

**THE EFFECTS OF VISUAL IMPAIRMENT ON ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS IN MATETE
EAST ZONE MATETE DISTRICT
KENYA**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE AWARD OF A BACHELOR OF
DEGREE IN SPECIAL NEEDS
EDUCATION OF KAMPALA
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY**

APRIL 2010

DECLARATION

I, ROSEMARY KHABUKWI MUTONYI, declare that this is my original research report and has never been presented to nay institute of higher learning for award of a diploma or degree.

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DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to my beloved husband James Hosea Okoko, my daughters Sharon Munde, Lucy Ongache, and my sons Sammy Muhanji, Victor Maindi, Dylan Khalwale, and my sister Silvia for love, patience, understanding and encouragement during my two year course while pursuing a degree in special needs education.

APPROVAL

This research report has been submitted for examination with my approval as the candidate's university supervisor.

Signed:..........

Date:.....23/04/2010'.....

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AKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge the assistance accorded to me by all the stake holders who were involved either directly or indirectly.

I feel deeply indebted to my lecturer as well as supervisor madam Chebet Shamim, who took her precious time, patiently guided and advised me through out the research.

I also wish to express my sincere thanks to Mr. James H. Okoko for his humble guidance and advice during this tiring time of conducting research

My special thanks go to the members of staff who courtesy stepped in my lessons while I was out for research.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Approval.....	iii
Acknowledgement.....	iv
Table of contents.....	v
List of tables.....	vii
Acronyms.....	viii
Definition of the key terms.....	ix
Abstract.....	x
CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2. Statement of Problem.....	2
1.3 Purpose of the Study.....	3
1.4 Objective of the Study.....	3
1.5 Research questions.....	3
1.6 Scope of the Study.....	3
1.6.2 Content scope.....	4
1.7 Significance of the study.....	4
1.8 Limitations of the study.....	4
1.8.1 Delimitations.....	4
1.9 Theoretical framework.....	5
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	7
2.0 Introduction.....	7
2.1 Effects of visual impairment on learning.....	7
2.2 Challenges learners with visual impairment face in learning.....	10
2.3 Challenges teachers faces in teaching learners with visual impairment.....	13
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY.....	15
3.0 Introduction.....	15
3.1 Area of study.....	15
3.2 Population sample.....	15
3.2.1 Data collection.....	15
3.2.2 Instruments /tools of data collection.....	16
3.4 Procedure for data collection.....	16
3.5 Data analysis.....	17
CHAPTER FOUR:PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS.....	18
4.0 Introduction.....	18
4.1 Respondents personal information.....	19
4.2 The effects of visual impairment on academic performance.....	20

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Declaration.....	i
Dedication.....	ii
Approval.....	iii
Aknowledgement.....	iv
Table of contents.....	v
List of tables.....	vii
Acronyms.....	viii
Definition of the key terms.....	ix
Abstract.....	x
CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2. Statement of Problem.....	2
1.3 Purpose of the Study.....	3
1.4 Objective of the Study.....	3
1.5 Research questions.....	3
1.6 Scope of the Study.....	3
1.6.2 Content scope.....	4
1.7 Significance of the study.....	4
1.8 Limitations of the study.....	4
1.8.1 Delimitations.....	4
1.9 Theoretical framework.....	5
CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE.....	7
2.0 Introduction.....	7
2.1 Effects of visual impairment on learning.....	7
2.2 Challenges learners with visual impairment face in learning.....	10
2.3 Challenges teachers faces in teaching learners with visual impairment.....	13
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY.....	15
3.0 Introduction.....	15
3.1 Area of study.....	15
3.2 Population sample.....	15
3.2.1 Data collection.....	15
3.2.2 Instruments /tools of data collection.....	16
3.4 Procedure for data collection.....	16
3.5 Data analysis.....	17
CHAPTER FOUR:PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS.....	18
4.0 Introduction.....	18
4.1 Respondents personal information.....	19
4.2 The effects of visual impairment on academic performance.....	20

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	25
5.0 Introduction.....	25
5.1 Discussion	25
5.2 Conclusions.....	28
5.3 Recommendations.....	29
REFERENCES.....	30
APPENDICES	32
APPENDIX A: THE TIME FRAME.....	32
APPENDIX B: BUDGET.....	33
APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS IN MATETE ZONE MATETE DISTRICT.....	34
APPENDIX D: INTRODUCTION LETTER.....	39

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: showing the effects of visual impairment on academic performance.....	20
Table 2: Average attendance of learners with visual impairment.....	21
Table 3: Classroom enrollment between the teacher and the learner	21
Table 4: Learning resources	21
Table 5: Friendly environment.....	22
Table 6: Teachers attitudes towards learners with visual impairment.....	22
Table 7: Teaching and learning methods of the visually impaired children	23
Table 8: Challenges learner with visual impairment face in learning	23
Table 9: Challenges teacher face in teaching learners with visual impairment.....	24

ACRONYMS

UNCRC	-	United Nations Conventions of the Right of the Child.
NARC	-	National Rainbow Coalition.
EFA	-	Education for All
F.P.E	-	Free Primary Education.
EARC	-	Educational Assessment & Resource Centre.

DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERMS

For the purpose of the study, the following terms are defined operationally:-

- Vision** : The study to see (sight).
- Impairment** : This refers to any loss or damage to a part of the body either through accident, disease, genetic factors or other causes. This leads to the loss or weakening of that affected.
- Visual impairment** : Is the diminishment of the ability to see. The terms Partially sighted legally blind, low vision and totally blind are commonly used to describe visual impairment.
- Myopia** : This is a refractive error known as near sightedness. The image is not focused onto the retina.
- Hyperopia** : This is a refractive error known as far sightedness. The light rays coverage beyond the retina.
- Astigmatism** : This is a refractive error whereby the image is not focused onto the retina but the light ray's coverage at many focal points making the image blurred or not clear.
- Performance** : what one can achieve in terms of grades in relation to Exams. Classroom management: how children are handled in class so as to follow what is being taught
- Motivation** : The elements that cause one to have interest in a given matter.
- Attitudes** : feeling towards something or somebody.

ABSTRACT

The study dealt with the effects of visual impairment on academic performance in primary schools. The researcher used descriptive survey design to gather data in four primary schools in Matete zone, Lugari district. The researcher used random sampling method to pick the respondents in each school. Data was analyzed and come up with the following findings. Teachers did not employ appropriate classroom management strategies to manage students with visual impairment. There was no appropriate strategies in using instructional materials to cater for learners with visual impairment. Learners with visual impairment are being motivated

Finally teachers had negative attitudes towards learners with visual impairment.

This kind of approach had poor performance on learners with visual impairment.

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Visual impairment is a sight problem that affects across all people irrespective of their age. These people can easily be identified by virtue of their physique and way of movement. Kiman (2003)

According to the federal register (1977), visual impairment affects child's education performance. The term includes those who are legally blind, partially and those are totally blind.

Visual impairment can be brought about by diseases such as glaucoma, trachoma or trauma, accidents, malnutrition and refracture errors such as myopia, hperpia and a stigmatism.

According to Kimani, (2003), learners with Visual Impairment manifest the following characteristics.

Watery eyes

Poor eye hand coordination

Low self esteem

Clumsy movement

Unusual head posture

Lack of social skills due to inferiority complex

They lack models to copy and hence develop bad characters.

The above characteristics affects/ learning/ academic performance of learners with visual impairment. Effects of visual impairment on learning include

avoidance of visual tasks, lags behind in academic performance, omission of words & Letters in sentences can not read the written text, lack of confidence and dropping out of school, poor handwriting, negative attitude from teachers and peers, unwelcoming school environments, labeling optic and non-optic materials not available, modified curricular such children need special care and provisions for their education, training and rehabilitation. Special personnel, instructional material, and curricular adaptations are required to help them to achieve as much education or vocational competency as their visual impairment allows.

1.2. Statement of Problem

According to article 28 of the United Nations convention of the Right of the Child (UNCRC), every child is entitled to free primary education which shall be compulsory, the initiative was undertaken by the National Rainbow Coalition (NACR) government in January 2003.

Free primary education initiative in Kenya has been taken up positively. After its launching enrollment of learners with visual impairment has been significantly improved in primary schools.

Parents in Kenya and international community comment Kenya government for this noble initiative. However, most of these learners with visual impairment perform poorly in academics due to reasons not known.

This study therefore seeks to look at the effects of visual impairment on learning in Matete east, Matete district, Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the effects of visual impairment on learning.

1.4 Objective of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives.

1. Determine the effects of visual impairment on the academic performance of learners with visual impairment.
2. The challenges learners with visual impairment face in the course of learning
3. Investigate the challenges teacher's learners with visual impairment.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. what are the effects of visual impairment on learning
2. what challenges do learners with visual impairment face in the course of learning
3. what challenges do teachers face in the teaching of learners with visual impairment

1.6 Scope of the Study

The study was carried out in Matete Zone in four (4) primary schools. Matete East Zone borders Lugari Division on the north, Kabras division and Uasin Gishu district on the East whereas Wabuye division in Bungoma on the west.

1.6.2 Content scope

The study centered on how visual impairment affects learning, challenges learners and teachers face during teaching and learning.

1.7 Significance of the study

- i. It is hoped that the results of this study will create public awareness on the effects of visual impairment on learning
- ii. It will expose the challenge teachers and learners with visual impairment face during learning.
- iii. Help teachers improve on their methods of teaching learners with visual impairment

1.8 Limitations of the study

Due to the physical terrain of the zone; some schools are interior where communication and transport was a problem.

The researcher also experienced some reluctance from the respondents because most of them did not understand the purpose of the study and how they had been picked upon to provide the required responses.

Generally, most of the respondents expressed mistrust and thought information given would benefit the researcher financially.

1.8.1 Delimitations

The researcher had an advantage of teaching in Matete East Zone and knew the kind of approach to use to the respondents she was going to meet

1.9 Theoretical framework

This study is based on the theory of Abraham Maslow hierarchy of needs. Abraham Maslow was one of the most renowned theorists of humanistic theory. Humanistic theories are those that deal with individuals by studying their inner drives and behaviour unlike learning theories, these theories are not observable but can be discerned or derived from interviews or by observing on individual's reactions to situations.

This theory emphasizes that an individual strives to be the best of what they can become when lower needs are satisfied, before an individual seeks to satisfy high needs.

According to Maslow's hierarchy, the first human need is physiological needs, which includes food, clothing, and shelter basic needs. Since most learners with visual impairment come from poor families, they cannot concentrate on their studies when they are hungry.

The second level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs is called safety needs. This include the need for security, orderliness, sameness and protection. If the learner with visual impairment is not friendly, this will have an effect on learning and academic performance. The teachers should provide friendly environment, sense of sameness and protection to this learners to excel in academic.

The third area of Maslow's hierarchy of need is love and belongingness. After safety needs have been met, the learners with impairment seek out love and a sense of belonging. This means that visual impairment student desires identification, acceptance and love in their academic performance.

The fourth level of Abraham Maslow's theory of needs is called esteem needs, when a person with visual impairment has been accepted and belongs to a group, the student is able to develop a sense of self-worth. After developing a sense of self-worth this makes the student interact well with other students instilling in him hope of success which leads to good performance.

According to Petris, after a person has acquired all the above need he will then start to strive for achievement, strength, confidence, independence and freedom. This will make a student to have a purpose in life, the need to achieve, to succeed in life to excel in almost all aspects of pursuits.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

This chapter reviews literature related to the effects of visual impairment on the academic performance of learners in Matete zone district. By professionals, researchers, and scientists, the related literature was reviewed under the following sub headings.

- Effects of visual impairment on learning
- Challenges learners with visual impairment face in learning
- Challenges teachers face in teaching learners with visual impairment

2.1 Effects of visual impairment on learning

Rizza (1979) describe the educationally blind child as being “more easily understood as the child who cannot make use of vision for the purpose of learning. A given child who is classified as educationally blind may well retain some degree of residual vision, but this remaining vision cannot be employed in learning. In the practical sense, the educationally blind child must rely chiefly upon touch and hearing as the major avenues of learning. Programmes for the educationally blind, therefore, must attempt to maximize the child’s use of non-visual sense. The most obvious application of this principle involves the use of Braille for reading.

The visually impaired children have learning difficulties because the concept formation of congenitally blind is restricted as they do not have any perceptions based on one sense modality. These children are not able to deal with random shapes or distorted objectives and their reasoning ability is also less developed, because unless basic concepts are formed, reasoning becomes handicapped.

These children should be trained to use the tactile sense modality to compensation for the deficiency of vision.

According to Mwaura (2002) visual impairment present at birth deprives the child of vital source of sensory information from the environment; this deprivation has a negative influence on the child's cognitive development. Loss of vision at an early age cause uneven intellectual growth, as rapid intellectual development occurs during the first four years of life.

A child with visual impairment is at a big disadvantage in areas of sensory stimulation and concepts formation in learning. This child lags behind in academic. Performance, find the schools unwelcoming environment, develops poor responsibility role, lack of confidence and drop out of school.

According to Harley, (1973), limited sensory input due to environmental deprivation, limited mobility and lack of exploratory opportunities may cause visually handicapped children to lag behind in cognitive development.

Harley further continuous to say that visual handicapped children, and particularly the congenitally blind, are disadvantaged in learning concepts that sighted children learn readily and which are able to related to other concepts in their environment for instance Miller (1969) found that partially sighted children performed better than those with severely impaired vision on plagetian tests of conversation Harley (1973) interprets this to mean that an intact vision plays an important role in the development of reasoning abilities.

Dubose (1979), states that research has shown that blind infants show the most obvious delay in object concept. This delay causes the child to be delayed in the

acquisition of spatial concepts and their causality. These observations agree with Harley's (1973) comments on the role of vision in the acquisition of concept formation.

Lowernfield (1980) stated that congenitally and totally blind children experience difficulty in learning speech by imitation. He noted that such children may learn better by hearing the sounds and by occasional touch. He further urged that, the development of speech in blind children may be slower than that of sighted children because they acquire word concepts slowly since they lack the experience of associating words with what they see.

Corn (1985), States that residual vision can be improved by using the following instructional approaches: (a) a vision stimulating programme (b) visual efficiency training, and (c) vision utilization.

Vision stimulating, this stimulation enables the brain area responsible for vision to be activated and register, record, and disseminate the visual clues that the child has learnt or mastered.

Visual efficiency training follows the visual stimulation, programmes and is concerned with perceptual factors involved in the functioning of vision such as "distinguishing patterns of what the child is seeing, differentiating outlines, inner characteristics of the object and transferring what the child has learned into two dimension pictures and symbols (Corn 1985).

Visual utilization instruction, according to corn (1985), involves modifying the environment, using optical and non-optical aids, and other technique to make maximum use of the vision on the academic performance.

2.2 Challenges learners with visual impairment face in learning

Salis (1974) noted that visually impaired children in regular schools experience the following problems; they are in a strange environment and often are complete strangers to other students if the school is a large one in town. They are often obliged to learn largely by listening and by touch. Imagination can play some unfortunate tricks on them if the teaching is bad and completely ignores their presence.

The blind child is faced with the problems of reading suitable textbooks, and writing a completely new medium. This adds in fact, another subject to his already crowded curriculum.

It was inevitable that there would be some subjects which would present special problems to individual children. For example, a child who experiences difficulty in free movement may easily take an intense dislike to games, physical education and Mathematics, because of the need for concentration and ability to write down figures in another medium, can also be a subject that will cause plenty of trouble.

A shy child who is blind can miss a great deal of the incidental benefits that come from ordinary school life. specialist teachers must try to encourage such children to join activities as much as possible.

The visually impaired children are not accessible to instructional materials like Braille, non optical devices and optical devices to facilitate their learning.

Heinze (1985, p 303) noted several advantages of using Braille as a reading or writing system it can be used by blind readers as a tool for daily living skills, or as a major communication tool. It provides both reading and writing systems. It

provides many deaf-blind individual with a workable communication tool if a visual impairment child is not accessible to Braille then the child cannot exceed in academics

On the other hand the findings of Lowenfield et al (1967), agrees with other studies which show that partially sighted children have normally academic achievements. This can only be by using low vision devices to enhance vision for far and near distance.

Low vision devices are divided into two categories of namely optical low vision devices and non optical devices. Optical devices are lenses placed between the eye and the object to facilitate seeing. They are used for magnification for example hand held magnifiers, stand magnifiers, spectacle mounted magnifiers and telescopes while non-optical low vision devices includes bookstands or reading stands, large type print books , bold line paper felt pens and highlighters.

Without instructional materials learners with visual impairment develops learning problems and exhibit in appropriate feelings even when the prevailing climate is normal.

The visually impaired children lack motivation in schools. According to Richards (1998) he says in a classroom situation positive reinforcement may be provided by use of primary reinforcements such as milk, cereals, or candy or may be conditioned reinforcer such as gold, stars, high grades and social approval or in the cases of younger pupil's physical contact.

When this kind of activities is engaged in the classroom, natural teaching of learners with visual impairment will quietly develops high self esteem and perform well in academics. Equally it will attract the child to remain in school as the environment values him/her.

These learners with visual impairment are socially stigmatized hence this affects their academic performance. The human touch, which embodies the qualities described by Carl (1967) as being real, authentic accepting and trustworthy is essential in handling children with visual impairment. These children may be a product of unloving, non accepting family schools of neighborhood and tend to be suspicious of others. In order for them to change and develop high self esteem and trusts, they need assurance that they are accepted as they are.

A teacher who emphasizes with their feelings and experiences and seeks to communicate with them in an accepting non -judgmental ways develops a bond of trust with them.

Poor academic performances are directly related to low self esteem, a student exhibits in schools. Learners with visual impairment can make positive achievements towards academic performance if only there is a friendly environment and if everybody shows a positive attitude towards them in their homes, schools and in the community as a whole Carl (1967)

Teachers should be aware of varied individual differences and should not generalize thinking all learners are at the same par.

Teachers should put more emphasis on learners' interest and capture their attention in class during lesson delivery. Children with visual impairment require help because they experience psychosocial adjustments and learning

problems. This calls for proper mobility and orientation skills and guidance and counseling for both teachers, children with visual impairment, peers, and parents with visual impairment children. The specialized teacher in visual impairment should also create awareness in the community of how to handle learners with visual impairment so that they can excel in their academics.

2.3 Challenges teachers faces in teaching learners with visual impairment.

Salis, (1974) describe challenges encountered by the classroom teachers in teaching learners with visual impairment, he says the class teacher has forty active children in his class, amongst whom he has to divide his time the one or two blind children in his class must learn how to work quietly , independently on some occasions and purposefully.

The class teacher is bound to be faced with some problems with using visual aids. It is up to the supportive teacher to advise him, how to use these aids for the class. He can, with very little extra efforts, make the lesson interesting for the blind.

Reading and writing present technical problems with which the visiting teachers must help and carefully explain.

Many teachers were to be quite unaccustomed to dealing with the blind and their attitudes may differ greatly from the standards of educational and social work.

According to Oyebade (1993), it is believed that students' performance is a function of teacher motivation and productivity. If teachers are properly motivated, the impact will simultaneously reflect in the quality of students' performance.

Motivation has numerous sources, depending, from the organization to the worker. Motivation could be in form of pay rise, leadership styles, added incentive, power sharing and enhancing the feeling of achievement by rewarding excellence with praise and encouragement.

Teachers face the problem of large enrolment in inclusive classroom and unqualified teachers in handling learners with visual impairment. Nduromo (1993), says that placement of children in special transitional station is commendable, however it servers very small number. He commends that special classes be established and manned by qualified teachers, social workers and psychologist on day to day basis.

According to Hiuhu (2002), Educational resources reduce barriers to learning and development by meeting learners' special individual needs. As learners are able to learn and function independently, visual impaired children educational resources includes mobility resources, communication resources, low vision devices, classroom devices and reproduction devices, which are very expensive for teachers to afford. For example white canes for easy movement, brail for writing and reading; optical and non optical devices for low vision.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the methods used to investigate the effects of visual impairment on learning. It also describes the study area, population sample, subject sample, tools for data collection, procedure for data collection and methods used to analyze data.

3.1 Area of study

The research was conducted in four (4) primary schools in Matete East Zone in Matete District, Kenya.

3.2 Population sample

The study involved learners and teachers of learners with visual impairment. The researcher interacted with twelve teachers teaching learners with visual impairment and ten (10) children with visual impairment in four (4) primary schools.

3.2.1 Data collection

Raw data was collected from all the four (4) primary schools in Matete East Zone, Matete district, Kenya using the following instrument, questionnaire.

The main research tools involved in-depth interview guides, focus group discussion guides and key informant interview guides. The instrument were unstructured to allow easy flow of information, flexibility where possible

documentary review was carried out in order to approach secondary information hidden in documents of the voluntary organizations in places dealing with matters of learners with visual impairment who look to be vulnerable to sustain their required needs.

3.2.2 Instruments /tools of data collection

The researcher used a questionnaire that was answered by teachers teaching children with visual impairment and students with visual impairment. The questionnaires had both closed ended and open ended questions. Closed ended questions required specific answers either yes or no, whereas open ended questions required the personal view of the respondents. The questionnaires were distributed personally to the teachers and collected thereafter the teachers had answered

3.4 Procedure for data collection

The researcher carried out preliminary study before she went out to the field; she wrote a letter to the Area Education Officer (AEO) and head teacher to be permitted to conduct educational research in their area of jurisdiction. The researcher contacted relevant authorities to be granted permission before accessing the respondents.

Student identification card and letter seeking permission from the area education officer (AEO) were presented to respective school authorities. The researcher had a brief explanation with teachers teaching learners with visual impairment and students with visual impairment. Thereafter, she gave out the questionnaires to fill as the researcher waits. After filling the questionnaires, they handed them to

the researcher for analysis. The system minimized loss of questionnaires and delays.

3.5 Data analysis

Having collected raw data from the respondents, the researcher compiled the data and analyzed every item. She treated the data collected statistically using table forms which had to indicate the response, its frequency and percentage on every item. At the bottom of every table, there was a brief analysis of the information revealed by the table.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter analyses and interprets information gathered from sampled respondents who participated in the study on the effects of visual impairment on academic performance.

The researcher used questionnaire to gather information. The questions were mostly closed ended type. The researcher targeted teachers as the population sample who served learners with visual impairment in Matete East Zone.

The questionnaires were meant to seek information about the effects of visual impairment on learning, challenges learners with disabilities visual impairments face in learning and the challenges teachers face in teaching learners with visual impairments.

Questionnaire had a total of twelve questions spread in two parts. Part one comprised of background information and part two comprised of questions under the specific information.

Questionnaires were sent out to teachers by the researcher in sampled schools. A total of 12 questionnaires which are 100% were all filled and returned.

Data analysis was done to establish the percentage of questionnaires received from out of those that were sent out. The data shows a reflection of 100% questionnaires were all returned.

SECTION A

4.1 Respondents personal information

This section dealt with gender in schools. The researcher found out to have more male teachers than female teachers teaching in regular schools.

Category	Frequency	Percentage
SEX		
Male	8	66.7%
Female	4	33.3%
Total	12	100.0%
AGES		
30 - 40yrs	6	50%
41 - 45yrs	3	25%
46 - 55yrs	3	25%
Total	12	100%
PROFESSION		
Primary teacher		
Examination (PTE)	8	66.6%
Diploma	2	16.7%
Degree	2	16.7%
Total	12	100.0%
MARITAL STATUS		
Married	8	66.7%
unmarried	4	33.3%
Total	12	100%

This data shows the ages of respondents found out, teachers handling learners with visual impairments are middle age a few are of young age and old age. The

study analyzed the marital status of teachers and found out most teachers in regular schools are married. Academic qualification, this data found out that the respondents attained level of their education was secondary schools. It helped the researcher to find out the appropriate level of education for teachers handling learners in primary schools. In professional qualification the data showed that teachers certificate holders a few diploma and degree.

SECTION B

This section comprised of specific information. The researcher tabulated and analyzed data in table form.

4.2 The effects of visual impairment on academic performance

Table 1: showing the effects of visual impairment on academic performance

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Poorly	10	83.3
Average	2	16.7
Excellent	Nil	0
Total		100%

Source: Field data 2010

The frequency of teachers observing the effects of visual impairments on academic performance is 10/12 which attributes to 83.3% of the total number of questions returned. While 2/12 observed that they can do well if given time.

The above table indicated that most learners with visual impairment learners are not performing well in academics.

Table 2: Average attendance of learners with visual impairment

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Regular	3	25
Irregular	9	75
Total	12	100

Source: field data 2010

From the table above, it shows clearly that learners with visual impairment come to schools irregularly. This has been observed by 75% of the respondents.

Table 3: Classroom enrollment between the teacher and the learner

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Between 1:5	0	0
Between 1:10	2	16.7
Between 1:20 and above	10	83.3
Total	12	100

Source: field data 2010

From the table above it reveals that, the class teacher is bound to be faced with some problems of large enrollment in an inclusive classroom. It was observed by 83.3% of the respondents.

Table 4: Learning resources

Specific learning for learners with visual impairments

Resource	Frequency	Percentage
Enough	0	0
Not enough	12	100
Total	12	100

Source: field data 2010

From the above table it was revealed that in Matete district, Matete East Zone there are no specific facilities/ equipment /aid that enhance learning for learners with visual impairment, such as Braille for the totally blind, optical and non-optical devices for the partially blind.

Table 5: Friendly environment

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Conducive	0	0
Not conducive	12	100
Total	12	100

Source: field data 2010

The table reveals that school environment is not conducive for learners with visual impairment. 100% of teachers have observed this.

Table 6: Teachers attitudes towards learners with visual impairment

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Poor	7	58.3
Good	5	41.7
Excellent	0	0
Total	12	100

Source: field data 2010

The response is poor 7/12 is 58.3% of the total questioners returned, good is 5/12 which attributed 41.7% excellent 0 which attributed to 100%. This indicates on overall of negative attitude toward learners with visual impairment

Table 7: Teaching and learning methods of the visually impaired children

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Suitable method	3	25
Not suitable method	9	75
Total	12	100

Teacher response of suitable is 3/12 not suitable 9/12 which attributed to 75%. This information showed that there are few teachers who are aware of suitable learning and teaching methods. While the majority indicates that learners with visual impairment can be taught using the normal teaching method.

Table 8: Challenges learner with visual impairment face in learning

Category	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Teaching and learning resources	Poor	12	100%
Learners motivation	Poor	12	100%
Marginalization	True	12	100%
Isolation	True	12	100%
Dependence	True	12	100%
Physical weakness	True	12	100%

Source: field data

The above table shows that learners with visual impairment face a lot of challenges in learning. They do not have teaching and learning resources, there is no learner's motivation, they are being marginalized, they are isolated, they depend on others and they are physically weak hence they do not attend lesson regularly.

Table 9: Challenges teacher face in teaching learners with visual impairment

Category	Response	Frequency	Percentage
Teachers motivation	None	12	100%
Learning resources	Not available	12	100%
Seminars/workshops	No	12	100%
Lack of skills	Yes	12	100%
Negative attitude		12	100%
Rigid curriculum	Yes	12	100%

Source: field data

From the table above it shows clearly that teachers face a lot of challenges in teaching learners with visual impairment, teachers are not motivated, no learning resources, unskilled manpower, negative attitude from the community and other teachers and a rigid curriculum.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

The study was to investigate the effect of visual impairment on academic performance of learners in Matete East Zone, Matete district, Kenya. The challenges learners with visual impairment face in the course of learning and challenges teachers face in teaching learners with visual impairment

5.1 Discussion

The following is a summary of the findings about the effects of visual impairment on learning. Teachers do not employ any appropriate strategies in classroom management on learners with visual impairment, teachers do not maintain friendly environment with learners with visual impairment, show objectivity and fairness for learners with visual impairment, teachers do not even encourage learners with visual impairment to seek for leadership position in schools in Matete east zone, Matete district Kenya. Finally, there are no specific facility/equipment/aid that enhance learning for learners with visual impairment.

During the visit to various primary schools the researcher came up with the following major findings that surfaced out.

views of respondents on academic performance of learners with visual Impairment is poor. It is evident by 10 respondents representing 83.3%. most teachers do not modify their teaching approach that can be used to handle learners with visual impairment if teachers were applying teaching approaches appropriately then learners with visual impairment would perform above average. Since visual impairment has a lot of effects on child learning process,

Mwaura et al (2002) cited some of the problems as reading and copying from the black board.

Average attendance of learners with visual impairment is irregular. 9 respondents representing 75% were of this view. This shows that learning environment are not barrier free for learners with visual impairment. As a result of this learners with visual impairment cannot move freely and interact with peers to explore and learn. Therefore, they opt not to come to schools daily. Learners feel valued and develop in forms of reasoning when they realize that teachers recognize their presence and respect them. They usually develop self esteem in terms of expression, responsibility and come to school regularly. When learners feel they are not recognized and respected they withdraw, become anxious, confused and drop out of school.

Teachers' response towards learners with visual impairment is poor. It is evident by 7 respondents representing 58.3%. Teachers and peer do not relate well with learners with visual impairment. This can be attributed to their problems resulting from having poor sight in support of this view Mwaura et al (2002) pointed out some of the major problems learners with visual impairment face such as reading, clumsy movements and poor balance which make others feel scared to mix with them. Due to these problems teachers even try to avoid such learners hence not giving them close attention.

My personnel experience towards these findings is that, most teachers in schools still harbor the notion that a learner with disability of whatever kind is a liability to them. Such beliefs make them distant themselves from these learners.

Population of learner to a teacher is too big. Therefore teachers cannot concentrate on learners with visual impairment in an inclusive classroom effectively. It is evident by 10 respondents representing 83.3%. Since most teachers are not for the learners with visual impairment being included in regular schools, they have negative attitudes towards them hence; they do not attend to them because of the big enrollment leading to poor performance of these learners.

Teachers do not use learning resources/materials for learners with visual impairment. 12 respondents representing 100% confess that learning resources /materials are not used in these schools. Learning cannot be realistic and enjoyable without learning resources/ materials like large print, optical and non optical for learners who are partially blind and Braille for learners who are totally blind.

The other findings that also cropped up was that teachers did not employ any methods to motivate learners with visual impairment associated with academic difficulties. Teachers seemingly concentrate only on those learners without visual impairment.

Richard (1998), states that positive reinforcement in classroom may use various techniques. He cited use of milk, cereals and candy or may be conditional reinforcer such as gold, stars, high grades or social approval. When these activities are engaged, learners with visual impairment quietly find themselves toeing the line without necessarily colliding with teachers and peers.

As teachers failed to motivate learners with visual impairment, on the other hand they also develop negative attitude towards them. This was yet another finding

that came up clearly. It can be supported by the fact that teachers were not tolerant towards learners with visual impairment. In fact they felt that these learners waste time in school.

5.2 Conclusions

In conclusion, the study has proved that visual impairment has an effect on learning in primary schools in Matete East Zone Matete district, Kenya.

The above statement can be supported by the following evidence that came up in data analysis. Teachers did not employ appropriate classroom management strategies to manage learners with visual impairment.

They could not understand learners' individual needs in classroom as they could not teach all learners due to overwhelming enrollment. But they would have resorted to shift methods of teaching if only had they were informed.

Also teachers did not employ appropriate motivational methods to learners with visual impairment; they had no patience for them. Finally teachers had negative attitudes towards learners with visual impairment. The study also reveals that, the environment is not barrier free thus contributes to poor performance of these learners.

There is lack of specific facility /equipment aids that enhance learning for learner with visual impairment in Matete district, Matete East Zone.

Learners with visual impairment can make positive achievement towards academic performance if only there is friendly environment and if everybody

shows positive attitudes towards them in their homes, schools and in the community as a whole.

5.3 Recommendations

As a result of ineffective handling of learners with visual impairment it has been caused by inadequate training. Therefore I would wish to recommend the following:

The ministry of education should come up with motivational clear policies on capacity building and training programmes to enable teachers be attracted to go in for the same, so that teachers can update their professional qualifications. This will enable them to open up with the changing global educational trends. today the government should step up school based programmes in-service courses in the field of guiding and counseling and special needs education so that teachers can be rewarded hence motivate them do better teaching job.

Educational assessment centre in respective districts should intensify sensitization programs in schools so as to change the teachers' attitudes towards learners with visual impairment.

The ministry of education should supply the schools with learning resources for learners with visual impairment for example Braille, whitecane and optical and non-optical devices which are expensive for teachers and parents to afford.

The ministry of education is advised to employ more teachers to counter the rising population of learner/ teacher ratio.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: THE TIME FRAME

The time frame will be done in stages running from August 2009 to April 2010.

Stages	Period	Activities
1	August 2009	Title development Proposal writing
2.	December 2009	Forwarding the proposal for approval
3.	January 2010 - Feb 2010	Field work
4.	March 2010	Data presentation and analysis Writing the report
5.	April 2010	Forwarding the write up to the board of examiners for marking

APPENDIX B: BUDGET

The following is a cost that enabled the researcher realize her objective

Item	Cost per unit	Amounts
Stationary requirements	@ Kshs 2,000	2000
Binding the		
i) Proposal	@Kshs 100	100
ii) Report 3 copies	@Kshs 100	300
Computer typing		
(i) Proposal	@Kshs 40 per page	1760
(ii) Report	@Kshs 40 per page	2800
transport	@Kshs100 Per day 20	2000
contingency and	days	1000
subsistence	@Kshs 1,000	
Total		10,060

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS IN MATETE ZONE MATETE DISTRICT

Dear respondent,

I am a student of Kampala International University carrying out a study on the effects of visual impairment on learning. provide the necessary information. Confidentiality will be observed please your cooperation will be highly appreciated.

Section A. Demographic information

Choose the correct response by ticking the correct box or by giving an explanation where necessary

1. Gender Age:.....

- a. Male
- b. Female

2. Professional qualification

a) P1 A/T'S IV A/T'S III A/T'S II A/T'S I

SCIENCE ART

University BED SNE

BED ARTS

BED SCIENCES

3. Teaching experience / years in teaching services

1-5 years 11 - 15 years

6 - 10 years

16 - 20 years

The effectiveness of visual impairment on academic performance

(i) How do students with visual impairment perform in academic activities?

Poorly

Average

Excellent

(ii) What is the average attendance of learners with visual impairment in the schools?

Regular

Irregular

None of these

Give reasons(s)

.....

.....

(iii) Do teachers encourage students with visual impairment more about in class just like other students

Yes

No

(iv) Do teachers expect the same level of performance from students with visual impairment as compared to normal student/

Yes

No

(v) Are there any special teaching approaches used by teachers to meet the needs of learners with visual impairment during the learning process?

Yes

No

(vi) If yes , state any 3 of them

i.

ii.

iii.

Challenges learners with visual impairment face in the course of learning

(i) How do learn with visual impairment related with

(a) Teachers Good Poor

(b) Peer in schools Good Poor

(ii) Do Teachers Maintain friendly environment with learner with visual impairment?

Yes No

(iii) What approaches do teachers employ when handling learners with visual impairment ?

Teachers approaches Learners approach

Teacher centered approach

None of these

Please complete the following table

Statement	Poor	True
Availability of teaching and learning resources		
Learners motivation		
Maginalised		
Isolated		
Dependence		
Physical weakness		

(iv) Teachers show objectivity and fairness for students with visual impairment

True False

(v) Learners with visual impairment should not be encouraged to seek leadership position in your school

True False

(vi) There are specific facility/equipments /aids that enhance learning for learners with visual impairment in your schools

Yes No

If yes please name any of them

i.

ii.

iii.

Challenges teachers face in teaching learners with visual impairment

(i) Are teachers who handle learner with visual impairment motivated?

Yes No

If No, how are they not being motivated?

1.....

2.....

3.....

Please complete the following table

Statement	Yes	No
Are teachers motivated		
Do you have teaching/learning resources		
Do you attend seminars /workshops		
Do you have modified Curriculum		

(ii) Do Large involvement of learners in inclusive setting have any impact on learning to learners with visual impairment

Yes

No

(iii) What is the ratio of qualified teachers in relation to the number of learners of visual impairment in your school?

Between 1:5

Between 1:10

Between 1:20 and above

(iv) What type of resources do teachers use in teaching learners with visual impairment in your school?

1.....

2.....

3.....

4.....

None

N: _____



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Office of the Director

Date: 15 April, 2010

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

BED/21137/81/DF Reg.No _____

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Research/ Project Writing

The above named is our student in the Institute of Open and Distance Learning (IODL), pursuing a Bachelors Degree in SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

He/she wishes to carry out his/her research/project study in your Institution.

Project writing / research is a requirement for the award of a-Masters degree of the University. Any assistance accorded to him/her will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

15 APR 2010
J.S. Owóyè, PhD
Director, IODL