

Children with Disability and Education Accessibility in Western Uganda

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Abstract

Original Research Article

This logical study examined the relationship between physical disability and education accessibility in Bushenyi district, in Western Uganda. The organized study used a correlational research design with mixed methods (qualitative and quantitative approaches). A sample of 108 participants out of 150 accessible population was chosen utilizing a table developed by (Morgan & Krejcie, 1970). Data was collected employing scholar generated questionnaires and interview guides and summarized using Descriptive dimensions and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for quantitative analysis and thematic analysis was employed for amalgamating qualitative issues. The inquiry study results came up with a significant relationship between physical disability and education accessibility in Bushenyi in Western Uganda. It was therefore established that issues related with availability of teachers, required completion rates, retention at school of children with physical disability, and their regular school attendance are critical to children's accessibility to education in Western Uganda. The study recommended that appropriate mechanisms should be adopted to increase availability of teachers, foster completion rates, school attendance and retention at school for children with physical disability so as to enhance children's accessibility to education.

Keywords: Disabled children, accessibility, Education, Uganda.

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INTRODUCTION

Globally, education positively affects socio-economic behavior including productivity, living standards, health and demographic characteristics of any population (Shapiro, 2022). Likewise, it opens infinity of possibilities for society that would otherwise be denied namely a better chance to lead healthy and productive lives, building strong and nurturing families, participating in civic affairs of their communities, molding morals, creating culture and shaping history (Hellen, 2022).

Children having disabilities tend to be marginalized in the educational systems and other forms of discrimination are also visible from mainstream society. Children having disabilities for long have been ignored in most governments' efforts to achieve universal access to primary education services, (UNESCO, 2020). Children having disabilities remain one of the most groups being ignored from accessing quality education as they deserve.

According to ACPF (2018), disabled children face violence, stigma and discrimination, primarily due

to misconceptions originating from cultural beliefs and traditions. 76% of children having disabilities in Sierra Leone for example and 67% in Central African Republic are absent from school. Additionally, ACPF (2018) states that most learners are also denied access to adequate health care due to physical barriers or lack of transport. Lack of integrated policies and cross-departmental programs (even within government), disconnected national and sub-national initiatives, and poor service provision are all major obstacles to inclusion and equitable access for learners with disabilities (Weidner, 2021).

There are multiple kinds of disabilities, and various accounts to explaining causes of disability. Some disabilities in Uganda include visual impairments; physical disabilities; hearing impairment; multiple disabilities; mental and psycho-socio disabilities; intellectual disabilities and albinism. The main causes of disability are diseases, congenital abnormalities and injuries (Farouk, 2019). Although in Uganda there have been tremendous achievements in secondary schools enrolment, some barriers are still visible in many places (ACPF, 2019).

METHODS AND MATERIALS

Data Capturing

The data utilized for the planned research study was composed while utilizing both primary and secondary cradles of data. Primary information was garnered while employing questionnaires and interview agendas to important persons in association to the orderly research study. Supplementary evidence was congregated with the use of written records. The sensible empirical study applied a survey descriptive examination design including qualitative and quantitative approaches.

Amin (2005) stated that descriptive inquiry design is usually used to echo an occasion and its data features. The researcher came up with a total of 108 participants (sample size) while using a table developed by (Morgan & Krejcie, 1970) to belong to the investigation study.

Sampling Methods

The intellectual engaged simple random sampling and purposive sampling strategies in the examination planned study. The accessible population involved the groupings like teachers, government officials, school managers, parents, and learners.

Questionnaires and Interviews

The investigator used a structured questionnaire to garner facts from the field because it covers a varied geographical cosmos in data reportage; it collects much proof within a short period, and offers robust guarantee in association to privacy.

The academic used a qualitative dialogue schedule because it was important to get the participants' subjective views of their proficiencies; unfolding the clarification of their realm, revealing their real practices prior to classified descriptions (Karoro, 2017).

Validity and Reliability of Technical Research Instruments

Validity of the investigator adapted questionnaire was determined by employing content validity Index. After testing of the validity of the inquiry study tools, the scholar got content validity index (CVI) of 0.78 which was well above 0.75 signifying that the research instrument was genuine to elicit information crucial for the credible orderly schoolwork (Amin, 2005). Besides, the validity of the interview plan was attained by talking to critical members to prove the answered interrogations (Gibbs, 2007).

Reliability of the structured questionnaire was considered by means of Cronbach's alpha coefficient formula looking at the investigation study variables that attained an alpha coefficient of value more than 0.70. Since the reliability figure got by the academic researcher was 0.79 alpha value, it suggested that the research facts collecting method was reliable to produce data reliable for the investigation. However, the reliability of the interview schedule was grasped by relying on peer review strategies (Gibbs, 2007).

Data Analysis

The research statistical tools which were involved in analyzing data for this meticulous investigation study included; descriptive statistics like tables, frequencies, percentages, and inferential analyses like Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for scrutinizing quantitative data. In addition to that, Qualitative information was measured by logically amalgamating information into rational themes or sub themes for immediate Interpretation along a narrative scenario (Gibbs, 2007).

RESULTS

Age of the Respondents

Table 1: The distribution of respondents by age

Length of service	Frequency	Percentage
12-20 years	52	48.1
21-40 years	46	42.6
41-50 years	8	7.4
51 and above years	2	1.9
Total	108	100

Source: Field Data (2022)

Table 1 showed that 7.4% of the respondents were of age between 41 to 50 years, 42.6% between 21 to 40 years, and 48.1% between 12 to 20 years, while those above 51 years of age were only 1.9%. This implied that all the respondents were mature enough to answer the questionnaire items, and that means the data collected was reliable.

Descriptive Statistics on Children with Disabilities in Bushenyi District

The results are presented in summary tables. Responses range from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D), to Strongly Disagree (SD), Table 2 below has the summary of the descriptive statistics on Disabled children.

Table 2: shows the descriptive statistics on physical disabilities

Statement/item	Scale	Frequency	Percentage
1. Children with physical disabilities are affected by availability of teachers	Strongly Agree	25	23.1
	Agree	47	43.5
	Neutral	12	11.1
	Disagree	16	14.8
	Strongly Disagree	8	7.4
2. Children with physical disability do not obtain the required completion rates	Strongly Agree	30	27.8
	Agree	42	38.9
	Neutral	24	22.0
	Disagree	8	7.4
	Strongly Disagree	4	3.7
3.Children with physical disability are rarely retained at school	Strongly Agree	26	24.1
	Agree	31	28.7
	Neutral	24	22.2
	Disagree	19	17.6
	Strongly Disagree	8	7.4
4.Children with physical disabilities do not regularly attend school	Strongly Agree	27	25.0
	Agree	34	31.5
	Neutral	25	23.1
	Disagree	10	9.3
	Strongly Disagree	12	11.1
5.There is a relationship between physical disability and education accessibility	Strongly Agree	32	29.6
	Agree	38	35.2
	Neutral	18	16.7
	Disagree	13	12.0
	Strongly Disagree	7	6.5

Source: Field Data (2022)

Table 2 indicated that the majority of the respondents on item number one: agreed that children with disabilities are affected by availability of teachers (47/43.5%). This percentage showed that children having physical disabilities do not in most cases get enough teachers to teach them in order to be successful in life.

Majority of the respondents on item number two: (42 38.9%) agreed that Children with physical disability do not obtain the required completion rates in the school systems. This suggested that children with disabilities in schools lack enough facilitation in order for them to complete the education cycle.

Majority of participants on item number three: (31/28.7%) agreed that disabled children are rarely retained in schools. This meant that the conditions surrounding such children are alarming to an extent that most schools lack the required capacity to retain them such as enough qualified teachers and relevant pedagogical materials.

A good number of respondents on item number four: (34/31.5%) agreed that Children with

physical disabilities do not regularly attend school. This implied that the environment at their homes do not favour them to always go to school for studies. Such conditions may include poor health due to bad diet, lack of enough uniform materials on daily basis and walking long distances to school.

Majority of participants on item number five: (31/28.7%) agreed that there is a relationship between physical disability and education accessibility in a sense that being in a state of disability can always attract attention from government education agencies to come to the rescue of children with disabilities. This meant that such children can easily access packages of help from donor agencies such as bicycles for disabled people, uniforms and various stationery.

Respondent Number 1 Remarkd

'It is possible that children with physical disabilities can perform well academically when they are availed with qualified teachers, gadgets for disabled persons and relevant scholastic materials'

This suggested that absence of the said facilities above may impair disabled learners for greater

achievement in class at school and their completion rates may remain negligible.

The Relationship between Children with Disability and Education Accessibility in Bushenyi District

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of Physical Disability and Education Accessibility

		Physical Disability	Education Accessibility
Physical Disability	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-Tailed)	1	.723**
	N	108	108
Education Accessibility	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-Tailed)	.723**	1
	N	108	108

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

Source: Field Data (2022)

The results presented in Table 3 show that Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for physical disability and education accessibility was $r=0.723$, which was positive with probability value $p=0.000$ which was less than $\alpha=0.01$ suggesting a significant correlation. This implied that physical disability significantly and positively correlates with education accessibility in Bushenyi district in Western Uganda.

DISCUSSION

The results exhibited that the association between children with disabilities and education accessibility was statistically significant. This inferred that the children with disabilities really affect education accessibility in Bushenyi district.

This result was in harmony with the study conducted by (Stephen, 2017) on Disabled children in Tanzania, who found out that awareness of the existence of disabled children in society, always leads to sensitization for their better facilitation in any educational institution. However, these findings are in disagreement to a popular inquiry study directed by (Reed *et al*, 2020) on academic status of deaf children who found out that deaf children can achieve better if they are well availed with relevant academic gadgets in communities and schools.

CONCLUSION

It was therefore established that issues related with availability of teachers, required completion rates, retention at school of children with physical disability, and their regular school attendance are critical to children's accessibility to education in Bushenyi in Western Uganda.

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE STUDY

The logical examination study recommended that appropriate mechanisms should be adopted to increase availability of teachers, foster completion rates, school attendance and retention at school for children with physical disability so as to enhance children's accessibility to education. The government regimes and ministry of education departments should consider

increasing the budget for purchasing special gadgets for learning in order for disabled learners to achieve better in academics.

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