

**CHALLENGES HINDERING THE PERFORMANCE OF
CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFICULTIES
IN REGULAR SCHOOLS. A CASE STUDY
OF NUU ZONE, MWINGI DISTRICT.**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE INSTITUTE OF OPEN
AND DISTANCE LEARNING IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF BACHELOR
OF EDUCATION IN SPECIAL NEEDS OF
KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY.**

AUGUST, 2008.

DECLARATION.

I hereby declare that this report is my original work and not a duplication of any sort whatsoever. I also certify that it has never been submitted for any award in any higher institution of learning.

Sign.....*J. Matu*.....

JAMES WAMBUGU MATU

Date:.....*28th AUGUST 2008*.....

APPROVAL

This work has been under my supervision and submitted with my approval

Signed:

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Date:

DEDICATION

This paper is dedicated to my wife Monicah Wangeci and my sons Daniel Matu and Vincent Njogu for their understanding and moral support they gave me when I should have been attending to them yet was fully engrossed in carrying out this research work to come up with this piece of work.

I can't forget the encouragement from my late grandfather Wambugu Gichina who inspired me to always aim high and explore the heights. May God rest his soul in peace.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Am indebted to those who assisted me in the production of this paper. Special thanks go to Mr. Oketch Chrisostom my supervisor in this research paper at Kampala International University for his valuable advice and guidance in writing this paper

My gratitude also go to the Area Education Officer Nuu division Mr. Ronald Kasina and Nuu division coordinator for early childhood education Mr. Mulatya for providing me with statistical data on population in schools in the zone. Thanks also to them for agreeing to participate as respondents in the study.

May I also thank all the teachers, parents and learners who generously contributed information used as data in this study.

Without your participation, this paper would not have been a success. I cannot forget the head teachers of Nuu DEB, Nyaani, Kavindu, Wingemi and Nguueni primary schools for allowing me to collect data from their institutions.

Special thanks also go to Mr. Laaki, a lecturer in Kampala international university for his unit well taught on carrying out research.

Finally I thank Ann for her secretarial work well done

LIST OF ACRONYMS.

The following acronyms were used in the study:-

1. Appro – Approximate
2. Av. – Average
3. DEB – District Education Board
4. EO – Education Officers.
5. FPE.- Free Primary Education
6. IEP – Individualized Education Programme
7. KNEC – Kenya National Examination Council
8. LDS – Learning Difficulties
9. Lns – Learners
10. MoE – Ministry Of Education
11. MoEST – Ministry Of Education Science and Technology.
12. NACECE - National Center For Early Childhood Education
13. No. – Number
14. Pns – Parents
15. SEN – Special Needs Education
16. SNE – Special Needs Education
17. SNEESP – Special Needs Education Support Project
18. Trs - Teachers
19. VSO – Voluntary Services Overseas
20. % -Percentage

ABSTRACT

The study was in challenges hindering performance of learners with learning difficulties in the regular primary schools in Nuu zone Mwingi District. The method used in the study was quantative approach. The data collected was obtained through questionnaires. It was analyzed and interpreted using the mean as the measure for central tendency. Research strategy employed as survey method.

The data was obtained from 49 respondents out of the 62 originally in the sample population. These included 2 education officers, 16 teachers, 6 parents and 25 learners. The major findings of the study indicate that teachers, parents and peers as well as the curriculum pose challenges to learners with learning difficulties. Such challenges include failure to be identified early for proper intervention measurers, showing such learners that they are failures isolating such learners and despising them as well as the curriculum context being too wide and complex for coverage by search learners.

Each group of people therefore has several roles to play to support such learners through use of appropriate teaching approaches, ensuring adequate provisions for the learners and positive interaction with them and above all early identification and planning appropriate intervention measurers. There is need also to diversify the curriculum.

The researcher recommended that there is need to create awareness about such learners, teachers should be trained on special needs education and examinations should be set bearing in mind the ability level of such learners. Learners with learning difficulties need individual attention for proper remediation and should be done during the school holiday.

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

The chapter highlights the contextual background of the study to show the existence of challenges hindering performance of learners with LDS and the necessity to carry out the study. Main items include the background, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives, research question, scope, significance of the study and list of acronyms.

1.1 Background to the study

Professionals and lay persons have for many years been concerned with the plight of children who evidence academic and social problems even though they are not necessarily less intelligent than their “normal counterparts”. As early as the beginning of this century, physicians were describing and working with children with average intelligence and good visual acuity who were unable to read using ordinary instructional methods. During the ensuing years, however, professionals found that many of these children could learn to read using special remedial approaches. Multi sensory approaches, such as the Orton –Gillingham and Fenaldo methods developed during the 1930’s and 1940’s that emphasized seeing, hearing and feeling the letters or words to be learned were particularly useful in helping some of these students to read to a level commensurate with their potential.

Because many of these children did not appear to be mentally retarded, emotionally disturbed, physically disabled, environmentally disadvantaged, or sensorially

handicapped, they were not eligible for the more traditional special education programmes. Numerous labels were used to describe these children such as hyperactive, perceptually handicapped, brain injured dyslexic, neurotically impaired and so forth (University of Kansas, 1990).

Some learners in Kenya primary schools have continuously exhibited low academic performance; they have all along been considered as under achievers, slow learners, lazy and inconsistent. They have been left to lag behind the average performing learners. Most of the learners who drop out of school fall in this category. Some end up being employed as house girls and herds boys. Others get hooked into activities that are against the cultural norms such as drug abuse, prostitution or even crime out of frustration.

Today we can appreciate the government's good will of implementing free and compulsory primary education for all in 2003 and secondary education in 2008. Many who had dropped out of school still within the school going age bracket as well as over-aged learners had resumed studies. But, had the problems facing such learners with learning difficulties been addressed? Partly, yes; as concerned financial provision; and partly no; in the area of attending to their learning needs in the school and home environments. The large population currently at school after the introduction of free primary education had in fact led to an out cry from teachers who felt the workload was too much.

Individual attention to learners and especially those with learning difficulties had not been possible. A number of learners performing poorly had continued to increase. Their performance had deteriorated. In some extreme cases, performance of such learners after a test had been excluded from merit lists to avoid lowering the mean score. Hence there was need for this study in Mwingi district and in particular Nuu zone which had been ranking poorly in comparison with other zones in the district.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Poor academic performance among learners with learning difficulties had been observed in most primary schools in Mwingi district over the last five years. This had raised great concern among all the education stakeholders as it was affecting the literacy levels in the whole district and in particular Nuu zone which had been ranking number eighteen or nineteen all through that period. This was a drawback to the country's struggle towards eradicating illiteracy which has been one of the country's aims since achieving independence forty five years ago. It was against this background that the researcher saw the study to be very much appropriate as most learners had not been scoring marks that could enable them join institutions of higher learning.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the challenges facing learners with learning difficulties in Nuu zone, Mwingi district, Kenya. The study would identify learners with learning difficulties and the challenges they faced as well as solutions or intervention measures to the problem.

1.4 Research objectives:

The general objective of this study was to investigate the challenges hindering performance of learners with learning difficulties in Nuu zone.

1.4.1 Specific objectives:-

The study sought to;

1. Outline indicators showing that a learner has learning difficulties.
2. Establish ways of identifying learners with learning difficulties at school level so as to provide appropriate intervention measures
3. Identify the challenges hindering performance of learners with learning difficulties in Nuu zone at the primary level contributing to their low performance
4. Determine solutions to challenges facing learners with learning difficulties.

1.5 Research questions

1. What indicators show that a learner is having learning difficulties?
2. How can one identify a learner with learning difficulties?
3. What are the challenges faced by learners with learning difficulties that contribute to their low academic grades?
4. What are the solutions to the challenges facing learners with learning difficulties?

1.6 Scope

The research would be carried out in five sampled schools among the 35 primary schools in Nuu zone which are spread in an area more than 200 square kilometers. Most of the schools are accessible through murrum roads while a few are on hilly parts only accessible on foot. The study would look into the indicators of learning

1.7 Significance of the study

The study was hoped to benefit various groups of people namely;

- a) Learners with learning difficulties who would achieve academic grades through being accorded individual attention, guidance and counseling and motivation by teachers to enhance their confidence, interest in learning and self esteem.
- b) Other learners (peers) who after being sensitized would act as peer tutors and interact positively with the learners with learning difficulties to lessen their learned helplessness.
- c) Teachers by being sensitized to handle such learners in special way through giving them extra time to finish tasks. They might also gain skills and knowledge on how to cope up with such learners.
- d) Parents as they would be sensitized on the needs of learners with learning difficulties so as to accommodate them the way they are and assist them to improve. They might be commending even other strengths such as brilliant performance in sports apart from only academic performance.
- e) Education officers who would be challenged to be more vigilant in their school inspections. They would realize the need to advocate for supporting learners with learning difficulties and other special needs among teachers. This would lessen their tendency of only focusing on mean score of learners which was discriminative to learners with learning difficulties.
- f) Ministry of education would be challenged to realize learning difficulties as a major special need. This would necessitate formulation of policies which allowed for a flexible curriculum that would cater for the needs of such learners.

- g) Kenya Institute of Education would consider designing learning materials which were at the level of such learners and friendly to the needs of learners with learning difficulties.
- h) The Kenya National Examination Council would be challenged to come up with a variety of examinations which would cater for individual needs rather than the standardized tests only suitable to average learners. This would foster success of most learners if not all.
- i) Other stakeholders such as Non Governmental Organizations, churches, and charitable organizations may realize the needs to assist learners with learning difficulties. They might offer financial or material support to such learners as they do to other learners with special needs such as the Visually Impaired, Hearing Impaired, Physically Handicapped and Mentally Handicapped.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

The chapter reviews related literature on identifying learners with LDS, challenges hindering their performance, solution to such challenges for supporting such learners.

2.1 Indicators showing that a learner has learning difficulties

MoEST (2001) stated that this might be done through observation of learners for a long period of time to make an appropriate judgment. It noted several indicators that could lay basis for suspicion of LDs include;

- Letter reversal problems
- Inability to write on a straight line
- Inability to copy from a given object
- Inability to perform simple arithmetic
- Verbal expression problems
- Reading problems such as confusing similar words
- Difficulties in associating the correct sound with appropriate letters.

If observations were done from the early stages in school, the learners could be identified earlier and supported.

Githang'a (2002) noted that a child in the childhood and early adolescence stages might be suspected to have cognitive problems if the child had difficulty in basic learning of academic subjects, reasoning, judgement and social perception. The stage was normally the school age period for learners in the primary school level.

Mwaura and Wanyera (2002) added indicators that might lead to suspicions of LDs.

Those indicators were related to behaviour and skills characteristics such as:-

- Appearing distracted most of the time or being hyperactive.
- Changing moods frequently, being passive or even hypoactive.
- Cannot pay attention for a long period of time.
- Inability to perform with their hands or legs certain skills for example cutting with scissors or kicking a ball.

Ogonda (2002) gave additional indicators that may be observed among learners with LDs .these included:-

- Mixed dominance where some learners fail to have an established left or right handedness
- Delayed or uneven development
- Difficulties in time and time relationships
- Impulsivity where some learners acts without thinking
- Learned helplessness
- Low motivation
- Poor self concept

Ogonda had categorized the problems into three namely academic, psychosocial and cognitive developmental problems

2.2 Ways of identifying learners with learning difficulties

According to Kathenya and Mwereria (2002), educational progress, abilities and difficulties could be specified and verified through assessment in various forms including;

- Baseline assessment where one establishes what a learner is able to do in a specific area.
- Continuous assessments which consist of tests administered at different times over a period of time.
- Terminal assessment which is carried out at the end of an educational programme for example a term.
- Case study which involves gathering information about the learners' background.
- Informal tests which are standardized test tools for a set of a group of examinees and designed by an examining body.
- Screening tests which are used to identify and confirm educational needs in learners.
- Diagnostic tests done to identify specific abilities and difficulties in academic skills.
- Interviews which involve sharing information with people close to the learner or the learner himself through structured conversations.

- Observations which can be carried out using various methods such as event recording, time sampling, use of checklists or rating scales and coded observation.
- Aptitude tests which check for a specific skills, ability or potential of a person to carry out a specific task.
- Achievement tests which determine how much pupils have learnt.
- Proficiency tests which measure how well a person can perform a certain task.

Knowledge of indicators and methods of verifying such problems would assist teachers to identify learners with learning difficulties.

2.3 Challenges hindering performance of learners with learning difficulties

Ngugi (2002) observed that the curriculum framework for the regular schools aimed at reaching the average learners. This indicated that learners with LDs were not catered for in the curriculum. She pointed out other challenges such as;-

- Negative attitudes towards persons with special needs. Learners with LDs are neglected, ignored and despised.
- Teachers having low expectations from them thus not involving them in class participation.
- Efforts of such learners are not appreciated hence not motivated.
- Lack of clear policy guidelines and legal status on special needs provision.
- Inadequate educational facilities, equipments and services for children with special needs. In schools there are no specialized instructional materials designed for learner with LDs.



- Rigid assessment procedures based on the mean score competition which does not consider the learning pace of the learners with learning difficulties.
- Irrelevant and over loaded content in the curriculum which is too complex for learners with LDs.
- Family instability which deprives the children love and security hence affecting the learner emotionally contributing to learning problems.
- Lack of adequately trained teachers with knowledge in special needs education (SNE).
- Some policy makers and administrators feel it is wastage of resources catering for learners with special needs hence not supporting them.

Otiato (2002) highlighted possible behaviors among teachers and peers which might challenge learners with LDs namely:-

Teachers:

- Avoid discussing such learners performance with parents
- Group them according to their ability leading to labeling

Peers:

- Not socializing with learners with learning difficulties
- Calling them names which portray their weaknesses

SNESP, VSO Kenya in conjunction with MOEST (2003) noted that learners with special educational needs (SEN) are unattended by teachers at individual level due to the high pupil: teacher ratio. Such teachers concentrated on the average learners and higher achievers to cover the syllabus.

2.4 Solutions to challenges facing learners with learning difficulties.

Several studies by MoEST (2001), Ngugi (2002) , Githanga (2002), Ndurumo (2002) , Mwaura and Wanyera (2002) Otiato (2002) and SNESP VSO in conjunction with MoEST (2003) had outlined various strategies of solving the challenges faced by learners with LDs . These included;

Teachers should:-

- Appreciate learners with LDs contributions during learning
- Ensure that the activities in class involve all learners.
- Set goals that can be attained by the learners with LDs.
- Modify learning activities for such learners into simpler tasks through task analysis.
- Provide remedial teaching on areas not understood.
- Encourage other learners to support those with LDs.
- Talk to other teachers about the needs of such learners to minimize barriers to their learning.
- Work closely with the parent to assist in and out of school by planning and helping with homework together.
- Give the learners extra time when need be.
- Plan for individualized education programme for such learners.
- Reward efforts displayed by such learners to motivate them.
- Be sensitive to their needs and show concern as well as exercise patience and tolerance towards them.
- Facilitate learning through use of appropriate teaching and learning techniques.

- Provide a stimulating environment to enhance development of mental skills.
- Acquire the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes to enable them cater for every learner effectively including those with learning difficulties.
- Adopt or adapt the curriculum to suit learners with LDs.
- Adapt examination questions to suit individual learner's needs and abilities.
- Use alternative ways of measuring the learners' competencies such as continuous assessment instead of terminal assessment.

Peers should:-

- Respect views of such learners
- Offer companionship and emotional support
- Guide and counsels them on discipline matters
- Be good role models to be emulated

Parents should:-

- Avoid being over critical of a child's minor failures
- Permit learners reasonable freedom for exploration and interaction with the environment.
- Show interest in learners work

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0. Introduction

The chapter details the methods to use which require selecting a research design, sampling procedure to use, instruments or tools to use, the procedures to follow and how to analyze the data to be collected.

3.1 Research Design

The researcher employed survey design to collect data so as to be able to describe the nature of challenges facing learners with LDs. Quantitative method was then used to analyze frequency of the responses given. Total responses given were divided by the number of subjects to arrive at the mean number of responses. Views with a frequency equal to or above the mean were taken as the popular views or the findings of this study. The approach helped to arrive at sound generalizations about various aspects in the study which could be valid and reliable as they represented views of the cross –section of the whole zone. The frequency method reflected the magnitude of each challenge.

3.2 Area and population of the study

The study was carried out in five sampled schools among the 35 primary schools in Nuu zone which are spread in an area more than 200 square kilometers. The zone has a population of 8495 learners and 202 teachers.

3.3 Sample and sampling procedure

62 participants were selected who included 2 education officers , 20 teachers , 30 learners and 10 parents.

Stratified sampling was employed to ensure various sub- groups were represented. These included schools, parents, earners and teachers.

Convenience sampling was used to select participants among class or levels of learners so as to gather concrete information. The sampling method was also used on education to enable researcher get schools' statistical data about the whole zone.

The participants apart from education officers came from Nuu D.E.B, Nyaani, Kavindu, Wingemi and Nguueni Primary schools.

3.4 Instruments

The researcher used questionnaires as the tools for data collection, since there were four groups of respondents namely education officers, parents, teachers and learners there were be four different sets of questionnaires designed each for a particular group.

All the questionnaires were open-ended to enable free self-expression on views and feelings towards the study. The respondents had freedom to speak their mind without fear of revealing their identities.

The questionnaires were suitable for the study so as to obtain the data from the big number of subjects within a short time as possible which enabled the researcher to come up with the project report soon after the analysis due to the short period

available for completion of the study. The study area was also big and was well covered without the researcher having to travel to all those areas.

3.5 Research Procedures

The study followed the following steps:-

- Identifying the existing problem
- Formulating the title of the study and had it approved by the supervisor.
- Developing and writing the research proposal and then its being approved by the supervisor
- Developing the research instruments
- Pre-testing the instruments on a pilot group of participants to find out their reliability and validity in the study
- Preparation of instruments for the use in the study
- Requesting administrators in the selected schools permission to collect data from their schools and the Education Office.
- Selecting the respondents in the study and issuing of the questionnaires
- Receiving the given data
- Analyzing the data and giving interpretation
- Preparing the first draft of report
- Liaising with the supervisor to advice on quality of work done and approval to go ahead or do corrections
- Writing of final report
- Submitting the report.

3.6 Data analysis

The data in form of statements was arranged in frequency tables. The frequency or occurrence of a similar response was accumulated. The data was then interpreted basing on mean or average as the measure of central tendency. Responses with a frequency equal to or more than the mean were taken as the major issues or popular opinions and therefore the findings or results of the study. The tables were formed from views as given by respondents under each heading namely, population of schools in the zone, population in sample schools, participation of sample population in the study, (shown in appendix H), indicators that a learner has learning difficulties, how teachers can identify learners with learning difficulties, challenges facing learners with learning difficulties and solutions to challenges facing learners with learning difficulties that could support learners with learning difficulties.

3.7 Limitation encountered in the study

The researcher encountered the following limitations in the course of the study:-

- Long distance away from the supervisor
- Financial implications of the study
- Uncooperative respondents
- Poor infrastructure to some schools thus very hard to access.
- Other duties to be done at the same time when the study was in progress.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION

4.0 Introduction

The researcher presented the collected data in form of frequency tables. Analysis was done calculating mean as the measure for central tendency to determine most popular views as the findings of the study in the interpretation of every table.

4.1 Statistical data about primary schools in Nuuz Zone

Table 4.1: Population of primary schools in Nuuz zone

Description	Number
Primary schools in the zone	35
Teachers in the zone	202
Learners in the zone	8495
Average distribution of teachers per school	6

Source: Primary Data

The teacher - pupil ratio is 1:42. This is a fair figure that is not extremely too large to defeat management in teaching / learning.

4.2 Population in sample schools

Table 4.2: Population in Sample Schools

Name	Enrolment	No. of teachers	No. Of classes	Av. no. of learners per class	Appro. no. of learners with LDS per class
Nuu DEB	379	9	11	34	3
Nyaani	339	7	8	42	5
Kavindu	586	11	13	45	6
Wingeni	276	5	8	35	5
Nguueni	48	4	8	6	1
Total	1628	36	48	34	4

Source: Primary Data

Table 4.2 above shows that the teacher –pupil ratio in some schools is higher than the others. Average number of learners with learning difficulties ranges between 1 and 6. This number is not easy to handle in a regular school.

Table 4.3: Respondents views on indicators showing that a learner has LDs

Responses	Total	%
Having low grades in subjects for a continuous period	22	45
Changing moods , for example jovial in play but sad in sessions of learning	11	22
Destructing others through making fun or beating or pinching others.	7	14
Engaging in truant or indiscipline behaviours.	5	10
Unexplained absenteeism	4	8
Total responses	49	100

Source: Primary Data

$$\text{Mean} = 49/5 = 10 \quad \text{OR} \quad 10/49 \times 100 = 20\%$$

The table above indicates that one could be identified as having LDs if he/she exhibited low grades in subjects for a continuous period of time as well as if one is constantly changing moods from being jovial when in play but get sad when learning tasks start.

4.3 Respondent's views on how teachers can identify learners with LDs

Table 4.4 Respondents views on how teachers can identify learners with LDs

Response	Frequency	%
Continuous assessment of a learner's performance in various learning areas.	13	27
Observation on learner's behaviour, interaction with others, self expression and participation in class.	11	22
Taking case history of an individual learner.	9	18
Observing physical appearance of a learner.	6	12
Interviewing the learner's and persons close to them	5	10
Discussing with parents and other teachers interacting with a learner.	5	10
Total response	49	100

Source: Primary Data

$$\text{Mean} = 49/6 = 8 \quad \text{OR} \quad 8/49 \times 100 = 16\%$$

Table 4.3 above shows that learner's with LDs can be identified through:-

- Continuous assessment of a learner's performance in various learning areas.
- Observation on learner's behaviour, interaction with others, self expression and participation in class
- Taking case history of an individual learner.

4.4 Challenges hindering performance of learners with LDs

Table 4.5: Respondents views on challenges hindering performance of pupils with LDs contributed by teachers

Response	Total	%
Poor teaching methods; ineffectiveness;	11	22
Lack of interest and concern to such learners	9	18
Not identifying such learners early and not supporting them appropriately	7	14
Showing such learners they have problems;	5	10
Fast pace of teaching to cover syllabus	5	10
Fear during test due to high set goals	5	10
unexplained punishments to learners	4	8
Indiscipline arising from poor management	3	6
Total response	49	100

Source: Primary Data

$$\text{Mean} = 49/8 = 6 \quad \text{OR} \quad 6/49 \times 100 = 12\%$$

Challenges identified to be posed by teachers to learners with LDs include poor teaching methods hence ineffectiveness; lack of interest and concern to such learners and failure to identify such learners early and thus not supporting them appropriately.

4.5 Respondents views on challenges hindering performance of pupils with LDS contributed by parents.

Table 4.6 Challenges causes by parents that affect the learning of pupils with LDs

Responses	Frequency	%
Showing such learners that they are failures	8	16
Failure to provide basic needs e.g. food, clothing	8	16
Absenting learners from school	7	14
A lot of work at home hence no time for homework	6	12
Not showing interest in children's academic work	6	12
Failure to educate elder siblings in higher institutions	4	8
Comparing higher achievers with such learners	4	8
Family instability e.g. broken marriages	3	6
Failure to liaise with teachers to instill discipline	2	4
Punishments in form of beatings	1	2
Total responses	49	100

Source: Primary Data

$$\text{Mean} = 49/10 = 5 \quad \text{OR} \quad 5/49 \times 100 = 10\%$$

Parents were seen to contribute challenges hindering performance of learners with LDs.

These include:-

- Showing such learners that they are failures

- Failing to provide basic/ needs such as food and clothing
- Absenting learners from school
- Giving a lot of work at home, hence there being no time for home work
- Not showing interest in children's academic work.

Table: 4.7 Respondents' view on challenges hindering performance of pupils with LDS contributed by peers.

Responses	Frequency	%
Discriminating, isolating and despising them	10	20
Molesting, bullying or intimidating them	9	18
Peer pressure, indiscipline and truancy	7	14
Abusing labeling and using discouraging remarks	6	12
Failing to assist them or refusing them access to instructional materials	6	12
Distracting others during study	5	10
Drug and substance abuse	4	8
Boy-girl relationships /love relationships	2	4
Total responses	49	100

Source: Primary Data

Mean = $49/8=6$ OR $6/49 \times 100 = 12\%$

The table indicates that peers pose challenges to learners with LDs hindering their performance. Such challenges include:

- Discriminating , isolating , and despising them
- Molesting , bullying or intimidating them
- Peer pressure, indiscipline and truancy.
- Abusing , labeling and use of discouraging remarks

Table 4.8: Respondents views on challenges hindering performance of pupils with LDS contributed by the regular curriculum

Responses	Frequency	%
Does not cater for individual differences	12	24
Content is too wide for coverage by such learners	11	22
Limited time for coverage of syllabus by such learners	9	18
Language used being above their level of understanding	7	14
Does not consider time lost during co-curricular events	6	12
Some resources are too expensive to buy in some schools	4	8
Total responses	49	100

Source: Primary Data

$$\text{Mean} = 49/6 = 8 \quad \text{OR} \quad 8/49 \times 100 = 16\%$$

The curriculum contributes to the challenges hindering performance of pupils with LDs such included:

- Not catering for individual differences
- Content being too wide for coverage by such learners
- Limited time for coverage of the syllabus by such learners

4.6 Solutions to challenges hindering performance of learners with LDs

Table 4.9: Respondents' view on solutions to challenges hindering performance of learners with LDS contributed by parental factors.

Responses	Frequency	%
Motivating their children ; give rewards to efforts shown, guide and counsel them	12	24
Give enough study time at home; avoid observing them from school; liaise with teachers in checking pupil's academic work.	10	20
Provide basic needs e.g. Food and clothing; provide required additional learning materials	10	20
Showing them love and concern; treating each child as an individual and avoid comparison; set realistic goals according to individual ability	8	16
Avoid giving children too much freedom; limit watching of some television programmes	5	10

Collaborate with teachers in instilling discipline; avoid overprovision of money to children	4	8
Total responses	49	100

Source: Primary Data

Mean = $49/6 = 8$ OR $8/49 \times 100 = 16\%$

Challenges hindering performance of/ learners with LDs contributed by parent factors can be solved through parents:-

- Motivating their children and guiding and counseling them.
- Giving enough study time at home and avoid absenting them from school
- Providing basic needs such as food and clothing as well as additional learning materials
- Showing love and concern and setting achievable goals as per individual ability.

Table 4.10: Respondents views on solutions to challenges hindering performance of learners with LDS contributed by peer factors.

Responses	Frequency	%
Treating them as equals, encouraging them; avoid labeling, despising them or laughing at them; peer guidance and counseling	18	37
Sharing ideas, Peer tutoring, assisting in group work and accepting them in study groups.	16	33
Help them to set own goals to achieve and encourage them to work hard in learning	10	20
Be good role models in making good use of leisure time.	5	10
Total responses	49	100

Source: Primary Data

Mean = $49/4 = 12$ OR $12/49 \times 100 = 24\%$

Challenges arising from peer related factors hindering performance of learners with LDS can be solved through peers:-

- Treating such learners as equals and guiding and counseling them.
- Sharing ideas with them, peer tutoring and assisting in group work.

Table 4.11: Respondents view on solutions to challenges hindering performance of learners with LDS contributed by curriculum factors.

Responses.	Frequency	%
It should cater for individual differences be diversified	11	22
Learning materials should be designed to cater for them	9	18
Reviewing the curriculum from time to time and teachers should be involved in its development	9	18
Teachers should adopt the curriculum to suit such learners; should advocate for continuous assessment	8	16
Trimming the curriculum content for easy coverage	7	14
It should aim at learners becoming self –reliant thus need for practical skills.	5	10
Total responses	49	100

Source: Primary Data

Mean = $49/6 = 8$ OR $8/49 \times 100 = 16\%$

It is evident from the above table that curriculum factors hindering performance of learners with LDs can be solved through:-

- It should cater for individual differences be diversified
- Learning materials should be designed to cater for them
- Reviewing the curriculum from time to time and teachers should be involved in its development
- Teachers should adopt the curriculum to suit such learners; should advocate for continuous assessment



CHAPTER 5:

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0. Introduction

The researcher is going to discuss the finding of the study and compare with what other authors have come up with or the same area. These will include the challenges hindering performance of learners with LDS and how to solve those challenges so as to enhance the performance of such learners. This will lead to drawing conclusions and making recommendations about the study.

5.1 Discussions

The study notes that learners with LDs can be identified through continuous assessment of their performance in various learning areas, observation and taking their case history. Indicators of LDs include; continuous of low grades and changes of moods when presented with a learning task from jovial to sadness.

Teachers are seen to contribute to challenges that hinder performance of learners with LDS. These include poor teaching methods, not showing interest towards them; making discouraging utterances towards them and failure to identify such learners easily enough to support them appropriately.

Parents also pose challenges to such learners by out lightly showing them that they are failures; failing to provide basic needs such as food and clothing; absenting

learners from school giving a lot of work home and not showing interest in children's academic work.

Peers on the other hand create challenges to such learners through discriminating or isolating them; molesting or bullying them; negative peer pressure; labeling them and unwilling to assist them in leaning or refusing them access to instructional materials.

The regular curriculum is also a challenges as it does not cater for individual differences; the content is too wide for easy coverage and there is limited time for coverage of the same. Other factors hindering performance of learners with LDS are hereditary factors disabling and chronic diseases.

The study reveals that solutions to the challenges are only come from various stakeholders. Teachers should identify such learners difficulties and support them; encourage motivate such learners as well as guide and counsel them and be devoted to their work through good time management as well as give individual attention.

Parents should motivate their children with such difficulties; give enough study time at home, avoid absenting them from school, liaise with teachers in checking learners academic work; provide basic needs such as food and clothing as well as other additional required learning materials. They should also show them love and concern through treating each child as an individual and avoid comparison with higher achievers by setting realistic goals according to individual ability

Peers on the other hand need to treat learners with LDs as equals, encourage them and avoid labeling them; and sharing ideas with them through peer tutoring and assisting and guiding group work.

For the regular curriculum to be friendly to learners with LDs it should cater for individual differences by being diversified designing learning materials appropriate for such learners. It should also be reviewed from time to time ensuring teachers have participated in its development.

To solve other challenges counseling, provision of assistive devices to learners with disabilities such as visual impairment, hearing impairment and physical handicap while at the same time ensuring that the environment is modified to suit such learners. Learners who fall sick should be given prompt treatment, those who are absent to attend to clinics should be given remedial teaching and those on drugs should be reminded when to take them

Teachers need to choose appropriate teaching approaches to enhance performance of learners with LDs. These include demonstration, experiments or practical, discussion, questions and answers, IEP, task analysis and peer- tutoring amongst others which are child centered.

From the researcher's point of view, education officers also have a role to play to support learners with LDs. They need to organize seminars/ workshops for teachers to equip them with skills for handling such learners, appraise teachers who assist such

learners to excel, conduct regular school inspections and educate for support of such learners in classroom situations and sensitizing parents to provide supplementary learning materials and offered under SPE funds.

The MOE's role in supporting learners with LDs should be designing curriculum and learning materials that cater for the needs of such learners; training practicing teachers on SNE and employ more teachers and establish a SNE faculty in very teacher training college.

KNEC need to consider such learners when setting examinations for example have two paper-one for the average learners and another for learners with LDS. The body also need to allow extra time to such learners when sitting for their papers.

The study focused on indicators showing that a learner has difficulties, the challenges hindering performance of learners with LDs and solutions to challenges hindering performance of such learners. Over three-quarters of the sample population participated in the study hence that their views can be said to represent the perspective of the entire Nuu Zone community as pertains the study.

The findings match with other researchers in the study. It is possible to say that such high expectations from the society create more challenges to such learners when they fail to met the expectations hence loose confidence and self-esteem which may eventually lead to learned helplessness.

The prevalence going by figures given by SNESP, USO Kenya in conjunction with MOEST (20303) who state that a class of regular pupils should not have more than 3 learners with special needs. Though the case the noted teacher pupil ration in the study is not extremely large to defect management if teachers are more devoted to their work and hence accord individual attention to such learners.

One possible explanation on teachers not appropriately supporting learners with LDS is the need to cover the wide curriculum in time and hence disregard the slow learning pace of learners with LDs and move ahead with average learners. This leads to leaving such appropriate intervention measurers put in place.

In some instances the teachers, parents and peers seem not to be fully aware of the needs of learners with LDs hence their failure to be supportive and in most cases despise such learners. This inhibits performance of such learners. There is need therefore for more sensitization on LDs to enhance support.

Since there are no particular suggested approaches or teaching methods to be solely used on learners with LDs, teachers need to be creative and use their initiative to select appropriate strategies to follow o support such learners so that they can learn at their own pace for better internalization of concepts.

Last but not least, MOE and KNEC should for the time being recognize learners with LDs as a needy group like the visually impaired, hearing impaired, mentally handicapped and the physically handicapped who are allowed extra time in national examinations.

This should be extended to learners with LDs from the national level down to the school level when such learners sit for examinations.

5.2 Conclusions

The study has enabled the researcher to arrive at various conclusions. In order to support learners with LDs effectively, teachers should identify such learners early and plan appropriate intervention measures. Methods of identifying such learners may include continuous assessment, observation and taking case history; Intervention strategies may include teachers using appropriate teaching/learning approaches such as IEP, task analysis and peer tutoring among others. Both teachers and parents should motivate such learners while peers should show acceptance and willingness to support them. Such measures would only materialize if all the various stakeholders who include MOE, KNEC, Education officers, teachers, parents and learners work in collaboration.

The study has realized that most of the challenges facing learners with LDs are contributed by people who should be supporting them. Each concerned person should therefore play his/her role in alleviating these challenges. Major challenges include;

- Teachers not identifying them early and therefore not addressing their needs.
- Parents showing such learners that they are failures and not providing basic needs.
- Other learners (peers) isolating such learners through not willing to interact with them or to assist them.

-
- The curriculum content being too wide and complex for coverage by such learners.

It is therefore upon teachers to use appropriate teaching/ learning hen handling such learners. They should also ensure learners are accorded individual attention. Parents should make appropriate provisions and liaise with teachers so as to monitor educational progress of such learners. Peers should interact with such learners and assist where they need help. The curriculum developers should ensure that the needs of learners with LDS are catered for as per their abilities. Finally those solutions to the challenges hindering performance of learners with LDS shall only come from us in total as a society.

5.3 Recommendations.

Following the finding of this study, the researcher has the following recommendations to make;

- Parents, teachers and learners should be sensitized more on needs of learners with LDs and how they should be supported. This should be carried out by personnel trained on SNE.
- The MOE should start offering refresher courses on SNE to practicing teachers.
- The government should deploy one or two teachers trained on SNE to every primary school in Kenya. SNE at teacher training college should be made a mandatory subject in which a teacher must have passed to be employed into the service.

-
- KNEC should prepare a set of examination papers cater for the needs of learners with LDs. They should also be given extra time to do the papers.
 - MOE should ensure such learners are identified and supported according at classroom situations.
 - A conclusive study should be carried out to assess the exact magnitude of the problems facing learners with LDs to enable formulation of policies about them.
 - Tuition should mainly target learners with LDs during the vacation unlike the common trend where all learners go for such tuition so that the performance of such learners can be uplifted to catch up with others.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

Further study is important to assess the exact magnitude of the problems facing learners with LDs especially in the semi-arid and arid areas or the under-developed parts of the country to enable formulation of policies safeguarding learners with LDs. Further research therefore can be conducted on the teaching methods and the attitude of teachers towards the inclusion of learners with learning difficulties in regular school settings. This shall give a detailed insight about the extent to which the learning needs of this category of learners is being or not catered for at all.

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APPENDIX A

A questionnaire for Education officers.

I am a graduating student at Kampala International University pursuing a bachelor degree in education (special needs). I am conducting a study on challenges hindering the performance of children with learning difficulties in regular schools in Nuu zone. Your contributions to this study will be greatly appreciated.

I humbly request you to fill in the questionnaire

N.B

Information given will be treated with confidentiality

- Number of schools in Nuu zone
- Number of teachers in Nuu zone
- Average distribution of teachers per school
- Number of learners in Nuu zone
- Average distribution of teachers per school
- Number of learners in Nuu zone

1. What indicators would you advice teachers to observe to identify learners with learning difficulties?

.....
.....

2. What are the challenges hindering high performance among learners with learning difficulties.

.....
.....
.....

3 a) How could teachers be contributing to low performance of the learners with learning difficulties.

.....
.....
.....

b) What advice would you give to teachers to help alleviate the problem(s) above?

.....
.....
.....

4 a) How could parents be contributing to low performance of learners with learning difficulties?.....

.....
.....

a) Give suggestions on how parents can help such learners improve their performance.

.....
.....

5a) How may the curriculum be hindering performance of the learners with learning difficulties?

b) Suggest ways in which the curriculum can be made to suit such learners?

6a) how may other learners be hindering performance of their peers with learning difficulties?

b) Give suggestions on what other learners should do to assist peers with learning difficulties improve their performance

7. Give suggests on what the ministry of education should do to help improve performance of learners with learning difficulties

8. How can the Kenyan National Examination Council ensure learners with learning difficulties realize better performance in their final examination?

APPENDIX B

A questionnaire for teachers

I am a graduating student at Kampala International University pursuing a bachelor degree in education (special needs). I am conducting a study on challenges hindering the performance of children with learning difficulties in regular schools in Nuu zone. Your contributions to this study will be greatly appreciated.

NB. Information given will be treated with confidentiality

Number of teachers in the school

Number of classes in the school

Average number of pupils per class

Approximate number of learners with learning difficulties in your class.

1. What indicators show you that a learner has learning difficulties?

2. What are the challenges hindering performance of the learners with learning difficulties?

.....
.....

3a) how could teachers be contributing to low performance of learners with learning difficulties?

.....
.....

b) What advice could you give other teachers to help improve performance of such learners?

.....
.....
.....

4a) how could parents be contributing to low performance of learners with learning difficulties?

.....
.....

b) What role should the parents play to help improve performance of such learners?

.....
.....

5a) How may the curriculum be contributing to low performance of learners with learning difficulties?

b) Suggest how the problem(s) above can be solved

6a) How could other learners be contributing to low performance of learners with learning difficulties?

b) Suggest what other learners should do to assist learners with learning difficulties.

APPENDIX C

A questionnaire for parents.

I am a graduating student at Kampala International University pursuing a bachelor degree in education (special needs). I am conducting a study on challenges hindering the performance of children with learning difficulties in regular schools in Nuu zone. Your contributions to this study will be greatly appreciated.

I humbly request you to fill in the questionnaire

NB

Information given will be treated with confidentiality

1. Why do some learners perform poorly at school?
2. how may teacher be contributing to low performance of the learners who always perform poorly/
3. how may parents be contributing to the low performance of learners who always perform poorly
4. How may other learners be contributing to low performance of learners who always perform poorly?
5. As a parent, what would you advice each of the following people to do to assist learners who always perform poorly do better?
 - a) Teachers
 - b) Other parents
 - c) The learners who always perform poorly
 - d) Other learners

APPENDIX D

A questionnaire for learners

I am a graduating student at Kampala International University pursuing a bachelor degree in education (special needs). I am conducting a study on challenges hindering the performance of children with learning difficulties in Regular schools in Nuu zone. Your contributions to this study will be greatly appreciated.

I humbly request you to fill the questionnaire

Note:

Information given will be treated with confidentiality

1. What may be the reasons that make some learners get low marks in their school work?
2. How may teachers be making learners not to get high marks in their school work?
3. What should the teachers do to help learners who get low marks get higher marks in the school work?
4. How could parents be making learners get low marks in their school work?
5. What should the parents do to help learners who do badly in their school work get better grades?
6. How do other learners make some learners who do badly continue doing badly in their school work?
7. What can other learners do to help those learners doing badly get better marks?

APPENDIX E

LIST OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NUU ZONE /DIVISION.

School	Enrolment	No. Of Teachers	Streams
1.Kaai	468	12	12
2.Mwalili	67	2	4
3.Kaombe	331	7	8
4.Nuu DEB	379	9	11
5.Nuu Special (MH)	117	9	11
6.Mbia	74	4	8
7.Kavuti	165	6	8
8.Iviani	253	4	8
9.Kiliku	140	6	8
10.Nyaani	339	7	8
11.Kithituni	293	8	9
12.Kalesi	209	7	8
13. Yatwa	269	5	8
14.Kyumbe	273	4	8
15.Wingemi	276	5	8
16. Kathanze	492	8	14
17.Nzanzu	240	7	8
18.Mwambiu	401	5	9
19. Imwamba	279	6	8
20.Mutyangome	437	10	11
21..Syumakethe	137	5	8
22.Mwangeni	440	11	12
23.Nguuni	48	4	8
24.Mutulu	332	5	9
25.Kivundui	175	5	8
26.Kawelu	235	6	8
27.Matulani	178	5	8
28.Tuvaani	247	5	8
29.Ngieni	199	5	7
30.Kavindu	586	11	13
31.Ngangani	287	6	8
32. Nguka Imwe	22	1	1
33. Imwaa	30	1	1
34. Mitavo	30	1	1
35.Nguuni	45	1	1

APPENDIX F

Participation of sample population in the study.

Category	No. In sample	No. that responded	Percentage
Education officers	2	2	100
Teachers	20	16	80
Parents	10	6	60
Learners	30	25	83
Total	62	49	79

Table 3: Participation of sample population in the study

Interpretation:

Over three quarters of the sample population participated in the study. Hence their views may be argued to reflect the position of Nuuz zone.

APPENDIX G

TRANSMITTAL LETTER TO THE HEAD TEACHER

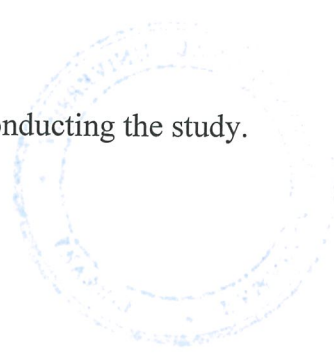
April 21, 2008

To whom it may concern:

Dear Sir/Madam

I am graduating student at Kampala International University pursuing a Bachelor Degree in Education (Special Needs). I hereby write to request you to allow me carry out research in your institution. I am conducting a study on challenges hindering the performance of children with learning difficulties in regular schools, Nuu zone, Mwingi District.

I would be grateful for your permission and assistance in conducting the study.



Respectively yours,

.....

JAME WAMBUGU MATU

Noted by:

.....

MR. OKETCH CHRISOSTOM

Supervisor.