



# Research Journal of Education

ISSN(e): 2413-0540, ISSN(p): 2413-8886

Vol. 3, No. 12, pp: 186-189, 2017

URL: <http://arpgweb.com/?ic=journal&journal=15&info=aims>

## Open and Distance Learning for Blind: Empirical Review of the Challenges Faced by Learners Who Have Visually Impaired

**William Ayub Mng'ong'ose**

Bank of Tanzania

**Mkanibwa Ngoboka**

Ruaha Catholic University-Iringa, Tanzania

**Romed Kavenuke**

Ruaha Catholic University-Iringa, Tanzania

**Alberto Gabriel Ndekwa\***

Ruaha Catholic University-Iringa, Tanzania

**Abstract:** It is well evidenced that students with visual impairments have basic learning experiences because they do not able to observe other objects and visuals and their educational needs of the visually impaired students may vary from person to person. This study focused on investigating the challenges facing visually impaired students who are in open and distance learning model using prior empirical literature review. Findings using contents analysis have indicated that university social view, inadequate resources and unfriendly university environment are the main challenges affecting their academic progress. The study have recommended that the university should ensure that learning environments for people with physical disabilities to have specific considerations in design and implementation to ensure their appropriateness and accessibility.

**Keywords:** Open and Distance Learning; Visually impaired.

### 1. Introduction

Worldwide, educating the visually impaired in higher learning is fundamental to a good national outlook and social economic in general. As argued by [Omede \(2015\)](#) that intellectual potentials of the visually impaired which are developed through higher education makes them contributors not only to the national but the global economics like their sighted counterparts of same qualifications. This mean that the integration of the visually impaired into the higher education system will no doubt create a lot of benefits. Their contributions as scholars, lawyers, journalists, braillists and otherwise will have a lot of impact on some of the global educational problems. Although higher institutions aspire to provide effective instructional curriculum and programs for students with learning and developmental disabilities, for them to learn better in the campus environment, but some of these institutions are not doing enough to prepare instructors and professors to meet their academic and non-academic needs. This is due to the fact that Learners with visual impairment are a heterogeneous group with varied nature of difficulties that require adequate attention in curriculum implementation in order to achieve good academic performance when placed in regular or main stream institutions ([Agesa, 2014](#)). Due to this heterogonous nature it is well indicated in [Mushome and Monobe \(2013\)](#) that most lecturers see teaching the visually impaired students as a problem.

On the other hand, [Agesa \(2014\)](#) found that most learners with visual impairments perform poorly in academics due to lack of implementation of the visually impaired school. As argued by [Mushome and Monobe \(2013\)](#) that students with developmental and learning disability is confronted with several challenges in life, especially in the postsecondary settings where attending two-year college or university is an option for the exceptional individual. This means that the visually impaired students are in danger of hating education, and therefore, destroy their future of attending higher education. Given this situation, this study filled the gap by analyzing the challenge facing visually impaired students in distance learning environmental where close relationship between learners and student is limited. As argued by [Penda and Ndhlovu \(2013\)](#). Students with developmental and learning disabilities are expected to benefit from comprehensive long-term services which empower them to be more active, productive, and independent, which equally benefits their families and communities.

### 2. Methodology

This study used secondary data. As argued by [Goretti \(2008\)](#) that, collecting secondary data from empirical literature review helps to evaluates the evidence available on a topic for creating familiarity with current thinking and may justify future research into a previously overlooked or understudied area. This article reviews 10 peer-

reviewed empirical studies on challenge facing students with visual impaired in Africa and worldwide. Content analysis was used to analyzed data. Content analysis was selected because it allows the researcher to distil words into fewer content related categories or issues to enhance understanding of the phenomenal. In addition, content analysis method helps for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context, with the purpose of providing knowledge, new insights, a representation of facts and a practical guide to action. As in this study, content analysis.

### 3. Findings and Discussion

Using contents analysis it was found that despite the open and distance education to offer flexible learning opportunities yet blind face numerous challenges which include qualified lecturer, equipment and services to adequately serve their needs. For example [Butler et al. \(2016\)](#) in their study of understanding the graphical challenges faced by vision impaired students in Australian universities, found that difficulty in accessing graphical materials was a challenge to many vision-impaired students and that there were systemic problems with processes for accessible graphics provision. This findings implies that despite of the availability of reading material but the use of graphical material was hindering student with visual impaired student in their learning process. On the other hand, [Tugli et al. \(2013\)](#) found that students with visual impaired at the University of Venda are facing challenges which include appalling sanitation conditions, poor and un-adapted facilities, and harsh physical environment. The find collaborate with [Ntombela and Soobrayen \(2013\)](#) who has found inadequate accommodations are available to ensure students with visual disabilities can function effectively and independently the at University of KwaZulu-Natal. This findings implies that the university is having inadequate resources, shortage of staff and poor support systems for supporting special group of visual impaired students. Further, [AL-Ghafri \(2015\)](#) on his study of the Challenges that Visually-Impaired Students At Sultaqn Qaboos University Face. the findings indicate that the students face difficulties in all four skill areas, with writing being the most challenging.

In un related perspective, [Mushome and Monobe \(2013\)](#) on the study of the attitude of lecturers towards visually impaired students at the Universities in the Limpopo Province in South Africa, finding have indicated that lecturers found teaching visually impaired students is a problem, because they were never trained to teach visually impaired students and that the institution should employ a permanent specialist in teaching visually impaired students and create a resource centre for them. [Jameel \(2011\)](#) on an empirical study of Disability in the Context of Higher Education, findings have revealed that Infrastructural facilities within institutions, attitudes towards persons with disabilities, transportation facilities, and lack of support services are a few areas, which hinder the entry of students with disabilities into higher education in India.

[Korir \(2015\)](#). Challenges Encountered By Students with Visual Impairments and Teachers In An Integrated School Environment, the study findings cited a number of challenges that are experienced by the visually impaired students such as; the administration view them as a burden to school and many times they do not meet their needs like providing the necessary learning materials even though they pay fees and academic performance significantly indicated the nature of evaluation among the students in these secondary schools was clear that they are conscious about the needs of others.

[Penda and Ndhlovu \(2013\)](#) found that lack of using appropriate teaching method to learners with visual impairment. This implies that students experience challenges when their teachers are teaching using question and answer method, expository method, group discussion method, demonstration method and inquiry method. Difficult to explain drawing on the board and pictures and Difficult to explain gestures as part of Communication.

[Mbugua and K'Okul \(2013\)](#) Findings from the study showed that visually impaired students experience anxiety at different levels and this affects their psychological stability, makes them unable to concentrate on their students and in some cases, feel neglected and unappreciated. it was found out that more individualized counseling was not taking place leading to students wishing to have more of the same.

[Khurshid and Malik \(2011\)](#) on the study of perception of visually impaired Youth about Familial, Academic and Caregivers Support, found that visually impaired male and female students, experienced lack of social support by caregivers; visually impaired male students experienced most of problems due to non cooperative attitude of caregivers; students who stay longer hours in hostel face more difficulties; students who are receiving higher education face more problems as compared to students of secondary and intermediate level. Study indicates that visually impaired students perceived lack of social support due the people those are near to them.

No	Contents Extracted from the Literature	Sub theme explain the main contents	Author(s)
1	Social View	feel neglected and unappreciated lack of social support administration view them as a burden	Khurshid and Malik (2011), Mbugua and K'Okul (2013), Korir (2015).
2	Inadequate resources	Infrastructural facilities Lack of transportation facilities graphical materials appalling sanitation conditions, poor and un-adapted facilities Inadequate accommodations	Tugli <i>et al.</i> (2013), Ntombela and Soobrayen (2013), Butler <i>et al.</i> (2016)
3	Unfriendly environment	lack of using appropriate teaching method nature of evaluation lack of support services	Penda and Ndhlovu (2013), AL-Ghafri (2015)

#### 4. Conclusion and Recommendation

- i) Learning environments for people with physical disabilities need specific considerations in design and implementation to ensure their appropriateness and accessibility.
- ii) The governments should provide funds, resources and enact effective legislation and policy on disability issues and special education programs which would help the development of the African students and higher institutions.
- iii) The Government should train more teachers in special needs education so that at least each regular school has one. Parents to learners with visual impairments and community should be sensitized on their education. The awareness could facilitate networking for better performance of the learners with visual impairments.
- iv) There is need to increase staff strength, support services and to provide user-friendly facilities in order to effectively serve students with disabilities in this disadvantaged tertiary institution.
- v) Which calls for a differentiated curriculum as per the laid down policy on Special Needs Education, which is attributed to social, economical and partly cultural factors.

#### Reference

- Agesa, L. (2014). Challenges faced by learners with visual impairments in inclusive setting in Trans-Nzoia County. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 5(29): 185-92.
- AL-Ghafri, M. S. (2015). *The challenges that visually-impaired students at sultaqn qaboos university face in learning english proceeding of the 3rd global summit on education GSE 2015*. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia.
- Butler, M., Holloway, L., Marriott, K. and Goncu, C. (2016). Understanding the graphical challenges faced by visionimpaired students in Australian universities. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 36(1): 1-15.
- Goretti, A. M. (2008). *Research methodology facts: Made simple*. Sure Technical Association Ltd: Kampala.
- Jameel, S. S. (2011). Disability in the context of higher education: Issues and concerns in India. *Electronic Journal for Inclusive Education*, 2(7): 1-21.
- Khurshid, F. and Malik, S. K. (2011). Perception of visually impaired youth about familial, academic and caregivers support. *Global Journal Of Human Social Science*, 11(9): 55-61.
- Korir, B. C. (2015). Challenges encountered by students with visual impairments and teachers in an integrated school environment: A case of integrated secondary schools in kericho district, ainamoi division, Kenya. *International Journal of Education, Learning and Development*, 3(8): 28-40.
- Mbugua, A. W. and K'Okul, F. (2013). Psychological dispositions of anxiety among learners with visual impairment: A study of high school for the blind, Thika. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(17): 67-76.
- Mushome, A. M. and Monobe, R. J. (2013). The attitude of lecturers towards visually impaired students: A case study of one of the universities in the limpopo province in South Africa. *US-China Education Review*, 3(2): 108-13.
- Ntombela, S. and Soobrayen, R. (2013). Access challenges for students with disabilities at the university of kwazulu-natal: A situational analysis of the edgewood campus. *Journal of Social Science*, 37(2): 149-55.
- Omede, A. A. (2015). The challenges of educating the visually impaired and quality assurance in tertiary institutions of learning in Nigeria. *International Journal of Educational Administration and Policy Studies*, 7(7): 129-33.
- Penda, A. D. and Ndhlovu, S. K. (2013). The challenges in teaching learners with visual impairment in Zambia. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Development*, 2(4): 157-66.

Tugli, A. K., Zungu, L. I., Ramakuela, N. J., Goon, D. T. and Anyanwu, F. C. (2013). Perceived challenges of serving students with disabilities in a historically disadvantaged tertiary institution. *African Journal for Physical, Health Education, Recreation and Dance*, December, 1(2): 346-55.