

## Job Preparedness Constrains among Learners with Intellectual Disability in Nakuru County, Kenya

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### Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate preparedness of learners with intellectual disability for transition from special schools to work in Nakuru County, Kenya. The researcher adopted the Piaget's theory that deals with the nature of knowledge itself and how human beings acquire, construct, and use it. The study was conducted at Nakuru Hills and Pangani special schools for the learners with intellectual disability in Nakuru County. The target population was teachers and parents of learners with intellectual disability in public schools. This consisted of a total of two hundred and twenty eight respondents where there were 2 Head teachers, 30 teachers, and 196 parents. The sample consisted of thirty two (2 head teachers, 10 teachers and 20 parents) for the study. The researcher conducted a purposive sampling of schools and head teachers and simple random sampling of the teachers and parents for equal chances of inclusion in the sample. The quantitative data collected was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics by percentages. The main findings were that transition from school to work in the special schools is not given much attention hence having over aged learners in the school. The study also found out that lack of an inter disciplinary transition teams in the schools and inadequate teaching and learning resources aimed at preparing the learners for life after school hindered proper preparation of the learners for transition. The study recommends that the government through the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, pay attention to the current and future needs of learners with intellectual disability to enable them prepare to join the world of work with ease. The major conclusion is that the learners with intellectual disability are inadequately prepared for the world of work after their education. The study recommends another study be done to investigate government's involvement in facilitating job preparedness for learners with special needs and disability in the special schools

**Key words:** Adolescent, Adult, Curriculum, Education, Intellectual disability, Mental retardation, Learner with intellectual disability, Special school, Transition, Vocational skills

### 1. Introduction

Globally, for many young adults with intellectual disability, becoming a productive, sufficient and independent adult frequently remains an elusive goal. According to Hardman (as cited in Gargiulo, 2009), the graduates of special education programs do not yet participate fully in the economic and social mainstream of their communities (Gargiulo, 2009).

According to Thressiakutty & Rao, 2001, majority of children with intellectual disability continue to be in special schools irrespective of their age, ability and the duration of schooling. As a result they rarely leave school to join the community as a productive member of the society; where as the ultimate aim of special education is employability and independent living. According to Hallahan and Associates (as cited in Gargiulo, 2009), often times, uninformed people believe that persons with intellectual disability are not capable of obtaining and holding a job. This is not true, even though employment rate for adults with intellectual disability are minimal especially for young ladies with intellectual disability.

Secondly, according to Blacher, (2001), most research findings are derived from two ends of the continuum- childhood and old age. There is a wide gap in research between childhood and adulthood for persons with intellectual disability. Blacher further proposes that researchers "fill the gap" in the literature by examining the critical transition period for persons with intellectual disability from late adolescence to young adulthood between the ages 18-26 years where formal education ends and changes in where the individual lives, what he/she does and the socialization. Study of transitional experiences will help to fill this gap, providing information that can be utilized by policy makers and employers, especially to facilitate planning for the future of these young adults with intellectual disability.

Thirdly, in the AAMR, 2002 definition of intellectual disability there are five assumptions essential in using this definition. The third assumptions states that within an individual, limitations often co-exist with strengths, the fourth states that an important purpose of describing limitations is to develop a profile of needed supports while the fifth states that with appropriate personalized supports over a sustained period, the life functioning of the person with intellectual disability will improve. The instructions provided to these children must be comprehensive and functional, equipping them to the maximum extent possible with the experience they need to live and work in their respective communities both now and in future (Gargiulo, 2009).

Fourth, the Kenya National Survey for persons with Disability (KNSPWD) preliminary report, 2008, had the intention of providing the basis for improving planning for persons with disability in terms of education, training, infrastructure, rehabilitation, assistive devices and environmental factors. In this way persons with disability were to be assisted and enabled to participate effectively and with dignity as full members of society. According to Kiarie, 2005, issues affecting other areas of special education services in Kenya also affect services for students with intellectual disability. According to Musima, 2014 in his study into Factors Influencing Transition Rate of Learners with Intellectual Disability from Vocational Training to Employment in Nairobi County Kenya, transition from school to employment for learners with intellectual disability remains a challenge in Kenya.

In efforts to seek a solution to the transition problem, some countries like India, the Special Needs Educators have come up with a transition guide to assist the students with intellectual disability to smoothly transit from school to work (Thressiakutty& Rao, 2001). Baltimore city in Maryland, United States has a model that supports the learners with intellectual disability to transit to the world of work by integrating their training with attachment to work stations (Grigal, Dwyre & DAVISAS cited in Gargiulo, 2009).

It is out of the challenges faced by learners with intellectual disability in transiting from school to work in Nakuru County and Blacher's call to research of the critical transition period that the researcher intends to investigate whether with appropriate planning and coordinated training, individuals with intellectual disability can secure and maintain meaningful and gainful employment.

## 2. Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objective which sought to:

Investigate preparedness of the learners with intellectual disability for transition from school to work.

## 3.0 Materials and methods

The researcher used the descriptive survey design to investigate adopting an exploratory approach which answers the question 'why' (Babbie, 2001) to investigate what hinders transition of the persons with intellectual disability from school to work. The descriptive survey research design was intended to produce good quantitative information through the use of questionnaires that were ideal in collecting information about the people's attitude and opinions about the current situation in the special schools for learners with Intellectual Disability (Kombo & Tromp, 2006). Data collected was quantitative in nature. The questionnaires were collected; the responses organized as per the objective. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics by percentages. The findings were reported in tables.

## 4 Results and discussion

### 4.1 Demographic data

Demographic data was discussed under the following sub titles: Gender of respondents, academic qualification, area of specialization and teaching experiences.

#### 4.1.1. Gender of Respondents

**Table 4.1 Gender of respondents**

Respondent	Teachers	Parents	Percentage (%)
Male	4	6	32
Female	8	13	68

Source: Researcher, 2015.

Majority of the respondents were female while few are male as shown in Table 4.1.

#### 4.1.2 Academic Qualification

**Table 4.2 Academic qualification of respondents**

Highest qualification	Teachers	Parents	Percentage (%)
Master's Degree	3	0	25
Bachelor's Degree	3	0	25
Diploma	6	0	50
Diploma	0	1	5
Certificate Level	0	1	5
Secondary Level	0	5	26
Primary Level	0	12	64

Findings show that all the teachers in the two schools are trained in Special Needs Education where a quarter of the respondents were master's degree holders; another quarter was bachelor's degree holders while half were diploma holders as shown in Table 4.2 above. Most of the parents were of primary school level, a quarter were of secondary school level while few have gone beyond secondary school (Table 4.2).

#### 4.1.3 Area of Specialization

**Table 4.3 Area of specialization of respondents**

	No of teachers	Percentage (%)
Intellectual disability	4	33
Learning disability	2	17
Hearing impairment	1	8
Inclusive education	3	25
Others	2	17

Findings show that only a third of the SNE teachers were trained in the area of intellectual disability while the majority were trained in other areas like learning disability, hearing impairment, inclusive education and autism (Table 4.3)

A learner with intellectual disability requires teachers specially trained in the area of intellectual disability to understand the learner's special needs and ability so as to teach and train him accordingly. Musima (2014) found out that despite being qualified, there was need for specialized training for handling learners with intellectual disability

#### 4.1.4 Teaching Experience

**Table 4.4 General teaching experience of the teachers**

Number of years	Number of teachers	Percentage (%)
11-20 years	5	50
21years and above	5	50

The teachers were asked to indicate for how long they had been teaching. The results are shown in Table 4.4 above. Half of the teachers have been teaching for a period of 11-20 years while the other half have been teaching for over 21years.

**Table 4.5 Teaching experience in the special schools**

Number of years	Number of teachers	Percentage (%)
3-5 years	3	30
6-10years	2	20
11-20 years	4	40
Over 21years	1	10

Table 4.5 shows about a third of the teachers have been teaching in a special school for the intellectually

challenged for 3-5 years, less than a quarter have been teaching for 6-10 years, slightly less than half have taught for 11-20 years and few for over 21 years. The two head teachers have been in the schools for the learners with intellectual disability for over 21 years. Teachers experience in teaching learners with intellectual disability would improve performance of learners. However, long teaching duration without refresher training and exposure to the changing trends in education of learners with intellectual disability could result in effectiveness in imparting skills (Orao, 2010).

#### 4.2 Preparedness of the Learners for Transition

The researcher sought to find the preparedness of the learners with intellectual disability for transition. On what determines the readiness of an individual learner to join the next class/grade. The respondents indicated that the key determinants of graduation to the next level / grade are the skills gained and to a small extent the age of the learner. This shows that skills acquisition develops gradually with the stay in the school.

On whether the learners could learn skills that can be of economical help to them after school and whether they were offered in their vocational training. The respondents indicated that the learners could learn such skills and the skills were offered in their vocational training. Findings from the head teachers and teachers show that despite the learners being offered these skills in the vocational training, the teaching and learning resources are inadequate for the appropriate training. With adequate resources, the learners can acquire the necessary skills. Musima, (2014), found out there are inadequate facilities and resources for teaching and learning in the vocational training institutions for learners with intellectual disabilities in Nairobi County. In addition to this the severity of disability determines the level of independence where the mild the disability the more independent the learner becomes.

The researcher sought to find out if the parents knew the level /class of their children. Most of the parents did not know and those who knew did not clearly understand what goes on at that level. This shows the parents are not fully involved in transition preparedness of their children. The parents were asked whether learners with intellectual disability are able to acquire skills for independent living by the time they leave the special school. The results are shown in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6 Learners Acquisition of skills of independent living

	Frequency	Percent
No	2	10
Yes	14	74
Not sure	3	16
Total	19	100

Nearly three quarters of the parents said their children were able to acquire skills of independent living, a few said they were not able while the others were not sure.

The parents were further asked what plans they had for their children after leaving school. The results are indicated in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7 Parental plans for the child after leaving school

	Frequency	Percent
None	7	37
Not yet	5	26
Business	4	21
Employment	3	16
Total	19	100

Slightly over a third of the parents had no plans for their children after leaving school, about a quarter had thought of it but had not yet come up with any plans, few had plans to engage their children in their businesses while the others were looking forward to have their children employed after school.

Thressiakutty and Rao, (2001), states that learners with intellectual disability on graduation should be in a

position perform tasks and jobs that they have learnt in their vocational classes. The ability to perform these tasks should be the determinant for graduation readiness and transition. According to Gargiulo, (2009), Instructional programming for the intellectual disability must be forward looking and address the student's current needs and future goals; it must be based on realistic assessment of adult outcomes and be sensitive to diploma requirements and graduation goals. According to Grigal, Neubert, & Moon, (2006), the first step in creating transition services for students with intellectual disabilities in college and community settings is to create an interdisciplinary committee representing each of the major players or organizations involved, including the local school system, students and their families, college or university personnel, local and state rehabilitation personnel, state developmental disabilities personnel, adult service providers and employers.

Assessment reports of the interdisciplinary transition team were missing for the learners with intellectual disability in the two special schools. This agrees with Musima, (2014), who stated that there were no centrally coordinated transition teams in the vocational institution for the learners with intellectual disability in Nairobi. Transition was organized by teachers, no networking and in some instances there were no organization for transition. According to Gargiulo, (2009), the family provides the most day-to-day support for their child from birth to adult life, so the family knows best which services their young person needs to make the transition from school to adult life whereas in this study, the respondents indicate that the parents are not aware of what is happening to their children in schools in term of preparedness for life after school.

## 5. Conclusion

Findings revealed that there was gradual imparting of skills for the learners that determined the graduation from one level or grade to the next. The learners were moved to the next grade having not fully achieved the grade requirements due to inadequate teaching and learning resources. Teachers had inadequate knowledge of the expectations on transition especially teachers who were not specifically trained in the area of intellectual disability.

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