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Accessibility of School Resources and Implementation of Special Education Policy: A Comparative Study of Nairobi and EMBU Counties in Kenya

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Abstract
Special Education Policy implementation is critical in the attainment of inclusive education globally and in Kenya. Its implementation has experienced challenges in Kenya and globally. Studies have shown widespread failure in implementation of Special Education Policy in Kenya and Africa. Inaccessibility of school resources has posed a challenge to Special Needs Policy Implementation. Thus,this study was conducted to examine the effects of accessibility of school resources on Implementation of Special Needs Education Policy.The Hybrid model, Maslow's Theory and the Management model of policy implementation guided the study. When employed in education policy implementation the model builds greater stakeholder's inclusion, more so the local authorities and schools where LWDs educational needs are to be met. This involvement brings out core issues that need attention for effective implementation. Employment of the Hybrid model of implementing the Special Education policies should enhance policy uptake. Pragmatism philosophy guided the study as it employed descriptive, cross-sectional survey research design targeting 591 respondents in Embu and Nairobi counties, from whom 239 individuals were sampled. This research utilized Stratified, Purposive then random sampling techniques. This research utilized Stratified, Purposive then random sampling techniques. In this study, six strata that comprise of officials/trainers from Ministry of Education, District Education Boards, Kenya Institute of Special Educationand Kenyatta University, Head teachers, teachers and learners, was considered. Yamane's (1967) formula was employed for the sample size calculation. The main data collection instruments were interviews, questionnaires and structured participant observation. Data analysis involved descriptive, inferential statistics and qualitative approaches. The data was primarily presented in the form of tables. Further, the study employed ordinal logistic regression analysis asthe major inferential statistics to establish the relationship between the variables. The study results indicated that there was a significant negative effect of accessibility of school resourcesimplementation of Special Needs Education Policy in Embu and Nairobi City Counties.

Key words: Special Needs Education Policy, Implementation of Special Needs Policy, Inclusive Education, Accessibility of School Resources,Learners with Disabilities

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I. Background of the study

Globally, PWDs need access to quality education. This has been the drive for many countries in the push for educational policies implementation (WHO, 2016). Ainscow (2005) citing Mitler (2000) notes that attempts have been made by countries to shift educational practice and policy to increase inclusivity. Following the Salamanca Declaration of 1994 and the setup of the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) in 1997, Special Needs Education has experienced worldwide transformation from the 1990s with a shift towards inclusive education. In the 1980s and before, Special Education provision took place outside regular schools in special schools (UNESCO, 2015;). Substantial steps were taken in the 2nd half of the 20th Century to push for equality in education provision.

Special Education in Brazil has evolved since 1600 when the first school for the individuals with physical impairment was established (Elisheba and North, 2018). The Brazil Public Law 1989 provided legal support and the National Policy of Special Education launched in 1994 promoted the protection and inclusion of students with disabilities in society (Santos, 2001 & Lin, 1987)'.South Africa's National Strategic Plan Vision

2030 vouches for Inclusive education noting that necessary accommodations and accesses should be put in place in schools for LWDs (Dalton, Mckenzie&Kahonde, 2012)

Kenya's original endeavor to provide Special Needs Education dates back to the late 1940s.This was largely done by Salvation Army Church. Later the Catholic, the Methodist, the Presbyterian and the Anglican churches supported the children with hearing, physical, visual and mental disabilities in different parts of the country (Muhombe&Rop et. al, 2015). The management and operations of majority of these institutions has since been handed over to the MoE (2017). The NSNEPF (2009) provides a guideline on provision of special education in Kenya noting that the MoE in Collaboration with other partners is necessary and they are bound to implement SNE in Kenya.

Statement of the Problem

Existing evidence shows that the implementation of SE has failed globally and locally. Studies exist showing the relationship between existing SE polices and their implementation; NSNEPFK (2009), Mitler (2014), Ainscow (2012, 2005), Matsha (2016), Oracha and Odeny (2015), Muhombe and Rop et al. (2015), KIPPRA (2019) and Mugambi (2017).

However, these studies do not focus on non-school level barriers impacting on special needs policy implementation such as accessibility to school resources (Best & Kahn, 2006).

Studies by Ainscow (2005) and Mitler (2012) examining the implementation of IE gave findings on the implementation of Special Education. Ainscow (2005) suggested a change of thought in the provisioning of Special Education policy while Mitler felt that change was not necessary and should continue being delivered under Inclusive Education. According to Ainscow (2005), a change was necessitated to accommodate the LWDs. Both scholars did not cover the LWDs in the Secondary school settings.

Gaps noted from the afore discussed studies include failure to focus on accessibility to school resources in line with the SNE Policy Framework (2009). Special Needs Education implementation failure presents in poor physical configuration of the schools as well as lack access to learning resources,

Objective of the Study

To examine the effects of accessibility of school resources on Implementation of Special Needs Policy.

II. Literature Review

Concept of Special needs Policy Implementation

The National Special Needs Educational Policy Framework (2009) provides a guideline on the provision of Special Education in Kenya. The Ministry of Education in Collaboration with private education institutions, line ministries, Development Partners, CBOs, NGOs, parents and other stakeholders are bound to implement Special education in Kenya.

Implementation can be viewed as a process, an output, and an outcome that involves a variety of players, organizations, and control systems (Pressman &Wildavsky, 1973). It essentially refers to the process of carrying out the law, in which a variety of parties, institutions, methods, and approaches collaborate to implement laws to achieve predetermined policy objectives (Stewart et al., 2008).

Owuor (2014) in an assessment of the determining factors of inclusion of Learners with Disabilities in public primary schools in Kisumu municipality suggested that infrastructure enhancement should be done to accommodate the LWDs.Muhombe and Rop et al. (2015) examined the challenges faced by learners with hearing impairment in Nandi County with an eye on school level barriers impeding access to learning which included inadequacy of facilities, instructional resources.

Accessibility of school resources

Sakiz and Woods (2014), Mauro and Jame et al. (2016) and Elizabeth (2020), discuss a lack of appropriate infrastructure for physically challenged persons in Argentina and Chile noting that schools lack facilities to ensure seamless movement of the PWD learners with the struggle being more in the rural and remote areas relative to urbanized areas. The highest illiteracy levels are in the rural areas (INE, 2016) with a low rate of primary schools with ramps, adapted pathways and toilets adapted for LWDs circulation recorded. Whereas some schools have ramps, the schools have facilities that cannot be accessed due to their architectural designs for instance where multi-level buildings exist and recreational facilities (Sakiz& Woods, 2014).

Accessibility should be perceived as rising above mobility (Sakiz& Woods, 2014) which is a reflection beyond physical movement. Provision of easy grip pencils, computer screen readers, audio books, appropriate signage and other reasonable accommodations. (Elisheba and North (2018). Duarte and Cohen (2006) argue that a considerable number of the handicapped are not able to access learning due to unfavorable physical environment in North America. Isabel and Diana et al (2019) and Bendinelli, (2018) note a lack of special

transportation which hinders class attendance in the rural and remote areas in a majority of Latin American Countries. Poor configuration of physical spaces and lack of awareness on the real needs of LWDs poses a challenge to the schools.

Challenges of physical access to school buildings characterized by a lack of elevators, narrow doorways and classroom facilities which do not favor LWD learning are evident in Cuba as noted by Havana Times (2019), Laudan and Pamela (2015), Margarita (2011) and Correa (2010). Notably, schools constructed with the older structures still have physical barriers such as type of flooring characterized by uneven flooring, slippery floors in America. Narrow passages, height of window sills, drinking fountains, sinks and accessible toilets are also evident in America (Laudan& Pamela, 2015).

The Indonesian Basic law of education stipulates that the design structure of schools should accommodate the LWDs. Enhancement of facilities such as laboratories, classrooms and libraries are also highly emphasized. Where obstacles to access exist, renovations and adjustments to eliminate the barriers are encouraged. Observations have been done on schools for instance where laboratories are on 2nd floor while the classrooms are on 1st floor and no rumps or elevators exist to ease the mobility of the physically challenged learners and some students have to be lifted by others, in one instance a student mentioned that "I want to go to the library and to read books in my spare time, but I feel bad when I have to ask for help to other people to lift me up, so I rarely go to the library" (Baby, 2016, p.67). Restrooms have also been noted to lack necessary enhancements accommodating LWDs (Baby, 2016).

Kathryn, Mpho et al. (2015) and HET (2018) and note that LWDs have minimal access to wheelchairs while too many ramps, dysfunctional or non-existent lifts, walk paths and recreational areas pose inaccessibility by physically challenged learners. Other hindrances localized internally and externally to schools are notable whereby the removal of these barriers to enhance access by wheelchairs, prosthesis, crutches and service animals is needful (Kathryn, Mpho et al., 2015). Damaged structures and roofs, and classes that don't even exist are some challenges LWDs face in DRC World Bank (2005).

A study conducted in Kabaale, Agago and Abim districts, reflects various impediments to accessing inclusive education in Uganda. The physical movement of the learners is often a problem owing to uneven ramps and lack of proper furniture for the learners. Some rural schools have latrines with no adaptations to accommodate the learners (MoES, 2017). The Kenya Disabilities Amendment Act Amendment Bill (2019) indicates that accessibility and mobility accommodations must be ensured in the schools for LWDs. Adequacy of physical infrastructure is needful in the schools to enhance mobility of the LWDs especially in the rural and remote areas where schools are more in number (NSNEPFK, 2009). In Ethiopia, special needs pedagogy is not supported by assistive technologies and devices (Susie, 2000). Barriers in instructional resources availability and materials such as audio devices, braille equipment and materials, is a challenge at the schools (Susie, 2000).

Theoretical Review

The Hybrid model of policy implementation was selected for this study since it examines the end-to-end policy implementation process while the Maslow's theory critically looks at the need for meeting the basic needs for a person prior to rising above physiological needs. The study also employed the management model of policy implementation. With reference to the Special Needs Policy implementation, it's important to have proper management structures to build cohesion between schools and their stakeholders(partners). This will result in better collaboration and a more seamless implementation of policy

III. Methodology

The research employed descriptive survey design. Data was collected cross sectionally. It involved utilization of mixed methods including observation, interviewing and administering questionnaires to the respondents while measuring variables as they exist naturally, Orodho (2003), and Gravetter and Forzano (2003). Concurrent triangulation was employed converging quantitative and qualitative data aimed at providing an all-inclusive analysis of the research problem (Creswell, 2009).

The target population totaling to 1121 respondents was drawn from Department of Special Education in the Ministry of Education, Trainers from Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) and Kenyatta University (KU), Sub-County District Education Boards (EARC) in and secondary schools in both Embu and Nairobi counties. A sample size of the study was 287 of target population was calculated using Yamane's formula and took part in the study.Data was analysed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Quantitative data was examined by means of ordinal logistic regression. Qualitative data was analysed using thematic content analysis based on the derivatives from the objectives. The study then presented quantitative data using tables and figures while qualitative data was reported in continuous prose.

Using Yamane's (1967) formula for sample size calculation at 95% confidence level, 287 respondents formed the sample size for the study.

IV. Discussion and Findings

Descriptive Statistics

In assessing accessibility of school resources, the respondents were requested to indicate the extent to which school resources were accessible in Embu and Nairobi City counties. Respondents were expected to indicate their level of agreement from 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree and 5-strongly agree on accessibility of school resources. As indicated in **Error! Reference source not found.**, respondents generally agreed (63% and 16.9% agreed and strongly agreed) that School heads were empowered to develop the school infrastructure to accommodate learners with Special Needs (Mean = 3.578 and standard deviation = 1.14). With regards to the modification of school environment, respondents generally were neutral (neither agreeing nor disagreeing - 41.6% disagreeing, 13.6% were neutral and 37% were agreeing) that school environment is sufficiently modified to accommodate LWDs (Mean = 2.990 and standard deviation = 1.25).

The respondents were neither agreeing nor disagreeing (45.5% disagreeing, 6.5% were neutral and 37.7% were agreeing) that schools sufficiently provided assistive learning resources to learners with Special Needs (Mean = 2.882, Standard deviation=1.15). The respondents were neutral (38.3% disagreeing, 24.7% were neutral and 37% were agreeing) that teachers have enough teaching resources for LWDs learning (Mean = 2.956, Standard deviation=1.10). Further, the respondents were neutral (46.1% disagreeing, 26.6% were neutral and 20.8% were agreeing) that schools provided learning resources such as Recorders, Braille, writing materials for better LWDs learning (Mean=2.887, Standard deviation=1.03). In addition, respondents agreed (92.9% agreeing and 4.5% strongly agreeing) that the schools have sporting activities that are friendly to LWDs (Mean=4.012, Standard deviation=1.14). The respondents were also disagreeing (41.6% disagreeing, 13.6% were neutral and 37% were agreeing) that teachers give enough attention to LWDs just like the other students (Mean of 3.129, Standard deviation of 1.03). Further, the respondents disagreed (42.9% strongly disagreeing and 10.4% disagreeing) that the LWDs can move around the school without hindrances (Mean of 2.413, Standard deviation of 1.14). Respondents were still neutral (29.2% disagreeing and 44.2% were agreeing) that learners with Special Needs are given study materials which is customized for their understanding and for catching up with other learners (Mean of 3.273, Standard deviation of 0.57). On LWDs being given enough time to finish examinations, respondents agreed (19.5% agreed and 69.5% strongly agreed) that LWDs are given sufficient time to finish examinations (Mean of 4.861, Standard deviation of 1.13). Still on whether schools are supported to customize study programs for LWDs, respondents agreed (51.3% agreed and 8.4% strongly agreed) that schools are supported to customize study programs for LWDs (Mean of 3.857, Standard deviation of 1.01). Respondents also agreed that teachers are enabled to craft teaching methods suitable for LWDs (Mean of 3.543, Standard deviation of 1.16) as illustrated above.

Accessibility of School Resources

Embu and Nairobi City Counties		SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean	STD
Q6	School Heads are empowered to develop the school infrastructure to accommodate Learners with Special Needs	9.1	11	0	63	16.9	3.578	1.14
Q7	The School environment is sufficiently modified to accommodate LWDs	2.6	41.6	13.6	37	5.2	2.990	1.25
Q8	The school sufficiently provide assistive learning resources to Learners with Special Needs	4.5	45.5	6.5	37.7	5.8	2.882	1.15
Q10	Teachers have sufficient teaching resources for LWDs learning	0	38.3	24.7	37	0	2.956	1.10
Q11	The school provides learning resources such as Recorders, Braille, writing materials for better LWDs learning	1.9	46.1	26.6	20.8	4.5	2.887	1.03
Q12	The school have sporting activities that are friendly to LWDs	0	0	2.6	92.9	4.5	4.012	1.14
Q13	Teachers give enough attention to LWDs just like the other students	2.6	41.6	13.6	37	5.2	3.129	1.03
Q14	LWDs can move around the school without hindrances	42.9	10.4	17.5	29.2	0	2.413	1.14
Q15	Learners with Special Needs are given study materials which is customized for their understanding and for catching up with other learners	13	29.2	0.6	44.2	13	3.273	0.57

Q18	LWDs are given sufficient time to finish examinations	0	3.9	7.1	19.5	69.5	4.861	1.13
Q19	Schools are supported to customize study programs for LWDs	4.5	13.6	0	59.7	22.1	3.857	1.01
Q20	Teachers are enabled to craft teaching methods suitable for LWDs	5.2	7.8	27.3	51.3	8.4	3.543	1.16
Composite index for accessibility of school resources							3.365	1.07

Statements on Accessibility of School Resources		Embu		Nairobi	
		Mean	STD	Mean	STD
Q6	School Heads are empowered to develop the school infrastructure to accommodate Learners with Special Needs	3.478	1.09	3.703	1.21
Q7	The School environment is sufficiently modified to accommodate LWDs	2.540	1.16	3.550	1.13
Q8	The school sufficiently provide assistive learning resources to Learners with Special Needs	2.487	0.98	3.374	1.15
Q10	Teachers have sufficient teaching resources for LWDs learning	2.664	0.94	3.319	1.18
Q11	The school provides learning resources such as Recorders, Braille, writing materials for better LWDs learning	2.714	1.13	2.887	1.03
Q12	The school have sporting activities that are friendly to LWDs	3.612	1.10	4.324	1.21
Q13	Teachers give enough attention to LWDs just like the other students	3.351	1.00	3.103	1.11
Q14	LWDs can move around the school without hindrances	2.332	1.13	2.051	1.04
Q15	Learners with Special Needs are given study materials which is customized for their understanding and for catching up with other learners	3.361	1.07	3.437	0.37
Q18	LWDs are given sufficient time to finish examinations	4.768	1.02	4.658	1.10
Q19	Schools are supported to customize study programs for LWDs	3.642	0.99	3.586	1.03
Q20	Teachers are enabled to craft teaching methods suitable for LWDs	3.634	1.21	3.602	1.14
Composite index for accessibility of school resources		3.215	1.07	3.67	1.06

The respondents were neutral that schools' resources were accessible to LWDs in Embu and Nairobi City counties, as indicated by the mean of 3.365 and standard deviation of 1.07 from the computed composite index foraccessibility of schools' resources. Teachers cited that the government should allocate enough budget for school infrastructure.Duarte and Cohen (2006) agreeing with this finding noted that a considerable number of the physically handicapped cannot access learning due to unfavorable physical environment in North America.

The study established that that MOE provides insufficient resources for the modification of schools to accommodate LWDs with 40% of the assistant directors in MOE strongly agreeing. Among the gaps cited by the assistant directors of MOE are that finances are never enough, such that provision of resources for the modification of schools to accommodate LWDs might not provide for all (Respondent M1) and MOE disperses funds when available (Respondent M2).

The study established that MOE provided resources for the modification of schools to accommodate LWDs with 40% of the MOE assistant directors agreeing citing inadequacy of availed resources, unclear policy development and unplanned sensitization as drawbacks to effective delivery of SNE (Respondent M5). Also, 20% of the MOE assistant directors were neutral that MoE provided resources for the modification of schools to accommodate LWDs. The assistant directors indicated that MOE facilitated curriculum designs, training, infrastructure development and gave teachers induction on environment adaptability (Respondent M4).This is consistent with the findings of Muhombe et al. (2015) and (Kinuthia, 2009) on the need of expanding physical infrastructure in schools and the necessity for a rise in budget allocations to develop physical infrastructure to accommodate in schools

Inferential Statistics

Regression analysis

The study computed composite indices for accessibility of school resources (BA) and Implementation of SNE Policy – Enrolment Rates (BE), then grouping the obtained indices into three categories (Agree, Neutral and Disagree). Then, the coefficient of determinants (Pseudo R^2) was generated to describe the proportion of variation in enrolment rates that has been accounted for by accessibility of school resources, which was the

regressor. The regression model summary, goodness of fit and coefficients' outputs was as presented in **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

Model summary, Goodness of fit and coefficients' output for Accessibility of School Resources and Enrolment rates

BE	Coef.	St.Error.	t-value	p-value	[95% Conf	Interval]	Odds. Ratio	Sig
Aggregate score for BA	0	.	.	.	.	.		
Agree	1.126	.311	3.62	0	.516	1.735	3.082	***
Disagree	3.115	.458	6.80	0	2.217	4.013	22.530	***
Constant	.73	.211	.b	.b	.317	1.143		
Constant	3.077	.323	.b	.b	2.444	3.71		

Mean dependent variable	0.652	SD dependent variable	0.717
Pseudo r-squared	0.134	Number of observation	204
Chi-square	54.530	Prob > chi2	0.000
Akaike crit. (AIC)	359.303	Bayesian crit. (BIC)	372.576

**** p<.01, ** p<.05, * p<.1*

From the model summary above, 13.4% of the variation in enrolment rates was accounted for by accessibility of school resources (R^2=0.134). In addition, the decision to reject the null hypothesis and adopt the alternative hypothesis was based on the significance of the overall model, where the P_{value} was used. From the overall $P_{values}$of .000 which was less than α=0.05, the null hypothesis that accessibility of school resources did not affect the Implementation of SNE Policy was rejected. Thus, the study found that accessibility of school resources significantly affected enrolment rates in Embu and Nairobi City Counties.

In addition, accessibility of school resources and enrolment rates were quantified as represented in the table above and an ordinal logistic regression equation developed as shown below.

$$Y = e^{0.73+1.126Agree+3.115Disagree} \quad \text{Equation 4. 1}$$

$$Y = e^{3.077+1.126Agree+3.115Disagree}$$

Accessibility of school resources and enrolment rates were evaluated using three categories (Agree, Neutral and Disagree, where neutral was the reference category). That is whether the respondents odds of agreeing or disagreeing, in contrast to neutrality, that school resources were accessible in Embu and Nairobi City counties was different. Then, whether the difference in odds was statistically significant. The models indicate that the respondents odds of disagreeing (OR=22.530) that school resources were accessible in Embu and Nairobi City counties was higher than the odds of agreement (OR=3.082). As such, in Embu and Nairobi City counties, school resources were 22 times more likely to be in accessible.

V. Conclusion

This study found out that a negative and significant association existed between accessibility of school resources and enrolment rates in Embu and Nairobi City Counties. As the study literature suggests, there is a need for a Least Restrictive Environment in the schools as well as the right accommodations to promote optimal learning for LWDs.

According to Sakiz and Woods (2014), Accessibility should be perceived as rising above mobility which is a reflection beyond physical movement. Provision of easy grip pencils, computer screen readers, audio books, appropriate signage and other reasonable accommodations. However, a lack of special transportation which hinders class attendance in the rural and remote areas are as a result of poor configuration of physical spaces and lack of awareness on the real needs of LWDs (Bendinelli, 2018; Isabel et al., 2019) which this current study supports. In line with Havana Times (2019), Laudan and Pamela (2015), Margarita (2011) and Correa (2010), provision and design of the school buildings characterized by elevators, wider doorways and classroom facilities that favor PWD learning, should be encouraged.

In agreement with this study, Muhombe, Rop et al (2015) and (Kinuthia, 2009) cite the need forstrategies to promote access to school by learners with hearing impairments and expansion of physical facilities in schools. Notably, expansion of physical infrastructure may imply demand for more teachers and, therefore, the need for increased budgetary allocations for secondary education and thus policies aimed at the expansion of primary school education should be accompanied by strategies to expand secondary school education given expected future implications as cited by (Ngware& Manda et al, 2006).

In line with Havana Times (2019), Laudan and Pamela (2015), Margarita (2011) and Correa (2010), provision and design of the school buildings characterized by elevators, wider doorways and classroom facilities that favor LWDs learning, should be encouraged. The schools examined in this study indicate little accessibility to schools' resources by learners with special needs. It is hence imperative that the schools should be empowered to have a Least Restrictive Environment to accommodate the learners as they learn as provisioned by the Law.

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