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Original Article

Teachers' and Students' Experiences on the Implementation of Individualized Education Programme for Students with Visual Impairments in Inclusive Secondary Schools

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Individualized Education Programme, Inclusive Education, Visual Impairment, and Special Education Teacher.

This study explored the experiences of teachers and students in implementing Individualized Education Programmes (IEPs) for students with visual impairment in Tanzania. The study employed a qualitative approach under case study design, situated at Shinyanga Secondary School in Kishapu district. A total of nineteen participants involved, including five special education teachers participated through interview and fourteen students with visual impairment participated through focus group discussion. The participants were selected purposively depending on their experiences in inclusive secondary school. The thematic analysis was used to analyse the data inductively. The study revealed three significant themes as experienced by the participants: the identification of the learning needs of students with visual impairment (VI), strategies to meet VI learning needs, and challenges during the implementation of the IEPs. The study found inadequate implementation of IEPs from the selected school due to several challenges, including informal strategies in identifying students with VI, irregular training for the IEP team and inadequacy of teachers of special education to accommodate the available students with VI. The study suggests that the identification of students with visual impairment needs to be formalized, regular knowledge updates for the IEP team, and a reduced workload for special education teachers. Although this research is confined to a single-school study, the findings can be used as a benchmark for the schools that face similar situations regarding IEP implementation.

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INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education was introduced to ensure access and learning together for all students in general schools regardless of their challenges or disabilities (Thota *et al.*, 2022). These students with visual impairment either low vision or blind in inclusive education require carefully planned services to cater to their learning needs (Bamidele, 2021). Effective meeting of these learning needs, calls for careful planning, specialized strategies, and significant implementation of individualized education programmes (IEPs). According to Majoko (2019), the programme promotes inclusive education practices for students with visual impairment, planned due to the individual learning abilities and challenges of the students as influenced by the IEP multidisciplinary team.

Inclusive education has been practiced over time but globally was manifested during the 1994 Salamanca framework. The framework emphasises the right to education for all children regardless of their differences while insisting on effective identification of needs and support (UNESCO, 1994). Inclusive education was not just to enrol children in regular school but required supportive measures and a conducive environment. This framework emphasized the need for teachers with special education training, who play a crucial role in inclusive education as a key approach for special needs students' learning. Furthermore, the implementation of an individualized education programme (IEP) for students with learning challenges in inclusive education was established by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1997. Before IDEA, most children with disabilities, including those with cognitive disabilities and sensory disabilities, had limited access to education opportunities. Since the beginning of IDEA, there have been more efforts to focus on the transition services aimed at helping

students. This emphasis on inclusion is evident in the requirement for all individualized education programmes (IEPs) as stipulated by the revised IDEA of 2004 (Pounds, & Cuevas, 2019; Wright, 2004). Moreover, there has been an increased emphasis on the proper identification of students' needs by considering a wide range of factors (O'hara *et al.*, 2016).

For the IEP implementation, specialized teachers are required to generate effective collaboration through their trained experience to remove learning barriers from the inclusive setting. The collaboration via IEPs involves stakeholders and teaching resources (Jachova *et al.*, 2018). The IEP implementation should go further in providing supportive devices and tailored instructions based on identifying student needs under the support of parents, special education teachers, regular teachers, and other specialists (Adams *et al.*, 2018). Likewise, the student's learning via IEPs should be based on the state of the curriculum to ensure compatibility with planned goals for the student (UNESCO, 2020).

An IEP for students with VI had to be built under basic stages such as gathering the student information, involving collaboration with the IEP multidisciplinary team, formulating the plan, implementing the programme, and conducting an IEP function review (Roy, 2023). Following these stages might reduce difficulties faced by educators associated with low strategic abilities in managing students with disabilities in classrooms (Allam and Martin, 2021). Likewise, Shevchenko *et al.* (2020) found that the discrepancy in staffing between special education teachers and other staff causes some teachers to work in toiled conditions that upset their performances. Tonegawa's (2022) study in Myanmar revealed that the effective teaching of students with visual impairments by regular teachers often hinges upon the cooperation efforts of special education teachers within the institutions.

By promoting inclusive education practices, Tanzania has responded to various international amendments such as the Education for All (EFA) of 1990, and the Salamanca Framework of 1994. The country's efforts in this area are credible and serve as an encouragement for other countries. Furthermore, Tanzania has been enhancing efforts to provide inclusive education for all students in both public and private schools before and after international reconciliation. The right for all children in education was formally announced during the Musoma declaration in 1974, followed by the initiation of inclusive education in primary schools in Temeke in 1998, as the case study (URT, 2020). In addition, different strategies have been implemented based on inclusive education, like the National inclusive strategy (2009–2017), (2018–2021), and (2021–2026) that provide directions for IE based on pedagogical and planning human and physical resources (PO-RALG, 2023; Revelian, & Tibategeza, 2022).

The implementation process regards special educational teachers and students with visual impairment as pivotal participants in individualized education (Wong & Rashid, 2022). According to Maphie (2023), most teachers from inclusive schools where the IEPs had to be implemented face the challenge of having knowledge updates for handling inclusive classes. The judgement of what was experienced by special education teachers and students with visual impairments in IEP implementation was still under assumptions due to insufficient information about their ability to handle inclusive classes. Therefore, the current study explores the experiences of teachers and students in implementing IEP for students with visual impairments in Shinyanga inclusive secondary school in the Kishapu district.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was supported by Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory, which emphasises social interaction and cultural context for effective learning and cognitive development (Akpan *et al.*, 2020). Vygotsky maintains that learning is a social process in which the individual learns via interaction with others who are more knowledgeable (i.e., teachers, peers, family members). Also, the theory highlights

the social context of facilitating learning and the role of language and conversation in cognitive development (Powell, & Kalina, 2009). The application of Vygotsky's Social Constructivism Theory to this study focuses on the outcome of social interaction between special education teachers and students with visual impairments through IEP in inclusive secondary schools. The theory emphasises the importance of social interactions and calls for teachers to be facilitators who provide scaffolding to encourage learner development. The study explored the experiences of learners with visual impairments and their teachers in teamwork, dialogic pedagogy, and relevant materials that constitute teaching and learning. This fits with Vygotsky's belief that cognitive development is a product of social interactions and the available tools. The findings of this study will contribute knowledge and skill to the field of inclusive education, helping students with visual impairments obtain appropriate cognitive-social-instructional support that promotes self-constructive intelligence person and academic achievement in an inclusive educational setting.

METHODOLOGIES

The study was conducted at Shinyanga inclusive secondary school in Kishapu district, which enrolls students with visual impairment. In order to have an exploratory and descriptive analysis of the experiences of special education. A case study design adapted that allows for the gathering of in-depth information in an inclusive context about the experiences of special education teachers and students with VI on IEPs. In this study, 19 participants were purposefully recruited, including 5 special education teachers and 14 students with visual impairments. Gay *et al.* (2012) highlighted that for a qualitative study, a small number of participants with related information is enough to provide comprehensive insights. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the form of interviews for special education teachers and two focus group discussion sessions (FGD) that took 45-55 minutes each to ensure that all aspects of IEP practices were covered. The thematic analysis was applied inductively following Braun and Clarke's stages of analysis (Lochmiller, 2021). Quotations were used to ensure that the participants' telling of the experiences was retained. Furthermore, ethical

consideration of the study and participants was ensured by keeping informed for confidentiality and anonymity in data presentation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The collected data was thematically analysed, presented and discussed to show teachers' and students' experiences on IEP for students with visual impairment at Shinyanga inclusive secondary school, in Kishapu District. For anonymity, the interview participants were presented using symbols A1 to A5, participants for FGD were symbolized as P1 to P14, while the number of quotes labelled V. As previously mentioned, this study aimed to explore teachers' and students' experiences with the implementation of IEPs for students with visual impairments at Shinyanga Inclusive Secondary School. The exploration focused on three thematic areas, including the identification of students with visual impairments, strategies to meet students with VI learning needs, and experiencing challenges in IEP implementation for students with visual impairments.

Identification of Students with VI Learning Needs

Identifying students with visual impairment learning strengths and weaknesses goes beyond physical limitations. It requires an intensive approach to cover the hidden needs that could hinder their learning in inclusive education. Students' learning needs can be expressed internally or externally (Oluremi, 2015; Okech *et al.*, 2021). Involving collaboration and social interaction among students and stakeholders in zonal proximal development assures supportive learning (Muhajirah, 2020). In this study, the approaches to identification of VI students' learning needs in the selected secondary school were made under three categories, as follows:

Identification of SVI through Observation of Individual Learning Behaviour

Identifying students with visual impairment needs remains crucial in revealing the hidden character that could limit individual effective learning in inclusive education. The collected data via interview shows that observation of students' learning behaviour was among the common tactics used by the school in

needs identification for students with visual impairments. The observations involve looking at physical appearance and individual learning behaviour as participant A4 elucidates:

"We normally use the observation method as one of the tactics for identifying individual needs... the observation involves the physical appearance of a particular student and how they learn in the class. We do this without involving other specialists." (Participant A4, Quote V1)

Another participant from the interview replies that:

"Needs identification is required for the students with VI. We do this when receiving a new group of students, especially in forms one and five. Few teachers with special education training identify each student with special needs to understand their hidden needs." (Participant A1, Quote V1)

The quotations above indicate that teachers from the respective schools had the task of observing students with visual impairments in terms of their abilities and difficulties in learning. The data collected adds that the observation was conducted after students reported to school. The focus group discussions of the students with visual impairments generally agreed to the practice of observation during the reporting days as one student in FG shared:

"During the first days of reporting in this school, our teachers used to interact with us and pose simple tasks to see how we read and write before allocating us to our respective classrooms." (Participant P5, Quote V1)

The quotation highlights the shared view of the students that observation helped the teachers in placing students in their respective classrooms, where the students revealed with visual impairments were allocated to lower floor classrooms rather than upper floors. The observation practice involves simple tests on reading and writing. The method helps in identifying individual differences in learning, which were finally used in planning how to help a particular student. Moreover, the school conducts an observation technique during the enrolment of newcomers. However, the observation does not involve other specialists or medical

assistants, which affects the attainment of comprehensive information and misses addressing the complex issues; it only sorts the ones who can read large or medium font sizes and blinds who need braille dots.

The findings concur with the NETAJI (2016) report, which highlighted the cruciality of conducting needs assessments while involving specialists to maximize the hidden difficulties experienced by the student and give the chance for extra intervention and services. The absence of such collaboration in current needs identification through observation suggests the gap that affects the provision of tailored instruction. A collaborative needs identification is suggested to be essential in revealing each angle of students' needs and strengths; thus, the school should conduct a systematic collaboration in learning needs identification for students with VI to allow tailored support.

Interaction or Collaboration in Classroom Activities

Another method employed by the school to identify students with VI learning needs was through classroom interactions. The method explained by participants was conducted during teaching and learning activities when students were asked to sit in pairs or groups for learning purposes. Based on the findings, the method enables teachers to identify partial and mild visual impairments that were less identified during the enrolment inspections. Subject teachers revealed the importance of this method due to their daily interaction with students in inclusive classes. The participant noted that:

“The subject teacher is the one who identifies the learning needs of the VI students during class teaching; normally, by questions and engagements in activities with others that provide alertness for them to the need for further help or not.” (Participant A3, Quote V1)

Participants in the focus group discussion raised an issue that might be affecting the method's performance. For instance, one participant shares;

“As students with visual impairments, we experience some difficulties in group discussion because we could not read the provided texts as

quickly as our fellows to interpret and share ideas. Hence, it seems to slow our learning speed compared to other students. We sometimes keep waiting for others to read for us before we discuss.” (Participant P1, Quote V1)

These extracts show that the interaction method needs some improvement in accommodating all learners. For instance, the texts or questions could be prepared in advance for all students before setting an intensive discussion. The study revealed that some students with VI had strong abilities and showed high responses once they got the needed concepts. The study agreed with Wong, and Rashid (2022), who emphasise students' interaction with well-organized learning materials adds the opportunity for students' engagement with learning activities, particularly students with VI. For better support of students with VI, teachers could also provide texts with different font sizes or braille notes to capture individual differences. This approach could make students concentrate on or have direct interaction with the given material on their own and give a picture of their strengths and weaknesses. The provision of accessible facilities lets to understand personnel without being affected by other interruptions situations. Hence, the paper reading test could help to identify those with low vision and blind strengths and other challenges in learning to strengthen their learning.

The use of Structured Checklists

Structured checklists for students compose the list of outlined questions filled by students, parents, or guardians in collaboration with teachers to assess the level of students' learning strengths and challenges. At the selected school, the structured checklist was prepared by the head of the department for special needs on behalf of the school, aiming to collect essential background information from the students. The participants highlighted that both special education teachers and the head of the department on behalf of the school were responsible for preparing the checklist form and providing the form to students and guardians, respectively. The interview participant replies that;

“The interview checklist is prepared and admitted by special education teachers with the

assistance of department supervision and executed by the special education teachers.”

(Participant A2, Quote V1)

In the FGDs, most of the participants shared their concerns about the checklist practices. For instance, one participant shares;

“My parents were absent during the reporting date. My sister and I feel some of the required information. I miss providing all the information that could be good to be provided by parents.”

(Participant P3, Quote V1)

This explanation shows the practices of the checklist, as it was largely supported by the participants. The findings highlight the provision of a checklist for information gathering from students who encountered several issues. Notably, checklists fail to capture some other important information, such as medical history and other personal backgrounds that are crucial for understanding the existing level of students with VI. Also, the development and conducting of the project lacks enough involvement of the different specialists. Therefore, the identification of students with VI needs in the selected school revealed to be practised with some sort of challenge due to several reasons, including poor involvement of other IEP multidisciplinary members from the beginning of its development. Hence, the school should involve parents, psychologists, and special doctors apart from special education teachers for the sake of rescuing further damage damaged for students with VI problems.

The finding aligns with Yell *et al.* (2013), who noted that ineffective ways of identifying students with special needs often stem from inadequately involving specialists and other experts, which is important for performing comprehensive understanding. Mboshi (2018) highlighted that need identification via experts gives opportunities for teachers and professionals to understand the level of disabilities and degree of performance of the student before setting the individualized education programs. The study by Nastiti and Azizah (2019) requests for the school team to have regularly designed services and strategies for the assessment of learning difficulties. Therefore, school-holding

students with special needs should have formal strategies in their plans on how they would involve experts and specialists in identifying the learning needs and strengths of students with VI and strengthening the IEP implementation.

Strategies to Meet Students with VI Learning Needs

Learning strategies refer to all plans and activities prepared to enhance behavioural change in learning regarding the student's needs. According to MoEST (2019), these strategies should consider the learning needs of students with disabilities. The data shows that the school employs different strategies for connecting students with VI in learning needs. These comprise formal strategies, including formal collaborations through official meetings. The formal meetings had different agendas, including how to accommodate students with VI needs. The head of the school and special education department uses formal meetings to set strategies for implementing individualized support for students with visual impairment through formal meetings. The participants replied:

“We conduct a meeting with the headmaster to follow the steps of developing the individual plan for students with learning challenges.”

(Participant A2, Quote V2)

Additionally, participants expanded this statement by mentioning meetings where teachers discuss students' challenges with the collaboration of other staff. The participant replies;

“We collaborate with other teachers by giving beliefs for our identifications conducted to our students and providing possible methods that could be useful to help the special needs students.” (Participant A4, Quote V2)

These excerpts highlight the use of formal collaboration among special education teachers and other staff in developing and implementing individualized education programmes for the sake of helping students with VI in their learning process. This demonstrates that the school staff were formally practising to ensure meeting the learning needs of the students with VI. Apart from the revealed formal collaboration, the participants agreed to use informal

collaboration to match the available context of inadequate special education teachers. In this context, the special education teachers collaborate with students with VI mostly outside of the formal planned activities to address their learning needs. The participant says;

“Our school allows an individual's efforts in learning support for the students with visual impairments out of formal planned collaboration due to a shortage of special education teachers.” (Participant A1, Quote V2)

The quotation above shows that both formal and informal support was utilized for students with visual impairments to meet the required education needs. Though informal collaboration needs more individual effort and time, it was essential in providing learning support for meeting the personal learning needs of students with visual impairments. These explanations answer whether the school practices strategies to meet students with visual impairments. The findings align with the study by O'Daniel and Rosenstein (2008), who emphasised the importance of the hierarchy in supporting effective formal collaboration to meet learners' needs. Lindner and Schwab (2020) also described that inclusive education practices become effective when characterized by collaboration, curriculum modification, and co-teaching in supporting students with visual impairments to meet their learning needs.

Furthermore, the collaboration initiatives in the institution enhance knowledge development among the teachers, students, workers, and other stakeholders in the aligned programmes (Wilcox *et al.*, 2021). A better classroom learning atmosphere for students with visual impairment becomes positive when their needs are regarded (Opie, 2018). This implies that having mixed formal and informal collaboration practices brings inconsistent dealing with the students' needs. Therefore, it calls for all the education stakeholders to be responsible for creating a conducive learning environment for students with special needs in a formal collaboration that could allow shared approaches.

Experiencing Challenges in IEP Implementation for Students with Visual Impairment

Personal requirements need to be met after being identified for the implementation of an individualized education programme. However, during the interviews and focus group discussion, participants, when asked about barriers to IEP implementation at school, raised the challenges of resource limitations, multidisciplinary team knowledge updates, and special education teachers' workload as among the challenges in supporting students with visual impairments.

Resources Limitation

The availability of both human and material resources remains essential for IEP success, specifically for students with visual impairments (VI). It has been reported that resource limitation is among the challenges faced by many schools in Tanzania (BEST, 2020). The availability of resources can foster or hamper individualized education programmes for students with visual impairments. The essential resources, like special education teachers, stand as crucial parts in enhancing the implementation of IEP and materials such as braille machines, magnifiers, large font printing, talking computers, white cane, and braille notices.

The interview responses revealed both material resources and human resources as experienced challenges in the IEP implementation at school. The collected data shows that the number of resources, like braille machines, tape recorders, teachers with braille knowledge, and other assistive devices for students with VI, were still challenging. The response from the interview participant pinpoints that;

“The school has a shortage of assistive materials for supporting students with visual impairment, for instance, braille machines and binoculars.” (Participant A5, Quote V1)

Most of the students also expressed their concerns in the FGDs about inadequate teaching resources. For instance, one participant shares;

“We experience inadequate braille machines; they are not accessible according to our needs.”
(Participant P6, Quote V1)

Further, the participant replied, stressing concern about assistive devices and the shortage of qualified teachers specifically for visually impaired students. The participant comments;

“The main challenge in individualized education programme implementation for students with visual impairments at school is inadequate instructional materials and a deficiency of specialized teachers for students with visual impairments. We have only three teachers with the braille knowledge.”
(Participant P8, Quote V1)

On this issue, most of the participants in the focused group shared their experiences regarding the inadequate number of special education teachers. For example, one participant shared that;

“In our school, we have only three teachers with the ability to transcribe Braille while we have nine subjects. Sometimes they come to teach in collaboration but in difficult situations.”
(Participant P1, Quote V1)

These responses and comments consistently reveal the inadequate human and material resources, which are essential resources for the IEP implementation. This experienced finding agrees with the Maphie (2023) study, which found the inadequacy of government resources and support for inclusive education programmes, leaving many issues unaddressed. Furthermore, the education analysis made by the Tanzania Institute of Education (2018) displayed that education performance remains very low due to understaffing and limited school expertise. Notably, the participants expressed these concerns, noting a shortage of specialist teachers for students with VI and supportive materials. Addressing these challenges necessitates providing related assistive devices to match the students' needs and staffing of special education experts. Such measures could lead to improved experiences for teachers and students with visual impairments in the implementation of IEPs.

The IEP Multidisciplinary Team Knowledge Update

The multidisciplinary knowledge update refers to updating the acquired skills from various perspectives using a combination of supportive approaches. The practices of IEP need well-knowledge practitioners, particularly when planning supportive measures for students with visual impairments. The findings revealed the potential need for knowledge updates, particularly in light of evolving advanced technology and best instructional practices that could fit students with VI. The interview participant's response revealed concerns about the lack of recent knowledge updates when interviewed on professional development, the participant elucidates;

“It has been a long time since I last received training. I do use the knowledge I have and that we share with my fellow staff members”
(Participant A1, Quote V3)

Another interview participant says;

“I have not attended any training since I was employed nine years ago, but I use my special education degree training to help these students with visual impairment.” (Participant A2, Quote V3)

These quotations show that the teachers involved in the study experienced the challenge of knowledge updates. This reduces the IEP multidisciplinary team's ability to perform their responsibilities as it is affected by an inadequate knowledge update programme. This finding aligns with the study by Choi *et al.* (2020), which affirms that training should be conducted on a frequent basis since the technological development in teaching learning resources such as braille tools, computer talking software, and tactile learning equipment requires constant updates from teachers in order to provide the best teaching support. This emphasis significantly highlights the role of professional knowledge updates towards the provision of efficient IEPs.

Moreover, participant A4 went further to suggest that students' parents must be trained on how to support their children as part of the multidisciplinary

team. Furthermore, the focus group discussion reinforced these concerns. For example, the participant shares;

"We see our parents when they bring us to school, and sometimes at the time of closing the school, they did not attend any IEP developing programme at school." (Participant 13, Quote V1)

The participant from the FGDs further suggests;

"Our parents simply are not familiar with this programme for their children; purposely, when we talk about IEP, they may be practising or not practising because they are not aware of it. They should be given a special programme purposefully in supporting the learning of their children." (Participant P9, Quote V1)

These shared perceptions of the students with visual impairments point out parents and teachers needing supportive training regarding IEP practices. The study by Elmira and Negmatzhan (2022) supports this concern by highlighting the knowledge gap that many educators face in inclusive education when dealing with students with learning challenges. UNICEF (2023) revealed that, although countries have teacher training initiatives on inclusive or special education in universities, they have to develop initiatives in continuous knowledge updates of teachers related to inclusive education. Also, Choi *et al.* (2020) study emphasised reshaping expert practices in individualized education programmes by applying professional training. Regarding the findings, implementing a comprehensive and continuous knowledge update for the IEP team ensures current knowledge and skills to support students' needs and comply with technological advancements. Contrary to this, keeping them practising approaches that are not familiar with the current situation, like technological advancement, could be disadvantageous. Thus, the government and other stakeholders have to develop formal training initiatives that could ensure uniformity and match the current educational needs, particularly for students with visual impairments.

Special Education Teachers' Workload

Special education teachers play an essential role in enhancing the learning success of students with visual impairments in inclusive education. However, one of the significant obstacles they experience is their workload, which restricts them from the double responsibilities of teaching regular periods and providing individualized support to students with visual impairments. These themes explore the complexities encountered by special education teachers in implementing IEPs for learners with visual impairments within their prevailing workloads.

The findings reveal inadequate interactions between students with VI and subject teachers during the lesson due to unfriendly schedules, teaching resources, and the teaching pedagogy employed in inclusive classes. These challenges are manifested by the heavy workload experienced by teachers, as they assist regular teaching in additional responsibilities to teachers with special education. The interviewed participant, when responding to the challenges experienced in the implementation of IEP, articulated the stress of balancing regular class teaching with supporting students with visual impairment, which creates a loss of work efficiencies and molarities. The participant highlighted:

"The challenge is that special education teachers have regular classes while being required to assist these students with visual impairments individually, which creates a workload and demoralizes our responsibilities." (Participant A5, Quote V2)

Another participant added to this discourse by shedding light on the expectations placed on special education teachers, revealing the issue that overloaded teachers may feel a loss of support in their efforts to meet the diverse needs of the students with VI. The participant replied;

"It is mostly seen that working with special needs students is the responsibility of the special education teachers; we do try to our level best, but because we teach other periods and implement IEP. In my view, we experience

difficulties since teachers are overloaded with responsibilities.” (Participant A3, Quote V2)

However, accounts for the emphasis on the challenges, particularly regarding time constraints and striving priorities. A participant says;

“We need to have time to help these students with visual impairments reduce the workloads first. We have quite similar normal periods as regular teachers; this has to be reviewed.” (Participant A5, Quote V3)

Participants in the FGDs also raised their frustrations, and stressing the overloaded duties negatively affects the IEPs implementation. For instance, one participant comments;

We mostly miss enough attention from our teachers because they are too busy with other responsibilities. Sometimes they don't have time to help adapt to assistive devices and the lesson. (Participant P12, Quote V1)

These excerpts indicate that teachers with special needs in inclusive education pointed out concerns about workloads. This implies the need to address the issue of teacher workload for efficient implementation of IEP. This finding agrees with Blind Citizens of Australia (2015), which emphasises special education teachers to be equipped with friendly schedules that enable them to conduct different learning programmes towards effective learning among students. Siddik and Kawai (2020) added that proper schedule arrangements could balance teachers' planning resources, learning approaches, and tasks that promote high interaction in inclusive classes.

However, the interaction between special education teachers and students with VI in supporting their learning needs might be inadequate as influenced by the special education teachers' heavy workload. The study by Shao *et al.* (2022) reveals that the high workloads for special education teachers limit their cooperation with regular teachers, which is crucial in implementing successful IEPs. Furthermore, the study by Fu *et al.* (2020) described the need for administrative support in reducing the burdens aligned with special education teachers, with dedication of time and schedule restructuring to

allow completion of IEPs. Liu's study notably emphasized the time management of special education teachers which can be as one strategy to improve their responsibilities (Liu, 2015). Likewise, Wakuru *et al.* (2020) suggested that workload stress can be lessened through the use of technology and increased use of assistive devices to allow special education teachers to streamline their support for students with visual impairment. Therefore, addressing the challenges through administrative support, effective time management, and incorporating assistive technological tools could be essential in enhancing required IEP practices for students with VI.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that the implementation of individualized education programmes (IEPs) in inclusive secondary specifically for students with visual impairment revealed several key experiences and challenges. The findings highlight three main themes: identification of students' learning needs, strategies used to meet the learning needs and experiencing challenges in IEP implementation for students with visual impairments. The challenges were further categorized into three sub-themes: resource limitations, the need for knowledge of the IEP team, and special education teachers' workload. The insights from both teachers and students experience challenges and highlight the need for better means of collaboration, guidance, education updates and resources in IEP support for students with visual impairments.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the case study, one inclusive secondary school cannot be generalized to all-inclusive schools in Tanzania but they can serve as a benchmark to the schools with the same condition and will mostly remain useful to the school. With regard to the revealed experiences of individualized education programs for students with visual impairments. The study recommends that: Firstly, the school administration and district secondary special education offices had to review the methods of assisting most teachers with regular training and build capacity knowledge of inclusive community creating and implementing IEPs.

Secondly, the school should restructure the period schedule to give opportunities for special education teachers enough time to support students and assist regular teachers in teaching and learning practices. Thirdly, the government and stakeholders have to take charge of ensuring resources in inclusive schools like braille machines, binoculars, talking computers and tape recorders, and staffing of specialist teachers would match the categories of disabilities available at school. Recommendation for further studies, as this study was a qualitative case study design, further studies can use different types of designs or approaches.

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