

TEACHERS' KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEIVED CHALLENGES OF TEACHING CHILDREN WITH AUTISM IN TANZANIAN REGULAR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Edward, Geraldina

Assistant lecturer at the University of Dodoma Tanzania

Currently, a student in PhD-education (coursework & dissertation) at the University of Dar es Salaam, **TANZANIA**

ABSTRACT

The study employed a phenomenological design with semi-structured interview to explore teachers' knowledge and perceived challenges of teaching children with autism (CWA) in regular primary schools. A sample of 16 teachers from three regular primary schools in Dar es Salaam region were interviewed along various aspects related to their knowledge and perceived challenges of teaching CWA. The study revealed that most of the primary school teachers had low knowledge about children with autism. The findings also found that there were many factors some of them being lack of in-service training and lack of seminars which were among the challenges towards teaching CWA in regular classes. The study further found that unlike other factors, provision of regular in-service training and workshops could help many teachers gain appropriate knowledge and skills in teaching CWA in different regular classes. It is concluded that effective inclusive education is still facing a lot of challenges to make it a reality. Therefore, the study recommends that different educational stakeholders should work hand in hand with teachers so as to let every child with and without autism learn and enjoy the benefits of education in regular schools.

Keywords: Knowledge, perceived challenges, children, autism, regular primary schools.