



Theoretical and Conceptual Framework for an Assessment on how inclusive Environment Hinders Pupils with Dyslexia Academically in two Secondary Schools in Kabwe

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ABSTRACT

This manuscript is an extract of a theoretical framework and conceptual framework from a Master's an on-going study of an assessment on how inclusive environment hinders pupils with dyslexia academically in two secondary schools in Kabwe in Zambia. Among the factors that can affect these learners are such as environment, cognitive and behavioral. It is argued that if these factors are identified and addressed learners with dyslexia can benefit a lot academically under inclusive education system.

Key Words: Dyslexia, secondary school, Inclusive education, hinders, academically.

1. INTRODUCTION

There is a problem in identifying how inclusive environment hinders learners with dyslexia. This is supported by Worthy, J. Natalie, S and Daly, A [10] who stated that, there are problems in helping learners with dyslexia in schools though there are dyslexia policies and practices because many pupils with dyslexia are leaving the classroom without necessary reading skills needed though the number of learners with dyslexia enrolled in school is on the rise.

Internationally there is a lot of support towards learners with dyslexia. For example, M, Pino and L, Mortari [8] conducted a study on the inclusion of students with dyslexia in higher education. In his study he found that legislative changes have been introduced to prevent discrimination and to provide equality of access to education. For instance, the United Kingdom's disability discrimination Act of [2] established disabled people's right to participate fully in the educational process and imposed an obligation education institution to provide equality of access to education through removing barriers and implementing academic adjustments and auxiliary aids and services. The study by Pino and Mortari highlighted the support given to learners with

dyslexia in form of legislative; however the study did not pay attention to identify how inclusive environment hinders pupils with dyslexia academically.

In addition, Stampoltzis, A.Tsitsou, E. Plesti, H. and Kolouri, R. [9] conducted a study on the learning experiences of pupils with dyslexia in a Greek education institution in Greece. They found that a recent law legally recognizes pupils with dyslexia as a distinct category of pupils who need special educational support and teaching. It was further found that, educational environment must be restructured so that all kinds of pupils can flourish within them, rather than being disabled by them. Furthermore, Macmillan, N.M.[7] states that the individuals with disabilities Act (IDEA) originally passed in 1975, has ensured that no child will be excluded from receiving an appropriate education, regardless of their disability. This act states that children with disabilities need to be educated with their peers who do not have disabilities in a general education classroom. Stampoltzis and others pointed out a law that legalizes special education support and teaching. Macmillan identified the right to education for learners with dyslexia as one way of supporting these learners. Both Stampoltzis and others as well as Macmillan did not pay notice on how inclusive environment hinders pupils with dyslexia academically.

In Africa, there is a lot of support towards learners with dyslexia. For instance, Leseyane, M. Mandende, P. Makgato, M and Cekiso, M [4] conducted a research on dyslexic learners' experiences with their peers and teachers in special and mainstream primary schools on North-West province in South Africa. In their study they found that in South Africa they followed international trends in accordance with the social rights discourse and adopted inclusive education. Subsequently the policy document, Education white paper number 6 of 2001, was developed and it outlined and accepted its responsibility to provide a supportive inclusive education environment for learners with special needs. This was in response to the implementation of the No child left behind policy. Leseyane, M. Mandende, P. Makgato, M and Cekiso, M [4] identified promotion of legalizing inclusive education as one of the support given to learners with dyslexia, though the study did not pay particular attention to inclusive environment that hinders learners with dyslexia academically.

In Zambia learners with dyslexia are equally supported. For instance, Chuunga, M [1] conducted a research on teachers' practices in the teaching of reading and writing towards supporting learners with reading difficulties at lower primary. In his study he found that the Zambian government is a signatory to the Salamanca statement of Africa endeavors of building capacity for the provision of quality education to all learners including those with dyslexic problem. The private sector has also put in place some efforts to help learners with disabilities. For example, Lusaka international

community school is committed to offering an inclusive curriculum for all pupils whatever their needs or abilities. They recognize the need to identify and support pupils with barriers to learning and strive to enable them reach their full potential within their school community. They provide differentiated curriculum in which teachers set suitable learning challenges and respond to pupil's diverse learning needs LICS [5]. The form of support which Chuunga pointed out was that of providing high quality education to learners with dyslexia. LICS recognized the need to identify and support pupils faced with barriers to learning and strive to enable them reach their full potential, this includes learners with dyslexia. In this case both Chuunga and LICS did not highlight on how inclusive environment hinders learners with dyslexia academically.

There has been various support towards learners with dyslexia at international level, for instance in United Kingdom, in Africa for instance in South Africa and in Zambia. Despite the effort of putting up legislation in place, help from most teachers and stakeholders, the problem of reading among learners with dyslexia still exists. Therefore, the study is an assessment on how inclusive education hinders pupils with dyslexia academically in two secondary schools in Kabwe.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is a problem of identifying how inclusive environment hinders learners with dyslexia. Although there have been efforts of putting up legislation in place for learners with dyslexia in inclusive setting at international level for instance in United Kingdom and help from most teachers and stakeholders towards learners with dyslexia in inclusive settings both in South Africa and in Zambia. In addition in Zambia high quality education has been promoted and it's a policy towards learners with dyslexia. However, the problem of identifying what hinders learners with dyslexia in inclusive environment academically still exists. This study therefore is an assessment on how inclusive environment hinders learners with dyslexia academically.

2.1 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the ongoing study is to explore on how inclusive environment hinders pupils with dyslexia academically.

2.2 Research Objectives

- To establish how inclusive environment hinders learners with dyslexia
- To establish views of learners with dyslexia on inclusive environment.
- To establish the measures to be put in place in order to help learners with dyslexia academically in an inclusive environment

2.3 Research questions

- How does inclusive environment hinders learners with dyslexia?
- What are the views of learners with dyslexia on inclusive environment?
- What measures those have to be put in place in order to help learners with dyslexia in an inclusive environment?

2.4 Significance of the study

It is hoped that the ongoing study will generate information on dyslexia on how inclusive environment hinders learners with dyslexia academically. The findings of the study might also contribute to the body of knowledge on how inclusive environment hinders pupils with dyslexia academically.

2.5 Study sites

The research will be conducted in two schools in Kabwe district at Kasandamalombe secondary school and Mwashii secondary school because learners with dyslexia are found in these two schools.

2.6 Limitations

The use of questionnaire in this study is a limitation because some respondents may not answer all the questions as expected. Despite this limitation, the results can be generalized. This is on the basis that respondents will be encouraged to be honest because the research will promise them that their identity will not be exposed.

2.7 Delimitation of the study

The study sites for this study will be Kasandamalombe secondary and Mwashii Secondary school and no other schools because of the chosen sites having learners with dyslexia.

2.8 Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Framework

The following theoretical framework and conceptual framework would be used while assessment on how inclusive environment hinders learners with dyslexia academically in Zambia.

3. LITERATURE SURVEY

Theoretical Framework

This study will be guided by the causal modeling framework by Frith, U [3]. The causal model framework is about dyslexia and provides a useful guide and clarifying some of the issues relating to the concept of dyslexia; in essence, it could be regarded

as the most helpful way to define and explain dyslexia at present. In this study the main concepts of this model which are taken into consideration are environment, cognitive and behavioral.

One of the aspects of the causal model is the environment. According to Frith, U [3] concerning the issue of dyslexia, the environment is understood to have factors that result from literacy problem and does not depend on severity and the nature of dyslexic problem but on the nature of interaction with other people in the environment and complexity in writing system and effectiveness of teaching.

In this case the environment at play is an inclusive one. To a learner with dyslexia in a school setup, inclusive environment will affect him or her in the following ways; the learner will face literacy problem and that is the failure to acquire reading skills which consists of listening and comprehending of what someone is reading. For example, in a classroom situation a learner will fail to read accurately any text being given to him or her by the teacher. At times when a child reads from right to left, skips some words, omitting some words, reads some words wrongly and these affect the dyslexic child in academic performance.

In the case of interaction in an inclusive environment, a learner with dyslexia can be affected by lack of contact with others or by being teased. For instance, in a classroom situation if a learner fails to read correctly other learners may start laughing or tease that learner in various ways, this way a learner may be affected in the acquisition of the reading skills which will result in poor academic performance. Another example would be that because of the reading problem the child has other learners may not accept to study with that learner as a result the child will face difficulties in understanding academic concepts.

The other issue of complexity of writing system can come about in a life of a learner with dyslexia due to his or her failure in comprehending what the child is reading. For instance, the child will have problems in writing some words, letters, sentences, spellings and symbols correctly, reverse writing and wrong formation of letters and this will lead to academic failure.

The issue of effectiveness of teaching can also affect a learner with dyslexia. For instance, if the teacher is not fully trained to handle a learner who is dyslexic, the teacher will use wrong teaching methods such as lecture method which may result in the academic failure of the learner rather than the use of individualized education program which is tailored to the needs of a learner with dyslexia which may result in the academic success of the learner.

The other aspect of the causal model is cognitive. According to Frith, U [3] cognitive implies that the child with dyslexia seem to have specific processing deficits in the mind which causes poor reading performance in a child. The understanding of the cognitive aspect in relation to the learner with dyslexia in an inclusive environment concerning the issue of specific processing deficits is as follows;

First one of the specific processing deficits is visual sequencing in which a learner with dyslexia will have problems such as reversing or misreading numbers or letters and reading words incorrectly, if a learner is not provided with oral instructions by the teacher.

The second specific processing deficit is spatial disorientation in which a learner with dyslexia will have difficulty with oral reading, if the child is not encouraged to read silently and not provided with more reading time.

The third specific processing deficit is visual memory in which a learner with dyslexia will have difficulties in remembering what was seen as well as difficulties in reading comprehension, the child will also have poor recall of information that is if a learner is not provided with handouts which are clearly written for rehearsals.

The fourth specific processing deficit is visual figure ground in which a learner with dyslexia has trouble picking one line of print from another while reading, if not given chance to use markers to highlight difficult words.

The fifth specific processing deficits is dysgraphia in which a learner with dyslexia will be unable to form letters correctly and cannot read their own writing if oral work is not given to them. If the five specific processing deficits are not addressed they make a learner with dyslexia perform poorly academically in an inclusive environment.

Another aspect of the causal model framework is behavior. According to Frith, [3] behavioral aspect implies that the child with dyslexia seem to have behavioral problems which causes poor reading performance in a child. The understanding of behavioral aspect in relation to the learner with dyslexia in an inclusive environment is as follows; learners will display reading difficulties for instance they will show repetitions, additions, transpositions, omissions, substitutions and reversals in letters, numbers and words, this will make them not perform well academically. The other behavioral sign which is displayed by learners with dyslexia is reading with little comprehension, they will spell wrongly phonetically; this will make them answer questions wrongly and fail to perform well academically. The other behavioral aspect

has to do with articulation problem, where they replace standard sounds with un standard sounds, for instance in a word “rice” the child will replace the standard letter “R” with the un standard letter “L” and pronounce the word as “lice”. If these behavioral problems are not attended to by the class teacher in an inclusive environment the learners with dyslexia will end up failing academically. In order to help the learners with dyslexia the teacher needs to put up measures to address the needs of learners with dyslexia under behavioral aspect.

The causal model fits well with the current research to be carried out which is an assessment on how inclusive environment hinders pupils with dyslexia academically because it will help the researcher in identifying what hinders the learners with dyslexia in an inclusive environment from performing well academically. This is because the causal model focuses on environmental, cognitive and behavioral aspect which will act as a framework for this ongoing study.

4. PROPOSED WORK

4.1 Conceptual framework

This conceptual framework is on how inclusive environment hinders pupils with dyslexia academically. The arrows show a reflective path that the researcher will adopt throughout the research process.

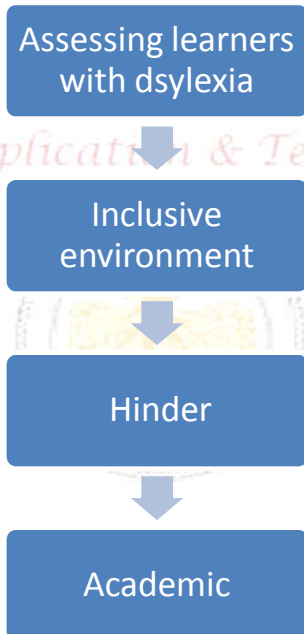


Figure 4:1 Diagrammatic representation conceptual framework on assessing learners with dyslexia

Source: Researchers

The framework starts with the exploring the meaning of assessing learners with dyslexia, then followed by its four factors namely environment, cognitive and behavior. Thereafter, the framework will end with explanations the meaning of hinder and academic.

4.2 Assessing learners with dyslexia

Assessing learners with dyslexia involves making judgment of learners' performance and abilities including strengths and weaknesses that can be used as an input into teaching or instruction process. Logsdon, A [6] defines dyslexia as a reading and language disorder that is typically identified in children after they take assessments and evaluations to spot reading disorders. Dyslexia testing is the first step in identifying strategies for dyslexic learners. School use evaluations for diagnosis of dyslexia. The dyslexia evaluation process can provide important information to help teachers in planning the pupil's program.

Analysis of the pupil's responses to test items and his performance on various scales of standardized dyslexia tests can provide important insights into how he learns. Special education teachers and school psychologists can work closely with the dyslexic pupil to analyze the child's work and gain immediate feedback and information on the types of reading and writing errors the student makes. This information can be very helpful in determining which teaching strategies may help the learners in developing special instruction Logsdon, A [6]. Pupils with dyslexia or disorders in basic reading and reading comprehension can benefit from the specific information this type of analysis provides. In the ongoing study the learners that will be assessed are those who will be found in an inclusive environment.

The subsequent paragraphs therefore, try to explain how involving inclusive environment, cognitive and behavior can be used in identifying how inclusive environment will hinders pupils with dyslexia academically in two secondary schools. An inclusive environment is a general education classroom in which pupils with and without disabilities learn together and in this study inclusive environment is composed of three aspects namely environment, cognitive and behavior. Environment is everything around us; it can be living or non-living. Cognitive is relating to being conscious intellectual activities such as thinking, reasoning, remembering, imagining or learning words. Behavior is the way in which one acts or conducts oneself especially towards others.

4.3 Aspect of Environment

As regard to the environment, to a learner with dyslexia in a school setup, inclusive environment will affect him or her in the following ways; the learner will face literacy

problem that is the failure to acquire reading skills which consists of listening and comprehending what someone is reading. Also a learner with dyslexia can be affected by lack of contact with others or by being teased in an environment Frith, U [3].

4.4 Aspect of cognitive

Aspect of cognitive implies that the child with dyslexia seems to have specific processing deficits in the mind which causes poor reading performance in a child. The understanding of the cognitive aspect in relation to the learner with dyslexia in an inclusive environment concerning the issue of specific processing deficits means that the learner has problems in visual sequencing in which a learner will have problems reversing or misreading letters, numbers and words. The other understanding is that the learner will have spatial disorientation were a learner has difficulty with oral reading and also visual memory which are the difficulties in remembering what was seen as well as difficulties in reading comprehension Frith, U [3].

4.5 Aspect of behavior

Behavioral aspect implies that the child with dyslexia seem to have behavioral problems which causes poor reading performance in a child. The understanding of behavioral aspect in relation to the learner with dyslexia in an inclusive environment concerning behavior is as follows; learners will display reading difficulties for instance they will show repetitions, additions, transpositions, omissions, substitutions and reversals in letters, numbers and words, this will make them not perform well academically Frith, U [3].

The learner with dyslexia requires conducive environment, right behavior and cognition in order perform well academically. When these three aspects are identified and addressed or put into consideration learners with dyslexia will perform well academically but if they are not there will be academic failure. Under an inclusive environment, the three aspects can hinder the learning of a learner with dyslexia.

4.6 Hinder

Hinder simply means preventing or obstructing or make difficult to accomplish, and act of obstacle. Learners with dyslexia will be hindered from the learning process in an inclusive environment due to lack of cognitive skills for reading, the reading behavior and hostile environment of being teased and poor teaching method. For instance, in a classroom situation the learner may be hindered to read correctly due to his or her cognitive failure which could be observable in the reading behavior being portrayed and other learners may start laughing or tease that learner in various ways, the teacher may also use wrong teaching methods such as lecture method rather than the use of individualized education program which is tailored to the needs of a learner with

dyslexia also a learner with dyslexia can be affected by lack of contact with others or by being teased, in this way a learner may be hindered in the acquisition of the reading skills which may result in poor academic performance. When a learner with dyslexia is not hindered by the various aspects mentioned the learner will perform well academically or will have fewer problems during the learning period.

4.7 Academic

Academic means a way that relates to studying and thinking and practical skills. It can also refer to a way that relates to schools and to the ability to study and think. When an inclusive environment is conducive for learners with dyslexia, they will not be hindered from acquiring education and this may result in good academic performance among learners with dyslexia.

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion, the paper concludes that the causal modeling theoretical framework and representation conceptual framework on assessing learners with dyslexia can be used as one of the model in identifying factors affecting learners with dyslexia academically in inclusive schools in Zambia. It involves these aspects, the environment, cognitive and behavioral. Thus the aspect of environment will be a guide in identifying if the nature of interaction with other people in the environment and complexity in writing system and effectiveness of teaching and learning of these learners with dyslexia hinder them academically. The aspect cognitive will be a guide in identifying how a specific processing deficit in the mind of learner with dyslexia which causes poor reading hinders a child academically. Finally, the aspect of behavior will be a guide in identifying if the behavioral problems which the child has which causes poor reading performance in a child hinder the child academically.

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