

**PROVISION OF REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION TO EMPLOYEES WITH
VISUAL IMPAIRMENT BY ORGANISATIONS OF AND FOR PERSONS
WITH DISABILITIES IN KAMPALA METROPOLITAN AREA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Twinomujuni Eria Samuel, attest that this dissertation titled "**Provision of Reasonable Accommodation to Employees with Visual Impairment by Organizations of and for Persons with Disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan Area**" is entirely original to me and has never been submitted for any academic honors at any institution of higher learning.

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APPROVAL

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DEDICATION

In general, I dedicate this endeavor to my loving family, who helped and supported me during my studies and while conducting this research. In particular, Twinamatsiko Alex, my DEO Kagadi, Mr. Bukenya Bartholomew, and fellow staff members at Junior Academy Soborwa Primary School.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION	i
APPROVAL	ii
DEDICATION	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	viii
ABSTRACT	x
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background to the Study	1
1.3 Problem Statement	5
1.4 Purpose of the Study	6
1.5 Specific objectives of the Study	6
1.6 Research Questions	7
1.7 Scope of the Study	7
1.7.1 Geographical scope	7
1.7.2 Content scope	7
1.7.3 Time scope	8
1.8 Significance of the Study	8
1.9 Definition of Operational Terms	9
1.10 Conceptual Framework	11
1.11 Theoretical Perspective	12
CHAPTER TWO	15
LITERATURE REVIEW	15
2.0 Introduction	15
2.1 Perceptions of Employers towards the Provision of Reasonable Accommodation to Employees with Visual Impairment	15
2.2 The Working Conditions for Employees with Visual Impairment	20
2.2.1 Individual support services	21

2.2.2 Transportation.....	22
2.2.3 Flexible schedule	22
2.2.4 Policy flexibility	23
2.2.5 Social accommodations	23
2.2.6 Work place and work station modification.....	24
2.3 Adaptations at the Workplace for Employees with Visual Impairment.....	25
2.3.1 Screen reading software.....	25
2.3.2 Alternative formats for documents	26
2.3.3 Environmental modifications	27
2.3.3.1 Accessible buildings	27
2.3.3.2 Ramps	28
2.3.3.3 Space.....	28
2.3.4 Adapted technology	29
2.3.4.1 Magnifiers.....	29
2.3.4.2 Braille embossers.....	29
2.3.4.3 Computer programs that enlarge speech	30
2.4 Literature Gap	30
CHAPTER THREE	32
METHODOLOGY	32
3.1 Introduction	32
3.2 Research Design	32
3.3 Population of the Study	33
3.4 Sample Size	33
3.4 Sampling Techniques and Procedures.....	33
3.5 Data Collection Method	34
3.6 Data Collection Procedures.....	34
3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation.....	35
3.8 Ethical Considerations.....	35
CHAPTER FOUR.....	36
PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS	36
4.0 Introduction	36

4.1 Perceptions of employers towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairments	37
4.2 Working conditions for employees with visual impairment	45
4.3 Adaptations at the work place to enable employees with visual impairment work comfortably	57
CHAPTER FIVE	65
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	65
5.0 Introduction	65
5.1 Summary	65
5.1.1 Perceptions of employers towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairments	66
5.1.2 Working conditions for employees with visual impairment	66
5.1.3 Adaptations at the work place to enable employees with visual impairment work comfortably.....	67
5.2 Conclusions	68
5.3 Recommendations	70
5.3.1 The perceptions of employers towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairments	70
5.3.2 The working conditions for employees with visual impairment	71
5.3.3 The adaptations at the work place to enable employees with visual impairment work comfortably.....	71
5.4 Key areas for further research	72
REFERENCES	73
APPENDICES	80
APPENDIX I: CONSENT FORM FOR RESPONDENTS	80
APPENDIX II: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR EMPLOYEES WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT.....	81
APPENDIX III: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR SUPERVISORS OR EMPLOYERS	85
APPENDIX IV: INTRODUCTORY LETTER	88

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
CBR	Community-Based Rehabilitation
Covid-19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
DPOs	Disability People’s Organizations
EEOC	Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
EwVI	Employers with Visual Impairment
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
NUDIPU	National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda
NUWODU	National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda
PALS	Participation and Activity Limitation Survey
PWDS	People with Disabilities
PWVI	Persons with Visual Impairment
RA	Reasonable Accommodation
U.S.	United States
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNAB	Uganda National Association for the Blind

UNAPD	Uganda National Action on Physical Disability
UNHS	United Nations Health Survey
V.I	Visual Impairment
WHO	World Health Organization
WIFI	Wireless Fidelity

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to explore the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairment (EwVI) in organizations of and for persons with disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan Area. The objectives of the study included exploring the perceptions of employers towards the provision of RA to employees with visual impairments among organizations of and for PWVI, establishing the working conditions for EwVI in organizations of and for PWVI, and analyzing the adaptations at the workplace to enable EwVI to work comfortably. An exploratory study design was used and the study was qualitative in nature. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. The study participants were thirteen (13), 10 of whom were EwVI and 3 were employers, and these were all selected by use of purposive sampling. The study findings revealed that employers largely had positive attitudes towards the provision of RA to EwVI as recognition for them being contributing agents towards the performance of the organizations, although they found them to be expensive. Yet, the negative attitudes of a few employers towards the provision of RA were largely due to a lack of awareness of their needs, seeing it as a burden and accusing EwVI of poor performance. The study findings also revealed that the majority of EwVI were faced with poor working conditions due to unfavorable work policies that included too much workload with short deadlines, a lack of consideration for salary and transport enhancement, and working under uncomfortable and obstructive work stations. The only favorable working conditions reported by employees with visual impairments were expressed by PWVI, especially the workplace interactions where they freely interacted with their workmates. Lastly, the study findings also revealed that there was a general lack of adapted technology for PWVI in the workplace. The adaptations that were expected included computer application software, information in an accessible format, an obstacle-free physical environment, and ramps for easy mobility, among others. However, a few EwVI had some adapted technological devices, including computers with jaws, screen-reading software, and smartphones with free internet services. It was recommended that employers should be sensitized to be non-discriminative against EwVI, provide them with sighted guides, provide flexible work schedules, cover transport expenses of EwVI, adapted technology and information in different accessible formats, provide adapted computers and smartphones with jaws, digital voice recorders and braille embossers as well as lenses, and modify the physical environment by covering the potholes, removing the tree stumps and broken bricks for easy mobility. Further research was recommended on perception of employers towards the employment of persons with visual impairment in the private sector in Uganda.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

This chapter includes the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, study scope and significance of the study.

1.2 Background to the Study

Globally, the WHO (2019) report indicates that over 1 billion individuals worldwide have some form of visual impairment, including partial or total vision loss. People with vision impairment (PWVI) encounter several obstacles when going about their daily lives and participating in society, and they also experience many difficulties when participating in the workforce (Elsman, van Rens, & van Nispen, 2019). The employment gap for those with visual impairments in European nations is as much as 50 percent (Margues, Ramke, Cairns, But, Zhang & Muirhead, 2021; McDonnall & Sui, 2019). According to estimates, 2% of all Americans who are in working age are visually impaired, yet just 29 percent of them hold full-time jobs (National Federation of the Blind, 2019). Thus, it is evident that those who have visual impairments have a significant loss in productivity. This condition has led to an increased rate of poverty among PWVI, underemployment, low work satisfaction, and early retirement of PWVI (Cumberland & Rahi, 2016; Mojon-Azzi, Sousa-Poza, & Mojon, 2010; Gopinath, Liew, Burlutsky, McMahon, & Mitchell, 2017).

Plenty of persons with visual impairments have become less productive as a result of not having access to and being excluded from the labor market, but this has also had positive social and

economic effects for PWVI. According to Margues et al. (2021), people with visual impairments cost the global economy \$411 billion annually in lost productivity. The increase in workforce ages in most developed countries implies an increase in the prevalence of working age of PWVI and this is estimated in ten years to come (Bourne, Steinmetz, Flaximan, Briant, Taylor, & Resnikoff, 2021). The positive effects of work on people's health and quality of life can be seen in their sense of financial security, their ability to support themselves independently, their social inclusion in the form of an established position in society, and their sense of worth as individuals (Modini, Joyce, Mykletun, Christensen, Bryant, & Mitchell, 2016; Thomas, Benzeval, & Stansfeld, 2005). In order to manage the long-term problems of an aging population and provide a sustainable welfare state for all countries, PWVI must be considered as a useful resource rather than as a burden at work (WHO, 2019).

Several legislations and societal changes have been improved for career possibilities of people with disabilities. However, the fact that there haven't been any concrete initiatives to incorporate individuals with visual impairment in the workforce is a deeply ingrained issue. This includes challenges and feelings they encounter at work, as well as their interactions with coworkers and their bosses (Wolffe, Ajuwon & Kelly, 2013). It is envisaged that the best obstacles in the working environment of PWVI concerns limited reasonable accommodation, inaccessibility and non-comfortable work (Halder & Argyropoulos, 2019). Prior research has shown that PWVI have greater levels of sadness and lower life satisfaction than ordinary people (Brunes & Heir, 2020). Due to this and the poor employment rates among PWVI, it is critical to look into the possibility of offering acceptable accommodations to those who are visually impaired.

In Africa, since there are so many unemployed persons with a visual impairment, PWVI have faced increased productivity losses. The production losses caused by moderate to severe vision

loss and blindness (MSVI) were 0.3% in Eastern Sub-Saharan Africa, according to a research by Margues et al. (2021), and the total productivity losses were projected to be \$365.2 billion. The aforementioned problem was caused by society's unfavorable attitudes regarding hiring persons with vision impairments, particularly among women with visual impairments in nations including Ghana (Gyamfi, 2020), Nigeria (Aiyeleso, 2016), and Uganda (Iyundhu, Karooma, & Emong, 2021). This therefore, signifies that reasonable accommodation relating to access to employment opportunities and privileges is not provided to employees with visual impairment in Africa.

In Uganda, it is thought that more than 57% of individuals with disabilities (PWDs) struggle to provide for their basic needs given the high rate of unemployment (Cheshire, 2018). According to the available research, Ugandans with disabilities experience greater rates of underemployment and joblessness than people without disabilities overall, both in the private and public sectors of the economy (NUDIPU, 2016; Cheshire, 2018). Education is thought to be a crucial pillar in any transformation process, however for many PWVI, who have attended school, their employment rate is still low at less than 5%, with the remaining 95% of the population out of work (Nsumikambi, 2017). According to Nyombi and Kibandama (2016) and Coffey, Coufopoulos & Kinghorn (2014), the problem is caused by employers' negative attitudes toward disabilities, their inaccessibility, and refusal to make appropriate accommodations for PWDs in their places of work.

In accordance with Article 27 of the 2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), which Uganda adopted, member governments must acknowledge PWDs' right to employment equality. Therefore, Uganda must give PWDs the chance to work autonomously and in a setting that is welcoming, inclusive, and accessible. Additionally, Section 9 of the PWD Act,

2019, prohibits discrimination against people based on disability. Among its important sub-sections is the prohibition of employers that fail to provide a disabled employee with the reasonable accommodations they need in order to execute their job duties. Other policy frameworks include Article 40 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, Section 6 of the Employment Act of 2006, Section 10 and 23 of the Local Government Act of 1997, and Sections 6 and 23 of the National Employment Policy of 2011. All of the aforementioned policies support the notion of offering workplace accommodations that are reasonable in nature to workers who have visual impairments. However, the implementation of these policies has always been a challenge in Uganda and this has posed challenges for employees with visual impairment to do their work comfortably (Coffey et al., 2014; Nyombi & Kibandama, 2016).

In Kampala and the surrounding areas, there are many organizations of and for PWDS that have been growing up. They are the National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU), Disability Organizations in Uganda (CBR), National Union of Women with Disabilities of Uganda (NUWODU), Uganda National Action on Physical Disability (UNAPD), and Africa Network. These organizations of and for persons with disabilities (DPOs) fight for these individuals' rights, particularly those with visual impairment. Their advocacy work manifests in ensuring that PWDs have access to employment opportunities, are provided with reasonable accommodation in their areas of work and have access to education and other rights as accessed by people without disabilities. This makes DPOs key focus for this study since they have adequate information (O'Donnell, 2014).

Although there are DPOs and Uganda is a signatory to the CRPD as well as a number of laws and policies pertaining to the rights of people with disabilities, there are still very few chances for people with visual impairment to get, keep, and benefit from reasonable employment in

which they are assured of being provided with reasonable accommodations in their workplaces (Obany, 2019; Iyundhu et al., 2021; Nyombi & Kibandama, 2016). Therefore, it was necessary to research and expose the prevalent employer practices regarding the provision of reasonable accommodations to employees with visual impairment in order to present a more complete picture of the employment conditions of persons with visual impairment in organizations of and for persons with disabilities. Hence, it is on the basis of the above background that the study was set to explore the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairment in organizations of and for persons with visual impairment in Kampala Metropolitan Area.

1.3 Problem Statement

Globally, the American Community Survey (ACS), which took place in 2017, found that the employment rate for adults with visual impairments remained low (44.2%) (McDonnall, 2019). In comparison to working-age individuals without impairment, PWVI experience considerably low employment outcomes and suffer insecure conditions on the labor market (McDonnall, 2019; World Blind Union, 2019). Of the disability prevalence rate of 12.4% in Uganda, visual impairment being the highest form of disability (6.5%), only 1.3% of people with disability are employed and these are mainly concentrated in the arts, entertainment and recreation sectors (UNFPA Uganda, 2021). Although a few persons with visual impairment get a chance to be employed in organizations of and for Persons with Disabilities, research shows that they experience exclusion, discrimination and inequalities in employment arising from unfavourable working environment that is characterized by lack of the required supportive devices and attitudinal barriers (NUDIPU, 2018). Realizing inclusive employment in such a system can be difficult, and it can be even more difficult for people with visual impairments given that they have trouble in mobility and have limited access to printed documents, making it harder for

employers to hire them (Nyombi & Kibandama, 2016; Bonaccio et al., 2019; Halder & Argyropoulos, 2019). It is as if these employees with visual impairment are not comfortable at their workplaces with the kind of reasonable accommodations provided by the employers, the issue which required investigation. Thus, the researcher was compelled to carry out the study in order to explore the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairment in organizations of and for persons with visual impairment in Kampala Metropolitan Area.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

To explore the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairment in organizations of and for persons with visual impairment in Kampala Metropolitan Area.

1.5 Specific objectives of the Study

- i). To explore the perceptions of employers towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairments among organizations of and for Persons with Disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan Area.
- ii). To establish the working conditions for employees with visual impairment in Organizations of and for Persons with Disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan Area.
- iii). To analyze the adaptations at the work place to enable employees with visual impairment work comfortably.

1.6 Research Questions

- i). What are the perceptions of employers towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairment among organizations of and for Persons with Disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan Area?
- ii). How are the working conditions for employees with visual impairment in Organizations of and for Persons with Disabilities Kampala Metropolitan Area?
- iii). What are the adaptations at the work place to enable employees with visual impairment work comfortably?

1.7 Scope of the Study

1.7.1 Geographical scope

The study was carried out from Kampala Capital City with coverage of Kampala Metropolitan Area. Kampala Metropolitan Area is located in central Uganda and neighboring with Wakiso and Mpigi district. Kampala Metropolitan Area was considered appropriate for this study based on the idea that these towns surrounding Kampala Capital City, such as Kireka, Kira, Namugongo and Bweyogerere among others, have relatively more organizations of and for persons with disabilities that offer employment to persons with visual impairment in large numbers.

1.7.2 Content scope

The subject scope for this study explored the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairment in organizations of and for persons with disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan Area. Specifically, the study explored the perceptions towards the

provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairments among organizations of and for Persons with Disabilities in Kampala metropolitan area; established the working environment of People with visual impairment in Kampala Metropolitan Area; and analyzed the reasonable accommodation provided by organizations to employees with Visual Impairment.

1.7.3 Time scope

This study was carried out from June 2019 to December 2021. The scope of literature was between 2002 and 2021 that was aimed at acquiring recent and relevant information for the study.

1.8 Significance of the Study

The following stakeholders could potentially gain from the study:

The study may be helpful to policy makers, particularly the Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development, by providing data needed to influence policy change with relation to the employment of individuals with disabilities in Uganda.

Also, as they offer recommendations for the essential working circumstances for employees with visual impairments, the study findings may be of tremendous significance to employers in organizations of and for people with disabilities.

Regarding employees with visual impairment, the study might be relevant in a way that it creates awareness of their rights to request for reasonable accommodation, especially at their work places.

This study may be pertinent to future researchers as a source of literature for studies on the provision of reasonable accommodations to workers with visual impairments and other related studies.

Lastly, the researcher benefited from the study by gaining deeper understanding of employment of persons with visual impairment and the required reasonable accommodations at the workplaces. Besides, the successful completion of this study helped the researcher to be awarded Masters of Special Needs Education of Kyambogo University.

1.9 Definition of Operational Terms

Employee with visual impairment: This refers to a person who is hired for a job with any degree of visual loss, including total blindness and partial vision (Maini, 2023). In this particular study, employee with visual impairment refers to an individual employed with any type of vision problem, whether or not it is disabling.

Perceptions: This is defined as the process of knowing and understanding sensory stimuli in order to form connections with the environment (Catherine & Missouri, 2022). In this particular study, perception is defined as the way in which something is viewed, comprehended, or interpreted.

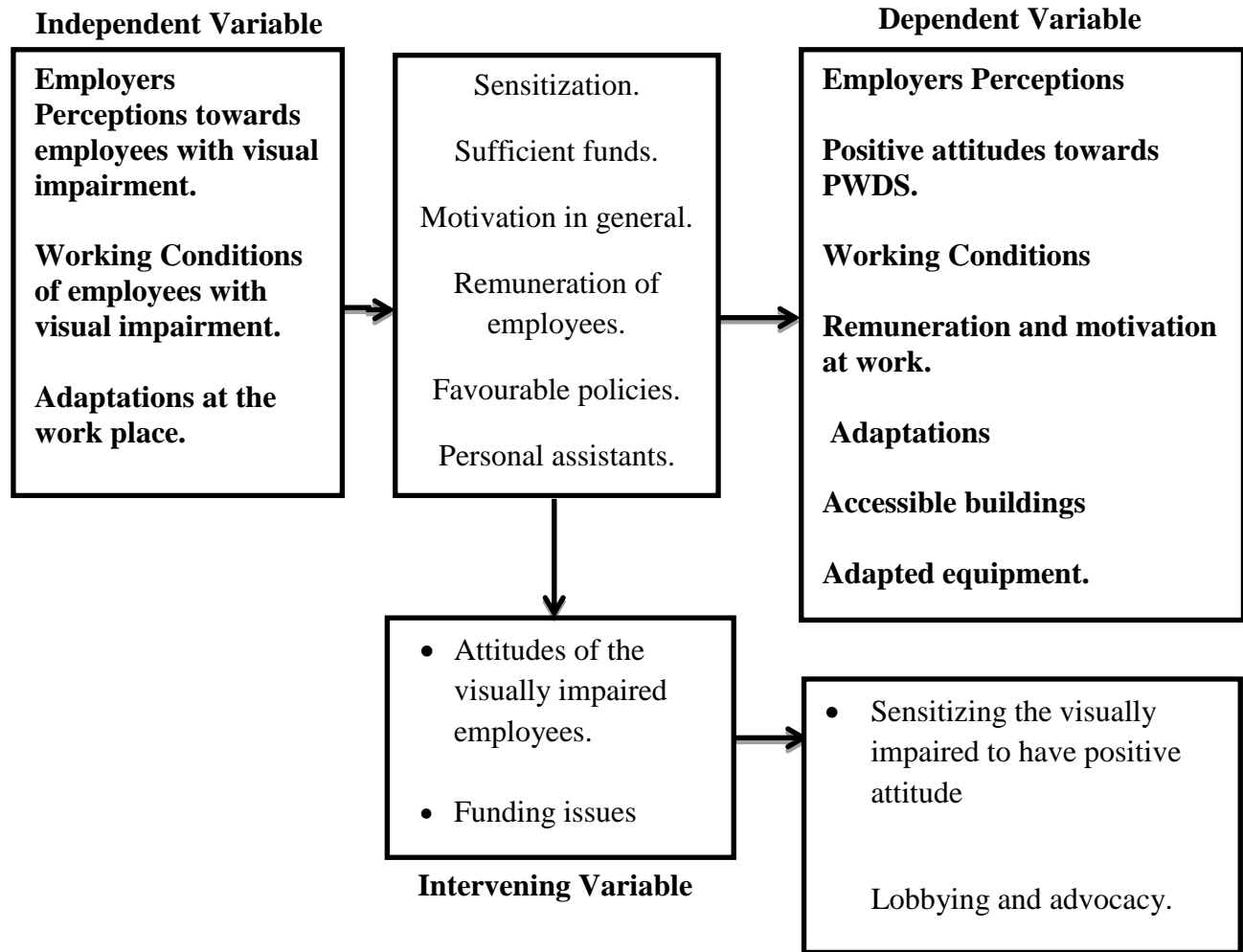
Reasonable Accommodation: This is explained in Article 2 of the 2006 CRPD as the required and appropriate modifications as well as adjustments that do not place an undue burden on an individual and enables PWDs to fully exercise all human rights and basic freedoms equally with others. In employment, reasonable accommodation means therefore; in employment it means changes or modifications to the work environment that an employer makes for an employee with

disability to enable that employee perform tasks on equal basis with the rest of the employees in the organization. For example, accessibility into the work place, adapted ICT that is appropriate to the employees' disability (Crampton & Hodge, 2003). In this particular study, reasonable accommodation refers to the practice of ensuring that the hiring process and workplace are friendly to all employees including those EwVI in order to enable them to take advantage of the job opportunities and privileges where they work.

Working Conditions: This relates to the workplace and specifics of a worker's conditions of employment. It tackles issues such as work-life balance, working hours, health, safety, and well-being, as well as job structure and responsibilities (Eurofound, 2011). In this particular study, working conditions refers to the work atmosphere created where employees may accomplish necessary duties despite disability like visual impairment.

Workplace adaptations: These are done to enable people with impairments operate comfortably and safely in the workplace (Burton-Hughes, 2018). In this particular study, workplace adaptations refer to the adjustments made to the workplace to enable persons with disabilities, such as visual impairment, to work comfortably and effectively as ordinary employees.

1.10 Conceptual Framework



Source: Developed by the Researcher 2020

The study intends to create reasonable accommodation for employees with visual impairment. This study intends to solve this by promoting sensitization among staff, improving remuneration, provision of support services e.g., personal assistants, favorable policies and provision of sufficient funding

However, in the process of endeavoring to do this, it will be hindered by attitude of the visually impaired, funding issues, e.g., in case of funding withdraws, lack of relevant labor policies, limited participation by labor unions and poor government policies on the employment of

visually impaired. But this will be solved through sensitizing the visually impaired to have positive attitude, setting up yearly budget to cater for the issues of visually impaired, lobbying for relevant labor policies from labor unions and government.

This will lead to provision of support equipment to changed employers perceptions towards visually impaired, that is, (Recognizing the abilities/capacities of visually impaired to work like other staff, willingness to give all the necessary support to the visually impaired, and believing in promoting good working relationships between visually impaired and other staff; better working conditions of the visually impaired, that is, (easily to access building and working rooms, good interactions between visually impaired and other staff, and good working environment created for the visually impaired with no obstructions; and making an adaptive work atmosphere for those with visual impairment at the work place, that is, (Equipment like walking sticks and visual aids provided to employees, Documents changed into favorable formats, and Computer soft wares that provide both audio and visual made documents available)

1.11 Theoretical Perspective

The social model of disability put forth by Mike Oliver in the 1980s served as the study's framework. Distinguishing between the terms "impairment" and "disability" is the foundation of the social model of disability. In this context, the term "impairing" refers to the actual characteristics (or lack thereof) that have an impact on a person, including the inability to independently move or breathe. The term "disability" is used to describe the limitations brought about by society as it does not adequately consider and accommodate the requirements of those who have impairments.

The social model seeks to eliminate the need for stair climbing, for instance by substituting the stairs with something like a wheelchair-accessible ramp, if a person lacks the ability to climb steps. The social model states that although the person's ability to climb stairs is still affected, since they can reach the same places without using stairs, their impairment should cease to be regarded as detrimental in that situation.

The social model of disability has shown success for persons with disabilities in society, overcoming prejudice and exclusion, tying in civil rights and empowering people with disabilities to reclaim their proper place in society (Finklestein 1990; Oliver 1990). According to activists, it is a potent tool for bringing about changes in society and politics (Anastasiou & Keller, 2011; Thomas 2004), for addressing the socio-historical oppression of people with disabilities (Longmore 2003; Oliver and Barnes, 1998); and for advancing emancipatory investigations (Booth and Booth 1996, 1998; Walmsley 2001; Walmsley & Johnson, 2003).

In relation to the current study, visually impaired employees have to be supported to enable them work effectively and efficiently like other employees that are not visually impaired. This can be achieved through changing the perceptions of employers in organizations where the visually impaired people work such that they can be employed. Changing employer perceptions towards visually impaired also makes it easy for them to create favorable working conditions for the visually impaired through making different adaptations at the work place.

For this case, changing perceptions of employers towards the visually impaired may include sensitizing them to; recognizing the abilities/capacities of visually impaired to work like other staff, improve their willingness to give all the necessary support to the visually impaired, and

improve their belief in promoting good working relationships between visually impaired and other staff.

This will make employers to create favorable work environment characterized by easily to access building and working rooms, promoting of good interactions between visually impaired and other staff, and good working environment created for the visually impaired with no obstructions.

This is achieved through making different adaptations for example; providing equipment like walking sticks and visual aids to visually impaired employees, changing working documents into favorable formats, increasing access to computer soft wares that provide both audio and visual documents available.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the existing literature related to the provision of reasonable accommodation to EwVI in organizations of and for persons with disabilities. The presentation in this chapter follows the objectives of the study, and in this case, the literature is reviewed on the perceptions of employers towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairment, working conditions for EwVI, and adaptations at the workplace for EwVI. The chapter also presents the literature gap. The reviewed literature was from journal articles, textbooks, working papers, dissertations, and internet websites.

2.1 Perceptions of Employers towards the Provision of Reasonable Accommodation to Employees with Visual Impairment

According to Crampton and Hodge (2003), a reasonable accommodation (RA) at the workplace typically entails tailored modifications to the environment (physical and social) that will support a PWD employee's equal access to employment prospects, performance, training, promotion, and retention without subjecting them to undue financial hardship. There are many effective RA practices, such as individual support services, physical surroundings (workstations and workplaces), scheduling, job reorganizing, place of work, communication, transportation, workplace culture, partnerships, and more, according to research (Padkapayeva et al., 2017). According to Padkapayeva et al. (2017), RAs fall into three categories: (1) workplace

accessibility-improving physical and technological modifications; (2) workplace autonomy and flexibility accommodations; as well as (3) social integration and inclusion accommodations.

Physical/technological adjustments are accomplished by inventively adapting currently available tools, technology, workstations, and the physical workplace in order to overcome performance and physical accessibility barriers. This gives PWD the ability to obtain and hold a job in a safe, fulfilling, and equal environment. The rigid workplace and time restrictions imposed by managers in the past are addressed by flexible employees' accommodations, which include job modifications, individual support services, schedule, and work location/transportation accommodations, leading to an increase in staff autonomy. By enhancing organizational and coworker perceptions of PWD, culture at work, communication techniques, inclusive hiring and recruiting processes, and collaborations, social accommodations support workplace inclusion and integration (Padkapayeva et al., 2017).

Studies show that organizations in many nations, including Uganda, have unfavorable attitudes toward providing appropriate accommodations to workers with visual impairments. The likelihood that a visually impaired employee won't be employed or even accommodated increases if the employer develops a negative attitude toward them (McDonnall and Crudden, 2018). On July 8, 2019, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) received a report stating that a larger company in Atlanta, Georgia, with a negative attitude toward visual impairment, had refused to make accommodations for a specific employee with visual impairment. The evidence in the lawsuit demonstrates that the employer in this case rejected the visually impaired employee's request for a job accommodation and fired him as a result (EEOC, 2020). The employee had asked for the accommodation so he could finish a necessary IT training course for blind computer users. As if that was not enough, a national online survey of hiring

managers across industries with 379 respondents in Virginia indicated that negative attitudes of employers were a key barrier to employment and accommodation of blind or visually impaired persons, mainly common among male employers (McDonnall and Crudden, 2018).

According to Lorna and Katie's (2012) study in Manchester, United Kingdom, on the perspectives of persons with disabilities and those who have chronic health issues, management and coworkers' attitudes and actions pose hurdles to providing effective, reasonable accommodations and, as a result, to people's full participation in the workforce. This was a result of managers' presumptions about the talents of disabled persons, particularly visually impaired employees, and their belief that these workers did not fit the organization's image and should not receive accommodations at work. Lynch (2013) also found that employers of people with visual impairments believed they had to spend excessive amounts of money on work accommodations for these people. On the other hand, Candela and Wolffe (2002) attributed the negative attitude of employers to a lack of knowledge about job accommodations for visually impaired workers.

In Africa, it is not all that different. For instance, a thorough investigation into coworkers' and employers' attitudes toward people with disabilities in the Zimbabwean community of Chitungwiza revealed that employers had negative attitudes toward hiring and assisting people with disabilities, which includes those who were visually impaired. According to this study's findings, employers believed that the majority of PWDs—including those with visual impairments—lacked knowledge and had subpar credentials, making them unsuited for employment and ineligible for reasonable accommodations (Mapuranga and Mutswanga, 2014). In Uganda, Aley (2016) discovered that due to damaging conventional ideas and misconceptions regarding the causes and nature of disability, views toward disabled people's employment and treatment at work were largely negative in their communities. While Ahaiwe, Ntale, and

Odokonyero (2019) found that inadequate work skills were the perceived barrier to providing reasonable accommodations to employees with visual impairments. Therefore, the above literature is an indication that employees with visual impairments could be employed in different organizations; however, providing reasonable accommodation to them is difficult due to the fact that employers already have negative attitudes towards their capabilities as well as what it actually takes to accommodate them.

The justifications stated by various employers for accommodating or not accommodating workers with vision impairments are listed below. According to research by Houtenville and Kalarhyrou (2012), the majority of businesses in the hospitality and leisure sector strongly believe that hiring visually impaired workers is too expensive and that they are less productive than their sighted coworkers. According to Lindsay et al. (2019), a negative employer impression of recruiting and accommodating employees with impairments, including visual impairment, is connected with receiving workplace accommodations for visually impaired employees.

Contrary to the above, a number of studies show that other employers are positive in the way they perceive the provision of RA to employees with visual impairments in their organizations. This favorable perception is supported by the fact that reasonable accommodations can assist EwVI execute their jobs more effectively by enhancing their results and skills. For instance, according to the National Disability Authority (2019), offering reasonable accommodations enables firms to improve business outcomes by maximizing employee involvement and skill levels at work. Also, Lindsay et al. (2018) found out that when they received reasonable accommodation at the workplace, visually impaired employees could have the quality of their lives improved and, therefore, be able to contribute positively to the organization.

In line with the above, Padkapayera et al. (2017) also conceded that effective provision of reasonable accommodation requires organizational and managerial support. This means that the authors held a positive perception towards the provision of reasonable accommodation at the organizational level. The visually impaired employees are thus expected to enjoy inclusive policies and procedures, infrastructure and equipment, adequate budgets, and an effective work culture at the organizational level. At the managerial level, it was suggested by the authors that employees with this kind of impairment should be expected to receive accommodations through job restructuring, scheduling, training, and communication with stakeholders who are also visually impaired (Padkapayera et al., 2017).

In the same way as above, Solovieva et al. (2011) revealed that when planned, developed, and implemented successfully, reasonable accommodation provided to employees with visual impairments can lead to direct and indirect benefits to employers. The identified direct benefits in this case include hiring, retaining, and promoting qualified employees; productivity improvements; diversity of the work team; reduced training costs; and the absence of cases of absenteeism from work. On the other hand, the indirect benefits include co-worker interaction improvements, organization morale, collective organizational productivity, safety at the workplace, and customer interaction (Solovieva et al., 2011).

According to Dong et al. (2013), various employers used to make reasonable accommodations for visually impaired staff members and those with other types of disabilities with a positive perception by displaying a positive attitude toward them, feeling empathy for them, and providing emotional support when necessary. This is somewhat comparable to the findings of Solovieva et al. (2011), which are given above. The authors revealed that most employers championed fair treatment for disabled employees, including the visually impaired, and that

these were subjected to a hostility-free working environment (Dong et al., 2013). The interpersonal conflicts that would impact the visually impaired employees were also defused by the employers. The findings of Obany (2019) further revealed that the same condition was perceived among employers in Uganda. Obany reported that teachers with visual impairments working in government schools in Soroti Municipality depended heavily on support given by head teachers for activities such as scheming, making instructional materials, and supervising school cleaning when on weekly duty. This suggests that while certain organizations are against making reasonable accommodations for workers with visual impairments, others are in favor of it and gain just as much from it as the visually impaired workers themselves.

2.2 The Working Conditions for Employees with Visual Impairment

According to EurWork (2011), "working conditions" are the workplace and related elements of an employee's terms and conditions of employment. This includes topics like how work and work-related activities are organized, training, employability, and safety, health, and well-being, as well as working hours and work-life balance. Whether it be an office or a factor, employers are required to adopt new management tactics in which they will equally and safely include employees with visual impairments in their work (Iyndha, Emong, and Karooma, 2021). According to the available research, there are a number of factors that can assist PWVI manage their condition at work better, and employers are primarily expected to facilitate this. These factors include, among others, individual support services, transportation, work schedule, policy flexibility, interaction with co-workers, and work place and work station modification.

2.2.1 Individual support services

Previous studies have shown that when the support provided by the office environment is insufficient to meet the everyday demands of employees with visual impairments, employers typically engage with the employees to set up personal assistance services at the workplace. According to Iyndha et al. (2021), a personal assistant is a person who enters into a work arrangement with a firm or organization and assists one or more employees who have a visual impairment or another type of handicap with everyday responsibilities. Individual support services for PWVI include training PWVI on-the-job and the supply of sighted guides.

Concerning the provision of sighted guides, it is stated that businesses may take into account employing an assistant for those who are visually impaired employee to help with these private duties (Iyndha et al., 2021). Personal care needs include things like eating, walking, and bathroom assistance. Additionally, according to Nadin (2017), firms can offer additional secretarial or clerical support for visually impaired workers, such as readers, note-takers, job coaches, or drivers. To cut costs and increase productivity at work, personal assistants are occasionally shared by multiple employees (Iyndha et al., 2021). On the other hand, Kirk (2019) discovered that the employee might be in charge of hiring and training their personal assistants; nevertheless, the assistant's pay is given by the employer. Kirk adds that coworkers (sighted employees) can step in to give instruction, feedback, modeling, and physical cues to the visually impaired workers if there aren't enough supervisors or managers available. However, they may need training to accomplish this.

Individual support services also imply offering on-the-job training for PWVI. This is a practical approach through which workers, or operative staff, are given direct instructions on how to

perform their jobs based on the actual work they are required to do (Business Jargon, 2019). Employees with visual impairments are able to be trained in the current study, and they gain exposure to the workplace while learning new skills necessary to succeed under real-world situations. The literature now in print supports this. For instance, ILO (2014) recommended that blind or visually impaired employees receive the same orientation to a job and basic training as sighted employees. ILO continues by stating that these employees must be consulted to determine whether vocal education or a mix of hands-on, written, and verbal learning will benefit them the most. Similarly, Heckl, Pecher, Oberholzner, Fröhlich, and Gugerell (2008) also revealed that when employees with visual impairments are trained for the job they have to do, their employability or professional advancement will improve.

2.2.2 Transportation

According to Jakobsen and Svendsen (2013), employers must provide employees with visual impairments with transportation perks. Hyland and Rutigliano (2013) highlighted that there is enough parking available near the business entrance for visually impaired personnel who utilize personal vehicles with the assistance of personal assistant drivers in addition to the aforementioned. On the other hand, the authors found that firms often offer car services or other forms of transportation to help employees with visual impairments who have trouble traveling and commuting (Hyland & Rutigliano, 2013).

2.2.3 Flexible schedule

A significant prerequisite that has been noted in the current studies is that sight impaired employees need to arrive to work on time. Tompa, et al. (2015) claim that employers and workers with disabilities, such as those with visual impairments can collaborate to plan the daily

work routine for workers. This should entail adjusting for variations in energy levels, frequent pauses or rest times, and scheduling doctor's appointments for staff members who are visually impaired. The authors also noted that employers frequently had to allow visually impaired workers to work from home when their jobs could be done remotely. A flexible work schedule has the power to reduce productivity loss, job disruptions, and workplace activity constraints, and it is beneficial in removing potential barriers related to movements (Tomba et al., 2015).

2.2.4 Policy flexibility

The available literature goes on to reveal that disability policies that are flexible in favor of employees with visual impairments at work are important to ease the conditions of work for these employees at the organizational level. Bengisu, Izbirak, and Mackieh (2008), for instance, pointed out that a visually impaired employee may require some flexibility in workplace regulations, such as the fact that animals are normally not permitted in a place of work, but a visually compromised employee may need the assistance of a service dog. Due to the availability and timeliness of transportation to get her to work, she could also need to change her schedule (Bengisu et al., 2008). A policy's flexibility in response to justifiable demands enables a worker with a visual impairment to carry out her duties.

2.2.5 Social accommodations

Effective communication between employees with visual impairments and their sighted coworkers has also come up frequently in previous literature as a requirement for successful employment of employees with visual impairments. In this regard, ENEI and RNIB (2017) recommended that sighted employees introduce themselves by name when speaking to a blind colleague in their Employer and Staff Guide. This is because it might be embarrassing for those

who are blind or visually impaired to not be able to identify the person they are speaking to. In a similar situation, Pavey, Douglas, and Corcoran (2008) discovered that management in inclusive work organizations should educate current sighted employees on the best ways to interact with their new visually impaired coworkers through a training session that promotes visual impairment awareness.

2.2.6 Work place and work station modification

Both workplaces and workstations that can be easily navigated are a must for employees with visual impairments. This was a concern in many earlier studies; for example, Higgins and Green (2008) advocated for no clutter at the workplace compound. They recommended that walkways be clear of obstructions to avoid accidents among the visually impaired employees. Similarly, Tompa et al. (2015) contend that it is crucial for employers to exercise caution and guarantee that the complete workplace is accessible for EwVI, including restrooms, elevators, common spaces, entrances, and exits. ENEI and RNIB (2017) found that natural light, rather than just relying on electric light, is ideal for partially sighted employees in the workplace by making the best use of light from windows. This has to do with the workstation of employees with visual impairments. Additionally, Higgins and Green (2008) agreed that resources and papers at a workstation where employees with visual impairments are present had to be conveniently arranged and physically reachable without obstacles.

It is crucial that visually impaired employees participate actively in decision-making, regardless of the working environment an employer offers for EwVI. The workplace policies of an organization for and for PwDs should include a procedure for monitoring and evaluating the

employees' effectiveness as well as an interactive process for addressing the conditions in the work setting of employees with visual impairment with the employee themselves.

2.3 Adaptations at the Workplace for Employees with Visual Impairment

According to Moleket (2007), adaptation is the process of lessening the effect that a disability has on a person's ability to carry out the crucial duties of a job. They are the steps taken to ensure that a person with any impairment can carry out their function with the least amount of help. This can take the form of providing assistive devices, rearranging working hours, redesigning workstations or workplaces to be physically accessible, or reassigning some non-essential duties of a particular position to another official. The following workplace modifications for workers with visual impairments have been identified by prior research in this area:

2.3.1 Screen reading software

Many jobs require the use of computers, but a person with vision problems would likely require specific software to utilize a computer properly. The use of keyboard controls to traverse the system and run programs is made possible by screen reading software, which reads aloud text on the screen using artificial speech (RNIB, 2018). Screen-reading software, in accordance with Lee and Park (2008), reads the information on the screen so that the worker with a visual impairment can use it. Some of the software in this category also enables the user to type or operate the computer by speaking through a headset or microphone. With a severe eyesight impairment, using a mouse might be challenging or impossible. This makes typing simpler and eliminates the need for one (Lee and Park, 2008). Ginley (2020) was also reported as noting that the inability to type text into change boxes for passwords and choosing check boxes in the form to agree to terms and conditions are the majority of the common access hurdles screen reader users

encounter when logging into new programs or websites. As a result, Ginley (2020) noted that visually challenged workers can travel through inaccessible digital pages with links that can be read out as graphics, hyperlinks, or drop-boxes which interfere with the screen reader by converting links or texts by using screen reading software.

2.3.2 Alternative formats for documents

The visually impaired workers should feel at ease asking for all written materials required for their jobs to be made available in their choice accessible format, such as braille, big print, or audio, when using them at work (Osfield, 2012). According to a recent study by Blanco (2021), visually impaired workers are dissatisfied by the never-ending fight with documents and business applications that are not produced in an accessible format. These employees complained about having to work with inaccessible PDFs and other applications, yet they are unable to do their duties independently or to the fullest extent of their expertise and abilities because they cannot access the documents or other programs. Crudden (2002) suggested that alternate formatting be used when reading written materials, such as paperwork, manuals, or any other written information, in order to enable the visually impaired employee to obtain the information on his own. An employee who is partially blind might be able to use a magnifying glass or a large-print version. Others might need materials in audio format, Braille, or on a computer using a screen-reading program (Crudden, 2002). Organizations that serve and benefit employees with visual impairments use the operated vocal eyes to offer recordings that are not available through talking books or employee recordings, and organizations must purchase electronic versions of textbooks from textbook publishers (Osfield, 2012).

2.3.3 Environmental modifications

2.3.3.1 Accessible buildings

According to Golub (2006), slight alterations to the surroundings can improve a visually challenged employee's capacity to navigate the building. However, this is a rare occurrence for Ugandan businesses that hire persons with vision impairments. For instance, Iyndha et al. (2021) discovered that workplace accessibility is a concern for those working in the public sector. The stairs can be there, but visually impaired employees may not have the ability to climb them. There are no lifts, and even where lifts are provided, some of them don't talk to ease use by the visually impaired.

In the same way as above, Clayton et al. (2012) found out that people with disabilities, including the visually impaired, find challenges in accessing unmodified physical environments at their respective places of work in Uganda. These have challenging designs, and they lack facilities like ramps and lifts. Some of the existing lifts have some technological constraints, such as not consisting of talking devices to enable employees who cannot see to access information or even have clear direction. Golub (2006) proposed that contrasting colors enable a person with reduced vision to distinguish between various surfaces. For instance, a colored strip along each stair's edge makes it easier for the employee to locate and use the stairs with a lower chance of falling. Also, in an academic study carried out by Obany (2019) in special schools in Soroti Municipality, it was suggested that accessibility features such as ramps, landmarks, shorelines, and handrails need to be part of the provisions in the school environment to facilitate accessibility to structures and effective mobility for visually impaired teachers.

2.3.3.2 Ramps

Kirk (2019) has demonstrated that a number of firms deliberately hire consultants to ascertain the accessibility accommodations needed in a certain workplace. Examples cited by the author include adding ramps, rails, and automatic doors; altering the floor; and putting ramp handles on doors rather than leaves or knobs. In another instance, Kirk demonstrated how employers have also placed workers with visual impairments in offices and cubicles that are closer to the building entrances. Employers are required to guarantee that employees with visual impairments have a place at the table in work environments that have architectural planning or plants and operations committees (Kirk, 2019). However, this poses a problem for Ugandan workers who are visually impaired. For example, Obany (2019) found out that in the mainstream schools in Soroti Municipality, ramps are only provided at the entrance of the school structures, yet the schools have storage buildings. Handrails or ramps are not present to ease the mobility of visually impaired teachers, something that limits them from being exposed to all school structures or offices positioned upstairs. Such conditions challenge the work of visually impaired employees in performing their tasks as assigned by employers.

2.3.3.3 Space

Employers take a wide range of steps to provide accommodations for their employees who have difficulties with vision, and the first one is to make sure that workers are informed of the options accessible to them (O'Donnell, 2014). These include rearranging furniture, raising or lowering desk surfaces; modifying lighting, moving power outlets, and making little improvements like adding handles to hanging folders and relocating commonly used things (Kirk, 2019). Employers

who are unable to give information on alternatives to reasonable accommodations frequently hire occupational therapists to analyze workstations and provide advice (Blanco, 2021).

2.3.4 Adapted technology

2.3.4.1 Magnifiers

LaGrow (2004) points out that an abundance of great technology is readily available to help those with visual impairments. The ability to increase the image of text and visuals on computer screens makes magnifying technology software useful for visually impaired workers (VisionAware, 2021). Employees with visual impairments may be able to move the magnifier to magnify a different area of the image, but they may still be unsure of where that area is in relation to the rest of the image. LaGrow (2004) believed that screen magnification systems should have a feature that allows users to find their position on the original, unmagnified screen in order to aid in these workers maintaining their orientation.

2.3.4.2 Braille embossers

O'Donnell (2014) found that in addition to customized magnifiers, it is critical to offer blind workers with assistive equipment, particularly Braille embossers, which must be given before to beginning of work or later if a person's handicap changes. Obany (2019), in his study to examine the reasonable accommodation measures in place for teachers with visual impairments in Soroti Municipality, found out that schools have made sure that braille machines and paper are in place and that headteachers supervise to enable visually impaired teachers to practice professionalism, such as having a schedule of work and a lesson plan and being present at the work place. In the same way, AbilityNet (2021) revealed that Braille displays can allow employees with visual

impairments to enter data, control their computers, and read documents, web pages, and emails using Braille.

2.3.4.3 Computer programs that enlarge speech

As revealed by Obany (2019), the provision of well-suited resources like adaptive technology supports employees with visual impairments in carrying out their professional duties. The author therefore cites programs, for example, Jaws, that are installed on computers to make the technology user-friendly for people with visual impairments. According to Ginley (2020), many employers have used a variety of digital platforms, such as Microsoft Teams, Google Meets, and Zoom, all of which have a high degree of accessibility, to communicate with employees who have visual impairments. IT professionals must set up workstations and computers in a well-established working environment in order to make visually impaired personnel productive enough (AbilityNet, 2021).

2.4 Literature Gap

Despite the excellent work done by a number of earlier researchers on the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairments, there were significant gaps realized in the literature that would be addressed in this study. First of all, most of the studies reviewed were conducted abroad and in countries with advanced economies with adequate implementation of employment policies (Lee & Park, 2008; Kirk, 2019), which is not the case for this study that has been carried out in Uganda, particularly in the Kampala Metropolitan Area, where little attention is paid to the working conditions of PWDs. Secondly, some of the studies reviewed were systematic reviews that followed the collection of secondary data (Lindsay et al., 2018; Nyombi & Kibandama, 2016; Bonaccio et al., 2019), which is not the case

for the current study, which solicited purely primary data from both employers and EWVI in organizations of and for PWD in Kampala Metropolitan Area. In addition, some literature was reviewed from blogs on the internet, such as VisionAware (2021) and RNIB (2018), which lacked empirical evidence, thus the need for the current study, which was based on empirical evidence from employers and EWVI in organizations of and for PWD. Lastly, even the studies reviewed from Uganda were limited in scope. For example, Nyombi and Kibandama (2016) only reviewed the policies and legislation with the aim of promoting disability protection at work stations. In addition, Obany (2019) studied the provision of reasonable accommodation for EWVI; however, he only explored issues concerning teachers with visual impairments in government schools in Soroti Municipality, leaving a gap in the exploration of the issue entirely. In light of the aforementioned gaps, the researcher drew from the literature to fill those gaps by exploring the perceptions of employers towards the provision of reasonable accommodation, the working conditions, and the adaptations at work place to enable EWVI to work comfortably in organizations of and for persons with disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan Area.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design, population of the study, sampling techniques, tools for data collection, procedure for data collection, ethical consideration and data analysis.

3.2 Research Design

The study employed a qualitative approach. Amin (2005) noted that a qualitative approach gives narrative and descriptive information that explains and gives deeper understanding and insight into a problem. The qualitative approach was considered appropriate for this study because it would be helpful in interpreting people's opinions and perceptions about reasonable accommodation for employees with visual impairments using interviews.

The study employed an exploratory research design. Preliminary study to define the precise nature of the problem to be solved forms the basis of the exploratory research design. It is carried out for a topic that hasn't been thoroughly examined before, demands priorities, creates operational definitions, and offers a model that's been more thoroughly studied. It is essentially a sort of research design that focuses on thoroughly describing each component of a research study. For the current study, the exploratory research style was chosen since it contributes valuable and meaningful data. Additionally, it gives the researcher the freedom to use creativity to learn as much as possible about a subject.

3.3 Population of the Study

The study considered the staff members of organizations of and for persons with disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan Area. People with Visual impairment working with such organizations will also be considered to participate in the study. The organizations that were considered include; National Council for Disabilities, UNAB and National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU).

3.4 Sample Size

The targeted population included; the staff members of National Council for Disabilities, UNAB and National Union of Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU). The point of saturation determined the number of respondents that were considered for the study. According to Amin, (2005), the point of saturation is usually attained after covering between 10 and 15 respondents. For this study therefore, the point of saturation was reached at a number of 13 respondents of which these included 10 employees with visual impairment and 3 employers from the organizations of and for persons with disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan Area.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Procedures

Purposive sampling was used for the study. Purposive sampling involved the selection of respondents depending on a certain criterion set by the researcher in consideration of the information required. The sampling method helped in selecting respondents from organizations of and for persons with visual impairment. This was done by giving first priority to employees with longer experience in the current organization or PWD work. The list of employees was obtained with their respective working experience in each organization. Then, eight employees

were selected from all the organizations. The researcher chose this technique because it helped to take into account respondents who have held their current positions for at least three years because they will be able to provide detailed information about the study field; it takes less time; it lowers the costs of conducting the sampling project; and the outcomes of purposeful sampling are typically more accurate than those attained with any alternative form of sampling.

3.5 Data Collection Method

The interview method was employed in data collection. Personal (face-to-face) interviews with influential people who are thought to have the knowledge essential to support the study's aims make up the interview method. This aided in gathering information from various staff members of organizations that serve and advocate for individuals with disabilities regarding their views on reasonable accommodations for workers who are visually impaired. A series of preset questions were utilized in structured interviews. The benefit of this method is that detailed information is provided. The approach is adaptable in that it allows for the adoption and modification of the questions as the research develops (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

In order to obtain the requisite approval from the Kampala Metropolitan Area for conducting the study, the researcher received an introduction letter from the Kyambogo University Department of Special Needs Studies. The executive directors of the organizations for and for individuals with disabilities that were visited for data collection also received a copy of the letter.

To avoid interfering with the respondents' regular routines, appointments were established with them. Additionally, it allowed the researcher to have ample time to address all of the study-related queries.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

Data had to be categorized before being assigned to the relevant categories for qualitative analysis. Themes established in the study's objectives were used to revise the analysis of the interview responses. By listing all of the respondents' opinions under each question category, the gathered data was analyzed. Quotes from respondents were used when necessary to support the interpretation.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

To reassure respondents that the data was only being used for academic purposes, the researcher acquired an introductory letter from the study coordinator at the Department of Special Needs Studies. The directors of the organizations the researcher visited for the study were asked for their approval. Due to the sensitive nature of the research, confidentiality was upheld because some participants did not want their full names and ages to be disclosed. The researcher handled the responses with the utmost discretion. The respondents were informed that participation was optional and that their participation would not directly or indirectly pose a threat to them.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study, including an analysis and discussion of the findings based on the objectives of the study. The purpose of this study was to explore the provision of RA to employees with visual impairment in organizations and for persons with visual impairment in Kampala Metropolitan Area. The presentation starts with the background information of the participants (Table 4.1). It is followed by themes as regards the study objectives: Perceptions of employers towards the provision of RA to employees with visual impairments, working conditions for employees with visual impairment, and adaptations at the work place to enable employees with visual impairment to work comfortably. Respondents' own voices featured prominently in the presentation of findings under themes.

Table 4.1: Background information of participants

S/N	Respondents' Code	Gender	Academic Qualification	Organization	Period of working
1.	Respondent A	Female	Bachelor's degree	NUDIPU	7 years
2.	Respondent B	Male	Bachelor's degree	NUDIPU	6 years
3.	Respondent C	Male	Bachelor's degree	NCD	2 years
4.	Respondent D	Male	Bachelor's degree	UNAB	3 years
5.	Respondent E	Female	Bachelor's degree	UNAB	Over 20 years
6.	Respondent F	Female	Bachelor's degree	UNAB	Not given
7.	Respondent G	Female	Bachelor's degree	UNAB	6 Months
8.	Respondent H	Female	Bachelor's degree	UNAB	2 years
9.	Respondent I	Male	Bachelor's degree	UNAB	30 years in different capacities
10.	Respondent J	Male	Bachelor's degree	UNAB	22 years
11.	Respondent K	Male	Bachelor's degree	NUDIPU	8 years
12.	Respondent L	Male	Bachelor's degree	NCD	11 years
13.	Respondent M	Female	Bachelor's degree	NCD	5 years

4.1 Perceptions of employers towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairments

The study sought to find out the perceptions of employers towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairment. Results of the study revealed the following as expressed below.

Majority of the employers had positive attitudes towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairment largely because their organizations were formed on the basis of disability as expressed below.

Almost all the respondents revealed that employers found it necessary and willing to provide reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairment including those with low vision and total vision loss, since their organizations were founded on the basis of disability. For example, Respondent I reported that:

“We believe in equity but persons with visual impairment take the first priority in case they have the required qualifications. When employing them, it is also part of our responsibility to ensure that these workers are provided with reasonable accommodation”.

Similarly, Respondent J had a feeling that Uganda National Association of the Blind (UNAB) being an organization that works with PWDs, there would be no reason whatsoever, for not providing reasonable accommodation to all employees including those with low vision and total vision loss. He expressed that:

“Our organization heavily works with people with disabilities so, why would they [employees with visual impairment] be denied chance of work in their own organization? We welcome them and they are happy to work with us also because every reasonable accommodation needed is surely given”.

Therefore, retaining employees with visual impairment, whether low vision or total vision loss at work, requires their employers to provide them with reasonable accommodation for effective performance of their activities. The expressions used above show employers believe it is their responsibility to make reasonable accommodations for workers who have vision impairments. The programs companies have put in place to make reasonable accommodations for workers with visual impairments who are part of the main workforce also demonstrate the effectiveness of the organizations. The results support Lindsay et al.'s (2018) contention that when given a reasonable accommodation at work, employees with vision impairments were able to contribute positively to the business.

However, this result differs from that of Aley (2016), who discovered that employers were not making reasonable accommodations for workers with visual impairment, and that these overwhelmingly negative attitudes were brought on by harmful traditional beliefs and misinterpretations about the causes and nature of disability.

They provided reasonable accommodation to them as a way of recognizing them as contributing agents towards the performance of the organization. Few respondents (K & A) showed that employees with visual impairment were handled as a special case when it came to protecting workers from contracting corona virus. This implies that some employers were positive towards

the welfare of their employees with visual impairment in the organizations. For example, Respondent K expressed:

“Our organization is kin towards observation of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure that as the working staff, employees with visual impairment be provided with masks, face shields and sit in a spaced kind of arrangement at work to maintain social distance.

In relation to the above, Respondent A also showed that employers found it appealing to provide protective gears for COVID-19 to employees with visual impairment. In this regard, she expressed that:

“They [employers] find it necessary because of the need to avoid losing the valuable staff they have”.

The above expressions thus, showed that the positive perceptions of employers towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairment was based on the need to maintain their safety at the workplace since they were valued as cores of the organizations that work with persons with disabilities. This is inconsistent with the findings of Ahaibwe et al. (2019) who found out that the perceived barriers to provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairment was poor skills possessed for work. However, the finding is in agreement with Padkapayera et al. (2017) who conceded that effective provision of reasonable accommodation requires organizational and managerial support.

Some employers gave testimonies of how their organizations endeavored to ensure that they provided reasonable accommodation to employees with low vision and those with total vision

loss amidst the availability of scarce resources. Respondent M explained how her organization struggled with the expenses of purchasing computers with jaws and paying for extra efforts of workmates who agreed to provide extra support to those employees with total vision loss in the accomplishment of their tasks:

“The management of this organization has really found challenges, especially to do with buying of computers with jaws. It was during the scaring COVID-19 period whereby, funds were limited and yet, workmates who provide extra support to employees with visual impairment had to be paid extra. So, I know that it is reasonable to provide reasonable accommodation to our employees, but it sometimes happens to be too costly” (Respondent M).

In another related scenario, making extra payment for hired sighted guides for blind employees seemed to be a burden to employers in some organizations of and for persons with disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan area as illustrated in the verbatim quote below:

“It is known everywhere that this is an organization for PWDs. Therefore, providing reasonable accommodation to them is a must. However, there is that unique challenge of paying salary to employees with visual impairment and then securing some other funds for their sighted guides, it turns out to be costly spending double on one person yet, we have about four of them”

The few employers who expressed negative attitudes towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with total vision loss expressed that it came with an extra cost; hence, they were not willing to provide it to them. This is congruent with Lynch's (2013) findings, which revealed that employers had a negative opinion of people with visual

impairments when they had to spend a lot of money on providing them with reasonable accommodations for their employees. The results are in line with those of Houtenville and Kalarhyrou (2012), who acknowledged that most businesses in the hospitality and leisure sectors strongly believed that providing reasonable accommodations to employees with visual impairments would be prohibitively expensive despite the fact that these employees were less productive at work than their sighted counterparts.

Some employers possessed negative attitudes towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to their employees with blindness because they felt it to be a burden in terms of costs incurred in paying extra funds for buying extra devices for use by them. This is closely analogous to the findings of Lindsay et al. (2019), who found that the employer's negative impression of employing and accommodating employees with disabilities, particularly those with vision impairment, is correlated with receiving workplace accommodations for visually impaired employees. The study's findings are similarly consistent with those of McDonnall and Crudden (2018), who noted that if an employer has a negative attitude toward a candidate with a visual impairment, they are more likely to refuse to hire them or even to make appropriate accommodations for them.

Findings of the study revealed that the negative perceptions towards provision of reasonable accommodation to EwVI resulted from the fact that some employers lacked awareness about the effects of total vision loss. Two participants demonstrated that lack of awareness of the impairment was a barrier to providing reasonable accommodation:

“The failure to understand can shift an employer’s perception of the capabilities of an employee with visual impairment” (Respondent I). In the same way, Participant C noted how his

experience has made him understand that lack of awareness about total vision loss impairment brings about negative perception of an employer towards providing reasonable accommodation to those with it. He expressed:

“The most worrying thing is that many of them [employers without visual impairment] already have it in their mind. They do not know that having a total vision loss is a different case whereby there are things one needs to do, mostly when it comes to work. Therefore, they really pay less attention to the provision of reasonable accommodation”.

The preceding results suggest that one of the reasons for the unfavorable attitude of providing a reasonable accommodation is the widespread lack of information about the effects of blindness among employers without impairment. This is in contrast to the finding of Dong et al. (2013), who discovered that different employers utilized to give visually impaired employees acceptable accommodations with a positive perception by showing empathy for them and providing emotional support when necessary.

Findings also revealed that two respondents with total vision loss showed that their employers were accusing them of performing poorly; hence they needed not to be provided with reasonable accommodation. Respondent E narrated how she was accused of poor performance and yet, she was claiming for a personal driver to take her home and back to work. She narrates:

“It is understandable that as employees with visual impairment, we find challenges moving to and from home on our own. But me personally, the day I proposed to my boss that he needed to get me a driver to take me home from work

and back, he told me that it may not be necessary after all, I don't seem to perform effectively”

Similar to the above, Respondent F reported her experience. She expressed:

“My manager is a good man. However, the day he told me that I don't need a computer on my workstation to do my work is the day I came to realize that employers sometimes pretend but they don't want to employ disabled persons. I know that even the few accommodations provided to me is because the organization has a disability element in it”

The above experiences of respondents reveal that employers are reluctant to provide reasonable accommodation to employees with total vision loss because they feel that they are non-performers who do not deserve to have the resources of the organization wasted on them. The finding concurs with that of Mapuranga and Mutswanga (2014) who found that employers perceived most PWDs including those with visual impairment as lacking knowledge and having poor qualifications rendering them unemployable and unfit for reasonable accommodation. The study findings is however, inconsistent Solovieva et al. (2011), who found out that successful planning, development and implementation of reasonable accommodation enable employers to hire, retain and promote qualified employees, in addition to improvement of workers' relationships and thus, organizational productivity.

On the other hand, findings revealed that employees; both with low vision and total vision loss found it difficult to request for reasonable accommodation from employers without any form of disability. A few respondents indicated that such employers would not easily understand the

whole situation and as such, they would instead label them as “so demanding” after making a request. For example, Respondent F expressed that:

“It is not a matter of just requesting for reasonable accommodation, you have to first think of what your boss will take it to be. You might make a mistake and then the following day, they say you are so demanding”.

Respondent K also expressed how it instills fear among employees with low vision and total vision loss to make request for reasonable accommodation to non-disabled employers whom they think are already biased:

“It is far from the truth. We have encountered challenges here that some employers tend to be harsh on our blind employees and in this case, they [employees with visual impairment] fear to make requests for what accommodations they need because they know that their bosses will not take it a necessity”

The above findings indicate that failure to request for reasonable accommodation by all employees with visual impairment including those with low vision and total vision loss is reduced by fear that they will not be understood in terms of needs, especially when dealing with employers without visual impairment. This finding is reinforced by research by Ahaibwe et al. (2019), who discovered that it is challenging to provide acceptable accommodations to workers who have visual impairments since employers already have unfavorable attitudes toward their skills and what is needed to make accommodations for them. Similarly, EEOC (2020), which demonstrated that even a larger organization in Atlanta, Georgia, refused to offer a reasonable accommodation to a particular employee with a visual impairment as a result of the employer's

negative attitude towards visual impairment, supports the study's findings. Inconsistently however, Dong et al. (2013) found out that most employers championed fair treatment for employees with visual impairment by subjecting them to a hostility-free working environment.

A few employers had mixed perceptions towards providing reasonable accommodation to employees with total vision loss. This was because the work output was less compared to the costs that were to be incurred in the provision of RA. The finding is in agreement with McNeil (2015) who concluded that employees with visual impairment usually face nasty experiences at the workplace in relation to reasonable accommodation.

4.2 Working conditions for employees with visual impairment

The study sought to find out the working conditions of employees with visual impairment. The findings indicated that the working conditions of employees with visual impairment were largely unfavourable. Findings have been expressed under the following theme:

Workplace interactions

The findings of the study revealed that majority of the employees with visual impairment had good workplace interactions with colleagues without visual impairment. This kind of interaction involved supporting each other in execution of one's assigned tasks, offering empathy and emotional support to employees with visual impairment by employers, and interaction for the purpose of resolving interpersonal conflicts within the organization.

Regarding interaction with fellow workers, majority of the respondents revealed that employees with visual impairment including those with low vision and total vision loss freely interacted with fellow workers by assisting each other during work. This was commonly reported in

situations whereby, the employees lacked enough knowledge about the way to perform certain tasks assigned to them and as such, they were assisted by employees without visual impairment.

Respondent A (an employer) expressed that:

“Our relationship with others is very good since each of us complements the others’ work and we really work hand-in-hand”.

In addition to the above, Respondent J (an employer) also expressed that:

“The relationship is cordial. I think there are no conflicts because workers are used as guides to assist one another”.

The aforementioned expressions show that employees with visual impairments generally work comfortably because of the support given to them by coworkers during office contacts, which enables efficient completion of job activities. The results of Tompa et al. (2015), who discovered that employers and workers with visual impairments can collaborate to plan the data-to-day work schedule for employees, are in line with this study.

On the other hand, most of the respondents showed that employers (managers) too maintained good relationships with all employees with visual impairments by simply offering empathy and emotional support. The most interesting interaction activity carried out between employers and employees with visual impairments was that all employees with visual impairments were allowed to consult their employers on anything concerning work. Respondent A (an employer) expressed that:

“All are okay both staff members and the top management. We are in good terms with them and even our bosses offer consultations if any of us need it”.

In addition, initiatives were taken by employers to allow free interaction with all their employees with visual impairment to device mechanism to prevent interpersonal conflicts among them. Negotiations were seen important by management in preventing the likely conflicts that would arise from non-performance of employees with visual impairment, especially those with total vision loss in order to avoid negatively impacting the smooth functioning of the organization. Respondent H expressed that:

“The relationship is always good as long as you perform your responsibilities as assigned to you in the contract as an employee. The manager also ensures that there are negotiations on something that has not been fulfilled, to be handled amicably without conflicts”.

The study findings above indicated that employers freely interact with all employees with visual impairment in terms of consultations about how to perform new activities introduced in the organization that employees with visual impairment may not be having enough knowledge about. This finding is in agreement with Pavey et al. (2008), who found out that it is important for management in inclusive employment organizations to show the current sighted employees the best practices for approaching their new co-workers who are visually impaired to raise disability awareness. Similarly, the study findings agree with Padkapayera et al. (2017) who concluded that employees with visual impairment are expected to enjoy inclusive policies and procedures as well as an effective work culture at every level of the organization.

Policy flexibility

The findings of the study indicated that the majority of employees with visual impairment, especially those with total vision loss were lacking favourable policies supporting their working conditions. This finding has been expressed as follows:

Findings of the study revealed that little was done in some other organizations to relieve employees with both low vision and total vision loss of workload. During interviews, more than half of the respondents reported that employees with visual impairment were loaded with work and yet, given less time to accomplish it within their respective organizations. Respondent D reported that he used to be given short deadlines and yet, with too much work. He expressed that:

“My work supervisors come once in a while and they expect to find all tasks completed without minding the challenges that I go through to perform those tasks”.

In relation to the above, Respondent B also expressed that:

“My challenge is too much work load where results are expected to be produced in the shortest time possible”.

Similarly, a few respondents also cited travel challenges to and from work due to the policy of the organizations that did not consider providing transport funds to any employee including those with low vision and total vision loss. Thus, the end result was that employees with visual impairment, in general, delayed to reach the workplace to start work in time. The most affected respondents in this case include C and A. In this regard, Respondent C expressed that:

“Traffic Jam delays my movement coming to work and going back home and yet, the manager doesn’t understand that this is one of the reasons I reach late to work and fail to accomplish my tasks in time”

In addition, Respondent A with total vision loss also shared her experience of how she struggled reaching the workplace due to delays by Taxis and Boda-bodas that she used as her transport means, paid using her-own money. She expressed that:

“I travel by Taxis or Boda-boda by self-payments because my boss says that with limited resources, the organization cannot provide everything, most especially money for transport to me”.

The above expressions indicate that some organizations have not bothered to adjust their policies to favour employees with visual impairment, especially those with total vision loss in terms of work they are given to do and how they get to work. This is because too much work is given to some of them and yet, they are allocated limited time some of which is again wasted during their travel to the workplace. This means that employees with visual impairment reach work late after being delayed on the way by public means and thus, exhibiting less work productivity as a result of disruptions. The findings are consistent with the recommendation made by Bengisu et al. (2008) that a visually-impaired employee may need some flexibility in organizational policies such as work adjustments and transport facilitation.

The study indicated that only a few organizations of and for persons with disabilities had in place, flexible policies that favoured employees with total vision loss whereby, only one policy was favourable. The frequently reported policy meant to favour these employees was the flexible work schedule. Most of the respondents revealed that in a situation where employees with total

vision loss failed to complete work in time, employers would often permit them to work from home. For example, Respondent B expressed that:

“Adjustments have been made by sometimes extending schedule for work. We sometimes go and do it from home”.

In relation to the above, Respondent D also expressed that:

“They give us chances to work from home especially when there is too much work”.

The implication of the above expressions is that the flexible work schedule is present in most organizations that enable employees with visual impairment, especially those with total vision loss to perform their activities with ease. The results are in line with the contention put forth by Bengisu et al. (2008) that workers with visual impairments require rules that permit modifications, such as changes in work schedules, in order to improve their performance at work. Additionally, the results are in line with those of Tompa et al. (2015), who discovered that a flexible work schedule has the power to stop productivity loss, job disruptions, and workplace activity restrictions.

Individual support services

Findings of the study indicated that majority of employees with visual impairment in organizations of and for persons with disabilities were largely not provided with individual support services. This finding has been expressed as below:

The study indicated that whereas one respondent showed that all categories of employees with visual impairment were being provided with breakfast and lunch, two other respondents reported in disagreement of this by claiming that they were left to work on empty stomachs. For example, Respondent B expressed that:

“We are given meals like breakfast and lunch and the atmosphere is conducive”.

However, Respondent F shared on how, in her organization, all employees with visual impairment including those with low vision and total vision loss were left to look for food around in the nearby restaurants. She claimed that at times, these employees would sometimes fail to get food and resort to chapattis and beans, something she termed as “Bicomandos”. She expressed that:

“Some of us [employees with visual impairment] survive on Bicomando [chapatti and beans] and others go to the nearby restaurants to look for food” (Respondent F).

Respondent G also showed that not being provided with meals at work mainly challenged employees with total vision loss in their activity performance. She expressed that:

“We are not provided with meals and it’s a challenge to us”.

The essence of the above expressions is that other individual support services such as workplace feeding are received by all employees with visual impairment. This is consistent with the findings of Blanco (2021) who found out that benefits such as feeding are meant for employees with visual impairment just like the sighted workers in the organization.

In addition, findings of the study also revealed that employees with visual impairment, especially those with total vision loss in certain organizations of and for persons with disabilities were transported back home after work, but they did not reach them home. In another instance, the study findings also revealed that employers took the initiative to provide free transport although this only happened when these employees had organizational activities to carry out in the field. For example, Respondent D expressed that:

“Sometimes, they provide transport but they don’t take us up to home. They stop at a certain point and you use your own other means to reach home”.

In addition, Respondent I expressed that:

“We provide transport funds when they [employees with visual impairment] are going to the field plus the machines that are needed in their work such as braille”.

The implication of the above findings is that individual support services in terms of transport for all employees with visual impairment is still lacking in organizations of and for persons with disabilities. This is in disagreement with the recommendation made by Jakobsen and Svendsen (2013) that employee benefits related to transportation for staff members with visual impairment is a requirement.

However, a few respondents revealed that some employees with low vision as well as total vision loss in organizations of and for persons with disabilities were provided with individual support services.

The study indicated that two of the thirteen respondents revealed that employers endeavored to maximize the potential of all employees with visual impairment to perform highly at work through skills development in terms of training in computer, mobility and access to internet-based information. In this regard, Respondent C expressed that:

“The organization provides us with good training skills in mobility and how to access information from the internet that is needed to perform activities”.

Similarly, Respondent D expressed that:

“They allow us [employees with visual impairment] to access computers and provide handsome training that involves showing to each of us how to access information that we may need on internet”.

In observation of the above expressions, employers in organizations of and for persons with disabilities take a responsibility to provide individual support services to all employees with visual impairment such as skills training in computer application and internet access as well as transport accommodation for the field work activities. These findings concur with that of Lindsay et al. (2018) who showed that employers accommodated employees with visual impairment by granting opportunity for further training, short-term, unpaid leave or permission to extend to the maximum medical leave.

Provision of sighted guides

The study findings indicated that all employees with total vision loss had sighted guides. This finding is expressed hereunder:

In the study, two respondents revealed that employees with total vision loss were complemented with extra support of sighted guides. These were provided to assist them in doing the organization's work as well as getting to work safely for quick and excellent work performance.

In this regard, Respondent E expressed that:

“Tasks have to be accomplished in time and for this case, the sighted guide helps me where I find challenges and my boss says, I am superb at work”.

And then, Respondent B also expressed that:

“I use a taxi and at times a Boda-boda to come here but I have a sighted guide”.

The expressions above indicate that employees with total vision loss need extra assistance when executing their tasks, as much as they need it during movements. This is what all employers of these persons have to provide to enable them perform effectively in organizations for and for persons with disabilities. These results are consistent with those of Iyndha et al. (2021), who discovered that companies might take into account hiring a personal assistant for the visually impaired worker to aid with personal duties including eating, walking, and restroom assistance. As a kind of RA for EwVI, Nadin (2017) also suggested that businesses give additional secretarial or clerical support to readers, note-takers, job coaches, or drivers.

However, whereas employers need to make necessary provisions for the service in the workplace, this may be limited, given that it has financial implications for hiring personal assistants, and employers may take it to be a burden. This result conflicts with that of Iyndha et al. (2021), who discovered that personal assistants can occasionally be shared across multiple employees in order to cut costs and increase productivity at work. Additionally, Kirk (2019)

demonstrated that coworkers (sighted employees) can step in to provide teaching, feedback, modeling, and physical cues to the visually impaired workers in situations where there aren't enough supervisors or managers present, however doing so may require training.

Work space obstructions

The study findings indicated that all employees with visual impairment were forced to work under uncomfortable and obstructive workstations that cut short enjoyment of their job and capability to perform effectively. The study revealed the following:

Among the frequently mentioned obstructions by respondents was little space between workstations in offices where employees with total vision loss work on their own without the help of the sighted guides. Respondent L expressed that:

“Having little space in-between workstations in an office makes many blind employees feel really bad because their sighted guides normally don’t help them from within the office”.

In addition, Respondent C demonstrated how he was challenged by the new office arrangement and he even got an injury when he knocked a chair and fell down. The respondent narrated that:

“One day I reported at work and really found the office rearranged. I had not been informed about it and while trying to look for my workstation in the usual sport, it is on the way that I knocked a chair and even got an injury on my left leg”

The implication of the above expressions is that even though it is mandatory for employers to ensure favorable working conditions for all employees with visual impairments, workstations still lack enough space for social inclusion. Also, the arrangement of the workstations seems not to be good because the furniture is squeezed, which causes accidents for employees with total vision loss who have to move around to locate their stations without demarcations. This finding differs from Higgins and Green (2008), who advocated for no clutter at the workplace compound. This is also in conflict with the findings of Tompa et al. (2015), who showed that it is crucial for employers to exercise caution and make sure that the entire workplace is accessible to workers with visual impairments, including restrooms, elevators, common spaces, entrances, and exits.

Generally, the aforementioned findings indicated that the established working conditions for employees with visual impairment, especially those with total vision loss in organizations of and for persons with disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan Area were largely unfavorable. For example, the working policies in place were not flexible, as evidenced by the fact that all employees with visual impairments were subjected to too much workload, transportation, and general welfare challenges. In addition, they were provided with inadequate individual support services and forced to work under uncomfortable as well as obstructive workstations. However, these employees had good office interactions with both fellow employees and employers. They were also provided with sighted guides to support them in their work activities and mobility.

4.3 Adaptations at the work place to enable employees with visual impairment work comfortably

Adapted technology

The study sought to find out the adaptations that were in place for employees with visual impairment to work comfortably. Results of the study revealed that there was general lack of adaptations for employees with visual impairment, especially those with total vision loss.

Respondent C revealed that in the organization where he was working, employees with total vision loss were not catered for in terms of adaptation for computer application software suitable for their work. He expressed that:

"We have been requesting the specialist scanning software, but it has now been unavailable for about a year and a half. However, this would enable quick scanning of paper documents, which might then be saved to computers for larger viewing or text-to-speech listening.

The above expression shows that in a few organizations of and for persons with disabilities, provision of screen reading software is still a challenge probably due to limited funds. This finding is inconsistent with Ginley (2020) who showed that the most common barrier towards access to screen reading software is the inability to use it among employees with visual impairment.

Findings of the study revealed that most of the employees with total vision loss were not provided with adapted technological devices and information in accessible format. This finding expressed as here under:

Two respondents showed that some organizations lacked adequate computers with Braille keyboard and screen, electronic voice response system and speaking calculators as expressed by Respondent H that:

“As an organization whose managers are aware that they are hiring blind individuals, they would prioritize installing enough computer equipment that is Braille-adaptive, such as a Braille keyboard and screen, an EVR, and speaking calculators. All of these, though, are somewhat limited, and I find it really difficult to carry out my duties as an accounts assistant”.

In relation to the above, it was also revealed by Respondent L that magnifying technology software for enlarging images of texts and graphics on computer screens for employees with low vision also lacked in some organizations:

“I have worked with over three organizations employing persons with visual impairment, but what I have realized is that, most employers are reluctant to provide magnifying technology software which would be good for enlarging the image of texts and graphics being displayed on their computer screens”.

The implication of the above findings is that in some other organizations, the adapted technology for the two categories of employees with visual impairment is generally lacking and yet, they need it for effective work performance. The findings are in disagreement with Obany (2019), who postulated that the provision of the well-suited resources like adaptive technology supports employees with visual impairment to carry out their professional duties. Similarly, the study findings are also in disagreement with O’Donnell (2014), who found out that it is of paramount

importance for blind workers to be provided with assistive devices, especially the Braille embossers.

Only a few employees with visual impairment revealed that they were provided with some adapted technological devices that included computers with jaws, smart phones, and braille that were required to manage or overcome limitations associated with visual impairment. For instance, Respondent A expressed that:

“I do my work using computers with jaws, braille embossers and smart phones with free access to internet services”.

The computers and smart phones provided to the few employees; both with low vision and total vision loss had free accessible internet services. In this regard, Respondent B expressed that:

“We have computers and Braille machines which we use and are readily available with embossers. The computers provided have free internet”.

This explains how comfortably all employees with visual impairment work when provided with adapted devices at the workplace. This finding consistently follows the recommendation made by AbilityNet (2021) that in a well-established office environment, workstations and computers have to be set up by IT specialists to make employees with visual impairment sufficiently productive.

Accessible formats

The study found out that there were largely no alternative formats provided for employees with total vision loss in organizations of and for persons with visual impairment. This is further revealed as follows:

One of the focus policy priorities of the national policy on disability in Uganda is access to information whose interventions include promoting the use of Braille, tactile and other alternative modes of communication. Findings of the study show that employees with visual impairment, especially those with total vision loss had limited access to alternative information formats. This was expressed by Respondent C that:

“We have very few large print copies of notices, reports in Braille and large print. Besides, some employees with visual impairment lack knowledge on using the computer and internet”.

In addition, there was also complaint about PDF documents that were inaccessible for use by all categories of employees with visual impairment. In this regard, Respondent I expressed that:

“The documents for use in performing activities are always available, but the problem is that most of them are in PDFs, which makes it difficult to access them, especially for employees with visual impairment”.

On the aspect of access to job advertisement information, the study found out that no information was made specific for employees with total vision loss to pursue their opportunities for promotions within the organizations. Most of the respondents showed that job adverts were made in newspaper print and on notice boards without any statement in Braille to inform employees

with total vision loss about the available promotional opportunities. For example, Respondent G expressed that:

“A friend told me about it [job advert] and then sent me an advert and after, we completed and I was given job promotion”.

In addition, Respondent H with low vision loss shows that she was only able to access information concerning advertisement for her current job through social media platform. She expressed that:

“Me I got to know about this job through social media platforms of the organization and that is how I came to join work at the organization”.

The above expressions show that employees with visual impairment, especially those with total vision loss felt left out by organizations' system of access to valuable information. Notices, report documents and adverts were made available. However, no efforts were made to provide alternative formats such as large format prints to enable employees with visual impairment have access to information that is embedded in PDF documents and organization-based reports. This result is inconsistent with Osfield's (2012) findings, which showed that when using documents at work, employees with visual impairments need to feel comfortable asking for all written materials they need to do their jobs to be available in their preferred accessible format, whether it be braille, large print, or audio. Similar to this, the results are at odds with Crudden's (2002) advice that employees with visual impairments may need copies of papers in Braille, audio recordings, or on computers with screen-reading software.

Physical environmental modification

Findings of the study indicated that majority of all categories of employees with visual impairment were largely lacking modified physical environment. The study findings were revealed as follows:

More than half of the respondents indicated that although buildings were well set for adaptation of movements for all employees with visual impairment, the situation of unmodified workplace environment was observed in some places, characterized by potholes, lack of demarcations on the compounds of workplaces, and pieces of bricks that were broken. These made the mobility of employees with total vision loss difficult. For instance, Respondent M expressed that:

“Rain is good but it’s when you come here that you will realize the need not to have it. The potholes all over the compound serve as an obstacle to access the area and for me [an employee with visual impairment] my movements get slowed for the days I am not with my guide to help me”.

In relation to the above, some buildings were old with broken verandas and floors, which could not be easily and safely accessible for all employees with visual impairment as revealed by Respondent G who acknowledged that:

“The environment here is generally not good. In fact, when you look at how the office buildings and verandas are, you realize that they are dangerous. But as an employee, you have to keep moving, at times you fall off but you have nothing to do since there big persons [employers] say that there is no money for renovation”

The above expressions show that apart from the case for office buildings, employment in organizations of and for persons with disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan Area is not proactive in the adaptation at workplace to enable employees with total vision loss safely navigate the outside environment. As such, modification of the environment has not been catered for to enable them perform their tasks with comfort. This finding concurs with Clayton et al. (2012), who found out that the visually impaired employees find challenges in accessing unmodified physical environments at their respective places of work in Uganda due to challenging building designs and lack of facilities like ramps and lifts.

Only a few respondents revealed that buildings within certain organizations were made in such a way that they favored movements of all employees with visual impairment. The findings were revealed as follows:

Most of the respondents showed that buildings were constructed with ramps to support easy movements and office doors were made wide enough with modified software to make it easy especially for employees with total vision loss access their offices. Respondent C expressed that:

“Buildings have got ramps, wide doors and modified software are provided”.

Similarly, flat-natured buildings for most organizations were well equipped with rails to provide support for movements of employees with total vision loss even without sighted guides. For example, Respondent B expressed that:

“Adjustments have been done as you see, there are handrails which ease our movements and free access to offices”.

The above expressions indicate that buildings are constructed in such a way that they allow easy access of all employees with visual impairment to offices. This relates to the postulation of Golub (2006) that small modifications to the environment increase the ability of a visually-impaired employee to maneuver the building. However, the findings are inconsistent with Iyndha et al. (2021) who found out that in public service employment, the physical workplace accessibility is a problem due to the inability of employees with visual impairment to climb the stairs, there are no lifts, even where lifts are provided, some of them don't talk to ease use by the visually impaired persons.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This last chapter builds on the study findings presented in the previous chapter four to bring out a summary of the study. It also provides the conclusions and recommendations of the study. The chapter concludes with suggestions for further research.

5.1 Summary

The following section brings out a summary of the main findings derived from the study and it follows the study objectives.

The study aimed at exploring the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairments in organizations and for persons with disabilities in the Kampala Metropolitan Area. The study had three objectives: to explore the perceptions of employers towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to EwVI among organizations of and for PWDs in Kampala Metropolitan Area; to establish the working conditions for employees with visual impairment in organizations of and for persons with disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan Area; and to analyze the adaptations at the work place to enable employees with visual impairment to work comfortably. An exploratory research design was used, which involved the use of a qualitative approach to data collection and analysis. A sample of 13 respondents was selected purposefully, and data was sourced from them using a semi-structured interview. The study generally indicated that efforts by employers to provide RA to all employees with visual

impairments were still lacking in organizations of and for persons with disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan Area. The study findings were presented as follows:

5.1.1 Perceptions of employers towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairments

Objective one sought to explore the perceptions of employers towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairments among organizations of and for persons with disabilities in the Kampala Metropolitan Area. To achieve this objective, question iii of Section B and questions iv and v of Section C in the semi-structured interview for employees with visual impairment required employees with visual impairment to show how they felt about their work and the services provided to them to do their work in the organizations. In addition, question iii of Section B in the semi-structured interview for supervisors or employers required employers to show how employees with visual impairments related to them and other colleagues at work and how the organizations influenced their performance. The study established that employers of persons with visual impairments had positive attitudes towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to all employees with visual impairments, largely because their organizations were formed on the basis of disability. However, a few employers had negative attitudes towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with total vision loss, largely due to a lack of awareness of their needs, seeing it as a burden and accusing them of poor performance.

5.1.2 Working conditions for employees with visual impairment

Objective two sought to establish the working conditions for employees with visual impairments in organizations and for persons with disabilities in the Kampala Metropolitan Area. To achieve

this objective, questions ii, v, and vi of Section B in the semi-structured interview for employees with visual impairment required employees with visual impairment to show how they moved from their places of residence to the workplace, factors that influenced their success at work, and the barriers to their work. In addition, in questions i and ii of Section B and questions ii and iii of Section C, in the semi-structured interview for supervisors or employers, they were required to show how the organizational policy on recruitment considered persons with visual impairment, how employees with visual impairment related to them and other colleagues at work, and the challenges encountered by the organizations in providing a favorable working environment for persons with visual impairment. The study established that the majority of employees; both with low vision and total vision loss were faced with poor working conditions due to unfavorable work policies that included too much workload with short deadlines, a lack of consideration for individual support services and transport enhancement, and working under uncomfortable and obstructive work stations. The only favorable working condition reported in the study was expressed by persons with visual impairment and this includes the workplace interactions where all EwVI freely interacted with their workmates.

5.1.3 Adaptations at the work place to enable employees with visual impairment work comfortably

Objective three sought to analyze the adaptations at the workplace to enable employees with visual impairments to work comfortably. To achieve this objective, questions vii of section A, question iv of section B, and questions i, ii, and iii of section C in the semi-structured interview for employees with visual impairment required them to show how they got to know about their jobs in the organizations, how they did their daily activities, how the organizations enabled them to perform their work, the adjustments made by the organizations, and the services provided to

enable them to perform their tasks like any other staff. In addition, question i of Section C in the semi-structured interview for supervisors or employers required them to show what the organizations put in place to enable employees with visual impairments to work like any other person in the organization. The study thus established that there was a general lack of adaptations for employees with total vision loss in the workplace. The adaptations that were expected included computer application software, information in an accessible format, an obstacle-free environment, and ramps for easy mobility, among others. The study concluded that adaptations at the workplace were largely lacking.

5.2 Conclusions

Basing on the objectives and analysis of the study findings, the following conclusions were made:

5.2.1 The study concluded that majority of the employers of persons with visual impairment had positive attitudes towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairment largely because their organizations were formed on the basis of disability. As a result, they provided them with reasonable accommodation as a way of recognizing them as contributing agents towards the performance of the organizations. Some of employers were willing to provide reasonable accommodation to all employees with visual impairment but they found those with total vision loss to be expensive.

Some employers had mixed perceptions regarding the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with total vision loss as they found expenses for reasonable accommodation as double payments since it included paying for sighted guides in addition to employees with total vision loss.

The few employers who expressed negative attitudes towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with total vision loss was largely due to lack of awareness of their needs, seeing it as a burden and accusing them of poor performance.

5.2.2: Secondly; the study concluded that the majority of the two categories of employees with visual impairment were faced with working conditions that were not good due to unfavourable work policies. These included too much workload with short deadlines, lack of consideration for provision of individual support services and transport enhancement, and working under uncomfortable and obstructive work stations. The only favourable working conditions reported by all employees with visual impairment included the workplace friendly interactions with workmates plus the flexible work schedules.

5.2.3: Lastly, the study concluded that there was general lack of adaptations for employees with visual impairment, especially those with total vision loss in the workplaces. The adaptations which were expected included computer application software, information in accessible format, obstacle-free environment and ramps for easy mobility among others.

Only a few employees with visual impairment, especially those with low vision loss had some adapted technological devices that included computers with jaws, screen reading software, and smartphones with free internet services. Information in accessible formats was very limited and the physical environmental modifications were largely lacking in organizations of and for persons with disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan area.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are based on the conclusions reached in accordance with the study objectives and they aim to promote the provision of reasonable accommodations to employees with visual impairment in organizations of and for persons with visual impairment in Kampala Metropolitan Area.

5.3.1 The perceptions of employers towards the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairments

The study concluded that some employers had mixed perceptions regarding the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairment, as they found expenses for providing reasonable accommodation to be double payments since they included paying sighted guides in addition to employees with visual impairment. Therefore, I recommend the following:-

1. The employers should be sensitized about the need not to discriminate against employees with total vision loss in their organizations.
2. Employees with total vision loss should be provided with sighted guides to assist them at work and mobility. This will enable them to be productive like other employees without visual impairment as stipulated in the United Nations Conventions.
3. Employers should continue lobbying and advocating for donor funds to facilitate their activities in order to promote equality and non-discrimination in every aspect of employment processes.

5.3.2 The working conditions for employees with visual impairment

The study concluded that the majority of employees with visual impairment were faced with working conditions that were not good due to unfavourable work policies which included too much workload with short deadlines, lack of consideration for provision of individual support services and transport enhancement, and working under uncomfortable and obstructive work stations. I therefore recommend the following:-

4. Employers should be flexible in their work policies. For example, they should make flexible work schedules that involve allowing employees with total vision loss to work from home.
5. As a matter of organization policy, employers should also provide for affirmative action of all categories of employees with visual impairment regarding extra funds to cater for their transport expenses and meals.

5.3.3 The adaptations at the work place to enable employees with visual impairment work comfortably

The study concluded that there was a general lack of adaptations for employees with visual impairments in the workplace. The adaptations that were expected included computer application software, information in an accessible format, an obstacle-free physical environment, and ramps for easy mobility, among others. Information in accessible formats was very limited, and physical environmental modifications were largely lacking. However, only a few employees with visual impairments had some adapted technological devices that included computers with jaws, screen-reading software, and smartphones with free internet services. Therefore, I recommend the following:-

6. Employers should consider providing adapted technology and information in different accessible formats to enable employees with total vision loss access the required information. This will eventually enable them to enjoy work and enhance their performance.
7. Employers should provide adapted computers and smartphones with jaws and digital voice recorders as well as braille embossers and lenses for employees with low vision including. This will enable them accomplish their assigned tasks with ease.
8. Employers should modify the physical environment by covering the potholes, removing the tree stumps and broken bricks for easy mobility in addition to provision of hand rails on all buildings at the work places.

5.4 Key areas for further research

There is need for further research in the following area:

- The perception of employers towards the employment of persons with visual impairment in the private sector in Uganda.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I: CONSENT FORM FOR RESPONDENTS

Dear Respondent,

I am Twinomujuni Eria Samuela student of Kyambogo University carrying out a study on “Exploring the provision of reasonable accommodation to employees with visual impairment in organizations of and for persons with disabilities in Kampala Metropolitan Area”. I would very much appreciate your participation in this study. The information you provide will be treated with confidentiality and only used for academic purposes. I hope that you will participate in this study since your views are important (*Tick the right option or fill the right answer in the spaces provided*)

Respondents Signature

.....

**APPENDIX II: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR EMPLOYEES WITH VISUAL
IMPAIRMENT**

A) Background Variables

i). Gender

a) Male

b) Female

ii). What is your qualification

.....
.....
.....

iii). What training programmes have you undertaken related to this job?

.....
.....
.....

iv). What is your position in this organization?

.....
.....

v). How long have you worked in this organization?

.....
.....

vi). How many employees with visual impairment are in this organization?

.....
.....

vii). How did you get to know about this job?

.....
.....

B). Working Environment

i). How far is your place of residence?

.....
.....

ii). How do you move to the work place?

.....
.....

iii). Explain how you feel about your work in this organization in the following areas?

Relationship with staff

.....
.....
.....

Relationship with management

.....

.....

.....

iv) How do you do your daily activities in this organization?

.....

.....

v) What factors are influencing the success of your work?

.....

.....

vi) What factors are a barrier to your work?

.....

.....

C). Provision of Reasonable Accommodation

i). How is the organization enabling you to perform your work?

.....

.....

ii). What adjustments have been made by the organization to enable you perform your work?

.....
.....

iii). What other services have been provided to enable you perform your tasks like any other staff?

.....
.....

iv). How is the organization feeling about the services that it is providing to you to do your work?

.....
.....
.....

v). Kindly provide any other information which you would like to share regarding employment of persons with visual impairment in this organization?

.....
.....

Thank you for your audience and wonderful time. May God bless you

**APPENDIX III: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW FOR SUPERVISORS OR
EMPLOYERS**

A). Background Variables

i). Gender

a) Male

b) Female

ii). What is your position in this organization?

.....

iii). What is your overall responsibility in this organization?

.....

iv). How long have you worked in this organization?

.....

v). How many people with visual impairment are employed in this organization and what position do they hold?

.....

.....

vi). What categories of persons with visual impairment are working in this organization?

.....

.....

B). Working Environment

i) How is your policy on recruitment considering people with visual impairment?

.....
.....

ii). How does the employee(s) with visual impairment relate with other colleagues at work?

.....
.....

iii) What factors within the organization influence the performance of your employee with visual impairment?

Negative factors

.....
.....

Positive factors

.....
.....

C). Provision of Reasonable Accommodation

i) What has the organization put in place to enable the employee(s) with visual impairment to work like any other person in the organization?

.....
.....
.....

ii) What challenges are the organization encountering in providing a favorable working environment for persons with visual impairment?

.....
.....
.....

iii) Kindly provide any other information you would like to share regarding employment of persons with visual impairment in this organization?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your audience and wonderful time. God bless you

APPENDIX IV: INTRODUCTORY LETTER