

To Determine the Extend to which Learning Resources Influence the Implementation of Inclusive Education in Selected Public Primary Schools in Trans - Nzoia County, Kenya

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Abstract

The goal of inclusive education has not been to erase differences among learners, but to enable all students to belong to an educational community that validates and values their individuality. Therefore, inclusive education call for making children with disabilities participate fully in all activities within a regular school. This requires a change in the factors that affect its implementation such as differences in curriculum, environment, and policies for handicapped children and those for education, support services, attitudes among other things. These factors were the area of concern in this study: the study was set to find out how these factors influence implementation of inclusive education. This study was guided by theory of Gross model of educational change. This theory highlights the stages of implementing a program and the factors that affect the implementation process. (Gross, 1975).The study was conducted in Trans-Nzoia County. The target population was all the all the teachers, all head teachers and Area Education Officers in the five selected schools which makes a population of 126. Sampling was where all regular primary schools that practice inclusive education were included. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. Purposive sampling was used to sample out teachers, head teachers, and education officers. The reliability and validity of the data collection instruments was tested and ensured. Data collection instruments included questionnaires and interview schedules. Frequency distribution and percentages were employed. Inferential statistics was also used involving chi-square. The study findings showed that educational resources for learners with disabilities are inadequate in most schools leading to ineffective implementation of inclusive education and therefore the government needs to pump in more funds to cater for the individual needs of learners with special needs in public primary schools. Further, the community should be involved in inclusion process for effective implementation of inclusive education. The study is expected to contribute valuable knowledge to the field of implementation of inclusive education in general. It is expected to produce unavailable knowledge on this subject.

Keywords: inclusion, special needs, special schools.

1. INTRODUCTION

The goal of inclusive education has not been to erase differences among learners, but to enable all students to belong to an educational community that validates and values their individuality. Therefore, inclusive education call for making children with disabilities participates fully in all activities within a regular school. This requires a change in the factors that affect its implementation such as differences in curriculum, environment, and policies for handicapped children and those for education, support services, attitudes among other things.

In 1999, there were 22,000 learners with special needs enrolled in special schools, units and integrated programs. This number rose to 26,885 in 2003. Currently, there are over 1,100 units and 100 public special schools in the country, which include vocational and technical institutions that cater for learners with special needs and disabilities. It is estimated that three quarters of Kenyan pupils with special needs are in special schools with only a quarter in special units located within the mainstream schools, Ministry of Education Task Force- Aligning the Education System to the Constitution, (2012).

Mainstreaming of special needs education in all education sub-sector programs have been faced with a number of challenges. These challenges include inappropriate infrastructure, inadequate facilities, lack of equipment that makes it difficult to integrate special education in regular programs, inadequate capacity among teachers to handle SNE learners, inappropriate placement of children with disabilities, inadequate and expensive teaching, and learning materials, inadequate supervision and monitoring of special education programs (Republic of Kenya- Special Needs Policy, 2008).

Efforts have been made to include and integrate physically, behaviorally, emotionally, and mentally handicapped children into the mainstream education system with notable success and failure. A significant number has often opted out (or forced out) of the system due to the existing environmental conditions inability to respond to their specific needs, Ndurumo, (2003). In a number of communities in Africa, physical aspects of disability are less significant than social ones in terms of responsibility and behavior.

2. Learning Resources and Implementation of Inclusive Education

The Encarta Dictionary defines resources as a backup supply: a reserve supply of something such as money,

personnel, or equipment. While Oxford Advanced Learners dictionary cited by Hiuhu (2006) defines resources as anything that can be turned for help, support, or consolation when needed. These resources include personnel and funds.

Machio (2012) states that teachers with relevant skills in Special Needs Education are in short supply in schools, this is due to multiplicity of disabilities, – an issue that often led to poor quality and standards of teaching and learning. The finding above is similar to the current research; however, it gives only one reason, not mentioning expertise among teachers.

Qualified teachers know that classroom needs must be approached 'From a circular standpoint', which difficulties are defined depending on each specific task and acting on classroom condition. Most teachers are not qualified to handle students with disabilities. The increase in enrolment brought by FPE has led to increased pupil teacher ratio in some schools. In some cases, high pupil teacher ratios of 80:1 have been reported. This is double the ministry's staffing benchmark of 40:1.

A conference on the role of African university in the Attachment of the Millennium Development Goals held from November 14 to November 18, 2008 on personnel states that: Primary education is undermined in some areas in the country by lack of teachers and other educational personnel. Whereas it is generally agreed that more teachers are needed, there is no concurrence on the actual number. On the other hand, KNUT asserts that FPE requires 60,000 new teachers while the government on the other hand pegs the figure at no more than 15,000. The current research agrees with the above observations and further sought to ascertain if it is a fact on the ground.

The government has embraced inclusive education whereby learners with disabilities and special needs are provided with appropriate education within regular schools, however, the challenge with most regular schools is that they are ill equipped to deal with special needs learners (Ministry of Education Task Force-Aligning the Education System to the Constitution 2012).

In most countries, funding constraints for disabled children are a major issue, (Kirui, 2012). Kirui continues to say that, there is first a need for the government to find the resources to initiate the shift educational thinking. Policy without funding is no policy. The Role on African Universities in the Attainment of the Millennium Development Goals conference (Nov. 14-18, 2008), says though government funding to schools under FPE has been on a predetermined unit cost, concerns have been raised that the annual allocation of ksh 1,200 per pupil cannot adequately cater for all educational costs within the school. This will obviously affect the qualities of teaching and learning and the provision of other services. This Conference finding is in agreement with the researcher; however, the current research will look at the budgetary allocation of all the equipment and materials to be bought to cater for learners with special needs. Republic of Kenya- Special Needs Policy, (2008) states that; apart from the funds allocated to every learner in primary schools, those with special needs get a top up capitation to cater for specialized teaching and learning materials and other assistive devices.

Studies by Sindiswa (2008) in South Africa indicated that the resources in some of the schools were grossly inadequate and this affected negatively on the teachers' efforts to teach effectively. Research shows that inadequate facilities and materials are a major barrier to the implementation of effective inclusion in developing countries (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002). It has been reported that as a result of lack of resources, "learners with special needs in rural areas in developing countries remain at home because the resources in the urban areas are inaccessible due to cost and distance" (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002: 116). Further, in India for instance, because of limited resources, special education is unaffordable, and hence inclusion is the only option (Mani, 2001).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The chapter unfolds the methods and procedures that were used to answer the research questions. It will include a research design, sampling techniques, instrumentation, and data analysis techniques as appertains the study on factors influencing the implementation of inclusive education.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted descriptive survey design. Survey is a research design where the researcher presents oriented methodology used to investigate population by selecting samples to analyze and discover occurrences (Oso & Onen, 2005). Descriptive Survey design is ideally suitable as it provides numeric descriptions of some parts of population.

3.3 Location of the study

The location for the study was Trans-Nzoia County in Rift Valley province. The county has so many children with special needs whereby a few are in regular schools, some in special units, and others not able to access education. This is the concern of the researcher.

3.4 Population of the study

This study was conducted in selected public schools in Trans-Nzoia County. This population was chosen because the teachers encounter learners with disabilities. Primary education is the foundation in the whole education system. The education of children with special needs is also the utmost preference for the government if it has to achieve the EFA goal by 2015. The researcher therefore felt that the child with special needs has been neglected since time immemorial and it is now high time that they are accorded same treatment as those said to be 'normal'.

3.5 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

The sample consisted of 120 respondents. This consists of all the head teachers, teachers from all the five schools and one education officer. Purposive sampling was used, as there are only five schools in the county that practice inclusive education. Purposive sampling is used when the information to be collected is focused (Wambiri & Muthee, 2010).

3.6 Instrumentation

Questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis was used as the main tools for collecting data. The selection of these tools have been guided by the nature of data to be collected, the time available as well as by the objectives of the study. The overall aim of this study was to unearth the factors affecting the implementation of inclusive education. The researcher was mainly concerned with views, opinions, perceptions, feelings, and attitudes. Such information can be best-collected using questionnaires and interviews techniques. Questionnaires were administered to teachers and head teachers while the education officer was interviewed.

Questionnaires were used since the study was concerned also with variables that cannot be directly observed such as views, opinions, perceptions, and feelings of the respondents. Such information is best collected through questionnaires. The target population is also largely literate and is unlikely to have difficulties responding to questionnaires items.

A maximum score of 5 points and minimum is one. After scoring the questionnaire, total scores were obtained and converted into percentages. Respondents who obtain above 50% were considered to be above average according to each objective. The researcher had a one to one interview with the education officer while recording his views and suggestions.

3.6.1 Validity

Validity is the degree to which results obtained from analysis of the data actually represented the phenomenon under study. Best & Kahn, (2006). It is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences, which are based on the research results (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999). Validity refers to the agreement between the value of a measurement and its true value. Content validity involves examining scales to ascertain whether the content is comprehensive and representative of the behavior domains measured. The researcher sought expert opinion on content and construct validity. Comments solicited from them were used to improve the research instrument before commencing data collection.

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability is the measure of the degree to which a researcher result yield consistent result of data after repeated trials, Mugenda & Mugenda (1999). It is the degree of consistency that the instrument or procedures demonstrate. Reliability refers to the reproducibility of a measurement. Poor reliability degrades the precision of a single measurement and reduces the researcher's ability to track changes in measurements in the clinic or in experimental studies.

Research is therefore concerned with degree of consistency or agreements between two independently obtained test scores. The scores are expressed in the forms of correlations co-efficient; Ndurumo (1999). In the study, reliability of the instruments was obtained through test –re- test method to obtain two sets of scores that was subjected to Pearson's product moment correlation coefficient to determine the reliability index. The questionnaires and interview schedule was administered twice, that test administered to fifteen teachers, two head teachers and one education officer Trans-Nzoia County who were not part of the main study. After two weeks, the same test was re-administered to the same respondents. Once the test has been done, the results were correlated using Pearson products moment co-efficient correlation. A reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained indicating that the instruments were reliable and therefore the researcher adopted the instruments for data collection.

3.7 Data Analysis

The raw data collected was first examined and organized by the researcher. The completed structural questionnaires were scrutinized in order to minimize errors and omissions. All the 120 survey questionnaires administered were dully filled and delivered. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 17.0 aided in analyzing descriptive (means, percentages and frequencies) statistics. The researcher in such a way that

a meaningful interpretation could be deduced from it at the analysis stage organized the quantitative data

4. Results And discussion

This section focuses on demographic characteristics of sampled respondents from the study area. Such a profile is important in providing a basis for a clear understanding of the respondents used in the study. 120 participants duly completed and returned the questionnaires. Some of the demographic information of the respondents gathered was gender, age, academic qualification, professional qualification, and teaching experience.

Gender

Figure 4.1 Summarizes the gender description of participants involved in the study.

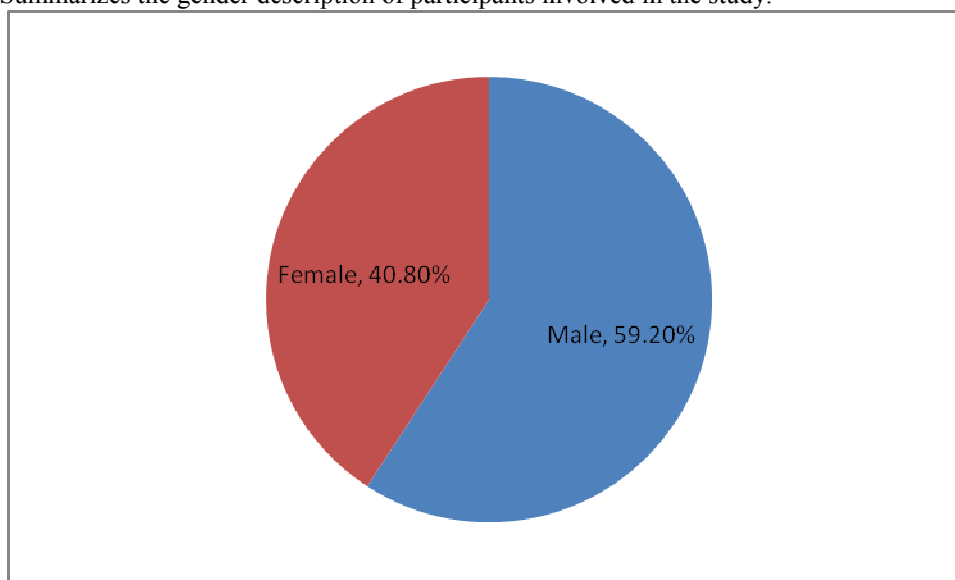


Figure 4.1: Gender of Respondents

The Figure 4.1 shows that 71(59.2%) respondents were male while 49(40.8%) respondents were female. This indicates that majority of the teachers in public primary schools practicing inclusive education in Trans-Nzoia County were male teachers.

Age Bracket

The age bracket of respondents is presented in Figure 4.2.

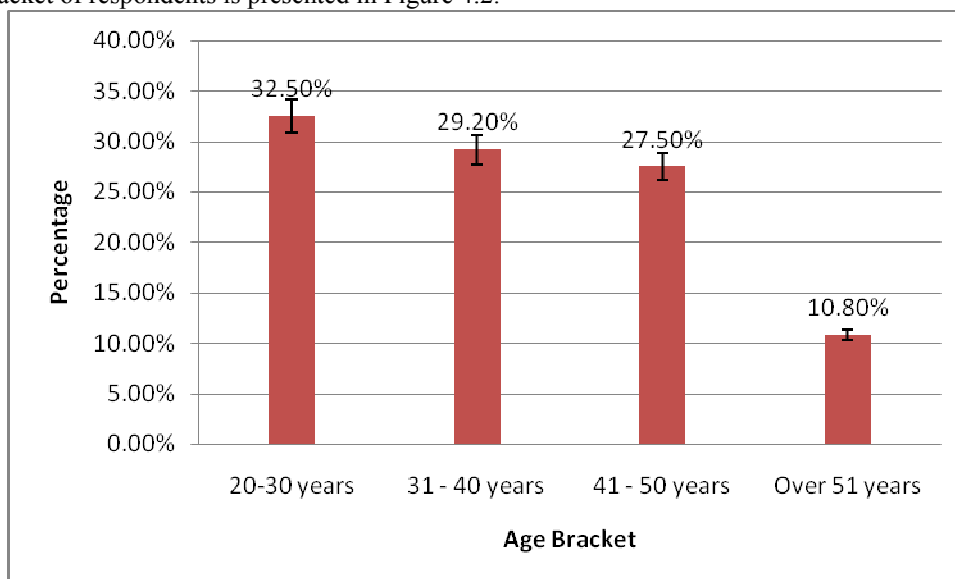


Figure 4.2: Age Bracket of Respondents

The Figure 4.2 shows that 39(32.5%) respondents were aged 20 -30 years, 35 (29.2%) respondents were aged 31 – 40 years, 33(27.5%) respondents were aged 41 - 50 years while 13 (10.8%) respondents were aged over 51 years. It implies therefore that majority of teachers were aged below 30 years.

Academic Qualification

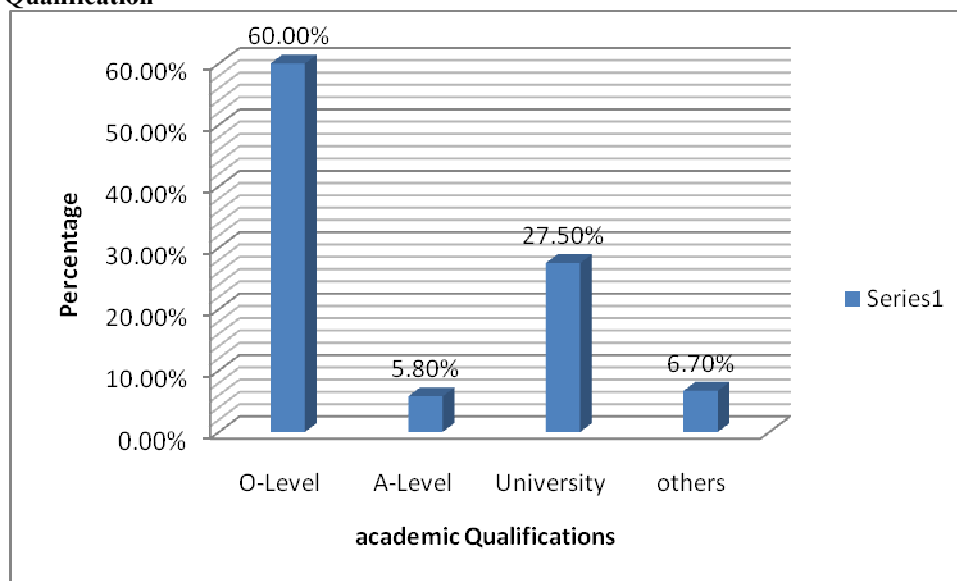


Figure 4.3: Academic Qualifications

The figure 4.3 shows that 72(60.0%) respondents had O-Level qualifications, 33(27.50%) respondents had university qualifications, 7(5.8%) respondents had A-level qualifications while 8(6.7%) respondents had other qualifications. It can therefore be shown that majority of the teachers had good qualifications to allow for the teaching of children with disabilities.

Professional Qualifications

Respondents were asked to indicate their professional qualifications. The results of data analysis are presented in Figure 4.4.

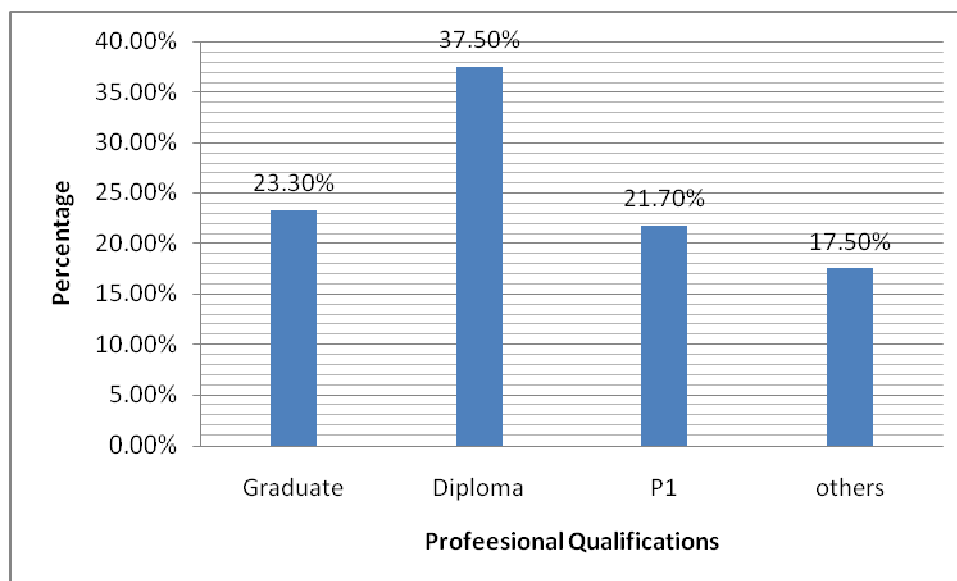


Figure 4.4: Professional Qualifications of respondents

The Figure 4.4 shows that 45(37.5%) respondents were diploma holders, 28(23.3%) respondents were graduate teachers, 26(21.7%) respondents were P1 teachers while on the other hand 21(17.5%) respondents had other qualifications. It can therefore be concluded that all respondents were professionally trained. Moreover, it can be deduced from this figure that majority of the teachers had a diploma level of education and above, making them able to provide a higher quality staff-child interactions (Carr & Mitchel, 2009 and National Institute of Early Education Research, 2003).

Teaching experience

Teaching experience of the respondents is presented in Figure 4.5.

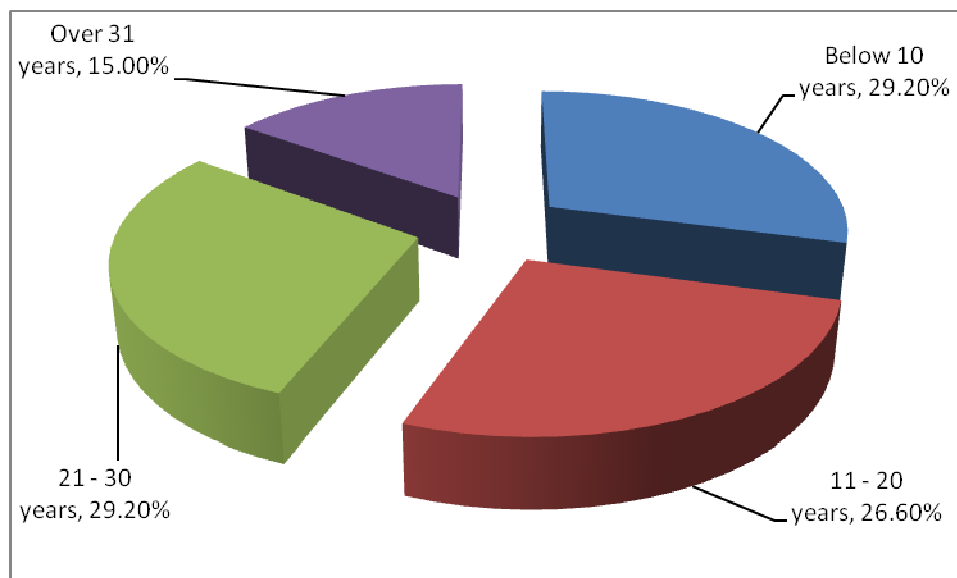


Figure 4.5: Teaching Experience of Respondents

The Figure 4.5 shows that 35(29.2%) respondents had a teaching experience of less than 10 years, 35(29.2%) respondents had a teaching experience of 21 – 30 years, 32(26.7%) respondents had a teaching experience of 11 – 20 years while 18(15.0%) respondents had a teaching experience of more than 30 years. This implies that majority of the teachers had a teaching experience of over 10 years and therefore are expected to be effective in their classrooms undertakings which should translate to increased learner engagement and achievement (Parents Across America, 2013).

4.1. The extent to which learning resources influence the implementation of inclusive education

To achieve this, the participants were requested to indicate on a five point likert scale questions their level of agreements/disagreements. The results of data analysis are presented in Table 4.5.

Table 4.1: extent to which learning resources influence the implementation of inclusive education

N= 120

Resource Factor	SD		D		NO		A		SA	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Educational resources for learners with special needs are expensive	21	18	12	10	11	9	25	20	51	43
There are enough teaching and learning materials to cater for learners with special needs in our school	31	26	31	26	9	7	34	28	15	13
The government needs to pump in more funds to cater for the individual needs of learners	28	23	3	2	15	13	19	16	55	46
I can produce and use teaching and learning resources using locally available materials	13	11	11	10	16	14	45	36	35	29
I build my own capacity through workshops, seminars, and conferences	29	24	32	27	8	7	29	24	22	18

The Table 4.1 shows that 51(43%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement that Educational resources for learners with special needs are expensive, 25(20%) teachers agreed with the statement, 21(18%) teachers strongly disagreed with the statement, and 12 (10%) respondents disagreed with the statement while on the other hand 11 (9%) teachers were undecided on the statement. The findings shows that majority of the teachers were of the view that educational resources for learners with special needs are expensive.

However, 31(26%) teachers strongly disagreed with the statement that there are enough teaching and learning materials to gather for learners with special needs in our school, 31(26%) teachers disagreed with the statement, 34(28%) teachers agreed with the statement while 15(13%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement. The findings imply that teaching and learning materials are not adequate to gather for the needs of special education learners as shown by the majority of the teachers (52%).

On the statement that the government needs to pump in more funds to cater for the individual needs of learners 55(46%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement, 28(23%) teachers strongly disagreed with the statement, 19(16%) agreed with the statement, while 15(13%) teachers were undecided on the statement. This shows that majority of the teachers (62%) were of the opinion that the government needs to increase budgetary allocations to gather for individual needs of learners who are in special needs schools.

Similarly, 45(36%) teachers agreed with the statement that “I can produce and use teaching and learning resources using locally available materials”, 35(29%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement, 16(14%) teachers were undecided on the statement, and 13 (11%) teachers strongly disagreed with the statement while 11 (10%) teachers disagreed with the statement. It can therefore be argued that majority of the teachers (65%) in special schools in Trans-Nzoia County can modify locally available teaching and learning resources to benefit learners with special needs.

On the contrary, 32(27%) teachers disagreed with the statement that “I build my own capacity through workshops, seminars, and conferences”, 29(24%) teachers disagreed with the statement, 29(24%) teachers agreed with the statement while 22(18%) teachers strongly agreed with the statement. The findings shows that majority of the teachers in special schools cannot built their own capacities through workshops, seminars and conferences due to the fact that schools or education stakeholders do not organize workshops, seminars and conferences for special needs education teachers.

Further, the statements on extent to which learning resources influence the implementation of inclusive education were subjected to chi-square analysis to test the level of significance of each statement. The results are presented in Table 4.6.

Table 4.2: Chi-Square analysis on extent to which learning resources influence the implementation of inclusive education

	Educational resources for learners with special needs are expensive	There are enough teaching and learning materials to cater for learners with special needs in our school	The government needs to pump in more funds to cater for the individual needs of learners	I can produce and use teaching and learning resources using locally available materials.	I build my own capacity through workshops, seminars, and conferences
Chi-Square	43.833 ^a	21.000 ^a	63.500 ^a	38.167 ^a	15.583 ^a
Df	4	4	4	4	4
Asymp. Sig.	.000	.081	.000	.000	.004

The Table 4.2 suggest that the statement that “there are enough teaching and learning materials to cater for learners with special needs in our school” was not significant ($p \geq .05$) while on the other hand the other statements were significant ($p \leq .05$). This shows that educational resources for learners with special needs are expensive, the government needs to pump in more funds to cater for the individual needs of learners, teachers can modify teaching and learning resources using locally available materials and at the same time teachers can build their own capacities through workshops, seminars and conferences they attend. Educational resources for learners with disabilities are inadequate in most schools leading to ineffective implementation of inclusive education. This concurs with Studies by Sindiswa (2008) in South Africa, which indicated that the resources in some of the schools were grossly inadequate and this impacted negatively on the teachers’ efforts to teach effectively. Machio (2012) on his part stated that teachers with relevant skills in Special Needs Education are in short supply in schools. Further, Eleweke & Rodda, (2002) argued that that inadequate facilities and materials are a major barrier to the implementation of effective inclusion in developing countries. The inadequacies in educational resources is brought about by the inadequate funding by the government and other stakeholders as cited by Kirui, (2012) who indicated in his studies that in most countries, funding constraints for disabled children is a major issue.

4.1. Extent to which learning resources influence the implementation of inclusive education

The findings shows that majority of the teachers were of the view that educational resources for learners with special needs are expensive and therefore are inadequate to gather for the needs of special education learners as shown by the majority of the teachers. This shows that majority of the teachers were of the opinion that the government needs to increase budgetary allocations to gather for individual needs of learners who are in special needs schools. This has led teacher modify locally available teaching and learning resources to benefit learners with special needs. Further, the findings showed that majority of the teachers in inclusive schools cannot built their own capacities through workshops, seminars and conferences due to the fact that schools or education stakeholders do not organize workshops, seminars and conferences for special needs education teachers.

5. Conclusion.

Educational resources for learners with disabilities are inadequate in most schools leading to ineffective implementation of inclusive education and therefore the government needs to pump in more funds to cater for the individual needs of learners with special needs in public primary schools.

Teachers in the special schools cater for the needs of learners due to the skills and competencies they have acquired through training at the same time these skills have enabled teachers to be in good position to identify learners who have trouble in learning.

Teachers in special schools understand clearly inclusive education and help students in understanding what the new program is all about and help them learn according to objectives.

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