



**Institutional Support, Parental Involvement and Retention of Special Needs Learners in
Mainstream Primary Schools in Jinja City, Uganda**

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Declaration

I, Twaha Musa Bahati (Reg. No. BU/GS21/EDM/4), solemnly declare that this dissertation titled “**Institutional Support, Parental Involvement and Retention of Special Needs Learners in Mainstream Primary Schools in Jinja City, Uganda**” is my original work, and it has not been previously presented for evaluation within the academic sphere of any university or higher education institution to attain any educational credentials. Where the works of others have been used, proper citation and reference has been made to them.

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Date 12-03-2024

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Approval

This is to certify that dissertation titled “**Institutional Support, Parental Involvement and Retention of Special Needs Learners in Mainstream Primary Schools in Jinja City, Uganda**” was written by Twaha Musa Bahati (Reg No. BU/GS21/EDM/4) under our supervision. It meets the requirements for the award of the Master of Education Leadership and Management of Busitema University. It has been submitted with our approval.

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Dedication

I wholeheartedly dedicate this endeavor to the cherished family of Mr. Twaha Musa Bahati, whose moral support, boundless encouragement, and profound understanding have been the cornerstone of my educational journey.

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List of Acronyms

ADM:	School Administrator
C.V.I	Content validity index
DV:	Dependent Variable
EDM:	Education Leadership and Management
ECD:	Early Childhood Development
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
IV:	Independent Variable
IEP	Individualized Educational Plan
LVI	Learners with Visual Impairments
MID	Mild Intellectual Disabilities
MOES:	Ministry of Education and Sports
NGOs	Non-Government Organizations
NPA:	National Planning Authority
P.7	Primary Seven Class
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goal
SNE	Special Needs Education
SPSS:	Statistical Package for Social Scientists
UBOS:	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children`s Emergency Fund
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.
USDC:	Uganda Society for Disabled Children
UPE:	Universal Primary Education

Abstract

This study examined the moderation effect of parental involvement on the relationship between institutional support and retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda. The study adopted cross-sectional survey research design using a mixed methods approach. The study objectives included the following: (a) To examine the extent of provision of institutional support to Special Needs Learners, (b) to establish the level of retention of Special Needs Learners, and (c) to examine the moderation effect of parental involvement on the relationship between institutional support and the retention. Different sampling techniques were used for various groups: Stratified for schools, Purposive for Special Needs Learners, Simple random for P.7 Learners, and Convenience for school administrators. The study participants included 22 Special Needs Learners and 17 school administrators as respondents in the qualitative focus group discussions and interviews respectively, and 400 Primary 7 pupils selected randomly to fill in questionnaires in the quantitative approach. The instruments were valid, C.V.I = 0.813, and reliable, $0.722 < \alpha < 0.864$. SPSS was used to analyze quantitative data. Qualitative data were analyzed in themes. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients were determined for the relationships between institutional support, parental involvement, and learners' retention. *Process* plugin in SPSS was used for determining the moderation effect of parental involvement. The results showed a moderate extent of provision of institutional support ($M = 17.95$, $SD = 4.19$, $Min = 11$, $Max = 32$) and a moderate level of retention of Special Needs Learners ($M = 14.64$, $SD = 11.48$, $Min = 3$, $Max = 41$) in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City. The results also revealed a significant positive correlation ($r = .571$, $p < .001$) between institutional support and retention in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City. Finally, there was a significant influence ($R = .679$, $R^2 = .461$, $p < .01$) of parental involvement on the institutional support-retention link. It is concluded that parental involvement is critical for retention of SNE. The study recommended that adequate and appropriate provision of institutional support should be stepped up to improve retention of Special Needs Learners, which provision should be monitored closely by government agencies in charge of inspection.

Chapter One.

Introduction

1.0 Introduction to the Study

The study examined how parental involvement moderates the relationship between institutional support and retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda. In this regard, institutional support is the independent variable (IV) while retention of Special Needs Learners is considered as the dependent variable (DV). This section presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, specific objectives, research questions, hypotheses, scope of the study, justification of the study, significance of the study as well as the conceptual framework.

1.1 Back ground to the Study

1.1.1 Historical Perspective

The concept of inclusive education traces its origin way back in 1946 when the Universal Declaration of Human Rights pronounced education as a basic right for all children. This guaranteed access to education for all children without any discrimination. This concept was later re-echoed by the World Conference on Education for all held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 that renewed commitment efforts towards basic education. Inclusive education has now become a global movement towards ensuring that all children, including those with special needs, have access to quality education (UNESCO Report, 2020). According to the United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF Report, 2022), there are approximately 240 million children with disabilities globally constituting 10% of the world's population. Despite this significant population, Special Needs Learners have historically faced exclusion and discrimination in many educational systems.

However, majority of the Special Needs Learners that is 80% live in developing countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Nekesa, 2018; Ngeno et al., 2019, 2020). In Sub-Saharan Africa, delivering education to Special Needs Learners continues to present challenges but the situation being worse for individuals with severe disabilities, who are entirely left out of the mainstream education system (Kipkosgei et al., 2017; Ngeno et al., 2020). Therefore, retention of pupils with disabilities in mainstream primary schools has remained a challenge in many societies in Africa, and this requires attention to resolve the situation.

In Uganda, special needs education discussions started in 1950s with formation of organizations serving the deaf, blind, and intellectually disabled individuals. The country has consistently been a signatory to the relevant international conventions and agreements, and therefore the rights of disabled people are recognized (Kipkosgei et al., 2017). According to USDC Report (2017), children with disabilities constituted only about 148,095 (1.79%) of the total enrollment (8264,317). Of these about 172,864 are Special Needs Learners in primary schools in Uganda (Ejuu, 2015; UNICEF Report, 2020). These children can access education through three different types of schools, for example, special schools, units attached to mainstream schools and inclusive primary schools that allow children with or without disabilities. However, only 5% of these children are able to access inclusive schools as compared to 10% in special needs schools (UNICEF Report, 2020). While there have been efforts such as development of national special needs policy, the UPE policy, provisions embedded in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, and training of special needs teachers among other interventions all with the rationale of improving inclusion of children with disabilities, exclusion is still persistent (Ejuu, 2015; Moyi, 2012; Niyisabwa et al., 2018; Nyende, 2012). This has made it difficult for the country to attain the sustainable development goals,

more especially the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 that stresses the need for equitable, inclusive and quality education for all (Action Aid Report, 2020).

In Busoga Sub-region, learners with disabilities are approximately 10,912 representing 1.22% of the total enrollment in the primary schools in the region which is lower compared to the other sub-regions within the country (USDC Report, 2017). According to Namwebya (2017), the region experiences very low levels of retention among special education needs learners with dropout rate placed at 60%. In this regard, many Special Needs Learners drop out and do not return to complete their academic journey. This therefore, calls for serious attention in order to ensure learning opportunities for all children in the region.

1.1.2 Conceptual Perspective

In this study, the independent variable is institutional support while retention of special needs learners is the dependent variable. Institutional support is defined as the factors within the school environment that facilitate the inclusion of Special Needs Learners (Moraa, 2013). According to Gichohi (2014), institutional support is defined as those issues within the primary school setting that influence retention of learners with disabilities. This encompasses a diverse array of teaching approaches, educational resources, and school services offered to the special needs learners to increase the rate of learning, enable them catch up with peers and generally improve their success in education (Dorine, 2019). Institutional support is also described as the services that educational institutions provide to Special Needs learners to improve their learning and living environments by accommodating their needs, interests and learning styles (Lau, 2003). In this study, institution support is conceptualized as the organizational and structural support that is provided by the school system to facilitate the education and retention of learners with special needs.

Earlier inclusive education literature (e.g., Kipkosgei et al., 2017; Lau, 2003; Ngeno et al., 2022; Njoroge, 2015) reveals that institutional support can take different forms, including policy frameworks, funding, adequate teaching and learning resources, support services, adaptation of physical facilities and training for teachers and support staff among others. This implies that institutional support is a multi-dimensional construct. Therefore, this study will concentrate on adapted physical facilities, support services and teaching and learning resources as the measures of institutional support. Adapted physical facilities refer to the modifications or changes in school structures and environment that have been made to ensure that learners with special needs access quality education and are retained in regular primary schools (Lamin, 2022; Niyisabwa et al., 2018). Teaching and learning resources are comprised of the instructional materials, methods, assistive devices and skilled human resource provided by the school to guarantee that Special Needs Learners in inclusive primary schools receive a high-quality education (Osman et al., 2020). Support services are defined as extra support needed by Special Needs Learners to adapt to an inclusive environment (Moraa, 2013; Njoroge, 2015). These include therapy, peer tutoring, and transport to and from school, and guidance and counseling. On the other hand, there has been consensus regarding the definition of retention of Special Needs Learners in an education setting. In this regard, retention refers to the process through which Special Needs Learners enroll and remain enrolled until completion of the education cycle (James, 2016; Kariamana, 2021; Ngeno et al., 2020; Niyisabwa et al., 2018). In this study, retention is defined as the establishment of conditions in a primary school setting, which enable Special Needs Learners to enroll and complete a seven years' academic cycle in a mainstream primary school. Different scholars have measured retention of Special Needs Learners in an education system using enrollment levels, attendance levels, dropout rates, completion rates or

transition rates (James, 2016; Ngeno et al., 2019, 2020, 2022; Osman et al., 2020). Therefore, this study adopted completion rates as the measure of retention. Completion rates refer to the proportion of the enrolled Special Needs Learners who complete an academic year and transit to the next class.

Whereas parental involvement is defined as the level of participation that a parent has in the schooling of his or her children with special education needs (Bartolome et al., 2017). Studies (e.g., Apodaca et al., 2015; Korfmacher et al., 2008; Zeynep, 2016) have revealed that parental involvement is measured using dimensions such as participation, supervision, provision, motivation and expectations. In this study, parental involvement constructs of participation in school activities and provision of learning resources were adopted.

1.1.3 Theoretical Perspective

The study was built on the conceptualization of the Education production function theory (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985). The production function is used to determine the possible maximum outcome that can be derived from a given combination of inputs (Hanushek, 1979). The educational output which denotes achievement of pupils is dependent on a series of inputs (Hanushek, 2007). The term production function is further described by Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985) as the process through which inputs are converted into outputs. The educational production function takes the form $A = f(B, E, T, \dots \text{ and so on})$ where

A-Achievement

B- Books and other materials

E- Equipment

T- Teacher ratio among other factors

In this study, the educational output is retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in terms of attendance levels and completion rates whereas the inputs include the adapted physical facilities, provision of educational materials, and assistive services available in a school setting. The educational processes include admissions, supervision, networking and parental involvement among others. However, parental involvement has been considered in this study.

Therefore, this theory emphasizes that provision of adapted physical facilities, support services, teaching and learning resources meet the needs of special needs learners and at the same time provide an opportunity to increase enrollment, access and retention of the pupils in the educational institutions resulting into inclusive education. The theory suggests that there are inputs into educational process such teacher quality, class size, instructional materials, and outputs such as learner achievement, graduation rates, among others. It emphasizes the importance of teacher quality as a key input in the education production process. It examines factors such as teacher training, experience, and effectiveness in improving learner outcomes. Considers the role of instructional materials in influencing educational outcomes. Additionally, parental involvement ensures that required funds and other requirements are mobilized to ensure retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools thereby impacting on the above relationship. The above argument is in line with the existing literature which demonstrates that institutional support facets predict retention among special needs learners in educational institutions (Kipkosgei et al., 2017; Ngeno et al., 2022; Niyisabwa et al., 2018; Osman et al., 2020). In view of the above, it is presumed that when mainstream primary schools provide appropriate and adequate adapted physical facilities, support services, teaching and learning resources along with involvement of parents in issues aimed at meeting the needs of children

with disabilities, this will enhance the retention of the children through increased attendance levels, low dropout rates, and high completion rates.

1.1.4 Contextual Perspective

The education of Special Needs Learners has been a topic of interest for scholars and educators around the world. Inclusive education, which emphasizes the provision of quality education to all learners regardless of their diverse needs and abilities, has gained traction as an essential approach for advancing the education of Special Needs Learners (Mutambo, 2020; Niyisabwa et al., 2018; UNICEF, 2022). However, in the global domain, low levels of retention among special needs learners top most discussions in the inclusive education literature. For instance, UNICEF Report (2022) reveals that 75% of the children are likely not to attend early childhood education. The report also further indicates that 47% of these special needs children are more likely to be out of the primary schools globally. According to Limaye(2016), millions of children continue to experience exclusion from the education system world over. In addition, Ochieng (2019) notes that approximately fifty percent of the learners with disabilities are out of the school world over. In the Indian context, it is noted that 25% of the literate people with disabilities had received education only up to the five years of schooling at primary level through mainstream schools (Limaye, 2016). Relatedly, Farooq (2013) in Pakistan indicate prevalence of low retention and high dropout rates in inclusive primary schools among millions of school going children who don't complete the primary cycle.

Africa has followed suit in poor retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools. For example, in Sierra Leone, Lamin (2023) found out that 21% of the primary school going children do not attend school with many being children with disabilities. Lamin further reports that 5.4% of these children are out of inclusive primary schools as a result of

some kind of disability. According to Flora et al. (2018), in Rwanda though a greater number of children with disabilities is attending inclusive education, 85% of the learners drop out leading to significantly low levels of primary school completion. In Kenya, retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools remains a problem (Ngeno et al., 2022). Additionally, only thirty-eight percent of learners with disabilities were retained to pursue their studies in regular mainstream primary schools in Kenya. Literature in Kenya further reveals a negligible completion rate (0.24%) and declined retention rate (22%) among Special Needs Learners in inclusive primary schools (Ochieng, 2019; Osman et al., 2020).

In Uganda, many children, especially those with special needs, do not have the opportunity to access inclusive education (Niyisabwa et al., 2018). The total enrollment of children with disabilities constitutes 1.79% of the total school enrollment in primary schools (Uganda Society for Disabled Children [USDC], 2017). Additionally, literature also indicates that approximately nine percent of the children with disabilities of school going age attend primary school, and only six percent of them complete primary school and continue to secondary school (Ejuu, 2015; UNICEF, 2020). Furthermore, 7.8% of the special needs children access education through inclusive primary schools (Ejuu, 2015).

The problem of poor retention among special needs learners in mainstream primary schools is more pronounced in Busoga Sub-region. This is indicated by a lower proportion of children with disabilities (1.22%) to total enrollment compared to other regions in the country (USDC, 2017). According to Namwebya (2017), the rate of enrollment and completion rate of special needs learners is very low, with about 60% of them dropping out and not returning to complete their academic journey. Jinja City is not exceptional in this situation as many Special needs learners drop out, making inclusive education a major challenge for children with

disabilities though data on children with special needs is limited. This has resulted in low quality education characterized by low levels of literacy and numeracy (Jinja City Development Plan 2020/21-2024/25).

Jinja City Development Plan (2020/21-2024/25) indicates that inclusive education is a major challenge for Special Needs Learners in Jinja City, although the data on Special Needs Learners is limited. There are only six primary schools that cater for the Special Needs Learners in the city which makes it inevitable that the available mainstream primary schools need to build capacity to support the children with or without disabilities. It is alleged that mainstream primary schools have no special needs teachers, insufficient number of educational facilities and limited assistive devices for learners with disabilities which may hindered access to education among the Special Needs Learners in the city. This has brought about low quality education characterized by low levels of literacy and numeracy, coupled with a high rate of school dropout in primary schools. The rate of retention of Special Needs Learners is therefore relatively low and this could be attributed to lack of institutional support such as inadequate physical facilities, inadequate assistive devices and insufficient special needs teachers among others in the primary schools in Jinja City.

1.2 Problem Statement

The Government of Uganda has been striving to provide equitable and quality universal primary education (UPE) based on the fact that education is a basic human right and a key ingredient for national sustainable development (Niyisabwa et al., 2018). In order to heighten access and participation, emphasis has been put on inclusive education through mainstream schools for Special Needs Learners rather than using special schools as policy framework among other interventions.

However, retention of Special Needs Learners remains challenging as many of them dropout of the educational system. For instance, almost 60% of Special Needs Learners drop out and do not return to complete their studies (Namwebya, 2017). In addition, only 5% of the children with disabilities are able to access education through inclusive schools which is lower compared to 10% through special needs schools (UNICEF Report, 2020). Furthermore, Ejjuu (2015) revealed that only 9% of the children with disabilities attend school and only 6% complete primary schools and go to study in secondary schools. This problem could be attributed to inadequate institutional support and lack of parental involvement which hinders mainstream primary schools from meeting the needs, interests and learning styles of Special Needs Learners. If this situation continues, the country is likely to lack the required critical mass of educated population to drive its sustainable national socioeconomic transformation agenda (National Planning Authority [NPA] Report, 2020; UBOS, 2018). In Jinja City, Jinja City Development Plan (2020/2021 – 2024/25) indicates that inclusive education is a major challenge for Special Needs Learners. With this context in mind, the study aims to examine the moderation effect of parental involvement on the relationship between institutional support and retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools and its impact on their retention in the school system.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the moderation effect of parental involvement on the connection between institutional support and retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda.

1.4 Specific Objectives

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the extent of provision of institutional support to Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda.
2. To establish the level of retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda.
3. To determine the moderation effect of parental involvement on the relationship between institutional support and retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions were answered to achieve Objective 1 and 2 respectively:

1. What is the extent of provision of institutional support to Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda?
2. What is the level of retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, in Uganda?

1.6 Hypotheses

H01. There is a statistically significant relationship between institutional support and retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda.

H02. Parental involvement significantly moderates the relationship between institutional support and retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope is subdivided into geographical scope, content scope and time scope as explained below.

1.7.1 Geographical Scope

Geographically, the study was carried out in 48 mainstream primary schools in Jinja City. These primary schools are known to provide inclusive education programs under new educational policy. Jinja City is a major part of Busoga region; divided into Northern and Southern divisions, with a total of 48 mainstream primary schools. The accessibility of these schools enhanced the feasibility, reliability, and relevance of the research outcomes by facilitating direct engagement with the institutional and participants.

1.7.2 Content Scope

The study was underpinned by adapted physical facilities, support services, and teaching and learning resources as measures of institutional support on retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools. The study also explored the moderation effect of parental involvement on the connection between institutional support and retention of Special Needs Learners in these mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda. The study considered a third variable because the earlier studies on the study variables provide ineffective mechanism on how & why institutional support may affect retention; making the direct relationship mysterious (Baron & Kenny, 1986)

1.7.3 Time Scope

Regarding the time scope, the study was conducted considering a period of three years from 2017 to 2022; putting into consideration the Covid-19 Pandemic period, when schools

remained closed. This time was viable because it is the period when there were high dropout rates, low attendance and rates of successful finishing among Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Busoga region. Data were collected (UNICEF Report (2020), USDC Report (2017), and Namwebya (2017)).

1.8 Justification of the Study

UNICEF Report (2020), USDC Report (2017), and Namwebya (2017) all indicate low and persistent poor retention among Special Needs Learners in form of low enrollments, low attendance, high dropouts and low completion rates in mainstream primary schools in Busoga region compared to other regions and sub-regions of the country. In Jinja City, Jinja City Development Plan (2020/2021 – 2024/25) indicates that inclusive education is a major challenge for Special Needs Learners.

This situation was attributed to inadequate provision of institutional support and lack of parental involvement. It was therefore important to undertake a critical study of the institutional support and parental involvement as critical factors which could be responsible for the low retention of the special needs learners.

1.9 Significance of the Study

The results of this research may have advantages for the stakeholders as listed below:

Legislators: The research findings could be of value to policy makers such as Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES), NGOs delivering special education as the study recommendations would help them in making informed decisions, policies and procedures that govern provision of institutional support to improve retention of Special Needs Learners within the education system.

Management of mainstream primary schools: The study could empower school administrators to create more inclusive and supportive learning environments that enhance the educational experiences and retention of special needs learners.

Academia: The study helped to increase on the body of knowledge on institutional support for Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools, particularly in the context of retention in the school system. The findings of this study also provided insights on how parental involvement impacts the institutional support-retention relationship.

1.10 Conceptual Framework

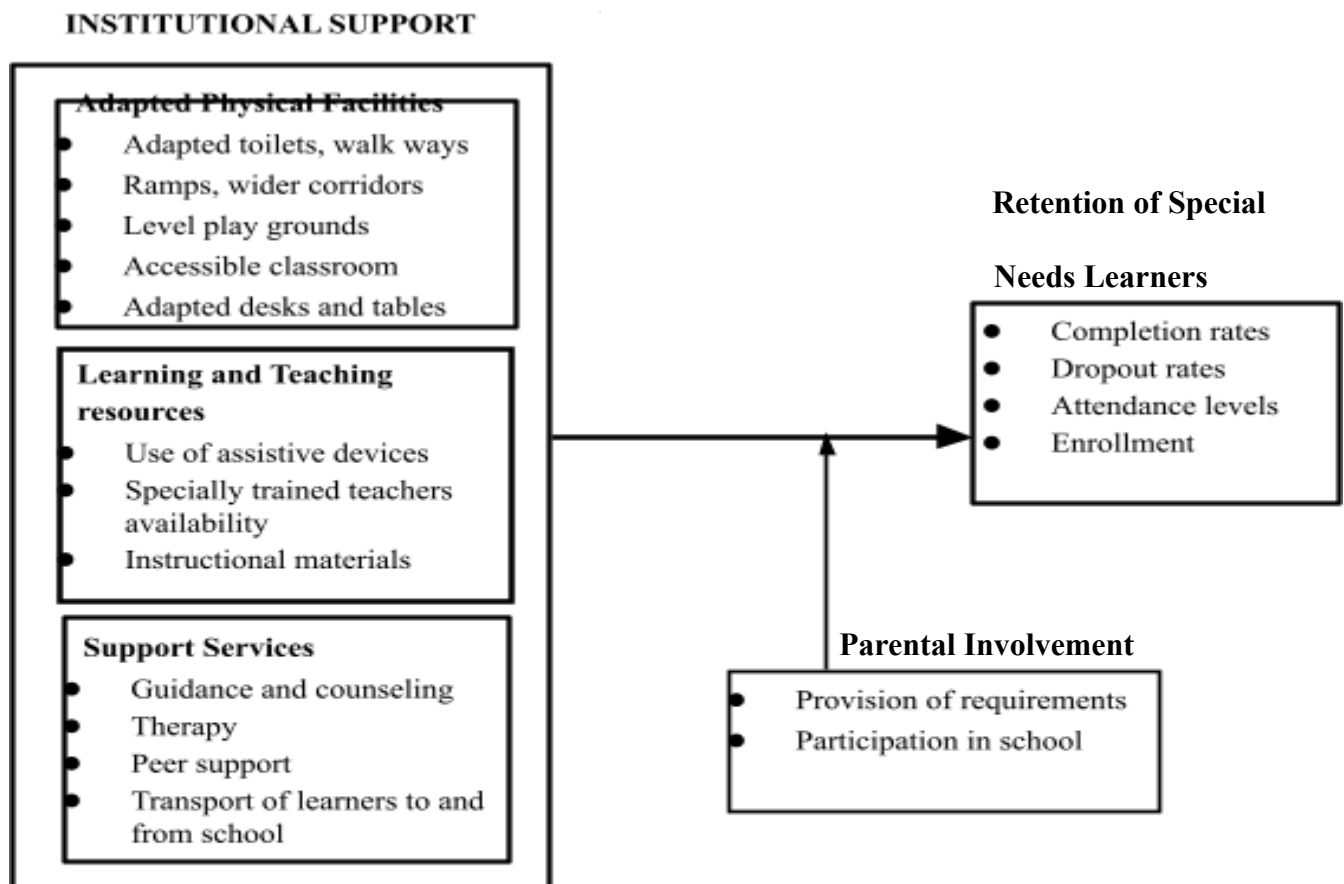


Figure 1, Conceptual framework
Source: (Njoroge, 2015 & Ngeno et al., 2020)

Conceptual Framework Explanation

Source: Researcher (2023)

The above conceptual framework was developed on the premise of Theory of Education Production Function. The production function is used to determine the possible maximum outcome that can be derived from a given combination of inputs (Hanushek, 1979). The educational output which denotes achievement (completion rates) of pupils is dependent on a series of inputs (Hanushek, 2007). The theory suggests that to enhance retention of Special

Needs Learners in terms of completion rate, educational institutions must ensure they offer suitable institutional support characterized by adapted physical facilities, appropriate and adequate teaching and learning resources, and support services as these are essential components of institutional support. Indicators of adapted physical structure include adapted toilets, walkways, ramps, wider corridors, level play grounds, accessible classroom, adapted desks and tables. Teaching and learning resources was measured by dimensions of assistive devices, specially trained teachers and appropriate instructional materials while support services was underpinned by therapy services, peer support, guidance and counselling and availability of transport to and from school. Parental involvement through provision of basic requirements and participation in school was considered as the moderating variable in this study; regardless of how institutional support could possibly predict retention of special needs learners in mainstream primary schools, parental involvement could play a critical role on this relationship.

1.11 Operational Definitions of Key Terms

Institutional support: It is defined as a diverse array of teaching techniques, school resources or educational services provided to the special needs learners to increase the rate of learning, enable them catch up with peers and generally improve their success in education by facilitating effective learning of Special Needs Learners (Dorine, 2019).

Parental involvement: It is defined as the level of participation that a parent or guardian has when it comes to the schooling of his or her children with special education needs (Bartolome et al., 2017).

Retention of Special Needs Learners: This is the process through which learners with disabilities enroll and remain enrolled until completion of the education cycle (James, 2016). In this regard, retention involves establishment of conditions in a primary school setting, which

enable Special Needs Learners to enroll and complete academic years in a mainstream primary school.

Special Needs Learners: These are learners who require special education service provision to help them meet their unique learning needs due to various cognitive, physical, and emotional factors in order to access education and maximize their learning potential.

Inclusive Education: This refers to a philosophy and approach in all learners, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, are educated in together typical educational settings.

Mainstream primary schools: These are traditional educational institutions that cater to the general population of learners, including those with disabilities.

Adapted Physical Facilities: These refer to structures or space within educational setting that have been modified or designed to accommodate the needs of individuals with disabilities.

Specially trained teachers: These educators who have received additional training, certifications, or professional development to effectively support learners with diverse learning needs, including those with disabilities.

Chapter Two

Review of Related Literature

2.0 Introduction

This section comprises a conceptual review, theoretical framework that underpins the research, and a comprehensive examination of relevant literature within the domain of the study. The review also focuses on variables of prior studies and identifying any existing research gaps.

2.1 Theoretical Review

The study was grounded on *Education Production Function Theory* (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985). The production function helps identify the potential highest output achievable from a specific blend of inputs (Hanushek, 1979). The educational output which denotes achievement of pupils is dependent on a series of inputs (Hanushek, 2007). The term production function is further described by Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1985) as the process through which inputs are converted into outputs. In this regard, the outcome of any education process is retention of Special Needs Learners. The inputs include adapted physical facilities, appropriate teaching and learning resources, curriculum adaptations, teachers' attitudes, appropriate instructional materials, human resource skills among other inputs (Lamin, 2023; Ngeno et al., 2022).

The theory therefore recognizes the elements of the production function in education. These elements constitute the inputs, process and output. This means that collaboration of adapted physical facilities, appropriate teaching and learning resources, and support services as well as parental involvement can help management of mainstream primary schools to overcome the difficulties faced by Special Needs Learners and this will lead to successful implementation of inclusive education characterized by stable attendance, high enrollment, low dropout rates,

and high completion rates among Special Needs Learners. This is in agreement with Muthanje et al. (2019) who argue that the education industry should utilize raw material inputs such as physical infrastructure, teachers' professional qualification, pupil to teacher ratio, and instructional materials among others to encourage learners' participation in early childhood development (ECD) and education in ECD and primary schools. According to Kipkosgei et al. (2017), educational outputs such as enrollment, increased access, and retention are dependent on availability of professionally trained educators, the supply of teaching and learning materials tailored to the requirements of special needs learners, and the provision of necessary equipment as key factors contributing to enhanced inclusive education.

Some studies on retention of Special Needs Learners such as those by Ngeno et al. (2019, 2020, 2022), Osman et al. (2020), and Gichohi (2014) have been guided by Von Bertalanffy's *System Theory* (1968), Darwin's traditional liberal concept of equal opportunity and the principles of social Darwinism (1982), and Expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). Bertalanffy's system theory is built on four foundational principles: Objects, attributes, relationships and internal environment. One limitation of theory is the overemphasis on abstraction. Von Bertalanffy's system tends to be overly abstract, making it challenging to apply directly to real-world situations (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). However, in this study, the *Education Production Function Theory* was selected because it offers underlying explanations for all major theories of education production process as it identifies the key raw inputs, the processes, and the educational output. This theory provides a structured framework for analyzing the inputs such as teacher quality, physical resources, support services, and curriculum and output such as learner's achievement and educational attainment of the educational system, facilitating understanding of the factors influencing educational output like retention. In this regard, inputs

in education are the institutional factors such as adapted physical facilities, instructional materials, and assistive services; while educational outputs include retention of special needs learners; while the educational process is parental involvement. The *Theory of Education Production Function*, remains the most appropriate as it provides for both institutional support factors, the process (parental involvement) and the output (retention of special needs learners). By using this theory, the study was able to achieve its intended purpose of examining the moderation effect of parental involvement on institutional support- retention of special needs learners' relationship.

2.2 Empirical Review

This portion contains a review relevant literature in the context of the study's research questions and identifies research gaps in previous studies conducted by different scholars.

2.2.1 The Extent of Provision of Institutional Support to Special Learners Needs

According to Lau (2003), institutional support is one of the key tools used in enhancing inclusive education in mainstream educational institutions. In this regard, schools and institutions can therefore use institutional support to encourage special needs learners to participate actively in their own learning process as it improves their retention in the education system. Institutional factors play a critical role in encouraging Special Needs Learners stay in school through school administrators providing the learners with appropriate funding, academic support services, and availability of physical facilities. Additionally, the schools can help maintain a conducive learning environment for these learners by using multi-media technology and innovative instructional techniques in class to motivate them stay in schools.

Kipkosgei et al.(2017), in a study on the factors influencing enrollment of learners with disabilities in primary schools with inclusive education in a Kenyan context, concluded that

education stakeholders including government should work together to increase enrollment of Special Needs Learners in inclusive primary schools through allocation of more funds, provision of appropriate physical facilities among other requirements for these special category of learners. Similarly, Okongo et al. (2015) argued that the availability of teaching and learning resources like Braille slates, large prints, audiotapes and loudspeakers, wheel chairs, crutches and sandpaper letters are crucial for the implementation of inclusive education as it enhances curriculum delivery, meets the needs of learners with special needs, and enhances pupils' enrollment and retention. The study further showed that inadequate instructional materials affect the enactment of inclusive education in mainstream schools.

The findings of studies by Lamin (2022, 2023) and Osman et al. (2020) both acknowledge that provision of sufficient physical infrastructure and educational materials for teaching and learning by primary schools ensures the success of inclusive education in these schools. Therefore, if school administration and government among other stakeholders in education enhanced institutional support, it could aid the Special Needs Learners easily access not only curriculum but also other facilities that support their learning process and hence an effective inclusive education in mainstream primary schools (Adjanku, 2020). Studies conducted by Ngeno et al.(2019, 2020, 2022) reveal that institutional factors such as trained teachers, provision of appropriate instructional materials, appropriate physical resources, and appropriate human skills had a positive and statistical significance with retention of disabled pupils. This is in agreement with Dorine (2019) who argues that teachers' level of support is crucial if Special Needs Learners are to be retained in mainstream primary schools. The study further recommends that educational stakeholders should provide adequate teaching and learning resources, train teachers in Special Needs Education, differentiation, individualized educational

plan (IEP) and peer tutoring with the goal of ensuring equitable educational opportunities for Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools.

The level of provision of institutional support in Uganda was found to be wanting by Niyisabwa et al. (2018) who notes that most of the required facilities by learners with visual impairments (LVI) to access learning in mainstream primary schools were missing. They concluded that overall, the strategies for enhancing access and retention of LVI were generally lacking in the mainstream primary schools. In this regard, the study recommended that government through the education line ministry should endeavor to provide human and financial resources such as providing brails, training teachers, and curriculum adaptations as way to reinforce the universal primary education (UPE, 1997) policy that gave priority to learners with special education needs to access education through mainstream primary schools; thereby improving on the extent of provision of institutional support to Special Needs Learners. This would lead to enhanced access and retention of learners with visual impairments (LVI) in mainstream schools. In addition, emphasis should be laid on sensitization of school administrators, establishment of integrated schools as well as putting physical adaptations in order to create accessible physical environments for LVI.

To improve the extent of provision of institutional support, Moraa (2013) and Njoroge (2015) argue that school administrators should strategically intend to cater for the requirements of special needs learners through modification of physical facilities, train teachers to improve their knowledge and skills in teaching Special Needs Learners, provide accommodation and transportation, provide support services as well as provide adequate teaching and learning resources. Hence provision of institutional support is a very vital strategy for inclusive education

implementation as it helps in enhancing entry and stay in the school system of Special Needs Learners.

2.2.2 The Level of Retention of Special Needs Learners

Inclusive education has become a global movement towards ensuring that all children, including those with special needs, have access to quality education. Therefore, it has been advocated for by many national governments through special education policy documents in which the Special Needs Learners should acquire knowledge alongside their regular counterparts in the mainstream primary schools (Osman et al., 2020).

Despite these assertions, the current situation of retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools, especially in developing countries, is so low that some schools barely have this category of learners, leading to increased interest in education of pupils with special needs by scholars and educators in Africa (Ngeno et al., 2019, 2020, 2022). There are also mounting concerns that high proportions of learners with special education needs in many low income countries experience high rates of school dropout as a result of lack of curriculum adaptations, insufficiently tailored educational materials and resources, inadequate trained teachers in special needs education (SNE), and lack of IEP as well as lack of peer tutoring among other institutional support, and this makes it difficult for the mainstream primary schools to meet the needs of the special needs learners (Dorine, 2019). A study by Kariamana (2021) on the determinants of school access and retention for learners with physical disability in a Kenyan context reveals that access and retention of these learners continue to be inadequate due to unmet educational needs in regular primary education program. It is also noted that 5.4% of the primary school going age do not attend school due to some kind of disabilities. The same study reveals

that some children did not even have an opportunity to go to school making them excluded from the mainstream education system in a Sierra Leonean context (Lamin, 2023).

Flora et al. (2018) in their research on strategies for reducing dropout rate of learners with Mild Intellectual Disabilities (MID) in inclusive primary schools in Rwanda found that though greater numbers of MID learners were attending, their dropout rate was significant and this has resulted in low completion rates. Inadequate physical provisions in the areas of structural adaptations for mobility, water, sanitation and hygiene facilities, specialized and adapted learning materials, assistive devices and technologies, as well as lack of transportation facilities were found to be the primary causes of low retention among Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools (Lamin, 2022).

Similarly, a study that was conducted in South Western Uganda revealed that there are low levels of access and retention among the learners with visual impairments in UPE schools. In this regard, teachers with braille skills, adapted materials, equipment and devices, and adaptations in curriculum were missing, resulting in low enrollment and high dropout rates among learners with visual impairments in these primary schools (Niyisabwa et al., 2018). In many primary schools, the government, school administrators, and parents determined the retention rate of special needs learners in such a way that made almost all the decisions regarding keeping them in school without seeking their opinion. Additionally, a study by Namwebya (2017) on management skills and retention of Special Needs Learners in primary schools in Iganga District, Uganda indicates low levels of retention. In this regard, a high proportion of Special Needs Learners drop out and do not go back to complete their primary school academic cycle. The implication of the above arguments is that Special Needs Learners may not

necessarily want to dropout of schools by themselves but rather due to conditions in these mainstream primary schools that compel them to do so.

2.2.3 Relationship between Institutional Support and Retention of Special Needs Learners

The need to enhance the access and retention of special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools has become so great that education institutions, government, and development partners are now prompted to develop strategies to better the quality of education so that it enables this special category of learners to complete the primary education cycle successfully (Niyisabwa et al., 2018). The focus has been directed towards enhancing the primary schools' capacity to cater for the requirements and interests of Special Needs Learners by providing sufficient teaching and learning materials, well-trained teachers, suitable instructional tools, recreational facilities, and adapted physical resources, among other interventions (Gichohi, 2014; Ngeno et al., 2019, 2020, 2022; Osman et al., 2020). The reason behind this is that these institutional support allow for a greater enrollment of special needs learners in primary schools (Kipkosgei et al., 2017). In this perspective, we can logically argue that adequate and appropriate institutional support in primary schools is very essential to the attainment of enhanced enrollment, stable attendance, reduced dropout rates, and high completion rates among learners with special needs, and this in turn enhances their retention in the education system.

Some scholars have asserted that institutional support facets have a positive and significant impact on retention of Special Needs Learners in primary school setting (Gichohi, 2014; Ngeno et al., 2019, 2020, 2022; Osman et al., 2020). Though existing literature is replete with studies arguing that institutional support facets have direct influence on retention of Special Needs Learners, there is lack of consensus on which institutional support facets would enhance the likelihood of retention of learners with special needs. Besides, there is no empirical study that

has endeavoured to determine the composite/combined direct effect of institutional support on retention. In addition, education management literature has ignored the adoption of *Education Production Function Theory* in explaining the relationship between institutional support and retention. Also, majority of the studies have been conducted in a Kenyan context different from Uganda in terms of policy frameworks, technology and geographical setting among the other factors. The studies also take a quantitative approach and therefore, emotions, feelings, perceptions, experiences of the respondents have been ignored and yet these can find support to quantitative data through triangulation process. Furthermore, this direct relationship is not conclusive and is subject to other factors to complete the relationship, thus leaving a vacuum on institutional support and retention special needs learners among mainstream primary schools in Uganda.

2.2.4 The Moderation Effects of Parental Involvement on the institutional Support-Retention Relationship

As education institutions and government have started recognizing the need for inclusive education in mainstream primary schools, institutional support and retention of Special Needs Learners has become imperative. However, due to lack of existing consensus on the topic, a greater onus has been put on parental involvement, as being one of the contributors to retention of these learners. As it stands, scholars of education management literature have conceded that institutional support facets directly affect retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools (Ngeno et al., 2019, 2020, 2022; Osman et al., 2020). While other studies have advanced that parental involvement is a significant predictor of access, retention, and inclusive education as well as academic achievement of learners with special education needs in education

institutions world over (Afolabi, 2014; Apodaca et al., 2015; Bariroh, 2018; Ogadho & Ajowi, 2013).

Parental involvement is conceptualized as the level of participation that a parent has when it comes to the schooling of his or her children with special education needs (Bartolome et al., 2017). The rationale is that parents of Special Needs Learners help to provide a safe home environment, transport them to schools, manage their behaviors, and provide learning resources to Special Needs Learners (Oranga et al., 2022). In addition, parental involvement helps to boost learning achievement and enhance motivation of Special Needs Learners (Afolabi, 2014; Bariroh, 2018). Though literature demonstrates that parental involvement is a key component in provision of institutional support as argued above literature, no research has however attempted to investigate the indirect correlation between institutional support and retention of Special Needs Learners. Without which the direct effect of institutional support on retention of Special Needs Learners remains incomplete or unexplained. This aligns with Baron and Kenny's (1986) argument that a third process variable is necessary to provide a more comprehensive explanation or to fill in the gaps in the direct relation between the independent and dependent variables. In this regard, this study attempts to bridge the research gap by integrating parental involvement as a moderation mechanism for explaining why and how institutional support influences retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools.

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.0 Introduction

This chapter encompasses the methodology for the study, a detailed exploration of sample demographics, the precise calculations for sample size, the strategy for selecting the sample, the characteristics and origins of data, methods for gathering information, the means of measure of variables, the validity and reliability of the research instruments, and the ethical considerations that guided the study

3.1 Research Design

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design involving both quantitative and qualitative data collection approaches. This “mixed methods” ensured a comprehensive exploration through the integration of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies in data collection, analysis and presentation. The mixed methods employed, as supported by Tashakkori and Teddlie (2010), was to boost triangulation, make complementariness, and enable extension outside solo method findings, link qualitative with quantitative data. The use of descriptive cross-sectional survey design facilitated the gathering of information that described the current status of the extent of provision of institutional support and the level of retention among Special Needs Learners using respondents’ perceptions, views, attitudes, and opinions regarding the study variables. This design also allowed the collection of large volumes of data from a sizeable population in a highly economical way within a short period of time.

The cross-sectional nature of the study also allowed the collection of data across several mainstream primary schools in Jinja City at one point in time to determine the relationships

among variables of study (Nguthi et al., 2021; Quick & Hall, 2015). In this regard, the design provided greater depth and understanding of the topic and analysis of data gathered from the population at a precise moment in time.

The use of quantitative methods enhanced the collection of data from the Primary 7 (P.7) pupils in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, which gave a general picture of the extent of provision of institutional support to Special Needs Learners, parental involvement and level of retention of these learners in the mainstream primary schools in Jinja City. While the qualitative methods enabled collection of data from school administrators and Special Needs Learners using the interview guide and focus group discussion guide respectively. These were structured to reveal a deeper understanding and interpretation of institutional support, parental involvement and retention of special needs learners. The qualitative approach was used as it gives details of the situation at hand and therefore, the beneficiaries of research will be made to understand the situation, why it is like that, and the practical solutions. The two methods reinforced each other as the weaknesses of one approach was overcome by strength of the other.

3.2 Study Population

The study targeted a population (N = 5000) of P.7 registered pupils (2023) for the quantitative survey, and (N = 140) of school administrators, and (N = 100) of Special Needs Learners; at least 2 respondents each case qualitative data from all the 48 mainstream primary schools in Jinja City.

3.3 Determination of the Sample Size

From a population of 5000 registered P.7 pupils in Jinja City, 400 pupils were selected using Yamane's formula (1967) for sample size determination as seen below;

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

This is because it is simple, and it gave minimum errors in determining the sample size as seen in table 1 below. Where n = sample size

N = population size

e = level of precision (0.05)

The study additionally incorporated the sample size selection recommendations outlined in Krejcie and `s Morgan, (1970) seminal table, demonstrating a judicious approach to determining the research sample. The table 3.1 below illustrates how the population was sampled:

Table 3.1: Determination of the Sample size

Variables	Population	Sample	Sampling technique
School administrators	140	103	Convenience
P.7 Pupils	5000	400	Simple Random
Special needs pupils	100	80	Purposive
Total	5240	540	

Source: (Jinja City Education Department Records, 2023)

From each primary school, at least three (3) respondents (head teacher, and special needs pupil) will selected because of the wide knowledge they have as regards institutional support.

3.4 Sampling Technique

Four sampling techniques were employed in this study:

3.4.1 Stratified sampling

Stratified sampling was employed by categorizing mainstream primary schools according to their geographical location within Jinja City and their foundation bodies. The schools were divided into two main categories: Jinja City Northern Division and Southern Division. Further,

they were classified basing on their foundation bodies, which included Anglican, Catholic, Muslim, and Community schools. When the strata were identified, appropriate sample size for each stratum was determined basing on the proportion of schools within each category to the total population. Within each stratum, every school within each category had an equal chance of being selected. After the schools were selected from each stratum, data was collected from these schools through surveys, interviews, and observations.

3.4.2 Purposive sampling

The study employed a purposive sampling technique to select the Special Needs Learners who could read, write, and speak. This was because they had sufficient experience with regards to institutional support, parental involvement and retention of learners with special needs.

3.4.3 Simple random sampling

Simple random sampling technique was used to select P.7 Pupils for the study. This technique ensured that each member of the population had an equal opportunity to be selected, thus provided a sample that was likely to be representative of the population from which it was drawn. This ensured the generalizability of the findings to the large population. Since every individual had an equal opportunity to be selected, this strategy helped in reducing selection bias. This meant that the sample was less likely to be skewed towards certain characteristics or groups within the population, which led to more accurate findings.

3.4.5 Convenience sampling techniques

This technique was adopted in selecting the school administrators including the Head teacher, Deputy Head teacher, and the Director of studies. This a non-probability sampling strategy where the researcher selected school administrators basing on their ease of access and availability at the various mainstream primary schools. This strategy allowed the researcher to

easily access the school administrators who readily available at station. This accessibility accelerated data collection. The flexibility of technique was beneficial in the dynamic school environments.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The study employed both primary and secondary data. Primary data included distributed questionnaires, interviews, focus group discussions, and observation checklists. The quantitative primary data were subsequently analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Scientists (SPSS) while thematic content analysis was used for the qualitative data, allowing the researcher to make informed conclusions and recommendations.

Secondary data, on the other hand, was gathered from published reports, journal articles, theses, conference proceedings, and websites. These secondary sources were utilized to assess the issue at hand, which was the poor retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda.

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

3.6.1 Data Collection Instruments

The study involved three groups of participants: primary seven pupils, school administrators and Special Needs Learners. In this regard, the researcher used questionnaires, interview schedules and Focus Group Discussions as well as Observation checklists as the main tools of data collection. The interview schedules were used to obtain data from the school administrators while focus group discussion guide was used to gather information regarding retention, parental involvement and extent of provision of institutional support from learners with special education needs. The researcher personally employed an observation checklist to

gather data on the school's physical facilities and resources tailored to the requirements of Special Needs Learners. .

3.6.2 Survey Questionnaires

The study used a Survey questionnaire for the P.7 pupils (Appendix A). A survey questionnaire was adopted to collect a large amount of data in a reasonably quick space of time while ensuring confidentiality. This schedule was used to collect information on institutional support, parental involvement and retention of Special Needs Learners. The survey questionnaire had closed ended questions. Section **A** had **five** questions on general information focusing on gender, age bracket, school status, school composition and foundation body; Section **B** consisted of **25** items which tapped into institutional support in terms of adapted physical facilities, teaching and learning resources and support services; Section **C** questions had **three** on rates of retention of Special Needs Learners and Section **D** comprised of (**15**) questions on parental involvement.

3.6.3 Interview Guide

In this study, school administrators were interviewed to elicit more information on extent of provision of institutional support, parental involvement and retention of Special Needs Learners in their primary schools. In this regard, the researcher developed ten (**10**) open ended questions for the school administrator (see Appendix B)

3.6.3 Focus Group Discussion Guide

In order to get information on attitudes, experiences, opinions, perceptions and feelings on the extent of provision of institutional support, parental involvement, and retention of Special Needs Learners, the researcher conducted a group interviews with some of the Special needs learners. Focus group discussions were guided and regulated discussions with Special Needs

Learners in classes of Primary 4, 5, and 6. It was presumed that these learners are able read and write. Also, during the discussions, the researcher endeavored to audio record the learners' verbal responses to enable enriched data collection process. The focus group discussion guide consisted of **five** items on general information, **five** items on institutional support provision extent, **two** on rate of retention among Special Needs Learners and **one** on parental involvement (see Appendix C).

3.6.3 Observation Checklist.

The employed structured form of observation. This involved pre - defined criteria for recording observations. The observation checklist used in this study evaluated physical facility modifications in mainstreams primary schools across three levels: Great Extent, Moderate, and Not all. It assessed various aspects including adapted toilets, desks, chairs, and other furniture, level playgrounds, ramps, and wide doorways, accessible spacious, classrooms, availability of assistive and mobility devices, and lower door handles (see Appendix D). For items, the checklist categorized the extent to which accommodations were made for Special Needs Learners, ranging from fully adapted and accessible to limited or no adaptations provided. This observation checklist served as a valuable tool for the researcher that enabled to systematically collect objective, standardized, and focused data, that ensured quality and consistency of the researcher's findings (Creswell, 2009).

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

After approval of the research proposal by the two assigned academic supervisors, submission of the proposal to post graduate school at Busitema University, Department was done by the researcher. Thereafter, the researcher initiated the process by securing an introductory letter from Busitema University. Subsequently, the necessary authorization from the head

teachers of various primary schools in Jinja City was obtained before engaging in formal interactions with the participants. After these processes, data were collected through face-to face mode where the respondents filled the questionnaires and the filled questionnaires collected immediately by the researcher. This ensured a high return rate of the questionnaires. Interview schedules with the head teachers and special needs learners were carried out by the researcher himself. Thereafter, the research filled the observation checklist through observation method of data collection. Later, the collected quantitative data were checked and entered in SPSS software as a way of preparing for analysis and qualitative data organized for thematic analysis.

3.6 Measurement of Study Variables

The study variables were measured using the already established items drawn from previously published studies but modified to suit the study context and objectives. For instance, institutional support was measured using three dimensions:

First adapted physical facilities, which included the availability and adequacy of buildings, classrooms, and other physical infrastructure. . In this regard, adapted physical facilities were measured by **nine** items adopted from (Kipkosgei et al., 2017; Lamin, 2022, 2023; Ngeno et al., 2022).

Second, teaching and learning resources comprised of the availability and quality of textbooks, teaching aids, and other tools necessary for effective teaching and learning. Availability and adequacy of teaching and learning resources was measured through three constructs of assistive devices, specially trained teachers and instructional materials by 11 items modified from Kipkosgei et al. (2017), Lamin (2023), Ngeno et al. (2019), and Osman et al. (2020)

Third, the support services which referred to the availability of support services such as counseling, tutoring, career guidance, and academic advising. These support services were considered as a three dimensional construct which was measured through guidance and counseling, therapy, peer tutoring and transport of special needs learners to and from school by **five** items developed from Lamin (2022) and Njoroge (2015).

Retention of special needs learners was measured by 03 items which were derived from (Ngeno et al., 2020, 2022; Niyisabwa et al., 2018; Osman et al., 2020). The instrument posits that completion rate is the measure of retention.

Parent involvement through provision of requirements and parents' participation was measured using 15 items modified from Apodaca et al. (2015), Ogadho and Ajowi (2013), and Oranga et al. (2022).

3.9 Data analysis and presentation

To prepare the data for analysis, completed filled in questionnaires were checked for consistency, coded and data entered in SPSS software. The process of data analysis started with response rate, demographic characteristics and then followed by each objective. The demographic information yielded frequencies and percentages where objective 1 and 2 were analyzed using descriptive statistics to obtain the extent of provision of institutional support and level of retention of learners with special education needs.

Qualitative data from interviews, focus group discussions, and observation checklists including recordings of verbal statements about institutional support, parental involvement and retention of Special Needs Learners were analyzed using thematic content analysis.

For objective 3, the Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was applied to determine the relationship between institutional support and retention of special needs learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City.

In addition, objective 3, was analyzed quantitatively using multiple regression of information from P.7 pupils' questionnaires through a three step procedures advanced by (Baron & Kenny, 1986).

Further, for objective 3, the researcher ran a process plugin in SPSS to examine moderation effect of Parental involvement on the relationship between institutional support and retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools.

The findings from both the quantitative data and qualitative data were triangulated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between institutional support, parental involvement and the retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools. The results of the study were then presented in form of tables, and graph.

3.10 Data Quality Control

3.10.1 Validity of the research instruments

Validity is the degree to which the research tool measures what it intended to measure representative of the fact or the situation (Kothari, 2004). For validity, approval of the data collection tool was obtained from the supervisors and thereafter the instruments pre-tested in part of intended respondents who were not included in the final study's respondents. Pre-testing was deemed viable in order to clarify and understand the survey instruments. The items were critically examined and unsuitable questions revised. The supervisors evaluated the relevance of each item in the instrument to the stated research objectives and these items were rated as either relevant or not relevant to measuring the objectives. Then the validity of the instruments was

arrived at using content validity index (C.V.I) = Items rated relevant by both supervisors divided by the total number of items in the questionnaire as shown hereafter

$$C.V.I = \frac{\text{No. of items rated relevant}}{\text{Total number of items}}$$

$$= 39/48$$

$$= 0.813.$$

As recommended by Newman (2013), any instrument is valid with the C.V.I values all being above the suggested and minimum of 0.70.

3.10.2 Reliability of the research tools

Reliability refers to the extent to which the instruments used in a research study consistently produce the same or similar results when applied repeatedly to the same research subjects or in similar conditions (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Reliability analysis was determined using data from a pilot study on 34 Primary seven pupils from four primary schools which did not form part of the final respondents. The sample of collected data were then entered in the SPSS software 25, and analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha using quantitative data. According to Nunnally (1978), any instrument with Alpha coefficient value above 0.7 is considerable and the reliability test results were tested for this threshold. The reliability and validity results are as seen in the Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Reliability of results

Variable	Number of Item	Cronbach's Alpha
Institutional support	25	0.864
Parental involvement	15	0.722
Retention rate	03	0.726

Source: Primary Data, (2023)

From the Table 3.2 above, the Cronbach alpha for institutional support is 0.864, parental involvement (0.722), and retention rate (0.726). Implying that all the research instruments were reliable.

3.11 Ethical Considerations

First, the researcher obtained informed consent through informing all the research participants about the research procedures, risks, benefits and their rights as study participants before gathering data and implied consent was obtained (Bunnik et al., 2020).

Second, respect for confidentiality and anonymity throughout the research process where the researcher ensured that the rights and dignity of respondents are protected; all the respondents' names did not be recorded on the questionnaires and the information collected was not be shared among the respondents (Parameshwara, 2019). The respondents were also being assured that the information required was purely used for academic purposes.

Third, the utmost respect for the privacy of the respondents and participants was diligently maintained, with a stringent commitment to only documenting information directly related to academic progress. An assurance will be made to the teachers, and head teachers that the study is purely academic and this will be possible by use of introductory letter that will be obtained from Busitema University.

Last, honesty where the researcher acknowledged all other's work which was used in development of his work by citation of all works consulted as seen in the references. This is the reasons to avoid falsification and misrepresentation of the information obtained from the consulted sources.

Chapter Four

Results

4.0 Introduction

This chapter encompasses the examination of data and the elucidation of findings pertaining to the response rate, demographic characteristics, descriptive statistics, correction analysis, regression examination, and assessment of the moderation effect.

4.2 Rate of Response

The rate of response was analyzed to establish whether the number of respondents from which the data were collected was adequate and representative of the entire population. In this case, out of the four hundred and sixty-four questionnaires (464) that were distributed to study respondents, only four hundred questionnaires (400) were completely filled. This constitutes a rate of response of (86.2%). This meets the (70%) threshold suggested by Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) in order to proceed with subsequent analysis.

Table 4.1: Rate of Response

Item	Frequency	Percentage
Target P.7 Pupils	464	100 %
Rate of response	400	87.5 %
Non-response rate	64	12.5 %

Source: Primary Data, (2023)

4.3 Demographic characteristics

This section presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents but particularly focused on their gender, age, status of the school, school composition and foundation body of the

school and has been presented using frequencies and percentages. The table 4.2 below shows the demographic respondents.

Table 4.2 Demographic characteristics of respondents

Item		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	182	45.5
	Female	218	54.5
Total		400	100
Age group	9-12	26	6.5
	13-17	327	93.3
	18 and above	2	0.3
Total		400	100
School Status	Only Day	223	55.8
	Only Boarding	2	0.5
	Boarding and Day	175	43.8
Total		400	100
School Composition	Only Boys	24	6.0
	Mixed	376	94.0
Total		400	100
Foundation Body	Catholic	45	11.3
	Anglican	299	74.8
	Muslim	44	11.0
	Community	11	2.8
Total		400	100

Source: Primary Data (2023)

The data presented in Table 4.2 clearly demonstrated that 182 (45.5%) of the respondents were males, while 218 (54.5%) were females. This reflects accommodation of opinions of both genders demonstrating a fair gender balance in the mainstream primary schools.

The findings also showed that 26 (6.5%) of the respondents were between the age of 9-12 years, 373 (93.3%) were between the age of 13-17 years, and 2 (0.3%) were over 17 years. It is thus evident that that the largest proportion of the survey respondents were between 13-17 years of age. The implication is that most of the pupils were delayed by some years due to covid-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, the results demonstrate that 223 (55.8%) of the respondents were in day schools, 2 (0.5%) were from only boarding mainstream primary schools, and 175 (43.8%) from both boarding and day, meaning that majority of the respondents were from only day mainstream primary schools.

The findings also depict that most of the respondents 376 (94.0%) were from mixed mainstream primary schools, implying that majority of the respondents who participated in the study are accommodative enough and therefore provided for gender balance.

The study results revealed that the majority of the respondents, 299 (74.8%), were from Anglican followed by 45 (11.3%) from Catholic, 44 (11.0%) from Muslim primary schools and 11 (2.8%) from Community primary schools. The implication is that the data are representative of all the different foundation body categories of mainstream primary schools in Jinja City.

The above demographic characteristics allow for a nuanced analysis of the data collected in the study, considering factors such as gender, age, school environment and religious affiliation. They enable researchers to identify patterns, trends, or differences within the data that be relevant to the study objectives.

Table 4.3 Cross-referencing for demographic characteristics

		Levels of institutional support		Total
		Moderate Institutional Support	High Institutional Support	
Gender of P.7 Pupil	Male	56(30.8%)	126(69.2%)	182(100.0%)
	Female	87(39.9%)	131(60.1%)	218(100.0%)
Age of P.7 Pupil	9-12	9(34.6%)	17(65.4%)	26(100.0%)
	13-17	134(35.9%)	239(64.1%)	373(100.0%)
	25-30	0(0.0%)	1(100.0%)	1(100.0%)
Status of the school	only day	64(28.7%)	159(71.3%)	223(100.0%)
	boarding and day	78(44.6%)	97(55.4%)	175(100.0%)
	only boarding	1(50.0%)	1(50.0%)	2(100.0%)
Composition of School	Only Boys	7(29.2%)	17(70.8%)	24(100.0%)
	Mixed	136(36.2%)	240(63.8%)	376(100.0%)
Foundation Body of the School	Catholic	16(34.8%)	30(65.2%)	46(100.0%)
	Anglican	97(32.4%)	202(67.6%)	299(100.0%)
	Muslim	19(43.2%)	25(56.8%)	44(100.0%)
	4=Community school	11(100.0%)	0(0.0%)	11(100.0%)
Total		143(35.8%)	257(64.3%)	400(100.0%)

The data presented in Table 4.3 above reveals that:

There is a notable difference in the levels of institutional supported reported between male and female pupils. High institutional support is more reported among the male pupils (69.2%) compared to female pupils (60.1%). Implying that there may underlying factors influencing institutional support vary between genders.

Across different age groups, there`s a consistent trend where the proportion of pupils reporting high (65.4%, 64.1%) institutional support is higher those reporting moderate (34.6%,

35.9%) institutional support respectively. Suggesting that regardless of age, there seems to be a focus on reporting higher institutional support.

Status of the schools that offer both Boarding and Day facilities have a higher proportion(44.6%) of pupils reporting moderate institutional support compared to those that offer only Day(28.7%) . In addition, schools only Day facilities have a higher proportion (71.3%) of pupils reporting high institutional support compared to schools with Boarding and Day (55.4%). Implying that schools with diverse facilities may have different resources allocations or support structures.

Schools with a mixed composition have a lower proportion (63.8%) of pupils reporting high institutional support compared to schools that exclusively for boys (70.8%). Implying that mixed-gender schools may need a diverse range of resources and support systems

There are differences in levels of institutional support reported based on the foundation body of the school. Catholic (65.2%) and Anglican (67.6%) schools have similar proportion of pupils reporting high institutional support, while Muslim schools have a slightly lower (56.8%) proportion. Implying that the religious affiliation of the school may influence the availability or allocation of resources.

4.4. Objective One: The Extent of Provision of Institutional Support to Special Needs Learners.

Objective 1 sought to examine the extent of provision of institutional support to special needs learners and the information obtained was analyzed under the question “What is the extent of provision of institutional support to Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City?” The study produced the statistical descriptors for the study variable to check whether the data was drawn from a normally distributed population using means and standard deviation.

The study results indicate a moderate level ($M = 17.95$, $SD = 4.19$; Min = 11, Max = 32).

Table 4.4 Descriptive statistics on extent of provision of institutional support to learners with special needs in Jinja City ($N = 400$).

Variable	Min.	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Institutional support scores	11.00	32.00	17.95	4.19

Source: Primary Data, (2023)

This moderate level of provision of institutional support was also reflected in findings from the interviews conducted. Some of items included; “What modified / adapted physical facilities are in your school for Special Needs Learners?” and “What additional services are available in your school to support the Special Needs Learners remain in school?” in which one school administrator said;

“Uhm... adapted physical structure are rarely found on majority of the school structures including dormitories, water points, latrine and bathrooms among other structures in the school. On the other hand, we always offer support services like guidance and counseling, peer teaching, speech therapy to learners with special education needs in this school. I can say teachers support the different categories of learners according to their education learning needs, yes and the teachers try to support them to access learning materials so that they can ably participate in learning, we congratulate ourselves in one or another”. (Interviewee ADM: 02, 18th July 2023).

The response of the administrator is in line with the education production function theory which asserts that the education industry utilizes raw materials inputs such as physical infrastructure, and support services among other inputs to encourage learners’ participation in learning process which in turn results into enhanced access and retention rate.

Similarly, another administrator was asked, “What teaching and learning resources are required for Special Needs Learners in your school?” and responded:

“In our school, there are very few teachers who are trained in special needs and also we experience a challenge of limited teaching and learning materials that are specifically designed for learners with special needs. Additionally, we do not have any transport provision for all the learners, regardless of their special needs categories, which create bottlenecks in their movement to and from school.” (Interviewee ADM: 04, 20th July 2023).

Such a response from a school administrator seems to suggest a little provision of institutional support to Special Needs Learners. One of the administrators, when asked to what extent the school provides institutional support to Special Needs Learners, responded:

“As a school, we provide some modified seats, assistive devices like wheel chairs, we also encourage peers to support learners with special education needs.” (Interviewee ADM: 01, 17th July 2023).

Special Needs Learners also faced some challenges such as poor teacher attitude, ineffective delivery methods, lack of transportation, and inadequate assistive technologies as evidenced by one Special needs Learner who was asked, “what other services are provided by the school to support and keep you retained in school?” and responded:

“Our teachers are not concerned about our education needs during learning process, as no special attention is given during classwork and examination in terms of time allocation for various activities among others issues. So we are almost helpless in and out of classes which inconveniences us” (Interviewee FGD: 03, 21st June, 2023).

The above challenges notwithstanding, every education institution needs to keep track of provision of institutional support to Special Needs Learners.

The responses of the administrators and Special Needs Learners above confirm the quantitative findings that there is a moderate extent of provision of institutional support in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City.

4.5 Objective Two: Level of retention of special needs learners in mainstream primary schools.

The second objective sought to establish the level of retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda. The level of retention of Special Needs Learners in the second objective was analyzed under the question, “What is the level of retention of special needs learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City?” To establish the level of retention, descriptive statistics were generated by transforming items of the same objective to aggregate them and the scores ranged from 3 to 41 ($M = 14.6400$, $SD = 11.47583$). The results showed a moderate level of retention among the Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City as shown in the table 4.4 below;

Table 4.5: Descriptive statistics on retention of special needs learners ($N = 400$)

Variable	Min.	Max.	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Retention rate scores	3.00	41.00	14.64	11.48

Source: Primary Data, (2023)

These statistics align with the results from the interviews carried out among the school administrators who gave divergent views on retention of special needs learners in the different mainstream primary schools. When asked to comment on various aspects of retention of Special Needs Learners in the recent years, including enrollment, dropout rates,

and completion rates at primary seven, one administrator stated:

“Few special needs learners enroll and keep dropping out due to some reasons beyond the school. He also noted that, for the last five years, the school has not registered any candidate for Primary Leaving Examinations as almost all dropout before completing the academic cycle and as a school were are concerned” (Interviewee ADM: 01, 17th July 2023).

The moderate levels of retention among special needs learners can be partly explained by a response from one of the administrators when asked about the necessary teaching and learning resources for Special Needs Learners in the school, and whether they available and enough to accommodate all learners. He said that:

“The majority of the intuitional support facilities for Special Needs Learners are missing.” (Interviewee ADM: 08, 26th July 2023).

On the contrary, another administrator when was asked, “In your opinion, to what extent is this school able to retain Special Needs Learners?”; revealed that learners with special education needs were retained to some reasonable extent. He stated,

“Special Needs Learners attend consistently, transit to next classes and the school typically have at least two candidates who register and sit for PLE examinations every year. I can say their performance has not been poor.” (Interviewee ADM: 05, 21st July 2023).

The moderate levels of retention of Special Needs Learners was attributed to factors beyond institutional control. For instance during one interview, a school administrator when was asked about their perspective on aspects influencing the retention of Special Needs Learners in the recent years such as enrollment and dropout rates. The administrator revealed that:

“Most of the Special Needs Learners face challenges such as traveling long distances, coming from poor socio-economic status, and having severe type of special needs. Consequently,, some of these Learners are forced to drop out." (Interviewee ADM: 07, 25th July 2023).

Drawing from the different responses of the above administrators, retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream P/S in Jinja City is moderate because in some schools the learners seemed to be retained than in others, which is in agreement with the quantitative results.

4.6 Objective Three: The moderation effect of parental involvement on the relationship between institutional support and retention of special needs learners

Objective 3 was purposed to determine the moderation effect of parental involvement on the relationship between institutional support and retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda. A Pearson Product Moment correlation analysis was performed to establish the relationship between the variables as a prerequisite for the moderation analysis. The correlation analysis results are presented in Table 4.5 below;

Table 4.6 Results of Correlation Analysis

Variable	(1)	(2)	(3)
Institutional support (1)	1		
Parental involvement (2)	.293**	1	1
Retention (3)	.571**	.455**	
** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) N=400			

Source: Primary Data, (2023)

The results in the table 4.5 above indicate a significant moderate positive relationship between institutional support and retention of learners with special needs ($r = .571$, $p < 0.01$). The results mean that an improvement in retention of Special Needs Learners is associated with improvement in institutional support. The results in Table 4.5 above also show a significant

positive relationship between parental involvement and retention ($r = .455, p < 0.01$). The results mean that an increase in retention is associated with an increase in parental involvement.

Furthermore, the findings in Tables 4.5 revealed that there is a positive and significant relationship between institutional support and parental involvement ($r = .293, P < 0.01$). These findings imply that a variation in parental involvement results into a proportionate variation in institutional support. This result correlates with what interviewee (ADM: 03) said when was asked to comment on the aspects of retention of Special Needs Learners in the recent years including dropout rates and completion rates. Response:

“Once Special Needs Learners are provided with appropriate teaching and learning resources, they will be able to access the curriculum study material and this motivates them to continue staying in school.” (Interviewee ADM: 03, 19th July 2023).

In other words, the administrator seems to suggest that when schools provide different forms of institutional support to Special education needs, their retention is improved.

Relatedly, another school administrator when was asked, “What additional services are available in your school to support the Special Needs Learners remain in school?” and “What modified / adapted physical facilities are in your school for Special Needs Learner?” The administrator observed that:

” our school encourages peer support, teachers also get specialized training to enable us meet the needs of Special Needs Learners”.

“yes and we try to make necessary modifications on structures available in school to enable these learners appreciate the learning environment thus retaining them in school.” (Interviewee ADM: 02, 18th July 2023).

A moderation analysis (Model 1) was done using Process Plugin in SPSS and Table 4.6 shows the results.

Table 4.7: Moderation results

Model 1

	Coeff	SE	T	P	LLCI	ULCI
Constant	13.7506	.4504	30.5305	.0000	12.8651	14.6360
IS	1.3507	.1060	12.7441	.0000	1.1424	1.5591
PI	.4086	.0608	6.7175	.0000	.2890	.5282
Interaction	.0974	.0170	5.7292	.0000	.0640	.1309

Note. $R = .679$, $R^2 = .461$, $F(3, 396) = 112.971$, $p < .01$

From the results in the Table 4.6, there was significant fit of the data to the multiple regression model ($F(3, 396) = 112.971$, $p < .01$). Institutional support and parental involvement predicted 46.1% variance ($R^2 = .461$) in retention of special needs learners in primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda. At zero institutional support, the estimated mean retention was statistically significant ($B = 13.75$, $t = 30.53$, $p = .00$), implying that in the absence of institutional support, parental involvement still played a crucial role in determining the retention of special needs learners in mainstream primary schools.

Holding other variables constant, for every one-unit increase in institutional support, there was a 1.35-unit increase in retention ($B = 1.35$, $t = 12.72$, $p < .01$). Also holding other factors constant, there is a .41-unit increase in retention for every one-unit increase in parental involvement ($B = .41$, $t = 6.71$, $p = .00$). The interaction of institutional support and parental involvement was significant; for every one-unit increase in the interaction there was a .10-unit increase in retention, holding other variables constant ($B = .10$, $t = 5.73$, $p < .01$), implying that the

relationship between institutional support and retention varies at different levels of parental involvement. Hence Hypothesis (H02) was accepted. The interaction is positive, which suggests that the effect of institutional support on retention is stronger when parental involvement is higher. Johnson-Neyman significance region is between values -9.9488 and 32.5300, suggesting that the moderation effect was statistically significant in this range (see appendix F).

The moderation graph (Figure 2) shows how the effect of institutional support on retention is moderated by parental involvement.

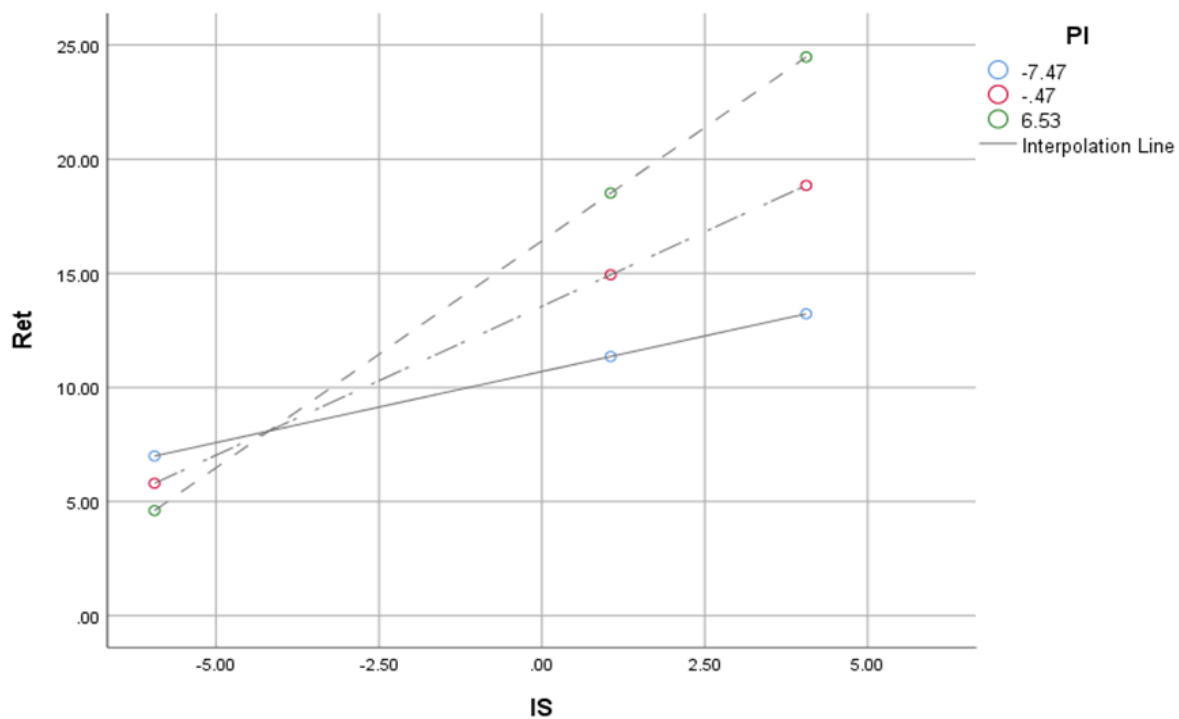


Figure 2. The moderation effect of parental involvement on the relationship between institutional support and retention.

The graph 1 shows the moderation effect of parental involvement on the relationship between institutional support and retention at three different levels (low, moderate, and high). Retention of the learners decreased with increasing parental involvement at low levels of institutional support. This implies that parents probably withdrew their children from schools

where there was little or no institutional support in form of adapted physical facilities, support services and teaching and learning resources. At moderate and high levels of institutional support, increase in parental involvement reciprocally increased retention of the learners. This most probably indicates that parents augmented the existing provisions for their special needs children in schools that offered support in form of some adapted learning materials like desks, large print, wider corridors and ramps on some building among others. These results is that schools should ensure the provision of minimum resources to attract positive parental involvement, and hence encourage active parental involvement in the education process, recognizing the crucial role parents play in supporting the learning outcomes of special needs learners.

It can be concluded that parental involvement significantly moderates the relationship between institutional support and the retention of special needs learners, our findings suggest that the positive impact of institutional support is more pronounced when parents are actively engaged. This highlights the importance of fostering collaboration between schools and parents to optimize the support systems in place for special needs students in mainstream primary schools. This concur with what interviewee (FGD: 02) said when asked, “What role do your parents play in ensuring that you remain in school so that you can complete you primary seven class?” Response:

“Our parents of help us with transportation to and from school, contribute to provision of specialized assistive devices, and purchase some specialized mobility, visual aids and communication devices. These supports have helped us to stay at school”. ." (Interviewee FGD: 04, 18th July 2023).

Chapter Five

Discussion of Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.0 Introduction

The chapter presents the discussion, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings in chapter four. The chapter is sub-divided into five sub-chapters namely: the discussions related to the study objectives, conclusions, recommendations, and limitations of the study and lastly, areas of further research.

5.1 Discussion of the Study Findings

5.1.1 Extent of provision of institutional support to Special Needs Learners

The study sought to examine the extent of provision of institutional support to Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City. The findings revealed that there is generally a moderate level (11- 32) of institutional support provided to the Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City. The study results seem to suggest that most school environments had inadequate levels of adapted physical facilities for instance the schools lacked adapted toilets, walk ways, desks and tables, structures did not have ramps as well, as play grounds and classroom not being easily accessible by Special Needs Learners. Generally, this seem to that the existing institutional support are not adequately addressing the needs of special needs learners in the mainstream primary schools in Jinja City.

However, concerning adequacy of provision of teaching and learning resources to learners, many administrators and Special Needs Learners seemed to be of the view that to some extent instructional materials and assistive devices such as loud speakers for hearing impairment, glasses for visual impairments among others are provided to support their learning process and as regards training in special needs, majority of the teachers had received in service special needs

trainings. The moderate levels of institutional support could be due to inadequate transport mechanisms for the Special Needs Learners to and from school, and limited therapies like speech, physiological and occupational therapies among other support services in most of the mainstream primary schools in Jinja City.

The researcher's observation affirmed the absence of suitable resources that had been adapted. Whereas some schools did provide institutional support, others seem not to get bothered. In some cases, adapted physical facilities like ramps, walkways were observed to be available while other institutional support were found to be missing.

5.1.2 The level of retention of Special Needs Learners in Jinja City

The second objective sought to establish the level of retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City. The findings showed that there was generally a moderate level (3- 41) of retention of Special Needs Learners in Jinja City. The results mean that the completion rates among Special Needs Learners in different P/S is moderate. The findings could be because there are factors other than investigated institutional support and parental involvement that are responsible for retention of Special Needs Learners, so even if the school administrators provides institutional support and also involved parents, still some learners would dropout. It should be noted that there are many ways of motivating Special Needs Learners to be remain in school, and in school setting, administrators need to incorporate others strategies other than institutional support if they are to attain retention of Special Needs Learners.

In Jinja City mainstream primary schools, the results revealed that majority of the learners with special needs are not retained as they do not complete an academic year and transit to next classes and teachers seem not be concerned with the situation. The study reveal that most school administrators seem to be interested in retaining of Special Needs Learners but do little in

exploring other avenues for retention of Special Needs Learners, which explain the moderate level of retention among Special Needs Learners. It can therefore, be concluded that retention levels of Special Needs Learners in Jinja City are just moderated and not only attributable to institutional support and parental involvement but also other factors may play a critical role in enhancing retention among the Special Needs Learners.

5.1.3 Moderation Effect of parental involvement on the institutional support-retention

Relationship

The third objective was to investigate the moderation effect of parental involvement on the relationship between institutional support and the retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City. The study findings revealed that parental involvement significantly moderates the association of institutional support and retention. The implication is that parental involvement transfers the inputs of institutional support to enhance retention of Special Needs Learners.

The results revealed a significant direct relationship ($r = .293, p < .01$). Implying that a variation in parental involvement results into a proportionate variation in institutional support. These results correlates with what the interviewee's (ADM O3) response. In other words, the study findings seem suggest that parental involvement positively impacts on the relationship between institutional support and retention of Special Needs Learners. The findings of the study are supported by the education production function theory (Psacharopoulos & Woodhall, 1985), which argue that recognizes the elements of the production function in education constituting the inputs, process and output. This mean that collaboration of adapted physical facilities, appropriate teaching and learning resources, and support services as, well as parental involvement can help management of mainstream primary schools to overcome the difficulties

faced by Special Needs Learners and this would result into successful implementation of inclusive education characterized by stable attendance, high enrollment, low dropout rates, high completion rates among Special Needs Learners hence retention.

5.2 Conclusion

In line with the above findings, the following conclusions were made;

First, the observation of moderate level of provision of Institutional support to Special Needs Learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City implies that schools are making efforts to accommodate Special Needs Learners. The study concludes that school administrators and government among other education partners should endeavor to provide organizational and structural support such as adapted physical facilities, adequate and appropriate teaching and learning resources and different support services like counseling and peer support among others

Second, the retention rate was moderate among the Special Needs Learners because the school administrators seemed not to pay special attention to provision of institutional support as modifications on structures were missing, support services were insufficient. The conclusion is that educational institutions should develop institutional strategies to enhance the completion rates among Special Needs Learners in different P/S.

Last, the study found that parental involvement significantly moderates the association institutional support and retention, implying that parental involvement transfers the inputs of institutional support to enhance retention of Special Needs Learners thus positively impacts on the relationship. Consequently, the study concluded that the effect of institutional support on retention is impacted by parental involvement.

5.3 Recommendations

In line with the above conclusions, the study draws the following recommendations to enable the education stakeholders improve on institutional support, parental involvement and enhance retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream P/S in Jinja City:

First, the school administrators seem to not to be paying attention to provision of institutional support despite the Ministry of Education and Sports guidelines that are in place. The study recommends that the provision of institutional support in education institutions should be closely supervised by the government agencies.

Second, retention of Special Needs Learners seem to take whole school approach where nobody special committee is available to cater for this special component in a school setting. Therefore, school administrators should endeavor to form a special committee to pursue this critical component of special needs learning environment in school to enhance the retention levels of special needs learners in mainstream primary schools. The government and school administrators should focus on development and provision of appropriate and adequate institutional support such as adapted physical facilities, teaching and learning resources and support services to Special Needs Learners in order to enhance retention since these enable higher completion rates by meeting the needs and interests of Special Needs Learners in a school setting.

Third, school administrators should endeavor to involve parents in school matters relating to special education issues in mobilizing the different institutional support as a mechanism for enhancing retention of Special Needs Learners because parental involvement helps in raising teaching and learning resources, mobilization of funds required to provide other basic needs to the Special Needs Learners in schools.

5.4 Study Limitations

The study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional survey research design where data from the study respondents was obtained just in once in a time and such results therefore are unable to capture some changes that occurred after the data was collected.

Second, the study was limited to the moderating role of parental involvement on the institutional support- retention relationship but considering few constructs under each of the study variables, yet they are multi-dimensional concepts, and therefore the findings may not be used to generalize that parental involvement moderates the relationship between institutional support and retention of Special Needs Learners.

Last, the study is only limited to mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, and the results may not be generalized to other settings such as private, secondary and non-governmental P/S as well as institutions of higher learning due to the difference in the nature of in these schools setting.

5.5 Suggested Areas for Further Research

In line with the above identified limitations, the following areas for further research have been suggested. The study recommends a longitudinal study along with a qualitative approach to examine the relationship between institutional support, parental involvement, and retention of Special Needs Learners. This will enable capturing changes that occur over time and give deeper understanding of retention of Special Needs Learners.

The study also suggested that future studies may also examine the mediating effect of parental involvement on the institutional support- retention rate association in the same and others settings to compare the study findings.

Last, the study was carried out in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda. Therefore, we recommend other studies to test this retention model using data set from private, secondary and Non-Government schools as well as educational institutions of higher education in Uganda.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Questionnaire for Primary Seven Learners in Mainstream Primary Schools Special Needs Learners in Jinja City

REF: INTRODUCTION LETTER

Dear Respondent,

I am **Bahati Twaha Musa** a master's student of Busitema University pursuing Master of Education Leadership and Management. As part of the requirements of the program, I am required to conduct a research study related to my area of specialization. The research is titled 'Institutional Support, Parental involvement and Retention of Special Needs Learner in Mainstream Primary Schools in Jinja City. The aim of this letter is to request you to take some minutes to answer the attached questionnaire. The information you provide shall be treated with complete confidentiality anonymity and will solely be used for academic purposes. **Therefore, do not write your name any on this questionnaire**

I greatly value your involvement

I deeply appreciate your willingness to participate in this study.

Section A: General Information

Please Tick (✓) the option that best describe your option

S/N	VARIABLE	RESPONSE
1	What is your gender?	☐ Male ☐ Female
2	What is your age bracket?	☐ 4 – 8 years ☐ 13 – 17 years ☐ 9 – 12 years ☐ 18 years and above
3	What is the status of this school?	☐ Only Day ☐ Boarding and Day ☐ Only Boarding
4	What is the Composition of this school?	☐ Only Girls ☐ Mixed School ☐ Only Boys
5	Indicate the foundation body this school	☐ Catholic ☐ Muslim ☐ Anglican ☐ Community

SECTION B: Extent of Provision of Institutional Support to Special Needs Learners in mainstream Primary Schools in Jinja City, Uganda

What kind of institutional support is available in your school to accommodate the needs of Special Needs Learners in your school? Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree with the statements below by ticking appropriately i.e., 1-YES, 0-NO,

A	The school has the following Adapted Physical Facilities	Yes	No
1	Ramps on most of the school structures.	1	0
2	Adapted desks, chairs and modified tables	1	0
3	Adapted toilets	1	0
4	Lower door handles	1	0
5	Level play grounds	1	0
6	Accessible, spacious classrooms	1	0
7	Light switches	1	0
8	Wider corridors	1	0
9	Modified walkways	1	0
B	The school provides the following Teaching and Learning Resources	Yes	No
10	Large print materials for learners with low vision	1	0
11	Hearing aids for residual hearing challenges to boost hearing while in class.	1	0
12	Crutches to physically disabled learners	1	0
13	Book holders for learners with physical difficulties of grasping	1	0
14	Embossed diagrams for learners with low vision	1	0
15	Visual aids for learners with low vision during the teaching and learning process	1	0
16	Low seats to learners with physical disability in their classrooms	1	0
17	Appropriate and sufficient “talking braille to the visually impaired learners	1	0
18	Appropriate text books for learner with special education needs	1	0
19	Appropriate and adequate computers for visually impaired learners	1	0
20	Enough specially trained teachers	1	0
C	The school offers the following Support Services to learners with special needs	Yes	No
21	Regular guidance and counseling.	1	0

22	Specialists such as braillists, physiotherapists, sign and speech interpreters, psychologists among others who come from different institutions.	1	0
23	Adequate buses and taxis that transport the learners to and from the school	1	0
24	Peer tutoring among the abled and disabled learners	1	0
25	Abled learners help to push the wheel chairs of those who are physically disabled	1	0

SECTION C: Retention of Learners with Special Education Needs in mainstream Primary Schools in Jinja City, Uganda

In this section, you are required to write the number of Special Needs Learners that you have studied with as per the table below;

How many learners with special needs are/were in your stream in the following classes? (Indicate T for the class in which you changed school.)	P1	P2	P3	P4	P5	P6	P7
Visual Impairment							
Hearing Impairment							
Physical Disability							

SECTION C: Parental involvement in education of special needs learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda

To what extent do the following aspects of parent involvement influence retention of learners with special education needs? (1-Strongly Agree, 2- Agree, 3- Not sure, 4- Disagree, 5-Strongly Disagree)

PARENT INVOLVEMENT						
	Provision of basic requirement	SD1	D2	N3	A4	SA5
1	My parents try to provide toiletries, pencils, exercise books and some pocket money for their children whenever they can	1	2	3	4	5
2	I come to school with a smart uniform, shoes, socks and a sweater	1	2	3	4	5
3	My parent ensures I have regular medical checkups to monitor my health	1	2	3	4	5
4	I always have enough food at home	1	2	3	4	4

5	My Parents always pay fees timely to avoid being sent home	1	2	3	4	5
6	My parents try to pay school requirements even though they are usually too many compared to their meagre financial earnings	1	2	3	4	5
7	I come to school with enough pocket money	1	2	3	4	5
	Participation in school					
1	My parent attend IEP, AGM, class meetings, and others held at school where major discussions are made	1	2	3	4	5
2	My parent endeavor to discuss with my teachers about my academic progress whenever they come school	1	2	3	4	5
3	My Parents do check the children's work whenever need arises	1	2	3	4	5
4	My Parents always visit the school to seek more information about me	1	2	3	4	5
5	My parents come to school to check on my discipline only when am suspended by the school administrators	1	2	3	4	5
6	My parents volunteer in fundraising for this school to improve school infrastructure like class rooms, computers, and laboratories among others	1	2	3	4	5
7	My parents are interested in knowing what is written in a letter by school administration at any time	1	2	3	4	5
8	My parents have a contact for my class teacher	1	2	3	4	5

You have completed the questionnaire!

YOUR TIME AND GRACIOUS COOPERATION ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED

Appendix B: Interview Guide

Interview for the school administrators in Mainstream Primary schools with Special Needs Learners in Jinja City

REF: INTRODUCTION LETTER

Dear Respondent,

I am **Bahati Twaha Musa** a master's student of Busitema University pursuing Master of Education Leadership and Management. As part of the requirements of the program, I am required to conduct a research study related to my area of specialization. The research is titled 'Institutional Support, Parental involvement and Retention of Special Needs Learners in Mainstream Primary Schools in Jinja City. The aim of this letter is to request you to take some minutes to answer the attached questions. The information you provide shall be treated with complete confidentiality, anonymity, and will solely be used for academic purposes. **Therefore, do not write your name any on this guide.**

I greatly value your involvement

I deeply appreciate your willingness to participate in this study.

Section A: General Information

Please Tick (✓) the option that best describe your option

S/N	VARIABLE	RESPONSE
1	What is your gender?	☐ Male ☐ Female
2	What is your age bracket?	☐ 25 – 35years ☐ 46 years and above ☐ 36-45years
3	What is your highest professional qualification so far attained?	☐ Post-graduate ☐ Degree ☐ Diploma ☐ Certificate
4	What is your teaching experience?	☐ 1-5 ☐ 6-10 ☐ 11-15 ☐ 16 and above

5	Have you had any training in teaching of learners with special education needs?	☐ Yes ☐ Currently being trained ☐ No
6	What is the status of this school?	☐ Only Day ☐ Boarding and Day ☐ Only Boarding
7	What is the composition of this school?	☐ Only Girls ☐ Mixed School ☐ Only Boys
8	Indicate the foundation body of this school	☐ Catholic ☐ Muslim ☐ Anglican ☐ COmmunity

SECTION B: Extent of Provision of Institutional Support in mainstream Primary Schools in Jinja City, Uganda

9. What modified / adapted physical facilities are in your school for Special Needs Learners?

10. a) What teaching and learning resources are required for Special Needs Learners in your school?

b) Are they available and enough to cater for all learners?

11. What additional services are available in your school to support the Special Needs Learners remain in school?

12. In your view, to what extent is this school able to provide the above institutional support mentioned above?

SECTION C: Retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream Primary Schools in Jinja City, Uganda

13. What is your comment on the following aspects of retention of Special Needs Learners in the recent years?

a) Enrollment

b) Dropout rate

c) Completion at primary seven class

14. In your opinion to what extent is this school able to retain Special Needs Learners?

SECTION D: Parental involvement in education of special needs learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda

15. What is the role of parents in ensuring that Special Needs Learners are retained in school so that they complete their primary education cycle?

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

YOUR TIME AND GRACIOUS COOPERATION ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED

Appendix C: Focus Group Discussion for Special Needs Learners in mainstream Primary Schools in Jinja City, Uganda

REF: INTRODUCTION LETTER

Dear Respondent,

I am **Bahati Twaha Musa** a master's student of Busitema University pursuing Master of Education Leadership and Management. As part of the requirements of the program, I am required to conduct a research study related to my area of specialization. The research is titled 'Institutional Support, Parental involvement and Retention of Special Needs Learners in Mainstream Primary Schools in Jinja City. The aim of this letter is to request you to take some minutes to answer the attached questions. The information you provide shall be treated with complete confidentiality anonymity and will solely be used for academic purposes. **Therefore, do not write your name any on this guide.**

I greatly value your involvement

I deeply appreciate your willingness to participate in this study

Section A: General Information

Please Tick (✓) the option that best describe your option

S/N	VARIABLE	RESPONSE
1	What is your gender?	☐ Male ☐ Female
2	What is your age bracket?	☐ 4 – 8 years ☐ 13 – 17 years ☐ 9 – 12 years ☐ 18 years and above
3	What is the status of this school?	☐ Only Day ☐ Boarding and Day ☐ Only Boarding
4	What is the Composition of this school?	☐ Only Girls ☐ Mixed School ☐ Only Boys
5	Indicate the foundation body of this school?	☐ Catholic ☐ Muslim ☐ Anglican ☐ Community

Section B: Extent of provision of institutional support in mainstream Primary Schools in Jinja City, Uganda

1. Are physical structures and facilities in the school modified to suit your needs and uses?

.....

2. If yes, mention some of the modified physical facilities in your school

.....

.....

3. Which special materials and equipment do you use in school during teaching and learning processes?

.....

.....

4. Are these materials and equipment adequate enough for all learners?

.....

5. What other services are provided by the school to support and keep you retained in school

.....

.....

.....

Section C: Retention of Special Needs Learners in mainstream Primary Schools in Jinja City, Uganda

6. Do you have friend (s) with special education needs who enrolled in this school and have dropped out of school?

.....

7. Do you intend to complete your studies up primary seven?

.....

Section D: Parental involvement in education of special needs learners in mainstream primary schools in Jinja City, Uganda

8. What is role do your parents play in ensuring that you remain in school so that you can complete you primary seven class?

.....

.....
.....
YOUR TIME AND GRACIOUS COOPERATION ARE GREATLY APPRECIATED

**Appendix D: Observation Checklists for Adapted Physical Facilities and Resources in
mainstream Primary Schools in Jinja City, Uganda**

The table below contains adapted physical facilities and resources in mainstream primary schools. The availability and adequacy of such facilities will be confirmed by researcher by filling the table.

Modifications of physical facilities in school	Great Extent	Moderate	Not all
Adapted toilets			
Adapted desks, chairs and other furniture			
Level play grounds			
Ramps and wide door ways			
Accessible spacious classrooms			
Availability of assistive and mobility devices			
Lower door handles			

Appendix E: Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Table

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	265	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	276	4500	351
35	32	150	108	360	181	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	186	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	180	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	190	123	420	201	1400	320	8000	367
55	48	200	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	210	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	373
65	56	220	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	230	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	240	144	550	225	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	250	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	260	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	270	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	256	2600	335	100000	384

N=Population, S=Sample

Appendix F: Moderation Results

Model Summary

R	R-sq	MSE	F	df1	df2	p
.6791	.4612	71.4999	112.9706	3.0000	396.0000	.0000

Model

	coeff	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
constant	13.7506	.4504	30.5305	.0000	12.8651	14.6360
IS	1.3507	.1060	12.7441	.0000	1.1424	1.5591
PI	.4086	.0608	6.7175	.0000	.2890	.5282
Int_1	.0974	.0170	5.7292	.0000	.0640	.1309

Product terms key:

Int_1: IS x PI

Test(s) of highest order unconditional interaction(s):

	R2-chng	F	df1	df2	p
X*W	.0447	32.8237	1.0000	396.0000	.0000

Focal predict: IS (X)
Mod var: PI (W)

Conditional effects of the focal predictor at values of the moderator(s):

PI	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-7.4700	.6229	.1603	3.8855	.0001	.3077	.9381
-.4700	1.3049	.1058	12.3347	.0000	1.0969	1.5129
6.5300	1.9870	.1582	12.5598	.0000	1.6759	2.2980

Moderator value(s) defining Johnson-Neyman significance region(s):

Value	% below	% above
-9.9488	4.5000	95.5000

Conditional effect of focal predictor at values of the moderator:

PI	Effect	se	t	p	LLCI	ULCI
-12.4700	.1357	.2311	.5873	.5573	-.3186	.5901
-10.2200	.3550	.1979	1.7938	.0736	-.0341	.7440
-9.9488	.3814	.1940	1.9660	.0500	.0000	.7628
-7.9700	.5742	.1668	3.4424	.0006	.2463	.9021
-5.7200	.7934	.1393	5.6940	.0000	.5195	1.0673
-3.4700	1.0126	.1181	8.5769	.0000	.7805	1.2447
-1.2200	1.2319	.1067	11.5420	.0000	1.0220	1.4417
1.0300	1.4511	.1085	13.3748	.0000	1.2378	1.6644
3.2800	1.6703	.1228	13.6022	.0000	1.4289	1.9117
5.5300	1.8895	.1460	12.9421	.0000	1.6025	2.1766
7.7800	2.1088	.1746	12.0786	.0000	1.7655	2.4520
10.0300	2.3280	.2063	11.2826	.0000	1.9223	2.7336
12.2800	2.5472	.2400	10.6138	.0000	2.0754	3.0190
14.5300	2.7664	.2749	10.0651	.0000	2.2261	3.3068
16.7800	2.9857	.3105	9.6150	.0000	2.3752	3.5961
19.0300	3.2049	.3467	9.2428	.0000	2.5232	3.8866
21.2800	3.4241	.3834	8.9318	.0000	2.6704	4.1778
23.5300	3.6433	.4203	8.6690	.0000	2.8171	4.4696
25.7800	3.8626	.4574	8.4445	.0000	2.9633	4.7618
28.0300	4.0818	.4947	8.2508	.0000	3.1092	5.0544
30.2800	4.3010	.5322	8.0822	.0000	3.2548	5.3472
32.5300	4.5202	.5697	7.9343	.0000	3.4002	5.6403

Data for visualizing the conditional effect of the focal predictor:
Paste text below into a SPSS syntax window and execute to produce plot.

```
DATA LIST FREE/
  IS      PI      Ret
BEGIN DATA.
  -5.9450  -7.4700   6.9949
   1.0550  -7.4700  11.3552
   4.0550  -7.4700  13.2239
  -5.9450  -.4700   5.8007
   1.0550  -.4700  14.9352
   4.0550  -.4700  18.8500
  -5.9450   6.5300   4.6066
   1.0550   6.5300  18.5153
   4.0550   6.5300  24.4762
```

Appendix G: Turnitin

Institutional Support, Parental Involvement and Retention of Special Needs Learners in

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Appendix H: Letter to the field

 **BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY**
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Email: info@busitema.ac.ug
www.busitema.ac.ug

OFFICE OF THE DEAN FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND EDUCATION

Date: 11/07/2023

Your Ref:

Our Ref: BUNAG/1001/1

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: BAHATI TWAHA MOSA Reg. No. BU/GS21/EDM/4

The above named is a student of Busitema University pursuing a Masters Degree in Education Leadership and Management (MELM) at Faculty of Science and Education (FSE). In partial fulfilment for the award, he/she is conducting a research on INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT, PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AND RETENTION OF LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN MAINSTREAM PRIMARY SCHOOLS

The purpose of this letter is to formally request you to allow him/her collect data from your organization which is relevant to this research. This is purely an academic research and therefore any information collected will be treated with utmost confidentiality in accordance with the research ethics principles.

Any assistance accorded to him/her in this regard will highly be appreciated.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Assoc. Professor David Kanl Olema
FACULTY DEAN

Recd
H7R
13.7.2023

HEADTEACHER
M. WANYANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL
JINJA CITY