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## **DETERMINANTS AFFECTING THE TEACHING OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TO LEARNERS WITH DIFFERENT KINDS OF DISABILITIES-PE TEACHER PREPAREDNESS**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study was to investigate determinants affecting the teaching of physical education to learners with different kinds of disabilities such as the physically challenged, visually and hearing impaired in public primary schools having a special unit in Nairobi City County, Kenya. The research highlighted teacher preparedness as a major concern.

**Methodology:** The study utilized the descriptive survey research design. Data was drawn from 7 public primary schools offering a special unit in Nairobi County Kenya, this included 16 PE teachers. Data was collected using questionnaires administered to PE teachers.

**Findings:** The study revealed that the PE teachers have relevant teaching experiences and are qualified as most are trained up to postgraduate level. It was noted that the teachers were trained in special needs education, however, the majority were not trained in adapted physical education. This hindered understanding and the delivery of physical education to the LWDS. It posed a challenge to them as they are not able to modify facilities, equipment, and activities to suit the needs of LWDS.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy :** The study recommends that physical education teachers need to be regularly provided with adequate in service training especially in adapted physical education. This will ensure that the goals of inclusion are attained hence contributing to the delivery of physical education to LWDS and education growth and development for all.

**Keywords:** *Teacher preparedness, Disability, Inclusion, Special unit, physical education.*

## INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, education communities are in pursuit of the inclusion of children with disabilities (Ballard, 2012; Florian & Spratt, 2013; Chhabra, Srivastava & Srivastava, 2010). In recent years, many countries are moving towards the inclusion of challenged learners with ordinary learners. Educators, therefore, not only ask for inclusion but also support the complete inclusion of all students regardless of their degree of disability in ordinary schools (Abdelbaky 2013). Inclusive education is founded on the fundamental that all learners have the right to quality education that encourages their personal development to its fullest extent, considers their diverse backgrounds, and meets their basic learning needs and abilities as a learning opportunity rather than a barrier (Ainscow M, Miles S. 2008). This is part of the huge debate on inclusive education. The United Nations Convention of Rights of Persons with Disabilities states in article 30.5, that children with disabilities should be provided with Physical Education (PE) as well as informal sports activities which were mandated signed, and ratified by 175 nations (UN, 2006). UNESCO published a statement acknowledging that adapted PE, inclusive and safe opportunities to participate in PE must be provided to children/learners with disabilities (UNESCO, 2015). This study attempts to look at the teaching of physical education to LWDs in Kenyan public primary schools that have a special unit. It closely focuses on the implementation of inclusive education in the teaching of physical education to learners with different kinds of disabilities especially highlighting teacher preparedness as a major determiner to its successful implementation.

For the successful implementation of inclusive education, effective and efficient teacher preparation becomes a necessity. The ministry of education therefore has the responsibility of conducting teacher training programmes to produce teachers with knowledge, skills and right attitudes to successfully implement inclusive education (Mwariri 2016). Courses of teacher education should be planned and designed to mold their attitudes, manners and habits in a way to reconstitute the teacher personality (AIOU, 2000, p.22). According to Erisen (2003), teacher qualifications and successful teacher performance rely on quality training in pre-service education as the primary mission of institutions where teachers are trained is to educate and produce “qualified teachers”. Teachers are expected to understand the varied categories of special needs, manage a diverse classroom, appropriately accommodate individual needs and adopt differentiated instructional strategies (Peebles & Mendaglio, 2014). The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education (2010) in a review of literature on teacher education for inclusion adds that the teachers needs to understand learners characteristics more deeply in order to develop empathy with their abilities.

Teacher education is regarded as the abilities, skills and knowledge which is transmitted to the life of a teacher. For learners with disabilities to receive a quality education, there must be quality and qualified teachers to deliver that kind of education. Lee 2002, noted that in the teaching and learning of PE, the teacher is key in what goes on in the classroom. Further, Lee observes that teachers create the required atmosphere for students to be involved in learning. Improved teacher preparedness and knowledge is a necessity, as student’s outcomes depend strongly on the effectiveness of the teacher, however, many teachers report a lack of support and unpreparedness to work effectively with students with special needs (Smith, 2011). There is a need to train teachers

to be effective as failure to do this leads to poorly organized lessons that affect the way a learner is taught. It was noted in New Zealand, that there is a push to ensure that physical education is inclusive for all students regardless of their abilities, however, some learners have been affected by the way they are handled by teachers. In the long run, it has led to some of these learners being considered ‘hopeless.’ (Petriek, Devcich & Fitzgerald, 2018). This finding tie well with proposals made by Ajmal, Farcoog, Nafees and Rehman (2011) that teachers need to be provided with in-service and pre-service training.

Physical education plays a key a vital role in the complete development of a child. It is esteemed for its great contribution to the physical, emotional, mental and social development of a child (Kahiga 2018). Therefore, the need for and support for the appropriate delivery of physical education for LWDs. Research suggests that the best time to introduce PE is during the early years of learning for children to acquire and refine their motor skills (ACARA, 2012). However, concerns have been raised over the implementation of PE in the Kenyan education system (Kahiga 2018). Teachers are required not only to modify their teaching methods according to the special needs of their students but at the same time also to maintain a high standard of academic achievements (Abegglen and Hessels 2018). Physical education teachers’ have been documented as being particularly vulnerable to control issues and safety for learners with special needs while associating themselves in an inclusive classroom (Morley D, Bailey R, Tan J, Cooke B, 2005). Omamo (2017), reported that teachers need to be competent enough to handle all learners with special needs. A research carried out by Njoroge (2015) on learners with special needs that teachers need to be provided with training to improve their knowledge base for learners with disabilities. The current study attempts to look at teachers’ qualifications and profession in the teaching and learning of PE for learners with different kinds of disabilities.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The introduction of Free Primary Education (FPE) in Kenya in 2003, opened up the way for the inclusion of learners with special needs (GOK, 2003). The government through the ministry of education ratified and domesticated various global policy frameworks in education to ensure children with special needs get access to education (MOE, 2009). A study carried out by (Njoroge, 1991) revealed that teachers with special needs training favoured the inclusiveness of education activities as opposed to those who had no qualifications in special needs education. So, what is the current situation for PE teachers’ teaching in public primary schools having a special unit in Kenya? A study was done in Brazil by, Osborne, Belmont, De Azeved and De Carvalho (2016) revealed that teachers of physical education felt devalued because of neglect by the school administration. How much more would you expect of PE teachers teaching learners with different kinds of disabilities?

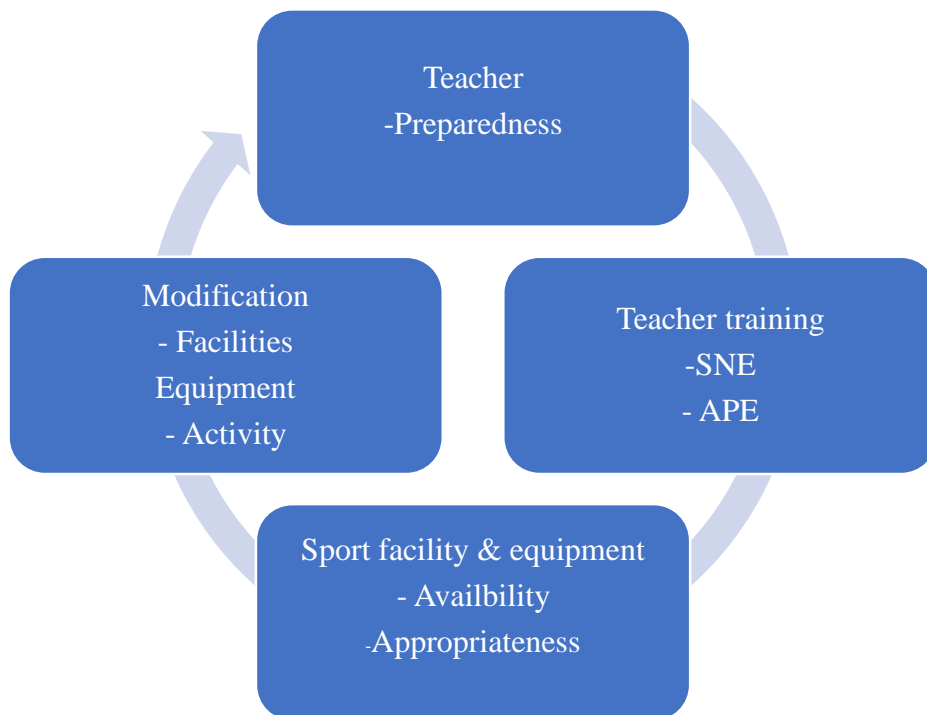
### **The objective of the study**

This study was guided by the following objective:

To examine the PE teachers’ preparedness in the teaching of physical education to learners with different kinds of disabilities in public primary schools in Nairobi County Kenya.

### Conceptual Framework

For the teaching of physical education to learners with different kinds of disabilities to be successful, there is a need for an interplay of several issues. Teacher preparedness will require PE teachers to have training in special needs education and adapted physical education, have access to adequate and appropriate sports facilities and equipment and require the PE teacher to modify the facilities and equipment to suit different learners' abilities and needs.



*Figure 1: Conceptual Framework- Significant Factors in the implementing of Physical education*

### METHODOLOGY

This study reviews the current situation in public primary schools having a special unit in Kenya. It interrogates the current situation in the country by going through current literature in the area. The researcher used a descriptive survey design. Data was drawn from 7 public primary schools having a special unit in Kenya. Since the population was small, the researcher used 20% (16) of the PE teachers. A simple random technique was used to identify the 16 PE teachers. Data was collected using questionnaires, and an observational checklist. Questionnaires were administered to PE teachers while the observational checklist was used as a checklist for PE resources available in terms of facilities and equipment. It was filled with the assistance of the PE teachers. Before data collection, the researcher requested permission for data collection from the ministry of the education state department of early learning and basic education. The study also sought the consent

and confidence of the respondents' by ensuring that their identities would not be revealed to anyone. The data collected was analyzed using content analysis and descriptive statistics.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### Response rate

The teachers who were subjected to questionnaires with the aim of obtaining relevant information on their level of preparedness were 16 (100%) who were randomly selected using the simple random technique, but only 12 (75%) filled in and returned the questionnaires.

**Table 1: PE Teachers' Training level in SNE and APE**

<b>Teacher training level</b>	<b>Training in SNE (n)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Training in APE (n)</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Certificate	2	16.7%	10	83.3%
Diploma	7	58.3%	2	16.7%
Degree	3	25%	0	0%
Masters	0	0%	0	0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 1 indicates that the majority 58.3% had SNE training up to diploma level, this is attributed to the availability of continuous professional development programmes commonly referred to as school-based programmes since 2003 that allow experienced teachers to study during the school holidays hence the majority of the teachers take that opportunity to get extra training. This is congruent to the finding of Andiema (2020) who found out that teachers teaching in public primary schools have the required qualifications in special needs education to enable them to teach and support special needs learners in their schools. Munayi (2015) concurs with these findings and stated that to be up to 71% of the teachers involved in the teaching of learners with disabilities were graduate teachers. Some even had a Diploma in special needs education together with a Bachelor's degree in special needs education. The teachers were however unmotivated due to the other pros such as remuneration, lack of in-service training, and lack of necessary resources, and these all played a part in the propping of teaching at this level.

In terms of training in adapted physical education, the minority 16.7% are trained in APE up to diploma level, while the majority 83.3% have a certificate in APE. This is an indication that the majority of PE teachers are not trained in APE. This, therefore, created a barrier for them to effectively administer physical education to learners with different kinds of disabilities as it was hard for them to modify activities, facilities, and equipment for them to be able to participate in physical education effectively. This finding is in line with the findings of Mwangi (2013) who noted that although teachers were well trained in special needs education, they had little training

in the area of adapted physical education and this gave them challenges in the successful teaching of P.E to an extent that they overlooked the subject. Mwangi further found that teachers' also suggested refresher courses on adapted physical education.

### Sports facilities and equipment

For teachers to deliver the expected learning experiences for learners with different kinds of disabilities, there is a need to provide them with the necessary resources; this basically refers to facilities and equipment needed in the teaching and learning of physical education. Physical facilities and teaching/learning resources (equipment) play a crucial role in achieving education for all. These physical facilities and equipment include adapted toilets, specialised pavements, level playgrounds, changing rooms near the sporting facilities, ramps, balls, traffic cones, sports wheelchairs and crutches (Republic of Kenya, 2005). Facilities are considered capital development; it is the government's responsibility, therefore, to ensure that schools have a certain amount of acreage before their officially registered. According to the Ministry of Education (Republic of Kenya, 2010), the adequacy and quality of physical facilities, equipment, teaching, and learning resources determine how efficient and effective inclusive education is implemented. Gathua (1990) established that the number and kind of facilities available influences the choices a teacher has. The quality and quantity of the facilities and equipment are the choices a teacher has to provide for his/her learners in terms of activities and eventually influence the involvement of learners.

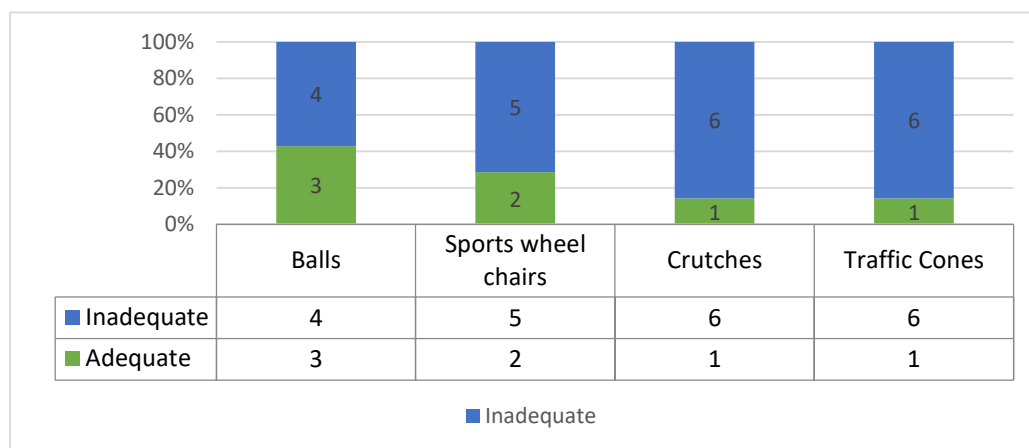


Figure 2: Availability of Physical Education Equipment for inclusive education

As indicated in figure 2 above, out of the 7 schools visited, it was evident that sports equipment is not adequately provided. A minority 42.8% had balls that were suitable for use by LWDs 57.1% did not have appropriate balls as the available ones were torn, not enough, and not adapted for use by learners with different kinds of disabilities. It is also evident that equipment such as sports wheelchairs, crutches, and traffic cones were not also adequately provided.

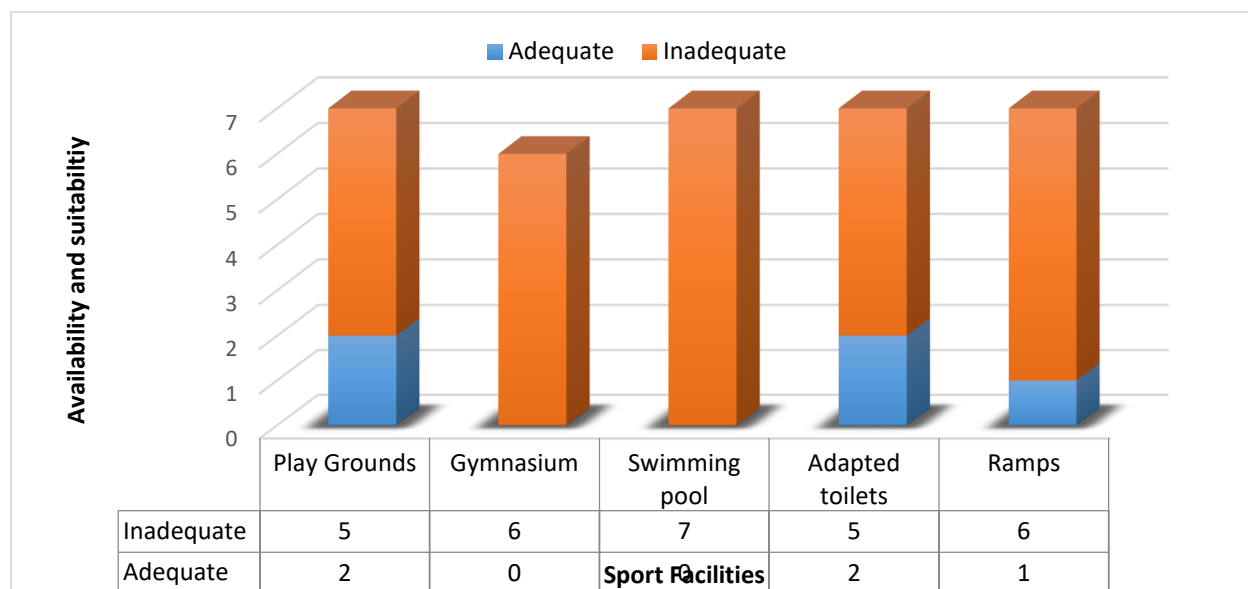


Figure 3: Availability of Physical Education Facilities for inclusive education

Results from figure 3 indicate that majority, 71.4% did not have appropriate playgrounds for use by LWDs because the available playgrounds were poorly maintained and unsafe. The findings indicate that most of the facilities were not adequately provided as is the case with the sports facilities. The findings of Munayi (2015) effectively portray these findings. According to the scholar, schools for students with scholarly inability will in general have essential hardware, for example, soccer balls, volleyballs, netballs, and napkins. Further, it is noticed that there is limited advanced equipment, which implies educators may not be keen on making any new gear to improve their students. Most educators appear to have chosen big ball games, which are anything but difficult to instruct, by uprightness of the learning being in the open space.

Further to the investigation on the availability of sports facilities and equipment, the study went on to find out if the available facilities and equipment were adapted/modified by PE teachers to suit the abilities and needs of LWDs. This is closely tied to the teachers' training in SNE and APE.

**Table 2: Modification of sports facilities and equipment by PE teacher**

Adaptation/Modification	Frequency	Percentage
Modified a variety of sports facilities	5	41.7%
Modified a variety of sports equipment	4	33.3%
Modified activities and adjusted some rules	3	25%
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>100%</b>

Table 2 shows that 41.7% of PE teachers were able to modify sports facilities such as reducing the size of the playing area especially for the physically challenged learners so as to reduce the distance in which they would run up and down the field. While 33.3% of the PE teachers could modify



varies sports equipment such as making use of bell or beeper balls to allow learners with hearing impairment follow the ball easily and used neon nets for goal posts to allow learners with visual impairment sight the goal better especially when attempting to score. However the higher percentage of the PE teachers were not able to make modify facilities, equipment and activities for LWDs. This made it difficult for learners with disabilities to participate in different kinds of sports of their choice. This concurred with Gichia, Njoroge, and Mwisukha (2009) who reported that most of the facilities and equipment were not appropriately adapted to meet the unique needs of learners with disabilities.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, there is a need to address the challenges that require attention: All PE teachers required specialized training in inclusive education and especially for learners with different kinds enrolled in mainstream schools. Pre-service and in-service teachers need a comprehensive teaching practice in ordinary PE classrooms with diverse disabilities. This can help them in coming up with a variety of modified activities for different disabilities and also improve on how to adapt the available facilities and equipment so as to ensure that all learners get to receive physical activities. The government should therefore embark on enforcing specific policies and legislation on inclusion in PE that can endorse its practice and ensure that these teachers get the required support they need to make the teaching of PE successful. The Ministry of Education should also ensure that PE teachers are provided with the necessary resources that (facilities and equipment) facilitate the teaching and learning of physical education. As from the findings of the study, most schools do not have enough facilities and equipment, and for those who do, they are unacceptable and not for use by learners with different kinds of disabilities. Hence it makes it difficult for teachers to effectively administer learning of PE for learners. There is a need therefore to provide the required facilities and equipment which are adapted for easier use of learners with disabilities. Currently, the government and education stakeholders have not fully provided trained teachers in APE, disability-friendly environment, and infrastructure such as playgrounds and equipment for the learning and teaching of PE for learners with different kinds of disabilities. The government needs therefore to take cognizance of this matter and address it.

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