

# **A critical Analysis On The Effects Of Labeling On Social Interactions In The Mainstream Schools In Kenya.**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study focuses on the effects of labeling on social interactions in the mainstream in Kenya. The article sought to examine how stigmatization affects social interactions among learners with disabilities in the mainstream, to determine how mortification affects social interactions in the mainstream, examine how degradation affects social interactions in the mainstream, determine how humiliation affects social interactions in the mainstream and establish how rejection affects social interactions in the mainstream in Kenya. Literature review was based on the study objectives, research questions and gaps between the problem and literature review established. The study adopted a qualitative research methodology approach with critical analysis design. The study analysis was used to collect, analyze and interpret data from the study findings. The study established that learners with diverse special needs and disabilities do exist in the mainstream in Kenya and in large number. The interventions strategies that could best address and solve the problems facing social interactions among learners with special needs and disabilities in the mainstream were; at classroom level, the school level and at policy formulation level or the government. The findings of this study syllogized a conclusion that would ministrates the stakeholders which include peers, regular teachers and education policy makers to contrive strategies that could be used to connive at social interactions in the mainstream. The researchers recommended for progressive participation at classroom, school and government level for acquisition and learning of acceptable social interaction skills in the mainstream in Kenya.

**Keywords:** Labeling, Social interactions, mainstream, stigmatization, mortification.

## **1.0.INTRODUCTION**

Effective social interaction among learners with special needs calls for collaborative teamwork of all stakeholders in special Needs Education (SNE). The education in special schools and special units should be key role models in demonstrating relevant skills to eliminate stereotype

thinking associated to labeling. Learners with special needs and disabilities remain isolated and withdrawn when they feel that they are not liked or loved by teachers and peer, as supported by Kiminyo, 1992. In the developed countries, learners with special needs have achieved an appropriate degree of social competence and acceptable social skills which is different in the developing countries. Social interactions is especially lacking in Kenya because most of the parents who give birth to children with special needs and disabilities, due to anger, shock, denial and fear of stigmatization, hide these children instead of seeking medical interventions. Lack of awareness to the availability of support services to many people also hinders access to them. Miller, 1990, stated that research on teachers 'attitudes towards mainstreaming has shown that general education teachers generally perceive themselves to be ill equipped to deal with learners with disabilities.

Social skills are a key component which is a collection of isolated and discrete acquired and learned behaviors. For one to be termed as having social competence, the individual must have acquired and or learned smooth sequential use of these skills in an effort to establish an ongoing social interaction. Hypothesis argue that social interaction skills deficits are the result of neurological dysfunctions which causes academic problems and the social disabilities are caused by the child's chronic rejection thus the child being unable to practice the required social skills because of isolation. School-aged children, with special needs need to be accepted and accepted by their educators and more so their non-disabled peer. According to Rao, 2 010, regular teachers who might be lacking special education skills often degrade learners with special needs and disabilities. More so, when the pressure these learners to do things the way they would like. This affects their social interactions thus remaining withdrawn from peer.

## 2.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The labeling of learners with special needs and disabilities is paramount. The labels are used to identify and classify learners with special needs and disabilities. For example, visually impaired, physically handicapped, mental disabilities or hearing impairment. The process of labeling involves emotional and ethical considerations which lead to a protective response in which learners are more accepted and accepting of the typical behavior of a peer with disability. They also gain a protective response by peers, parents and teachers including other professionals. However, despite various benefits of labeling learners with special needs feel stigmatized due to peer rejection or ridicule. This more so, affects their self-esteem leading to withdrawal and poor social relations, participation in interactive dialogues and acquisition of identification. Some learners will hold low expectations for those with special needs and differentially treating them on the bias of label. This results to negative self-fulfilling prophecy. Koestne, 1990, stated that empathy is the ability to understand another person and imagine what he or she might be feeling. Therefore, it is a duty to all educators to give attention to children with special needs and create a friendly environment that encourages social interactions. Teachers should note that children with special needs and those who might have been abused develop a feeling of depression thus distorting their communication skills causing less self-confidence, as supported by Alber & Allen, 1987.

The issue of labeling also assumes that all learners in a category share other traits as well, thereby diminishing the detection and appreciation of each learner's uniqueness. These assumptions hinder the rate at which the learner develops self-acceptance. In the long run, it makes it difficult for Kenya to achieve 100% enrolment for all learners with special needs and disabilities. It is necessary to find out the effects of labeling on social interactions among learners

with special needs and disabilities modifications should be no more restrictive than absolutely necessary to make these learners take risks like their able-bodied peers so that they can learn to be more independent and their experiences to be as normal as possible. Therefore, overprotection should be avoided. This curbs some of the social interactions and unacceptable skills due to exposure.

### **3.0 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this study was to critically analyze the effects of labeling on social interactions in the mainstream in Kenya.

### **4.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. A critical analysis of the effects stigmatization on social interactions in the mainstream schools in Kenya.
2. A critical analysis on the effects of mortification on social interactions in the mainstream schools in Kenya.
3. A critical analysis on the effects of degradation on social social interactions in the mainstream schools in Kenya.
4. A critical analysis on the effects of humiliation on social interactions in the mainstream schools in Kenya.
5. A critical analysis on the effects of disgrace on social interactions in the mainstream schools in Kenya.

## **5.0 OBJECTIVE QUESTION**

1. To what extent has stigmatization affected social interaction with special needs in the mainstream schools in Kenya?
2. How does mortification affect social interactions of learners with special needs and disabilities in the mainstream schools in Kenya?
3. How much has degradation affected social interactions of learners with special needs in the mainstream schools in Kenya?
4. What are the effects of humiliation to social interactions among learners with special needs in the mainstream schools in Kenya?
5. What are the effects of disgrace towards social interactions among learners with special needs in the mainstream schools in Kenya?

## **6.0 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

The aim of this critical analysis may be to identify the effects of labeling on social interactions in the mainstream in Kenya. The critical analysis may increase the available knowledge in the field of special education on the needs of learners with disabilities hence contributing to the increase of the literature on the implementation of inclusive education in the mainstream towards education for all (EFA).

The knowledge accrued from this critical analysis may assist the school administrators, special educators and regular instructors in designing and developing effective practices for inclusive education in the regular classrooms and the whole school at large. Regular instructors and non-disabled peers may also discover positive ways of accepting learners with disabilities, develop positive attitude which will be an avenue to the raising of self-esteem

among learners with disabilities. It may therefore create an ideal environment for socialization. This article will also promote awareness to instructors as curriculum implementers on appropriate internal differentiation pedagogy strategies that will take into account the individual differences. It may also show critically that a learner has social problems which require special attention and intervention, thus imparting desirable and acceptable skills.

The article may further create awareness to teachers on effective communication and communication styles in order to understand what learners with disabilities are telling them about, how they feel or think. This is by using modified communication skills like Blissymbols to depict the semantic concepts they present. The critical analysis may also help teachers and peers to be patient and give chances to learners with disabilities to express themselves, empathizing with them and always reinforcing them positively. The critical analysis may therefore assist them to avoid ridicules, making imitations and name calling. Finally, the article may add to knowledge on which issues related to special education and special needs can be based.

## **7.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This critical analysis adopted a qualitative methodology and a critical analysis design. It intended to use this approach in order to have an in-depth view of implementation of mainstream education with reference to attitude of various stakeholders, effects of labeling on social interactions, constraints encountered by learners with disabilities as a result of negative attitude, stereotype thinking associated with labeling, rejection and isolation and interventions that will lead to smooth implementation of mainstream education.

## **8.0 CRITICAL LITERATURE REVIEW.**

### **8.1 EFFECTS OF STIGMATIZATION ON SOCIAL INTERACTION IN THE MAINSTREAM.**

There is evidence that different education setting many expose learner with special needs and disabilities to different levels of stigmatized treatment .due to their specialty, social identities can be devalued and depersonalized into stereotypic caricatures .As supported by Richard M.G [2016]and Henker and Whalen [1991] social problems are obvious among learners with special needs and disabilities in the mainstream. This is because these learners are not able to make friends as well as maintaining appropriate relationship with non-disable peers. Labeling is a demeaning process frequently contributing to stigmatization and leading to social isolation.

As a result of stigmatization, learners with special needs in the mainstream are more so affect negative since it threatens their self-esteem and specially when they sense or feel that they are not liked, value or accepted by regular teachers who may nickname them according to their labels .This diminishes their self-confidence and they develop a negative feeling of social isolation and rejection thus not making attempt to participate in class or out of class or out of class interactions as supported by Friends and Bursuck, 2002.Teachers should embrace mainstreaming and treat all learners with equal rights

### **8.2 MORTIFICATION AND SOCIAL INTERACTION IN THE MAINSTREAM.**

Learners with special needs and disabilities often feel humiliated and ashamed when they are denied passion from their peer and regular teachers. This causes wounds to their self-respect hence making them to feel uncomfortable in relating well with their classmates as well as their

teachers. They develop fear or embarrassment as it in most cases happen publically when they struggle to form social groups and they end up being ridiculed.

They feel unaccommodated which hinders acquisition of special skills. According to Forness and Kavale, 2002, these learners develop antisocial behaviors such as withdrawal and anxiety because they are not certain whether what they say is going to be accepted or they will end up being laughed at and mocked. It is often bad to subject persons with disabilities [PWDs] to such situation since they can never learn and differentiate right from wrong. All rights should be preserved and skilled personnel should create awareness in order to fight such weird behaviors.

### **8.3DIGRADITION AND SOCIAL INERACTION IN THE MAINSTREAM**

Teachers who do not have skills in special need education often get challenged with dealing with learners with special needs, are supported by Hersh and Walker, 1983. Due to this negative attitude they have low expectations towards learners with special needs. Whenever they make effort to interact with them it is out off without giving much or any attention to their feelings. This kills their spirits towards social interaction thus remaining isolated from the rest of the group.

Teachers should note that disability is not inability and having a disability does not mean that this learners do not have feeling. Although positive attitude towards learners with special needs does not occur automatically, teacher are key models and therefore they should faster better interaction between handicapped and non-handicapped in the main stream. As supported by Fiedler and Simpson, 1987, teachers should facilitate surpassing and sensitivity towards these learners with special needs and disabilities.

#### **8.4 HUMILIATION AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS IN THE MAINSTREAM**

It is with no doubt those learners who are disabled who are more often humiliated by regular teacher as well as their peers. This poses a big challenge on how they develop social group and social interaction amongst themselves and with adults. A non-disabled learner making a mistake while expressing himself or herself has no big deal than to a child with disability. Regular teacher tends to loose patient, make faces and mummer so often when learners with handicapped are expressing themselves. They are denied the opportunity to contribute their wills because they are viewed as irrelevant.

Teacher should embrace each uniqueness because despite each learner being unique as an individual has varying needs and abilities. Researches has been done of the effect of rebelling and according to MacMillan et al, 1982, it is difficult to make conclusions. Therefore, all stakeholders should use the labeling wisely not to hurt and cause social interaction difficulties and among learner with special needs and especially in the mainstream. Lack of social skill is one of the primary reasons that learners with disabilities are humiliated by teachers and non-disabled peers.

#### **8.5 DISGRACE AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS IN THE MAINSTREAM**

In contempt of the advantages of labeling learners with special needs, teachers including special educators, we are note ardent supporters of the cabling process. This is because it encourages stereotyping and discrimination that leads exclusionally practices in the mainstream, educational and social arenas as commented by Hobbs, 1975.

Labeling has a negative impact and social interruption thus causing disgrace to learners with special needs and abilities. They tend to lose their esteem because peers and some of the regular

teachers do not have respect to them. They tend to feel unworthy of any kind of respect. They also feel that their condition causes disgrace to their teachers, peers and significant others hence remaining withdraw and enable to form a stable social group or even future relationship.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

Based on the critical analysis finds, learners with special needs and disabilities are negatively affected socially as a result of labeling the mainstream setup. Lack of awareness on the essence of labeling has significantly contributed to the issue of social isolation and rejection among others with special needs in the mainstream. Also lack of enough special educators can also lead to high rate of social misfits. Negative attitude and stereotyping thoughts associated with labeling continue to hinder social interaction among learners with disabilities. Failure of the stakeholder to empathetically understand each learner unique needs is another barrier to social interaction I the mainstream. Therefore, the intervention strategies which could solve the effects and challenges of labeling on social interactions in the mainstream where at classroom level, the school level and government level.

## **10.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

For accommodation of all learners regardless of their status in the mainstream and ensuring active social interactions, the administrators should work hand in hand with special educators' establishments of guidance and counseling sessions for remedial measures for learner who are socially disadvantaged. This is because special educators cannot man this alone. Regular teachers who are not interested should be identified and made expert in understanding and adopting suitable strategies for enhancing social interactions among learner with disabilities in mainstream.

Learners with poor social interactions skills in the mainstream despite their labels should make use of their environment to acquire and achieve these skills. It is therefore a collective responsibility of all stakeholders including the state government to obtain the goal fixed with the help of attitude based learning environment. All teachers should bridge the gaps between learners with Special needs and their peers and the teachers themselves. They should be able to lift up their social interaction in their possible ways by connecting actions with consequences. They should also formulate strategies that could be used to social interactions in the main stream

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