

**AN EXPLORATORY STUDY ON HOW TEACHERS COPE WITH LEARNERS
WITH MODERATE AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS IN INCLUSIVE
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NAKAWA DIVISION, KAMPALA DISTRICT.**

BY

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SEPTEMBER 2022

DECLARATION

I Kabaganja Hafisa hereby declare that this dissertation is entirely original work of mine unless as noted otherwise and that it has not previously been presented for any degree award at any other university.


Signature:  Date: 12th / 09 / 2022

Kabaganja Hafisa

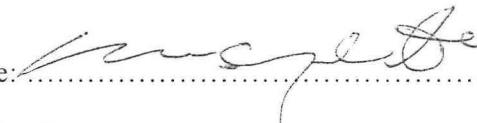
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APPROVAL

This is to acknowledge that the undersigned research supervisors have given their approval for the submission of the research dissertation titled 'Learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools: How teachers in Kampala cope'

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Dr. Elijah Musenyente.....

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family and close friends who have supported me throughout my academic career. May you never lose that attitude.

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Various people and institutions that should be thanked for their respective assistance have helped along the way to the preparation of this dissertation.

First and foremost, I want to express my gratitude to the Almighty God for His kindness and favor shown to me over the duration of my master's studies. God was ever-faithful to me and maintained his promises to me throughout the good times and the bad.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore how teachers cope with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders (MASDs) in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa Division, Kampala District. The study was guided by the following objectives; to establish how teachers cope with the verbal and nonverbal communication of learners with MASDs in inclusive primary schools, to find out how teachers cope with the unusual behaviors of learners with MASDs in inclusive primary schools, and to assess the teachers' facilitation of social interaction of learners with MASDs in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa division. A qualitative research paradigm was used in which an exploratory study design was used. The study population consisted of teachers in two inclusive primary schools in Nakawa Division i.e., Hill Preparatory School and Kyambogo Primary School. The sample size of the study was 8 teachers of which 4 teachers were selected in each of the two schools using purposive sampling technique. This was based on their long-serving experience of over five years of teaching in inclusive classes. Data was collected from the study participants using a semi-structured interview guide that followed a greater ethical consideration of signing a consent form by participants before being interviewed. The study findings revealed that verbal and non-verbal communication strategies of teachers included; understanding and accepting the nature of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders using soft talks and giving learners remedial time to express themselves. Additionally, the findings of the study showed that teachers managed the peculiar behaviors of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders is by simply sensitizing normal peers to associate freely with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders and encouraging parents to introduce them to the environment that promotes love other than hate or fighting. Lastly, the study findings revealed that the social interactions of learners with MAS were facilitated through involving them in games and plays such as football with normal peers in a group setting to discourage social isolation, giving them extra time to complete their academic tasks and promoting teamwork amongst them. It was recommended that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders should be given oral exercises as a training for normal talk. In addition, teachers should adopt the sunrise approach for violent and aggressive learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders that discourages direct punishments to them as they can easily copy and apply violence. Lastly, teachers must be sure to promote peer connections by designing cooperative learning activities that require group members to collaborate with students who have moderate autism spectrum disorders.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This chapter covers the background to the study, the statement of the problem, the purpose the study, objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study, significance and justification of the study and definition of terms and concepts of the study.

Background to the study

Historical perspective

The global prevalence of autism has increased 20- to 30-fold since the first epidemiological studies in the late 1960s and early 1970s (Baio, 2014). Since its addition as a special education classification in the early 1990s, the number of learners aged 6 to 21 who have been offered public education programs under the “learners with moderate autism spectrum disorder” classification is, up from just over 54,000 learners in 1998 and it reached over 370,000 learners in 2010 (CDC, 2014). With this overall increase in prevalence and the increasing number of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders receiving special education services, we hope to address the unique needs of these individuals and provide effective educational support and more attention is being paid to urgency.

In order to address the specific verbal and nonverbal communication, social, and behavioral needs of many students with moderate autism spectrum disorders, long-term educational services have historically been offered in segregated settings. About 1.8 million students in the United States with significant autism spectrum disorders were completely barred from the public education system even in the late 20th century (Duncan, and Bishop, 2015). The federal Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) of 1975 mandated

that public schools provide students with moderate autism spectrum disorders with a free and suitable public education. But the definition of an appropriate education was left to the discretion of the legal system. Despite the law, many educators believed that including students with moderate autistic spectrum disorders would be of dubious value, take up teachers' time, and pose a disruption threat to the status quo (Esteves & Rao, 2008).

Basing on the facts from Humphrey and Lewis (2008), the location of a learner's education has been determined by inclusion. The presence, involvement, acceptance, and success of students with disabilities in a general education classroom or activity, however, has been characterized as inclusion more recently. Many people believe that inclusion is a good practice since it may benefit students with mild autism spectrum disorders. Increased opportunities for social contacts with peers, the potential for friendships, improvements in communication and social skills, and the engagement in age-appropriate activities all contribute to social competency and, ultimately, effective post-school adjustment (Hunt & McDonnell, 2007).

Conceptual Perspective

Although its causes are not completely understood, moderate Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is a lifelong developmental condition that is occasionally linked to heredity. Despite all individuals with autism having three primary areas of difficulty, the term "spectrum" refers to the variety of effects that the condition has on each individual. Some people are able to live quite independently, often without the need for any additional assistance, while others need lifelong specialized care (APA, 2000). Asperger's disorder, Rett's disorder, childhood disintegrative disorder, and pervasive developmental disorder not otherwise specified are the five subtypes that make up moderate autism spectrum disorders (APA, 2000). This study, however, concentrated on moderate autistic spectrum condition. This is one of the more prevalent of the five sub-types. A limited range of interests and

aberrant or impaired social interaction and communication development are characteristics of learners with moderate autism spectrum condition (Virnes, Karna & Vellonen, 2015). Therefore, nonverbal behaviors including eye contact, facial expression, body postures, and gestures may be difficult for kids with moderate autism spectrum condition to use. They might also lack language development, and if they do have it, their capacity to start or carry on a conversation might be compromised (Simpson, Boer-Ott, & Smith-Myles, 2003). Teachers need to first grasp the disease because it is a very prevalent and complex one for them in order to successfully include students with moderate autism spectrum disorders.

Alquraini and Gut (2012) define inclusive education as the practice of placing all students, regardless of the difficulties they may be facing, in age-appropriate general education classes within the neighbourhood schools. This enables them to receive the high-quality instruction, support, and interventions necessary to succeed in the core curriculum. According to Irvine and Lynch (2009), inclusive education is a unified system of public education that includes all children and youths as active, fully engaged members of the school community, views diversity as the norm, and ensures a high-quality education for each learner by offering relevant curriculum, effective teaching, and necessary supports for each learner. Alquraini and Gut (2012) posited that the school and classroom are based on the idea that students with mild autism spectrum disorders are fundamentally just as capable as students without disabilities. All students can participate fully in their classes and the local school community as a result, and they can all study in the least restrictive setting possible. This indicates that they are as integrated as possible with their typically developing classmates, with general education being the setting of choice for all students. In this research, with inclusive education, learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders will be taught by the same teacher in the same classroom.

Coping has a significant impact on a person's physical and mental health, especially in response to early and intense stress, and has been characterized as a person's continual efforts in thought and action to manage specific demands assessed as taxing or overpowering (Lazarus, 1993). Ineffective and/or inappropriate coping mechanisms can, in fact, have negative, long-lasting repercussions on a person's socioemotional health (Lazarus, 2006). Admiraal, Korthagen, and Wubbels (2000) examine two well-known coping mechanisms: problem-oriented coping, which is used when the environment is thought to be malleable, and emotional-oriented coping mechanisms, which are used when modifying the environment is thought to be unlikely. About 88% of class instructors worldwide face work stress, (AbuMadini & Sakthivel, 2018). Teaching students with mental or behavioral difficulties also tends to make teachers' occupational stress worse (Boujut, PopaRoch & Palomares, 2017). This might be as a result of lack of training and the felt failure in their jobs, as well as the varied character of mild autism spectrum disorders, which necessitates modifications in normal educational settings (Zarafshan, Mohammadi, & Ahmadi, 2013). Social interaction and behavioral challenges are common among autistic students, which endanger their judgment of the competence of their teachers and lead to psychological anguish (Boujut et al., 2017; Cappe, Smock, & Boujut, 2016). The purpose of this study was to explore the interactions between teachers in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa Division and learners who had moderate autistic spectrum disorders.

Theoretical perspective

The transactional theory of coping put forward by Lazarus and Folkman served as the study's main inspiration (1984). The transaction or interaction between personal and environmental elements in determining coping strategies is highlighted by the Lazarus and Folkman model. Cognitive appraisals, which determine the purpose of the transaction, the efficacy of coping responses, and the emotional response, and coping, which involves

managing the person-environment relationship, are the two processes that have an impact on the relationship between the person and the environment (Folkman et al, 1991). The approach assesses how significant life events and minor inconveniences affect emotions, placing special focus on cognitive assessment and stress management. The two components of cognitive appraisal are primary assessment (to determine the potential harm or threat the situation poses) and secondary appraisal (which assesses what can be done as well as the person's capacity to handle and cope with it). Following this assessment of threat, coping can either modify how people interact with their surroundings or how much emotional suffering they experience. Personality traits, depressive symptoms, and social support are a few things that have an impact on coping mechanisms. Individuals can recognize and become aware of thoughts and feelings that contribute to insufficient coping using cognitive behavior therapies and methods, and they can learn new approaches to problem resolution and coping. A complex range of social, emotional, behavioral, verbal, and nonverbal communication challenges are experienced by students with mild autism spectrum disorders, raising serious and recurring worries about how their teachers will manage in an inclusive classroom environment.

Contextual Perspective

Every child must have the chance to attain and maintain an adequate level of learning since education is a fundamental right. The Addis Ababa Conference for the African Region in 1961, the United Nations Declaration of 1948 affirming the right to education, and finally the Jomete in Education for All Convention in 1990 all backed this. In Uganda, the Government White Paper on Education from 1992 and the Constitution from 1995 both emphasize the importance of education to the country.

Uganda has ratified the international commitments and agreements that support students with special needs. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special

Needs Education is one such document that serves as a binding contract for such agreements (1994). 1) The right of all children, including those who require temporary or long-term educational adaptations, to attend school is emphasized by this document. 2) The right of all children to attend school in inclusive settings in their local communities 3) The right of every child to take part in a child-centered education that meets their specific requirements; 4) The right of every kid to take part in an excellent education that has value for everyone. Uganda has enacted The Individuals with Disability Act (2006) and ratified the United Nations Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities in accordance with the Government Constitution (1995). (2008). Both tools require equal access to educational services for people with exceptional learning needs as well as quality and equity. The Ministry of Education & Sports established a division in charge of special needs and inclusive education to fulfill those objectives.

With assistance from the Danish government, the Ugandan government started implementing inclusive education between 1991 and 2001. It was designed to offer special needs training. A plan to manage special needs services in districts and inform community leaders, parents, and teachers about individual needs and inclusive education resulted in the appointment of three teachers to serve as assistant inspectors. A vast number of students, including those who were suffering learning challenges, were enrolled in primary and secondary schools as a result of Universal Primary Education, which was implemented in 1997 and raised awareness of inclusive education. Today's growing student population in schools necessitated more resources, which the nation finds challenging to offer.

In order to provide for the education of students with disabilities who were excluded from the mainstream education, the Ugandan government opened special schools like the Kampala School for the Handicapped, Kireka Home for the Mentally Handicapped, Ntinda School for the Deaf, and Salama School for the Blind. Since 1997, universal primary

education has given all students, including those with mild autism spectrum disorders, the chance to enroll and receive an education. However, there were some difficulties with this. This group of students requires qualified instructors, a suitable curriculum, a unique teaching approach, and unique teaching resources. Unfortunately, there were not enough special needs education (SNE) instructors available at the beginning of inclusive education to fully meet the learning needs of students with special educational needs during routine classroom activities. This, in addition to the environment that was hostile to students with moderate autism spectrum disorders and the discriminatory attitudes of teachers and peers, made it difficult for students with moderate autism spectrum disorders to receive a proper education and to have opportunities for a full social life.

Today, however, the Ugandan government has put initiatives in place to create an atmosphere that is supportive of inclusive education. Schools that have been built in large numbers now have accessible features, and Core PTCs continues to train teachers who work with students with special needs. Despite these government initiatives and efforts, there hasn't been a dedicated academic curriculum to support and prepare teachers to work with students who have moderate autistic spectrum disorders in inclusive classrooms.

Statement of the Problem

While it is a legal requirement that all students, including those with severe autism spectrum disorders, attend inclusive primary schools, instructors are nonetheless required to foster an inclusive learning environment, frequently with little to no guidance (Horrocks, White, & Roberts, 2008; Lindsay et al., 2013). Teachers frequently encounter significant challenges in effectively addressing the requirements of students with moderate autism spectrum disorders due to their social and behavioral difficulties (Wilmhurst & Brue, 2010). Evidence consistently demonstrates that many educators are ill-equipped to assist students

with mild to moderate autism spectrum disorders in social, intellectual, and behavioral domains (Symes & Humphrey, 2010). Lack of information of students with moderate autism spectrum disorders and limited access to consultation, assistance, and counsel are, in fact, two of the biggest obstacles to working with them in inclusive primary schools (De Boer & Simpson, 2009). Teachers may become frustrated by such training gaps, and students with moderate autism spectrum disorders may miss opportunities to realize their full potential (Warnock, 2005).

Teachers must adjust to the special characteristics that children with autism display in order to interact with them in a good way. Unfortunately, because no research has been done in Uganda, it is unclear how teachers of children with moderate autistic spectrum disorders deal with the verbal and nonverbal communication of students with these disorders in inclusive primary schools. To be able to recognize the positive and effective coping techniques, promote them, and, in the event of negative and unhelpful coping, avoid them, it was necessary to know how the teachers are handling the children's atypical actions.

Purpose of the study

To explore how teachers cope with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa Division, Kampala district.

Objectives of the study

The following objectives guided this study;

- i. To establish how teachers cope with the verbal and nonverbal communication of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa Division, Kampala District.

- ii. To find out how teachers cope with the unusual behaviors of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa division, Kampala District.
- iii. To assess the teachers' facilitation of social interaction of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa division, Kampala District.

Research questions

- i. How do teachers cope with the verbal and nonverbal communication of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa division, Kampala District?
- ii. How do teachers cope with the unusual behaviors of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa division, Kampala District?
- iii. What facilitation is provided towards the social interaction of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa division, Kampala District?

Scope of the study

Content scope

In inclusive primary schools in the Nakawa division, Kampala District, the study looked at the coping mechanisms used by teachers of pupils with moderate autistic spectrum disorders. It centered on determining how teachers deal with the verbal and nonverbal communication of students with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools, how they facilitate social interaction of students with moderate autism spectrum

disorders in inclusive primary schools, and how they deal with the peculiar behaviors of students with moderate autism spectrum disorders in the classrooms.

Geographical Scope

Two inclusive primary schools in Nakawa Division, Kampala District served as the study locations.

Time Scope

The research was done between August 2019 and May 2021.

Significance of the study

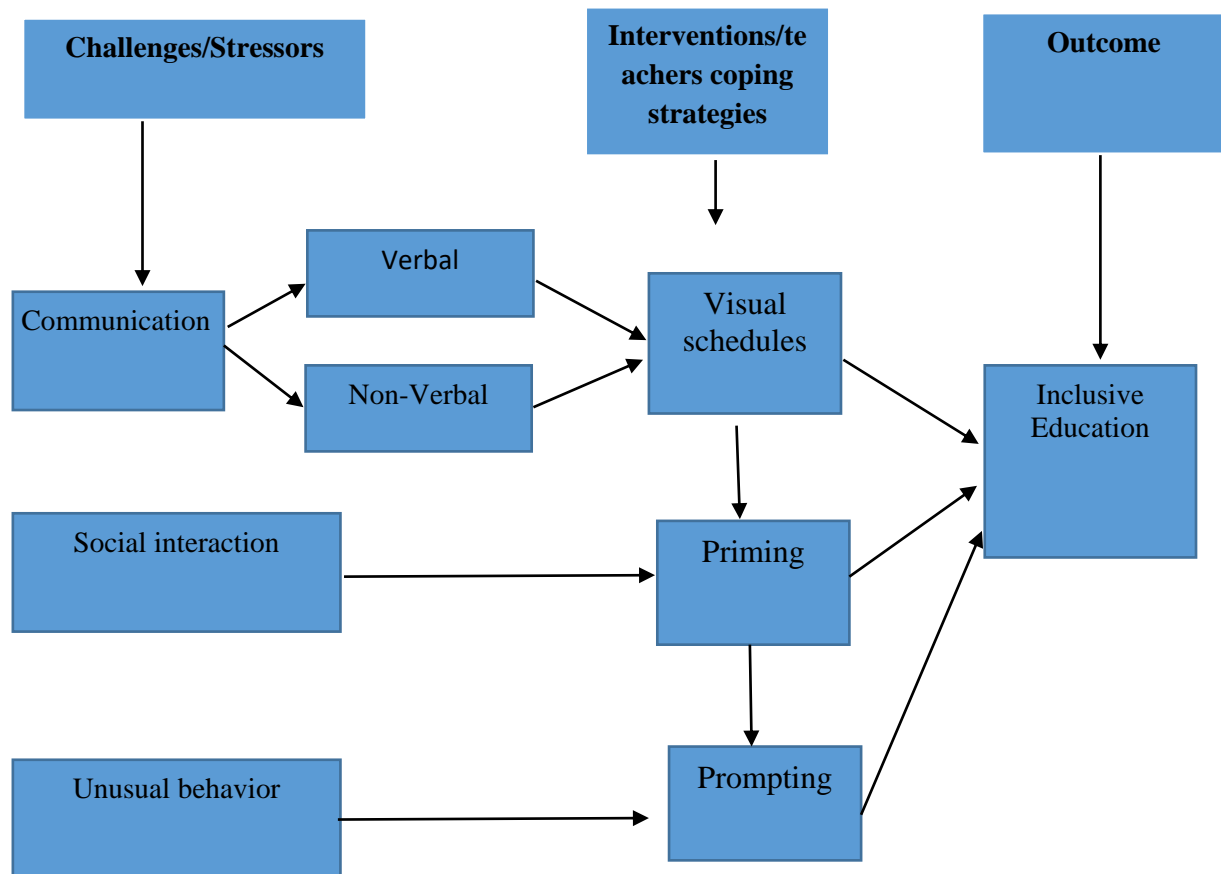
At the international, national, and local levels, it is intended that the results of this study would help in the creation and application of policies pertaining to learners with autism spectrum disorders. This will improve the educational intervention for this group of learners.

In addition, the findings:

- Highlight the necessity for the East African community to make sure that issues related to disabilities are taken into account when creating laws and policy frameworks at both the national and regional levels.
- Could enable policy makers in Uganda to ensure that learners with special needs with moderate autism spectrum disorders are able to access quality education services equitably in inclusive primary schools.
- Could make it possible for the school to provide inclusive and special needs education services in a coordinated and resourceful manner, especially for students with mild autism spectrum disorders.

- The ability to participate in regular classroom programs that optimize intellectual and social development and are consistent with the objective of full inclusion may be provided to students with moderate autism spectrum disorders.
- Helped the researcher deepen her understanding of the coping mechanisms used by teachers of learners in inclusive primary schools who have mild autism spectrum disorders. The researcher was able to advance her research abilities and expertise, particularly the practical side of fieldwork and data gathering.

Conceptual framework of coping



Source: Adopted from Lazarus and Folkman (1984), and Crosland, & Dunlap, (2012) and modified by the researcher

The conceptual framework demonstrates that students with mild autism spectrum disorders struggle with verbal and nonverbal communication, social engagement, and odd behaviors. Teachers' coping methods for successfully including students with moderate autistic spectrum disorders in inclusive settings, according to Crosland and Dunlap (2012), include priming, rapid delivery, and visual scheduling. Priming is the process of giving a learner with moderate autism spectrum disorders a preview of the material or a learning activity before they actually participate in it. According to research by Zanolli, Daggett, and Adams from 1996, priming can also improve social engagement with peers. It has been successful to facilitate the inclusion of students with mild autism spectrum disorders using prompting tactics. For students with moderate autism spectrum disorders, additional prompts are frequently required to elicit responses to behavioral activities. Visual timetables have reportedly been utilized as a way to boost predictability for students with mild autism spectrum disorders, according to Crosland and Dunlap (2012). The use of schedules can help learners with mild autism spectrum disorders become more independent by making transitions between activities easier and visually communicating forthcoming events. Students with severe autism spectrum disorders must be capable of some degree of independent academic functioning in order to succeed in inclusive primary schools. Prior research (Harrower, & Dunlap, 2001) has shown that while increasing freedom has been successful when done so under the close observation of teachers, removing that monitoring has led to a resurgence of odd behavior and a decline in proper behavior.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

In this chapter, a review of relevant literature is presented in accordance with the study objectives, including how teachers manage learner with moderate autism spectrum disorders' verbal and nonverbal communication in inclusive primary schools, how teachers manage the students' unusual behaviors, and how teachers support social interaction among students with moderate autism spectrum disorders in such schools. The chapter also discusses the gap in the literature. The literature that was reviewed came from books, working papers, dissertations, journal articles, and online portals.

Introduction

Pupils with autism experience a variety of challenges in educational environments due to their disorder for which teachers need effective coping strategies in order make the learners achieve meaningful gains from school. Extant literature report studies suggest that these coping strategies should be practical, social, behavioural, and academic in nature (Murray, 2015; Fleury et al., 2014; Muchetti, 2013; Van Berckelaer-Onnes, 2013). The regrettable fact is that mild autism spectrum diseases Teachers who work with children in regular schools are unfamiliar with the effects that mild autism spectrum disorders (ASD) can have on a learner's performance (Fleury et al., 2014). Due to this lack of instructor knowledge, students with autism may spend the majority of their schooldays disengaging from academic pursuits (Muchetti, 2013). However, the majority of autistic kids who are enrolled in special education programs and receive the necessary educational support have increases in their academic performance, functional language, socialization, adaptive abilities, and communication (Manti, Scholte, & Van Berckelaer-Onnes, 2013). To ensure

that teachers are aware of the steps required to make a positive change in their students' life, research studies are required, specifically to discover what coping and management approaches may be appropriate for each child with autism (Muchetti, 2013).

Coping with verbal and nonverbal communication challenges of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders.

Social, communicative, and behavioral difficulties are common among children with autism spectrum disorders in modern culture. The name "autism" has its roots in the Greek word "autos," which means "self," according to the American National Institutes of Health. Many autistic children are self-absorbed and appear to live in a secluded universe where they are unable to effectively engage and communicate with others (Boyd, Woodard, & Bodfish, 2011). They could struggle to learn a language and comprehend what other people are saying to them. Additionally, they could struggle with nonverbal cues including facial expressions, eye contact, and hand gestures (Ostmeyer & Scarpa, 2012). The degree to which a youngster can communicate depends on both his or her intellectual and social growth. While some children with autism spectrum disorders may have limited speech abilities, others may have large vocabularies and be able to converse in-depth about particular topics. However, most people struggle to communicate clearly, especially when speaking to others (Muchetti, 2013).

Around 30 to 50 percent of children with autism spectrum disorders are hardly verbal when they start school globally (Muchetti, 2013). The majority of kids have issues with receptive and expressive communication (Fleury et al., 2014). Due to their incapacity to read social cues, many kids continue to suffer in social situations (Jacklin & Farr, 2005). People with moderate autism spectrum disorders frequently exhibit social awkwardness, which causes their classmates to reject them. They can also occasionally become targets of taunting and bullying (Ostmeyer & Scarpa, 2012). The mental health of a child is directly

impacted by these conditions. For high-functioning children on the mild autism spectrum, such situations can lead to a loop in which their social inadequacy makes them feel more anxious and depressed, which in turn makes them feel even more anxious and depressed. Given that schools are social settings, it is clear that socially awkward youngsters have a difficult time there (Fleury et al., 2014). Children on the mild autism spectrum frequently struggle academically because their social skills limit their ability to study in a classroom (Ostmeyer & Scarpa, 2012).

Ten social coping skills were identified as essential for successful learning to take place in a classroom environment in a study involving teachers, including "listening to others, following steps, following rules, ignoring distractions, taking turns, asking for help, getting along with others, staying calm, taking responsibility for one's own behavior, and doing nice things for others" (Ostmeyer & Scarpa, 2012, p. 932).

Finally, the research conclusively demonstrated the critical role instructors play in developing adaptive social skills in autistic children (Admiraal et al., 2000). Therefore, it is essential that teachers develop healthy and efficient coping mechanisms so that they can teach those same abilities to the students. Teaching social skills to students with moderate autism spectrum disorders in the classroom was one coping mechanism used by instructors to develop those skills (Fleury et al., 2014). As a result of their poor copying abilities and inability to recognize social signs, many autistic youngsters find it difficult to maintain social interactions (Jacklin & Farr, 2005). But teaching these social skills in the natural setting where their demonstration is expected has the most impact on autistic pupils (Fleury et al., 2014).

Coping with the unusual behaviors of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders

Sometimes, children with autism display negative behaviors that can interfere with their learning and disturb other kids in the classroom (Ostmeyer & Scarpa, 2012). Problematic behaviors may include inability to pay attention to and follow instructions, trouble adhering to regulations in the classroom, and exhibits of persistent, disruptive behavior (Boujut et al., 2017). When conditions are introduced that are intended to stop a person with autism from repeating behaviors, it can often be distressing for them and cause "extreme anger, violence, self-injury, or other repeated and troublesome behaviors" (Boyd et al., 2011, p. 197). Instructional and behavioral supports are typically implemented for kids who exhibit these types of behaviors to promote involvement in academic studies (Fleury et al., 2014).

In a 2011 study, Boyd, Woodard, and Bodfish investigated whether children with autism who also have intellectual disabilities might benefit from tailored exposure and response prevention (ERP) therapies that are used to treat obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD). The findings indicated that following ERP therapies, the participants' time spent on academic activities, their delay in responding to the trigger stimuli, and the amount of time they spent delaying exhibiting the repetitive behaviors all increased over the course of the study. Additionally, the frequency of the repetitive behaviors was reduced (Boyd et al., 2011). These outcomes are encouraging because teachers were trained to implement the ERP interventions during the trial, in addition to the desired objectives. The results of the study and the promotion of knowledgeable application by teachers are encouraging for the future, but more research is required to confirm the efficacy of ERP as a therapy technique for restricting behaviors that interfere with learning.

The usage of iPads is emerging as a novel and successful strategy for reducing problematic behaviors in the classroom with regard to technological treatments that might help students with ASD (Neely, Rispoli, Camargo, Davis, & Boles, 2013). For two male participants with autism and demanding conduct, Neely, Rispoli, Camargo, Davis, and Boles (2013) compared the use of iPads to traditional paper/pencil teaching methods. When using the iPads instead of more conventional teaching techniques, both pupils demonstrated better levels of academic engagement. Despite the fact that the two students were fulfilling the same academic requirements, the iPads served as motivating incentives for the participants and the assignments did not feel like academic "work." Most educational settings utilize iPads frequently, therefore implementing their wise use may be appropriate. Additionally, iPads could be used to help students with ASD with their transitional abilities (Neely et al., 2013). For people with ASD, changing between schools, classrooms, and even activities can be incredibly stressful, which frequently results in problematic behaviors (Perfitt, 2013). Given that many people with ASD are visual learners, iPads have a variety of applications that can give children visual clocks and schedules, which greatly ease transitions. Perfitt (2013) carried out a qualitative study while relocating her ASD students to a new school. She then offered the following suggestions to help adolescents on the moderate autism spectrum experience transition less stressfully:

- Involve students in the creation of their transition plans to make sure they are aware of what will take place.
- Instead of using a general transition plan for everyone, customize transition plans to make sure they match the needs of each student.

- Anticipate potential pressures that students may experience and teach coping mechanisms in advance.
- Teach pupils general coping mechanisms for a range of stressors.
- In order to reduce students' reliance on adult support, independent learning activities should ideally be implemented (Perfitt, pages 194–195).

These are practical solutions that may be quickly included to transition plans to support kids with autism in making successful transitions. Students with ASD will have a better school experience with transition support since there will be fewer social and behavioral issues, which will increase their focus on academics.

When kids with ASD or mild autism spectrum disorders suffer sensory pain that can affect a variety of senses, behavioral issues frequently follow (APA, 2000). Learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders may struggle with sensory experiences that prevent them from participating in classroom activities, behaving as desired, and learning. These experiences can range from the hum and pulse of fluorescent lighting to the whispering that occasionally occurs among other students in the room (Elsabbagh, et. al, 2012). Teachers can start by looking for a sensory source of the issue when a student with mild autism spectrum disorders exhibits a noticeable shift in behavior. The learner with moderate autism spectrum disorders should be encouraged to open up to the teacher about any external distractions, according to Costley's (2012) argument. This will help the teacher understand and resolve several issues that could hinder a student's capacity to learn.

It has been successful to facilitate the inclusion of students with mild autism spectrum disorders using prompting tactics. For students with moderate autism spectrum disorders, additional prompts are frequently required to elicit responses to behavioral activities

(Crosland, & Dunlap, 2012). In order to acquire the right reaction from a student with a mild autism spectrum disorder during a targeted academic or behavioral activity, it is frequently necessary to use prompts in addition to the regular instructional routine. As learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders may not respond to conventional instructions given in general education classrooms, it is crucial to use a variety of prompting tactics to support their participation.

Regarding the aforementioned, Sainato, Strain, Lefebvre, and Rapp (2006) evaluated the efficacy of two prompting techniques for easing transitions to and from school with three preschool boys with autism. In the peer buddy setting, a kid who was usually developing received cues and modelling from the classroom teacher, who then had them pass along to students who had moderate autism spectrum disorders. The learners with mild autism spectrum disorders were not given prompts by the classroom teacher. When mild autism spectrum problems were present, the classroom teacher alone gave suggestions to the students, telling their peer buddies not to help. The teacher-only condition showed higher results in all transition circumstances, however both conditions resulted in increases in acceptable behavior. Additionally, in all situations, there was a gradual decrease in the amount of instructor prompts, indicating that the students could transfer on their own (Sainato et al., 2006).

Lastly, it has been demonstrated that additional prompting techniques can enhance outcomes for students with moderate autistic spectrum disorders in inclusive classes (Singh et.al. 2014). For instance, Taylor and Levin (2012) looked at how a tactile prompting device increased verbal initiations in a student with moderate autism spectrum disorders who was 9 years old. The student carried a gadget in his pocket that vibrated slightly at certain times. This vibration acted as a cue for the student to initiate play verbally. Increases in verbal initiations

were noticed not just when the child was playing with an adult in a variety of circumstances, but also when follow-up questions were asked of him by classmates who were usually developing in his general education class.

Teachers' facilitation of social interaction of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders

It is typical for students with moderate autism spectrum disorders to struggle with social skills like making and keeping friends, interpreting social cues and understanding how to respond, and basic communication skills like figuring out the meaning of another person's body language and tone of voice (Costley, 2012). For these reasons, students with mild autism spectrum disorders find it difficult to recognize social boundaries and sarcasm, and they may misinterpret subtle social cues. These social challenges may leave students with mild autism spectrum disorders exposed and susceptible to misunderstandings from their peers (Hunt, & McDonnell, 2007). As a result, it's critical to make sure teachers are informed about students with moderate autism spectrum disorders and their unique social and emotional needs. In order to create a network of support that does not exclude or alienate the students with moderate autism spectrum disorders, this should be done gently.

In order to support and educate students with mild autism spectrum disorders, some teachers have also established social skills groups (Costley, 2012). The goal of social skills groups is to gather students in a secure setting where they may interact and practice skills that reflect acceptable social behavior. Depending on the students engaged, social skills groups can be flexible or rigid (Lindsay, et.al. 2013). Each meeting in a structured group could have a different focus, such as making decisions, controlling emotions, comprehending others' feelings, or acting appropriately in class. According to Blome and Zelle (2018), these groups can include students who have mild to moderate autistic spectrum disorders as well as those

who have a similar degree of social abilities and would benefit from being a part of a social skills group.

Additionally, it is clear from the literature that students with mild autism spectrum disorders experience anxiety when they are unaware of the timetable or approaching events. Some people question "What's next" or "When's reading?" constantly. Some people struggle with severe anxiety all day long. For students with moderate autism spectrum disorders, priming satisfies these demands by offering structure and predictability in a time- and cost-effective manner. Priming has been shown by Zanolli, Daggett, & Adams (1996) to increase social engagement with peers. By demonstrating the real materials that will be used in a session the day or morning before the lesson, teachers often employ the priming approach. Priming can also take place soon before the activity, as when a peer mentor summarizes what will happen during the science experiment just before science class starts. One can prepare for a school day in less than ten minutes (Plimley & Bowen, 2006).

Further, social stories are a tactic that teachers can employ to help students with mild autism spectrum disorders comprehend social situations. Social stories serve as examples of proper conduct and reactions in social settings. Three types of sentences should be used in social stories, according to research by Blome and Zelle (2018): descriptive sentences that state what, where, and why; directive sentences that frame the desired response; and perspective sentences that describe the emotions and reactions of others related to the social situation (Blome & Zelle, 2018).

The last point was made by Duncan and Bishop (2015), who noted that social skill deficiencies can make a learner with moderate autism spectrum disorders stand out from the crowd. Without proper preparation and mindfulness, even well-intentioned teachers may succumb to intimidating and occasionally even bullying conduct with the persistently behind-

the-curve student (Marsh et.al.2017). The classroom is the ideal environment for learning and exercising social skills (Montes and Halterman 2008). For the student with moderate autism spectrum disorders to become socially fluid—both in terms of expressing his or her own feelings and states of being and in interpreting the meaning and feelings implied in others' expressions, words, and actions—the conscientious teacher can do much to support this and encourage the tolerance and participation of other students (Montes and Halterman 2008).

Literature gap

Teachers' coping with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive schools has been extensively studied and it continues to be a current popular area of study. However, resinous gaps were identified as regards to literature review, which called for immediate action meant to be realized in this study. In the first place, studies reviewed above were mainly carried out among learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in developed countries with ready-developed education system which wasn't the case for this study caried out in Uganda, particularly Nakawa Division in Kampala District. In addition, most studies reviewed were not specific to learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools. Finally, no study among those examined above had particular variables like teachers' coping with students with moderate autism spectrum disorders' verbal and nonverbal communication, teachers' coping with students' peculiar behaviors, and teachers' facilitation of social interaction of students with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools, as was the case for this study. This study, which examined how teachers in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa Division, Kampala district, deal with learners who have moderate autistic spectrum disorders, built on the body of prior research to fill in these gaps.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter describes the research design, study population, sample size and selection sampling techniques and procedures, data collection methods and instruments, data analysis and reporting.

Research Design

The investigation was purely exploratory. Exploratory research seeks to examine novel issues for which there is scant or no prior research (Singh, 2007). It was pertinent to approach this little-studied issue from an exploratory viewpoint because there was so little study on how teachers in inclusive primary schools in Kampala district deal with students who have moderate autistic spectrum disorders. The study, which used an exploratory design, offers new insight into how teachers in inclusive primary schools deal with the verbal and nonverbal communication, the unusual behaviors, and the learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. It also examines how teachers facilitate social interaction between students with moderate autism spectrum disorders. This study adopted a qualitative methodology. This made it possible to thoroughly analyze the information gathered from interviews to comprehend the phenomenon (Bogden and Biklen, 2003).

Location of the Study

Two inclusive primary schools in Nakawa Division served as the study setting. These include Kyambogo Primary School and Hill Preparatory School. Hill Preparatory School integrates children with exceptional needs, such as those who are disabled, and provides extremely affordable worldwide standards of distinctive education. It is situated in Kampala on Plot 10-12 Lower Naguru East Road. In contrast, Kyambogo Primary School is a public

elementary school situated in Kyambogo Parish, Nakawa Division, Kampala District, close to Kyambogo University.

Study Population

The targeted study population consisted of inclusive primary school teachers in both Hill Preparatory School and Kyambogo Primary School, located in Nakawa Division, Kampala District. Teachers at these two schools were formally trained to work as special needs assistants and had 5 to 20+ years of experience. This led the researcher believe that they would surely provide adequate and unbiased data to inform the study.

Sample size

Eight (8) teachers were chosen to participate in the study since it was a qualitative one that intended to delve into the perspectives of those in the study group who were considered as being information-rich. Four teachers were chosen from Hill Preparatory School Naguru, while another four worked at Kyambogo Primary School in Kyambogo Parish. All the teachers sampled for the study were interviewed with a focus on learners with moderate autism spectrum disorder as the key targeted sub-type of Moderate autism spectrum disorders.

Sampling technique

The participants were chosen using the purposive sampling method. Selecting study participants who are thought to have the desired knowledge about the research problem is done through purposeful sampling (Creswell, 2013). Four instructors from each of the two inclusive elementary schools were chosen for this study. The teachers were chosen using a purposeful sample strategy based on their extensive knowledge of how to manage pupils in inclusive classrooms.

Data collection methods

The interview technique has been described as a way to get information from someone in order to analyze particular elements of a population (Mathiyazhagan & Nandan, 2010). Such information may be gathered voluntarily, including through in-person interviews. Compared to surveys and telephone interviews, this style of interview has greater response rates (Krosnick, Presser, Fealing & Ruggles, 2015). Face-to-face interviews were employed in this study as a result to help clarify the issue at hand and to help participants who misunderstood the questions that were read to them.

In this study, a semi-structured interview guide was the primary instrument for data collection. This was composed of open-ended, general questions that probed teachers' general approaches to dealing with verbal and nonverbal communication, the unusual behaviors of students with moderate autism spectrum disorders, and teachers' facilitation of social interaction for students with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools. The semi-structured interview guide encouraged the use of adaptable tactics, such as probing as appropriate, and all interviews took place in the participants' individual schools. The interviews were taped and transcribed with consent to make data processing simpler.

Development of the data collection tool

The researcher used publications on qualitative research procedures as advice for creating the in-depth interview guide. The researcher's background as a special needs school teacher was also used in the process.

In two schools with students who have autism spectrum disorders, a pilot study was carried out to pre-test the interview guides. The results led to the removal of redundant questions from interview guidelines and the addition of new ones to address issues that were left out. The results of the pilot research showed that the tool required to have a few items

rephrased. The interview guide's questions were simplified in some cases so that participants could understand them with ease.

Administration of the interview

Interviews were conducted with the eight (8) teachers in English. The interviewer (researcher), prior to the interview session, had been trained in skills of interviewing by the research supervisors. Thereafter she administered the interview schedule to the teachers. The interviewer utilized a tape recorder so she could pay close attention to the participants, engage them in appropriate eye contact and non-verbal communication, record the entire interview verbatim, and take notes on her observations and impressions as it happened.

Quality assurance

Accuracy in the study was assured through a number of measures:

- During the construction of the data collection tools there was extensive consultation with the research supervisors. On particular components of the instrument, the opinions of a few academics and students from the faculty of special needs and rehabilitation at Kyambogo University were also solicited.
- The tool was pre-tested (piloted) in two other schools with children autism in Nakawa Division. Finding the research design's flaws and potential opportunities was the main goal of the pilot study. The pilot study was conducted under the same conditions using similar participants and the same tools planned for the research study. The pre-test helped identify potential problems with the interview schedule, the processing and interpretation of the data acquired, and the feasibility of the research.
- Finally, in terms of reliability, this study adhered to all the standards for qualitative research as outlined by Perakyla (1998). The tape recorder, which was the technological apparatus employed, was examined and confirmed to be trustworthy. Moreover, transcriptions were done with accuracy; and interview, observation and

field notes and were summaries read through by a colleague to check for any error in transcribing.

Data Processing and Analysis

The act of turning unusable information from raw data into a published article is known as data analysis (Amin, 2005). Data from qualitative sources were analyzed using content analysis. The interview guide's qualitative data was carefully examined, categorized, and arranged into themes and groups. Selected verbatim quotes from participants were used as examples to highlight the recurring concerns that were identified in relation to each guiding topic.

Ethical Issues

Teachers who were interested in taking part in the study gave their informed consent to the researcher. The researcher gave a brief introduction, discussed the purpose of the study, the advantages, drawbacks, and risks of participating, and invited the teachers to ask any questions they may have about it.

The researcher avoided sensitive topics like age and records that might have contained personal data when creating the interview guide's questions in order to respect the participants' rights. Participants received guarantees of anonymity regarding the information they gave, and research materials did not include personal names; instead, identifying numbers were utilized.

Limitation of the Study

Some participants attempted to furnish the study with false information out of concern for their personal safety since they were under pressure not to say anything bad about the various stakeholders in their schools. The researcher dealt with the issue by giving

participants adequate assurances that the information they provided would be treated with the utmost confidentiality and that it would only be used for academic purposes.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of the study was to examine to investigate the coping strategies of teachers of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools in Kampala. Specifically, the following research objectives guided the study:

- 1) To establish how teachers cope with the verbal and nonverbal communication of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa Division, Kampala District.
- 2) To find out how teachers cope with the unusual behaviors of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa division, Kampala District.
- 3) To assess the teachers' facilitation of social interaction of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa division, Kampala District.

The data was obtained from teachers of children with autism in inclusive primary schools using an in-depth interview guide. The information underwent content analysis. It was carefully examined, arranged, and divided into themes and categories. Selected verbatim quotes from participants were used as examples to highlight the recurring concerns that were identified in relation to each guiding topic. The pertinent research objectives were used to summarize them. Then it was verbally reported.

The findings are presented in Sections A and B of this chapter. While Section B gives findings based on the research objectives, Section A first brings out the demographic information about the study participants.

Section A: Demographic characteristics of participants

The study participants were teachers (male and female) who teach classes with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools (n=8).

Participants' demographics

All the eight teacher participants were teaching in one of the two inclusive primary schools in Kampala District. Five out of the eight participants were male. Most of the participants were above the age of 30. Details of the participant demographics are displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Demographic information

Participant	Gender	Age	Education qualification
Teacher 1	Female	-----	Certificate
Teacher 2	Female	-----	PhD
Teacher 3	Male	40	Masters Degree
Teacher 4	Female	26	Certificate
Teacher 5	Male	42	Bachelors Degree
Teacher 6	Male	28	Diploma
Teacher 7	Male	25	Certificate
Teacher 8	Male	30	Certificate

All eight teachers sampled for the study were teaching in an inclusive primary school in Kampala District. Five out of the eight participants were male. Finally, more participants had higher levels of education, including some with bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. The majority of participants were over 30 years old.

Coping with verbal and non-verbal communication difficulties of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders

Teachers views on challenges to interaction with children with moderate autism spectrum were sought. The challenges were perceived as difficulty of verbal interaction with the learners, and difficulty of communicating to the children.

The teachers reported both positive and negative experiences presented under the following themes; understanding and appreciation of learners' unique characters, strategies of teachers' communication with learners.

Understanding and accepting of learners' unique characters

The first theme that emerged from the responses of the participants was understanding and accepting of learners' unique characters. The teachers indicated that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders are unique in their characters. Most importantly, these learners were described by their teachers as stand-alone pupils who tend to live uniquely as unruly, shy and hyperactive with speech difficulties. By hyperactive, the researcher meant that learners don't settle in one place for a long time.

"... these children are always hyperactive. They don't settle, some of them are hyperactive whereby they cannot settle in a place for some good time, they settle for some minutes and the move away, they move sometimes they make careless movements or useless movements they run to this, they run to that. They are always up and down which makes them hyperactive" (IDI with Teacher 3).

Similar to the above, another teacher responded that:

"Learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders are the learners who are sometimes shy, maybe they have speech difficulties or their communication

difficulties, they are shy in a way that they don't ask themselves as what they are going to say they have low self-esteem sometimes those others" (IDI with Teacher 5).

Another way in which teachers described learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders was through their level of autism. According to a certain participant, learners with severe level of autism do not behave the same way as those with moderate autisms. Learners who are moderately moderate autism spectrum disorders are shy while those who are severely autistic are rude, unruly and don't normally interact with their normal peers. The level of autism among learners is understood by teachers after carrying out an assessment on the child using tools like C.A.R.S. When asked how she knew that the learner had autism, a certain teacher responded that:

"...that is by means of assessment, so we know them after assessment through knowing what he does, what he cannot do compared to the ordinary child, failing to speak, you will know that this child has autism" (IDI with Teacher 1). In the same way, Teacher 3 in an IDI revealed that "These children behave differently depending on the level of autism and as you know getting this level, we need to make an assessment which is done using tools like C.A.R.S and these children now get to you".

Irritation from noise for some learners with moderate autism spectrum disorder was manifested to teachers through covering their ears in case of exposure to loud noise. However, this was not common to all learners instead, some enjoyed listening to music and were not affected by loud noise at all. Teachers commonly revealed during interviews that certain learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders play games that produce music for them. For example, they put stones in tins and shake them just to enjoy the sound produced. Also, the interview responses indicated that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders

are identified by teachers basing on their physical structure that characterized uncoordinated body parts, most especially eyes. These findings are exemplified in the following narratives:

“Their body parts some times are uncoordinated, for example when they are moving the eyes might not be coordinated with the legs, things are there but they always barb into things there is some space where this child could pass but the coordination between these body parts like the eyes, the hands and some other things. For example, if the child wants to place a glass on to the table might place it in an open space but he intended to place it on the table because their body coordination is always poor. I would like still to add on that these kids always try to cover their ears. They are always irritated by noise in certain cases but again this is also on contrary for some kids who enjoy music. They enjoy noise some learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders enjoy noise you find throughout their games plays they try to put stones in the tins shake” (IDI with Teacher 3).

Teachers also accepted learners with moderate autism spectrum disorder as normal just needing special care and attention. When denied attention by a teacher, a learner would get annoyed and sometimes tend to neglect whatever taught to him/her. However, given attention the learner loved to be closer to the teacher as a way of seeking support to grasp the concepts. Also, the fact that learners understood at a slow pace, teachers accepted that, it was so because of several disabilities and thus, teachers used signals to teach them; giving them remedial time to enable them catch up with their peers in class. The analysis is supported by the following narrations:

“...they need special care and attention because if you don't talk to them and you don't pay attention to them sometimes, they get annoyed they do what and even they tend to neglect whatever you are teaching but if you pay attention to them, they also move closer to you so they need to be supported yes they need teacher support” (IDI with Teacher 5).

“Learners, some of them take long to understand the teachers since they have several disabilities for example some of them may need signals to teach them while teaching them to cater for their disabilities some learners while teaching them you need to add them some remedial time since you are teaching them with these learners who are okay so to manage them after teaching ones you can assign some time to see whether they have understood what you have taught” (IDI with Teacher 7).

The above findings indicate that teachers in inclusive primary schools in Kampala easily cope with verbal and non-verbal communication of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders through understanding accepting their condition so as to be able to help them learn effectively. Some of these learners would be assessed using tools like C.A.R.S for teachers to know those who were severe. This was because, severely affected learners with autism are the ones who are normally complicated and they have difficulty communicating. Learners are also unruly, hyperactive and they don't like noise. Therefore, teachers handled learners by talking softly to them using signals, and by also giving them remedial time to enable them catch up with the normal peers in an inclusive class.

Strategies of teachers' communication with learners

The second emergent theme pertained to strategies of teachers' communication with learners. Learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders were known to teachers as learners, majority of whom didn't want to be exposed to too much noise. Therefore, as a means of communicating to them, teachers revealed that they always talked to the learners with a soft voice in order not to irritate them. This would be done in a friendly way whereby, teachers could at times separate such learners from the general class simply to explain concepts to them with a low voice and make them understand at the same level with the normal learners. For example:

“When it comes to communicating to them (learners with moderate autism spectrum disorder), it varies first as I said. It depends on the personality as you know, the nature of the child if I get to know that this child doesn’t need noise and whenever you are talking to this child, he or she covers the ears that means noise irritates this child and what you have to do is always talk to this child softly, Jane, can you do this softly because this child doesn’t want noise” (IDI with Teacher 3).

To do with friendly teaching of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders as analyzed above, another participant narrated that:

“As teachers in fact, we have to be very friendly to them. We should not discriminate and sometimes when I am teaching, I mix them together with the normal ones but I give them special assistance for example when am teaching the ordinary ones, they take long to understand so at least I keep on asking Sarah what is this? Like that so, it has helped me to keep them learning yes so that is how another thing I always encourage them you don’t give up just keep on working hard it has enabled them to love me and to love studying” (IDI with Teacher 6).

In another scenario, teacher reported that:

“This is a moment where I get time in between the class the intonation of my voice lowers not to threaten them because sometimes, these learners might think I am barking at them yet there is someone who is somewhat is impaired in the ears. The hearing impairment is lower so sometimes I call them separately and I communicate to them because according to us is an inclusive school whereby you are not supposed to separate them but I give a remedial time to them, I discuss with them, they share with me and even, when they have challenges at home, I call them we converse and they are free to talk really” (IDI with Teacher 8).

The crux of the above narratives is that teachers in inclusive primary schools effectively communicated to learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders through using

soft voices. The intension was to avoid threatening learners because some of them would feel bad when exposed to loud voice and to them, it would feel like the teacher is barking at learners. Communication was made in a friendly environment free from interruptions by other learners in class.

Signals were also used by teachers in inclusive primary schools to communicate to learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. According to the responses given by teachers during interviews, it was indicated that some learners could not talk but they perfectly understood when a teacher talked to them. Therefore, teachers revealed that they would ensure to talk to such learners using signs to show them what would be required of them. For example, *“if want like cup I tell him (a learner) to bring a cup or a chair by talking while showing them what I want them to bring for you. You talk with action (IDI with Teacher 4).* In another dimension, teachers also revealed that learners communicated to their teachers through singing songs. They had irregular verbal communication and only a few of them could express themselves orally. Teacher 3 in an IDI revealed that:

“These children always have irregular verbal communication some of them could rarely express themselves orally, it will always be irregular whereby they will not always talk, initiate conversations, or express themselves verbally only that on rare occasions. They can come up and say food, juice, home, mummy, so they can rarely say such words, that is why am talking about irregular communication”.

The most common response on how learners with moderate autism spectrum disorder talked to teachers was use of objects and simple gestures. Majority of the participants revealed that when teaching, teachers encouraged and motivated learners to use objects and gestures to communicate what they wanted to their teachers in class. Gestures are motions of a bodily part, often a hand or the head, to convey an idea or meaning, and they revealed,

according to teachers interviewed for this study, that learners use them frequently. For example, Teacher 1 in an IDI provided that when you see this child trying to remove the trousers, you the person near him will know that he wants to go for short call or long call or to ease himself you help immediately and if he holds a plate, you understand he is requesting for something to eat and when he holds a cup, you understand he wants something to drink, you go where there is water, tea, milk or juice then maybe you let him pick what he wants. In his own words, he had this to say:

“...but for simple gestures, when you see this child trying to remove the trousers, you the person near him will know that he wants to go for short call or long call or to ease himself you help immediately and if he holds a plate, you understand he is requesting for something to eat and when he holds a cup, you understand he wants something to drink, you go where there is water, tea, milk or juice then maybe you let him pick what he wants rather than using a communication board even the Jajja in the village at least can understand this. So that is how you communicate to these children” (IDI with Teacher 1).

In another case regarding gesture use, learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders communicated to their teachers by mentioning some few words while others would just hold the teacher’s hand and take him or her to the particular thing he or she wanted. Most of the participants in the study revealed that depending on the child’s level of autism, some learners could mention what they wanted on occasional basis. For example, child could mention that food and the teacher get to know that the child is hungry, water and the teacher knows he/she is thirsty. However, some other learners could not talk and so, if they wanted something from the teacher, they would just go and hold the teacher’s hand and then point onto that. The analysis is exemplified in the following statement:

“... sometimes once in a while like I said it depends on the child’s level, some can say food, some can talk irregularly, in case a child is hungry, he/she says

food teacher water so aurally some talk to us. But one word, so when he is hungry, he says food, water – thirsty or he can say two words teacher food or me food depending on the child's level then sometimes they can as well hold your hand on to what they need they are communicating to me. Now this child is communicating to me that may be this child is in a room and wants some water, this child holds my hand and takes me where water is so that action of holding my hand is a means of communication and sometimes, they also point at their needs, they say teacher as they point at what they need, yes that is a mode of communication they use” (IDI with Teacher 1).

Similar to the above, the participant also mentioned the objects that teachers used to communicate with learners in addition to simple gestures and these included tables, chairs and boards. Also, other participants indicated that teachers used pictures that they showed to the learners for them to point at so that teachers would derive meaning of what the learner was trying to communicate to the teacher. More interestingly, one participant revealed that teachers in a certain inclusive primary school were trying to adopt or copy a certain system from the United States of America called Pictorial Education Communication System (PECS). In this system, a teacher takes a photograph or a picture of the real object and then makes cards out of it, put them on a communication board in form of a chart and then pins pictures on the chart. Therefore, a learner just needs to point on the picture that represents the action he/she wants to take and the teacher or any other person nearby will know what the learner wants. For example, when a learner wants to go to the toilet, he/she will come and hold the teacher's hand and points it to the picture of a toilet. In that case, the teacher will know that the learner wants to ease him/herself. The analysis of the finding is supported by the following verbatim quote:

“We (teachers) use simple gestures, real objects like a table, a chair you speak to them looking at each other's face to face. If you don't want him to do something, you tell him facing each other they hear and understand because

their hearing is okay, they are not deaf, it is only the speech which is affected. You talk to them face to face; you show them real objects. We also have a system, we are copying it from America, it's called PECS that is Pictorial Education Communication System where you take a photograph or a picture of the real object then you make cards out of it and you put them on a communication board. Do you know a communication board? No... communication board you just develop something like a chart or something like a soft board then you pin these pictures on it in case you take a picture of a toilet, you go to the kitchen you take a picture of a glass, a cup and everything you have at home so you bring and pin on that communication board in case this child wants to go to the toilet because he cannot talk, he will come and holds you hand and points to the picture of the toilet and you will understand that he wants to ease himself” (IDI with Teacher 1).

Communication aids accompanied by adequate time of teaching learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders were also techniques applied by teachers in their communications with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. Two study participants showed in an interview that teachers have to take time when communicating to learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in an inclusive class. This is done through using chalkboards where words are written and then encourage learners to sound them slowly using signals. This is because teachers can take long to understand learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders yet, they need someone who is a friend to teach them, someone they will not fear and for that case, time is needed to first develop that rapport before normal communication for content delivery can take place. This analysis is evident in the following two statements as given by a certain teacher in an inclusive class:

“As teachers that is not easy but after some time for example you are teaching something on the chalkboard maybe you tell them to sound the words since they are together again you will see them changing what meaning they have not understood or you draw nearer to them you reading with them slowly

maybe using signals slowly then they will end up understanding but it is not easy” (IDI with Teacher 7).

“When talking to them, you need to design for them along time so that you understand them if you are very fast you will not understand them so you need time to understand them then it is not very easy to talk to them if you are not their friend, they fear strangers so you need to be used to them and be near to them any time there you can talk to them” (IDI with Teacher 7).

The other and last strategy used by teachers to communicate to learners was through engaging them with other learners in activities. One participant showed that it was common and easy for a teacher to communicate to a learner with moderate autism spectrum disorder through engaging him/her with the rest of the learners in activities. For instance, the teacher revealed that when she wanted a learner to do an activity, she would make sure that the learner was not given a task alone. She would involve the learner in performing an activity together with normal peers and the moment the learner would see that others are doing it, he/she would also join willingly. In her own world, the teacher had this to say:

“... I make sure I don't call him or her alone but now I get other peers or friends so the moment he or she sees others doing that thing she will automatically come and join and say hooo teacher was trying to tell me this okay madam” (IDI with Teacher 4).

Teachers’ conversation problems with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders

The third theme that emerged from the responses of the participants was teachers’ conversation problem with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. The most commonly identified problem was the inconsistency in learners’ conversations. According to a certain teacher during interviews, learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders were never consistent in the way they conversed. Conversing calls for consistency of the discussion being made so as to make meaning however, teachers complained that when conversing with

learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders, sometimes they would mention words during the conversation and sometimes use gestures and actions instead of words. For instance, a teacher could ask the learner, have you seen that car or dog, the learner's response then would be, yes or no under normal circumstances however, he/she would instead laugh without exchanging any word. Thus, deriving meaning from the conversation became hard because of the inconsistency in it. A participant explained how it had been hard for him to make the conversation with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in class:

"We teachers are conversing as we are saying, first of all it is hard to converse with them may be to just a simple chat because conversing calls for consistency of the discussion, am talking you are responding but for them a simple chat we mostly use gestures and actions for example if like now am seated with this child I can say have you seen that car, have you seen that dog this child might not respond but will laugh as a way of because the discussion will not follow because conversing means am telling you, you are responding but for them like now you are talking to someone he laughs may be I think you are impressed by what I have said but the consistency in the discussion will not be there, I will say this this and that then just laughs or looks at me so that exchange of words is not always there. It is one-way discussion, may be for them, they respond with actions, if it is a play or a task" (IDI with Teacher 3).

Another problem identified that could fail teachers from having a consistent conversation with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders was their failure to articulate words. One participant revealed that the way these learners pronounced their words was a bit difficult for somebody to understand. For example, it would take long for the learner to pronounce the words and for this case, the teacher would end up failing to understand what he/she could be saying. This therefore made conversations inconsistent and difficult to understand. In addition, the learners were shy when conversing and this made it

difficult for them to make the conversation coordinating to enable the teacher derive meaning. The analysis is evident in the following verbatim quotes:

“Another thing sometimes they fail to articulate their words the way they pronounce their words is a bit difficult they take a lot of time to pronounce the words so you end up failing to understand what he or she wants it takes a lot of time to understand what they want” (IDI with Teacher 5).

“They are trying to talk to you, which problems do you face as a teacher so these learners are somewhat, they are shy they shy out sometimes you ask a question they keep quiet” (IDI with Teacher 8).

Continuous unintentional insults to the learners also presented a challenge to the consistence in the conversations made by teachers with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. The study indicated that in most cases, a teacher would ask the learner something and he/she fails to answer thereby leaving the teacher in suspense and thus insulted. Also, the findings revealed that these learners normally didn't give immediate response orally when asked to respond about something. In addition, learners would also be insulted in a way that teachers sometimes instructed the learners to do certain things thinking that they would enjoy, yet in actual sense, this was just taken as an insult by moderate autism spectrum learners due to their condition. This happened because certain learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders would easily be irritated. In his own statement, Teacher 3 had this to say:

“I have asked Jane; Jane do you need food? Jane has not answered and am left in suspense does she need food or she doesn't need, so some times they don't give an immediate response orally then another problem sometimes you might insult them unintentionally because you as I instructed as I prompted the child I thought the child was enjoying, is comfortable with what I go on with what am telling this child to do yet the child is irritated, I just see a negative reaction the child bursts into tears, cries the child does something

contrary because the child has not told me he or she doesn't want, so failure to get the aural response we get negative response/ reaction from them” (IDI with Teacher 3).

Failure to complete the syllabus was another problem identified to have associated with communication of teachers with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. The study findings revealed that because these learners take long to grasp the concepts, teachers needed to make longer explanations during a lesson. Therefore, a lot of time would be taken explaining the same thing by the teacher in class and thus, the time scheduled for the syllabus could end up elapsing without completing it. Two teachers in this case had these to say:

“As a teacher you know these learners you may tell him or her something and again, he does another thing different so you find that it is a bit tiresome because they need longer explanation you may do the same thing every day or a month therefore in case you resort to that teaching you may end up failing to complete the syllabus in time” (IDI with Teacher 6).

“...and now, the problem is that they take long to understand what you are trying to tell them so you have to give them time to think. They take long to understand yes so meaning teachers must be to be patient” (IDI with Teacher 4).

Teachers' perception of challenges relating to communication with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders.

The fourth theme derived from the responses of the participants was the “problems of teachers' communication with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders”. Communication of teachers with learners was perceived to be time consuming. Over five participants in the study agreed that they took a lot of time communicating to learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders and this was because learners would mention few words at a go and ye, teachers had to keep listening. In addition, interpreting what has been said by the learner was another thing that would take time for the teacher in his or her activity. This

problem manifested as a result of using gestures to communicate among certain learners yet, this proved to be tiresome especially for teachers who were inexperienced in reading gestures, to know what the learn could be trying to tell them. They ended up wrongly interpreting some gestures thereby irritating learners. Two participants reported in line with the findings that:

“...so, when they are communicating to you it takes a lot of time now a child comes to me has something to tell me I listen to the child but it takes five minutes before this child tells me then I wait tell me tell me I try to encourage this child to tell me it takes time so it is time consuming as I try to listen to this child one” (IDI with Teacher 3).

“...misinterpretation of their (learners) communication. I am listening may be this child uses gestures I interpret it wrongly that is not what this child wanted. This child sometimes may be bringing a cup or brings a glass, I may think this child needs water not juice as I bring water, he pours water because he wanted juice and he holds my hand up to where juice as he will not say juice but brings a glass to put it in. Now, how will I know what he wants, will I put in water or juice? Sometimes we get a problem of misinterpretation of their communication. So, it is so hectic, it is tiresome to communicate to them” (IDI with Teacher 3).

Another problem that was faced by the teachers when communicating with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders was that they rarely used words to describe the situation and when they used words, it meant talking on the top of their voices. Interview responses revealed that certain learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders responded to any communication by use of eye contact. These learners would just look at the teacher directly in the eyes and depending on the look of the learner, the teacher could be able to interpret something being communicated. Another teacher revealed that certain learners used words to communicate however, the problem could be that they talked on the top of their

voices and this gave teachers hard time to internalize and understand the meaning. Therefore, teachers' failure to read signs and too much noise made by those learners who talked on the top of their voices, were among the problems identified. In their own statements, two teachers had these to say:

“What I have observed is their (learners) eye contact. They look at you and you say eeh what is the problem so they look at you without communication they just look at you for you when you look at them you understand there is something wrong John what is it Master you know there is this and that” (IDI with Teacher 5).

“...yes, I have those who don't hear very well and they speak on top of their voices so their intonation is high” (IDI with Teacher 8).

I take long to understand them is that enough no you may add more some use signals/ gestures which are a bit technical to me so I fail to understand, it is very hard to understand what they want (IDI with Teacher 7).

Communication improvement strategies

This sub-theme addresses the strategies that teachers used to improve on their communication with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. Most of the participants reported giving children oral exercises in form of training to enable them talk normally. The findings showed that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders had irregular speech and so, they needed to be trained for their sound production to be stimulated through conditioning them to verbal communication. Other participants proposed training learners to use cards or pictures indicating different images from which they could pick depending on their individual needs at a time. According to the study participants though, pictures or cards would help learners to effectively communicate to their teachers about anything. For example, if the learner wanted something and could not say it verbally, he or

she would just pick a card and use it to communicate to the teacher. In their own responses, participants reported that:

“We also need to stimulate their speech, so when we have these children because we said they have irregular speech we need to stimulate their sound production as you are with these children try to encourage them to talk whenever they say a word praise them reward them accordingly such that you are boosting them in their speech don’t let them keep quiet in case they do something of their interest, tell them to say it you want juice say juice I give you so you can condition them in a way of training them and improving their speech so that whenever they want to communicate to you verbally. So, you condition them with speech” (IDI with Teacher 1).

“...like you are in a class you can have these cards or pictures somewhere in the basket or on the table in case you need something you come and pick from here. These kids once they are trained, they will come and pick a card of their interest. So that one comes after training, yes, it’s not automatic it comes after training. So, as you get them you can train them to use these cards in case you want something you can’t tell me come and pick a card and show me so out of training, they can acquire the skill” (IDI with Teacher 3).

“...that one can be improved by giving them enough oral exercises or conversations and you include them in the process of acting during the acting they can improve on their speech and speech pace/ speed okay” (IDI with Teacher 5).

Another strategy laid by teachers in inclusive primary school to improve on their communication with learners was the use of teaching aids in addition to provision of adequate time to learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. One participant reported that as a teacher, she needed learning aids such as Braille machines, hearing aids and rolling ball and many more. Communication boards were also proposed by another participant and these would be associated with enough time to use them. Training of teachers to use these learning aids was equally important because if used effectively, there would be flow of

communication and effectively applying them by teachers handling learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders:

“We need more learning aids we can use while teaching those children especially those and of course, the government can also adjust the extra time because they take long to understand us. The timetable is saying you are there for forty minutes yet some of them in that class if they are together, you are there alone in that class with all of them it takes longer time to understand they may end up not understanding” (IDI with Teacher 7).

“The third thing is facilitation that is the tools and equipment used like for learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders there are machines meant for them so we need that equipment at a large scale which should be supplied to all of these schools. Which equipment are those? We need the Braille, Braille machines, hearing aids, the trampoline, rolling ball, swimming pools, they need so many things. I think they need communication boards but I think it’s needed after sensitization because people need to know how to use it and we need good communication between home and school and not a prison at the other side” (IDI with Teacher 1).

Learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders also needed a friendly environment in order to improve on their communication with teachers. The environment suggested for learners by teachers is that which would cater for all learners regardless of their moderate autism spectrum disorder condition. In an inclusive class, teachers revealed that they ensured learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders were positioned in front of the class so that they could face them to take every detail of pronouncing words to understand them and where need be, guide them to adjust. One participant on this reported that:

“...in fact, as a school we should have a school friendly environment which caters for all of them then in classroom situation. These learners when I am communicating to pupils, some have hearing impairments so I try to bring them nearer so that they can hear me very well yes and I try to tell them to

face me to look at me very well when they see me pronouncing the words at least can understand you well what you are saying yes” (IDI with Teacher 2).

In another scenario, a certain teacher suggested that learners would be helped to improve on their communication through arranging for them special time for extra learning. This would be intended to enable learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders catch up with their normal counterpart since for them, they learn slowly and take long to grasp concepts. As a result, it was thought that separating them on occasion would allow students with moderate autism spectrum disorders to freely interact through gestures or signals because more time would have been available for the learning task. In the following statements is what the participant told the researcher:

“I find that, if possible, for me as a teacher to talk to the education system of Uganda, I would advise it to get someone somewhere maybe, we spare room for those people such that we can teach them separately that is according to me” (IDI with Teacher 8).

The dynamics of improving communication for learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders also involved assessment. Improving communication needs an understanding of the level of autism of a particular learner before arrangements can be made to help them. Therefore, teachers suggested assessing learners so that those who are moderate could be handled basing on their condition of autism in the same way as those with severe autism. This is because the moderate learners are easy to manage and they are less rude, shy and can only mention few words as one of the participants explained:

“...first to understand the nature of these children that is why when for us we do an assessment even if it is not autism any assessment conducted, we try when we are sharing the report, we don’t give the report to only the parents who brought the child, we request them to come with their caretakers at home. This is intended to inform them (caretakers) that this child is different. So,

what we need to know is the nature of the child not only to the parent but also to the people around him, such that they appreciate the nature” (IDI with Teacher 1).

Teachers’ facilitation of social interaction of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools

This section reveals the opinions of teachers from different inclusive primary schools in Kampala District.

Teachers shared both positive and negative experiences that were categorized into the following themes: Playing habits of students with moderate autism spectrum disorders with peers, observable characters of students with moderate autism spectrum disorders in a group, and support for students with moderate autism spectrum disorders in their social interactions.

Playing habits of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders with peers

This sub-theme addresses the ways in which learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders played with their peers. The responses from the field revealed that some of the learners didn’t want to play with peers. Most of them would isolate themselves from others during play and those who sometimes played with peers, they were just pushed by teachers to freely interact. The most common game in which learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders were encouraged by teachers to play with peers is football. This way, teachers reported that they would encourage learners to join others on the pitch to play football together and at the same time and also, they encouraged the normal peers to accept sharing with the learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders without nicknaming them. In defense of the analysis, two teachers reported that:

“...so, these children as I said it depends on the level. Some of them don’t play with peers, they rarely play with peers and most of them isolate themselves as

they are playing that is one. Some play for some time when encouraged as we teachers, we encourage them to play with peers. Once you train them (learners) to play with peers at a certain level, for example, once you see this child enjoys football then try to bring him to peers, they play with them at a certain level for some time. So, we can encourage them once they are well encouraged, they can play with them for some time but not to the end” (IDI with Teacher 3).

Another teacher reported that:

“These pupils sometimes isolate themselves but for us teachers, we keep on encouraging them because sometimes there are some games where they are not able to participate in for example, playing football. Someone may not be able to do it very well and therefore, they end up in isolations but as teachers, here, we encourage them to interact with others and we also encourage the normal ones to share with them as they are playing like that. So, we discourage nick naming like that...” (IDI with Teacher 6).

Teachers that participated in the interviews regarded the students as unkind, prejudiced, and resistant to the idea of sharing with their peers. The main takeaway from the interview responses is that instructors may motivate students to conduct responsibly in a variety of social interactions with peers. They require additional assistance because verbal and nonverbal communication are typically areas in which they are disadvantaged. The development of interpersonal interactions is frequently delayed in learners on the moderate autism spectrum as a result of these deficits. Students with mild autism spectrum disorders are more pleased to engage in self-stimulatory activities than they are to interact socially and with their peers. Two participants indicated evidence for the above analysis that:

“Sometimes they (learners) talk to them freely with some of them but still others don’t simply because some are rude to them. However, for us teachers, we encourage them to share with them in class. We always encourage the normal ones to share with them, help them to understand well and therefore,

they always talk to them even if some are greedy and others are hard to deal with” (IDI with Teacher 5).

“... they are discriminated sometimes. For example, there are games where they separate themselves you may see others don’t want them in their groups so they end up being discriminated (IDI with Teacher 5).

“They are not people who can share easily it is after some time” (IDI with Teacher 4).

During play, learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders often used gestures when chatting with other peers. This behavior usually interfered with their inclusion into games such as swinging because it set them apart from the normal peers in the whole interaction setting. This is due to the fact that other peers may not know how to interpret signs and gestures and thus, they find it difficult to communicate and eventually, these learners are discriminated by their peers. The following statements support the finding:

“They also use gestures or actions when they are swinging. He wants also to swing he can easily pull the other aside and he sits there or they can say to me so sometimes they say a few words and sometimes, they use actions” (IDI with Teacher 3).

“...some of them because of that problem, they have speech and for others, you can find some of them using gestures so, in our school, we teach them sign language to communicate at least with others” (IDI with Teacher 4).

Grouping of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders with their normal peers was also used as a strategy by teachers to enable them interact and play together. A certain teacher revealed that he used to group all learners in class inclusively and give them one activity to perform together. Therefore, learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders would end up relating effectively with peers. However, the teacher further showed that these learners were short-tempered which meant that they needed guidance on how to cum

themselves down. In this sense, a certain teacher reported that he assisted learners to interact with peers by turning them into group leaders and this forced them to communicate easily with each other. The participant on this reported that:

“Learners need to be assisted by the teacher. They need grouping them, you can group them and you give them a task or an activity then during that time, you can see their reactions maybe their interaction/ relationship with others and their true colours/ characters. So, sometimes they are short tempered during the interaction they get annoyed very quickly....another assistance is by choosing them as group leaders because when given responsibilities, they will not behave as they are used to then, in that process, they can find the right thing to do as they try to communicate to friends. They have to talk all the time to teachers and peers thus they will improve their communication” (IDI with Teacher 5).

Observable characters of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in a group

This theme captures the sentiment that many participants expressed as they described the behavioural characters of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in joined groups. The participants revealed that learners normally interacted with the rest of the group members only when they felt loved and accepted in a group. For example, when accommodated in a game such as football, teachers showed that these learners would love the group members back. However, the challenge would be that at times, group members discriminated against learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders and this was exhibited in actions against them such as kicking, slapping and insulting them. The reasons given by the participants for this immoral behaviour by group members was their personality. Group members complained that these learners could prove to be rude on others and some had running saliva. These made group members to isolate learners with moderate autism

spectrum disorders not learn and eventually they also lost interest in identifying with members in a group. The findings are exemplified in the following verbatim quotes:

“If they (normal peers) love this boy (learner with moderate autism spectrum disorders) who has joined them. This boy will also fit in. For example, when they are at school, they initiate and accommodate each other once he knows that he will be accommodated. They will give him the ball to throw also they will give him this to do, then this boy will join and be accommodated but once this boy gets to know that I will be negatively received even if I go they will push me, they will insult me, they will slap me, this child will not go there but once this group is impressive and can as well join some games in case they are playing football, he wants also to play can do it the opposite way that is if they are kicking for him he might start throwing up can join most of the time once this child is comfortable with the group” (IDI with Teacher 3).

“...the first answer I can give is that maybe the peers tend to isolate themselves from him or her why? Because of their personalities. Sometimes, they tend to be rough and hard on others because of their nature maybe with saliva running out of the mouth they are unfit in the group” (IDI with Teacher 5).

Another non-linear participant shared her perspective on behavioural characters of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in a group. She reported that when in a group, learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders would feel much excited and eventually collapse. This happened for example during play and the group to which the learner belongs, started winning, where the learner would be expected to be happy, he or she instead ended up collapsing. However, the participant addressed this by reporting that after sometime, these learners would become familiar with the situation and eventually cease collapsing in situations of excitements. In her own statement, the participant had this to say:

“If there is more excitement to them (learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders), they get collapsed. If there is too much excitement to them, you can

see them joining the group but instead of being happy and playing with them, they collapse sometimes but after sometime, they join they get used” (IDI with Teacher 4).

Also, learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders felt emotional when challenged in a group. For example, during play in a certain game, learners would in most cases feel happy when they saw fellow group members winning but in case of losing the game, these learners would end up feeling emotions. The emotions of the learners were mainly expressed through crying and sometimes initiating fights with the winners. One teacher on this explained:

“In most cases, they feel happy once they see the side, they are supporting is winning but if on the other side, they are failing, the teams they are supporting are not winning or they are losing, they try to cry. They try to bring in their emotions where in most cases they want to fight questioning members of the other group as to why they have won their group” (IDI with Teacher 8).

Challenges relating to interaction with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders

Other data that transpired as a result of questions were problems of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders when interacting with peers and or, play with other learners at school. Teachers viewed learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders as violent and destructive but this was because learners could have been irritated by the normal peers during play or conversation. For example, these learners would be expected to behave contrary to the team’s norms however, when such things happened, the group members would normally beat them, push them, or use abusive language to him/her. These therefore forced moderate autism spectrum learners to turn violent and also fight back in form of defense. They could also decide to damage things around them and this made the learners look like violent and destructive. A certain participant on this narrated that:

“They cause chaos with other learners and they fight others even the normal ones they tend to abuse. They are abused by the peers; they are considered not to be knowing anything by the peers they are considered as nothing doers and they lack practice. They don’t participate maybe in class; they are slow learners which is not the case but others are just shy and when they are given an activity to do, they do it very well (IDI with Teacher 5).

The other commonly mentioned problem was that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders did not sense that normal peers or other people would also get hurt. They also had trouble comprehending the beliefs, desires, intents, knowledge, and perceptions of other learners as well as their own. They raised issues with comprehending the link between thoughts and deeds. For instance, the participants revealed that learners with autism could hurt others without understand that they could equally get hurt despite the fact that the person would be crying. For example, two participants reported that:

“Those (learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders) once they talk or speak, they think what they have talked is very true and they don’t want any opposition. Once they are opposed, they become emotional, they want freedom from what freedom once they are communicating, they want to take over the whole conversation they don’t want to keep quiet, they don’t want other people to intervene (IDI with Teacher 8).

“...yes, they are not always considerate. They don’t look at the outcomes they have egocentrism pushing you from the second floor is not their problem yes, he pushes you because he wants to pass (IDI with Teacher 3).

The other problem that emerged from the interviews was that learners were misunderstood by their peers. This is so because the language they used or the way in which some learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders pronounced words was normally difficult for other learners to understand. They would be very slow when talking and they sometimes skipped some words. Other learners used gestures and signs that would prove

difficult to understand for normal peers. Now, because learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders are short tempered in their nature, they would end up quarrelling with peers and at times fight with them. The analysis was made basing on participants' views that:

“There are misunderstandings in the way they see things who the other group misunderstandings because they misunderstand the other group as I told you of the poor pronunciation and what have you. The pronunciation may confuse the other people” (IDI with Teacher 5).

‘...because they (normal peers) are speedy and these ones (learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders) are slow. So, that one is a problem and for them they are short tempered so that one causes the problem of quarrelling. You find them quarrelling and fighting’ (IDI with Teacher 4).

Another problem mentioned among most of the participants was that learners moderate autism spectrum disorders had limited interactions with peers in groups. This is because learners with milder forms of autism spectrum disorders would frequently isolate themselves, refuse to share, and this also limited their social interactions. However, the participant added that the learners' interactions could be encouraged through appealing to the normal peers to involve these learners in their plays when they see them alone:

“...yes, they always isolate themselves, so the interaction is limited...yes very limited. But sometimes when it is well encouraged for example, if you as well encourage the peers that please whenever you see him alone occupy him play with him take the ball to him and let him play with you, he will be initiated in that game for some time” (IDI with Teacher 3).

On the issue of sharing, a certain participant explained that:

“Some of those who are not learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders some of them they don't want to share they think that if they share with them, they will take their things now some of them they are just fearing them” (IDI with Teacher 4).

Lastly, it was also mentioned by a certain teacher that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders had a possibility of spoiling other learners with their bad behaviours. For example, the teacher revealed that some of the learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders normally threw tantrums and this could easily be copied by other learners in an inclusive class. This in itself would be a problem to the learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders but also, be imitated by the rest of the learners. In his own response, the teacher had this to say:

“Sometimes, these other learners imitate their (learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders) behaviours because we say learning is by imitation. So sometimes, they (normal learners) tend to imitate their behaviour for example, these children throw tantrums and also, these end up copying that so sometimes these other kids they imitate their behaviour which is a problem. They are not supposed to behave like that because the learners moderate autism spectrum disorders may damage the other learners in the process of throwing tantrums” (IDI with Teacher 3).

Support to learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in their social interactions

This sub-theme addresses the supporting mechanisms of teachers to help learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders who experience problems interacting with peers during play, joining groups and during conversations in an inclusive setting.

The major emphasis of participants on the interactions of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in groups was put on guiding and counseling of the normal peers/learners to accept and bear with the unfriendly characters among pupils who had mild autistic spectrum illnesses. Teachers reported that their facilitation of the interactions was mainly on guiding and showing the normal group members that these learners could also be normal like them only that they had speech and ABCD problems but they could be like them. This

guidance and counseling helped to make the normal learners accept the fact that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders are also human being and thus, they would slowly stop discriminating against them but rather give them time to express themselves in the way they would like it to be. Also, even if not discriminated, teachers also sensitized normal learners that they should not leave learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders to be alone in isolation but rather, bring them on board. Two participants confirmed this analysis that:

“As a teacher, I just guide them and counsel the other ordinary group tell them about the learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders group that those are normal people like you only that they have speech problem and ABCD problem. They understand like you as you may have another problem so, it is equally the same because you may be having a problem which we have not discovered yet so we should not discriminate and they are part of us and is a normal person like you it was just God’s plan /making, you can also fall sick and experience the same” (IDI with Teacher 5).

“...you also need to sensitize the peers not always to leave him alone. Encourage them to bring him on board” (IDI with Teacher 3).

In another way, a certain teacher during interviews confessed that as teachers, they needed to be well-trained in handling children with special needs more so, learners moderate autism spectrum disorders in an inclusive setting. This training meant to provide skills to teachers on how to encourage moderate autism spectrum disorders make friends without causing trouble to them, freely join groups and be able to interact like the normal peers. In her own statement, the participant was quoted verbatim:

“We as teachers we automatically have to be well trained teachers about each and every impairment to get used with our children then after, teachers know each and every thing. We also sit with our children; we talk to them about their friends so that they understand them” (IDI with Teacher 4).

One teacher showed that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders could be trained by conditioning. This would involve a process of training or accustoming the learner to change his/her behaviour by punishing them each time the action of misbehaviour was performed until there would be behaviour modification. Therefore, the teacher revealed that a misbehaving of the learner with moderate autism spectrum disorder needed a moderate punishment for example, in case of beating a friend, the moderate autism spectrum learner can miss being served juice and be told that he or she has not been served juice because of beating a friend. Then, when he or she reacts by may be crying, the learner cannot be given juice to take. This is however intended to make the child feel pain so that he or she slowly starts adjusting to non-violent behaviours against fellow children. The analysis of the findings is exemplified by the following verbatim quote:

“...or in addition to that, you can condition them (learners moderate autism spectrum disorders). You train by conditioning Jane. My learner with moderate autism spectrum disorders boy is Tom, Tom you have beaten Jane am not going to give you juice, you are not taking juice because you have beaten Jane now you serve juice to Jane and you leave Tom unserved because he has beaten Jane. But later, in case it works, he feels so much pain, he is not given juice then he cries starts screaming you can comfort him, you say now okay will you beat her again? He says no now let me give you juice then you give him juice but don't leave him unserved forever later give him but after showing him that what he has done is bad” (IDI with Teacher 4).

In another unique way, a certain participant revealed that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders could be supported alone by teachers as a special group within the class. Teaching of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders to interact freely is difficult for teachers and for that case, there was suggestion that although in an inclusive class, learners needed to be separated from the normal ones and put aside for extra training

one-on-one with their teacher. The intension of the teacher in her suggestion was to make the moderate autism spectrum learners catch up in terms of interacting with others:

“Teachers in the process of helping themselves to cope sometimes they withdraw them from the classes, they put them in corners so that they practice with them one on one interaction and also when you look at them their understanding is a little low, they don’t attend” (IDI with Teacher 2).

Another interesting approach to stopping learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders from exhibiting violence onto others was given by a certain teacher as sun rise approach. In this approach, the teacher revealed that direct punishment to learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders who are violent may not work well. In fact, it makes them even become more violent by thinking that violent acts such as beating friends is good and normal. Therefore, what the teacher suggested in his sun rise approach was that the learner has to be shown that what she has done is bad. This could be done in a way that the teacher has to bring the crying or bleeding victim near the learner with moderate autism spectrum disorders who has harmed him is shown that the harmed is crying. According to the participant, this would teach the learner moderate autism spectrum disorders that what he or she has done was bad and thus, he or she would slowly stop misbehaving by beating others. The teacher narrated this that:

“...now as we said that these children are not considerate, let us say he has pushed a friend, he has stoned a friend what should be done is not punishing this boy because whenever you punish a learner with moderate autism spectrum disorders, this child gets to know that beating is good and he will also start beating the peers. This is experienced by learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders who always beat friends. Therefore, just get to know that they are always beaten at home so in case you have noticed that my child with moderate autism spectrum disorder has beaten a child, bring in the experience, let this moderate autism spectrum child feel the experience get this

child maybe the beaten one is crying screaming Tom has beaten me, bring Tom near this one, you say Jane have you seen Tom is crying because you have beaten him and he is bleeding. You the teacher imitate that you are also crying once and Jane sees both of you crying, she will feel guilty and gradually she will stop beating friends (sun rise approach)” (IDI with Teacher 3).

Teachers’ coping with the unusual behaviours of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools

Participants reported on the general behaviors of students with moderate autism spectrum disorders, the behaviors of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders toward teachers' requests, the behavioral problems of students with moderate autism spectrum disorders, and the strategies used by teachers to modify the behaviors of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in interviews with teachers from inclusive primary schools in Kampala.

Behaviours of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders

This sub-theme highlights the behaviors that pupils with moderate autism spectrum disorders exhibit in class when they are irritated as well as those that are unusual for young children.

The three behaviors that were mentioned in all interviews for students with moderate autism spectrum disorders are aggression, hyperactivity, and violent behavior. The violent behaviour of learners according to teachers in an inclusive class was manifested much in their endless fighting nature. This was due to their aggressiveness and this personality forced majority of them to resist danger. The aggressiveness of learners was said to be as a result of their unbalanced diet. It was reported that these learners consume a lot of fats and sugars that make them gain more energy and because they are already in a terrifying situation, fighting

becomes a norm to them. When annoyed, learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders were also said to shout on top of their voices which is accompanied by fight whoever could be around them. Two participants narrated that:

“...then some other behaviour like unnecessary fighting because some of these children depending on the level, they might be violent we try to calm this boy down slowly this like now we first manage the diet. Some of these children are so much hyperactive and so much aggressive because of the diet. They are given excessive fats excessive sugars and other things so they become so much aggressive and now we talk to the parent to manage the diet so as they manage the diet you can be able to manage the child” (IDI with Teacher 3).

Also, another teacher explained that while some learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders can be hyperactive, violent and aggressive, others prove to be shy. This is common among learners with moderate autism level and when annoyed, these learners just cry and they don't really indulge in fighting with peers. The teacher in his response explained:

“When they are annoyed, they over shout to let the public know that there is something wrong going on. Fighting is not their problem. Without judgement, they don't need to consult anybody, they slap friends /peers and there and then those who are shy they just cry and then you come to ask what has happened then he or she will tell you so and so has beaten me or abused me” (IDI with Teacher 5).

The other behaviour only common to learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders is hyperactivity. These learners were reported to be restless which meant that they were ever up and down in class. As part of their nature, a certain teacher reported that learners make unnecessary movements in class and everywhere and they hate being stopped from moving. In his own response, the teacher had this to say:

“They do the opposite so you may tell them that I don’t want unnecessary movements in my class but for them, they end up moving any how then another thing these learners sometimes they hate if you always go to her to tell her that do this do this, they start hating you” (IDI with Teacher 6).

Teachers revealed that learner with moderate autism spectrum disorders behave authoritatively when interacting with others. It is just their nature that they are rough both in their way of interaction and communication. They use commanding language and they easily forget what they have just said that is to say in not more than one or two minutes ago. Their short attention span makes them diverted so easily from what they are told to do:

“Most of those learners are rough in the way they interact with others. They are also rough in the way they communicate with others. They are authoritative so, they just command for what they want. Two, even sometimes when playing, they seek for attention they have a short attention span they can easily be diverted from the current activity to something else” (IDI with Teacher 5).

In addition, it is common according to teachers that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders behave emotionally. To confirm this, teachers indicated that it was common for the learners to cry in case they were annoyed and also, majority of them would abandon class and run home. It is within them that they always have to seek comfort from their parents and at times, after being comforted, some of them would choose to come back to school:

“They even want just to go home they just leave and sometimes they abandon school no they go and come back” (IDI with Teacher 6).

“Once annoyed, sometimes they run away from school before even reporting to teachers some fight the friends who have annoyed them some of them just cry” (IDI with Teacher 8).

“When they are annoyed, they cry uuu, they cry for almost one and half hours crying. So as a teacher, you just call him or her and say sorry like a mother, you talk to him and consul and even some of them feel like being with their parents” (IDI with Teacher 4).

Another behaviour common among learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders was that they loved to be alone. These learners always want to isolate themselves from friends and they hate involving in any activities with the rest. The study also indicated that learners didn't want to share and if haunted, they would easily initiate violence inform of fighting and for this reason, it would become difficult for the normal peers to identify with them. Thus, they ended up maintaining self-isolation in class and around school. Participants on this were quoted verbatim:

“They are loners, there is sometimes they isolate themselves from the group and they over report. They don't want to do any activity in class and move out of the class. Others start disturbing those ones in class and loss patience while others take long to understand the concepts” (IDI with Teacher 5).

“They feel isolated and they isolate themselves from friend. They don't want to share, they are rigid and not ready to change, they only ask questions to their friends only and teachers who are their friends only” (IDI with Teacher 8).

Lastly, a certain teacher showed that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders had a tendency of copying whatever they see. According to him, parents over protect these children and in so doing, they keep the children near to themselves. In the process, because parents think that these children don't understand anything, they would rather do whatever they want in front of them not knowing that children understand and try to copy everything. For example, the teacher explained that he had seen a learner demonstrating to others how mummy slept with daddy. Therefore, parents were urged to always mind what they do when they are with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders at home. Parents were advised not to keep naked when the children are around because, these children

perfectly understand and can carelessly demonstrate what they have seen to other people in open. In his own statement, the teacher was quoted verbatim:

“These unusual behaviours start from home. They (learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders) have some practices that they copy from home. You know, as these children have special needs, they are over protected by their parents and some of these parents think that these children don’t understand to the extent that they stay with them, and they sleep with them in their bed rooms. Now you get a learner with moderate autism spectrum disorders maybe five years old doing funny things as these parents are staying with this boy at home when he comes to school, he demonstrates to peers how he saw mummy sleeping with daddy but even ordinary learners do it. With these special needs children, they are sexually active in addition, parents show them everything because they think they don’t understand now he comes and he wants to play sex in a classroom or anywhere else” (IDI with Teacher 3).

The behaviours of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders towards teachers’ requests

This theme captures the sentiment that many participants expressed as they described the behaviours of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders when requested to do somethings by their teachers. The common behaviours identified from interviews include pretending as if they haven’t heard, their inquisitive nature, immediate and positive response dependent on friendship status of that person requesting.

The study results showed that most students with moderate autism spectrum disorders would act as if they hadn't heard when asked by teachers. It is not that they will completely refuse to do as requested, they first pretend not to do so because they don’t want to be bothered. For example, a certain participant showed that on many occasions, learners could be called by a teacher and they refuse to respond but later, the child would choose to positively react to the request:

“Sometimes they pretend as if they haven’t heard. They tend to pretend and after sometime, you may find them following the instructions but when initially, they began by pretending” (IDI with Teacher 3).

“...other learners when maybe they are requested to do something or an activity, some don’t respond. They pretend as if they have not heard what is being requested from them” (IDI with Teacher 6).

Another closely related behaviour to the above was that these learners could prove to be so inquisitive. For example, when requested to do an activity, a learner would first inquire as to why he/she is being sent by the teacher to do so. It is in their understanding that they know everything. On top of wanting to know everything, some other learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders responded through rushing without understanding what has been told to them. It would be after failing to recall what they have been told, that they came back to beg their pardon.

“...others are very inquisitive. the learners are trying to inquire why am I doing this, they tend to know everything and for others, when you tell them to do something, they respond very fast even if they haven’t understood what they are going to do and after, they come back and ask you teacher what did you tell me to do? But when they are responding, they show you that they have understood, they just rush very fast then after sometime, they come and tell you master/ teacher I have forgotten” (IDI with Teacher 5).

Half of the participants revealed that on request from the teachers, some learners only reacted with an immediate and positive response when in a happy mood and have been requested by those they would consider to be their friends. When learners are not in their moods, they will just look at the teacher and even if they are in good mood but the person requesting is considered an enemy, the child will refuse to respond. The analysis is exemplified in the following two narratives:

“...maybe you are requesting from him something, he has or to help a friend or you, what happens for me as Primrose even if I ask them to do what, immediately, they will go. For other teachers, the learners will just look at them and disappear. This is so because they are not familiar with them and they feel they cannot stay together with them” (IDI with Teacher 4).

“In most cases, they feel once they are not in good moods, they don’t want to perform such a duty. There are those ones once they are in good moods, they find them performing those duties freely and they say quickly come on this side they want to become leaders of the others” (IDI with Teacher 8).

The behavioural problems of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders

This sub-theme exposes the behavioural problems that emerged for teachers and normal peers when learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders got annoyed, behaved in ways rare to others and those problems that emerged when due to requests made by teachers to learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders.

The common problem across all interviews was that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders were destructive in nature. When angry, these learners would destroy everything near them in addition to continuous hurting of themselves. For example, a certain teacher revealed that these learners would normally bang their heads on walls when they are annoyed and this affected their health:

“You can find they can spoil something you left on the table, they are destructive hello you find them crying beating someone near him or her showing that he has no friends around that time” (IDI with Teacher 4).

Another teacher explained:

“...banging their heads on the walls. They do self-harming biting themselves throwing themselves down. Heee self-harming then fighting immediate people irrespective of their age. It is also very rare because you can’t find an

ordinary child harming him/ herself, biting themselves, banging themselves then fighting the immediate people irrespective of their age. When they are annoyed, they don't care about themselves but to spark off the anger” (IDI with Teacher 3).

The learners were also reported to always throwing tantrums at teachers. When annoyed, most of them would resort to crying and this was often due to the misguidance from some of the parents. For whatever happens to the children, moderate autism spectrum disorders were blamed to run home and yet, this annoyed some parents so much. Therefore, some of these learners are difficult to deal with and it is for this case that teachers would call the parents to devise means of helping learners together:

“...it is very hard for me to put them back to their good moods especially when am going to teach. In case he or she gets angry, even though you bring a song not gain his or her mind so they take long to calm down so he or she may end up not taking anything out of the whole lesson because he is angry” (IDI with Teacher 6).

“When they are angry in class, they cry they don't say anything but you see them crying. Then the opposite, they start making a lot of noise, others over disturb their colleagues they sit with” (IDI with Teacher 5).

The last problem mention by teachers during interviews was that they made it difficult for teachers to maintain order in class. This is because most participants revealed that these learners would always make noise, disturb fellow learners and fight all the time. The other thing is that they didn't want to study together with others and they would make themselves isolated. In their own statements, two participants had these to say:

“They behave in the ways that is not common to other learners. Class control becomes difficult and two, teaching arrangement is tampered with as they tend to isolate themselves, it disrupts lessons as they are settling cases, it is good

for the teacher to find out more information from the parents of those learners” (IDI with Teacher 5).

“...as a teacher each time you go there you get a number of cases in class reporting those disturbances from both sides; teacher this one has done this so if you are not a good manager, you may fail to teach. There is misconduct in class” (IDI with Teacher 7).

The strategies of teachers in modifying behaviours of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders

The sub-theme presents strategies adopted by teachers in inclusive primary school to modify behaviours of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders.

Helping learners change behaviour from fighting to being friendly needs parents to change the environment in which they copy harmful behaviours. Teachers suspected that some learners copied harmful behaviours such as fighting, crying, and throwing tantrums among others from the films they watched on TVs at home. Therefore, a certain teacher suggested that teachers would call upon parents to change the children’s environment so that they at least tune in for them TV programmes that would promote love. In her own words, the participant explained:

“...sometimes we talk to the parents that we have observed this behaviour from this boy and this means he has ever seen this on the TV or watches films. Then, we share it with the parents and try to change the environment where this boy stays, that is, the first approach, the behaviour we have seen in the boy, we communicate to the parents and we do this work together” (IDI with Teacher 3).

Another strategy adopted to modify behaviour was to sensitize the normal peers on how to treat their fellow learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders both in and outside class. This could be handled by talking to both categories of learners while letting

them know that the learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders are just special but they are also human beings like them. Therefore, this would be better if they treated them the same way they would love to be treated. For example, children could be told not to fight learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders back, freely associate with them and learn to love them like they love others. In case of persistence in behaviour of mistreating learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders, teachers could give moderate punishments just to discourage the normal peers from mistreating the moderate autism spectrum ones. The analysis is exemplified by the following statements.

“The first thing I do as a teacher is to take them out including the colleague they were fighting with and counsel them to find out about the case then after judgement, punishment will be given accordingly as a way of protecting them from other colleagues. Two you should punish the one who has annoyed the child with autism so that you can protect this one from being maybe beaten or abused by the others then what we can do to the one who is annoyed is to talk to them with sympathy we take them somewhere until both sides calm down” (IDI with Teacher 5).

Another teacher took the same direction to advise that:

“I think it is also good to sensitize them that these colleagues of yours are also people like you. They are not special people but it is God’s plan to be created the way they are. They did not create themselves” (IDI with Teacher 8).

The researcher discovered that sometimes, learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders misbehaved because they were isolated by normal peers around them. For example, a certain teacher indicated that when a learner is annoyed, the next thing to do as a teacher is to show the learner that he/she is loved. This encourages them to also love people back and slowly, they abandon harmful behaviours. To the analysis, the participant reported that:

“Me what I always do even though they are annoyed still I try to show them love. They end up getting used to me and there is a certain boy who was behaving as such but with that thing of showing love to him, he improved so with that, it has helped me with me. I don’t abandon them; I always encourage them to behave well and I tell them don’t get angry so fast and that they have to share with friends” (IDI with Teacher 6).

Participants further advised that it makes sense for teachers to start teaching after ensuring that there are no sharp objects. This is because when learners with autism get annoyed, they would hurt themselves and so, removing sharp objects would help to reduce on injuries that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders would impose on themselves. In addition to this, teachers could also sensitize these learners not to touch or even play with sharp objects such as pencils, needles and Rosa blades. The two participants responded in this line that:

“I talk to them how. Sometimes, you know these pupils some of them understand and I tell them that for example when they have sharp objects, I tell them that these things spread diseases when you cut your friend, he will end up getting the disease and I always check them to see whether they are carrying those sharp objects or not so that one has helped me to handle them together in the class” (IDI with Teacher 6).

“If we are teaching them, we are not supposed to leave those sharp things around them or on the table even if sharpening pencils, we teachers slowly but not give them sharp things if it happens, I just call all of them and I tell them you people it is not good to play with sharp things do you know what comes out they? They tell me no then I just show them so that next time they don’t do it again” (IDI with Teacher 4).

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the summary, discussion of findings, conclusions and recommendations of the study as regards to an understanding of how teachers cope with verbal and non-verbal communication of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders, how they facilitate social interaction of such learners and how they cope with unusual behaviours of the learners in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa Division, Kampala District. It also presents the key areas for further research as follows.

Summary of the key findings

In the study, key findings were highlighted from the previous chapter and they are summarized below as regards to the study objectives.

Coping with the verbal and non-verbal communication

The study found out that teachers in the two inclusive primary schools considered for the study coped with verbal and non-verbal communication by accepting learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders' stand-alone nature of being unruly, shy and hyperactive with speech difficulties. They accepted to handle learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders with careful and soft talk using signals, and also giving them remedial time so that they catch up with the rest of the pupil in an inclusive class. In addition, the study found out that teachers also coped by avoiding threats to the learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders, especially barking at them. Teachers made sure that communicating to learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in class was made in a friendly environment free from interruptions and that learners were encouraged to use objects and gestures to

communicate what they wanted to their teachers. Furthermore, the study's findings showed that some teachers had to adopt the Pictorial Education Communication System of taking photographs or pictures on charts for learners' demonstration of their needs to them. This was accompanied by an extra time of teaching learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders and the general class time. Lastly, the study results also showed that teachers talked to pupils with moderate autism spectrum disorders through engaging them with other learners. When teachers needed their learners to do certain activities, they would make sure that learners are given task and it is performed together with friends and when he/she sees that others are doing the activity, they will also automatically join.

Despite the above coping strategies teachers in inclusive classes also faced challenges to do with their communications made with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. The study results showed that inconsistent talks among learners was a challenge for teachers whereby, these would mention words during the conversation and sometimes they use gestures and actions instead of words or failure to articulate words and as such, deriving meaning from uncoordinated conversation would be hard for teachers and hence, these failed in most cases to understand how to help the pupil. In addition, the study findings also indicated that there were continuous unintentional insults to the learners by teachers. Teachers sometimes instructed learners to do certain things thinking that they were enjoying doing such a thing yet, in actual sense, they would feel insulted and thus, this delayed teaching thereby negatively impacting on completion of the syllabus.

Teachers' coping with the unusual behaviours

According to the study findings, teachers must first comprehend the atypical behaviors of students with moderate autism spectrum disorders, which include violence, hyperactivity, aggression, self-isolation, mimicking, and their authoritative attitude. Learners

would shout loudly in class when they got annoyed and they would continuously get involved in fighting, unnecessary movements during class time, copying/ imitating whatever other people in their sight were doing thus, strongly warning parents never to expose themselves naked to these learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders at home. Additionally, the study's findings showed that when requested to do something by a teacher, learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders would also misbehave by pretending not to have heard their teacher unless the teacher was such a good friend.

To cope with the above-mentioned unusual behaviours of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders, the study findings showed that teachers encouraged parents to equally contribute towards avoiding violent behaviours of their children with moderate autism spectrum disorders by introducing them to a friendly environment such as tuning in to TV programmes that promote love. In addition, the study findings also showed that instructors made regular students and peers more sensitive on how to treat their fellow learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders well both in class and outside class besides initiating lessons in a class with moderate autism spectrum learners after ensuring that there are no sharp objects within the room to avoid the common accidents made by these learners.

Teachers' facilitation of social interaction of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools

The study results demonstrated that by include students with moderate autism spectrum disorders in plays and games, teachers at inclusive primary schools helped them interact socially. These were mainly encouraged to play football with peers so that social isolation would be discouraged among learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. Teachers also tried to help students with moderate autism spectrum disorders to interact socially and to behave correctly in a variety of social contexts with peers by allowing them

more time to finish their sentences. The aim of this was to address issues of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders being rude, discriminative and resistant to sharing with their peers. The study findings further revealed that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders were grouped with their normal peers when doing a certain activity as a strategy to enable them interact and play together.

The major interactional challenges faced by learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders that were revealed in the study mainly included being violent and destructive in nature. These learners would normally beat their fellow normal peers in group activities, push them, or use abusive language to them. In addition, learners also faced a challenge of difficulty in speech due to challenges pronouncing words, being slow in talking, skip some words and use of signals and gestures to communicate. These were difficult to tolerate by the normal peers who found it difficult to converse with them and for that case of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders ended up being discriminated in social interactions and thus, self-isolation.

Discussion of findings

Various findings were obtained from interviews but only those aspects directly related to the study objectives have been singled out for discussion. To ensure that the study was relevant, the key findings were outlined and discussed in light of the relevant literature.

Coping with the verbal and non-verbal communication

As one way of coping, the research findings showed that teachers in inclusive primary schools in Kampala took a burden to try to understand and accept that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders are unique in characters. Teachers accepted learners' stand-alone nature of being unruly, shy and hyperactive with speech difficulties. Also, the study findings revealed that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders who are shy, are those with

moderate level of autism while the rude ones are the ones with severe or profound autisms and these rarely interact with the rest of pupils. In addition, learners got irritated in a noisy environment although it is not common to all. Therefore, teachers cope by handling learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders carefully through talking softly to them using signals, and also giving them remedial time so that they catch up with the rest of the pupil in an inclusive classroom. Consistently, the findings tell the same as Wilmhurst & Brue (2010), who acknowledged that teachers frequently have significant challenges in effectively addressing the requirements of students with moderate autism spectrum disorders due to their social and behavioral impairments. Although it is a legal requirement for all students, including those with moderate autism spectrum disorders, to attend inclusive primary schools, the findings are supported by earlier research, and teachers are expected to foster an inclusive learning environment despite frequently having little to no guidance on how to do so (Horrocks, White, & Roberts, 2008; Lindsay et al., 2013).

Secondly, the study established that teachers in inclusive primary schools effectively communicate to learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders through using soft voices and signals. This is intended to avoid threatening learners because some of them feel bad when they are exposed to loud voice and to them, it will feel like the teacher is barking at them. Communication is made in a friendly environment which is free from interruptions from other learners in an inclusive class. Also, the findings of the study illustrated that during class hours, teachers encouraged and motivated learners to use objects and gestures to communicate what they want to them. Gestures are motions of a bodily part, often a hand or the head, to convey an idea or meaning, and they revealed, according to teachers interviewed for this article, that students use them frequently. In addition, learners would also mention some few words while others just hold the teacher's hand and take the teacher to that particular thing one wants. These results are corroborated by Schopler et al. (2010), who

concluded that teachers can manage students with moderate autism spectrum disorders' verbal and nonverbal communication by using visual schedules like the Picture Exchange Communication System, Augmentative Alternative Communication, visual aids, technology, and gestures. These are employed by educators to promote communication with students who suffer from mild autism spectrum disorders, who are thought of as human resources. According to Crosland & Dunlap (2012), priming, prompt delivery, and visual scheduling are some of the instructors' coping strategies for successful inclusion that have been specifically employed with students who have moderate autistic spectrum disorders.

In addition to the aforementioned, the study results revealed that some teachers had adopted the Pictorial Education Communication System whereby, a teacher would take a photograph or a picture of the real object and then he/she makes cards out of it and they are put on a communication board, something like a chart that is developed to pin on the pictures so that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders can just point on the picture that represents the action they want to take for the teacher to know. This is in line with the American Psychiatric Association's (2013) findings that the majority of autistic students may never speak, making the need for non-verbal classroom strategies and communication intervention approaches urgent and obvious given that autistic students are now studying in inclusive classrooms or in special schools (Mirenda, 2009). Similarly, Plimley and Bowen (2006) proposed that color coding and noticeable distinctions in text size may also be employed to provide a clear hierarchy for the written content. If required, visuals and/or symbols may also be employed to provide the student with cues for deciphering instructions that are written in text.

The study also established that communication aids accompanied by adequate time of teaching learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders were used by teachers in their

communication with learners in an inclusive class. For instance, teachers used chalkboards to write words on it and then encourage learners to sound the words slowly using and this would be made successful after befriending learners to remove fear out of them and therefore, there was need for enough time to first develop that rapport before normal communication for content delivery can take place. This is the same as the findings of Frost & Bondy (2002), who found that children with autism are the primary target audience for the image exchange communication system (PECS) and the augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) system. Examples of visual assistance are the break and help communication cards and the color-coded timetable displayed earlier in this resource (Mirenda, 2009).

The study findings also indicated that teachers communicated to learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders through engaging them with other learners. When teachers needed their learners to do certain activities, they would make sure that learners are given task and it is performed together with friends and when he/she sees that others are doing the activity, they will also automatically join. Alquraini and Gut (2012) favoured these findings that pointing out that the school and classroom function under the assumption that students with mild autism spectrum disorders are basically just as competent as students without disabilities. All students can participate fully in their classrooms and the local school community as a result, and they can all study in the least restrictive environment (LRE).

Challenges of communication with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders

Under this theme, the study findings revealed that teachers faced a problem of inconsistency in learners' conversations. Conversing calls for consistency of the discussion being made so as to make meaning however, when conversing with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders, participants revealed that sometimes, learners with moderate autism spectrum learners mention words during the conversation and sometimes they use

gestures and actions instead of words or failure to articulate words. Thus, deriving meaning from uncoordinated conversation would be hard for teachers and hence, these failed in most cases to understand how to help the pupil. This is the same as Tomaino and Charlop's (2012) findings, which indicated that only about one-third of kids with moderate autistic spectrum disorders develop functional speech.

Another identified problem according to the study findings is the continuous unintentional insults to the learners by teachers. The study participants reported that learners were insulted in a way that teachers sometimes instructed them to do certain things thinking that they were enjoying doing such a thing yet, in actual sense, they would feel insulted. The result of this was commonly due to irritation especially among learners with severe autism. The study's results also showed that these conversational issues made it difficult for teachers to finish the curriculum because it would take a long time for students with moderate autistic spectrum disorders to understand the concepts, wasting a lot of time. Evidence consistently demonstrates that many educators are ill-equipped to assist students with mild to moderate autism spectrum disorders in social, intellectual, and behavioral domains (Symes & Humphrey, 2010).

Teachers' coping with the unusual behaviours

Unusual behaviors of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders

According to the study's findings, learners with autism frequently exhibit uncommon behaviors such as violence, hyperactivity, aggression, self-isolation, mimicking, and an authoritarian demeanor. These are the behaviors that instructors have to deal with in the Nakawa Division's inclusive elementary schools. The study findings indicated that teachers had to cope with shouting of the learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders when annoyed, continuous fighting, unnecessary movements of learners and thus teachers had to

ensure that these learners interact freely with their normal peers both in groups and normal friendship. In addition, the study findings illustrated that teachers would cope with the learners' behaviour of copying everything that they see around and on this, a strong warning went to parents never to keep themselves naked when learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders are present. This is because, they understand and can carelessly demonstrate what they have seen to others in an open. This is consistent with what Harrower, Dunlap, and other researchers found in 2001, who noted that while students' freedom increased under the strict monitoring of teachers, removing that supervision led to the return of anomalous behavior and a decline in appropriate behavior.

Findings also showed that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders have unique behaviours also when requested to do something by teachers. When called upon to do something, learners have a tendency of pretending as if they haven't heard and this is intended for them to discourage teachers since they perceive it to be like bothering them. However, the study findings also indicated that depending on the relationship with the teacher requesting, the learner with moderate autism spectrum disorders will show immediate or delayed response. With the teacher who is a friend, the learner will immediately respond to the request and for the one who is considered unfriendly, the learner will delay to respond to the request. According to Horrocks, White, and Roberts' (2008) research, instructors are required to establish an inclusive learning environment, but frequently receive little to no guidance on how to do so (Horrocks, White, & Roberts, 2008; Lindsay et al., 2013).

Behaviour modification for coping by teachers

In the study findings, there is evidence to suggest that helping learners change behaviour from fighting to being friendly needs parents to change the environment in which they copy harmful behaviours. Teachers suspected that some learners copy harmful

behaviours such as fighting, crying, throwing tantrums among others from the films they watch on TVs at home. Therefore, teachers called upon parents to change the children's environment so that they at least tune for them TV programmes that promote love. The results don't line up with those of Crosland and Dunlap (2012), who found that learners with mild autism spectrum disorders were more predictable when visual timetables were utilized as a method. The use of schedules can help learners with mild autism spectrum disorders become more independent by making transitions between activities easier and visually communicating forthcoming events.

The study findings also demonstrated that behavior modification was accomplished by teachers through sensitizing regular students or peers on how to behave around their peers who have mild autism spectrum disorders both within and outside of the classroom. This would be handled by talking to both categories of learners while letting them know that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders are just special but they are also human beings like them and, the intension was to promote love and friendship of the normal peers for learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. Apart from promoting love and friendship between learners with autism and normal peers, the study findings also indicated the need for love of teachers to the learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. This was reported that when certain learners with autism are annoyed, they need to be showed some love and if the teacher does so, the learner will also get to learn to love back and slowly, harmful behaviours are washed away from learners. The results are in line with those of Costley (2012), who claimed that the instructor should interact with the student who has a moderate autistic spectrum diagnosis and encourage him or her to disclose any external distractions to the teacher without feeling ashamed. This will help the teacher understand and resolve several issues that could hinder a student's capacity to learn.

Lastly, findings of the study indicated that it makes sense for any teacher to initiate a lesson in a class with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders after ensuring that there are no sharp objects within the room. This is so because when learners with autism get annoyed, they have a tendency of hurting themselves and so, removing sharp objects helps to reduce on the cases of injuries that the learners would impose onto themselves in addition to sensitizing these learners not to touch or even play with sharp objects such as pencils, needles and Rosa blades. This contradicts the findings of Crosland, Dunlap, and others (2012), who found that prompting tactics have supported the inclusion of students with moderate autistic spectrum disorders. For students with moderate autism spectrum disorders, additional prompts are frequently required to elicit responses to behavioral activities.

Teachers' facilitation of social interaction of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools

Facilitation of social interactions

The study findings demonstrated that teachers in inclusive primary schools helped students with moderate autism spectrum disorders interact socially by simply include them in plays and activities. In the study, it was reported that some of the learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders don't want to play with peers and they tend to isolate themselves from others when they are playing and those who sometimes play with peers, they are just pushed by teachers to freely interact. These are mainly encouraged to play football with peers so that social isolation is discouraged among learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. This is consistent with Costley's (2012) research, which suggested that students with moderate autism spectrum disorders frequently struggle with social skills like making and keeping friends, interpreting social cues and knowing how to respond, and basic communication skills like figuring out the meaning of another person's body language and

tone of voice. These social challenges may leave students with mild autism spectrum disorders exposed and susceptible to misunderstandings from their peers (Hunt, & McDonnell, 2007).

In light of the foregoing, the study's findings showed that teachers viewed students with moderate autism spectrum disorders as unfriendly, prejudiced, and reluctant to share with their peers. Due to these disabilities, students frequently experience delays in the formation of interpersonal bonds and are more content to engage in self-stimulatory activities than to interact socially and with their peers. Therefore, teachers tried to help students with moderate autism spectrum disorders to interact socially and to behave appropriately in a variety of social contexts with peers by allowing them more time to finish their sentences. This is supported by Costley's (2012) findings, which show that some teachers also set up social skills groups to encourage and instruct students with mild autism spectrum disorders. Similar to this, Lindsay et al. (2013) discovered that social skills groups require gathering learners in a secure setting so they can communicate and hone abilities that reflect appropriate social behavior. Depending on the learners involved, social skills groups can be unstructured or quite organized.

The study findings also showed that grouping of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders with their normal peers was also used as a strategy by teachers to enable them interact and play together. In this sense, learners would be given one activity to perform together as a class inclusively to facilitate the social interaction of those with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. However, teachers did not forget that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders are short tempered, rude, collapse when they are much excited and feel emotional when challenged in group. This meant that teachers had to encourage the normal peers to show some love for learners with moderate autism spectrum

disorders as teachers themselves would guide them on how to cum themselves down when they feel annoyed. The results are corroborated by Blome & Zelle's (2018) research, which found that students with moderate autism spectrum disorders need to be involved in social groups. These groups may also contain students with a similar level of social ability who might gain from being a part of a social skills group. Similar to this, Zanolli, Daggett, and Adams (1996) found that teachers frequently employ the priming method by demonstrating the real materials that will be utilized in a session the day or morning before the lesson.

Interaction problems of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders

The study found that since they are aggressive and destructive, students with moderate autism spectrum disorders have trouble socializing in groups with typical peers. The normal peers interacting in a group with moderate autism spectrum disorders learners, normally tend to beat them, push them, or use abusive language to them. Thus, it is due to those bad acts that force learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders to become violent and also fight back in form of defense thereby disorganizing social interactions. Also, the study findings indicated that learners with autism don't understand the situation of their normal peer counterparts. Due to their difficulties understanding the relationship between mental states and behavior and the fact that they are unaware that others can also suffer harm similar to their own, they are alienated since they are seen as the cause of harm. In this instance, Blome and Zelle's (2018) findings share some similarities with our own since social stories are one method teachers can use to help students with moderate autism spectrum disorders understand social situations.

The study findings also suggested that speech impairments in students with moderate autism spectrum disorders contribute to their poor social relations. The study revealed that since these learners have got difficulties pronouncing words, they are slow in talking, skip

some words while others use signal and gestures to communicate, the normal peers normally find it difficult to converse with them and for that case, learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders end up being discriminated in social interactions and the result is often for them to go into self-isolation. However, the participant suggested that the learners' interactions can be encouraged through appealing to the normal peers to occupy the learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in their plays when they see them alone. According to Duncan, Bishop, and the findings (2015), social skill deficiencies can make a learner with moderate autism spectrum disorders stand out from the crowd. Without proper preparation and mindfulness, even well-intentioned teachers may succumb to intimidating and occasionally even bullying conduct with the persistently behind-the-curve student (Marsh et.al.2017). The classroom is the ideal environment for learning and exercising social skills (Montes and Halterman, 2008).

Conclusions

It is crucial that all teachers in an inclusive educational environment are knowledgeable on how to manage learners with mild autism spectrum disorders, especially at the basic level. When the appropriate strategies are used to support these learners in terms of their verbal and nonverbal communication, social interactions, and general behavior, they can succeed in the classroom. Teachers need to have a thorough understanding of how to teach students with moderate autism spectrum disorders.

This study makes it very evident that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders have communication difficulties both inside and outside of an inclusive classroom, particularly when speaking with teachers and typical classmates. These have got inconsistency in their conversations with failure to articulate words and more of use of gestures and signals instead of words and this leads to ineffectiveness of teachers in their

work as most of the times, syllabus is not completed in the stipulated time. However, teachers in inclusive primary schools in Nakawa Division cope by learning to understand and accept the nature of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders and thus handle them with care through soft talks and giving learners remedial time to catch up with others. Besides, engaging of learners with others in academic activities and objects and gesture use are promoted in class to allow learners effectively communicate their needs through Pictorial Education Communication System.

Teachers are also tasked to modify behaviours of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders some which are terrifying. These behaviours range from acting violently, being hyperactive, aggressive, isolating themselves from others and imitating everything they see to being authoritative in nature. When requested to do certain things by teachers, learners also pretend to disguise as if they haven't heard although this is a common response to requests from teachers whom learners take not to be friendly. Thus, as coping strategies of teachers, these behaviours are modified through encouraging parents of these learners to introduce them to the environment that promotes love such as TV channels that promote love other than hate of fighting. Also, sensitizing of normal peers is another weapon to promote their love for learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders as it is done by teachers themselves, all of which are aimed to discourage them from isolating themselves. Sharp materials like pencils, needles, and razor blades are kept out of reach of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in order to prevent self-injury.

Finally, despite the fact that students in inclusive primary schools with moderate autism spectrum disorders face a variety of difficulties in their social connections with others, teachers have opted to persevere and actively support these interactions. The identified interactional challenges of learners in the study include violence, destructive nature in groups,

continuous hurting of others, difficulties in speech that cut back conversations, self-isolation and being discriminated by normal peers. However, teachers have managed the situation by involving learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in games and plays such as football with normal peers in a group setting to discourage social isolation. In addition, learners were given extra time to complete their academic tasks besides promoting teamwork among learners that included activity performance of both learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders and their normal counterparts.

Recommendations

The researcher suggests the following actions to improve education of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders, their behavior modification, and their successful contact with normal classmates in inclusive schools based on the study findings and the conclusions drawn therefrom.

Coping with the verbal and non-verbal communication

The study discovered that teachers struggled with learners' inconsistent conversations whereby, these would mention words during the conversation and sometimes they use gestures and actions instead of words or failure to articulate words and as such, deriving meaning from uncoordinated conversation would be hard for teachers and hence, these failed in most cases to understand how to help the pupil. In this aspect, it is recommended that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders should be given oral exercises in form of training them to talk normally. These can be trained to stimulate their sound production through conditioning them to verbal communication. In addition, teachers can use pictures or card to help learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders communicate to them easily by simply pointing at the object that describes the learner's need to the teacher.

The study findings also revealed that there were continuous unintentional insults to the learners by teachers. Teachers sometimes instructed learners to do certain things thinking that they were enjoying doing such a thing yet, in actual sense, they would feel insulted. Based on the aforementioned findings, the study advises teachers in inclusive schools to have students with moderate autistic spectrum disorders sit in front of the class so that the teacher can hear their pronunciations. This is an arrangement that is suitable for teachers to capture every detail of the learner's conversations as well as gestures when communicating to them in an inclusive class.

Teachers' coping with the unusual behaviours

The findings of the study revealed that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders presented behaviours of violence, hyperactivity, aggressiveness, self-isolation, imitation and their authoritative nature. In this regard, the study recommends that teachers should learn to adopt the sunrise approach for violent and aggressive learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. This approach discourages teacher to use direct punishments to a violent learner because it makes them even become more violent by thinking that violent acts such as beating a friend is good and normal. Therefore, by adopting sunrise approach, the teacher instead shows to the learner that what he/she has done is bad by bringing the victim in front of the perpetrator to see how badly he or she has harmed a friend. This way, the perpetrator (learners with moderate autism spectrum disorder) will eventually abandon the violent act.

The findings of the study also showed that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders would shout loudly in class when they got annoyed and they would make unnecessary movements during class time. The study consequently suggests that the government develop a policy through the Ministry of Education and Sports to train all

teachers in inclusive schools to learn how to handle learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders. Without teachers in inclusive classes knowing the special way of teaching such learners along with their normal counterparts, learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders may end up dropping out of school before completion of their studies.

Teachers' facilitation of social interaction of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools

The study findings also revealed that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders had challenges interacting with their normal peers in a way that they would normally be, especially during group activities, push them, or use abusive language to them. The study advises teachers to make sure to encourage peer connections by simply designing cooperative learning activities that require group members to cooperate. Each group member should be assigned a task that is appropriate for his or her ability in order to ensure maximum efficacy and prevent conflicts between learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders and their typical peers.

Additionally, the findings of the study revealed that learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders also faced a challenge of difficulty in speaking to their normal peers due to challenges pronouncing words, being slow in talking, skipping some words and using signals and gestures to communicate. These were difficult to tolerate by the normal peers who found it difficult to converse with them and discriminating against them. In this situation, it is advised that teachers in inclusive schools take into account assisting peers in gaining understanding of the potential causes or purposes of the behaviors that students with moderate autistic spectrum disorders frequently exhibit. By dispelling myths, peers can encourage more open communication and interaction with students who have moderate autism spectrum disorders.

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APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

I am KABAGANJA HAFISA a student of Kyambogo University pursuing a master's degree in special needs education and conducting a study entitled: "Learners with Moderate autism spectrum Disorders in Inclusive Primary Schools in Kampala: how teachers Cope."

1. What coping strategies teachers use to manage verbal and nonverbal communication difficulties of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools

- (i) What do you know about learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders?
- (ii) How do you communicate to learners with Moderate autism spectrum disorders?
- (iii) Tell me how learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders talk to you.
- (iv) Which problems do you face when you're conversing with learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders?
- (v) Can you tell me what problems you experience when learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders?
- (vi) What do you think should be done to improve the problem when communicating to learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders?

2. Teacher facilitation of social interaction of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools.

- (i) Tell me how learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders play with other peers.
- (ii) Can you talk about how learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders converse with other learners?
- (iii) What happens when learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders join groups?
- (iv) Tell me about the problems that come up when learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders play with other learners?

- (v) Can you freely talk about the problem that comes up when learners converse with other peers?
- (vi) What should be done when there is a problem during play between learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders and other learners?
- (vii) What should be done when there is a problem during conversation between learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders and other learners?
- (viii) What do you do when there is a problem when learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders join other groups?

3. How teachers cope with the unusual behaviours of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in inclusive primary schools.

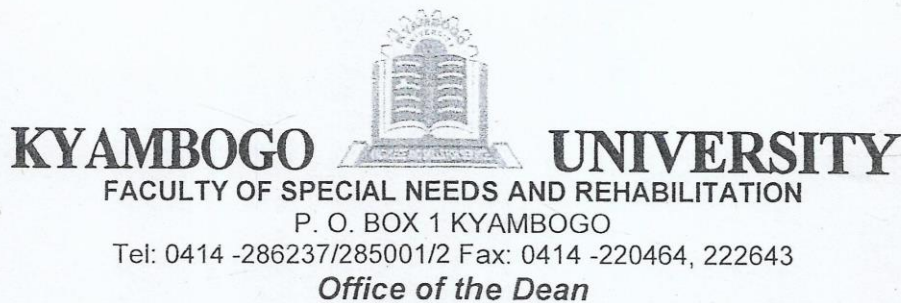
- (i) Can you freely talk about the behaviour of learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders in your school?
- (ii) Tell me how learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders behave when annoyed?
- (iii) Talk about their behaviours which is not common to other children?
- (iv) Tell me how learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders behave when requests are made to them by a teacher or other learners?
- (v) Tell me about the problems you face when learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders get angry?
- (vi) What problems do you face when learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders behave in ways that are not common to other learners?
- (vii) What problems do you face when you request learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders to do any activity?
- (viii) What do you think should be done to solve the problem that happens when learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders get angry/annoyed?

(ix) What do you think should be done when learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders start hurting themselves or other learners?

(x) What do you think should be done when learners with moderate autism spectrum disorders refuse or ignore requests?

APPENDIX II: CORRECTIONS TO THE THESIS

file



March 7, 2022

Ms. Kabanja Hafisa
18/U/19462/GMSN/PD
Kyambogo University

Dear Ms. Kabanja

RE: CORRECTIONS TO THE THESIS

The Committee that conducted the Viva Voce, the Internal Examiners and the External Examiner recommended that you make corrections to thesis. The areas for corrections are indicated below;

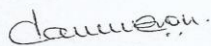
- a) The title should be made more clear and specify where the study was conducted.
- b) Clarification and use of concept of coping explained and should cut across to findings and recommendations.
- c) The autism disorder should be described in the background and specify the category that the study focused on
- d) You should give your reflections on the literature review.
- e) The sample should be made clear, which category of Autistic Spectrum Disorders were considered?

Additional Comments from Internal and External Examiners

1. Literature review; make the voice of the author clear , evaluate the literature
2. Design; explain how it is relevant to your study
3. Improve on the justification study population
4. Justify the tools used for the study
5. Provide the summary of the key findings
6. Recommendations should relate to the findings

You are required to make the revisions with your supervisors input and submit within a period of three months. Dr. Nuwagaba Ephraim has been requested to over see the corrections. Please liaise with him to ensure that the correction matrix is completed accordingly.

Yours sincerely



Dr. Lawrence Eron
DEAN

c.c. Dr. Nuwagaba Ephraim
Head of Department, Hearing Impairment & Sign Language

**APPENDIX III: PREPARATION FOR VOICE IN REGARD TO THE AWARD OF
MASTER OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**



FACULTY OF SPECIAL NEEDS AND REHABILITATION
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February 10, 2022

From : Dean *Johnson*
Faculty of Special Needs and Rehabilitation

To : Ms. Kibudde Irene 15/U/GMSN/15956/PD
Ms. Achieng Christine 18/U/GMSN/19466/PD
Ms. Kabyanja Hafisa 18/U/GMSN/19462/PD
Ms. Nalubwama Sylvia 18/U/GMSV/19458/PD

Subject: PREPARATION FOR VIVA VOCE IN REGARD TO THE
AWARD OF MASTER OF SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

This is to notify you that we have received results of your dissertation from examiners.

I am writing to inform you to prepare for a Viva Voce scheduled to take place on 24th February 2022.

Venue : Faculty Boardroom
Time : 9.00 a.m.

It is advisable to prepare a power point of your report in advance as you are allocated only 15 minutes for presentation and 30 minutes discussion.

c.c. Head of Department
Graduate Programme Coordinator