



The Impact of School Community Attitudes on Learning Efficacy among Learners with Physical Impairments in Public Regular Primary Schools: A Case Study of Kitui County, Kenya

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Abstract: Learners with impairments have a right to a quality education in regular classrooms. Nevertheless, the learning efficacy of learners with physical impairments in public regular primary schools has been declining. The goal of this study was to investigate how psychosocial factors affect the learning effectiveness of learners who have physical impairments in public regular primary schools in Kitui County. The target population was 89,745 participants while sample size was 265 respondents. The data collection tools were limited to questionnaires, observation checklists, interview schedules and focus group discussions guide. Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive methods while qualitative data was presented in narrative form. This publication details the results of an in-depth investigation into the relationship between school community attitudes and the learning efficacy among learners with physical impairments attending public regular primary schools in Kitui County. The study established that there was significant relationship between community attitudes and learning efficacy among learners with physical impairments whereby positive attitudes triggered high learning efficacy and vice versa. The study recommended robust programmes be put in place by ministry of education in collaboration with non-governmental organizations to spur positive change of attitudes among school community and to demystify stereotypes associated with physical impairments. The study also recommended teachers and peers in regular schools to appreciate and support learners with physical impairments in regular schools.

Keywords: community attitudes, learning efficacy, physical impairments, regular primary schools. Special school, psychosocial dynamics.

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1. Introduction

All enrolled learners around the world are entitled to a basic education. Therefore, giving all children the same educational opportunity requires including learners with physical impairments in conventional primary schools.

This is in line with the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights which emphasized the importance of basic education as a human right (Ramcharan, 2021). The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with handicap (Lang, et al., 2011) guarantees every child the right to an appropriate public or private school education free from discrimination based on the child's handicap

(Buchner et al., 2020). However, according to UNESCO Institute for Statistics (2018) learners with physical disabilities who attended mainstream schools recorded poor academic outcomes, high dropout rates, and low transition rates. Negative attitudes and stigmatization against the learners with impairments by members of school community were cited as the primary causes of low learning efficacy (Maina, 2014). How well these children learn is heavily impacted by the school community's outlook, which includes mainly the teachers, peers, and parents or guardians (Krönke, 2020).

The Kenyan government is id to implementing educational and training reforms that would allow learners with disabilities to fully participate in mainstream classrooms. While the number of learners with physical impairments has increased in regular schools, their learning ability does not commensurate with the same improved (Mose, 2021). Most of these learners reportedly drop out of school, and their KCPE results tend to be below par. Several reports and research highlight the prejudice, stigma, and cultural challenges these students face in regular schools (Barbareschi et al., 2021). According to Musembi (2012), learners with physical impairments have low learning efficacy and poor learning outcomes because of the negative attitudes they face in regular classrooms. Many students with physical impairments do poorly in the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) examinations and eventually abandon their education as a result (Khatievi & Special, 2021). Increasing the intellectual and social potential of learners with physical impairments requires shifting attitudes and eliminating prejudices associated with physical disability. The objective of this study was therefore to examine how school community attitudes affected level of leaning efficacy among learners with physical impairments and to establish whether there was significant relationship between school community attitudes and level of learning efficacy among learners with physical impairments in public regular primary schools in Kitui county.

2. Literature Review

According to Sdorrow (2003), attitude from community affects individual's psychological and social developments. Erikson (1950) observed that attitude of an individual was influenced by the significant others while Vygotsky (1973) stated that attitude of an individual was influenced by the environment in which one lived in. Bandura (1995) posits that positive attitude creates an accommodative environment in an individual while negative attitude acts as a barrier to the assimilation processes.

Blooms (1980) acknowledges significant influence of teacher's attitude in the development of learner's cognitive, affective and psycho-motor domains. Teacher's behaviour towards the learners can positively or negatively influence their learning outcomes. Learner's intellectual abilities, emotional state as well as ability to perform practical skills all depended on teacher's attitudes towards them. A study by Donohue and Bornman (2014) in South Africa established that teachers who demonstrated positive attitude towards learners with impairments influenced their educational outcomes positively while those who projected negative attitudes undermined learner's levels of undertaking learning tasks. The study revealed that most learners with physical impairments encountered negative attitudes from their teachers and peers thus becoming difficult for them excel socially and psychologically within regular schools.

Learning is a psychological process that is influenced by the attitudes of an individual and that of the members of community. Myers (2014) ascertained that the behaviour of a learner was highly influenced by the attitude propagated by their teachers. Additionally, Santrock (2012) observed that learners think, reason and imagine based on evaluation of their self-efficacy and expectations from their teachers. Therefore, it goes without saying that learners who are appreciated by their teachers are psychologically and emotionally stable. Despite the above facts, a study by Oracha and Lumumba (2015) exposed that learners with physical impairments were despised by their teachers and peers in most regular in Kenya instead of getting appropriate educational support. This resulted to development of psychopathic and sociopathic behavior which lowered their learning efficacy.

A study by Odeniyi et.al (2009) attested that most teachers, peers and parents in Nigerian regular schools express much disgrace towards learners with impairments. Learners with physical disabilities were subjected to unnecessary condemnation because of perceptions that they are underachievers and social misfits. This affected their social and psychological developments which are prerequisites for high learning efficacy. Aley (2016) reported that most teachers in regular schools in Uganda and Kenya had fixed mind sets making it difficult for them to embrace learners with physical impairments. The study established that positive change of attitude towards learners with physical impairments by teachers and peers triggers high self-efficacy among them.

A study by Kiarie (2014) reveals that most head teachers in Kenyan regular schools especially those who had not undergone any special need education training were pessimistic towards learners with physical impairments. They strongly believed that it was wrong to commit scarce resources on educating learners with physical impairments while the "normal" ones were also in need of the same.

Increasing evidence from a study by Mitra, Palmer, Kim, Mont and Groce (2017) affirmed that learners with physical impairments were viewed as academic failures and economic saboteurs by most school administrators thus acting as a stumbling block towards their actualization of learning efficacy within regular schools. In this study, the researcher established that most head teachers demonstrated apathy towards learners with physical disabilities. They believed regular schools were not appropriate for the learners with physical impairments since they had no relevant resources. They believed learners with physical impairments should be taken to special schools or be supported by philanthropic organizations if they were to be hosted in regular schools.

Although the government of Kenya abolished ranking of schools in 2012 and rolled out Competence Based Curriculum (CBC) in primary schools in 2017 which focused on individual competences, teachers in regular schools still place a lot of emphasis on academic performance. This is evidenced by the concept of “mean score” used in schools as an index of measuring academic excellence as opposed to value addition in an individual learner. This has further contributed to delineation against learners with physical impairments by the teachers. An excerpt by Kigotho, (2017) indicates that most of the regular school’s head teachers hesitate admitting learners with physical impairments in their schools because of believe that they will lower school means scores and thus be viewed as ineffective leaders. Therefore, instead of supporting them to achieve their academic excellence in regular schools, they view them as a source of failure and disgrace to their institutions.

According to UNESCO (2016), most classroom teachers in regular schools demonstrate high degree of cynicism towards learners with impairments. This was mostly reflected by the type of feedback and responses they gave to the learners with impairments during their lesson’s delivery. There was profound labeling and sarcasm towards learners with physical impairments in regular schools by their subject teachers. A study by Maina (2014) indicated that there was widespread use of negative comments and derogative language by classroom teachers towards learners with physical impairments. As observed by Santrock (2012), persistent negative comments towards an individual usually lead to development of anomie, a condition characterized by lack of self-control, low self-esteem as well as low self-efficacy.

Psychological and social development of learners are highly influenced by the attitude of peers. Bandura (1997) observed that learners who were accommodated and assimilated by friends had better opportunity to develop well psychologically and socially. However, a study by Mwangi (2014) established that most peers in regular

schools demonstrate significant degree of negative attitude towards learners with physical impairments. Majority of them did not like associating themselves with the learners with physical impairments since they believed they were social misfits. According to Social Constructionist Theory by Vygotsky as advanced by McLeod (2014), learning is a social process that mainly occurs through social interactions. Peers are the main agents of socialization in regular school. Learners with physical impairments who are appreciated and supported by their peers show high degree of self-efficacy than those who were deprived such an opportunity. The researcher noted that negative attitudes protracted by peers prohibited learners with physical impairments from acquiring necessary scaffolding and thriving in regular schools.

A study by Akinyi, Nyangia and Orodho (2015) in Migori County, Kenya established that most teachers in regular schools do not support learners with impairments. Instead of treating diversity of learners in the school as strengths, they viewed learners with physical impairments as an obstacle to the delivery of quality education. They associated them with any drop in their subject mean score which was used as an index for measuring their teaching competences by the school administration. To avoid embarrassment from their seniors, most assistant teachers usually advise learners with physical impairments to be taken to special schools or abandon them completely.

The researcher noted with much dis’race’ that negative attitudes emanating from school administrators, assistant teachers, peers and some parents were leading to discrimination and stigmatization of learners with physical impairments which in turn lowed their learning efficacy. According to Republic of Kenya (2018), strategies to spur positive change attitudes among the members of school community should be put in place by different education stakeholders to facilitate effective learning among the learners with physical impairments in public regular schools. If this is not done in good time, learners with physical impairments enrolled in public regular schools will forever be sidelined and education for all shall remain to be an illusion and disillusion in Kenyan.

3. Methodology

The research took place in public regular primary schools in Kitui County that had enrolled learners with physical impairments. Kitui county was selected because of its high wastage rate for learners with physical impairments attending public elementary schools in the area. While 88% of “normal learners” completed primary education, the graduation rate for pupils with physical disabilities was just 23%. In addition, compared to their non-disabled peers, just 21% of learners with physical impairments who

transited to high schools finished on time. The scenario in Kitui county, where pupils with physical impairments were having a hard time fitting in regular primary schools, prompted the researcher to investigate the matter.

3.1 Research design

The study analyzed quantitative and qualitative data using correlational and phenomenological research approaches. Both the phenomenological and correlational methods were utilized to analyze the extent to which the school community attitudes affected the learning efficacy of learners with physical limitations.

A total of 183,750 learners were enrolled in public regular primary schools throughout 15 sub-counties in Kitui County. Three hundred and twenty-five public regular primary schools were selected from five different sub-counties within the county using non-probability sampling technique. There were 56,875 learners in those classrooms and 2,605 teachers. The parents and guardians were 30,221 while curriculum support officers were forty-two.

The sample size included 265 individuals, drawn from a convenience sample of 17 regular primary schools that had enrolled learners with physical impairments. Purposive sampling technique was applied in getting 162 teachers, 51 learners with physical impairments, and 47 parents/guardians of learners with impairments who took part in the study. Consensus sampling was used to get the five CSO-SNE-serving sub-counties. Different research methods were used because they were deemed more appropriate for certain subsets of study subjects. The primary methods of information gathering were questionnaires, surveys, interview guides, and observational checklists.

3.2 Data analysis

The study questions and objectives informed the structuring, analysis, and interpretation of the data. Pearson's correlation coefficient and analysis of variance were used to test hypotheses, while SPSS version 25.0 was

used to code and organize the quantitative data. The results of the qualitative analysis were presented in narrative style.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 School community attitudes and learning efficacy among the learners with physical impairments.

The researcher was interested in determining the impact of teachers, peers and parents' attitudes on learning efficacy among the learners with physical impairments in regular primary schools. The objective was also accompanied by null hypothesis which was tested using feedback obtained from learners with physical impairments. Feedback from different categories of respondents were collected, analyzed and presented as discussed below.

The researcher targeted 265 participants out of whom 223 responded representing 84.15%. The numbers of parents and guardians targeted for focussed group discussions were 47 whereby 38 of them turned up for the study. The number of CSO-SNE expected to be interviewed were 5 and all of them responded. The number of questionnaires distributed to teachers were 162 out of which 140 were returned. The number of questionnaires which were distributed to the learners with physical impairments were 51 whereby 40 of them were returned.

4.2 Number of schools and teachers that participated in the study per sub-county

Five sub-counties with 325 regular primary schools were selected for the study. However, the number of schools which had enrolled learners with physical impairments were only 17. Table 1 shows the five sub-counties involved in the study as well as distribution of schools which had enrolled learners with physical impairments and the number of teachers in those schools.

Table 1: Distribution of schools, LPIs and teachers per sub-county

Sub-County	Regular Schools	Schools with P1 Learners	Teachers	Percent
Kitui West	70	5	34	24.2
Kitui Central	75	4	33	23.6
Mutomo	68	3	27	19.4
Mwingi Central	71	2	18	12.8
Matinyani	42	3	28	20
Total	325	17	100	100

Source: Research data 2019

4.3 Learners with physical impairments attitudes and learning efficacy

The study sought to examine attitude of learners with physical impairments and how it affected their learning efficacy. Table 2 displays responses from the LPIs on their attitudes and their influence on learning efficacy.

Table 2: Learners with physical impairments responses on attitudes and learning efficacy

Statements	SA		A		UD		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I am easily accommodated by normal learners	4	10.0	6	15.0	2	5.0	12	30	16	40.0
It is difficult to be accommodated by normal learners	19	47.5	7	17.5	3	7.5	5	12.5	6	15
I am friendly to learners without PIs	4	10.0	5	12.5	2	5.0	18	45.0	11	27.5
I am not friendly to learners without PIs	6	15.0	19	47.5	3	7.5	7	17.5	5	12.5
I am supported by learners without PIs	7	17.5	5	12.5	3	7.5	18	45.0	7	17.5
I am not supported by normal learners	17	42.5	12	30.0	2	5.0	5	12.5	4	10.0
I am liked by normal learners	3	7.5	6	15.0	3	7.5	12	30	16	40.0
I am not liked by normal learners	18	40.0	9	22.5	5	12.5	3	7.5	5	12.5

Source: Study data 2019

Learners with physical impairments were asked whether they were easily accommodated by their peers, 40% of the respondents strongly disagreed whereas 30% disagreed.

Cumulatively, a quarter (25%) of respondents agreed that they were accommodated by peers. Only 5% of the respondents were undecided. With references to whether it was difficult for learners with physical disabilities to be

accommodated by their peers, slightly less than half (47.5%) of the respondents agreed with the statement while 15% of them strongly disagreed. The respondents who were unsure accounted for only 7.5%.

When the LPIs were asked to give their feedback on whether they were friendly with the learners without physical impairments, majority (45%) of the respondents disagreed while 12.5% of them agreed with the statement. Only 5% of them were undecided. Almost half (47.5%) of respondents agreed that they were not friendly to learners without physical disabilities while 17.5% disagreed with the statement.

Cumulatively, nearly two thirds (62.5%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that they were supported by their peers in the regular school whereas 17.5% of them strongly agreed that they were accorded necessary support by their peers in regular school. Only 7.5% of the learners were elusive on the issue. Majority (72.5%) of learners with physical impairments agreed and strongly agreed that they were not supported by their peers.

A vast majority (70%) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed that they were liked by their peers in the regular school. Only 22.5% of the learners agreed and strongly agreed with the statement while 7.5% of the learners were undecided. An overwhelming majority (62.5%) of respondents agreed that they were not liked by their peers while 20% disagreed with the statement.

The study discovered that the attitude of the most of “normal learners” towards learners with physical impairments was aversive. This made learning in regular schools for the learners with physical impairments difficult

since they were not given appropriate psychosocial support by their peers. This was in line with a study finding by Watts (2013) on “Special needs education in Kenyan public primary school”. The study revealed that learners without disabilities expressed much loathe towards learners with physical impairments. They acted as stumbling block towards education of learners with physical impairments in regular schools. According to Erikson (1950), learning is more effective when children work collaboratively without discrimination while Vygotsky (1978) articulated that learning is a social process which is mediated by More Knowledgeable Others (MKO). Peers might be the MKO since they can scaffold learners with physical impairments. Therefore, positive attitudes towards LPIs will lead their high self-efficacy while discrimination will make them suffer from social and mental stagnation.

4.4 Relationship between learner’s attitude and learning efficacy

Accompanying this objective was a null hypothesis which stated that “there is no significant relationship between school community attitudes and the level of learning efficacy among the learners with physical impairments”. Correlation analysis was used to test this hypothesis with learners. In this case, learner’s attitudes were treated as the independent variables while dependent variable was learning efficacy. Both learner’s attitudes and learning efficacy were measured on a 5-point likert scale and their total scores calculated. Table 3 shows a correlation coefficient matrix of learner’s attitudes and learning efficacy.

Table 3: Pearson correlation on learner’s attitude and learning efficacy

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Statistics</i>	<i>Learning efficacy</i>	<i>Learner’s attitudes</i>
Learning efficacy	Pearson Correlation	1	.0881(**)
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
	N	40	40
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	.881(**)	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
	N	40	186

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The analysis shows that there is a positive and strong relationship between learners’ attitude and level of learning efficacy ($r = .881, p < 0.01$). Since $p < 0.01$, therefore, the null hypothesis that opined, “there is no significant relationship between learner’s attitude and the level of learning efficacy among the learners with physical impairments”, was rejected. This implies that those learners who are accorded positive attitude by members of

school community develop high level of learning efficacy and vice versa. It is important to note that for high learning efficacy to be realized in regular schools, teachers, parents and peers should accommodate and give favourable feedback to learners with physical impairments. These results were supported by Bandura (1997), Myers (2014) and Webb-Williams (2018) who argued that feedback from

teachers and peers influence learner’s perceptions of their ability, behaviour and ultimately self-efficacy.

4.5 Influence of teachers’ attitudes on learning efficacy among learners with physical impairments in regular schools

The researcher wanted to find out how teachers’ attitudes influence learning efficacy among the learners with physical impairments in regular schools. Teachers were given questionnaires to give the required data. Table 4 reflects teachers’ responses on their attitudes towards learners with physical impairments.

Table 4: Teachers’ responses on attitudes and learning efficacy among learners with physical impairments

Statements	SA		A		UD		D		SD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Teacher’s attitude towards LPDs										
I like teaching LPIs	11	7.9	6	4.3	8	5.7	83	59.3	32	22.9
I do not like teaching LPIs	78	55.7	35	25.0	6	4.3	9	6.4	12	8.6
I accommodate LPIs	17	12.1	12	8.6	2	1.4	36	25.7	73	52.1
It is difficult for me to accommodate LPIs	75	53.6	31	22.1	12	8.6	15	10.7	7	5.0
I am friendly to the LPIs	14	10.0	12	8.6	5	3.6	34	24.3	70	50.
I am unfriendly to the LPIs	62	44.3	42	30.0	10	7.1	15	10.7	9	6.4
I am supportive to the LPIs	11	7.9	20	14.3	9	6.4	30	21.4	70	50.0
I do not support LPIs	76	54.3	31	22.1	15	10.7	8	5.7	10	7.1

Source: Study data 2019

In reference to whether teachers liked teaching learners with physical impairments, over half of them (59.3%) reported that they were not interested. Only 7.9% strongly agreed and 4.3% agreed that they liked teaching learners with physical impairments. The elusive respondents were 5.7%. Regarding hatred as a reflection of teachers’ attitude towards LPIs, a vast majority (55.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they hated teaching LPIs. Only 8.6% of respondents strongly disagreed that they do not hate teaching LPIs while undecided respondents were 4.3%.

Concerning teacher’s attitude towards accommodating LPIs in their teaching activities, more than half (52.1%) of them strongly disagreed that they easily accommodated LPIs in their teaching activities. The respondents who strongly agreed that they easily accommodated LPIs in learning activities accounted for just 12.1%. Slightly more than half (53.6%) of the respondents strongly agreed that it was difficult for them to accommodate learners with physical disabilities in learning activities while 10.7% of them disagreed with the statement.

Half (50%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that they were friendly to the LPIs while slightly less than a quarter (24.3%) disagreed. Only 10% of respondents strongly agreed and 8.6% agreed that they were friendly to LPIs

while 3.6% of the respondents were undecided. With reference to whether teachers were unfriendly to the learners with physical impairments, majority (44.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed while 10.7% of the respondents disagreed with the statement.

Half (50%) of the respondents strongly disagreed that they were supportive to the LPIs while 14.3% of the respondents agreed that they were supportive to the learners with physical impairments. A majority (54.3%) of the respondents strongly agreed that they did not support LPIs. Only 7.1% of the respondents strongly agreed that they supported learners with physical impairments.

The evidence exposed by the study findings reflected that quite a significant number of teachers in regular schools had negative attitudes towards learners with physical impairments. Negative attitude from the teachers contributed to low self-efficacy and learning efficacy among these learners since their potentials were not effectively natured. O’Hagan, Bond and Hebron (2021) observe that attitude by caretakers influences child’s behaviour and learning. Therefore, negative attitudes from the teachers makes it difficult for the LPIs to be supported and accommodated in regular schools. Webb-Williams (2018) established that learning efficacy of a learner was highly determined by the attitudes of the teachers since

they were the main source of knowledge. Erikson (1950) and Sandrock (2012) observed that caretakers who demonstrate positive attitude towards children created ideal learning environment which facilitated high learning level. Therefore, teachers who disgrace learners with physical impairments makes them develop psychological and social maladies thus negatively affecting their learning efficacy.

A comparative study in Kenya and Botswana (Chesire, 2013) about the attitude of teachers towards learners with disabilities revealed that many teachers in these two countries resisted integrating learners with physical impairments in their classes believing that they were underachievers and that inclusion interfered with their effective teaching and learning efficacy of the other “normal pupils”. This was also attested by Maina (2014) in his study in Kiambu County” where he observed that many head teachers were pessimistic towards LPIs. They resisted enrolling them in their schools believing that their inclusion will interfere with the effective education of other students and lower school performance index. Another study by Oracha and Lumumba (2015) asserts that most assistant teachers in regular schools strongly believed integrating learners with impairments in their classes would negatively affect their anticipated subjects’ performances and be viewed as inferior teachers by their bosses. These negative attitudes and perceptions highly contribute to low self-efficacy among LPIs.

4.6 Curriculum Support Officers responses on attitudes and learning efficacy among the learners with physical impairments

During the interviews, the five curriculum support officers in charge of special needs education (CSO-SNE) in the county were required to comment on the attitude of the members of school community towards learners with physical impairments in regular schools. Concerning the attitude of teachers and peers, all the interviewees reported that most teachers and ‘normal learners’ in regular schools were not friendly to the LPIs. Interviewee 4 stated “most teachers and peers were pessimistic towards learners with physical impairments. They believed that LPIs should be educated in ‘special schools’ by ‘special teachers’ while their peers believed that they were social misfits”. When asked how negative attitudes from teachers and peers affected leaning efficacy among the LPDs, all the interviewees agreed it had adverse effects on their learning efficacy. Interviewee 2 said “since learners with physical impairments are discriminated by their teachers and peers, they end up developing mental and behavior problems. Erikson (1950) and Santrock (2012) observed that negative

attitudes triggers psychopathy and sociopathy in an individual.

When the interviewees were asked whether the LPIs were fully accommodated by their teachers and peers in regular schools, three of the interviewees said they were not while two interviewees indicated they were somehow accommodated by their teachers but not peers. Interviewee 1 observed “most teachers believe learners with physical impairments are underachievers and therefore accommodating them in their educational programs was a waste of time and school resources”. Commenting on why peers do not accommodate LPIs, interviewee 3 said “majority of the peers believe learners with physical impairments had poor inter-personal relationship and therefore could not accommodate them in their social as well as academic activities”. When probed how failure by teachers and peers to accommodate LPIs affect their learning efficacy, all the interviewees conceded that it was contributing to their low learning efficacy and poor interpersonal relationships. Both Atwater (1994) and Webb-Williams (2018) underscored importance of positive attitude towards an individual. Children who were accorded appropriate social and psychological support portrayed high self-esteem and learning efficacy.

With reference to whether LPIs were supported by their teachers and peers, 2 interviewees agreed while 3 opposed. Interviewee 5 stated “indeed most teachers and even some parents believed educating learners with physical impairments was a wastage of resources thus avoided committing resources to their education’. Interviewee 3 observed, “some peers believed learners with physical impairments were socially and psychologically incapable hence supporting them was a wastage of time. All the interviewees agreed that failure by the school community to support LPIs was contributing to low learning efficacy among LPIs in regular schools.

From the study findings, it was proved that negative attitudes towards learners with physical impairments was prevalent among the teachers and peers. The kind of treatment accorded to the LPIs, and behaviours portrayed by their teachers and peers was a clear manifestation of negative attitudes. Negative attitudes adversely effected learning efficacy among the learners with physical impairments in regular schools. In their study entitled “Are young people with disabilities falling through the cracks?”, Mugo, Oranga and Singal, (2010) observed with much regret that negative attitudes protracted by the members of school community were the main impediments to the learning efficacy among the learners with impairments in regular schools.

According to Erikson as cited by Mcleod (2014) children need social and psychological acceptance to be emotionally

stable and excel in their learning activities. However, LPIs encounter negative attitudes from school community. The CSO-SNE are at the nexus of curriculum implementation in regular schools as they are involved in assessment, placement, monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning processes for the LPIs. In this regard, they are better placed to spur positive change of attitudes among the teachers, peers and even parents to accommodate and assist learners with physical impairments to shine in regular schools.

4.7 Parents and guardians' responses on attitudes and learning efficacy among the learners with physical impairments

To understand more about parent's/guardian's attitudes and how they affected learning efficacy among the LPIs in regular schools, focused group discussions for 38 parents/guardians of the learners with physical impairments were conducted in five sub-counties. The results of discussions are explained below.

With regards to whether the respondents liked LPIs, majority (21) of the parents/guardians reported that they loved learners with physical impairments. One of the respondents commented "I feel very much humiliated whenever I see children with physical impairments being oppressed by some of their parents, peers or teachers instead of supporting them to achieve their educational aspirations in regular schools". However, a significant of parents (17) still regretted why they gave birth to children with physical impairments. One of the 17 respondents who had dissenting opinion attested, "children with physical impairments are burden to the family as they require tender care and a lot of material support both at home and in school".

Regarding respondent's relationship with the learners with physical impairments, quite a reasonable number (23) of the respondents reported that they related well with them. One of the respondents explained "I always ensure that I demonstrate love and patience whenever I am communicating or handling matters of my child with physical impairments so that she may feel loved and accepted in the family". The remaining number of respondents (15) expressed some loathe towards children with physical impairments. To confirm this, one respondent said, "it is difficult to relate well with the learners with physical impairments because they are uncooperative and hot tempered". When the respondents were asked how their relationship with the children with physical impairments affected learning, efficacy, one respondent commented "good relationship leads to high self-esteem and learning efficacy among LPIs because they feel they are valued. On

the other hand, poor relationship results to low self-esteem and learning efficacy since learners feel that they are not appreciated by their parents or guardians.

With respect to whether the respondents were accommodative to the learners with physical impairments, majority of respondents (20) reported that they were accommodative to their children with physical impairments. One of respondents articulated, "children with physical impairments can do better in regular classrooms than even some of their 'normal learners' as long as they are psychologically and socially supported by their teachers and parents." A reasonable number (18) expressed reservations on the same. One respondent commented "learners with physical disabilities are difficult to accommodate because their body deformities limit them". When the respondents were asked how failure to accommodate LPIs by members of school community affected their leaning efficacy in regular schools, one respondent noted "learners with physical impairments who are not accommodated by their parents develop negative attitudes as well as low learning efficacy".

When the respondents were asked about their friendship with the learners with physical impairments, half of respondents (19) reported that they were friendly to the LPIs while the other half of respondents said that it was difficult for them form healthy friendship since LPIs were social misfits. One of the respondents observed, "learners with physical impairments suffer from low self-efficacy and poor inter-personal relationship and therefore cannot form healthy friendships". When probed how friendship affected learning efficacy among the children with physical impairments, one respondent indicated, learners with physical impairments need love from their parents, intimacy from their peers, and appreciation from teachers to form healthy inter-personal relationships. Therefore, learners with physical impairments who are isolated by their parents cannot learn successfully even if they were gifted and talented since learning is a mental and social processes facilitated by significant others.

With regards to whether the respondents supported educational programs for their children with physical disabilities in regular schools, various respondents reported the following, 22 respondents stated that they fully supported educational programmes of their children by providing required teaching and learning resources. One respondent stated, "I support my child by providing necessary assistive devices and learning resources". Another respondent said the following "I always advocate for change of negative attitudes towards LPIs as well as recognition of their rights in the society". However, (16) parents/guardians reported that it was difficult for them to support educational needs of their children with physical impairments because of financial difficulties. One of respondents went on to say "...because of financial

constraints and it is better to use the meagre resources to support educational needs of the other “normal children”. This clearly reflects negative attitude of some parents towards their children with physical impairments.

The research findings revealed that although a significant number of parents demonstrated positive attitude towards LPIs, quite a notable number still had aversive attitudes. The study results were in line with those of Zoniou-Sideri and Vlachou (2016) on Greek parents’ attitude towards children with physical disabilities. They discovered that some parents were holding conflicting attitudes towards LPIs and their educational inclusion although they may not publicly display them. These parents reported that although regular schools reduced marginalization and stigmatization of LPIs, special segregated education was important as a means of providing a secure and protective environment to these learners and as a way of covering several education deficiencies in them.

A study by Oracha and Lumumba (2015) reported that there were significant number of parents who strongly believed that LPIs could not learn successfully in regular schools and their integration in regular schools was a risk factor. Similar views were still rampant among parents in regular schools in Kitui County as attested by Musembi (2012). The study noted that quite a good number of parents demonstrated pessimism towards LPIs thus failing to support their educational needs. The evidence from these studies clearly signifies fixed mindsets among the parents in regular schools. Erikson (1950) and Rogers (1971) established importance of “significant others” in facilitating positive change of attitude to create ideal learning environment for the children. Teachers and parents are expected to be drivers of positive change in the society. Therefore, failure by them to facilitate change of attitudes among the members of society makes it difficult for the learners with physical impairments to be accommodated and supported in regular schools.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

From the study findings based on research objective any hypothesis, the researcher draws the following conclusion. Majority of members of school community were pessimistic towards learners with physical impairments. Negative attitudes emanating from teachers, peers and even some parents/guardians were greatly lowering level of self-efficacy among the learners with physical impairments. Failure by school community to offer necessary psychological and social support to the LPIs led their low learning efficacy in regular schools.

5.2 Recommendations

The recommendations were based on the key findings of the study in relation to the objective “effects of school community attitudes on learning efficacy among learners with physical impairments in public regular primary schools in Kitui County”

5.2.1. Recommendations for policy

The government of Kenya through the Ministry of education should enforce, review and formulate inclusive policies to address negative attitudes towards learners with physical impairment emanating from teachers, peers and parents in regular schools This will in turn spur high learning efficacy among the learners with physical impairments in regular schools. This is in accordance with study findings and Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities (2018) which noted some policy gaps.

5.2.2. Recommendations for further research

Since the concept of inclusive education is no longer new, there is need for the researchers to study why it has taken too long to be effectively embraced in most regular schools. Pertinent and contemporary issues hindering learning efficacy among the learners with physical impairments in public regular primary schools should be addressed. This is in line with study findings and KNCHR (2014).

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