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**Teaching and Learning Difficulties that hinder academic performance of students with
mental challenges**

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July, 2022

Certification

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled “Teaching and learning Difficulties that hinder Academic performance of students with mental challenges is the work of Kyomugisha Kellen submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Masters of Education in special needs.

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to whoever contributed directly or indirectly to the achievement of this research project

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to investigate teaching and learning difficulties that hinder academic performance of learners with mental challenges in two selected special schools of Rwanda. The study addressed the following objectives: to find out whether teaching methods used in special schools affect academic performance of learners with mental challenges, investigate challenges faced by teachers when teaching learners with mental challenges in special schools, identify whether teaching materials used in special schools affect academic performance of learners with mental challenges. The researcher used descriptive survey design. The research was conducted in two special schools of HVP GATAGARA Gikondo, Kicukiro District and CENTRE HUMURA Ndera Gasabo District. The target population was Two Hundred (200) respondents that included Hundred (100) learners with mental challenges, two (2) teachers and two (2) administrators in CENTRE HUMURA and ninety (90) learners four (4) teachers and two (2) administrators of HVP GATAGARA Gikondo in Academic year 2019-2021. In this study purposive and simple sampling techniques were used to select teachers and administrators while learners were all selected because they were few in number. Questionnaires, interview guide and observation checklists were used to collect data on teaching and learning difficulties that hinder academic performance of learners with mental challenges. Descriptive statistics was used to present and analyze the results of the study. The data showed that although many respondents agreed that the teachers' teaching methodologies were appropriate in special schools there were others who disagreed that methodology of requesting learners to do research, give source of knowledge, where there was scarcity of materials means that methods that teachers used in teaching and learning were not appropriate. Teachers revealed challenges they face during teaching in special schools as teaching materials were not satisfactory. The school management took measures of system of team working; establishing regular budget to support special education, recruitment of teachers who are trained about special education; and digital library. Teachers are recommended to be provided with in-service training in the form of workshops. Once the teachers are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills related to the education of learners with mental difficulties, their views and perceptions towards special education for learners with mental challenges will change.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

% Percentage

& And

NCPD: National Council of persons with Disability

CWDs: Children with disabilities

DPO: Disabled people organization

EDPRS: The Economic Development and poverty reduction strategy

EFA: Education for all

ESSP: Education sector strategic plan

IDEA: Individual with disabilities education act

MINEDUC: Ministry of Education

No: Number

P: Page

ICT: Information and computer Tools

PWDs: People with Disabilities

REB: Rwanda Basic Education Board

SEN: Special educational needs

SNE: Special Needs Education

SPSS: Statistical package for social sciences

WHO: World Health Organization

CHAPTER ONE:INTRODUCTION

1.0 . Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope and limitation and conclusion.

Background of the study

Mental health means “a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community “World Health Organization. Mental disorders are a quite broad term and characterized by some combination of disturbed thoughts, emotions, behavior and relationships with others. This includes anxiety, depression, schizophrenia and substance abuse (Johnsson, 2014a).

Current situation of mental difficulties globally, it's 1 million people estimated in 2017. The largest number of people had an anxiety disorder, estimated at around 4 percent of the population (Ritchie, 2018). Mental health problems appear to be increasing in Africa. Between 2000 and 2015 the continent's population grew by 49%, yet the number of years lost to disability as a result of mental and substance use disorders increased by 52%. In 2015, 17.9 million years were lost to disability as a consequence of mental health (Sankoh, 2018).

According to international standards, teaching and learning of learners with mental difficulties requires appropriate teaching methodologies to fully have good academic performance but unfortunately students have limited access to teaching materials, teachers are not trained on how to handle them, adapting holistic approach to have pedagogical practices successfully, limited access to learning centers like play grounds due to limited resources, finance and people who think students with mental difficulties are useless (Mupa & Chinooneka, 2015).

Mental problems can affect both teaching and learning process. An appropriate use of teaching methods can impact knowledge and skill of learners with mental disability. If someone is experiencing difficulty in controlling his/her symptoms or behavior, or is in a crisis, you may need

to help out. In these situations, teachers do not stay calm and professional to let the student tell them how they can be most helpful (Aperribai et al., 2020).

Direct death in Africa can result due to substance use disorders, self-harm, suicide and other malnutrition diseases. The only direct death estimates result from eating disorders, which occur through malnutrition and related health complications. Excessive Alcohol can cause brain disorder; However, Suicide deaths are strongly linked although not always attributed to mental health disorders (Dattani et al., 2021). As a result, direct attribution of suicide deaths to mental health disorders is difficult. Nonetheless, it's estimated that a large share of suicide deaths links back to mental health. Studies by (Brådvik, 2018) suggest that in Africa people with depression, risk is around 20 times higher than in other countries.

Many studies in Nigeria suggests the differing nature of self-harm due to mental disturbance and a high percentage of self-harming behaviors are carried out through more lethal methods such as poisoning (often through pesticides) and self-immolation. This means if not controlled at early stages especially in schools, many self-harming behaviors can prove fatal, even if there was no clear intent to die (Sivaraman & Naumann, 2020).

Mental health problems can affect a student's energy level, concentration, dependability, mental ability, and optimism, hindering performance. Research suggests that depression is associated with lower grade point averages, and that co-occurring depression and anxiety can increase this association (Saha, 2021).

In Rwanda mental health challenges are 20% mostly due to Genocide because of traumatic – experience such as witnessing a murder or sexual assault, hiding under corpses, losing a family member or threatening for their lives. Most of the research regarding mental health in Rwanda is connected to the genocide and traumatic experiences. In refugee camps following the genocide prevalence of mental health problems was estimated to 50% which affect level of thinking in schools (Ng & Harerimana, 2016).

Fourteen years after the genocide Munyandamutsa, Mahoro Nkubamugisha Paul, Marianne Gex-Fabry. Ariel Eytan 2012 estimated the prevalence of Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to 26%,

which led to low education, high age and loss of both parents. The patients showing signs of Post-traumatic stress disorder(PTSD) also turned out to have a higher prevalence of somatic symptoms as well as other mental disorders (Munyandamutsa et al., 2012).

Parents with PTSD have shown higher levels of anxiety and depression in Rwanda while children born shortly after the genocide show no signs of PTSD and lower symptom levels of anxiety and depression than the ones born before the genocide. Children born before also display higher levels of maltreatment by parents. Also it seems that the more violence a family has been exposed to, the more violence will occur within the family threatening the mental health of the descendants (28, 32). With this said it might be too early to rule out the theory of transgenerational trauma within Rwanda, but also that more interest is to take in family violence(Johnsson, 2014b).

Rwanda is still a very poor country with bigger number of the children growing up with additional risk factors of mental illness than for example in Sweden.It should also be remembered that when the country is getting richer, the inequalities among people are likely to rise, and as mentioned inequalities makes a risk factor for mental health problems (Timsit, 2019).

Poverty is not only an increased risk of development, but a mental disease because an empty stomach is an empty mind. So without proper care this can affect someone mental thinking capacity. The country is not only lacking psychiatrists; also other important resources are under dimensioned. There are only 382 psychiatric beds all over the country compared to 3244 in Sweden, even though 3 million more inhabitants, and the expenditures on psychotherapeutic medicines only 2 895 dollars per 100 000 people and year compared to 3 700 000 dollars in Sweden (Kruk et al., 2018).

The young generation are held back because of their mental illness and problems which has affected the development of the country during last years, so teaching and learning difficulties need to be investigated to know the causes of mental illness among the generation born in Rwanda even after Genocide (Johnsson, 2014b).

1.2 Problem Statement

Disability issues are increasingly being discussed and addressed in education and wider society, mental health issues remain shrouded in stigma. There is little understanding of mental health among families and communities or in schools, leading to negative attitudes and fear regarding family members or learners with mental ill-health. In Education, staff specializing in supporting learners with health and disability issues often lack the knowledge, skills and confidence to provide support to learners experiencing mental ill-health and their families. Due to lack of support in providing the right support, counselling techniques, learners develop depression, hopelessness, anxiety, lack of concentration leading to dependability. The progress being made around policy and practice for disability-inclusive education often wrongly excludes mental health, and this urgently needs to be redressed. In order to make more progress, certain myths and misunderstandings need to be addressed and broken down (Lewis & Davidson, 2019).

Though Rwanda has made efforts to support people with disabilities including people with mental illness, however, students with mental problems still faces difficulties to their academic performance.

Moreover, little is known about teaching and learning difficulties that hinder Academic performance of students with mental problems. Lack of this information, may affect the achievement of sustainable development goals in special education need programs. Therefore, this study aims to find out Teaching&Learning difficulties that may affect Academic performance of students with mental challenges.

1.2.1 General objective.

The study sought to find out Teaching and learning difficulties that hinder academic performance of learners with mental challenges in two selected schools of Rwanda.

1.3 Objectives of the study.

The study sought to:

1. Find out whether the teaching methods used in special schools affect academic performance of learners with mental challenges.

2. Investigate difficulties faced by teachers when teaching learners with mental challenges in special schools.
3. Identify whether teaching materials used in special schools affect academic performance of learners with mental challenges.

1.4 Research questions

1. How do teaching methods used in special schools affect academic performance of learners with mental challenges?
2. What difficulties do teachers face when teaching learners with mental challenges in special schools?
3. How can teaching materials used in special schools affect academic performance of learners with mental challenges?

1.5 Significance of the study

First of all, this research will be significant to the researcher herself since it will be a partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Education in Special Needs Education and will add on knowledge. The research finding also may be important to the teachers teaching in special schools because the finding may help these teachers to adapt teaching methods to minimize difficulties which can hinder academic performance of learners with mental challenges. Moreover, when formulating or reviewing existing policies especially for learners with mental challenges, this research may contribute to the management of special schools in Rwanda by guiding policy makers on critical issues to consider in expansion of more schools while ensuring that novice special schools do not reinvent the wheel. It may facilitate other students in literature review.

1.6 Scope and limitation

The research was conducted in two selected special school; HVP Gatagara Gikondo which is located in Kigali city, Kicukiro district and centre Humura located at Ndera, Gasabo district. This study investigated teaching and learning difficulties that hinder academic performance of learners with mental challenges in above schools. This research considered the period of three years from 2019 to 2021.

The study was limited to analyze data due to the fact that the respondents may not give information as required. This study may have also limitation of having short period of time to collect data due to covid control measures and changes of weather.

1.7. Definition of key terms

Performance is defined as the observable or measurable behavior of a creature in a particular state habitually experimental situation.

Academic performance

Academic performance is the result of education it may equally be the extent to which a learner, educator or establishment have attained their academic objectives. This generally is calculated by tests however, there is no common conformity on how it is best tested or which aspects are most important

Mental Illnesses

This refers to any disease or condition affecting the brain that influences the way a person thinks, feels, behaves or relates to others or to his/her surroundings.

Disability

This refers to any loss or reduction of functional ability (resulting from impairment) to perform an activity in the manner or within the range generally considered normal for a human being within the cultural context. It is also a limitation of opportunities that can prevent people who have impairments from taking part in the normal life of the community on an equal level with others. This may be physical or social barriers to full participation.

Accommodation

This is the removal of a barrier to full participation and learning. The emphasis is on access, not outcome. This is done by providing the student with a disability equal access to the content and activities of a course, but not necessarily assuring their success.

Special education

Special education is the practice of educating learners with special educational needs in a way that addresses their individual differences and needs and get what other learners get.

Special school

A special school is a school catering for students who have special educational needs due to severe learning difficulties, like those students with physical disabilities or behavioral problems. Special

schools should be particularly designed, staffed and resourced to provide appropriate special education for children with additional needs.

Resource room

Resource room is a classroom where a special education program can be delivered to learners with a disability and learning difficulty. It is for those learners who belong to a regular class but need some special instructions in an individualized or small group setting for a portion of the day. It is typically a large room in the main school building with lots of facilities for learners with special needs.

1.8 Theoretical Review and Theory of Inclusion (Social Quality)

This theory will be guided by Inclusive mental health theory which is based on mental health counseling that details behaviorism in it, biological, psychodynamic, cognitive, humanistic (D.Miller, 2021). However mental illness cannot be seen outside but need a psychologist to identify. It looks beyond a person's impairment at all the relevant factors that affect their ability to be a full and equal participant in society. This theory shows the need for disability to be addressed at every stage of life and that everyday things should not be a barrier or even a special accommodation. People with disabilities have the right to enjoy the same childhood as their non-disabled siblings and friends such as to attend the local mainstream school, to use public services among others just like anyone else. In line with hurdles learners with mental problems face, the theory contains the following aspects which includes; attitude, materials, trained teachers financial support and attention.

In an Inclusive school, involving attitudes, materials, trained teachers and financial support can be used in identifying hurdles that affect learners with mental problems.

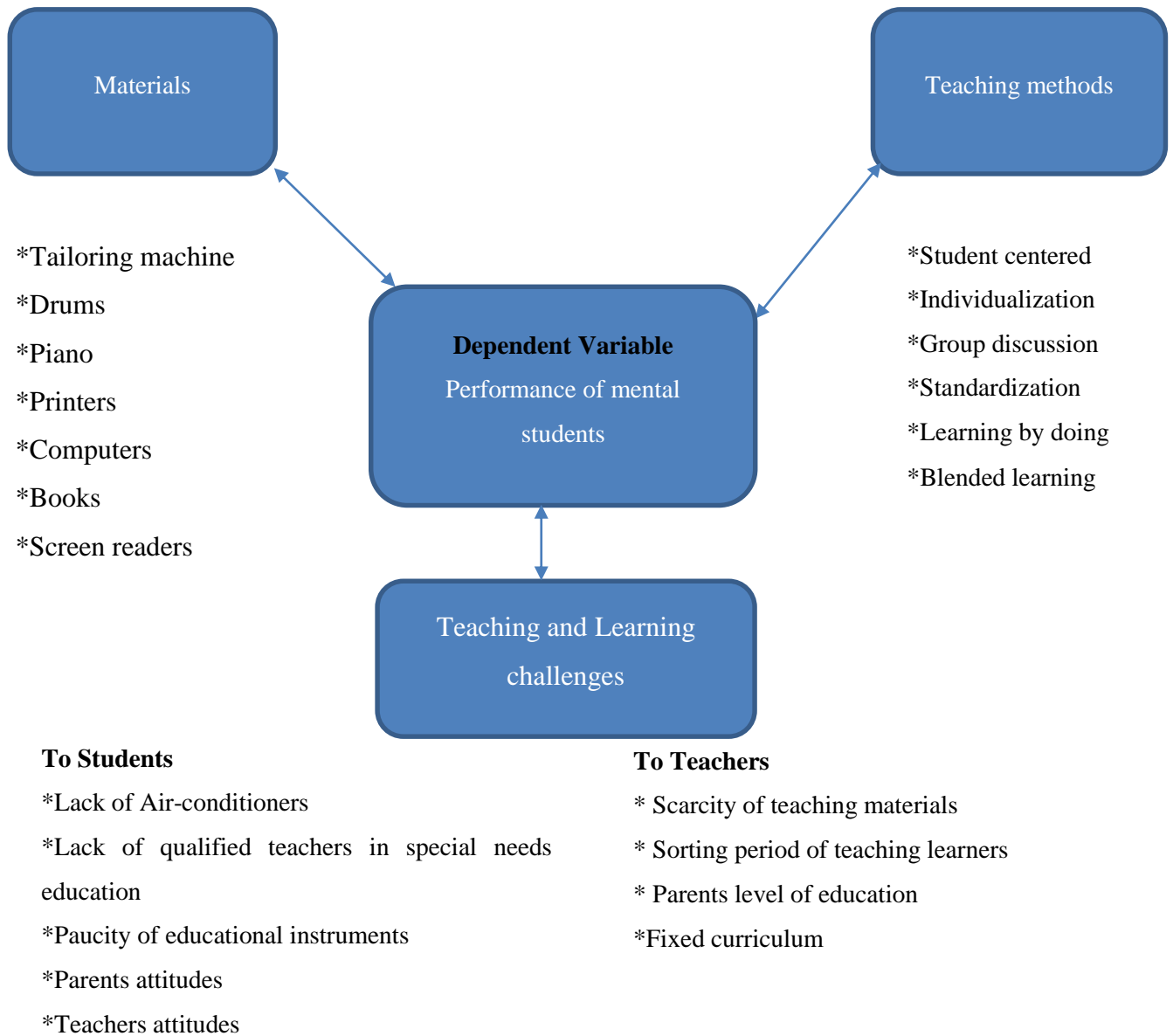
1.8.1 Theory of Inclusion (Social quality)

Social quality' improvement can make a significant contribution to the wellbeing of mental illness learners. Psychiatrists can make a significant contribution' by providing the help necessary to enable people to remain socially included, or to rejoin their leisure, friendship and work communities, This has been defined as 'the extent to which citizens are able to participate in the social and economic life of their communities under conditions which enhance their well-being and individual potential 'Social quality refers to the concepts of social inclusion and also socio-

economic security, social cohesion and empowerment .It is in these areas that psychiatrists, together with others who provide mental health and associated services, can help to make a real difference to the course, consequences and outcomes of mental disorders, both for the patient and for the communities of which they are a part .Interventions designed to have an impact upon social inclusion through Demos channels would include enhancing structures that promise and deliver greater access to services. Actions by psychiatrists to achieve service improvement through Ethnos-related measures would, for example, relate to greater emphasis within the psychiatric training curriculum on understanding the interrelationships between ethnic minority culture and the experience of mental illness. There is in turn an interplay between these two domains: Ethnos-related measures are unlikely to be effective without concurrent Demos-related changes. The undertaking of such activities by psychiatrists may eventually lead to greater social inclusion and a reduction of the stigma of mental illness (Huxley et al., 2018).Both theories emphasize equal full participation in social and economic life of communities where people live despite any type of disability.

Figure 1: Interaction of variables on factors hindering academic performance of learners with mental problems.

1.8.2 Conceptual Framework



The performance of mental learners will be influenced by materials used, teaching methods and teaching and learning challenges that teachers and students meet on the way. This means that when the above methods and materials are available, students will learn well and get good performance but when they are not in place students may fail. Again when teachers challenges are solved, they

will be realable to teach well,as well when students challenges are catered for,they will learn well and drive to good performance.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The above means a survey of scholarly sources on a specific topic (McCombes, 2019). It provides an overview of current knowledge, allowing researcher to identify methods, relevant theories and gaps in existing research. In this chapter the researcher focused on, challenges of learners with mental problems, political, socio-cultural factors and economic factors, attitudes towards learners with mental problems, academic challenges of learners with mental challenges, lack of coordination in service provision, challenges that teachers face when teaching in special schools, opportunities for learners with special educational needs.

2.1 Challenges in teaching methods

Learners need an educational system that meets the individual needs of all learners, promotes independence, and is considered by the achievement of each person in the schools and its surroundings. Learners with mental problems requires favorable teaching methodology like blended learning, group discussion, student centered approach which will enhance a large amount to thrive in educational structure where suitable regulation and services made available in a full array of program options by qualified staff to address each learner's unique educational needs, as required by Public Law 101-476, The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).Teachers don't meet above teaching methodologies due to limited or nonexistent training to acquire special education competencies;limited teaching experiences, limited experience with learners with special education needs and lack of laws requiring special education.Therefore teaching methods are not addressed well because teachers aim at finishing the content without bothering on whether learners understand or not (Sugano & Mamolo, 2021).

2.2 Difficulties that teachers face when teaching in special schools

Teachers teaching in special schools face many challenges. Some are highlighted by special education teachers' where scheduling is a challenge-getting to see all the kids in the time you need to see them so you are not pulling kids from the things they need to be there for in the regular classroom". They expressed frustration with the lack of support provided by general education teachers and co-teaching is not easy. They commented on federally imposed responsibilities: paperwork, state assessments, and meeting required benchmarks, limited support from stakeholders, lack of resources and non-inclusive curriculum, teachers lack competence to deal with learners experiencing challenges, Instructions are affected due to other task given like coaching in special events, Difficulties in preparing lesson plans, Limited knowledge on special education curriculum, Insufficient materials needed in teaching special education classes, Delegate assignments and chairmanship to the special education teachers, disseminating information is not on time, Teachers assigned in special education is not their specialization, negative attitudes towards teaching learners with disability also constitutes a significant barrier (UDOPA, 2014).

2.2.1 Challenges faced by mental learners

Many learners with mental challenges in special schools come across the challenges in different levels of education owing to lack of specialists. The research done in Azerbaijan found that many schools do not have qualified specialists to provide the services needed by learners with mental problems (Wolbert et al., 2018). The school related factors are responsible to create challenges for learners with disabilities, lack of appropriate education and faculty training about disability issues and inexperience working with persons with disabilities; overall lack of awareness. Lack of access and lack of accommodations were reported. The epidemic covid-19 brought to people, not only the risk of death after virus infection, but also unbearable psychological pressure leading to mental disturbances. This is mainly because quarantine gradually distances people from each other. In the absence of interpersonal communication, depression and anxiety are more likely to occur and worsen. (Jenny Lei Ravelo, 2019)

Social interaction whereby they act in a way not considered socially acceptable, get annoyed easily, impatient, overcoming fear and anxiety when dealing with new people or situation is a problem, keeping silent is a problem, get angry easily, getting into un protective fight mode like struggling

to connect with people who one has little in common sometimes becomes a burden to mental learners because they fail to see the value in that (Kashdan, 2022).

Learners with mental challenges make themselves a priority and need to be loved alone, for them they require regular things in life “when things are going well in life, having friends and family, saying nothing hard to them” They think that When they become complacent and stop regular practices it's almost a guarantee that their mood will change and go downhill. Getting enough sleep and going for a walk becomes a necessity, no matter how busy they are and how good they are feeling (Lisa, 2018)

These learners with mental disability find it hard to hold themselves back when elevated, hard at managing them, reaching out to them is conscious of one's symptoms, knowing when to reach out for help and not being too proud to accept help is also a problem (Matthew, 2018).

Mentally disabled learners find it difficult to identify moods and feelings by not knowing whether the feeling is related to their illness, symptoms, or just a part of life. Because of a policy change at work may be reduced hours. As a result, one finds it very hard to motivate herself to work at home and be productive. They ask themselves different questions “Is this symptomatic of my illness?” Or is it associated with feelings of loss and doubt over my future, and therefore normal (Tania, 2018a).

Mentally disabled finds it easy to come up with a reason to not exercise, maintaining good routines becomes a problem, cooking dinner etc. They have to really work at maintaining those positive habits (Harrison, 2018).

They live up to expectations, Others' expectations are a huge factor in how they feel day to day. The pressure of being everything they need to be. A mother, partner, constructive work colleague and good employee can be overwhelming (Lesley, 2018).

The unknown hurdles symptoms bring biggest challenge When one wakes up, not knowing what the day will be like. How will the mood be? How will one handle daily stressors and triggers? To

combat this, they limit the number of commitments they make each day. This allows for unforeseen disturbances in the day and time for self-care (Tania, 2018b).

Planning and navigating the world is the best way to manage anxiety, so mental disabled don't know what to doing every day, right down to what they eat. They don't plan what things first e.g walk into bed or kitchen. If I walk into the bathroom or the kitchen, all days' things are hardest. It's the day to day things that are the hardest. Despite all of that they still manage to work and study and make attempts at having a social life. It just means they work very hard every day and becomes tired (Gans, 2022).

A lot of children with special needs comprise alterative tribulations since most of them become inward looking and fix most of time to their disabling condition. They are not like better adjusted children who are less likely to be furious or disappoint by what they perceive like undue treatment and tactless behavior. Better adjusted these ones are supplementary able to accept vague conditions where they are unconfident of others feedbacks to them .The social and affective needs of learners with mental disability are unique for the reason that the effects are not seen visually and may have the formation of their self-concept (Babik & Gardner, 2021).

2.2.2 Challenges due to lack of enough teaching materials.

Lack of services for early identification, poorly trained teachers and inadequate allotment of resources, Teachers are not trained to accommodate learners with difficulties fittingly, support and supplemental materials are not available and as well, learners with difficulty have asked for going back to segregated systems owing to the instructors were not prepared to meet their needs appropriately (Emmanuel, 2018).

Many studies have confirmed that a great deal of the learning that happens in classrooms wide world is superficial learning. Facts rules and formulas are memorized however, repeatedly; this information is not linked in a coherent framework that would let learners to make sense of it and to utilize it in innovative situations only to obtain facts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019).

2.2.3 Challenges in educational achievement

In school for the persons with mental problems have barricade to learning and participation caused by varied factors such as the rigid curriculum, socio-economic deprivation, communication problem, negative attitudes towards the persons with disabilities, inaccessible and unsafe built environment, inappropriate and inadequate support services, inadequate policies, non-recognition and the non-involvement of parents, insufficiently and improperly qualified teachers. The policy and the society play a big role in education for learners with disabilities. There are many factors in the society which affect the effective learning for children with disabilities such as negative attitudes, culture, traditional attitudes and practices, ignorance. Members of the society think that the special education is better than the inclusive education because they believe that the burden caused by the disability of their children is reduced when the learner is kept in special schools (Rachel, 2018).

2.2.4 Challenges in adjustment to special needs

According to Rwandan policy on special education needs, EDPRS 1 and 2, ESSP, The Government of Rwanda focuses on improving the quality of education for learners with disabilities by ensuring appropriate infrastructures, curriculum content and methodology and provision of appropriate learning materials. The learners with disabilities have the right to access the same schools with those without disabilities unless when the nature and severity of disability needs cannot be achieved appropriately in general education schools. The Rwandan constitution, article 40 says that every person has the right to education. As other countries, government of Rwanda puts an effort in education of persons with disabilities. (VanderLind, 2017)

Mental health problems can affect a student's energy level, dependability, concentration, mental ability and optimism, hindering performance. Research by American College Health Association. (2015) suggests that depression is associated with lower grade point averages, and that co-occurring depression and anxiety can increase this association. Depression has also been linked to dropping out of school..

2.2.5 Attitudes towards learners with mental challenges

2.2.5.1 Attitude of teachers

Teachers are the principal educationalist for learners with mental problem who is placed in his/her classroom. It is the teacher's liability to educate all the learners in the classroom together with the cognitive disturbance or child with mental problems. Teachers working with learners with mentally disabled need to understand the nature of a particular learner's difficulty quandary to be able to prefer appropriate accommodative tactics. These teachers need necessary information interconnected to fundamental concepts of disorder, mental challenges sign on possible items, typical characteristics of learners with mental problems and specific accommodative methods for meeting these learners' needs. Some studies authenticated that positive teacher's feelings towards special education were influenced by a various factor like the established policies on special education, school philosophy, available resources, and level of support in catering for the needs of learners with mental problems (Davis et al., 2004).

In quite a few, studies it is also pointed out that those educators were repeatedly not prepared to meet the needs of learners with significant disabilities. There are ordinary concerns like teachers' time taken away from the rest of the learners, class size, lack of training and resource material is not given. The content validity is not assessed by teachers and specialists in the field of special needs education (Wolbert et al., 2018) also gave details that one of the most crucial factors affecting teachers' thoughts towards special needs education is the kind and harshness of disabilities. Research has exposed that irrespective of teaching experience, severity of disability shows an inverse relationship with positive attitudes, if such perceptions of severity increase teachers' positive attitudes decreases.

Furthermore, many educators decline the placement of the learners with disabilities as well as learners with mental problems in their classes with the view that this may be unfulfilling and burdensome. Negative school experiences of learners with mental challenges have been coupled to teachers' low level of knowledge of disabilities and intervention technique and in-sufficient special education support.

2.2.5.2 Attitude of parents

(Wolbert et al., 2018) elucidated that parents of children with special needs thought that inclusive education can bring both the pleasure of increased options and impenetrability of heterogeneous learning. A lot of parents, who either hope to progress their children's learning standards in mainstream schools or want to avoid the humiliation of enrolling them in special schools, prefer to send them to mainstream schools when they are given the choice.

The thoughts of parents are well acknowledged to manipulate the self-concept of mental impaired children. In turn, the self-concept of the child will determine his/her school performance. Hence, counseling has to be a twin process of counseling the parents and encouraging the mental impaired learners to perform better (Mohan, 2021) draws attention to the fact that research has pointed towards parental reactions such as over protection, which is the phenomenon most generally seen in affluent parents. The parent experiences guilt and shame and does everything for the child thus destroying his/her initiative and autonomy. Brothers and sisters may have negative reactions. They may not play with the child, read to him/her or take him/her 24 out. All this gives rise to open and distinct resentment, which may sporadically explode into outburst of anger or protest.

On the other side (Đurišić & Bunijevac, 2017) highlighted that parent participation is very crucial to uphold a productive educational program for mental disorders of children. All specialists working with disabled persons are recommended to establish a good parent- professional partnership for the wellbeing of the learners. Parents should be involved in every stage of the program like planning individualized educational programs for their children in homes and evaluating development of their children.

2.2.5.3 Attitude of learners with mental disorders towards themselves

The three perceptions of the students towards people with mental disorders. Overall, 219 (51.29%) students had negative perceptions towards mental health disorders, and 208 (48.71%) respondents had positive perceptions. Most of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed with the perceptions that people with mental health problems tend to be blamed for their conditions (55.87%), that individuals with mental disorders can work (64.88%), and that anyone can suffer from a mental illness (92.03%). Conversely, some of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed with the

perceptions that one can tell whether an individual has a mental health disorder through his/her physical appearance (57.85%), that people with mental disorders can make friends (51.29%), that they are commonly dangerous (59.48%), and that they are insane (88.99%)(Puspitasari et al., 2020).

2.2.6 Academic challenges of learners with mental disorder

Depression is a mood disorder that involves persistent feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and loss of interest in previously enjoyable activities. People experiencing depressive episodes may also experience mood swings, sleep disturbances, appetite changes, and headaches and body pains that have no apparent physical cause.

2.2.6.1 Reading and writing difficulties

Teaching learners with mental disorders needs an open heart and an excellent capacity to realize and communicate. Teachers require assorted teaching techniques to educate the category of reading to a learner with mental disorder. Learning to read a book, for instance, demands a dissimilar form of instruction than learning math. In general, mentally disturbed learners are able to read while led by serious teacher. They have a problem with writing in a straight line and they write in a zigzag manner (Teaching Students with Special Needs in Inclusive setting, 2012), (Mulanya, 2021).

According to the United States of American National Centre for Individuals with Disabilities, it is crucial for educational institutions to take in charge the need of persons with mental disorders. Mentally disturbed learners most of time cope with difficulties in the classroom in addition to reaching in the classroom. For example, the learners with mental illnesses should be treated with cautiousness (Mohan, 2021).

2.2.6.2 Inaccessibility of teaching and learning materials

Inclusion has its own disputes, which comprise of lack of services for early identification, poorly trained teachers and inadequate allotment of resources. Teachers are not trained to accommodate learners with difficulties fittingly, support and supplemental materials are not available and as

well, learners with difficulty have asked for going back to segregated systems owing to the instructors were not prepared to meet their needs appropriately.

Many studies have confirmed that a great deal of the learning that happens in classrooms wide world is superficial learning. Facts rules and formulas are memorized however, repeatedly; this information is not linked in a coherent framework that would let learners to make sense of it and to utilize it in innovative situations only to obtain facts (Darling-Hammond et al., 2019).

2.2.6.3 Factors affecting learners' success

The academic factors that are acknowledged in the literature as affecting learners' achievement and maintenance as predetermined by (Odongo, 2018) comprise of learners' academic readiness, lack of support and encouragement of the family, their past and present 29 academic success and failures, their understanding of their institution's and teachers' expectations and the connection between student expectations and what they experience.

2.2.7 Lack of coordination in service Provision

Education is seen as the collective responsibility of the home and the school. Parents should be incorporated just as active members of the helping team early in the process as possible. Educational main concern recognized by family members should be mainly taken into consideration. To develop a high quality learning environment, each school's community members, teachers, support staff, parents and learners with disability have to collaborate in a consistent, coordinated and corporative manner.(Verger, 2021) also affirmed that it is the responsibility of the whole school and community to act as a unified team to decrease mental ability problems and to maximize learner's participation. Studies conducted by (Finkelstein et al., 2019) have shown that within the field of mentoring work together with colleagues and administrative support can increase new general education teacher commitment.

In addition, collaboration among common and special teachers has been found to be the only factors that relate to teachers' positive response towards inclusion. In the many years ago it has been shown that, educational policies tend to support the integration of children with disability into ordinary schools. Even if this idea is received by some literatures there are some other

evidences that show that the benefits to integration may not be as immense as expected. (Odongo, 2018) have found that a growing number of family support specialists and teachers teaching in the cities are moving away from the terminology of “parent involvement”. This is the reason why most of parents and families continue to be isolated and are not getting sufficient assistances throughout care, education and training for their learners with difficulties. Quality education is promoted by collaboration between educators and families. The management of all concerned members, as well as family members, helps to assure a shared focus on learners’ success. An appropriate service provision should be a collaborative process involving the child, the parent and relevant service providers from the departments of education, health, and community services. Human Resources and Employment, Justice and other relevant agencies should also play a big role.

The preparation of educators who teach in ordinary school has experienced main pedagogical shift in recent years. The establishments are promptly needed to make sure that strong collaboration is well built to provide support and collaborate with family members and other members of the instructional team who work with learners. They must be able to convey professional opinions in a diplomatic, collaborative manner in order to ensure that appropriate programs are recommended for the learner with a mental challenge (Ness et al., 2014).

2.2.8 Opportunities for learners with special educational needs

There are also some opportunities of learners with disabilities including learners with mental disorders although there are many factors contributing to inhibit the effective learning. Almost all countries have elaborated the policies and laws for their people without any discrimination. The governments have the responsibility to provide the necessary policies which guide the education of persons with disabilities including learners with mental disorders. This is the case for Rwanda where in 2007, the special needs education policy has been established (Republic of Rwanda, 2007). Learner with mental illness is protected against discrimination in all levels of education and provided an equal opportunity. Federal laws prohibit discrimination against learners with disabilities and seek to provide them with appropriate services and supports. Providing more educational opportunities for learners with disabilities began with elementary (Hayes & Bulat, 2017).

The Children with mental challenges have also opportunities to the rehabilitation services. Persons with mental problems are in association which helps them to disclose their disabilities and to be integrated in the society; in Rwanda there are National Council of Persons with Disabilities (NCPD). Through the Disabled People Organization (DPO), some challenges are removed and PWD are considered as the normal persons.(Sileyew, 2019).

To the best of my knowledge no study has done on teaching and learning difficulties that hinder academic performance of learners with mental challenges.

Gaps shows that learners with mental disability requires appropriate teaching methodology that will enhance alarge amount to thrive for education like student-centered approach,discussions according to individual needs,blended learning etc.However,teachers thrive only to finish the content without considering whether its heard or not.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

Research methodology are techniques, procedures used to identify, process, select & analyze information about a topic. In this chapter, the researcher analyzes the research design, study setting, population, sampling strategies and sample size, research instruments, data collection techniques, data analysis procedures, position of the researcher, validity and reliability, ethical issues (Sileyew, 2019)

3.1 Research design

Research design is a total plan or framework of research methods, techniques chosen by a researcher. This allows researcher to hone in on research methods that are suitable to aid in answering research questions, suitable for subject matter and set up their studies up for success.

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design (Orodho, 2014). A descriptive survey design is an approach of collecting information by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals.

A descriptive survey design was selected because the researcher wanted to describe teaching and learning challenges that hinder academic performance of learners with mental challenges in special school. Descriptive statistics and themes will be used to analyze data that were collected from the selected sample through questionnaires and Observation Checklist. This is because both methods supplement each other in that qualitative methods provide the in-depth Explanations while quantitative methods provide the hard data needed to meet required objectives.

3.1.1 Study setting

The research was conducted in a special schools of HVP Gatagara Gikondo which is located in Kigali, Kicukiro district, Centre Humura located in Kigali, Gasabo district. These special schools are among special schools here in Rwanda that have mission of teaching learners with mental challenges and enough knowledge that will be required by the researcher.

3.1.2 The population

In every research there is target population from which information related to the phenomena under study are gathered. (Cottrell & McKenzie, 2011)refer to the population as an aggregate or totality of all the objects, subjects or members that conform to a set of specifications. This research was made up of 200 population including 90 learners with mental challenges, 4 teachers and 2 administrators of HVP Gatagara Gikondo and 100 learners with mental challenges,2 teachers and 2 administrators of Centre Humura Ndera in the academic year 2021.

Table 3 1: The target population of the study, academic year 2021

Schools	Learners with Mental challenges	Teachers	Administrators (head teachers and Production Room/ Resource Room Officers)	Total
HVP Gatagara Gikondo	90	4	2	96
Centre Humura	100	2	2	104
Total	190	6	4	200

3.1.3 Sampling strategies and sample size

This section discusses on the different sampling techniques that were used in the study to get the sample. It also discusses the size of the sample that was selected for the study and the reason for the selection.

3.1.3.1 Sampling strategies

The district of Kigali was purposively selected because it has special school for learners with mental challenges. Teachers and administrators were also purposively selected because they are expected to have relevant information on teaching and learning challenges that hinder academic performance of learners with mental challenges and the services offered to them.

3.1.3.2 Sample Size

The selection of sample size wasn't easy because students were few in number that's why I had to take the whole population (Cottrell & McKenzie, 2011) said that there is no rule for sample size in qualitative inquiry that when determining the sample size for qualitative studies, the researcher has to balance the need for appropriate data with the resources necessary to collect it.

3.1.4 Research instruments

The questionnaire was adapted from this research thesis of Patricia Lea Sutherland(2018) entitled The impact of mental health issues on Academic achievement of high school students. In the study the researcher used questionnaires, observation checklist as research instruments.

3.1.4.1 Questionnaire

A questionnaire has the ability to collect a large amount of information in a reasonably quick space of times (Wachianga cited in Orodho 2010). It also ensures confidentiality. Closed- ended items in the questionnaire will be used to obtain relevant and specific data to enable the study to be more focused and realistic in its data. The open – ended items will allow the respondents to give their views and opinions on difficulties that hinder academic performance of learners with mental challenges. The questionnaire for teachers was used to seek background information which showed teachers' personnel data. It was also provided for collection of information on the teacher professional, tools and strategies used for learners with mental challenges and impact on academic performance.

3.1.4.2 Observation Checklist

This instrument was useful in the classroom during instruction where the researcher will sit in classes during the teaching and learning process to observe the learner's behavior, manipulation of curriculum, materials, strategies and teachers professional in teaching learners with mental challenges. Observation schedule was considered appropriately because; it yields data which supplement the questionnaires for relevant information.

3.1.4.3 Interview guide

This instrument consisted of a set of general questions that the interviewer asked when interviewing a respondent. The instrument helped to cover a broad area of the study and was allowed in depth information through constant probing.

3.1.5 Data collection techniques

The research first skilled the research helper who assisted in piloting study, administration and take back of the questionnaire during the full-scale study. All questionnaires were given to administrative staff and teachers at the same time to eliminate losses and cross sharing of information between the respondents. Data collection was done in two successive months. The two weeks the researcher consulted Kicukiro district where there is HVP Gatagara Gikondo and the other two weeks went for research. After completion of student interviews, the researcher gave Questionnaires to administrators and teachers. Again another month researcher went to Centre Humura located in Gasabo district first interviewed students then gave questionnaire to administrative staff and teachers at same time.

3.1.6 Data analysis procedures

Judd, Charles and McClelland (1989) defined data analysis as a process of inspecting, Purification, transforming, and modeling data with the goal of discovering useful information, suggesting conclusions, and supporting decision-making. In current research, data were collected from the study of both quantitative and qualitative in nature following the research questions.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data. Data collected from questionnaires were coded and presented in frequency distribution, percentage and tabulation as well as in narrative to describe methods, materials and teacher professional competence used in teaching learners with mental challenges. Data collected from observation checklist was analyzed qualitatively and were presented in frequency distribution, tabulation and in narrative to describe methods and materials used to teach learners with mental challenges and researcher used Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to calculate percentages and frequencies.

3.2 Position of the researcher

The research had the purpose of investigating the Teaching and learning difficulties that hinder academic performance of learners with mental challenges. The researcher used case study research. Shona McCombes (May 8,2019)define a case study as the detailed study of specific subjects such as persons, group, place, event, organization or phenomenon. They insist that a case study approach is convenient when a researcher wants to describe and explain a phenomenon. The current study's phenomenon is performance of learners with mental challenges in special schools.

Furthermore, Gall and Borg (2007) define a case study as an in-depth investigation of two or more phenomenon in natural settings considering the perspectives of the research participants.

3.3 Validity and reliability

3.3.1 Validity

Validity is the extent to which a concept, conclusion or measurement is well-founded and corresponds accurately to the real world. The validity of a measurement tool is considered to be the degree to which the tool measures what it claims to measure (Ogince, Hall, Robinson, &Blackmore, 2007). To ensure validity of instruments we used the expert judgment which ascertained that the items of questions related to the objectives of the study and suitable for their task. This means that Consultation with the experts in the area of special needs education was done and the instruments modified and redesigned accordingly to determine the relevance of the content of questionnaires and objectives to ensure the clarity of information in the questionnaires.

3.3.2 Reliability

Reliability is the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results (Saul McLeod 2013). To test reliability, test- retest technique used. The reliability of the research instruments for this study was measured and calculated using the test-retest method. Thus, the questionnaires were administered to the group members at once at each school but there was a break interval of three weeks. After administering the second test instrument, the results indicated the reliability of the study.

3.4 Ethical issues

The Researcher got an acceptance letter to conduct research from the University of Rwanda College of Education which allowed her to conduct research. Afterwards, the researcher informed head teachers of this two special schools so as to carry out research in a good way. Then a researcher requested respondents not to write their names on questionnaires that assured the respondents of confidentiality that the information collected from them, would be used for the purpose of the study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

4.1. Demographic characteristics

Table 4- 1: Sample size by schools

School	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
HVP Gikondo	90	47.4
Centre Humura	100	52.6
Total	190	100

Table 4- 2: Gender and Age distribution of the students

	HVP Gikondo	Centre Humura	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Gender			
Male	55(28.9)	45 (23.7)	100 (52.6)
Female	35 (18.4)	55 (28.9)	90(47.4)
Total	90 (47.4)	100 (52.6)	190 (100)
Age			
Mean (SD)	12.01 (2.4)	12.1 (1.25)	12.07 (1.8)

4.1.1. Distribution of Age and Gender participants

In total, 190 Students from two different schools participated in the study, through which 90 (47.4%) were from HVP Gikondo located in Kicukiro district, while the rest of 100 (52.6%) were from Centre Humura located in Gasabo district (see table 1). The mean age of the students was 12. Regarding the Gender of the participants, 100 (52.6%) were males, while 90 (47.4%) were females (see table 4-1).

Table 4- 3: Students residential status

Are you parents alive	Frequency	Percent
No	27	14.2
Yes	158	83.2
I don't know	5	2.6

Total	190	100
If they are alive, do you live with them		
All	141	89.2
Only mother	10	6.3
Only father	2	1.3
Prefer not to say	5	3.2
Total	158	100

4.1.2. Parents residential status

Parents in a child's life is important as they both play very distinct and important roles in the psychological and emotional development of a child. Among all students, 158 (83.2%) have self-reported to live with either one or both parents, while 27 (14.2%) don't live with the parents. 141(89.2%) of students with parents live with both mother and father, 10(6.3%) lives with their mothers only and 2(1.3%) live with their fathers only.

Table 4- 4: Types of student's disability

	Male	Female	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Gender			
Emotional disorder	53(27.9)	47 (24.7)	100 (52.6)
Attention deficit hyperactivity	63 (33.2)	66 (34.7)	129 (67.9)
Behavioural disorder	16 (8.4)	8 (4.2)	24 (12.6)
Genocide disorder	0 (0.0)	1 (0.5)	1 (0.5)
Total	100 (52.6)	90 (47.4)	190 (100.0)

4.1.3. Types and onset of disability.

Students were asked to state the type of disability they have, and dichotomized results of the responses are shown in table 4. The most occurring disability among the students was Attention deficit hyperactivity 129(67.9%), Emotional disorder 100 (52.6%), Behavioural disorder 24(12.6%) and Genocide disorder 1(0.5%).

Table 4- 5: Disability onset

Were you born with disability?	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)

No	16	8.4
Yes	174	91.6
Total	190	100
if not, when did you become disabled?		
As child	9	56.3
As teenager	7	43.8
Total	16	100

Among 190 Study participants, 174 (91.6%) were born with disability while 16 (8.4%) suffered from disability after they were born. For 16 students who suffered from disability after they were born, 9 of them suffered as child whereas 7 suffered as teenager (see table 5)

4.1.4 Students' attitude with special needs

Learners were asked to state whether their disability makes them feel self-conscious in their life, majority of the students 149 (78.4%) have self-reported to feel self-conscious, however there were no gender significancy observed for this consciousness. Learners were asked if they sometimes feel isolated because of disability and 147 (77.4%) have reported to experience this isolation, 43(22.6%) have reported to sometimes feel isolated.

Table 4- 6: Library and Laboratory accessibility

Access to library materials		
	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Yes	67	35.3
No	117	61.6
Some	6	3.1
Total	190	100
Laboratory disability friendly		
Yes	57	30
No	127	66.8
Some	6	3.2
Total	190	100

4.2. Difficulties faced by Teachers in special schools.

Table 4- 7: Parent's level of education and profession

Parent's level of education		
	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Informal education	50	26.3
Primary	36	18.9
Secondary	49	25.8
Graduate	55	28.9
Total	190	100
Guardian/parents profession		
Unemployed	48	25.3
Informal employment	64	33.7
Formal employment	78	41.1
Total	190	100

4.2.1. Parent's level of education and profession

Generally, education gives us a knowledge of the world around us, educated Parents facilitates children in many ways, for example parental coaching. Among 190 students their parents' level of Education was assessed, 50 (26.3%) of the parents have no formal education, 36 (18.9%) have completed primary school, 49 (25.8%) have completed secondary schools, 55(28.9%) have completed university studies. Regarding the parents' professional status, majority of the parents 78 (41.1%) have formal employment, 64 (33.7%) have informal employment while 48(25.3%) are unemployed.

Table 4- 8: Parents encouragement for their students to go for further studies

	Education status		
	Non-educated	Educated	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Parents encourage me for further studies			
Yes	21 (11.1)	90 (47.4)	111 (58.4)
No	29 (15.3)	50 (26.3)	79 (41.6)
Total	50 (26.3)	140 (73.7)	190 (100.0)

$\chi^2 (1, N = 190) = 7.5, p = 0.006$

4.2.2. Parent's education and their commitment to encourage student for further studies.

A chi-square test for association was performed to examine the relation between parents' education and Parents who encourage students for further studies. The relation between these variables was significant $\chi^2(1, N = 190) = 7.5, p = 0.006$, educated parents are more likely to encourage their children to go for further studies (see Table 4-7).

Table 4- 9: Learner's attitudes

	Gender		
	Male	Female	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Disability makes me feel self-conscious			
No	25 (13.2)	16 (8.4)	41 (21.6)
Yes	75 (39.5)	74 (38.9)	149 (78.4)
Total	100 (52.6)	90 (47.4)	190 (100.0)
I sometimes feel isolated because of my disability			
Yes	74 (38.9)	73 (38.4)	147 (77.4)
Sometimes	26 (13.7)	17 (8.9)	43 (22.6)
Total	100 (52.6)	90 (47.4)	190 (100.0)
Society treats me differently because of my disability			
No	25 (13.2)	15 (7.9)	40 (21.1)
Yes	75 (39.5)	75 (39.5)	150 (78.9)
Total	100 (52.6)	90 (47.4)	190 (100.0)

According to (Tony, 2019) teachers who teach learners with disability lack training on special education needs and as a result collaborating with students with mental problems, their families becomes a problem. Giving extra time in terms of curriculum adaptation is a problem, assistive technology, resources and funds for more assistance in adapting the school environment.

4.3. Teaching materials in special schools

Table 4- 10: Library and Laboratory accessibility

Access to library materials		
	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Yes	67	35.3
No	117	61.6
Some	6	3.1
Total	190	100
Laboratory disability friendly		
Yes	57	30
No	127	66.8
Some	6	3.2
Total	190	100

4.4. Availability and accessibility of physical infrastructure

4.4.1. Library and Laboratory

Library and laboratory play an important role in enhancing a student's effectiveness and performance. Referring on the data shown in table 8, majority of the students 117(61.6%) don't have access to library materials, 67(35.3%) of the students have self-reported to have access to library materials while 127(66.8%) of the students have reported that their laboratory facilities are not disability friendly (see table 9). Learners were also asked to state institution areas which are not disability friendly and the responses are graphed in chart 1, offices 128(67.4%), Pathways 34 (17.9) were most areas which were reported to not be accessible (see chart 1)

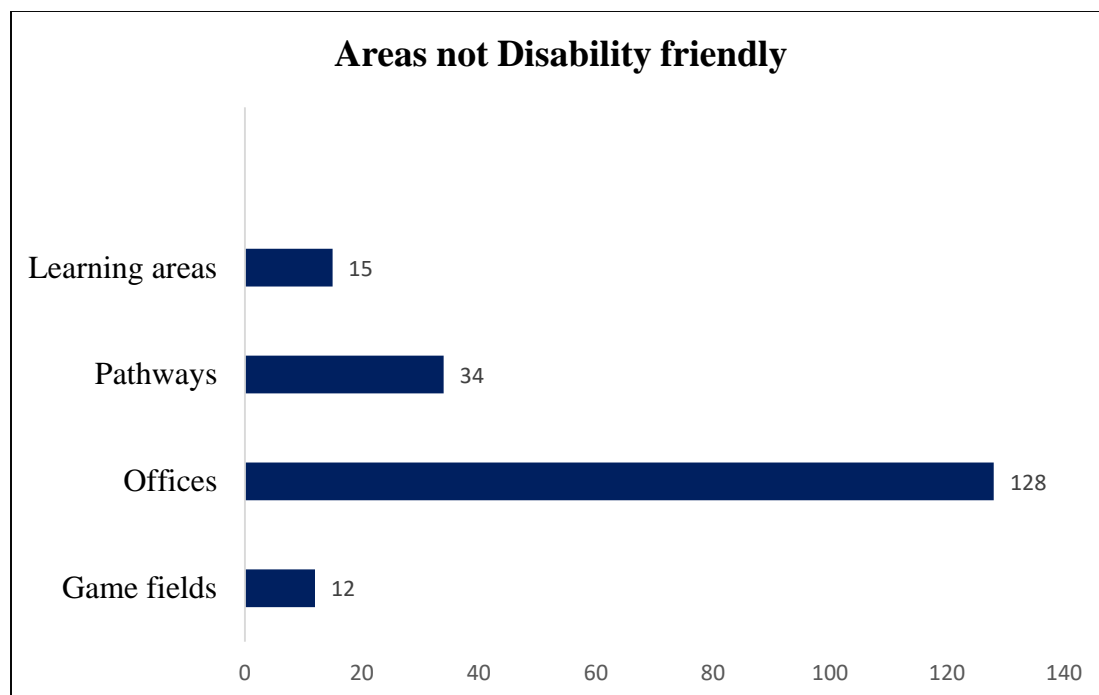


Figure 1: Institution areas not disability friendly

According to (Tony, 2019) confirmed that a great deal of the learning that happens in classrooms wide world is superficial learning, Facts rules and formulas are memorised however this information is not linked in a coherent framework that would let learners to make sense of it and to utilize it in innovative situations only to obtain facts. Learners with mental health problems need materials like tailoring machine, Drums, Piano, computers that will help them to learn practical work and be associated in society.

4.5. Teaching methods in special schools (Instructional strategies)

Table 4- 11: Learners views on teaching method and class environment

Tutors adapted their teaching method		
	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
No	118	62.1
Yes	64	33.7
Some	8	4.2
Total	189	99.5
Teachers avail extra notes to the students with disabilities		
No	135	71.1

Yes	47	24.7
Some	8	4.2
Total	190	100

Is the classroom environment (lighting, seating arrangement), modified to suit students with special needs?

No	116	61.1
Yes	74	38.9
Total	190	100

4.5.1. Learners Teaching methods and school environment.

The data from learners on teaching methods shows that majority 118 (62.1%) tutors don't have teaching methods adapted to learners with disability. Students were asked whether their teachers avail extra notes to the students with disabilities, majority 135(71.1%) have reported that they don't get such extra notes. Classroom environment is important for student's concentration in their daily studies, learners were asked whether lighting, seating is suited for their learning, 74(38.9%) of the learners have judged the environment to be suitable while 116(61.1%) judged the environment to be not favorable.

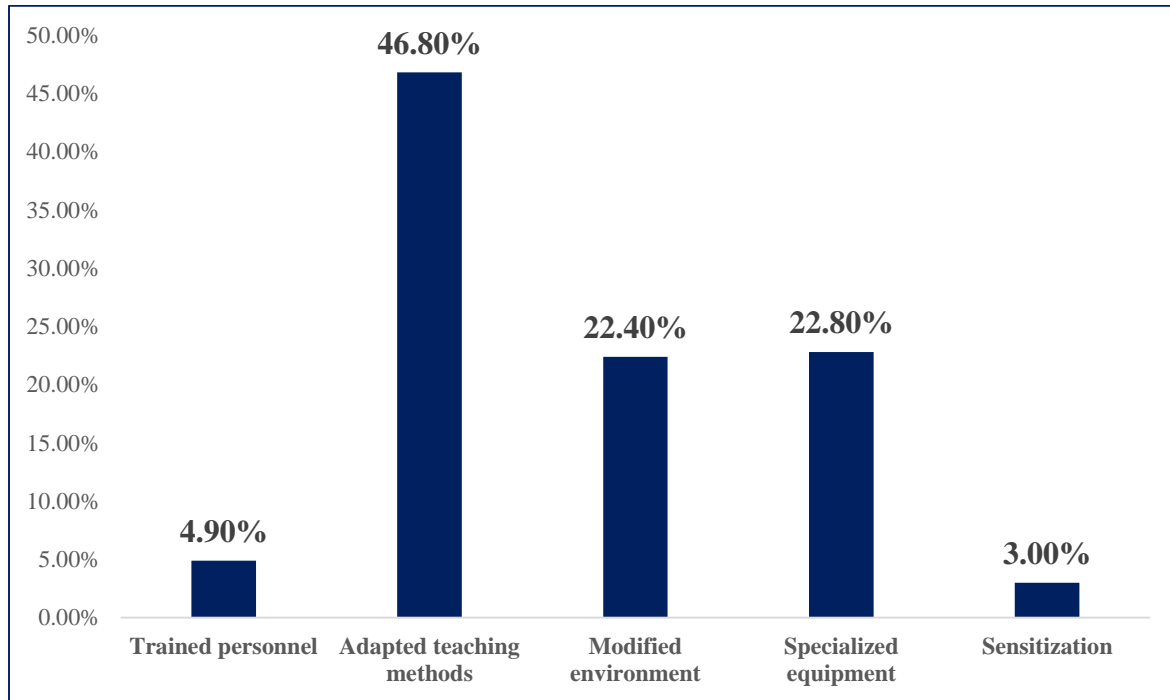
Table 4- 12: Learner's midterm examination score

	Mid-term examination score		
	Pass	Credit	Total
	n (%)	n (%)	n (%)
Extra time during exams			
Yes	32 (16.8)	20 (10.5)	52 (27.4)
No	129 (67.9)	9 (4.7)	138 (72.6)
Total	161 (84.7)	29 (15.3)	190 (100.0)

4.5.1. Learners' examination score and extra time availed during exams

Table 4-11 shows cross tabulation between learner’s mid- term examination score and extra time availed to student during exams. Association between the two variables revealed majority 161(84.7%) of the students that have passed the exams, while 29 (15.3%) have failed to pass mid-term exams. Slight number of the learners 52(27.4%) have reported to get extra time during exams with average time of one hour.

Figure 2: Learner's recommendation



According to (S.S Mustakim, 2014) teaching Approaches revealed that the incorporation of literary elements in the classroom was minimal. Teachers lacked creativity to fully utilize the modules provided by the Curriculum Development Centre. The Pre, Post-Reading was not employed effectively due to the lack of textbook provided by the school.

4.5.2. Students’ recommendations

Learners were asked to give recommendations that can be adopted to improve the academic and social life for students with special needs in their colleges. majority 46.8% of the learners suggested Adapted teaching method, modified environment (22.4%), specialized equipment (22.8%) (see chart 2).

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS.

5.0 Introduction

The aim of chapter five is to present a brief and clear summary of the data, followed by presentations of comprehensive set of conclusions and recommendations based on the data discussed in chapter four.

5.1 Summary of the study

The study focused on identifying teaching and learning difficulties that hinder academic performance of learners with mental challenges in two selected schools. The study targeted learners with mental challenges in those special schools of Rwanda. The target population was 200 population including 90 learners with mental challenges, 4 teachers and 2 administrators of HVP Gatagara Gikondo. The same size used in this study was 100 learners with mental challenges, 2 teachers and 2 administrators of centre Humura in these two selected special schools in the academic year 2021.

The questionnaires were given to learners with mental challenges, teachers teaching learners with mental challenges, and personnel for filling in. Data collected from the field was edited. The coding process then followed before the data was keyed into the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) to aid in data analysis. Qualitative data was analyzed through content analysis and emerging major themes were identified. Descriptive statistics analysis was done from which percentage, frequency and tables were generated.

5.1.1 Accessibility of learning and teaching materials in the special schools in Rwanda.

The data of this research showed that teaching and learning materials provided to learners with Mental challenges were not enough compared to the numbers of users because learners with Mental problems usually share available learning and teaching materials and many failures caused by lack of teaching learning resources. This scarcity of materials is caused by financial problems.

5.1.2 Other resources which are not available if provided can support learners with mental challenges

There were other learning resources which were not available and provided they could support learners learning in special schools. These resources are computers, air fresher(fans) and screen readers to attract them.

5.1.3. Being comfortable in special schools

The majority of learners were comfortable in special schools while others were not comfortable. These learners disagreed by saying that they lack socialization with other people without disabilities and they agreed they are isolated from non-disabled people.

5.1.4. Appropriateness of teachers' teaching methodologies

Teaching methods used in teaching and learning were appropriate on one hand, and on the other hand these methodologies still have barriers like requesting learners to do research, give source of knowledge, however there are no enough materials means that methods that teachers used in teaching and learning were not appropriate.

5.1.5 The way learners take notes during teaching and learning

Learners take notes while scrapping and no printers to print all notes and be given to learners with mental problems.

5.1.6 Extra time given to learners with Mental impairment during exams

All learners with mental challenges were given extra time during exams but it is short.

5.1.7 Curriculum used in special schools adapted to fit in their learning needs

Curriculum used in special schools is adapted to fit in learning needs of learners with mental problems because these schools have special curriculum.

5.1.8 Learners' views on whether library is well equipped to support learning needs for learners with mental challenges.

Many learners argued that in library no instruments to support their careers like drums, piano, computers, tailoring machines etc.

5.1.9 Problems that teachers encounter when interacting and teaching learners with mental challenges

Teachers encounter the problems of scarcity of teaching materials, sort the periods of teaching learners with mental challenges.

5.1.10 Course of action put in place by school management to address identified academic challenges

The measures taken were every staff member was involved in looking a solution through the system of team working; establishing regular budget to support special education field; adapting teaching/ learning contents for mental issues, provision of professional development course to staff to make refreshment about special methodologies to be applied to teach mental learners; recruitment of teachers who are trained about special education; and digital library.

5.2 Conclusions

It was concluded that teaching and learning materials provided to learners with mental challenges were not adequate because of sharing available learning materials. The financial problems were the main challenges that caused the learning materials to be insufficient in these special schools. This shortage of materials hinders academic performance of learners with mental problems.

The data showed that all learners agreed that there were other learning resources which were not available and they felt that if provided they could support their learning in this special school. The mentioned other learning resources were computers, child trauma toolkits for educators, psychological first aid for schools, trainings, and technical assistance for professionals in mental health, child welfare, juvenile justice, special learning instruments, recorders to motivate their talking capacity. Therefore, researcher concluded that academic performance of visually impaired learners delayed by unavailability of necessary teaching and learning materials.

Teachers also explained that it was difficult to get methodologies used to teach learners with mental challenges because sometimes they had no enough knowledge on how to teach these learners because they were not trained and familiar with people of mental challenges. They also added that they lacked the teaching musical instruments to attract their attention, require extra time for explanation but they didn't get the opportunities to do so.

The data, from learners on extra time given to learners with mental impairment during exams in special schools, showed that all learners with mental challenges were given extra time during exams. The most of learners were given one hour, and rest a few of them were given extra time of thirty minutes. All of respondents complained that extra time was not enough. Teachers supported the data that learners with mental challenges were given an extra time of only one hour which was not enough because these learners need enough time to read and writing. Administrators also supported the data that although learners with mental problems were given extra time, it was not enough compared to what is required to be performed in school. The researcher concluded that if extra time given to learners with Mental challenges in special school of Rwanda was enough their academic performance would be well.

Administrators showed the measures taken into consideration to address identified academic challenges that every staff member was involved in looking a solution through the system of team working; Establishing regular budget to support special education field; Adapting teaching/learning contents for mental challenges into practical lessons, Provision of professional development course to staff to make refreshment about special methodologies to be applied in well teaching mentally disturbed learners; Recruitment of teachers who were trained about special education and Digital library. The researcher concluded that within these measures taken by school management academic performance effects can be reduced to learners in special school of Rwanda.

5.3 Recommendations and suggestions

The researcher would like to make the following recommendations on the basis of the data to the study and conclusions made,

5.3.1 Recommendations to school management

They are advised to take a conscious decision to especially charge of special education aspects of their schools and explore various alternatives to ensure success for learners with mental challenges. It is recommended that an exchange of enough learning resources teaching materials should be designed for learners with mental challenges. Working together with different stakeholders so that

they can solve many problems which hinder academic performance of learners with mental challenges by school management.

Extensive training of teachers combined with the exchange of expertise (In tenant teachers) between special and inclusive schools be planned and implemented in order to maximize the participation of learners with mental difficulties in both social and academic activities.

5.3.2 Recommendations to teachers

It is clear from the data that there are many teaching and learning difficulties that hinder academic performance of learners with mental challenges; so teachers are recommended to be provided with in-service training in the form of workshops. Once the teachers are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills related to the education of learners with mental difficulties, their views and perceptions towards special education for learners with mental challenges will change. Also learners with mental difficulties will not be restricted from taking only some subjects from the curriculum.

The researcher, therefore, recommended that special schools HVP Gatagara Gikondo and Centre Humura Ndera should prioritize the development of in-service Programs for management and teachers.

5.4 Strengths and Limitations

5.4.1 Strengths

Other special schools in Rwanda were not concerned with this study. It was focusing only to the learners with mental challenges, their teachers and school administrators. The teachers and administrators responded positively on all questions I asked. The study targeted only teaching and learning difficulties that hinder academic performance of learners with mental challenges. The participants were learners with mental challenges from those two special schools in academic year 2021.

5.4.2 Limitations

The study required along time because getting teachers of students with mental challenges to fill questionnaire wasn't easy from two special schools; Gatagara Gikondo and Centre Humura. And the study had also limitation of having short period of time to collect data.

5.5. Conclusions of the chapter five

This chapter five discussed the summary, conclusions, recommendations and strengths and limitations of the study.

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APPENDIX

KYOMUGISHA Kellen,

8th/April/2021.

College of Medicine and Health Sciences,UR,

School of Public Health,

Remera Campus,

Email: kkellen@nursph.org,

Tel: (+250)788526637,

To the District Executive Administrator (Kicukiro District)

Dear Sir,

RE: Requesting permission to collect data at HVP Gatagara Gikondo from 14th -30th 2021.

I KYOMUGISHA Kellen, final year student from University of Rwanda, College of Education, school of Inclusive and special Needs Education in a department of Special Needs Education, Iam delighted to request the permission to collect data concerning my research topic entitled ***“Teaching and learning challenges that hinder Academic performance of students with mental challenges at HVP Gatagara Gikondo”*** for the fulfillment of my masters degree in Special Needs Education.

Consequently, this study will identify the challenges hindering Academic performance of students with Mental challenges at HVP Gatagara Gikondo, Kicukiro District, the results will help us to know how students can be helped leading to better performance and contribute to the decision making on interventions, measures for improving wellbeing of learners with mental challenges.

Please, the attached copy is my ethical clearance from Institutional Review Board of University of Rwanda.

We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Yours faithfully,



KYOMUGISHA Kellen.



H V P GATAGARA/GIKONDO
FRERES DE LA CHARITE
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Mails : ntezpet2000@yahoo.fr



ACCEPTANCY LETTER

I, NTEZIRYAYO J.Pierre, the Director HVP GATAGARA GIKONDO, having led your letter requesting permission to collect data at HVP Gatagara Gikondo from 14th -30 2021 on your research topic entitled: Teaching and learning challenges that hinder Academic performance of students with mental challenges at HVP Gatagara Gikondo for fulfillment of your master's degree in Special Need Education

We therefore inform you that, we allowed you to conduct your research on our Institution as described above and we wish you better cooperation and any support that will facilitate you on your research at HVP Gatagara Gikondo and we also hope your research will help us to better performance and contribute to the decision making on various interventions, measures for wellbeing of learners with mental challenges. We thank you

NTEZIRYAYO J.Pierre

Director

HVP Gatagara Gikondo

*P/o Director In charge of
Studies*



STUDENTS QUESTIONNAIRES

You have been selected as a respondent in the study to establish the Teaching&learning challenges that hinder the academic performance of students with mental challenges in Rwanda.

Your response will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. The information you give will be limited to the purpose of the study only.

Tick as appropriate

SECTION A. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. What is your gender?

a) Male b) Female

2. Which is your institution?

a)

3. What is your age bracket?

a) 18-20 yrs b) 20-25 yrs

c) 26-30 yrs d) 31-40 yrs

d) Above 40yrs

4. What is your disability?

a) Emotional disorder b) Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder

5. Were you born with the disability?

a)Yes b) No

6. If not, when did you become disabled?

a) As a child

b) As a teenager

c) As an adult

SECTION B. Student's family background

7. What is your parent's/ guardian's level of education?

a) No formal education

b) Primary

c) Secondary

d) Graduate

8. What is your guardian's / parents profession?

a) Not employed

b) Informal employment

c) Formal employment

9. My parents/ guardians encourage me to go for further studies

a) Yes

b) No

c) Never discuss

SECTION C. Attitudes of students with special needs

10. My disability makes me feel self-conscious

a) Yes

b) No

11. I sometimes feel isolated because of my disability

a) Yes

b) Never

c) Sometimes

12. I feel that society treats me differently because of my disability

a) Yes

b) No

13. Do you support inclusion of students with special needs in teacher training colleges?

a) Yes

b) No

SECTION D. Availability and accessibility of physical infrastructure

14. Do you have access to the library materials?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Some

15. Are the hostels disability friendly?

a) Yes

b) No

16. Which areas of the institution are not accessible

Learning areas, Pathways, Offices, Games fields

17. Are the resources provided enough for all students with mental problems in your institution?

Yes

No

18. Are there other learning resources which are not available and you feel if provided they can support your learning in this inclusive institution?

Yes

No

If yes, list them

SECTION E. Instructional strategies

19. Have the tutors adapted their teaching methods to suit learners with special needs?

a) Yes

b) No

c) Some

20. The teachers avail extra notes to the students with disabilities

a)Yes

b) No

c) Some

21. Is the classroom environment (lighting, seating arrangement), modified to suit students with special needs?

a) Yes

b) b) No

22. What recommendations would you make to improve the academic and social life for students with special needs in the college?

a) Trained personnel

b) Adapted teaching methods

c) Modified environment

d) Specialized equipment

e) Sensitization

23. How do you rate your performance in the Midcourse examination?

a) Pass

b) Credit

c) Distinction

24. Are you given extra time during exams?

Yes

No

If yes, How many more hours?.....

.....

.....

25. Is the curriculum used in your institution adapted to suit the learning needs of learners with mental problems?

Yes

No

Elaborate your answer above.

.....

.....

Questions to Teachers

1. How long have you been a high school teacher?

RESPONDENTS.

1.1 Year

2.1 Year

3.13 Years

4.1 Year and one term

5.4 Years

2. What is your educational background?

RESPONDENTS.

1. Bachelor in SNE obtained from UR-CE

2. Bachelor in Inclusive & special need education
3. Bachelor degree in Education
4. Teachers Training College (KIE)
5. A2 teaching in primary A0 in special Need education

3. What are some of your classroom methods to keep teenagers engaged?

RESPONDENTS.

1. Individualisation
 2. Individualisation
 3. Individualised learning and self-learning
 4. Learner-centered and question and answer method
 5. Learning by doing, question and answer method
4. Based on your experience as a teacher, what is your opinion on student emotional wellness?

RESPONDENTS.

1. Be positive to each and enable emotion for a learner
2. Emotional wellness of student is not good enough
3. Students who express emotional problems are depicted from home background, how is treated at home and emotions manifested at school.
4. Learners should be prepared and teachers must be an example in order for students express emotional wellness
5. Teachers should try all the best to handle student's behavior difficulty patiently.

5. What is your experience with students in your class who have emotional problems?

RESPONDENTS.

1. . Students who express emotional problems are depicted from home background, how is treated at home and emotions manifested at school
2. To be patient, treat them individually & Learned that each child is unique
3. Aggressive, like to cry, don't like to share toys with others

4. Rewarding positive behavior and self adaption to them
5. Show emotion automatically
6. Describe some of the types of problems you've been aware of?

RESPONDENTS.

1. Parental attitudes towards their children, Children are dependent
 2. Lack of concentration
 3. Drug abuse, banditism at school, delinquency
 4. Carelessness of their parents, not able to treat themselves
 5. Angry, anxiety, moody, depression, sadness etc
7. How do these problems affect the student's ability to perform in your class?

RESPONDENTS.

1. Being dependent prevent them to do classroom activities, sometimes miss out class
 2. No good performance of all because many doesn't master content
 3. Affects ability to concentrate and attention
 4. Parents carelessness
 5. Following is a problem
8. What resources do you help the students' access for their problems, if any?

RESPONDENTS.

1. Motivation and encouragement
 2. Puzzles box, sounding toys
 3. Delivering content, cars, motor bike
 4. Clubs and peer to peer
 5. Use of concrete materials to reach their needs
9. What differences do you see in students who have unmet emotional needs versus those who don't?

RESPONDENTS.

1. Sometimes those whose emotional can be controlled progress while others can't.
 2. They are different in physical appearance
 3. When early intervention is given as early as possible a child can achieve more than those who receive it.
 4. Those who have unmet emotional needs tend to progress quickly than those who don't.
 5. Socialization is a problem to those with emotional needs
10. What types of support systems do your students have those who seem to have problems and those who don't?

RESPONDENTS.

1. Self-individualization
2. Concrete to abstract
3. Individualized method
4. Individualization method
5. Counseling

11. What correlation do you see between student's who have emotional problems and their academic achievement? Those who seem to not have problems and their success in your class?

RESPONDENTS.

1. Academic performance of learners with emotional problems is low compared to those without.
 2. They all have special educational needs
 3. Learners with emotional problems need lovely teachers to perform well
 4. They achieve communication skills, behavior, daily autonomy but their academic is less
 5. Those without emotional problems feel guilty after performing poorly but others don't.
12. For those students who receive support at school, do you see a difference in their ability to be successful in your class?

RESPONDENTS.

1. Learners show different ability in learning activities
2. Yes they show capability in class activities
3. support and motivation lead to success

4. Those with support have changed academically
5. Improvement is seen in a way they behave, socialize, put on etc.



School of Inclusive and Special Needs Education
OFFICE OF THE DEAN

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: Ethical Clearance

The School of Inclusive and Special Needs Education offers Masters in Special Needs Education, and as part of the academic requirements, students are expected to conduct field studies and write a dissertations on topics of their choice.

The purpose of present letter therefore, is to seek your cooperation in allowing the above named student to conduct his/her research, and/or facilitate his/her data collection in your Institution/Organization:

Teaching and Learning challenges that hinder academic performance of students with mental challenges.

In case you require any other information regarding this exercise, you are welcome to contact the School of Inclusive and Special Needs Education on the address below.

Thank you for your cooperation

Sincerely yours

Done at UR-CE on 18th /03/2021

Signed

Dr. Evariste Karangwa
Dean, School of Inclusive and Special Needs Education
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Tel : (+250) 788755285, 0785489767, **0788809234**

