

Teachers and Head Teachers' Preparedness for Implementing Inclusive Education in Public Primary Schools of Murang'a County

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Abstract

Although inclusive education has been acknowledged as the means through which learners with special needs can access quality education, the practice is yet to be fully introduced and implemented in public schools in Kenya. Inclusive education is grounded on the principle that learners with special needs should be accommodated age-appropriate regular classes: this being the first placement option. Based on Everett Rogers' theory of innovation diffusion. This study aimed at assessing teachers and head teachers preparedness for implementing inclusive education in public primary schools in Murang'a county. Employing the embedded model of mixed research design, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected. The participants were 462 teachers, 66 head teachers, 4 Quality Assurance and Standard officers and 4 Education Assessment and Resource Centre Officers. Using questionnaires, interviews, observation and document analysis, knowledge, skills and attitudes of teachers and head teachers were accessed to establish their level of preparedness for inclusive education. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze quantitative data while content analysis was used for qualitative data. The study findings revealed that preparedness of teachers and head teachers for implementing inclusive education in Murang'a county was inadequate and the level of inclusive education was negative and only the demographic variables of age and marital status had significant influence on teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education. Findings also indicated that preparedness predicted effective implementation of inclusive education and head teachers' attitudes was the most significant predictor of effective implementation of inclusive education. Lack of training on inclusive education impeded teachers and teachers' preparedness for inclusive practices. The implications of the findings are discussed in reference to promoting teachers and head teachers' preparedness with the intention of advancing effective adoption, implementation and institutionalisation of inclusive education.

Keywords: Teachers and Head Teachers', Preparedness, Inclusive Education, Public Primary Schools, Murang'a County