



Impact of Fee Free Education on Teaching Resources for Students with Special Needs in Public Primary Schools in Bukoba Municipality, Tanzania

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to assess impact of fee free education on teaching resources for students with Special needs in special public primary schools in Bukoba municipality, Tanzania. Pragmatic paradigm was employed. Moreover, a mixed-methods approach was used supported by a convergent parallel design. A sample of 50 respondents (3 HTs and 47 normal teachers) was drawn using purposive and simple random sampling techniques from a population of 56

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respondents. Questionnaires, observation, documentary reviews and interview were used to collect data. Descriptive statistics for quantitative data and thematic analysis for qualitative data were used as data analysis tools. The study found that, trained and specialised teachers for students with Special needs are inadequate. In regard to the state of instructional resources, findings show that, taped text books and computers with extended keyboards are available while overhead projectors and acoustic rooms were lacking. Concerning strategies adopted by the administration to encounter challenges in special schools, findings indicate that, the school administration involves various education stakeholders in strategic planning of school activities and in decision-making process, and establishes school generating projects. Based on the findings this paper recommends that, the local government authorities should maximise adequate instructional resources and specialised teachers. It is concluded that, trained and specialised teachers and instructional materials for students with Special needs are inadequate. Involvement of various education stakeholders in order to encounter challenges pertaining to these schools should be enhanced.

Keywords: *Fee free education; teaching resources; students; special needs; special public primary schools.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is every child's right because it equips him/her with necessary skills and talents to solve several challenges of life and it prepares the same for a happier productive and useful life (Roy, 2020). It is on this basis that, "Education for All (EFA) children with or without disabilities has been made mandatory all over the world" (Chesaro, 2020) and all countries were to ensure all children with disabilities received free, inclusive, and appropriate education at both primary and secondary levels (Agrawal *et al.*, 2019). In attaining the goals of Education for All (EFA), the International Organisations such as the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and national governments in the world joined together to increase access to schooling by abolishing school fees and other mandatory contributions (UNESCO, 2017). The essence of abolishing school fees and other monetary contributions was to make the cost of schooling very low enabling parents to send their children to school; and help all learners with and without disabilities to move in the social cohesive groups in which they socialize with their fellows and learn more comfortably (Joshi, 2016). This arrangement minimised segregation within the school and the outside community (Joshi, *ibid*). Despite the movement for EFA and its advantages, global studies on school enrollments indicated that, one-fourth to one-half of children with disabilities were marginalised, excluded, and denied of their right to education (UNESCO, 2020).

Tanzania was not left behind in the implementation of Education for All (EFA) programme. After gaining her independence in

1961, she made several education reforms (Katabazi & Kamugisha, 2022). For example, in 1971, she established the Directorate for Adult Education, Institute of Adult Education (IAE) marking the beginning of adult literacy courses, particularly, in rural areas; in 1977, she also introduced another initiative called Universal Primary Education (UPE) in order to promote free access to education (Sanga, 2016). In all these educational initiatives, education was provided free of school fees or any form of monetary contributions. It was in 1986 when the school fees and other monetary contributions were reintroduced into the education system (Bjerk, 2017). In 2014, she issued another education policy for continuing to implement a fee free education programme in primary schools after attending the Dakar Framework at the World Education Forum in Senegal (Ochieng'Opalo, 2022). The goals of this forum were, among others, to ensure that, all school-aged children received primary education by 2015. In attempting to achieve the above goals, the government banned primary school fees again (Hakielimu, 2017). The implementation of this policy at the primary level effectively started in 2015, supported by the Education Circular No. 5 and Education Circular No. 3 of 2016 (Luvanga & Mhagma, 2022). According to the Education and Training Policy of 2014, parents were to meet only school uniforms for their children, learning materials, provision of food for their children, medical treatments and other obligatory necessities concerning their children (URT, 2020).

The available evidence establishes that, the implementation of fee free education policy of 2014 faced several impacts. For instance, fee

free education to special and inclusive education had led to an apparent increase in the number of schools and subsequent relatively higher enrollment figures for children with special needs in Dar es Salaam (Possi & Milinga, 2017). This is also supported by the studies of the President's Office, Regional Administration and Local Government Authorities (2016) and the United Republic of Tanzania (2016) where all posited that, because of the abolition of the school fees in public primary schools, there was an enormous enrollment of students, witnessing by 52% increase. Up to 2017, there was a notable shortage of 85 000 primary school teachers (URT, 2020). Furthermore, due to the students' increase, teachers' teaching morale and commitment had declined due to congestion of students in classrooms (Baruani, 2020).

This study aims to assess the impact of fee free education on teaching resources for students with special needs in special public primary schools in Bukoba municipality. Given the unprecedented increase in the enrollment of students due to the policy of fee free education, it is essential to evaluate how its implementation is meeting these objectives. Understanding the impact of the implementation of the fee free education policy will not only help the government to seeing the need of developing her primary schools into good learning institutions but also on how students with special education needs can be assisted while in special schools.

The fee free education policy has triggered unprecedented increase of students' enrollment in public primary schools in Tanzania (Possi & Milinga, 2017; URT, 2016, 2020). Due to this increase, children with Special needs need extra attention in teaching and learning approaches and techniques in the school environment.

However, evidence indicates that, the implementation of the policy in public primary schools in Morogoro municipality was faced with insufficient teaching and learning materials (Katabazi & Kamugisha, 2022). There were also classroom shortages which facilitated students over congestions in public primary schools in Babati town (Doriye *et al.*, 2020). Bukoba municipality is among the areas which face an increase and the challenges arising from the same, since, her special primary schools are heavily enrolled with students, falling short of classrooms and other physical infrastructures among other things (Bukoba Municipal Primary Education Office, 2024).

Given these concerns, it is imperative to systematically assess the impact of the implementation of the fee free education policy on teaching resources for students with special needs in special public primary schools in Bukoba municipality. With its implementation, this study seeks to address this gap by assessing the adequacy of specialised teachers for students with learning disabilities, examining the state of instructional resources that support students with Special needs and exploring the strategies adopted by the administration in overcoming encountered challenges in special public primary schools.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Literature Review

The Social Justice theory as it was advanced by Luigi Taparelli d Azeglio between 1840-1843 but later modified by John Rawls in 1971, was built on notions as the fair and equitable distribution of power, resources, and obligations in any society to all people, regardless of their races or ethnicities, ages, gender, ability status, sexual orientations, and religious or spiritual backgrounds (Sabbagh & Schmitt, 2016).

The founder of this theory built it on five fundamental principles as inclusion values, collaboration, cooperation, equal access, and equal opportunity. This theory is associated with three principles (Izudin & Amilia, 2018). One of the principles was *treating human beings equally* and without any discrimination on grounds of class, caste, race or gender but judged on the basis of their work and actions (Izudin & Amilia, *ibid*). The second one was that of *proportionate justice* where people are rewarded in proportion to the scale and quality of their efforts (Izudin & Amilia, *ibid*). The third principle was one which obliges the society to take into account *peoples' special needs* while distributing rewards or duties or services between or among groups and individuals within a society (equity) (Izudin & Amilia, *ibid*).

The strengths of this theory are, it protects the weak, and enhances legal equality among students such as equality to health, education, housing or social security; it fosters a society where every person is treated with dignity and respect, and where everyone has an equal chance to thrive and contribute to the collective good (Karakoç & Sakiz, 2021).

However, the theory suffers some critiques. It cannot offer complete or absolute equality and increases costs in education (Steensma, 2023).

This theory is appropriate to this study, as it protects the weak and it obliges the strong to do justice to all without discrimination. In most cases, children with special needs have been marginalised, denied their rights (education, resources, and other services), excluded in the society, discriminated and segregated (Griful-Freixenet *et al.*, 2018). Thus, this theory is used as a yardstick to gauge whether the society takes into account the impact of free education on teaching resources for children with special needs in special schools in Bukoba municipality.

2.2 Adequacy of Trained and Specialised Teachers for Students with Disabilities

Fernández-Batanero *et al.*, (2022) evaluated the assistive technology for the inclusion of students with disabilities in elementary schools in Spain where this study found that, despite the usefulness of the assistive technologies in helping students with disabilities, specialised teachers to use the same were inadequate. Janusheva *et al.*, (2022) assessed the inclusive education and the disabled students in elementary schools in Macedonia. The study found that, teachers had insufficient knowledge how to teach students with specific learning disabilities. Ede *et al.*, (2022) in Eswatini Kingdom, examined teachers' implementation of inclusive education in primary schools. The findings established that, teachers lacked self-confidence because they were not specialised in teaching students with learning disabilities. In Mozambique, Franco (2023) assessed the inclusion of children with disabilities, in primary schools. The study found that, there was a short of trained teachers teaching students with learning disabilities. Khomera *et al.*, (2020) while examining the challenges faced by learners with hearing impairments in special primary schools in Malawi, unveiled that, students with hearing impairments were faced with shortage of specialised teachers which later impacted on their academic performances. Similarly, Banks *et al.*, (2022) when investigating the factors affecting inclusion in education for children with disabilities in primary schools, established that, trained teachers were inadequate, a situation which affected students with learning difficulties and their social experiences at schools. In Kenya, Opondo *et al.*, (2023) evaluated

challenges facing implementation of competency-based assessment in primary schools. The study showed that, teachers were inadequately trained to teach students with learning impairments. Similar observations were also made by Long'ore *et al.*, (2023) on the influence of government support and teacher training on the teaching of special needs learners in public primary schools where it was Found that, there was a gap in the training of teachers specialised to teach students with learning difficulties in schools. In Tanzania, Kachweka (2021) assessed the challenges facing visually impaired pupils on academic achievement in special needs primary schools in Bukoba district. The study found that, there was a shortage of teachers trained in special education in schools. Similarly, Possi and Milinga (2017) while assessing special and inclusive education in primary schools in Dar es Salaam, unveiled that, the schools lacked a properly trained personnel to teach students with specific learning disabilities. Furthermore, Maphie (2023) while examining the progress made in the implementation of inclusive education policy in primary schools in Dar es Salaam, portrayed that, there was a shortage of teachers trained in special needs education.

2.3 State of Instructional Resources that Support Students with Learning Disabilities

Lu *et al.*, (2022) evaluated the inclusive teaching for young students with special needs in primary schools in China where they found that, English teachers were not using specific teaching resources to teach students with students with Special needs because they were not available. In Saudi Arabia, Al-Jaffal (2022) carried a study on the barriers general education teachers face regarding the inclusion of students with autism in elementary schools. The findings indicated that, teachers were not provided sufficient resources by their schools and programmes to best teach students with specific learning disabilities. Motsamai (2021) while examining the teachers' perspectives on the effects of free primary education policy on education quality in public schools in Swaziland, portrayed that, there was inadequate teaching/learning aids, a shortage of school furniture and other physical infrastructures which negatively affected the implementation of free primary education policy. In Lethoso, Seliane and Kgothule (2022) conducted a study on teaching learners with Special needs in inclusive classrooms in primary schools. The

study portrayed that, there was a critical shortage of teaching and learning materials and classrooms. Gift and Kabubi (2016) while examining the impacts of free primary education in Zambia, revealed that, primary schools in Zambia were faced with inadequacy of classrooms and other physical facilities which negatively impacted the quality of teaching and learning. In Zimbabwe, Tafirenyika *et al.*, (2023) carried a study on the building inclusive early learning environments for children with a disability in primary schools. The study found that, there was a lack of access to assistive devices for the students with Special needs in schools. Matter and Eide (2018) conducted a study on the access to assistive technology in primary schools in Botswana. This study found that, students with Special need had no access to assistive devices and other teaching and learning materials. In Kenya, Cheasaro (2020) while examining the challenges faced by teachers in teaching mentally challenged and communication deficient learners in primary schools found that, inadequate classrooms, assistive devices and financial resources were the major challenges faced by teachers teaching mentally retarded students in Mbagathi special unit. Similar observations were made by Ngeno *et al.*, (2019) on the influence of appropriate instructional resources on retention of pupils with disabilities in mainstreamed primary schools where they found that, there was a scarcity of assistive devices and other instructional materials which helped students with learning difficulties in schools. In Tanzania, Katabazi and Kamugisha (2022) evaluated the implementation of the fee-free primary education policy in Morogoro municipality. The findings showed that, the implementation of the policy in primary stage was challenged with insufficient funds, classrooms and teaching/learning materials.

2.4 Strategies adopted by the Administration in Overcoming Encountered Challenges

Kumar *et al.*, (2022) carried a study on the discrimination against students under special private primary schools in India. The findings indicated that, schools were challenged with non-payment of schools by the government for students with learning difficulties. The school administration mitigated the situation by passing the burden of these students to the parents. In Norway, Randby *et al.*, (2021) when examining the implementation enablers and barriers for school meal guidelines found that, at schools,

there were several challenges such as weak administrative leadership and lack of a school culture around meal practices; noisy classroom climate, limited facilities and difficulties associated with teacher–parent collaboration around packed lunches. The school administration solved these challenges by engaging education authorities, coordinating action at the municipal level and whole-school discussions on meal practices. Mansor and Hamid (2020) investigated the challenges and strategies in managing elementary schools in Malaysia. The study demonstrated that, schools were challenged with financial constraints and a dilapidated infrastructure. The school administration overcame financial and infrastructure challenges by establishing school generating projects in order to get extra funds. In Tanzania, Khamis (2017) evaluated the challenges faced by head teachers in implementing fee free primary education policy in Zanzibar west district, Unguja, where it was found that, the head teachers employed various strategies such as involvement of the school committees for planning and making decision, establishments of school generating projects and sending challenges to the Ministry of Education of Zanzibar. Similarly, Mbawala (2017) Lindi, assessed the implementation of fee-free basic education in primary schools in Ruangwa district council. The study unveiled that, the school administration sensitised the community to participate in necessary contributions for the school and encouraged students' parents to provide essentials to their children.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Paradigm

Pragmatic research paradigm balances both positivist and interpretivist paradigms associated with mixed approach studies (Tanlaka, Ewashen, & King-Shier, 2019). This paradigm considers that, there is no single best way to conduct research; thus, the researcher utilised the strength of both, positivist and interpretivist, to avoid some short falls which could be found if one of the two could have been used (Revez & Borges, 2018).

3.2 Research Approach

This study used mixed-methods approach to collect information. The researcher opted to use mixed-methods approach because, the weaknesses of one method was outweighed by the strengths of another (Queirós *et al.*, 2017).

3.3 Research Design

This study employed a convergent parallel design. In this design, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously, analysed separately and then merged together in the study during interpretation and discussion (Demir & Pismek, 2018).

3.4 Targeted Population

The targeted population for this study was all 56 respondents (3 head teachers and all 53 normal teachers).

Table 1. Unit of Inquiry

Respondents' Category	Population	
	Males	Females
HT-A	-	01
HT-B	01	-
HT-C	01	-
Teachers in School-A	12	08
Teachers in School-B	07	07
Teachers in School-C	05	16
Total	24	32

Source: The Bukoba Municipal Primary School Education Office (2024)

3.5 Sample Size

A sample size of 50 participants (3 HTs and 47 normal teachers) participated in the study. A sample of 47 participants was determined by the Taro Yamane sample size formula (1967) [$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$] where n = corrected sample size, N = targeted population, 1 = constant and e = marginal error which was (0.05), assuming 95% confidence level. In this study, $N=53$ after eliminating head teachers who were purposively selected and n is unknown. From the formula, n was determined as follows:

$$n = 53 / 1 + 53 * (0.05)^2$$

$$n = 53 / 1 + 0.1325$$

$$n = 53 / 1.1325$$

$$n = 47 \text{ normal teachers}$$

Table 2. Sampling Distribution

Respondents' Category	Sample Size
Head teachers (HTs)	03
Normal teachers (NTs)	47
Total	50

Source: The researcher (2024)

3.6 Sampling Techniques

This study used purposive and simple random sampling techniques to select the participants.

Purposive sampling technique was used to select all HTs in the selected three special public primary schools. Head teachers (HTs) were purposively selected because they were vested with supervision obligations. So, they were in the position to share with the researcher their personal experiences and perceptions about the real situation on the adequacy of specialised teachers, the state of instructional resources that supported students with disabilities and the strategies employed by the same in overcoming encountered challenges. Simple random sampling technique was used to select 47 normal teachers in the selected schools. The normal teachers (NTs) were selected because they have been the teaching force and the same were in a position to provide data on their adequacy and specialisation in line with the state of instructional resources that supported students with disabilities. This technique deemed useful because it gave a chance for any teacher to be selected in the study without any discrimination (Badwarj, 2022).

3.7 Data Collection Methods

Questionnaires aiming to collect quantitative data from all teachers, comprised of close-ended questions prepared by the researcher, were distributed to the participants. The researcher employed this method because it helped to collect information in a very short time within a group of people (Etikan & Bala, 2017). Observation was used to watch how teachers were teaching in class. The researcher opted to use a direct observation method so as to interact and find out the competence and specialization of teachers during teaching of students with learning disabilities. Documentary reviews were used to review previous and current documents (inventories) on the state of instructional resources that support students with disabilities in selected special public primary schools. Interview were used to gather qualitative data from all head teachers. This instrument was opted for because it enabled the researcher to probe more information which would not have been collected from questionnaires, observations and documentary reviews (Ruslin *et al.*, 2022).

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

Quantitative data from questionnaires were analysed by the descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, mean scores and standard deviations) by the help of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer

programme version 28.0. Qualitative data from observations, documentary reviews and oral interviews were thematically analysed and presented through direct quotes and narratives.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Adequacy of Trained and Specialised Teachers for Students with Learning Disabilities

The findings in Table 3 show that, the education levels of the respondents as follows: teachers with certificates were 18 (38.0%) and those with diploma were 17 (34.0%). Teachers with Bachelor's degree were 14 (28.0%) whereas Doctor of Philosophy and Master's degree were absent (00.0%) respectively.

Table 3. Teachers' Levels of Education

Descriptive Statistics		
Level of Education	Responses	
	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Doctor of Philosophy	0.00	00.0
Master Degree	0.00	00.0
Bachelor Degree	14	28.0
Diploma	17	34.0
Certificate	18	38.0
Total	50	100.0

Source: Data Analysis (2024)

Table 4 shows a total number of trained and specialised teachers for students with Special needs in special public primary schools. Findings indicated that, Mugeza Mseto with a total number

of 20 teachers had only 06 (08.0%) trained and specialised teachers, Mugeza Viziwi with a total of 10 teachers had only 08 (16.0%) trained and specialised teachers whereas Tumaini with a total of 20 teachers only 08 (16.0%) teachers were trained and specialised to teach students with learning disabilities. All special schools with a total of 50 had only 22 (40.0%) trained and specialised teachers to teach students with learning disabilities. The remaining 28 (60.0%) teachers were not trained to teach students with learning disabilities.

The findings from interviews with HTs indicated a similar understanding. Most HTs considered that, teachers who were not trained specifically to teach students with specific Special needs were a challenge to their respective schools as noted from one of the HTs:

"In the school I am supervising, almost three quarters of teachers are not trained specifically to teach special students with learning disabilities. This becomes a big challenge not only to teachers themselves but also to students." (HT-A, 13 November, 2023, 8.00 A.M).

Another HT from another school added:

"In my school, a good number of teachers are not trained specifically to teach students with special learning disabilities. They have been employed as normal teacher.... sometimes teachers become stressed of the situation because these students need special care and handling which these teachers do not have....." (HT-B, 14 November, 2023, 10.00 A.M)

Table 4. Adequacy of Trained and Specialised Teachers

Descriptive Statistics					
Name of School	Total Number of Teachers (f)	Teachers without Special Training (f)	Percentage of Teachers without Special Training (%)	Teachers with Special Training (f)	Percentage of Teachers with Special Training (%)
Mugeza Mseto	20	14	28.0	06	08.0
Mugeza Viziwi	10	02	04.0	08	16.0
Tumaini	20	12	28.0	08	16.0
Total	50	28	60.0	22	40.0

Source: Data Analysis (2024)

Table 5. State of Instructional Resources

Activities	Responses		Interpretation
	M	SD	
Taped textbooks	3.86	1.35	Agree
Computers with extended keyboards and modified screens	3.63	1.40	Agree
Lenses for those with low visions	3.41	1.35	Agree

Source: Data Analysis (2024)

Table 6. Strategies adopted by the Administration

Activities	Responses		Interpretation
	M	SD	
Students' parents are encouraged to provide necessary necessities to their children	3.52	1.36	Agree
The school administration involves various education stakeholders in strategic planning of school activities	3.52	1.39	Agree

Source: Field Data Analysis (2024)

4.2 State of Instructional Resources that Support Students with Learning Disabilities

Quantitative findings in Table 5 indicate that, the available instructional resources supporting students with Special needs at schools were taped textbooks (M=3.86, SD=1.35), computers with extended keyboards and modified screens (M=3.63, SD=1.40) and lenses for those with low visions (M=3.41, SD=1.35).

However, an interview with HTs indicated contradicting views. One of the HTs commented:

"Despite none availability of other instructional material at my school, sun-glass spectacles and screen lotions for learners with albinism are available. Sun-glass spectacles are supplied by the government the school buys screen lotions for students with albinism..." (HT-C, 15 November, 2023, 01: 00, P.M).

4.3 Strategies Adopted by the Administration in Overcoming Encountered Challenges

The findings presented in Table 6 indicate that, the school administration employed various strategies in overcoming encountered challenges in special schools. These strategies included encouragement of students' parents to provide necessary necessities to their children (M=3.52, SD=1.36), involvement of various education stakeholders in strategic planning of school activities (M=3.52, SD=1.39).

These quantitative findings have been supported by qualitative data from the head teachers. One of the HTs asserted that:

"The government cannot provide every necessity to these students. What I sometimes do, encourage students' parents to provide necessary necessities to their children..." (HT-C, 15 November, 2023, 01: 05, P.M).

Another HT argued:

"I solve some of the challenges pertaining to the students with specific learning abilities by involving various education stakeholders through planning and making joint decisions..." (HT-A, 13 November, 2023, 8.15 A.M).

4.4 Discussion

4.4.1 Adequacy of specialised teachers for students with special needs

Both quantitative and qualitative findings showed that, specialised teachers for students with Special needs in special public primary schools are inadequate. This is in contravention with the Social Justice theory in which it provides that, the resources should be fairly and equitably distributed in any society. This argument and finding resemble those of Fernández-Batanero *et al.*, (2022), Ede *et al.*, (2022) and Janusheva *et al.*, (2022) who reported that, specialised teachers were inadequate, had insufficient knowledge and confidence to teach students with specific learning disabilities. These studies are

also supported by several studies such as those of Franco (2023), Long'ore *et al.*, (2023), Opondo *et al.*, (2023), Banks *et al.*, (2022), Allam and Martin (2021), Zemba and Chipindi (2020), and Khomera *et al.*, (2020) who all report that, trained teachers were inadequate, a situation which affected students with learning difficulties and their social experiences at schools. Others with similar observations were those of Maphie (2023), Kachweka (2021), and Possi and Milinga (2017) who all also found that, there existed a shortage of teachers trained specifically for special needs students.

4.4.2 State of instructional resources that support students with learning disabilities

Quantitative findings and documentary reviews indicated that, some of instructional resources to support students with special needs were available. These included: taped textbooks, computers with extended keyboards and modified screens, and lenses for those with low visions. These observations are contrary to those of Lu *et al.*, (2022), Seliane and Kgothule (2022), Al-Jaffal (2022), Katabazi and Kamugisha (2022), and World Bank (2022) who reported that, specific teaching resources to teach students with Special needs were not available. This finding is contrary the principles of the Social Justice theory in which one of the principles states that, human beings must be equally treated without any discrimination on grounds of class, caste, race or gender. However, qualitative findings through interviews and observation affirmed that, sun-glass spectacles and sun-screen lotions for learners with albinism were available. The reasons for their availability was that, the school administration established school generating projects and students' parents were encouraged to provide necessary necessities to their children.

Furthermore, both quantitative and qualitative findings unveiled that, special public primary schools lacked overhead projectors, note-taking digital pens and artificial limbs. Others were e-books, pilot-fine point pen and acoustic rooms for the deaf and hard-hearing pupils. These findings are in line with those of Tafirenyika *et al.*, (2023), Nembambula *et al.*, (2023), Motsamai (2021), Lingolwe *et al.*, (2021), Welwel and Otieno (2022) who reported that, there was inadequate teaching/learning aids, a shortage of school furniture, physical infrastructures and assistive

devices which negatively affected students with Special needs in their course of learning.

4.4.3 Possible strategies adopted by the administration in overcoming encountered challenges

The findings established that, the school administrations use several strategies to overcome challenges facing students with learning disabilities. These strategies included: encouraging students' parents to provide necessary necessities to their children, involving various education stakeholders in strategic planning of school activities and in decision-making process. These findings concur with those of Achtaridou *et al.*, (2022), Kumar *et al.*, (2022), Randby *et al.*, (2021), and Mbawala (2017) who reported that, the school administrations solved these challenges by engaging education authorities, whole-school discussions, community participation in necessary contributions for the school, and encouraging students' parents to provide necessary necessities to their children.

Furthermore, school administrations established school generating projects. This observation resembles those of Mansor and Hamid (2020), and Khamis (2017) who reported that, school administrations overcame financial and infrastructure challenges by establishing school generating projects in order to get extra funds, involving school committees for planning and making decision.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Trained and specialised teachers for students with special needs in special public primary schools are inadequate.

Taped textbooks, computers with extended keyboards and modified screens, and lenses for those with low visions were available. Others were sun-glass spectacles for learners with albinism and sun-screen lotions for learners with albinism are also available. However, overhead projectors, note-taking digital pens and artificial limbs e-books, pilot-fine point pen and acoustic rooms for the deaf and hard-hearing pupils were found to be lacking.

Encouraging students' parents to provide necessary necessities to their children, involving various education stakeholders in strategic planning of school activities and in decision-making process and school, and establishing of school generating projects were the possible strategies adopted by the administration in overcoming encountered challenges in special public primary schools.

5.2 Recommendations

Firstly, it is recommended that, local government authorities should ensure that, teachers are specifically trained for teaching and handling students with special needs.

Secondly, the local government authorities and school administration in collaboration with other education stakeholders should make sure that, overhead projectors, note-taking digital pens and artificial limbs are available in adequate numbers. They should also include e-books, pilot-fine point pen and acoustic rooms for the deaf and hard-hearing pupils.

Lastly, it is recommended that, the local government authorities and the school administrations should also sensitise the community to participate in necessary contributions for the schools and in-service training should be adequately provided for to teachers who are not specialised for students with special needs.

DISCLAIMER (ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE)

Author(s) hereby declare that NO generative AI technologies such as Large Language Models (ChatGPT, COPILOT, etc) and text-to-image generators have been used during writing or editing of this manuscript.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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