the ways the others view them creating a cycle of dependency and exclusion. The regular pupils seem to be aware about what the physically challenged do not like, showing that they are accommodative to the physically challenged pupils.

#### III. SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

The results of the study revealed that the attitude factor of the regular pupils towards the physically challenged pupils do not face major challenges since majority of the regular pupils agreed that physically challenged pupils like their school. The head teachers responses however revealed that the enrollment of the physically challenged pupils in public primary schools were very low. There was different views on the teachers' and pupils' respondents on whether the regular pupils help physically challenged perform activities they are not able the do. Majority of the teachers disagreed whereas majority of the pupils agreed showing that each category of respondent held a different view. The results of the study revealed that majority of the teachers and pupils agreed that physically challenged pupils are stigmatized by regular pupils. This leads to the low self-

esteem of the physically challenged pupils. The study also revealed that majority of the regular pupils help physically challenge pupils feel good about themselves.

## IV. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the study revealed that the regular pupils' attitude towards the physically challenged pupils was positive. This is because the majority of the physically challenged pupils liked public primary schools, however, the enrollment of the physically challenged pupils in public primary schools was still very low. On the item of whether regular pupils helped the physically challenged pupils, the majority of the pupils agreed whereas majority of the teachers disagreed. Majority of the teachers and pupils agreed that physically challenged pupils are stigmatized by regular pupils by name calling. This therefore may have led to low self-esteem of the physically challenged pupils in public primary schools. The pupils also agreed that they help physically challenged pupils feel good about themselves.

#### V. RECOMMENDATIONS

- I. There is need to bring to awareness to the regular pupils in public primary schools on the dangers of stigmatizing physically challenged pupils through subject like Christian Religious Studies.
- II. Guidance and Counselling of both the regular and physically challenged learners is also necessary so as to reduce stigmatization of the physically changed pupils and improve self-awareness of both groups. Stigmatization of the physically challenged pupils can make them have low self-esteem.
- III. There is need for the Ministry of Education to ensure that learners who are physically challenged are enrolled in regular primary schools
- IV. There is need for the government of Kenya to recommit herself to UPE and EFA by complying with the world declarations on SNE and revisiting the constitution of Kenya 2010.

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Jeniffer Chepkoech Maiwa" Attitude Factor influencing Regular Pupils towards the Physically Challenged Pupils in Primary Schools in Kericho County" Quest Journals Journal of Research in Humanities and Social Science, vol. 07, no. 1, 2019, pp. 71-80