

Influence of Remedial Program On academic Performance of Pupils in Public Primary Schools in Nyahururu District, Kenya

*Jane Nyambura Munene, Dr. Kimiti R. Peter, Dr. Njoka

Department of Educational Administration, Karatina University

Corresponding Author: Jane Nyambura Munene,

Abstract: *Since the introduction of free primary education, pupils' academic achievement has emerged as an issue of concern among parents and other stakeholders in Education not only nationally but also in Nyahururu District. In Nyahururu District, enrollment has gone up without corresponding increase in learning facilities. The use of remedial programme in primary school has continued to characterize teaching and learning in primary schools. However, some education stakeholders have divergent attitude towards the use of remedial programme. This study sought to establish the impact of attitude of teachers and pupils towards remedial programme on academic performance of pupils in primary schools in Nyahururu District. The study adopted a descriptive survey design. The study targeted head teachers, teachers, pupils, Zonal Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (ZQASO) and Zonal Education Officers (ZEO). 138 research participants were selected using census and stratified random sampling techniques. Structured questionnaires and interview schedule were used to collect data. Data was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation. The results were represented in tables. The study concluded that teachers' and pupils' attitude was a significant factor in determining the effectiveness of remediation. From the findings, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that remedial teaching programme improved pupils' performance. However, remediation often clashed with other co-curriculum activities making it difficult for them to concentrate during remedial lessons while their peers and friends were playing on the fields. The study recommends that the Ministry of Education should formulate policies regarding remedial teaching to harmonize it with other school activities.*

Keywords: *Public primary schools, pupils, attitude, remedial education, academic performance, teachers*

Date of Submission: 17-08-2017

Date of acceptance: 13-09-2017

I. Introduction

The 1990 Jomtien Conference on Education For All (EFA) and the 2000 Dakar World Education Forum (WEF) targeted Education For All by 2018 (Bruns, Mingat & Rokotemala, 2003). This was a great effort aimed at achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on education. Towards realizing this goal, the government of Kenya introduced Free Primary Education (FPE) in all public primary schools in 2003 (Mwarigi, 2003). The introduction of Free Primary Education was a move at realizing Universal Primary education (UPE). This is because primary education was considered a fundamental means of acquiring basic literacy skills, positive attitude and values (Bogonko,1992). However, expansion of education has not been accompanied by adequate physical facilities to promote learning. Adequate learning materials and proper school management guarantee pupils academic achievements. According to Avramidis (2000) some pupils lag behind in academic attainment due to inadequate learning resources. This is more common among the nomadic families who move with their children thus abandoning school programme (Avramidis, 2000). Some pupils also abandon school due to political instability. To bridge this gap some schools have adopted remedial teaching where they try to bring these pupils to the academic level of their peers (Desai, 2006). Remedial education programme is as an educational programme that schools routinely use to bring low achieving learners' academic performance closer to the standards of their grade in school (Melton, 2010). In other words, it is the learning and teaching programme designed to bring learners who are lagging behind up to the level of achievement realized by their peers (Smith & Wallace, 2011). Remedial education is necessary where the learner is cognitively average or above average in intellectual ability and is therefore able to quickly assimilate the missed concept and relate it to the rest of the topic or area of study (Chakuchichi & Badza, 2004). The remedial programme acknowledges the shortcomings that any educational system is bound to have, considering the human weaknesses and therefore attempts to save pupils who might not otherwise achieve their full potential if there is no early detection and intervention (Chireshe&Mapfumo,2002). Globally, remedial learning has been going on not only in primary schools but also in secondary schools and tertiary colleges (Eldah, 2005). In the United States and Canada, remedial education is common at all levels of schooling. The most common remedial programmes focus on

developing basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics (Sigafoos & Elkon, 1994). Remedial programmes are based on the assumption that a student underachieves because of extrinsic factors such as poverty and insufficient access to quality education. In America, remediation has become an important part of basic education. According to 1996 study on National Center for Education statistics (NCES) nearly 34% percent of all incoming first year learners require remedial education in reading, writing and mathematics (Conroy, 1993). Community colleges play an epical role in remediation as they provide services to over 60 percent of their first year learners (Conroy, 1993). Also the Federal Title Program administered by the US Department of education provides funding for remedial programs in approximately 90 percent of all schools in the district. A school becomes eligible for the funds for remedial programme based on the estimated number of children in the district who come from low income families (Reusen, 2001; Avramidis, 2000). In Canada, funding for remedial education is more decentralized. School district receives general education funding from their territory's ministry of education and each district decides on its own how much to fund the remedial programs for academic upgrading (Topping & Whitely, 1999; Haskell, 2000).

In Ireland, the formal provision of remedial education within the national school system coincides with the genesis of a more child centered philosophy of education. At first, the service developed slowly and tentatively, but the format of provision as it expanded tended to reflect contemporary trends in education. In European countries, remedial education program points out that by relating the individual learning differences to pupils' developmental situations, teachers can develop appropriate activities that meet the needs of their learners (Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001).

In developing countries education is often hindered by large class size and low teaching quality and poverty. In Kenya 50 percent of families live below poverty line and high teacher absenteeism is common in many schools. This makes it necessary to remediate weak pupils. Remedial programme can be designed for any pupil with the defining trait is simply that they have reached a point of under preparedness (Heinman, 2001). Some pupils also attend schools of poor quality and don't receive adequate grounding in mathematics and languages to prepare them for secondary schools. Other pupils may have transferred in and out of schools or missed school a lot creating gaps in their education which contribute to lack of knowledge in core subjects. Pupils may also have learning disorders and other issues which have impaired their ability to learn.

While proponents argue that remediation provide opportunities for underprepared learners to gain the necessary competencies, critics suggest that it provides disincentives for learners and that remedial lesson impede individual progress (Kuester, 2000). In remedial programs pupils are usually given assessment to determine their level of competency. Based on test results, pupils are placed in classes which are most likely to provide benefits. Classes are often small with a focus on high teacher pupil interaction which can take place early morning before normal routine lesson which begins at 8.20am, after lunch before afternoon lessons begins at 1.30 pm to 2.00pm and evening tuition after the days lesson are over from 3.30pm to 4.30pm.

Unlike in developed countries, remedial programme is not funded in Kenya. Some schools offer remedial lessons while others do not. Sadly, experience and evaluation of the programme indicate that there are still large numbers of learners who slip through the net at primary school and miss one or two basic skills or concepts in reading or mathematics. Yet early detection and assistance by remedial education teachers are required for these learners to grab a chance to develop their potentialities (). Observations made by the researcher show that there was a gradual increase in challenges faced by some teachers in implementing remedial programmes. School administrators complained about lack of expertise among teachers and lack of resources for the school to assist learners with remedial lessons. Some teachers do not demonstrate positive attitude toward implementation of remediation in schools.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Parents, teachers and other stakeholders in education continue to invest resources in remedial programme in order to improve performance of pupils in primary schools in Kenya. Yet, the real value of such programme in assisting learners improve on their academic performance is not clearly known especially in primary schools in Nyahururu District. In some schools, teachers continue to implement remedial programme by organizing early morning lessons, make up lessons, afternoon lessons and evening tuitions beside weekend classes. The Government in its various policy guidelines seems to appreciate the value of remedial programme in helping learners improve their academic performance but in an equal measure discourage its commercialization owing to the lack of information on its importance. This has prompted this study to examine the impact of the attitude of teachers and pupils towards remedial education on pupils' academic performance in primary schools in Nyahururu District.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study was guided by mediation theory of learning propounded by Vgotsky (1978). Vgotsky (1978) examined how social environment influences the learning process and suggested that learning takes place

through the interactions learners have with their peers, teachers and other experts. Consequently, teachers can create a learning environment that maximizes learners' ability to interact with each other through discussions and collaboration. Vgotsky (1978) emphasizes the mediational role of the teacher as the goal between the learner and the content being taught. The goal is realized when the teacher utilizes remedial programmes to assist pupils to improve on what was not clearly understood during the routine classroom teaching/learning activities.

2.2 Concept of Remedial programme in Education

Remedial education is a part of education which is concerned with the prevention, investigation and treatment of learning difficulties from whatever source they may emanate and which hinder normal development of pupils (Eldah, 2005). Remedial education is given to children who function at a lower than average level because of certain learning or behavioral problem, but it can also be offered to pupils who achieve at higher than average level. According to Sifafoos and Elkins (1994) pupils who need remediation portray several characteristics that guide the teacher in their intervention. Generally, learners who require remedial learning have poor memory, short attention span and are easily distracted by other things, have relatively poor comprehensive power, lack learning motivation and self-confidence and exhibit relatively slow self-expectation. They are also weak in problem solving, fail to grasp information quickly and mix things up easily. Others have difficulty in understanding abstract concepts and need more time to complete assignment or tasks.

According to Conroy (1993) there are various ways in which remedial programs can be carried out in primary schools. It is the obligation of remedial teacher to choose that best that suits his/her learners. The method chosen should reinforce the foundation of learning, help pupils overcome their learning difficulties and develop their potentials. Topping and Whitely (1991) emphasize the need for detailed planning of the programme, careful selection and matching of children, a wide choice of reading materials, the appropriate training of tutor and tutee and the careful monitoring and evaluation of the whole process. Many learning institutions especially primary schools have devised other teaching lessons other than regular classes. In Kenya, primary schools normal lessons begin at 8.20 am and end at 3.30pm. Remedial teachers can teach the weak pupils early in the morning before the lessons starts, after lunch from 12.40pm to 2.00pm before the afternoon lessons and later in the evening after 3.30pm. According to Okwach (2015), before preparing for remedial lessons, teachers should identify pupils' diverse learning needs so that they may design appropriate teaching plans to facilitate effective learning. Since pupils have different characteristics in learning, teachers must devise different learning activities.

2.3 Teachers and Pupils Attitude on Remedial Programme

Teachers are perceived to be integral in the implementation of remedial education (Haskell, 2000). Other studies acknowledge that remedial programme can only be successful if teachers are part of the team driving this process (Horne, 1983; Malone, Gallagher & Long, 2001). While some studies point out that teachers' attitude to remedial programme is typically positive (Avramidis, 2000) other studies reveal that teachers' attitude may be influenced by the disquiet they experience regarding the impact such a process will have on their time and skills (Kuester, 2000). Researchers note that teachers may resist remedial programme on account of inadequate training (Heinman, 2001). This may result into lowered teacher confidence as they plan for it. Teachers who have not undertaken training on remedial programs may exhibit negative attitude towards the program (Reusen, 2001) while increased training could be associated with more positive attitude towards remediating weak pupils. Several studies support the view that there is no correlation between teachers' attitude towards remedial programme and pupils' performance (Avramidis, 2000). However, other studies that investigated attitude of teachers on remedial programme have found that some teachers are inclined to have more favourable attitude (Leyser & Tappendorf, 2001).

Some of the most comprehensive have focused on teacher demographic characteristics and its influence on attitude towards remedial education. These studies have investigated whether there is any significant correlation between a teacher's age, years of experience and qualification and teachers' attitude towards remedial teaching (Whitting & Young, 1995). Some studies record that old teachers appear to foster less positive attitudes than younger teachers (Cornoldi, 1998). Heinman (2001) and Kuester (2000) concluded that a teacher's level of educational qualification did not significantly influence a teacher's attitude towards remedial teaching. However, studies show that large classes may be viewed as an obstacle to successful implementation of remedial lessons (Agran, Alper & Wehmeger, 2002). Larger classes place additional demands on teachers while reinforcing concerns that all pupils may not receive proper time or attention (Stoler, 1992).

Possessing previous experiences on remedial teaching appears to positively predispose teachers towards remediation (Avisar, 2000). Teachers attitude towards remedial programmes appear to be shaped by the type and the degree of pupils weaknesses (Agran, 2002). The study by Sifafoos and Elkins (1994) found that teachers attitude were less favorable when dealing with pupils with multiple difficulties. Administrative support has also been cited as a significant factor in determining teachers' attitude towards remediation. Teachers feel reaffirmed if the same

school heads foster a positive learning environment for both teachers and learners (Idol, 1994). Teachers believe that support of school heads and other school leaders are critical in order for them to implement remedial teaching practices.

2.4 Effect of remedial programmes and pupils’ academic performance

According to Bereiter (1985) an important aim of remedial education is to teach at faster rate than regular education. So if learners who academically have fallen behind their peers fail to implement faster progress, they will have difficulty to reach the level of their peers. According to Huang (2010) the goal of remedial instruction is to provide low achieving learners with more chances to reinforce the basic knowledge in common subjects, so that they can meet minimum academic standards. To do this, it is important for teachers to make efforts to adapt instruction to learners’ special needs. In the remedial program, personalized strategies are given in order to address each student’s individual needs and to measure their progress. These include creative approaches to teaching and learning through short discussions, cooperative learning activities, assessments and reviews and sample practice opportunities which are all integrated with the science program in the mainstream classes. In order to differentiate the activities of the program with that of the regular classes, PowerPoint presentations, outdoor/field experiences, and interactive game activities were conducted every session. Connells (2009) conducted a study with children of specific reading difficulties. The study established that they presented with a mean reading delay of approximately two years before attending the school. In contrary, some children made little progress. Moses (1998) conducted a study on the effect of structural drills in remedial teaching, and found that the most frequently occurring grammatical error in learners’ written work is the error concerned with subject verb agreement. Desai (2006) developed a remedial program for improving the language ability of children in fourth grade. The results showed that most defects committed by these pupils which included errors on spelling, missing letters and faulty pronunciation were minimized by remedial instruction. Abu (2011) examined the impact of a remedial educational program on English writing skills and the results showed an improved performance after the remediation.

III. Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This design was appropriate because it allowed the researcher to describe, record, analyze and report conditions as they existed. The study was conducted in Nyahururu District of Laikipia County. The target populations were head teachers, teachers, pupils, Zonal Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (ZQASO) and Zonal Education Officer (ZEO). The study involved 20 public primary schools, 536 teachers and 6112 learners, 1 Zonal Quality Assurance and Standards Officer and 2 Zonal Education Officers (ZEOs). The study used census techniques to select one ZQAO and two ZEO and 10 head teachers. The study adopted stratified random sampling to select 10 teachers and 115 pupils, making a total study sample size of 138. Primary data was collected by the use of structured questionnaire. Secondary data were obtained from relevant literature review for instance form dissertations, journal and internet. The test-retest technique was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire. Data was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentages, mean and standard deviation. Results were presented in tables.

IV. Findings And Interpretations

4.1 Teachers and pupils’ attitude on remedial education and its influence on academic performance

The results on the impact of the influence of teachers and pupils’ attitude towards remedial education on pupils’ academic performance are presented in table 1.

Table 1: Impact of teachers’ and pupils’ attitude towards remedial education on academic performance

Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	Std
Teachers embrace remedial teaching programme to improve performance	46%	44%	4%	6%	0%	4.64	0.876
Pupils embrace remedial teaching programs as a way of improving academic performance	37%	27%	20%	13%	3%	4.52	0.975
Teachers attitude towards remedial programmes is shaped by the type and the degree of pupils weaknesses	14%	7%	4%	51%	24%	2.54	0.456
Administrative support is significant factor in determining teachers’ attitude towards remediation	58%	20%	2%	13%	7%	3.70	0.345
The association of remedial teaching to slow learners contribute to low attitude among the pupils	50%	18%	16%	12%	4%	4.16	0.341
Teachers perceive remedial teaching as a means of finishing the syllabus	43%	52%	2%	3%	0%	4.82	0.765
Majority of pupils consider remedial teaching to consume on their break time	41%	52%	2%	5%	0%	4.46	0.567
Parents misunderstand the objectives and rational of remedial programme and associate remedial teachings as a programme for retarded pupils	34%	46%	16%	4%	0%	4.32	0.456

From the findings, majority of the respondents strongly agreed that teachers embrace remedial teaching programme to improve performance as revealed by a mean = 4.64 with standard deviation of 0.876. In addition majority of respondents agreed (mean = 4.52; std dev = 0.975) that pupils embraced remedial teaching programs as a way of improving their academic performance. However, majority of the respondents disagreed (mean = 2.54; std dev = 0.456) that teachers’ attitude towards remedial programmes was shaped by the type and

the degree of pupils weaknesses. Nevertheless, it was noted that majority of the respondents agreed (mean = 3.70; std dev = 0.345) that administrative support was a significant factor in determining teachers' attitude towards remediation. In addition, majority of respondents (mean = 4.16; std dev = 0.341) agreed that the linkage of remedial teaching with slow learners contributed to poor attitude towards remedial teaching among pupils. The study also indicated that majority of the respondents strongly agreed (mean = 4.82; std dev = 0.765) that teachers perceived remedial teaching as a means of completing the syllabus. In addition, the respondents agreed (mean = 4.46; std dev = 0.567) that majority of pupils considered remedial teaching as consuming their break time. Finally, the respondents agreed (mean = 4.32; std dev = 0.456) that parents misunderstood the objectives and rationale of remedial programme and instead associated it with teaching programme for retarded pupils. These findings concur with Huang (2010) who noted that having a child in the remedial programme was often seen by the parents as a sign that their child was mentally retarded or that they were not doing their part as parents with regard to education of their child.

4.2 Relationship between Teachers' and Learners' Attitudes towards Remedial Programme and Academic Performance

The results on the relationship between attitudes of teachers and learners towards remedial programme and academic performance in public primary schools in Nyahururu District are presented in table 2.

Table 2: Correlation between Attitudes of Teachers and Learners towards Remedial Programme on Academic Performance

		Academic Performance
Attitudes of Teachers and Learners Towards Remedial Programme and academic performance	Pearson Correlation	0.948**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000
	N	92

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

As shown in table 2 the relationship between attitudes of teachers and learners towards remedial programme and academic performance was positively and statistically significant ($r = 0.948$; $p < 0.00$). The results implied that when the attitude of teachers and learners towards remedial programme was positive academic performance increased. As such in order to improve the academic performance both teachers and pupils should have a positive attitude towards remedial programme. This is supported by the fact that some schools did not even try to provide guidelines or policy to implement remedial education in their school. Lack of policy to provide guidelines for effective implementation of remedial education programme in primary schools may make teachers and pupils have different views on how to implement remedial education.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusions

From the results obtained, the study concluded that teachers' and pupils' attitude towards remedial education was a significant factor in determining pupils' academic performance. Thus both teachers and pupils embraced remedial teaching programs as a way of improving pupils' academic performance. Teachers perceive remedial teaching as a means of completing the syllabus. However, some pupils viewed remedial teaching as consuming their break time.

5.2 Recommendations of the Study

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, there is a great need to ensure that parents and guardians are informed about the merits of remedial programme. There is also a need of revising the time tables so that they can accommodate all school activities, thus enhancing the effectiveness and efficiency of remedial programs.

References

- [1]. Abu, M. (2011). The Effect of Using Language Games on EFL Vocabulary Achievement: The case of seventh grade students in Jerusalem District. Unpublished M.A. Thesis.
- [2]. Agran, M. (2002). Curriculum and instruction in general education: Implications for service delivery and personnel preparation. *Journal of the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps*, 25, 167-174.
- [3]. Agran, M., Alper, S. & Wehmeyer, M. (2002). Increasing the problem solving skills of students with developmental disabilities participating in general education. *Remedial and Special Education*, 23, 279-288.
- [4]. Avisar, M. (2000). Ottoman Pottery Assemblages from Excavations in Israel. In B.J. Walker ed. *Reflections of Empire: Archaeological and Ethnographic Studies on the Pottery of the Ottoman Levant*. Boston. Pp. 7-14.
- [5]. Avramidis, E. (2000). Student teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children with special educational needs in the ordinary school. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 16(3), 277-93.
- [6]. Bereiter, E. (1985). Remediation at the community college: Student participation and outcomes. *New Directions for Community Colleges*, 129, 17-26
- [7]. Bogonko, N. (1992). *A History of Modern Education in Kenya (1895-1991)*. Nairobi: Evans Brothers Ltd.

- [8]. Chakuchichi, D. D. &Badza, A. M. (2004).Orthopedagogics and Orthodidactics, Harare: ZOU.
- [9]. Chireshe, R. & Mapfumo, J. (2002). Focus on the Slow Learner; the Zimbabwean Scene. African Journal of Special Needs Education Vol. (7) (2), 126-134
- [10]. Connell, R. (2009). Good teachers on dangerous ground: towards a new view of teacher quality and professionalism' Critical Studies in Education, 50 (3), 213-229.
- [11]. Cornoldi, C. (1998). Teacher attitudes in Italy after twenty years of inclusion. Remedial and Special Education, 19(6), 350-356.
- [12]. Desai, E. (2006). Evaluation of the Impact of a Remedial Mathematic Programme in Mexico City; Paper Submitted to Mexican University.
- [13]. Eldah N. (2005). Primary education in Kenya: Access and policy implications. XZairobi: Institute of Policy Analysis and Research.
- [14]. Haskell, R. (2000).Transfer of Learning, Volume: Cognition and Instruction Hardcover.
- [15]. Heiman, J. (2001) Peer Rejection and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder Symptoms: Reciprocal Relations through Ages 4, 6, and 8.
- [16]. Huang,T. (2010). Teachers coping with changes: Including students with disabilities in mainstream classes: An international view. International Journal of Special Education, 19(2).
- [17]. Kothari, R. (2009).Research Methodology: Methods & Techniques, New Age International Publishers, New Delhi.
- [18]. Kuester, M. (2003). The attitudes of teachers towards the inclusion of students with disabilities in grades 7-12 in the regular physical education class in Newfoundland and Labrador high schools. In M. Dinold, G. Gerber, & T. Reiner, European Congress Adapted Physical Activity, Vienna: Verlag.
- [19]. Leyser, Y., &Tappendorf, K. (2001). Are attitudes and practices regarding mainstreaming changing? A case of teachers in two rural school districts. Education, 121(4), 751-761.
- [20]. Melton, K.L. (2010). Effects of Remedial Education; A Thesis Submitted to the Kent State University.
- [21]. Moses, D. (1998). The cost of remedial education in higher education. Journal of Development Education, 25,2-8
- [22]. Mwamwenda, T. S (2004). Educational Psychology-An African Perspective, Durban: Butterworths.
- [23]. Reusen, J (2001). Developmental reading instruction, academic attainment and performance among underprepared college students. Journal of Applied Research in the Community College, 10, 127-136
- [24]. Saxon, D. P. &Boylan, H. R. (2001). The cost of remedial education in higher education. Journal of Development Education, 25, 2-8.
- [25]. Sifafoos, J. & Elkons, D. (1994). Developmental reading instruction, academic attainment and performance among underprepared college learners. Journal of Applied Research in the Community College, 10, 127-136.
- [26]. Smith,S. E. & Wallace, O. (2011).What is Remedial Education? International Journal of Multidisciplinary Academic Research Vol. 4, No. 4.
- [27]. Stoler, J. D. (1992). An Elementary Approach to High School Reading Remediation; Applying Elementary Practices to the Problem of Adolescent Reading Remediation, Washington: Summer Publishers.
- [28]. Townsend, S. B. & Whitely, G. (1999). The Need for a Remedial Qualification within Inclusive Education.
- [29]. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press.
- [30]. Wehmeyer, M. (2002). Self-determined assessment: Critical components for transition planning. In C. L. Sax & C. A. Thoma (Eds.), Transition assessment: Wise practices for quality lives(pp.25–38). Baltimore: Brookes
- [31]. Weissman, J, Silk, E & Bulakowski, C. (1997). Assessing developmental education polices, Research in Higher Education, 38,187-200
- [32]. Whiting, M., & Young, J. (1995). Integration: Social justice for teachers. Paper presented at the Australian Association for Research in Education Conference., Hobart, Tasmania.

Jane Nyambura Munene. "Influence of Remedial Program Onacademic Performance of Pupils in Public Primary Schools in Nyahururu District, Kenya." IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME) . vol. 7. no. 5. 2017. pp. 45–50.