



**IMPACT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION OF CHILDREN WITH
AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER: A CASE STUDY OF HVP GATARA GIKONDO
BRANCH, A SPECIAL SCHOOL IN KICUKIRO DISTRICT, RWANDA**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF RWANDA**

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September, 2024

Certification

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled Impact of parental involvement in education of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder at HVP Gatagara Gikondo Kicukiro District is the original work of NIKUZE Odette, submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Education in Special Needs Education.

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Declaration

I, Nikuze Odette, hereby declare that, this dissertation is the result of my own work and has not been submitted for any other degree at the University of Rwanda or any other institution and all resources that I used, have been indicated.

Nikuze Odette

Signature:

Date:/...../.....

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Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to Almighty God for giving me a gift of life, my husband who assisted me financially, my mother, brothers, and sisters who were the sources of encouragement, and my dearest friends and colleagues who gave me their time, supportive ideas and thoughts that helped in the entire process of writing this thesis. Thank you so much may Heavenly father bless you abundantly.

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Abstract

Parents are broadly acknowledged to be essential partners in the education of their children, with parental involvement being linked to positive impact on academic progress. Regrettably, poor parental involvement remains significant and unfortunate challenge in Rwandan primary special schools as well as a contributing factor to low students' progress in schools. Therefore, the study was to explore how involved parents and teachers are in the education of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder(ASD) at Home de la Vièrge des Pauvres (HVP)-Gatagara Gikondo branch a primary special school in Kigali city province of Rwanda using Ecological system theory and Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence as a theoretical lens. The researcher employed the descriptive survey research design as an appropriate method of inquiry in the research and adopted Random Sampling techniques to parents, teachers, and administrators. The study was conducted on the target population of 77 participants that include 54 parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)- AS21 special educators, and 2 school administrators of HVP Gatagara/Gikondo branch. The study used simple sampling technique to select 5 teachers,5 parents and 2 administrators. Data for the study was obtained through questionnaires for teachers, semi-structured interviews conducted with the administrators and parents respectively and document analysis. The findings obtained revealed that parental involvement improves discipline and student progress. The researcher also reported on the ways in which parental involvement in education of children with ASD can be enhanced. However, various factors hindered parent involvement, such as the lack of confidence in providing assistance to children with homework, conflicts in home–school scheduling, ineffective communication, and reluctance to attend parent meetings and to serve on governance structures. The study recommends that both teachers and parents should establish good home-school relationships, teacher training for parent involvement should be organized, with schools developing a parent involvement program, so that a feasible collaborative partnership can be established between school and home.

Keywords: Autism, parental involvement, education, student, special school.

Table of contents

Certification	i
Declaration	ii
Dedication.....	iii
Acknowledgements.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Table of contents.....	vi
LIST OF TABLES.....	xi
LIST OF FIGURES	xii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	xiii
CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of the study	1
1.3 Statement of the problem	6
1.4 Purpose of the study	7
1.5 Objectives of the study.....	7
1.6 Research Questions	7
1.7. Significance of the study	7
1.8 Conceptual framework	8
1.9 Theoretical framework	10
1.10 Limitations and delimitations.....	11
1.10.1 Delimitations.....	11
1.10.2 Limitation.....	11
1.11 Operational definitions.....	11

1.12 Assumptions	12
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	13
2.1 Introduction	13
2.2 Theoretical review	13
2.3 Effects of parents’ and teachers ‘collaborations in education of children with autism.....	13
2.4 Effect of parents ‘and teachers’ attitudes towards education of children with autism.....	14
2.5 Effect of parents’ expectations in education of children with autism	15
2.6 Enhancing parental involvement in the education of children with ASD	17
2.6.1 Educating parents	17
2.6.2 Empowering parents.....	17
2.6.3 Partnership with parents	18
2.6.4 Parents can become involved in the organisation of events at the school.	18
2.6.5 Parents can become involved in the classroom	18
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	20
3.1 Introduction	20
3.2 Research Design	20
3.3. Location of the study	20
3.4 Target population	20
3.5 Sampling Techniques	21
3.6 Sample size.....	21
3.7 Research instrument for data collection	22
3.7.1 Interviews.....	22
3.7.2 Questionnaire	23
3.7.3. Document analysis	24
3.7.4 Validity of the instrument	24

3.7.5 Reliability of the instrument.....	24
3.8 Procedures for data collection.....	25
3.10 Data Processing and Analysis	26
3.11 Legal and Ethical Consideration	26
CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA.....	27
4.1 Introduction.....	27
4.2 Demographic data of teachers.....	27
4.2.1 Age and gender of teachers	27
4.2.2. Academic qualification of Teachers	28
4.2.3. Teacher teaching experience.	28
4.3 Effect of Parents’ and teachers ‘collaborations in education of children with ASD.....	30
4.3.1 Effect of parents’ responsibilities toward education of children with ASD.....	30
4.3.2 How parents are involved in the education of children with ASD.....	32
4.3.3 Administrators ‘views on how parents are involved in their children’s education.	33
4.3.4. Benefits of parental involvement in education of their children with ASD.	34
4.3.5. How parents are informed about what is happening at their children’s school.....	36
4.3.6 How parents of children with ASD are informed about what is happening at school.....	36
4.4 Effect of parents’ and teachers’ attitudes towards education of children with ASD.	38
4.4.1 How parents of children with ASD attend Parents Meeting.	38
4.4.2 How parents of children with ASD attend parents ‘meeting.	39
4.4.3 Nature of attitudes that parents hold towards education of children with ASD	40
4.5 Parents ‘expectations affect education of children with ASD at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo in Kicukiro District.....	40
4.5.1 Ways in which school should assists parents on the issue of parenting children with ASD.	40
4.5.2 Extent to what school assists parents on the issue of parenting children with ASD.	42

4.5.3 Administrators’ views on the ways in which school assists parents on the issue of parenting children with ASD.	42
4.6. Parents’ administrators’ and teachers ‘views on how to enhance parental involvement in the education of children with ASD in special schools.....	43
4.6.1 Administrators ‘views on how to enhance parental involvement in the education of children with ASD in special schools.	43
4.6.2 Parents ‘views on how to enhance parental involvement in the education of children with ASD in special schools.	43
4.6.3 Teachers ‘views on how parental involvement in the education of children with ASD can be enhanced.	44
CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	45
5.1 Introduction.....	46
5.2 Summary of the Findings	46
5.2.1 Parents ‘perceptions on how Parents’ and teachers’ collaborations affect education of children with ASD.	46
5.2.2 Teachers ‘views on how teachers ‘and Parents’ collaborations affect education of students with ASD.	47
5.2.3 Administrators ‘views on how parents ‘and teachers’ collaborations affect education of children with ASD.	47
5.2.4 Parents ‘opinions on how teachers ‘and parents’ attitude affect education of students with ASD	47
5.2.5 Teachers ‘views on how teachers ‘and parents’ attitude affect education of students with ASD.	47
5.2.6 Administrators’ views on how teachers’ and parents’ attitudes affect education of students with ASD.	47
5.2.7 Parents ‘views on how to enhance parental involvement in the education of children with ASD in special schools.	48
5.2.8 Teachers ‘views on how parental involvement in the education of children with ASD can be enhanced.	48

5.2.9 Administrators ‘views on how to enhance parental involvement in the education of children with ASD in special schools.	48
5.3 Conclusion of the study.....	48
5.4 Recommendations	50
5.5 Suggestions of further research.....	50
Appendix A: Letter for introduction	60
Appendix B: Research Permit.....	61
Appendix C: Interview guide for parents.....	62
Appendix D: Questionnaire for teachers	64
Appendix E: Interview Guide for administrators	66
Appendix F: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH PROJECT	68
APPENDIX G: SAMPLE OF INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN.....	70

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1	Composition of the participants.....	20
Table 2	Sampling table.....	22
Table 3	Distribution of teachers by age and gender.....	27
Table 4	Teachers' educational level.....	28
Table 5	Teaching experience of teachers.....	28
Table 6	Parents' understanding of the ways in which they are involved in the education of children with ASD.	30
Table 7	Teachers' understanding on how parents are involved in their children's education.....	32
Table 8	Parents 'opinions on the benefits of being involved as parents of children with ASD in their children's education.....	34
Table 9	Communication as an effect of parents 'collaborations towards education of children with ASD.	36
Table 10	Teachers' understanding on how parents are informed about what is happening at their children's school.	37
Table 11	Parents 'Attendance as an effect of parents 'attitude towards education of children with ASD.....	39
Table 12	Teachers' understanding on parents' attendance as an effect of parents 'attitude towards education of children with ASD.	39
Table 13	Parents 'opinions on the ways they think that school should assists them on the issue of parenting children with ASD.	40
Table 14	Teachers' understanding of the ways in which school assists parents on the issue of parenting children with ASD.	42

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure1. Conceptual framework 9

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADDM: Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring

ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder

DSMD: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

EFA: Education for All

HVP: Home de la Vierge des Pauvres

IEP: Individual Education Plan

SEN: Special Educational Needs

TEACCH: Treatment and Education of Autistic and Related Communication Handicapped Children.

UAE: United Arab Emirates

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the background of the study, the purpose of the study, the problem statement, the research objectives, the research questions, significance of the study, conceptual framework, the theoretical framework, ethical considerations, limitations and delimitations, the definition of key concepts and assumptions.

1.2 Background of the study

This study investigates parents' and teachers' involvement in the education of children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in a special school in Kicukiro district, Rwanda. There have been different important international conferences on education. In Dakar, 2000 World Education Forum, the participants agreed that: "Education is a fundamental human right. It is the key to sustainable development and peace and stability within and among countries. The basic learning needs of all can and must be met as a matter of urgency" Dakar Framework for Action 2000. In order to achieve education for all, we need to: Ensure equal opportunities for children who are the most vulnerable, marginalized and excluded. Ensure not only access to education, but access to quality education.

At the World Conference on Special Needs Education (1994), the participants agreed that: "Experience in many countries demonstrates that the integration of children and youth with special educational needs is best achieved within inclusive schools that serve all children within a community. It is within this context that those within special educational needs can achieve the fullest progress and social integration." Salamanca Framework for Action, 1994. International learning of students (Education, 2019). The academic achievement of students in schools is subjected to a variety of factors, many of which are beyond the control of the students.

Factors such as parental involvement, parent level of education, and disability all influence the academic achievement. Autism is the fastest growing developmental disability in the United States (Speaks, 2013). About one in 68 children has been identified with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) according to estimates from Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Autism and Developmental Disabilities Monitoring (ADDM) Network. ASD is almost five times more common among boys (1 in 42) than among girls (1 in 189) (CDC, 2014).

ASD is often used to describe a range of diagnoses that share characteristics of autism. Public schools apply the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM D) definition which is published by the American Psychiatric Merriam; Autism Spectrum Disorders are a range of complex developmental disorders that can cause problems with thinking, feeling, language, and the ability to relate to others.

They are neurological disorders, which mean they affect the functioning of the brain. How autism disorders affect a person and the severity of symptoms are different in each person (APA, 2014) .The importance of parents' participation in the education of children with ASD is well recognized, parents are their first teachers and they have a key role in shaping up their character. A stability of education at home and school shapes a student's actual learning. Their role is not limited to home but involvement in school activities too. Parents and teachers have an important role to play in the education of children experiencing barriers to learning, such as ASD (Sapungan, 2014).

Parents and teachers often take up separate, isolated roles (Hill and Taylor, 2004). Parents usually focus on moral, cultural, religious education and supporting their child's needs, whereas the teachers take responsibility for academic orientated topics and development (Mucube, 2009).

The research found that there are several benefits if parents and teachers are involved in their child's education (Jeynes, 2011; Sheridan, Ryoo, GArbacz, Kunz and Chumey, 2013). The benefits include improved academic outcomes, better school attendance and homework completion rates, improved self-esteem, and higher teacher moral (Durisic and Bunijevac, 2017). However, there are several factors that might influence the parents' and teachers' involvement in the education of children with ASD (Benson, Karlof andSiperstein, 2008).

Parents of children with ASD face increased challenges with regard to balancing work and family commitments, and often have negative attitudes or perceptions regarding parental involvement (Benson et al., 2008). Moreover, teachers have also indicated that parents of children with ASD are less involved in school activities such as volunteering in their child's classroom, communicating with teachers and attending school meeting (Hoover-Dempsey e al., 2005).

This may also be because the school does not provide sufficient opportunities, support and encouragement for parents to explore how involved parents and teachers are in the education of children with ASD. In developing countries, research and treatment options for children and adults with any kind of disability are just recently being explored. Given the introduction of research on disability in developing countries, there is an incredible gap in available knowledge among both professionals, teachers and, parents leading to a misunderstanding of disabilities such as autism in children and adults.

In Tanzania, cases of autism have been noted to appear after a particularly traumatic case of childhood malaria or rheumatic fever and this has been a confirmed source of autism following scientific research (Mankoski, 2006). Other researchers are more convinced by the genetics behind this developmental disorder and through monozygotic twin studies it has been found that when there is a diagnosis of autism, there is a 90% chance that both twins will present with some form of the disorder (Rapin,1997).

While there are many different therapies available such as speech and language therapy and behavior analysis, every child will without a doubt respond differently to various combinations of treatments. A trial and error method of intervention is most often recommended by physicians and autism professionals in order to pinpoint the most effective option for an individual child (Callahan, 2010).

Despite the wide range of available treatment options, there is no doubt among professionals that early intervention will yield the best results in each and every case of autism. Early intervention can be defined as treatment programs that begin before the child reaches the age of five due to the increased brain plasticity and ability to acquire communication and behavioral skills (Erba, 2000). For children with autism that is backed by scientific results as well as a set of data on each child undergoing therapy in order to thoroughly chart individual progress. ABA therapy has the unique ability to break down a social skill that the therapist would like the child to learn and teach that skill one step at a time until it is mastered. It has been calculated that anywhere from 60 to 75% of the world's population with a disability lives in a Third World nation and 10% of these individuals are children of school age.

This is undoubtedly a significant portion of the world's population; however, few resources are allocated to this group of people (Mutua, 2001). The neglect of these individuals worldwide has led to the lack of accurate prevalence data in countries like Kenya. Researcher Jon Onala has estimated that given current world data on autism prevalence and the population of Nairobi, an estimated 25,000 children are affected by a disorder on the autism spectrum in this area alone. The relatively new field of autism and developmental disabilities in Kenya has led to an influx of both accurate and inaccurate information available to parents, teachers and medical professionals.

The most important barrier to access of therapy and education is a family's location within Kenya. Families with children living in rural areas are more likely to raise a child with autism without ever receiving proper diagnosis, and even if they did, it is likely there would not be a treatment center located near their home. If a school in a rural part of Kenya does happen to have a special unit, this classroom will most probably be full of children, each with a unique disability, taught by a teacher with minimal training in what Kenyans call "special needs education." These teachers are unable to give each child the individualized lesson plans they will require to learn and succeed despite the best intentions of the teaching staff.

A study conducted in Kenya identified a rural upbringing as a significant risk factor for developing a neurological impairment. Children in high versus low-income households, often inaccurately thought to be synonymous with urban versus rural families, also have very different access to autism and educational services.

Most autism services in Kenya are available in urban areas if a family is willing and able to pay the fees that accompany private and specialized services, usually administered by Americans or Europeans living and working in Kenya. Most of these individuals are certified specialists in the field of special education and administer more western therapy options such as behavior therapy, occupational therapy, and applied behavior analysis and speech and language therapy. While this influx of professionals is a step in the right direction for the treatment of autism in Kenya, these services are still considered a luxury for many families and most are unable to pay the high price for private services.

The public education option for children with disabilities, including autism, in Kenya includes what are referred to as “special needs units” and in one case, a specific “autism unit.” These units are set-up as single classrooms within primary schools generally equipped with two to three special needs teachers for a classroom of 30-40 students. The problem with these units, specifically concerning children with autism, is the lack of individual attention that can be placed on each child to ensure they are learning to their fullest potential.

Government schools have begun to employ an inclusive education model rather than a special needs unit system in order to increase the learning potential of children with disabilities like autism. Multiple studies have shown the benefits of integration into mainstream classrooms that give children with special needs access to heightened social environments and elevate their potential to learn on grade-level with their peers (Wendelborg, 2011). The Kenyan government created and instituted a new constitution in the year 2010 that had multiple rights reserved for individuals with disabilities living in Kenya.

In addition to these outlined provisions, the recent initiative entitled Education for All by 2015 outlines the benefits and requirement of an education for all children, even those with disabilities like autism. It is known that many children of school age in Kenya do not attend school because of required uniforms, school fees and other complications but the main reason cited by parents of children with autism for not sending their children to school is the lack of accommodations for their child.

In a public school system, classrooms and teachers for these children should be provided under this constitution that is conducive to diverse learning needs and limitations. In Rwanda, the origin of Special Needs Education can be drawn to organizations with religious affiliations, particularly Roman Catholic ones (Suubi, 2012). They started the first Special primary school in the country in the 1960s, and even now virtually all special primary schools in Rwanda are owned and managed by these religious organizations.

In 2005, Rwanda had approximately 20 Special schools serving 1,500 individuals with disabilities (Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Scientific Research, 2005).

According to the Ministry, only six of the 20 Special schools engaged exclusively in education activities, while the rest placed more emphasis on medical activities such as physiotherapy. The mixed nature of the activities that take place in these institutions is what leads to the use of term ‘school’ when referring to them.

In 2010, the number of Special schools had risen to 34 (Karangwa et al, 2010) Rwanda’s education programs are still disadvantaged in many ways by limited research evidence specifically on parental involvement in education of children with autism. The current study will investigate the impact of parental involvement on the progress of students with autism at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo branch, Kicukiro district in Kigali city province of Rwanda.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Parental involvement in the education of children without ASD has been associated with a number of positive outcomes, including higher levels of academic achievement, lower levels of child behavior problems, and increased social-emotional skills (Sheridan et al., 2013). This involvement is unique for parents of children with ASD (Boswell and Smith, 2012).

However, children with Autism are not making a significant progress in their education, misbehavior portrayed by these children are dramatically increasing in and outside of school. The analysis of students goals set in their Individual Education Plans, students work book, homework books, progress reports and meeting register for parents revealed that some students were not completing their goals and most of the parents do not attend the meetings and events organized by school.

As the result, low academic progress of children with ASD, increasing goals repetition rate, school dropout, many children with ASD will ended up begging, entering in bad actions, and stealing. When this issue continues “Leave no one behind” commitments of Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goal made by the government of Rwanda will be a dream. The present study therefore sought to investigate the impact of parental involvement in education of children with ASD at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo in Kicukiro district, Kigali city, Rwanda.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine how involved parents and teachers are in the education of children with ASD at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo in Kigali city province of Rwanda.

1.5 Objectives of the study

The study sought to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine the effect of parents' and teachers' collaboration in the education of children with ASD at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo in Kicukiro district.
2. To find out the effect of parents' and teachers' attitudes towards parental involvement in the education of children with ASD at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo in Kicukiro district.
3. To explore parents' and teachers' views on how parental involvement in the education of children with ASD at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo in Kicukiro district can be enhanced.

1.6 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the effects of parents' and teachers' collaborations in education of children with ASD at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo in Kicukiro district?
2. What are the effects of parents' and teachers' attitudes towards education of children with ASD at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo in Kicukiro district?
3. What are parents' and teachers' views on how parental involvement in education of children with ASD at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo in Kicukiro district can be enhanced?

1.7. Significance of the study

The research is important to the researcher herself, parents of children with ASD, teachers who teach those learners with ASD, Students with ASD, Special schools, and Ministry of Education.

Parents: The data collected from this study will inform parents and highlight their contribution in the education of young children with ASD to a variety of positive child outcomes, including improved skills maintenance and generalization, as well as to enhanced family functioning and well-being.

Teachers: It will help teachers teaching in special schools as they will closely work together with parents to ensure the children's progress. It increases teachers' awareness of the knowledge children bring to the class from home and other settings and the support they get out of school. It will also inform them what parents do and can do in their capacity and within their intellectual and materials resources to support their children's learning.

Students with ASD: Furthermore, other benefits of this study may include improved student academic progress and aspirations, but also non-academic outcome which includes attendance, behavior, attitude, homework, self-esteem, motivation, and self-discipline.

Special schools: It will provide practical facts that will assist the schools to improve their collaboration with parents of children with autism. Parents are equal members of the (Individual Education Plan) IEP team. This research will help them to attend in all children's IEP meetings and evaluations.

Ministry of Education: The research may contribute to the ministry of education in implementing of education programs for all and will guide policy makers on critical issues to consider when formulating or reviewing existing policies especially for students with ASD.

1.8 Conceptual framework

The current study was conducted through the lens of Epstein's parental involvement model (Epstein, 1994). Epstein's theory (1994) describes the dynamics of family and school relationships and the forces that have an influence.

The theory is regarded as pivotal in the field of family-school partnerships and also explains the internal and external factors that may influence the six parent involvement types that can assist when planning, implementing and reviewing parents' participation (Van Wyk and Lemmer, 2009).

The six types of parental involvement model include parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community (Epstein, 1994) and are visually illustrated in the figure below.

Independent Variables

Dependent Variables

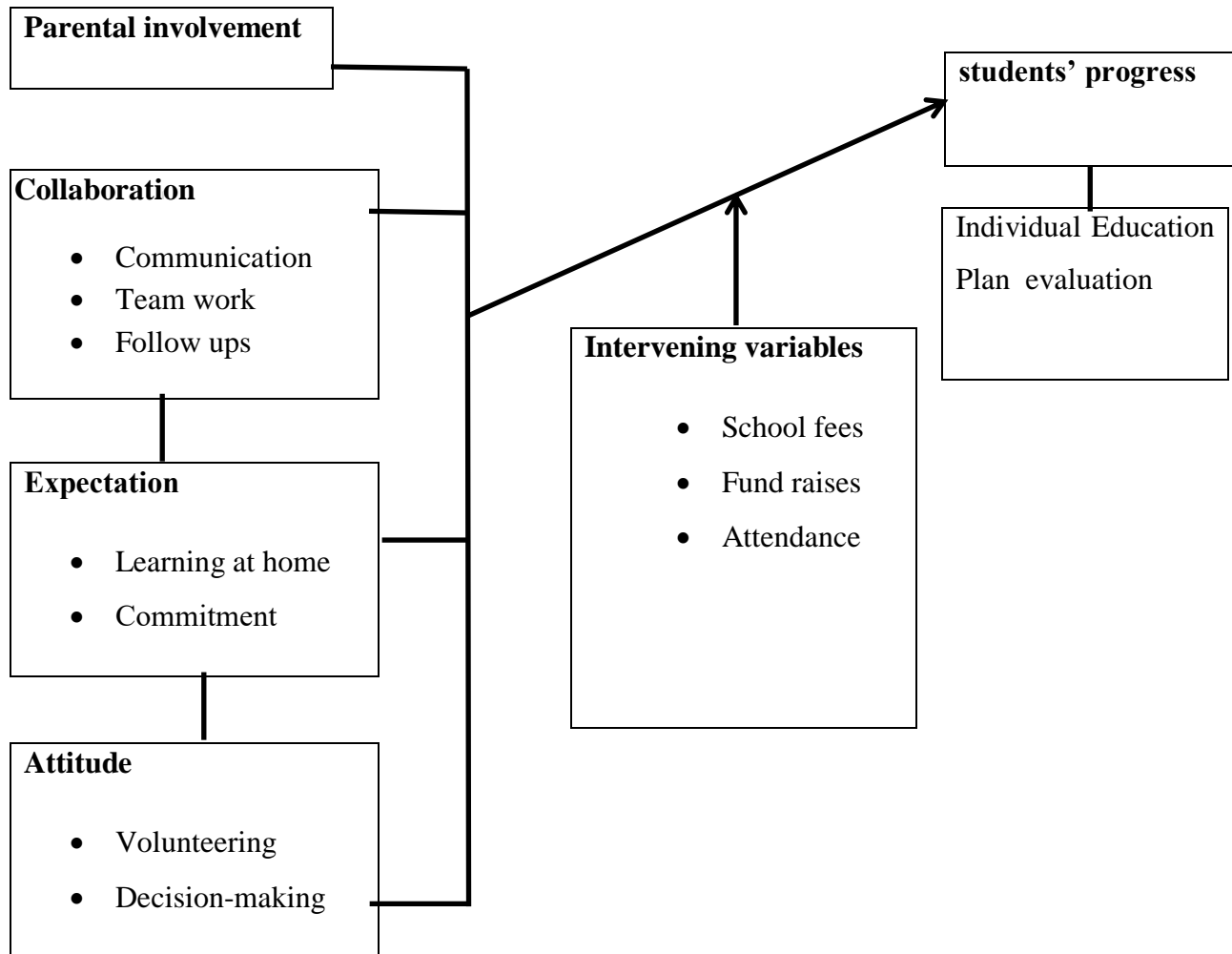


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

It is obvious from Figure 1.1 that conceptual framework explains the relationship between the dependent and independent variables in the study; the dependent variable is considered since parental involvement depends on the progress from very many factors.

Several single factors acting individually have a collective effect on the parents' involvement and students' academic progress; these are parental collaboration, expectation and attitudes variables. When these variables are well processed like good collaboration, positive attitudes and high expectation linked to intervening variables, like school fees, fund raising and attendance will lead to better improved students 'progress.

1.9 Theoretical framework

According to Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) who is most known for his ecological system theory. In his theory he identified four environment systems such as micro system, mesosystem, ecosystem and macro system within which children exist that would combine to have an impact upon how they grow and develop. Micro systems are factors located within the immediate environment of the child which is directly with the child and have the greatest impact on them, such as people and events at home.

The child's immediate family such as his/her parents and siblings constitute the micro system. It serves as the most important subsystem for the child within which, parents play a vital role as primary educators. DU Toi.L in 2000 agrees that parents are the most important and influential figures in their children's lives. T.M in 2003 states that children displayed poor progress in certain areas due to an absence of parental involvement. Therefore, interaction between educators and parents is essential to create a supportive environment in which families would feel safe and comfortable enough to participate.

Mesosystems are interconnections between the micro system such as between the family and teachers or relationship between the child's peers and the family. Learning activities at school must be carried over to the home environment (kenan, 2002). Similarly, a caring and motivated educator will influence the child positively in his/her growth and development. (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) uses the term bi-directional to explain that the influence of the behavior of adults and children are from both directions.

For example, an overall attentive child is likely to be responded to positively, whereas a distractible child is more likely to evoke a negative response from adults such as restriction and punishment (Berk, 2000).

According to (Donald, 2006) the mesosystem constitutes roles, relationships and daily living activities that affect the holistic development of the child within his/her cognitive, social, emotional, moral and spiritual spheres.

Constructed on this theory parents of children with autism at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo do not effectively collaborate and communicate with educators and interact with their children that might lead to poor progress of children with autism at school.

1.10 Limitations and delimitations

1.10.1 Delimitations

Roberts (2010) defined delimitations as the planned limits of a study including factors the researcher is able to control, and the manner in which the research focuses the study. Thus there may be different parental factors that can influence the progress of students with ASD in HVP Gatagara Gikondo in Kicukiro district but the current study is delimited to parent collaboration, expectation and attitudes. The sample size was picked from the selected school in mentioned district.

1.10.2 Limitation

Limitations describe issues and incidents that may crop up in an investigation that are beyond investigator's control. They restrict extensity of an inquiry and may influence the final findings and conclusions (Simon, 2011). The study was conducted in only a special school. The researcher could not carry out the research in many special schools owing to the limited time and financial constraints.

These constraints were managed by selecting one primary special school located in Kicukiro district that admits students with ASD. The researcher focused on the impact of the parental involvement on the progress of students with ASD and did not pay attention to the other factors affecting the progress of students with ASD.

1.11 Operational definitions

The following key concepts were used in the research:

Autism spectrum disorder- the term “autism spectrum disorder” (ASD) and autism are often used interchangeably (Milunsky and Tager, 2008).

In this study, the term “ASD” is preferred. According to the DSM-5, ASD requires three deficits in social interaction and social communication and at least two symptoms in the category of restricted interests and repetitive behaviours.

Furthermore, these symptoms should be present during the early developmental period and must cause clinically significant impairments in social, occupational or other areas of functioning that cannot be explained by a global developmental delay or intellectual disability (APA, 2013).

Special educational needs school- Special educational needs schools and programs are for children who have challenges or disabilities that interfere with learning. They provide the support that is not normally provided in general education programs. These schools and programs tailor learning to address each child's unique combination of needs (Black, 2019).

Parent- The biological, adoptive or legal guardian of a child, or the person who accepts the responsibility to all the obligations with regards to learner's education (DoE, 1996).

Parental involvement- Refers to an attempt made by parents to be personally involved in their child's school activities and school functions, assisting teachers at school as well as at home, in order to enhance the educational outcomes for learners (Ntekane, 2018).

Progress of Students-This is the degree at which a student has been able to achieve the set expectations.

Individualized Education Program (IEP)- The written document required by Individual with Disabilities Education Act for every child with a disability; includes statements of present performance, annual goals, short-term instructional objectives, specific educational services needed, extent of participation in the general education program, evaluation procedures, and relevant dates; and must be signed by parents as well as educational personnel.

1.12 Assumptions

The study assumes that participants answered both interview and questionnaires questions honestly and authentically. It is also assumed that they had a sincere interest in participating in the research without any other motives or incentives.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter commences with the theoretical review followed by the literature related to the effect of parents' collaboration on the progress of students with ASD, effect of parents' attitudes on the progress of students with ASD, effect of parents' expectations on the progress of students with autism and strategies to enhance parental involvement in education of students with ASD, and Summary and gaps identified concerning the impact of parental involvement on the progress of students with ASD.

2.2 Theoretical review

In this context, the researcher highlighted what other scholars pointed out about the impact of parental involvement on the progress of students with ASD, its importance and some of the obstacles that discourage parents from getting fully involved in their children education.

2.3 Effects of parents' and teachers 'collaborations in education of children with autism.

The importance of family involvement in services is supported by ecological systems theory. Ecological system identifies the important influence the home and other microsystems have on a child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Just as children are influenced by their microsystems, they are similarly affected by the interactions between microsystems, the mesosystem. Given the cross-setting nature of support for children with ASD and the potential for lifelong involvement with service providers, family involvement is likely to increase the effectiveness of treatments (Matson, 2009).

Although successful collaborative relationships are valuable to the academic achievement of students, including those with any degree of impairment, they become particularly important when children are identified with autism. One reason for this regards the broad range of cognitive, sensory, motor, communicative, or social impairments that may be present (Dalrymple, 2002). Given the variability in students' strengths and weaknesses, a diagnosis of ASD does not delineate certain IEP objectives or teaching strategies (Moroz, 1989).

Additionally, autism is a lifelong disability, and goals should target long-term changes, as opposed to the short-term aims of most cooperative teams (Dalrymple, 2002).

Thus, collaborative relationships provide a means for parents and teachers to support each other over the broad spans of time necessary for interventions to be effective.

Second, research has demonstrated that students with ASD achieve greater success when home and school simultaneously attempt to achieve the same educational goal such as the acquisition of a specific social skill (McGee, 1999). For this to happen, parents and teachers must both work toward the same goal in the same way at the same time.

Thus, consistency across goals and intervention procedures is critical (Dalrymple, 2002). To ensure consistency, parents and teachers need to operate as a knowledgeable, coordinated team in prioritizing goals and developing strategies to achieve those goals (Hays'05, 2005). Finally, parent-teacher collaboration is necessary to increase the social validity of educational interventions for children with ASD (Dalrymple, 2002).

2.4 Effect of parents 'and teachers' attitudes towards education of children with autism.

Limited research has been conducted on parents' attitudes towards their involvement in the education of children with ASD (Potter, 2016). According to Maluleke (2014), parents have a negative attitude towards their involvement in the education of their children when the level of complexity of the schoolwork becomes more advanced.

Parents often reported that they do not receive adequate support from teachers in the form of extra information to assist their children with more complex school work and, therefore, do not want to be involved in their children's education as they themselves do not understand the schoolwork (Brown and Beckett, 2007).

Siririka (2007) reported that parents are of the opinion that they do not know the content of the subject and are, therefore, unable to help their children with schoolwork. Parents have also reported that they often do not feel welcome or included in the school and, therefore, do not want to be involved in their child's education (Dixon, 1992).

The frequently cited communication gap between the parents and the school is also a contributing factor to parents' negative attitude towards their involvement (Elliot and Whipple, 2010).

Parents reported that there is not enough communication between them and the teachers and that they are only invited to parent meetings when there is a problem with their child. This causes frustration for parents and then parents are not motivated to be involved in their child's education (Erlendsdóttir, 2010). Other parents reported that they had a positive attitude towards their involvement in the education of their children (Maluleke, 2014).

Parents reported that when they were more involved in their children's education, they had a better knowledge of the school curriculum and the areas in which their children needed improvement (Combs et al., 2010). Therefore, parents who were more involved in the education of their children were more satisfied with their children's education and therefore had a positive attitude towards parental involvement.

2.5 Effect of parents' expectations in education of children with autism

Parents' expectations for their children shape their parenting behaviors, and consequently, children's self-concept, school adjustment, and academic outcomes (Caprara and Pastorelli, 1996). In fact, parents who hold high academic expectations have children who exhibit better school outcomes than might be anticipated based solely on their cognitive functioning or previous academic achievement (Boer and Van der Werf, 2015).

Past research suggests that parents' expectations may play a protective role in children's academic achievement for children facing risk factors, such as economic disadvantage (Alexander and Bedinger, 2005). However, despite the potentially influential role of parents' expectations of schooling, very little attention has been placed on parents' expectations for their students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) as they transition into early schooling.

In the current study, we examined parents' school related expectations for their children with ASD, as well as their child-parent/family-, and teacher/school-level correlates. The intent was to identify areas where professionals might better understand and support parents of children with ASD adapting to school entry. Among typically developing children, many characteristics have been associated with parents' expectations for their children's adjustment to school and academic progress.

Despite the history of increased parental involvement in the education of children with autism spectrum disorders relative to parents of children without ASD, there is little research on the educational expectations that parents hold for their young children with ASD and how these are formed. The socio-economic status of the family tends to predict the quality and quantity of intervention given to children with ASD. Social support given to ASD children is linked to the educational level of the parents.

Well –educated parents are more responsive and have higher expectations for their children with ASD (Bush et al.,2017), compared to low level or uneducated parents who are characterized by parental distress, parent-child dysfunctional interaction, difficulties understanding why the child is the way he/she is (Johnson and Zauniewski,2012).

So, Parents who have positive relationships with teachers' form more positive expectations. There are important ways in which expectations may differ between parents of typically developing children and parents of those with ASD. Parents of children with ASD may face unique barriers that impede formation of positive expectations of schooling. Such barriers might include parents, teachers, and therapists having different goals and beliefs about what would be best for the child, which may impede the child from maximizing his or her academic potential (Parsons and Eliiins,2009).

Parents' and teachers' expectations may differ in the extent to which they are achievable or realistic given children's current level of functioning; this contrast could lead to strained communications and goal-setting between parents and teachers. Similarly, parents may hold expectations that prioritize or emphasize different aspects of the child's development, such as social or emotional development versus academically–focused expectations.

Further, tensions may arise when parents' expectations do not align with the services that are available or feasible within the school (Russell, 2005), or when parents encounter difficulties communication or sharing their perspectives with the educational team (Tucker and Schwartz, 2013).

On the other hand, parents of children with ASD, who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP), are more likely to be actively involved in their children's day to day educational experiences (e.g., engaging in consistent communication with the child's teacher or therapists, attending conferences and meetings more frequently), as compared to parents of typically developing children, without an IEP (Wagner and Valdes, 2012). This regular involvement may provide parents with specific knowledge about their child's capabilities, resulting in more alignment or specificity in parents' expectations.

2.6 Enhancing parental involvement in the education of children with ASD

Since there are numerous benefits to parental involvement, it is important for both teachers and schools to create opportunities to enhance parental involvement for parents of children with ASD (Michael et al., 2012). Parental involvement can be enhanced in the following ways:

2.6.1 Educating parents

If parents are educated about their children's diagnosis and associated challenges, they might be able to understand their children better and become more involved in their children's education. Therefore, it is important for professionals, which include teachers, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists and physiotherapists to provide parents with information on how to become more involved in their children's education and how they can provide their children with the necessary support (Eakin, 2006).

Parents need to be provided with the relevant information and resources on ASD and available support that could be provided for them (Chee and Chua, 2015). The researcher is of the opinion that parents do not always have the knowledge to be able to assist the child with homework or schoolwork; therefore, providing parents with training programs may enable them to be of assistance when it concerns their children's education.

2.6.2 Empowering parents

Parents are the primary caretakers of children and, therefore, they should be allowed to have a say in the intervention program of their children and they should feel that their opinion is valuable (Chee and Chua, 2015). Furthermore, parents can easily be overwhelmed and therefore, it is important that the goals of children with ASD are achievable and manageable (Eakin, 2006).

The researcher is of the opinion that when parents of children with ASD are involved in the decision making of the children's education, they feel that they can become more involved in other aspects of the children's education.

2.6.3 Partnership with parents

Parents, teachers and professionals should work together to determine goals for their children (Gooch, 2016). It is always important for parents' decisions to be respected (Eakin, 2006). During the education process, learners with ASD learn across multiple settings such as the home, school, and the community is the shared and continuous responsibility of parents and professionals (Swart and Phasha, 2011).

Parents of children with ASD need to be actively involved with the teachers and other professionals so that they can share information, provide feedback on their child's education, share decision making, and determine goals (Chee and Chua, 2015). It is the researcher's opinion that by involving the parents, they may feel that their opinion is of value and they will put in more effort to build a trusting relationship with the school and the teachers.

2.6.4 Parents can become involved in the organisation of events at the school.

Parents of children with ASD can become involved in their children's education by volunteering their time to help organize events such as fundraising, sports coaching and field trips (Swart and Phasha, 2011).

2.6.5 Parents can become involved in the classroom

Parents of children with ASD can become involved in the classroom by assisting the teacher to create the learning resources that are used during the year (Vogel and Landsberg, 2011). Furthermore, parents can accompany the teachers during outings and be a substitute teacher when a teacher is on sick leave or perhaps study leave (Epstein and Salinas, 2004).

2.7 Summary and Gaps Identified

In short, the literature highlighted what other scholars pointed out about the impact of parental involvement on the progress of students with ASD, its importance and some of the obstacles that discourage parents from getting fully involved in their children education. It virtually showed the limited research that has been conducted on parental involvement in the education of children with ASD in developing countries (Afolabi and Ellis, 2017).

Some parents of children with special educational needs were involved in their children's education with regard to having a good relationship with their children's teacher, assisting their children with homework, discussing their children's progress with the teachers and attending parents' meetings (Erlendsdóttir, 2010).

Furthermore, parents in the study by Botts and Owusu (2013) reported that they generally trust teachers to make decisions on behalf of their children. As in other developing countries, studies have been conducted on parental involvement in the education of children with and without special educational needs, but limited research on parental involvement in the education of children with ASD (Engelbrecht, 2007).

Stephinah (2014) conducted a study on parental involvement in the education of children with special educational needs; he found that teachers were of the opinion that parental involvement was limited in schools. Manjula's research in 2009 revealed that children with special educational needs did not receive any support from their parents and other family members. The majority of studies, which were conducted on parental involvement in developing countries focused on children's special educational needs, and not on ASD specifically (Combs et al., 2010).

In Rwanda, there are many factors, which may influence parental involvement in the education of children with special educational needs, which include the educational level of parents, poverty, the literacy of parents and limited support from teachers. The present study will focus on "The impact of parental involvement on the progress of students with ASD".

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This part outlines the methodological approaches the researcher used. It presents the study design, participants, sample size and sampling procedures, research instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis techniques, consideration of logistic issues and consideration of ethical issues.

3.2 Research Design

The researcher adopted the descriptive survey research design as an appropriate method of inquiry in this study. This choice was informed by (Kahn, 2006) who stated that in descriptive research plan, in contrast to an experiment, the researcher does not manipulate the variable, decide who receives the treatment, or arrange for events to happen.

In fact, the events that are observed and described would have happened even if there had been an observation or analysis. It also involves events that have already taken place and maybe related to a present condition. The design was appropriate in this study in those variables for the study namely, “parents’ contributions and education of learners with intellectual disabilities”.

3.3. Location of the study

This study was carried out in Kicukiro district, in HVP Gatagara /Gikondo a special school for children with Intellectual Disabilities and those with autism.

3.4 Target population

The participants of this research included parents of children with ASD, special needs educators, and school administrations at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo branch.

Table 1: Composition of the participants

Categories of participants	Participant by gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Teachers	8	13	21
School administration	2	-	2
Parents	20	34	54
Total	30	47	77

3.5 Sampling Techniques

The researcher adopted Random Sampling techniques to parents, teachers, and administrators. The researcher chose Random Sampling as the method of sample selection that gives each possible sample combination and equal probability of being drawn up and each item in the entire population to have equal chance of being included in the sample.

3.6 Sample size

A sample is a sub population a researcher studies so that features of the population are shown by it. A sample is a smaller group or subject of the total population in a way that knowledge gained is representative of the total population under the study. The sample comprised of five Parents of learners with ASD and five teachers teaching learners with ASD from HVP Gatagara/Gikondo branch a special school in Kicukiro district.

The parents consist of two fathers (40%) and three mothers (60%).The parents were between 30 and 50 years old while teachers consist of two female (40%) and three male (60%). The teachers were between 26 and 35years old. The 2 administrators were randomly selected that made a total of 12 participants.

Table 2. Sampling table

Categories of participants	Participant by gender		
	Male	Female	Total
Teachers	3	2	5
School administration	2	-	2
Parents	2	3	5
Total	7	5	12

3.7 Research instrument for data collection

Most of qualitative research depends on the use of multiple methods to collect data (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015). The research used interviews and questionnaire to collect data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2014). The interviews and questionnaire used in the study will be discussed in the text section.

3.7.1 Interviews

Interview is the method of collecting data which involves presentation of oral verbal stimuli and reply in terms of oral-verbal responses. The semi –structured interviews for the study consisted of predetermine questions that allowed the researcher to probe and clarify answers (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015). In this study semi-structured interview were the main data collection method used to parents and administrators in this research.

In some cases, in-depth interviews used in order to get the inner feeling and views of participants on the impact of parental involvement on progress education of students with autism. Justification for selecting interview for data collection was based on the potential the method has to help the researcher obtain more data and in greater depth, through probing beyond the planned questions.

The semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents and administrators between July to December 2023. The research arranged the interviews at locations convenient for the participants such as the school or the participants ‘homes.

Conducting the interviews in familiar environments set the participants at ease. Before the researcher started with the interviews, she made sure that she had a pen and notebook at hand, to write important information down.

Furthermore, with permission from the participants, the research also recorded the semi-structured interviews on a telephone in order for her to be able to listen to their responses afterwards. The semi structured interviews lasted for approximately 20 minutes and were recorded exact. A predetermined number of questions (see Appendix) were asked which focused on their own views and opinions regarding parental involvement in the education of children with ASD.

The research asked several types of questions such as yes/no questions and open –ended questions. The interviews questions for the parents (Appendix c) consisted of two sub-sections. Section A focused on obtaining the demographic characteristics of the child and parents. Section B focused on obtaining information about the family, what it is like to be the parent of a child with ASD, parents ‘understanding of parents ‘role in parental involvement, who should initiate parental involvement, the responsibilities of a parent with a child with ASD, areas that parents feel where they need support, how parents feel the school can support them better.

In addition, information was obtained on how parents are informed about what happens in school, how parent ‘views are on parent meetings, in which activities they are involved at their child’s school, parents’ opinions regarding the opportunities available for parental involvement at school.

3.7.2 Questionnaire

A questionnaire has the ability to collect a large amount of information in a reasonably quick space of time (Orodho, 2010). In this research, questionnaire was composed of two sections that set for special needs educators at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo branch to help the researcher collect data on the impact of parental involvement on the progress of students with ASD in that school.

Section A focused on obtaining the personal information about the teacher Section B focused obtaining information about parent teacher relationship, what it is the meaning of the term parental involvement, problems teachers encounter when interacting and teaching learners with

ASD ,what do they do to promote high level of parental involvement in their children's education, teachers 'understanding of teachers 'role in education of children in their school, who should initiate parental involvement, what do parent do that tell you they are involved in their children's education, how are parents informed about what happening at their children's school, in what way the school assists parents on the issue of parenting children with ASD.

3.7.3. Document analysis

The aim of document analysis involving the study of existing documents to obtain a deeper meaning of the phenomenon under study or to understand the content of the documents at hand (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003). In the current study, the research investigated how and to what extent parents and teachers are involved in the education of children with ASD and reviewed various documents such as individual education plans, the children 's homework books, attendance list of parents meeting and teacher's folders.

3.7.4 Validity of the instrument

According to Mutai (2000) validity is the ability of a research instrument to measure what it is meant to measure. In the current research to ensure that data collection instruments covered all aspects of the study, the content validity was determined by two experts in the field under study. Then, after taking into account their comments and corrections some elements were modified. The researcher presented the designed questionnaire to the supervisor of the work for a final remark before administered to participants.

3.7.5 Reliability of the instrument

According to Mugenda (1999), a research instrument is considered reliable if it measures what is intended and produces consistent results despite repeated trials. The questionnaires were administered to the group members twice within a break interval of two weeks between the first and second administrations. The data collected produced similar results from all respondents on impact of parent involvement in relation to the progress of students with autism at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo branch.

That means to test reliability; test-retest techniques were used. At the first time questionnaire were distributed to the group members for indicating X value. Within a break interval of two weeks, retest was used to the same group for representing Y value.

After the researcher calculated the Pearson product moment correlation coefficient (r) to establish the relationship between test and retest. It was found that coefficient is 0.77. Referring to (Ordho, 2009), being greater than 0.75 means there is a reliability. The results indicated the reliability of the study.

3.8 Procedures for data collection

- The researcher obtained research permission from the University of Rwanda College of Education which allowed her to conduct research.
- The researcher contacted the director of the school and request permission from him to conduct the research at the school.
- The researcher discussed exact dates with the director to conduct the research at the school.
- Next, the researcher visited the sampled school with an introductory letter and consent form to be given to administrators and teachers before the administration of the questionnaire,
- After that, then researcher took time to explain the purpose and procedure for completing the questionnaires correctly.
- The researcher set specific dates and times to conduct interviews with administrator and parents.
- Accordingly, the researcher conducted all interviews and collected questionnaires in the school.
- The researcher wrote down the interviews and recorded the data that was obtained from questionnaires and subsequently, the researcher analyzed the data and transcribed the results.

3.9 Procedures for data preparation.

A key was developed to serve as a guide for coding the data collected for analysis. The items on the questionnaire were sorted out according to the variable they were to measure. A frequency table was drawn to code the available data as found on each questionnaire for all sections. The coding schedule which was developed based on the Likert type options. Strongly Agree (SA) 4 points, agree (A) 3 Points, disagree (D) 2 Points, and Strongly Disagree (SD) 1 Points

3.10 Data Processing and Analysis

Data analysis is the process of bringing order and the meaning of information collected (Kombo and Tromp, 2006). Raw data was edited to detect errors and omissions. The completed questionnaires were analysed to ensure that the data was accurate and consistent with other facts gathered and organized well to facilitate coding and tabulation. To facilitate the analysis descriptive statistics was used.

3.11 Legal and Ethical Consideration

Legal and ethical considerations form a key part in research since it helps to ensure that no one suffers harm or undesirable consequences as a result of the research activities. Owing to the normally sensitive relationships between the researcher and the respondents, reasonable safeguards were built during the field work study that is based on appropriate ethical requirements and measures.

The researcher was allotted a letter of introduction from the University of Rwanda. The letter assisted the researcher secure research permit. A preliminary visit was made to school to inform the director of the intended research. A date to administer the tools were arranged during these visits. This helped the researcher to establish a work plan. Furthermore, while collecting data the researcher acknowledged all the sources of information collected from textbooks and other research materials.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA.

4.1 Introduction

This chapter present the results and analysis of data collected on the topic of impact of parental involvement on the progress of learners with ASD at the special school accommodating learners with intellectual challenges in Kicukiro district. Objectives of the study were to, determine the effect of parents' collaboration on the progress of students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo in Kicukiro district, find out the effect of parents' attitudes on the progress of students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo in Kicukiro district, enhance parental involvement on the progress of students with ASD at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo in Kicukiro district.

4.2 Demographic data of teachers

Demographic Data of teachers were analysed in terms of age, gender, educational level and teaching experience.

4.2.1 Age and gender of teachers

Table3. Distribution of teachers by age and gender

Range of age in years	Male		Female		Total	Percentage
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage		
18-25	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
26-35	3	100%	2	100%	5	100%
36-45	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Above60	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	3	100%	2	100%	5	100%

Source: Primary data (October, 2023)

Table 5 present the age and gender of the teachers participated in this study. The study findings revealed that all teachers were above 25 years. They were aged between 26-35 years (100%). The majority of teachers were male (60%) compared to female teachers (40%).

4.2.2. Academic qualification of Teachers

Table 4: Teachers' educational level

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
A level(A2)	1	20%
Diploma in education(A1)	0	0%
Bachelor's Degree in education(A0)	4	80%
Others	0	0%
Total	5	100%

Source: Primary data (October, 2023)

Table 6 presents the education level of the teachers participated in the research, study revealed that majority of the teachers (80%) are Bachelors' Degree holder and 20% of the teachers have advanced level.

4.2.3. Teacher teaching experience

Table 5: Teaching experience of teachers

Experience	Frequency	Percentage
Below 3 years	3	60%
4-6	0	0%
7-9	1	20%
Above 10 years	1	20%
Total	5	100%

Source: Primary Data (October, 2023)

Based on data shown in table 7, the majority of the teachers (60%) taught below 3 years, (20%) of them taught from 7-9, and (20%) also had teaching experience of above 10years.

Table 6. Profile of parents

Parents	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5
Relationship to child	Mother	Father	Mother	Father	Mother
Gender of child	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Child's age	12	14	13	9	8
Other siblings with ASD	No	No	No	No	No
Highest qualification of the father	A0	A0	A2	Primary 6	A1
Marital status of the mother	Married	Married	Married	Divorced	Married
Highest qualification of the mother	AO	A2	Primary 6	A2	A1
How many people living in your household	5	5	4	6	5

Source: Primary data, 2023

As it is illustrated in table4, the participants were requested to provide the researcher with information on their relationship with the child, the child's date of birth, the gender of child, the child's age, other siblings with ASD, the highest qualification of the father, the marital status of the mother, the highest qualification of the mother, the highest qualification of the primary caregiver, and the number of people living in their household. Sixty percent (60%) of the parents participated were mothers, and Forty percent (40%) fathers.

All the children with ASD whose parents participated in this study were males. It is interesting to note in this regard, that evidence suggested that ASD is more prevalent in males than in females. The mean age of the children with ASD in the school was 11.2 years.

A possible explanation of why the students were older is due to their intellectual capacity and slowness in learning compared to their school age mate.

The findings were supported by the phenomenological study conducted in South Africa by Hestr petronella Marais on Parental involvement in the education of children with autism spectrum disorder, the research revealed that mothers appear to participate in family-related autism studies. In a study conducted in autism-specific schools in Northern India, it was also found that seventy-five percent (75%) of the participants were mothers (Cheung and Lui, 2015). In another study conducted in the United States, 86% of the participants were mothers of children with ASD (Mandell and Salzer, 2007)

4.3 Effect of Parents’ and teachers ‘collaborations in education of children with ASD

4.3.1 Effect of parents’ responsibilities toward education of children with ASD.

Parents were asked responsibilities they have as parents of children with ASD.

Table7. Parents understanding of the ways in which they are involved in the education of children with ASD.

Do you have some responsibilities as a parent of a child with ASD?	Frequency n=5	Percentage
Yes	5	100%
No	0	0%
If yes describe them		
Paying school fees	5	100%
Learning at home by helping them with homework	1	20%
Taking and piking children at school.	5	100%
Attending all school event and activities that are promoting education of your child.	1	20%

Communicating with school, doctors and other professionals.	2	40%
Built structure and routine into family and personal daily life.	1	20%

Source: Primary data (2023)

As shown in the table 8, parents knew that they have responsibilities 100 %, paying school fees 100%, Learning at home by helping them with homework 20%, taking and piking children at school 100%, Attending all school event and activities that are promoting education of your child 20%, communicating with school, doctors and other professionals 40%, and built structure and routine into family and personal daily life 20%. The analysis was also supported by the interview with sampled parents.

Parent 1 said ” *Yes we have responsibilities in education of our children like other parents even though to me I fill shocked as parent of child with ASD but I pay school fees, school bus, attend parent teacher meeting, communicate with his teacher and we have routines to consistently follow in our family because my child with ASD When wakes up he knows what to do by imitating what his siblings are doing and he knows that he has to put on uniform before going to school*”

Parent 2 replied “. *We sometimes do not help our children with their school work as we are not aware of what they study and how they do it, the school does not share with us the content and you know that it`s hard for children to take notes, so really we do not know what we can help them in. Problems come in school communication to parents and when we are called to attend school event especially parent teacher meeting because most of us don`t have time to attend as we are working persons and work full-time.*”

All (n=5) replied that they have different responsibilities as parents of children with ASD because they love them like other children, they pay school fees, and knowing how their children go to school and back home. In addition, it is important that parents should not only be involved in one aspect of their child’s education but also in different aspects, which include field trips, parents’ meetings, homework, sport and other events.

The findings of this current study is in agreement with in a study conducted by Erlendsdóttir (2010) at a school in Windhoek in Namibia, it was recognized that the parents were aware of the importance of their involvement in their children’s education and its importance for their children’s academic achieved when they stayed involved. The parents of children with ASD or other special needs should be involved closely with their children’s teacher to stay updated on their child’s progress and to assist where needed.

4.3.2 How parents are involved in the education of children with ASD.

Teachers were asked if the parents are involved in their children’s education.

Table8. Teachers’ understanding on how parents are involved in their children’s education.

Are parents involved in their children’s education at your school?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	0	0%
Agree	1	20%
Strongly disagree	1	20%
Disagree	3	60%

Source: primary data (October, 2023)

As shown in the table 9, 0% of teachers strongly agreed, 20% agreed, 20% strongly disagreed, and 60% disagreed. The implication is that 80% of responses allotted by sampled teachers confirmed that the involvement of parents in education of children with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo branch is still low. Teachers in this study stated that parents should be involved in their children’s education.

The results from this study agree with a study conducted by Haung (2013) in Prague, in the Czech Republic. The study was conducted with teachers in a mainstream primary school attended by learners with ASD.

Huang (2013) found that teachers were of the opinion that parents should be involved in their child's education more specifically their homework, school activities and also in the classroom.

The findings of this current study stated that the parental involvement has to do with homework, classwork, school activities and daily activities with which parents should be involved. Therefore, if parents were more involved in their jobs as teachers, it would be easier as children would show more progress in their education.

4.3.3 Administrators 'views on how parents are involved in their children's education.

1. Do you involve parents when making decisions concerning special education for learners with ASD?

They replied *"Yes, we involve parents when making decisions concerning special education for students with ASD rather we implicate them, but some of the parents when contacted to attend Special Educational Needs Assessment, Individual Education Plan, and other school related activities to special education of their children they do not come."*

The findings of the current study are not in agreement with a study conducted by Lynch and Stein (1982) who surveyed 400 parents about their involvement in IEP meetings. Although 71% of the participants reported active involvement in the meeting, only 14% provided specific recommendations or opinions.

2. To what extent do you think parental involvement affect education of children with ASD in your school?

Administrator responded that *"Parental involvement affects the progress of the students with ASD in our school either positively or negatively. Positively students do follow the command and routines, doing their school work and assisted at home when answering their homework, and concentration increase. Negatively when badly catered, overlooked in terms of helping them consistently in their learning at school as well as at home, it turns into violence at home and school."*

The findings are in contract with Epstein’s theory of parental involvement on which this study was built. Epstein described that parenting activities increase families’ understanding of their children’s growth and development. These activities may assist parents with information on children’s health, safety, nutrition, other topics of child and adolescent development, and home conditions that support students’ education at each grade level (Epstein and Van Voorhis, 2002).

Therefore, when parents participate fully in children’s education, parental involvement affects the progress of the students with ASD positively and children get more progress but when parents do not participate fully in children’s education, parental involvement affects the progress of the students with ASD negatively and then children get little progress.

4.3.4. Benefits of parental involvement in education of their children with ASD.

Parents were asked the benefits of being involved in their children’s education as parents of children with ASD.

Table 9. Parents ‘opinions on the benefits of being involved as parents of children with ASD in their children’s education.

Is there any benefit of being involved as a parent in your child’s education?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	5	100%
No	0	0%
If yes, write them own		
Children can learn new things at home with people closest to them.	3	60%
Learning becomes natural, motivating and fun	2	20%
It teaches me as the parent how I can better understand my child’s needs.	4	80%

Source: Primary data (October, 2023)

All parents (n=5) 100% in the study described that it is beneficial for them to be involved in their children's education. Most parents were of the opinion that the more they are involved in their children's education, the better they understand what is expected of them as parents to support their children and preserve their children progress. From the interview a researcher held with parent states that.

“Yeah there are different benefits as my child has been learning there for 1 year and I see that before going to that school he was selective to food but now as I worked with his teacher now he can eat all kinds of food, he is no longer selective to food, about behavior change, he changed some even though he still has so many challenges.”

Other studies also conducted on parental involvement, portrayed the benefits of parental involvement include improved academic and non-academic outcomes. In academic outcome includes, students 'academic achievement and progress and aspirations completing homework. A non-academic outcome includes attendance, behavior, attitude, self-esteem, motivation, and self-discipline (Erlends and Manilal, 2014).

Furthermore, Research found that parental involvement benefits the teacher's morale, the mental health of the students, parental confidence and parental satisfaction and interest in children's education as well (HornbyandLafaele,2011; Michael et, al,2020).

Teachers can also benefit from successful parental involvement when they increase their understanding of parental involvement and understand the concerns that the parents have for their children (Newchurch,2017). Communication between parents and teachers is extremely important and, therefore, in order to avoid a misunderstanding, there should be regular communication between parents and teachers (Jooste, 2011).

The positive development of children's self-concept can be enhanced through a partnership between teachers and parents (Cheng and Chen, 2018). In order for children to be successful in school, their success depends on a triangle of interaction between the teacher, the parent and the child. Thus, a working partnership between parents and teachers enhances the opportunities to help a child to learn positive behavior successfully (Prinsloo and Gasa, 2011).

4.3.5. How parents are informed about what is happening at their children’s school.

Parents were asked how are they informed about what is happening at their children ‘s school.

Table10. Communication as an effect of parents ‘collaborations towards education of children with ASD.

How are you informed about what is happening at your child’s school?	Frequency	Percentage
Daily reports	0	0%
Weekly reports	0	0%
Parents Teacher Meeting	5	100%
Any Other: <i>Sometimes accident can happen, in that time they use mobile phone as means of communication.</i> (A parent additional remark).		

Source: primary data (October, 2023)

The findings from table 11 reveals that all parents (n=5) 100% get information in Parent Teacher Meeting and this is one-way communication which is insufficient and does not give a clear pictures of what children go through at school daily. From the interview with the parents, Parent 1:” *stated that when her child experiences an injury, teacher calls her immediately, then she goes to school and communicates to the teachers face-to-face.*”

In addition, parent 2 said that *the school contacts them at the end of every term to discuss about what went well or wrong in education of their children during the whole term.*

4.3.6 How parents of children with ASD are informed about what is happening at school.

Teachers were asked if parents of children with ASD are informed about what is happening at their children’s school.

Table 11. Teachers’ understanding on how parents are informed about what is happening at their children’s school.

Are parents informed about what is happening at their children’s school?	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	2	40%
Agree	3	60%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	0	0%

Source: Primary data (October, 2023)

Table 12 revealed that 60% of respondents agreed that parents are informed about what is happening at their children’s school. They said that school organizes parents meeting once per term and parents get information from there.

In the meeting teachers and parents discuss about IEPs ‘evaluation even though parents don’t participate in planning of IEP. This is a big gap in education of children with ASD to hear that parents are not involved in their children’s educational planning. Prior studies also suggest that although the parents were present in their child’s IEP meetings, they did not fully participate in planning objectives, evaluations, and interventions.

This was also affirmed by Autism Open Access, Vol.10 Iss.4 No:262 where both parents and teachers highlighted that maintaining good relationship between home and school could be difficult especially due to lack of opportunities for communication and the potential for misunderstanding, however, the importance of good relationships between teachers and parents for the child’s wellbeing is paramount in children’s education.

As a result, it is essential to let parents participate in activities carried out at school especially in Special Educational Needs Assessment, planning of IEPs and IEPs’ evaluation for better progress of children with ASD.

4.4. Effect of parents’ and teachers’ attitudes towards education of children with ASD.

4.4.1 How parents of children with ASD attend Parents Meeting.

Parents were asked how long they attended parents meeting at school in year.

Table12. Parents ‘Attendance as an effect of parents ‘attitude towards education of children with ASD.

Have you attended any parents meeting at school this year?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	2	40%
No	3	60%
If yes how many per year?		
Zero()	0	0%
Once (1)	1	20%
Thrice (3)	1	20%

Source: Primary data (October, 2023)

The parents were asked if they attended parents’ meetings at the school. The 3 of them that constitute 60% replied that they do not attend parents’ meetings due to work circumstances. Parent 1 said: *“I don’t attend the school meeting because I’m a working parent, I work long hours and it is not always possible for me to get time off to attend school meeting and I don’t have any motivation as my child had been learning at that school for 2 years and he did not make any progress instead he learnt different bad behaviors in addition to what he has, for example he imitates loud voice he never said.”*

Other 2 Parents stated that they attend the parents’ meetings at the school. One of them said: *“Yeah I attend the school meeting every term, the school arranges meeting once per term that means it is 3 times per year when I get time I attend.”* The school is not the problem because it offers opportunities for parents to become involved.

Additionally, after analyzing and reading the attendance register of the parents' meeting, it became clear that many parents do not attend the parents' meetings. This may either be due to the fact that parents work long hours or that they do not show any interest. The findings of the current study are not in agreement with a study conducted by Nazzal (2015) in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) who found that parents take the parents' meetings seriously and that they have 95% attendance. Therefore, it is evident that the current school where the research was conducted should aim to increase the attendance of parents at their parent meetings.

4.4.2 How parents of children with ASD attend parents 'meeting.

Teachers were asked if parents attend parents 'meeting at school.

Table 13: Teachers 'understanding on parents' attendance as an effect of parents 'attitude towards education of children with ASD.

Are parents attending parents meeting at school?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	2	40%
No	3	60%
If yes , In your class, how many parents have attended the parents meetings this year		
5/9	1	20%
2/12	2	40%
3/8	1	20%
4/10	1	20%

Source: Primary data (October, 2023)

According to Table 13 findings revealed that parents' attitudes affected the progress of children with ASD, as shown by 60 % of respondents who answered No and in 39 parents 14 parents attended others (25) did not that means 35.89% attended and 64.10% did not attend. In other words, the nature of parents' attitudes may determine the progress of children with ASD.

These findings are in agreement with other study where Parents reported that there is not enough communication between them and the teachers and that they are only invited to parent meetings when there is a problem with their child (Erlendsdóttir, 2010). This causes frustration for parents and then parents are not motivated to be involved in their child’s education (Erlendsdóttir, 2010).

4.4.3 Nature of attitudes that parents hold towards education of children with ASD

Administrators were asked to describe the attitudes parents hold to words education of children with ASD.

1. Could you describe what attitudes parents hold to words education of children with ASD?

One Administrator explained *“some parents are depressed and tend to shift a blame to their partners or family”* The findings are in agreement with the Autism Spectrum Australia (March 2017) There is a great diversity across the autism spectrum, a parent on the autism spectrum may have very different traits, preferences and coping styles to those of their child. Then, parents of children with ASD should be responsible for their children with the needed support whether it is with homework or assessment preparation.

4.5. Parents ‘expectations affect education of children with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo in Kicukiro District.

4.5.1 Ways in which school should assists parents on the issue of parenting children with ASD.

Parents were asked the ways they think that school should assists them on the issue of parenting children with ASD.

Table 14: Parents ‘opinions on the ways they think that school should assist them on the issue of parenting children with ASD.

Do you think that the school should assists parents on the issue of parenting children with ASD?	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	5	100%

No	0	0%
If yes in what way?		
Information sessions	5	100%
Provide workshops	3	60%
Positive partnerships	4	80%

Source: primary data (October, 2023)

One parent replied: *Yes, the school should assist us on the issue of parenting children with ASD for example in learning at home especially how to help our children in doing homework because there was time teacher gave homework to my child and I tried to help him to correct it and in feedback teacher told me to stop doing homework to my child yet I thought I did my best to help him.*

The findings are in agreement with the study conducted by Maluleke (2014), parents have a negative attitude towards parental involvement in the education of their children when the level of complexity of the schoolwork becomes more advanced.

Parents often reported that they do not receive adequate support from teachers in the form of extra information to assist their children with more complex school work and, therefore, do not want to be involved in their children’s education as they themselves do not understand the schoolwork (Brown and Beckett, 2007).

Therefore, it is essential for both parents and teachers to be involved in the education of children with ASD, that additional should be done in teaching parents and teachers on parental involvement, encouraging parents to take part in school activities and organize workshops for parental involvement.

4.5.2 Extent to what school assists parents on the issue of parenting children with ASD.

Teachers were asked if the school assists parents on the issue of parenting children with ASD.

Table 15. Teachers’ understanding of the ways in which school assists parents on the issue of parenting children with ASD.

The school assists parents on the issue of parenting children with ASD.	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	0	0%
Agree	2	40%
Strongly disagree	0	0%
Disagree	3	60%

Source: Primary data (October, 2023)

Table 16 Findings revealed that school does not assist parents on the issue of parenting children with ASD, as shown by 60% of respondents who disagreed. In other hand 2respondents agreed by 40% to mean that school try to assist parents on the issue of parenting children with ASD but not at the high level to meet parents ‘expectations. Therefore, school should improve the ways used in assisting parents of children with ASD on the issue of parenting children with ASD so as to help parents meet the expectations set to their children.

4.5.3 Administrators’ views on the ways in which school assists parents on the issue of parenting children with ASD.

Administrators were asked if they have parents of children with ASD Who receive training.

1. Do you have parents of children with ASD who receive training in the special Needs Education?

One administrator reported that Yes, we do have but at minimum therefore we need to install a system where parents can get detailed information from learners be it online platforms etc.

2. Have you found this training to be helpful for the parents?

Yes, training is helpful to parents because they learnt how to help a learner and get involved in the improvement of the learners' autonomy. (Administrator)

4.6. Parents' administrators' and teachers 'views on how to enhance parental involvement in the education of children with ASD in special schools.

As a result, the respondents of this study were asked how they think parental involvement in the education of children with ASD can be enhanced.

4.6.1 Administrators 'views on how to enhance parental involvement in the education of children with ASD in special schools.

One member of the administrators answered to this question "What do you think are the measures to be put in place to improve parental involvement in education of learners with ASD?" *Let them participate fully in the implementation of individual education plan by both teachers and parents get together in forming objectives.*

4.6.2 Parents 'views on how to enhance parental involvement in the education of children with ASD in special schools.

Parent 1 shared "*I think assistance, like workshops, training and other information sessions will really be supportive to us.*"

Parent 2 said" if possible school can give us advice on how to help our children at home. You know what even us we need to tell the teachers how to do certain activities "for example if my child has a problem in communication, what can we do to help him to communicate his needs"

Parent 3 replied "Teachers needs to be up to date in autism, because children with Autism varies in behavior, they must be specialized teachers in field of special educational needs"

It is evident from the findings in the current study that both, parents and teachers must go on courses and even updates; they need training on how to assist their children with ASD in educational context. These results are in agreement with another study conducted by Hollingworth and Rose (2009) in London at schools where parents indicated that they require more support either by information sessions, support groups, training and workshops.

Furthermore, parental involvement in the education of children with ASD could be enhanced by incorporating parents' needs into school services or connect parents to community resources (Zeman and Doktor, 2011). It is, consequently, important for parents to express their needs to the school in order for the school to arrange workshops, courses, support groups and information sessions. This way, parental involvement can be enhanced.

4.6.3 Teachers 'views on how parental involvement in the education of children with ASD can be enhanced.

Teachers were asked what they think are the measures to be put in place to promote high level of parental involvement in their children's education. All teachers (n=5) responded that parental involvement support strategies should include training, parents' meetings, workshops and other information sessions.

Teacher 1 expressed the view that workshops can provide parents with more information and also educate them and teacher 2 expressed the view that guide and give tasks to parents to help learners after class should also be established to ensure that parental involvement is enhanced.

In the opinion of teacher 3: Firstly, if parents can be educated through parent meeting, one on one therapy may bring a great change, secondly is to make a mobilization on the role/impacts that may result from parental involvement in child's education.

The conclusion of this study is agreed with the existing literature. (Bartel and Huang, 2013). The responding school in this study does not provide information sessions, workshops, seminars, or courses related to ASD. The school only has an information evening at the beginning of the year to introduce new teachers and parents.

Some of the teachers mentioned that workshops and information sessions may help parents and teachers to work together to enhance parental involvement. In a study conducted by Bartel (2010) in the United States, Elementary school revealed that families should be provided with information or training on how to develop home conditions or environments that support learning. Schools should develop a plan and program me for family and community involvement (Bartel, 2010).

Parents who attend ASD training and information sessions are able to understand ASD better and provide support to their children (Huang, 2013). Dameh (2015) has revealed in her research that the district organise a parents' academy a few times during the year where they focus on specific topics to help the parents.

The Parent Academy is a free, year-round, parent engagement initiative helping parents become full partners in their children's education (The Parent Academy, 2019). In accordance with Epstein's theory of parental involvement on which this study was based, parents can become volunteers at their children's school. Volunteering activities enable families to share their time and talents to support the school, teachers, and 71 students. Families also give their time to attend students' performances, sports activities, assemblies, celebrations, and other events (Epstein et al., 2002).

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of parental involvement on the progress of students with autism at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo in Kigali city province of Rwanda. This chapter presents the summary, conclusions, recommendation, and suggestions for further studies.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of parental involvement in education of children with autism at HVP Gatagara Gikondo branch. It was guided by three objectives namely; to determine the effect of parents' and teachers' collaborations in education of children with ASD; to find out the effect of parents' and teachers' attitudes towards education of children with ASD; to explore the parents' and teachers' views on parental involvement in education of children with ASD.

All the research questions were answered, and the aims of the study were reached. The findings of the study highlight the responsibilities of parents in education of children with ASD, the benefits of parental involvement and the ways of assistance in parental involvement in education of children with ASD. The research reported on ways in which parental involvement in the education of children with ASD can be enhanced.

All participants in this study who are parents, teachers and school administrators expressed themselves openly regarding their understanding of parental involvement. The study provided evidence that there is a need to conduct research on the parental involvement in education of children with ASD across the country.

5.2.1 Parents 'perceptions on how Parents' and teachers' collaborations affect education of children with ASD.

All parents (n=5) replied that they have different responsibilities as parents of children with ASD because they love them like other children, they pay school fees, and knowing how their children go to school and back home. They described that it is beneficial for them to be involved in their children's education. Most parents were of the opinion that the more they are involved in their children's education, the better they understand what is expected of them as parents to support their children and preserve their children progress.

5.2.2 Teachers ‘views on how teachers ‘and Parents’ collaborations affect education of students with ASD.

The implication is that 80% of responses allotted by sampled teachers confirmed that the involvement of parents in education of children with ASD at HVP Gatagara/Gikondo branch is still low. Teachers in this study stated that parents should be involved in their children’s education.

5.2.3 Administrators ‘views on how parents ‘and teachers’ collaborations affect education of children with ASD.

Administrator responded that “Parental involvement affects the progress of the students with ASD in our school either positively or negatively. Positively students do follow the command and routines, doing their school work and assisted at home when answering their homework, and concentration increase. Negatively when badly catered, overlooked in terms of helping them consistently in their learning at school as well as at home, it turns into violence at home and school.”

5.2.4 Parents ‘opinions on how teachers ‘and parents’ attitude affect education of students with ASD.

The parents were asked if they attended parents’ meetings at the school. The 3 of them that constitute 60% replied that they do not attend parents’ meetings due to work circumstances.

5.2.5 Teachers ‘views on how teachers ‘and parents’ attitude affect education of students with ASD.

Teachers were asked if parents attend parents ‘meeting at school. 60 % of respondents answered No and in 39 (100%) parents 14 (35.89%) parents attended other 25 (64.10%) did not. In other words, the nature of parents’ attitudes may determine the progress of children with ASD.

5.2.6 Administrators’ views on how teachers’ and parents’ attitudes affect education of students with ASD.

Administrators were asked to describe the attitudes parents hold to words education of children with ASD. One Administrator explained “some parents are depressed and tend to shift a blame to their partners or family.”

The findings are in agreement with the Autism Spectrum Australia (March 2017) There is a great diversity across the autism spectrum, a parent on the autism spectrum may have very different traits, preferences and coping styles to those of their child.

5.2.7 Parents ‘views on how to enhance parental involvement in the education of children with ASD in special schools.

It is evident from the findings in the current study that both, parents and teachers must go on courses and even updates; they need training on how to assist their children with ASD in educational context.

5.2.8 Teachers ‘views on how parental involvement in the education of children with ASD can be enhanced.

Teachers were asked what they think are the measures to be put in place to promote high level of parental involvement in their children’s education. All teachers (n=5) responded that parental involvement support strategies should include training, parents’ meetings, workshops and other information sessions.

5.2.9 Administrators ‘views on how to enhance parental involvement in the education of children with ASD in special schools.

One administrator answered “Let them participate fully in the implementation of individual education plan by both teachers and parents get together in forming objectives”.

5.3 Conclusion of the study

The present study investigated the impact of parental involvement in education of children with ASD in selected primary special school. Parental involvement was seen to be more than ever required in Rwanda, since such involvement provides multiple benefits for the functioning of a school and for improving students’ academic progress.

The extensive research that has been undertaken in the past indicates that parental involvement tends to have a positive impact on children’s academic progress. However, despite acknowledging the significance of parental involvement as being the most powerful tool available.

The researcher checked the children's progress reports in different areas such as numeracy, language and communication and in behavior, after comparing the children's progress reports whose parents are involved with those children whose parents are not collaborating, the current study revealed that the extent of parental involvement in the selected school remained inadequate in terms of influencing children's education, both academically and behaviorally.

The parents concerned failed to take an active role in their children's education, with them distancing themselves from school matters. As informed by Ecological system theory and Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence as a theoretical lens, the above research argues that parents, through the various types of parental involvement, can build up their confidence as active participants in their children's education.

They can do so by means of becoming involved in school-related decision-making processes, by being willing to take on leadership roles related to the school that their children attend, and by means of establishing effective communication channels with teachers at the school to discuss matters related to their children's education. In addition, parents can render support to schools and educational programs in the community, thereby becoming active school community members.

Only limited research has, as yet, been undertaken into investigating the impact of parental involvement in education of children with ASD in Kicukiro District, Kigali City, Rwanda.

The current research has served to close the existing gap, with it having made a valuable contribution to the existing body of knowledge, by means of investigating the impact of parental involvement in education of children with ASD. Another contribution made by the study lies in its exploration of various barriers that are still deterring the effective implementation of parental involvement in special schools.

The findings made have revealed that the lack of parental desire and confidence, conflicts in home- school scheduling, teacher's negative attitudes, the lack of appropriate teacher training and illiteracy all deter effective parental involvement.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the present findings, the researcher made the following recommendations aimed at promoting effective parental involvement in education of children with ASD education:

- The school management team should provide special adult literacy classes for the parents to be involved.
- The school needs to reschedule meeting times to accommodate the parents' busy schedule and to ensure that the site of such meetings is flexible enough to meet the parents' needs, as well as family obligations.
- Teachers and parents should establish good home–school relations, with parents and schools collaborating closely, so as to improve their interpersonal relations for the benefit of learners in a special primary school of HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo branch.
- Busy and committed parents should reschedule their commitments and strive to set aside time to assist their children with their schoolwork.
- Both teachers and parents need to be provided with training on parental involvement for capacity-building.

5.5 Suggestions of further research

The researcher suggested the following areas for further studies based on the fact that they would provide additional information relevant to the future study.

1. Assessments of the resources are needed to enhance parental involvement in schools accommodating students with ASD to ensure that all children have access to education.
2. Impact of teacher-parent relationship in education of children with autism spectrum disorder in rural primary special schools in Rwanda.

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Appendix A: Letter for introduction

Email:odettenikuze@gmail.com

Date: November 10th, 2023

Tel: +250789876749

Kicukiro District

HVP Gatagara / Gikondo

Re: Request for permission to conduct research in your school

Dear principal,

I Nikuze Odette, a master's student conducting a research under the supervision of Dr. Nasiforo Betty Mukarwego a lecturer at the University of Rwanda-College of Education, Department of Inclusive Education and Special Needs Education. I am currently conducting a research on the impact of Parental Involvement in education of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The purpose of the study is to explore the impact of Parental involvement in schools for accommodating students with Special Educational Needs Precisely Autism Spectrum Disorder. Only parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder and teachers who work with those children will be included in the study.

Your school has been selected because it was identified as a school that accommodates students diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder. The more parents and teachers actively participate in the study the more reliable result will be. Allowing me to carry out this research in your school will contribute to the improvement of education of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in primary special schools of Rwanda.

Sincerely yours,

Appendix B: Research Permit



UNIVERSITY of
RWANDA

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Student Name: **NIKUZE Odette**
Registration number **22 10 2701**

The School of Inclusive and Special Needs Education offers a master's degree in special Needs Education. As part of the academic requirements students must write their dissertation on a topic of their choice after conducting a research study.

We seek your cooperation in facilitating the student to conduct research on the topic:
Impact of parental involvement on the progress of students with autism at Home de la Vierge des Pauvres (H.V.P) Gatagara Gikondo branch
by collecting data in your Institution/ Organization.

For further information please contact the Postgraduate Coordinator
Dr Gonzague Habinshuti; Phone: 0788809234; Email: habinshutihgo@gmail.com

Thank you for your cooperation.

Ass.Prof. Evariste Karangwa
Dean, School of Inclusive and Special Needs Education
Email: karangwa28@vmail.com
Phone: 0785489767

EMAIL: principal.ce@ur.ac.rw
www.ur.ac.rw

P.O. Box:55 Rwamagana, Rwanda WEBSITE:

Appendix C: Interview guide for parents

SECTION A: INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD

1. Date interview will be held
2. What is the relationship to your child (mother, father, family caregiver, non-family caregiver, etc?)
3. What is the gender of your child?
4. How old is your child?

Section B: Information about the family

4. a) Does your child have any other siblings with Autism Spectrum Disorder?
- b) If yes, please specify the age and gender
6. What is the highest qualification of the father?
7. What is the marital status of the mother?
8. What is the highest qualification of the mother?
9. How many people are living in your household?
10. Describe what is like being a parent of a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
11. What do you think is your role as a parent in your child's education?
12. Do you think there are benefits of being involved as a parent in your child's education?
13. Describe your responsibilities as a parent of a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

14. Do you think that the school should assist parents on the issue of parenting children with Autism Spectrum Disorder? if yes in what way?

15. How are you informed about what is happening at your child's school?

Daily Reports

Weekly Reports

Parent Teacher Meeting

Any other

16.a) Have you attended any parent meeting at school this year?

Yes

No

b) How many per year?

17. Are you involved in any other activities at your child's school? Please explain

18. In your opinion do you think the school arranges enough opportunities for parents to become involved in the schooling of their children?

19. In what areas would you like the school to support you as a parent?

20. What factors influence your involvement as a parent in your child's education?

child's characteristics

maternal education

sources of support

Satisfaction with services.

Appendix D: Questionnaire for teachers

Please complete the questionnaire by responding to all questions. Information that you give will be kept confidential and will be used for the purpose of this study to improve education of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the special schools in Rwanda.

SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

1. Name of the school.....
2. Subject you currently teach.....
3. Class you teach.....

Please tick where appropriate

4. **Age**
- | | |
|----------|--------------------------|
| 18-25 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 26-35 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 36-45 | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Above 60 | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Sex

- Male
- Female

6. Education level

- A Level(A2)
- Diploma in education(A1)
- Bachelor's Degree in education(A0)
- Others

7. Teaching experience

- Below 3 years
- 4-6 years
- 7-9 years
- Above 10 years

SECTION B

8. Have you undergone one or any training on special needs education? Yes,

9. Briefly explain the problems you encounter when interacting and teaching learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

14. Your school initiated parental involvement?

Yes

No

15. Are parents involved in their children's education at your school?

Strongly Agree (SA)

Agree (A)

Disagree (D)

Strongly Disagree (SD)

16. Are parents informed about what is happening at their child's school?

Strongly Agree (SA)

Agree (A)

Disagree (D)

Strongly Disagree (SD)

17. Are parents attending parents meeting at school?

Yes

No

18. In your class, how many parents have attended the parents' meetings this year?

19. Your school offer guidance or support in terms of parenting a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Strongly Agree (SA)

Agree (A)

Disagree (D)

Strongly Disagree (SD)

20.. Do you think that the school assists parents on the issue of parenting children with Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Strongly Agree (SA)

Agree (A)

Disagree (D)

Strongly Disagree (SD)

Appendix E: Interview Guide for administrators

1. Do learners with Autism perform well in school, Yes No

Explain

.....

.....

.2. What are the curriculum barriers for the implementation of special education for learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder in Rwanda?.....

.....

3. Could you describe the attitudes parents hold towards education of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder Spectrum Disorder

.....

4. Do you involve parents when making decisions concerning special education for learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder?

.....
.....

5. To what extent do you think parental involvement affect the performance of the students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in your school?

.....
.....

6. Do you have parents of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder who receive training in the special needs education?

.....

7. Have you found this training to be helpful for the parents?

.....
.....

8. What do you think are the measures to be put in place to improve parental involvement in education of learners with Autism Spectrum Disorder?

.....

Thank you.

Appendix F: CONSENT FORM FOR PARTICIPATING IN RESEARCH PROJECT

Study title: Impact of parental involvement in education of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder at Home de la Vierge des Pauvres (HVP) Gatagara Gikondo branch, Kicukiro district.

Investigator: Nikuze Odette

Reg. No. 221027701

Tel: +250789876749

Master of Education in Special Needs Education.

Email: odettenikuze@gmail.com

Purpose of the study.

To investigate the impact of parental involvement in education of children with Autism Spectrum Disorder at HVP Gatagara/ Gikondo in Kigali city province of Rwanda.

Procedure.

The researcher visited the sampled school and obtained permission from the principal. Before the administration of the questionnaire, the researcher will take time to explain the purpose and procedure for completing the questionnaires correctly. In all, five (5) questionnaires will be administered and retrieved.

Duration and location

This research will be conducted at HVP Gatagara Gikondo a special school for Brothers of Charity that accommodates students with Mental Disabilities. The study will last for 8 months.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Throughout this research activity, presentation, and analysis of research findings, codes will be used to protect the respondents' anonymity. Moreover, the participants will be ensured that the information provided during data collection will be kept confidential and not be used for any other purposes outside the research nor disclosed to any other person.

Risks.

During data collection, a respondent may fail to participate in research due to personal reasons.

Benefits.

There may be no personal benefit from participating in research, but the knowledge received may be of educational value to the researcher and leads to the improvement of academic achievement of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

I BABU Hussain.....Director of studies/ Teacher from HVP Gatagara Gikondo.....accepts to participate in the research performance in HVP Gatagara Gikondo Kicukiro district. I will willingly provide the information without basing on any personal interest, emotions, and feelings. The information provided will be true, sincere and related to real situation and research purpose.

Name and signature of participant.....BABU Hussain

Phone number of participant.....0792157535



APPENDIX G: SAMPLE OF INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

Name of the school: HYP Gatagara Gikondo filled on: 24 / 04 / 2015

I. IDENTIFICATION OF THE LEARNER WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Names: SHEMA GIBBOR

Age: 9

Sex: Male Female:

Class level: GROUP LEVEL 4

Exceptionality / Difficulties that affects ordinary learning: AUTISM

II. REASON FOR DEVELOPING THE IEP (tick in appropriate box)

> Student identified Exceptional by parents /teacher

> Student not formally identified but requires special education program/ services including modified/alternative learning expectations and /or accommodations

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE LEARNING DIFFICULTY

Brief summary of the learner problem(Refer to the individual educational assessment results)

Areas of needs

- NUMERACY: To be able to write numbers 11 to 20 (to be read)
- pre-writing: To be able to write the sound of his name
- Expressive / Receptive Language: Use short common words for communicating

Areas of strength

- Numeracy: He can copy numbers 1 - 20
- pre-writing: He is able to trace sounds of his name
- Expressive / Receptive Language: He can use three lettered words

IV. ASSESSMENT TEAM PLACEMENT DECISIONS (tick in appropriate box)

V. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

General objective:

1. Regular class with indirect support	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Regular class with resource assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Regular class with withdrawal assistance	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Special education class with partial integration	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Special education class full-time

Detailed individual education plan (It indicates the objectives clearly set, the activities to be done, the person who will be responsible, the target date for the goal to be attained and finally be evaluated)

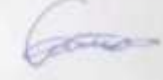

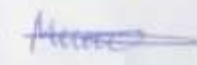
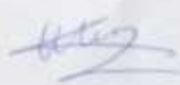
Specific objectives	Plan for activities		Responsible person for the activity tick✓					Schedule target date	Evaluation date
			Peer/sibling	parent	Teacher	Head teacher	Specialist		
1. Able to write numbers	2. Action	resources							
4. 11-20	teach him	flash cards	✓	✓	✓		✓	30/6/23	
5. write numbers	and boards	- chalk boards	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
7. sound of his name	with verbal prompts	- chalk blocks letters	✓	✓	✓		✓		
8. short words									

IEP Planning Team
Signature

Position/Responsibility

Names

1. Gerard Nkurunziza
 2. Ingabire Olive
 3. Mukasine Angélique Kayiranga Melly
- Additional comments

- special teacher 
- Teacher 
- Teacher 
- parent 

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

Name of the school: HVP Gatagara Gikondo branch Filled on: 16.1.01/2023

IDENTIFICATION OF THE LEARNER WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Names: SHEMA GIBBOR

Age: 9

Sex: Male Female:

Class level: Group 1/XP.4

Exceptionality / Difficulties that affects ordinary learning: AUTISM

II. REASON FOR DEVELOPING THE IEP (tick in appropriate box)

- > Student identified Exceptional by parents /teacher
- > Student not formally identified but requires special education program/ services, including modified/alternative learning expectations and /or accommodations

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE LEARNING DIFFICULTY

Brief summary of the learner problem(Refer to the individual educational assessment results)

Areas of needs

1. Numeracy: To be able to write numbers 1 to 20
2. Pre-writing: To be able to write the sounds of his name
3. Expressive/Receptive Language: use words for communicating

Areas of strength

1. Numeracy: He is able to match and identify numbers 1-20
2. Pre-writing: He is able to write numbers 1-20 independently
3. Expressive/Receptive Language: He can use gestures for communicating

IV. ASSESSMENT TEAM PLACEMENT DECISIONS (tick in appropriate box)

V. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

General objective:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Regular class with indirect support | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Regular class with resource assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Regular class with withdrawal assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Special education class with partial integration | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Special education class full-time



Detailed individual education plan (It indicates the objectives clearly set, the activities to be done, the person who will be responsible, the target date for the goal to be attained and finally evaluated)

Specific objectives	Plan for activities		Responsible person for the activity tick✓					Schedule target date	Evaluation
			Peer/sibling	parent	Teacher	Head teacher	Specialist		
1. Able to write numbers 11-20	Action	resources							
2. Able to write sounds	one on one interaction	-pencils -books -Cards -puzzles	✓	✓	✓		✓		
3. Use words	Verbal prompting	-pictures -blocks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		

IEP Planning Team
Signature

Position/Responsibility

Names

1. Gerard Nkurunziza.....

Special Teacher *Gerard*

2. Ingahire Olive.....

Teacher *[Signature]*

3. Mukasine Angelique
Kayiranga Nelly.....

Teacher *[Signature]*
parent *[Signature]*

Additional comments.....

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

Name of the school: HYP Gatagara Shondo branch Filled on: 16.01/2023

IDENTIFICATION OF THE LEARNER WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Names: SHINGIRO JACOB RUBULIKA

Age: 8

Sex: Male Female:

Class level: Group Level 4

Exceptionality / Difficulties that affects ordinary learning: AUTISM

II. REASON FOR DEVELOPING THE IEP (tick in appropriate box)

- Student identified Exceptional by parents /teacher
- Student not formally identified but requires special education program/ services including modified/alternative learning expectations and /or accommodations

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE LEARNING DIFFICULTY

Brief summary of the learner problem(Refer to the individual educational assessment results

Areas of needs

1. Numeracy: To identify numbers 6-10
2. pre-writing: To be able to copy
3. Expressive: To imitate speech

Areas of strength

1. Numeracy: Shingiro is able to identify numbers 1-5
2. pre-writing skills: He can trace and coloring
3. Expressive /Receptive language: He is able to respond to name

IV. ASSESSMENT TEAM PLACEMENT DECISIONS (tick in appropriate box)

V. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

General objective:

1. Regular class with indirect support
2. Regular class with resource assistance
3. Regular class with withdrawal assistance
4. Special education class with partial integration

5. Special education class full-time



Detailed individual education plan (It indicates the objectives clearly set, the activities to be done, the person who will be responsible, the target date for the goal to be attained and finally be evaluated)

Specific objectives	Plan for activities		Responsible person for the activity tick✓					Schedule target date	Evaluation date
			Peer/sibling	parent	Teacher	Head teacher	Specialist		
1. Able to 2. identify 3. numbers 4. 6 - 10 5. Able to 6. copy 7. initials 8. of his name use action words	Action teach and support him in his learning	resources - Abacus - blocks - puzzles - books - pencils		✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓			✓ ✓	31/03 202

IEP Planning Team
Signature

Position/Responsibility

Names

1. Gerard Nkurunziza

Special Teacher

2. Ingridine Olive

Teacher

3. Mukasine Angelique

Teacher

RUBULIKA JEAN SAM

parent

Additional comments

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATION PLAN (IEP)

Name of the school HYP Gatagara Gikondo branch Filled on 24/04/202

IDENTIFICATION OF THE LEARNER WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

Names SHINGIRO JACOB RUBULIKA

Age 8

Sex: Male Female

Class level GROUP level 4

Exceptionality / Difficulties that affects ordinary learning AUTISM

II. REASON FOR DEVELOPING THE IEP (tick in appropriate box)

- > Student identified Exceptional by parents /teacher
- > Student not formally identified but requires special education program/ services including modified/alternative learning expectations and /or accommodations

III. DESCRIPTION OF THE LEARNING DIFFICULTY

Brief summary of the learner problem (Refer to the individual educational assessment results)

Areas of needs

1. Numeracy: To identify numbers 11-15
2. pre-writing: To be able to write sounds and numbers
3. Expressive/Receptive language: To use words for communicating

Areas of strength

1. Numeracy: He is able to identify numbers 1-10
2. pre-writing: He can trace, color and copy
3. Expressive/Receptive language: He is able to imitate speech

IV. ASSESSMENT TEAM PLACEMENT DECISIONS (tick in appropriate box)

V. EDUCATIONAL PLAN

General objective:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Regular class with indirect support | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Regular class with resource assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Regular class with withdrawal assistance | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Special education class with partial integration | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Special education class full-time



Detailed individual education plan (It indicates the objectives clearly set, the activities to be done, the person who will be responsible, the target date for the goal to be attained and finally be evaluated)


Specific objectives	Plan for activities		Responsible person for the activity tick✓					Schedule target date	Evaluation date
	Action	resources	Peer/sibling	parent	Teacher	Head teacher	Specialist		
1. To be able to identify numbers 2. 11-15 3. To write single digits and numbers 1-10 4. Use words	To teach him numbers and single sounds	charts - abacus - Flash cards - Book - pencils		✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓	✓ ✓ ✓		soloblo

IEP Planning Team
Signature

Position/Responsibility

Names



1. Gerard Nkurunziza

Special Teacher 

2. Ingridre Olive

Teacher 

3. MokoSine Angelique
KUBULIKA JEAN SAM

Teacher 
parent 

Additional comments