

**EVALUATION OF HEADTEACHERS' MANAGEMENT OF PRIMARY SCHOOLS
WITH INTEGRATED PROGRAMMES FOR LEARNERS WITH INTELLECTUAL
CHALLENGES IN MERU SOUTH DISTRICT, THARAKA NITHI COUNTY, KENYA.**

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MED 111/01635

**A Research Project Submitted to the school of education in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement of the Award of the Degree of Master of Education in Education. (Planning,
Management and Administration) of**

Mount Kenya University

July 2013

ABSTRACT

Educational opportunities for children (learners) with special needs and disabilities is a major challenge to the education sector. Management is a major challenge in institutions for the learners with intellectual challenges. In Meru South District there are 17 such institutions in three divisions Magumoni, Chuka and Igamba Ng'ombe. This study aimed to evaluate the headteachers role in management of primary schools with integrated programmes for the intellectually challenged learners in Meru South District. The objectives of the study were: To evaluate the headteachers' management of primary schools with integrated programmes, to find out challenges facing headteachers in effective management of primary schools with integrated programmes and to establish strategies to address the challenges facing headteachers in management of primary schools with integrated programmes for the learners with intellectual challenges. A descriptive survey research design was used for the study. Populations of 252 subjects were targeted for the study. This population comprised 17 head teachers, 51 teachers and 184 parents. An accessible sample size of 42 subjects was used for the study. Two sets of instruments for data collection were used, that is a questionnaire for head teachers, teachers and an interview guide for the parents. Piloting was done on a sample of 2 head teachers, 4 teachers and 4 parents. Instrument reliability was tested by employing the Spearman Brown split half prophesy technique. A correlation coefficient of 0.71 for headteachers, 0.74 for teachers and 0.72 for parents was obtained and was deemed reliable. Data was analyzed by use of descriptive statistics facilitated by statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The study established that the headteachers were efficient in management of primary schools with integration programmes in the areas of; management of curriculum and learning materials, school-community relations management of students and staff, financial management and management of physical and material resources. The headteachers were faced with a number of challenges during the management, that included; inadequate management skills, indiscipline among staff members, inadequate financial management skills, external and political interference, lack of school strategic plans, inadequate teaching-learning facilities such as desks, and chairs for pupils, high teacher-pupil ratio and inadequate government funding and delay in disbursement of funds for FPE and grants. The strategies suggested to curb these challenges included increased government funding and grants, increased share of government infrastructure funds to enable schools to put up adequate physical facilities to cater for the rising enrolment, minimum transfer of teachers, head teachers training on financial and management, employment of more teachers and increased involvement of SMCs and PTAs in school management. It is hoped that these findings will provide better understanding and insights on the various management issues encountered by the headteachers in management of the primary schools with integration programmes so as to ensure a conducive learning environment for all the pupils in these schools.