

*Climbing up the Challenging Hill from Exclusion to Inclusion*

## **Climbing up the Challenging Hill from Exclusion to Inclusion: Teachers and Administrators' Attitudes towards Integration in Tanzanian Primary Schools**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This study looked at the attitudes of regular and special education teachers towards school integration of children with special educational needs in Tanzanian primary schools. Specifically, the study aimed at finding out if length of service and teaching experience affected teachers' attitudes. In addition, the study examined the differences in teachers' attitudes when different disabilities are involved. A total of 288 respondents were involved in this study. The results showed that most respondents had positive attitudes, although the majority from every category did not support the idea of educating gifted, normal and mentally retarded children in the same class. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to determine whether there were differences in attitudes towards integration among teachers according to their length of service and experience. The results revealed that number of years of service had no significant effect on respondents' attitudes. In addition, Scheffe test was used to determine whether respondents' attitudes differed towards children with different disabilities. Scheffe test results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between general education teachers and special education teachers on attitudes towards deaf children being in regular classrooms. General education teachers were more positive than were the special education teachers. It was concluded that there is need for intervention strategies that are focused on changing teachers' attitudes towards integration, if success is to be achieved.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The history of special education globally reveals that special schools began to emerge in Europe in the 15th Century, starting with those with sensory impairments. Before the establishment of those schools, many children with disabilities were killed and some were used as objects of entertainment. Later they were placed in institutions because of society's negative attitude towards them. 'People with disabilities (PWDs) were considered to pose a social

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threat, to contaminate an otherwise pure human species' (Kisanji, 1999 p. 4), so they had to be isolated from the mainstream.

#### **History of formal and special Education in Tanzania**

In Tanzania, the history of special education is short, although, like other African countries, Tanzania did not experience the period of institutionalization. However, there is one thing similar to the European situation, and that is that the first school in Tanzania was also for children with sensory impairments. In 1950, while Tanzania was still under the colonial administration of the British government, Buigiri School for the Blind was started by the Anglican Church and later supported by the Christophel Blinden Mission. It has to be noted that formal education in Tanzania was also started by non-governmental organizations. The German missionaries introduced formal education in Tanganyika in the late 1880s (Furley & Watson, 1978; Lema, 1972).

Many of the first schools for learners with disabilities were special schools, which discriminated the learners in terms of gender and type of disability. At present, however, some integrated schools have been established in Tanzania. Now there are about 27,422 learners with disabilities in Tanzanian primary schools and of these 16,165 are males and 11,257 are females (The United Republic of Tanzania, 2009). Tanzania is at present offering primary education for some students with different disabilities including visual impairments, hearing impairments, mental retardation, physical impairments, autism, and multiple disabilities, in both special and integrated schools.

#### **The teachers' attitudes towards integration**

Article 28 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child 'asserts the basic right of every child to education and requires that education be provided on the basis of equality opportunity' (Farrel & Ainscow, 2002 p.7). Access to education is the right of all children, regardless of their differences. To bring about equity and quality education in schools, teachers' attitudes are key. Several studies have revealed that the attitude of teachers is considered to be a vital and important factor in the success or failure of integration. The quality of education requires a lot of factors to be in place, including trained teachers, who have positive attitude and who use teaching methods that meet individual needs in the classroom. It should be noted that just having a teaching certificate does not make someone an effective teacher. It should be understood also that access to education and provision of quality education to all children can never be separated. For, they are inextricably linked. 'Along with parents, teachers are at the heart of ensuring a good quality of life for learners with special educational needs, regardless of where education takes place' (Mitchell, 2008 p. 1). Studies have also shown that in the field of education, 'teachers' attitudes have been considered one of the major factors

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guaranteeing the success of integration of students with special educational needs' (Padeliadu & Lampropoulou, 1997, p.174).

Countries may have laws on integration, but the key person to implement such laws is the classroom teacher. Garvar-Pinhas and Schmelkin (1989) maintained that while mainstreaming may be imposed by binding laws, 'the manner in which the classroom teacher responds to the needs of the special child may be a far more potent variable in ultimately determining the success of mainstreaming than administrative or curricular strategy' (p.38). Underlining the importance of the teacher, LaMore (1984) asserted that getting children with disabilities in general classrooms is only half of the triumph; 'preparing teachers and classmates to receive them is the other half' (p.32).

Some studies have looked at teachers' experience and attitude towards integration. For example Harvey (1992) did a study which revealed that experience does not have some measurable and positive effect upon attitudes towards mainstreaming. Studies done by Frith and Edwards (1981), Marston and Leslie (1983) and Thomas (1985) made similar conclusions, namely, that teachers' attitude towards mainstreaming was not associated with teaching experience. Another study done in Haiti by Dupoux, Hammond, Ingalls and Wolman (2006) concluded that 'teachers' attitude toward integration was not associated with years of experience.

#### **Administrators' attitudes**

Both teachers and school administrators are significant for the effectiveness and/or success of any educational program (Tungaraza, 2009). Studies have revealed that 'the positive attitude of teachers towards mainstreaming of children with special needs is a prerequisite for successful integration' (Hayes & Gunn cited by Chazan, 1994 p. 262). In addition, Prillaman (1984) stated that teachers' attitude towards children with special needs 'is more likely to be positive if they observe a positive and supportive attitude in their school administrators' (p. 46). Cline (1981) insisted on the importance of the Principal's attitude towards integration when he said, since the Principal is the 'school's gatekeeper, mainstreaming has a poorer chance of success if the Principal is not knowledgeable concerning the educational needs of the children to be managed' (p. 174). In a study carried out in four inclusive schools in Tanzania, Tungaraza and Mkumbo (2008) discovered, to their dismay, that some of the head teachers were not even aware that their schools were considered inclusive schools and so titled.

Tanzania has only one teacher training college that trains special needs education teachers at certificate and diploma levels. The majority of teachers in integrated schools either have very little or no knowledge at all about meeting the needs of learners with disabilities. Those who have some training are trained only for one specific disability and have no skills and knowledge and even courage to deal with other learners with different disabilities. Lack of training may adversely affect the attitudes of those teachers.

### **The purpose of the study**

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of teachers and head teachers towards educating learners with disabilities together with those without disabilities in Tanzanian regular primary schools. Specifically the study explored possible differences in attitude that existed between regular teachers, special education teachers and head teachers by using the variable of years of experience.

### **Research questions**

1. Do years of teaching experiences affect the respondents' attitude towards integration?
2. Do head teachers', general education teachers' and special education teachers' attitudes differ towards children with different disabilities according to their own experiences with those children?

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Area of study**

This study was conducted in ten integrated primary schools in five administrative regions, namely Dar es Salaam, Iringa, Mbeya, Tabora and Tanga. The regions and the schools were randomly selected. The five regions were selected because they had integrated primary schools and the schools selected were those which admitted learners with special needs.

### **Population**

A survey design was employed to collect information from teachers and head teachers. The head teachers of the ten integrated schools and both special education teachers and regular teachers were involved in this study. The respondents included 238 regular schoolteachers, 40 special education teachers and 10 head teachers.

### **Data collection techniques**

The instruments used in this study were the modified version of the Attitudes towards Mainstreaming Scale (ATMS) (Berryman, Neal, & Berryman, 1980) and structured interview method. ATMS was developed to measure attitudes towards integrating students with disabilities into the regular classroom and it consists of 18 five point Likert-type items. In this study only four statements were used to collect data which answered the research question number one. These statements are number 1, 2, 3 and 18, and they were selected because they deal with the feasibility of teaching normal children and children with

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special needs in the same classroom. Statements 4 to 17 were used to answer research question number two, though they were modified to deal with the only disabilities found in schools. The interviews were carried out after the respondents had completed the ATMS in order to avoid possibilities of their responses being influenced by the interview process.

#### **The four items of the ATMS used for this research question number one were:**

1. In general integration is a desirable education practice.
2. Students should have the right to be in regular classrooms according to the Universal Primary Education Act (UPE).
3. It is possible to teach gifted, normal, and mentally retarded students in the same class
4. Integration will be sufficiently successful to be retained as a required educational practice.

## **THE RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF THE FINDINGS**

### **Demographic information**

Ten integrated primary schools in five regions of Tanzania were involved in this study. The students with disabilities who were enrolled in the schools visited were those with visual impairments, hearing impairments, mental retardation and physical impairments.

The study involved 288 teachers as respondents. Of these, 77 (26.7%) were male teachers and 211 (73.3%) were female teachers. Their ages ranged between 20 years and above 51 years. Only nine respondents were 51 years and above. Seventeen teachers were between 20 and 25 years old, while 24 teachers were 46 years old and above. The majority of the respondents (58.7%) were between 31 and 40 years.

Training and qualifications: All respondents were trained teachers except five who indicated that they were teaching, but had no teaching certificate. It was revealed also that only 23 (8.0%) of the total respondents (288) were trained to deal with learners with special needs. These teachers were regular teachers before they returned to college to be certified as special needs education teachers. They reported to have taught in regular schools for not less than three years before going back to college. The information collected from the respondents revealed that 208 (72.2%) of the teachers were Grade A and 47 (16.3%) were Grade B teachers. Thirty-three teachers (11.5%) said that they were Grade C teachers.

Teaching experience: The respondents' teaching experience ranged from one year to 43 years. However, 187 (64.9%) teachers indicated that they had no previous experience of working with learners with special needs. Only

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101 (35.1%) of the teachers had worked with learners with disabilities. Teachers were asked if they were working with learners with special needs at the time of the study. Only one hundred and fifty seven (54.5%) teachers responded that they were working with learners with special needs. This meant that not all learners with special needs received services and support from all teachers in the schools in which they were admitted.

Research question number 1: Do years of teaching experiences affect the respondents' attitudes towards integration?

The researcher used items 1, 2, 3 and 18 of the Attitudes Towards Mainstreaming Scale (ATMS) developed by Berryman, Neil, & Berryman (1980). The ATMS used a Likert Scale to determine respondents' degree of agreement with these four statements.

Notwithstanding the differences in percentages, the responses to research question number one, using the four ATMS items show generally that the respondents favour the principle of integration. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine whether significant difference occurred in attitudes towards integration mean scores by years of experience. The results revealed that years of experience had no significant effect of respondents' attitudes. This may mean that experience does not necessarily change people's attitudes. Similar results were found by Berryman and Berryman (1981) who found that there was no significant difference in attitudes towards integration among groups according to years of experience. However, regardless of the fact that ANOVA showed no significant differences, a number of noteworthy points came to light from the examination of the teachers' responses under each of the four items of ATMS as reported under each item.

#### **In general, integration is a desirable education practice**

The researcher wanted to know if the number of years the teachers have taught affected their attitudes towards integration. Statements 1, 2, 3, and 18 of the ATMS were used to answer this research question. Respondents were asked to use the responses strongly disagree, disagree, undecided, agree and strongly agree to respond to the four items of the ATMS.

The responses for statement number one, which says that 'In general, integration is a desirable educational practice', revealed that there were more respondents in each group who agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. Statistics show that 53.4 percent and 50.9 percent of teachers with experiences between 1-5 years and 6-10 years agreed or strongly agreed respectively. For teachers with 11-15 years of experiences, 46.3 percent either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement while 36.2 percent of teachers between 16-20 years of experience agreed or strongly agreed. Fifty percent of teachers with teaching experience from 21-25 agreed and only five percent strongly agreed. Only 35.7 percent of the teachers with teaching experience between 26-43 years either agreed or disagreed.

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**Table 1:** Frequencies and percentages of respondents according to years of experience on S1

	1-5 years		6-10 years		11-15 years		16-20 years		21-26 years		26-43 years		Total	
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Strongly disagree	5	11.1	7	12.7	12	12.9	11	19.0	1	5.0	3	21.4	39	13.7
Disagree	2	4.4	2	3.6	20	21.5	9	15.5	5	25.0	1	7.1	39	13.7
Undecided	14	31.1	18	32.7	18	19.4	17	29.3	3	15.0	5	35.7	75	26.3
Agree	16	35.6	15	27.3	34	36.6	16	27.6	10	50.0	3	21.4	94	33.0
Strongly agree	8	17.8	13	23.6	9	9.7	5	8.6	1	5.0	2	14.3	38	13.3
Total	45	15.8	55	19.3	93	32.6	58	20.4	20	7.0	14	4.9	285	100

Note: Three respondents did not respond and they were dropped for this question

As shown in Table one, there were more respondents who agreed with the statement that ‘In general, integration is a desirable educational practice’ than those who disagreed. This means that many teachers interviewed supported integration. However, the results as indicated in Table one also show that in general, less experienced teachers were more positive towards integration than more experienced teachers except those between 21-26 years of experience. In addition, there is a considerable number of respondents who were undecided and this may mean that some of the teachers were not exactly sure what integration meant. Another explanation may be that some of these teachers were not trained and, therefore, were scared of having children with special needs in their schools. Teachers with many years of experience might not have a good handle on disabilities, since special education itself does not have a long history in Tanzania, and that might have affected their attitudes. In short, the results revealed that more teachers with less experience had shown positive attitudes towards integrating children with special educational needs than teachers with more experience. This is similar to what other researchers such as (Padeliadu & Lampropoulou, 1997) have found, namely, that less experienced teachers were more positive towards school integration.

Students should have the right to be in regular classrooms according to the Universal Primary Education Act (UPE)

The Universal Primary Education Act was introduced in Tanzania in the year 1977. The main purpose was to make sure that at least all children get primary education. The responses for statement number two, which stated that ‘Students should have the right to be in regular classrooms according to the Universal Primary Education Act (UPE)’, revealed that, the majority of the respondents in each age group were undecided. For example, 50 percent of teachers with 1-5 and those with 26-43 years of experience were undecided while 45.5 percent and 40 percent of teachers with experience between 6-10 and 21-25, respectively, were undecided.

In addition, there were more respondents who disagreed or strongly disagreed than those who agreed or strongly agreed. One hundred and seventeen respondents were undecided, 96 disagreed or strongly disagreed



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and 71 either agreed or strongly agreed. There was no significant difference in attitude that was noted, according to years of experience, but the percentages were less for teachers of between 1-5 years and those of between 21-25 years of experience, who either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

It is possible to teach gifted, normal, and mentally retarded students in the same class.

**Table 2:** Frequencies and percentages of respondents according to years of experience on S3

	1-5		6-10		11-15		16-20		21-26		26-43		Total	
	years		years		years		years		years		years			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Strongly disagree	14	31.1	26	47.3	38	40.4	27	47.4	7	35.0	5	35.7	117	41.1
Disagree	19	42.2	12	21.8	27	28.7	15	26.3	8	40.0	3	21.4	84	29.5
Undecided	9	20.0	13	23.6	18	19.1	12	21.1	2	10.0	3	21.4	57	20.0
Agree	3	6.7	4	7.3	11	11.7	3	5.3	2	10.0	1	7.1	24	8.4
Strongly agree	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	5.0	2	14.3	3	1.1
Total	45	15.8	55	19.3	94	33.0	57	20.0	20	7.0	14	4.9	285	100

**Note:** Three respondents did not respond and they were dropped for this question

As indicated in Table 2, the majority of the respondents did not think it was possible to teach gifted, normal and mentally retarded students in the same classroom. Only one teacher in the group of years of teaching experience between 21 and 25, and two teachers in that of 26 and 43 years strongly agreed with the statement. In short, it can be argued that teachers with more experience were a little bit positive on the integration of these learners compared to the other groups. Tungaraza (2009) also found that with the exception of respondents between age groups 46 and 50, and those in the over 51, ‘none of the respondents in other age groups strongly agreed that it is possible to teach gifted, normal and mentally retarded students in the same class’ (p. 105). No teacher from the other age groups strongly agreed with the statement. All in all, twenty-four teachers agreed with the statement, 117 strongly disagreed, 84 disagreed and 57 of the teachers were undecided. These responses clearly indicate that the majority of the teachers, with varying longevity of teaching experience, in this study did not think it was possible to integrate gifted, normal and mentally retarded learners in the same classroom. In their study, Yuen and Westwood (2001) reported that ‘negative attitudes were expressed concerning the feasibility of integrating students with behavioral problems and those with severe visual or hearing

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difficulties or with mental retardation (p. 1), which seems to be congruent with my findings.

Integration will be sufficiently successful to be retained as a required educational practice.

**Table 3:** Frequencies and percentages of respondents according to years of experience on S18

	1-5		6-10		11-15		16-20		21-26		26-43		Total	
	years		years		years		years		years		years			
	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Strongly disagree	3	6.7	4	7.3	2	2.1	5	8.6	1	5.0	2	14.3	17	5.9
Disagree	2	4.4	5	9.1	12	12.6	7	12.1	1	5.0	1	7.1	28	9.8
Undecided	10	22.2	4	7.3	19	20.0	11	19.0	8	40.0	5	35.7	57	19.9
Agree	18	40.0	19	34.5	32	33.7	18	31.0	6	30.0	5	35.7	98	34.1
Strongly agree	12	26.7	22	40.0	28	29.0	17	29.3	4	20.0	1	7.1	84	29.3
Total	45	15.7	55	19.2	95	33.1	58	20.2	20	7.0	14	4.9	284	100

**Note:** Four respondents did not respond and they were dropped for this question

The respondents for this item were more positive than they were in their previous responses. Over 60 percent of the respondents in each group with the exception of the last two groups agreed or strongly agreed that integration will be sufficiently successful to be retained as a required educational practice. Ninety-eight respondents agreed and 84 strongly agreed that integration will be sufficiently successful to be retained as a required educational practice. Seventeen respondents strongly disagreed, 28 disagreed and 57 were not decided. Respondents in the groups with years of teaching experience between 26 and 43 had less people who either agreed or disagreed with the statement, while those in the other groups agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. In addition, these groups had a big percentage of people who were undecided compared to other groups. It may be possible that the respondents had little knowledge of integration and that is why their responses were not positive.

Generally, however, the responses indicated that teachers with less experience were more positively inclined to believe that integration will be sufficiently successful to be retained as a required educational practice than teachers with more experience.

Research question number 2: Do head teachers', regular teachers', and special education teachers' attitudes differ towards children with different disabilities according to their own experiences with those children?

This research question aimed at finding out whether head teachers differed in their attitudes towards integrating children with different special needs, including students with mental retardation, visual impairments, hearing impairments, physical impairment, communication disorders,

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behavior disorders and those students who have health problems. Items 4 to 16 of the ATMS were used to answer this research question.

Scheffe test was used to determine whether respondents' attitudes differed towards children with different disabilities. Scheffe test results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between general education teachers and special education teachers in their attitudes towards deaf children being in regular classrooms. It was revealed that general education teachers were more agreeable that deaf students should be in regular classrooms than were the special education teachers. The differences in group means were significant at .10 level.

Item 4: Mentally retarded children should be in regular classrooms

Teachers were asked to agree, strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree or remain undecided to the items given. Item number four stated that mentally retarded students should be in the regular classroom. Over 80 percent of general education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, 17.1 percent were undecided, while only 2.6 percent agreed or strongly agreed. The responses from the special education teachers were not different either, in that 80 percent of special education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed, 17.5 percent were undecided and 2.5 percent strongly agreed with the item. Eighty percent of head teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed, 20 percent were undecided and none of them agreed or strongly agreed.

The results indicated that the majority of all three groups of respondents did not think children with mental retardation should be integrated in regular classrooms. A study done by Thomas (1985) discovered, likewise, that teachers were against integrating students with intellectual disabilities in the regular classrooms.

Item 5: Visually handicapped students who can read standard printed materials should be in regular classrooms

Statement number five dealt with learners with visual impairment who can read standard printed materials, in other words those with low vision, to be included in the regular classroom. The results revealed that 31.1 percent of regular teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed, 16.4 percent were undecided and 52.6 percent were not decided on the statement. On the other hand, 35 percent of special education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed, ten percent were undecided and 55 percent agreed or strongly agreed. Forty percent of the head teachers strongly disagreed and 60 percent agreed or strongly agreed that visually impaired students who can read standard printed materials should be in regular classrooms. The majority from all the three groups agreed or strongly agreed with the item. Their responses might have been influenced by the fact that reading is the main way people use to learn and if those students can read, then learning with others is possible.

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Item 6: Blind students who cannot read standard printed material should be in regular classrooms

Statement number six was concerned with whether students with visual impairment who cannot read printed materials should be included in regular classrooms. Sixty three percent of the general education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed, 20.4 percent were not decided and 16.6 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the item. For special education teachers, 67.5 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, 15 percent were undecided and 17.5 percent agreed that blind students who cannot read standard printed materials should be in the regular classrooms. Fifty percent of the head teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed, 20 percent were undecided and 30 percent agreed. None of the special education teachers or head teachers strongly agreed with the item. In summary the responses indicated that the majority of the respondents in all the three groups did not approve that such children should be educated in the regular classrooms. These results differ significantly with the responses given for item number five. Perhaps some of these teachers' responses might have been influenced by lack of awareness that blind students can read and write in Braille. Lack of this kind of knowledge may lead to fear that teaching such children may become a big problem. In addition, maybe some teachers were thinking in the traditional way that in order for one to learn, one has to know how to read and write standard prints.

Item 7: Hearing impaired students who are not deaf, should be in regular classroom

Item number seven of the ATMS stated that partially hearing impaired students should be in the regular classroom, and 26.4 percent of the regular teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed, 30.2 percent were undecided and 43.4 percent agreed or strongly agreed. Only 17.5 percent of special education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed, 40 percent were undecided and 42.5 percent of them agreed or strongly agreed. Ten percent of head teachers strongly disagreed, 40 percent were undecided and 50 percent agreed and none of them strongly agreed. As the percentages have indicated most teachers in every group thought that children who are partially deaf should be integrated. Thus, the big number of teachers who were undecided might be due to the fact that most of them lacked direct classroom experience with those children.

Item 8: Deaf students should be in the regular classroom

The results of the regular education teachers who responded to this question showed that, 71.1% either agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, 14.5 percent were undecided or 6 percent either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement. Thirty-three (82.5%) of the special education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed and 17.5% were undecided on the item. None

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of the special education teachers either agreed or strongly agreed with this item. Responding to this item, 90 percent of the head teachers strongly disagreed or disagreed with the item, 10 percent were undecided and none of them either agreed or strongly agreed with the item.

The results suggested that general education teachers were more agreeable that deaf students should be in regular classrooms than were special education teachers. These differences might have been due to the fact that special education teachers who come into contact with these children had better understanding on the difficulties of integrating these children, particularly owing to communication problems. The general education teachers might have been more positive because of the fact that deafness is normally a hidden hard-to-detect disability.

Item 9: Physically handicapped students confined to wheelchairs should be in regular classrooms

The responses from the regular education teachers concerning this item indicated that 23.2 percent of them disagreed or strongly disagreed, 23.6 percent were undecided and 52.2 percent agreed or strongly agreed. Thirty percent of special education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the item, 25 percent were undecided and 45 percent agreed or strongly agreed. Of the head teachers, 20 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, another 20 percent were undecided and 60 percent agreed or strongly agreed that students with physical disabilities and confined to wheelchairs should be in the regular classroom.

The responses from all the three groups show clearly that most of the respondents feel strongly that these children should be integrated. Favorable responses to this item may be due to the fact that, though in Tanzania there are a few schools designated for children with physical disabilities, the majority of these children are enrolled in regular schools all over the country and teachers, whether they are trained or not, have these children in their classrooms. In addition, the fact that their physical problems do not affect their mental functioning may be another reason why the responses are so positive.

Item 10: Physically handicapped students not confined to wheelchairs should be in regular classrooms

The majority of the respondents in all the three groups either agreed or strongly agreed with the item. The results revealed that 69.1 percent of the general education teachers and 71.8 percent of the special education teachers agreed or strongly agreed that physically handicapped students who are not confined to wheelchairs should be in regular classrooms. Only 16.3 percent of the general education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed and 14.6 percent were undecided. For special education teachers, 12.8 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed and 15.4 percent were not decided. Ninety

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percent of the head teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the item, ten percent disagreed and none of them was undecided.

The positive agreement that was expressed by the majority of the respondents on this item is an indication that students with physical disabilities are not seen as having limited abilities to learn academically. Most often their disabilities do not interfere with their academic learning ability, and teachers do not have to modify their lessons and teaching strategies to meet their special needs. The percentages of those who agreed or strongly agreed in each group are higher than for those under item nine perhaps because these children require less or no modification at all of the physical environment. In most cases, it seems that teachers are more concerned about those children whose disabilities affect their academic performance than the other disabilities that do not affect the cognitive domain.

Item 11: Students with cerebral palsy who cannot control movement of one or more of their limbs should be in regular classrooms

Seventy nine percent of the regular education teachers either disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, 12 percent were undecided and 8.2 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the item. The majority (87.5%) of special education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed, 2.5 percent were undecided and ten percent agreed and none strongly agreed. Eighty percent of head teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed, ten percent were undecided and another ten percent agreed.

Notwithstanding the fact that children with cerebral palsy are not necessarily mentally retarded, in Tanzania many people do not see this difference. Once a child is identified as having cerebral palsy he/she is also labeled as mentally retarded. It is perhaps due to this misunderstanding that the majority of the respondents responded negatively on this item. Persons with cerebral palsy have abnormal, involuntary, and/or coordinated motor movements and the severity can range from mild to severe (Gargiulo, 2003).

Item 12: Students who stutter should be in regular classroom

Very few regular education teachers (9.4%) disagreed or strongly disagreed with item 12 while 23.1 percent were undecided. The majority of regular education teachers (67.5%) agreed or strongly agreed. A little bit of over 21 percent of the special education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed, 18.4 percent were undecided and 60.6 percent agreed or strongly agreed that students who stutter should be in regular classrooms. All head teachers agreed or strongly agreed that students who stutter should be in regular classrooms.

It is possible that most of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed because usually these children are not many in the schools and those previously admitted might have done well academically. In addition, in

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Tanzania many people do not consider stuttering as a disability and there are no special schools or services for these children, anyway.

Item 13: Students with speech difficult to understand should be in regular classroom

Speech disorders include disorders of voice, articulation and fluency, and a person may have more than one speech disorder (Hallahan & Kauffman, 1997). The responses for this item differed to some extent between the three groups of respondents. About 39 percent of the regular education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed with the item, 32.3 percent were undecided and 28.9 percent agreed or strongly agreed. For the special education teachers, 28.2 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed 38.5 percent were undecided and 33.3 percent agreed or strongly agreed. Twenty percent of the head teachers agreed or strongly agreed, 40 percent were undecided and another 40 percent agreed. None of the head teachers strongly agreed that students with speech difficult to understand should be in regular classrooms.

The responses of all the respondents for this item show that the number and percentages of respondents who agreed outnumber those who did not agree with the item. However, in every group of respondents, the percentages of those who were undecided were high, almost similar to those who agreed. It is possible that many of the respondents were not certain how problems arising from speech difficulty might affect students' academic performance. Students of this type are usually enrolled in regular schools and perhaps those whose problems are severe may not even be in school. Some people have confused speech problems with deafness, and, as was reported under item eight, most respondents did not think deaf children should be in regular classrooms.

Item 14: Students with epilepsy should be in regular classroom

Some children have health problems that affect learning. One of the most common health impairments are seizure disorders. A seizure disorder is also known as epilepsy. This is 'a sudden, temporary change in the normal functioning of the brain's electrical system as a result of excessive, uncontrolled electrical activity in the brain' (Gargiulo, 2003 p. 558).

General education teachers, special education teachers and the head teachers were asked to respond to this item. Teachers' responses showed that 21.3 percent of the general education teachers strongly disagreed or disagreed and 26.8 percent were not decided on this. The results showed that one hundred and twenty two (51.9%) of general education teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Twenty five percent of the special education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed, and 17.5 percent were undecided. However, 57.5 percent of special education teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. None of the head teachers either strongly

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disagreed or disagreed with the statement that students with epilepsy should be in regular classrooms. On the other hand, 22.1 percent of the head teachers were undecided and 77.8 percent agreed or strongly agreed with the statement.

It is obvious that the majority of the respondents in each group supported the idea that children with epilepsy should be in the regular classroom. Although 22.2 percent of the head teachers were undecided, none of them thought these should not be included in the regular classroom. Perhaps the respondents' responses have been influenced by the fact that in Tanzania epilepsy is not seen as a disability. These children always attend school with other children without discrimination and sometimes some of their problems are not even known to some of the teachers or fellow students.

#### Item 15: Children with diabetes should be in regular classrooms

At present diabetes is threatening the lives of both children and adults. 'Diabetes results when the pancreas stops producing or produces too little of the hormone insulin', and 'when this happens, the cells do not absorb glucose, and unused sugar builds up in the blood' (Turnbull, Turnbull, Shank, Smith and Leal, 2002 p.377).

The results showed that only 4.7 percent of general education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed that students with diabetes should be in the regular classroom and 13.4 were undecided. The majority of these teachers (81.9%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement. Only two (95.2%) of the special education teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed, 12.8 percent were undecided and 82 percent agreed or strongly agreed that children with diabetes should be in regular classrooms. On the side of the head teachers, all of them (100%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that children with disabilities should be in regular classrooms.

The majority of the respondents in each of the three groups also favored the idea that students with diabetes should be integrated. One explanation for these results is that most people in Tanzania do not regard diabetes as a disability, but just as a disease that can be healed and leave someone free to continue with his or her daily activities including learning. Diabetic children have always been included and teachers usually do not face academic problems with such children unless the problem is so severe that it affects school attendance and learning.

#### Item 16: Students with behavior disorders who cannot really control their own behavior should be in regular classroom

Teachers were asked to respond to this statement and 22.1 percent of the regular teachers either disagreed or strongly disagreed and 27.7 of them were undecided. The majority of these teachers (50.2%) agreed or strongly agreed that students with behavior disorders who cannot control their own behaviors



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should be integrated. Special education teachers' responses revealed that 23.7 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed, 31.6 percent were undecided, 44.7 percent agreed with the item and none of them strongly agreed. Twenty percent of the head teachers disagreed or strongly disagreed and 40 percent were undecided. In addition, 40 percent of the head teachers agreed or strongly agreed with the item.

Regrettably, Tanzania does not have specific and special programs for students with behavior problems, although these children are found in the classrooms. Most teachers just view them as children with discipline problems. Punishment has been used as the main method to control their behaviors. It is, therefore, possible that the respondents' agreement on this item just indicated that these children can just be integrated because teachers are able to handle this problem. No doubt some children have suffered because of this kind of opinion. Knowledge about these children might have given teachers clues that the children with behavior disorders have more than discipline problems, and that teachers need to know them and their problems. Such children may not benefit from punishment alone; teachers need different management strategies so as to help them learn and live with others in amicably.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

### **Summary**

Tanzania, like many other world nations, is struggling to make sure that all children receive equitable and quality education. This study aimed at finding out teachers' attitudes towards integration according to years of teachers' experience on the job. In addition, the study tried to find out if teachers' attitudes differed towards children with different disabilities. Two hundred and eighty eight teachers were involved and of these, 77 (26.7%) were male teachers and 211 (73.3%) were female teachers. Their ages were between 20 years and above 51 years. The respondents' teaching experience ranged from one year to 43 years. However, 187 (64.9%) teachers indicated that they had no previous experience of working with learners with special needs.

The results of this study have shown that the majority of teachers supported integration. The analysis of variance indicated no statistically significant differences among groups according to years of experience. However, the majority of teachers did not think it was possible to teach gifted, normal and mentally retarded students in the same classroom. Other results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between general education teachers and special education teachers on attitudes towards deaf children being in the regular classroom. General education teachers were more agreeable that deaf students should be in the regular classroom than were special education teachers.

## CONCLUSION

Studies have revealed that 'negative attitudes of teachers and adults are the major barrier to inclusion' (UNESCO, 2003 p.24). In addition to those teachers who did not support integration in the present study, some of the respondents also were undecided. This is not a good sign because teachers play a big role in any educational reform and their attitudes are vital for any educational change to succeed. Previous studies have also suggested that when students with special needs are integrated successfully in regular classrooms the success is largely dependent upon the positive attitudes of teachers (Yuen & Westwood, 2001). Integration will not succeed if all teachers do not embrace the change and work hard and willingly to meet the needs of all children. Education for All (EFA) goals will only be realized when all children, including children with special education needs, are given equal access to, and quality, education. Efforts to educate and support teachers and society in general, should not be overlooked. Such efforts must be well planned and effectively and efficiently implemented. 'Education has to take on the difficult task of turning diversity into a constructive contributory factor to mutual understanding between individuals and groups' UNESCO, 2003, p.5).

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