

Teachers' and Learners' Attitudes and Practices Associated With the Participation of Learners with Visual Impairment(VI) In Physical Education and Sport(PE&S)

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Abstract: *This research paper attempted to study teachers' and learners' attitudes and practices associated with the participation of learners with visual impairment (VI) in Physical Education and Sport (PE&S). A case study, based on qualitative paradigm, was used to illuminate such attitudes and practices in the implementation of the subject PE&S in school curriculum. A purposive sample of ten participants: six pupils with VI and four teachers was used in this study. Interviews, observations and document analysis were used for data collection. Two interview schedules were prepared, one for the teachers and the other one for the pupils. Both interviews were ethnographic and interactive in nature. Field notes were made as the researcher observed both teachers and pupils taking part during PE&S lessons. Documents were scrutinised to complement primary data collected through interviews and observations. Taken together, the three data collection methods served a triangulation purpose. This study raised a number of pertinent issues that may be of great interest to a number of beneficiaries. The interview findings of this study mirrored both emic and etic views, that is focusing on participants' and researcher's views respectively. The main findings of this study were that both teachers and pupils have negative attitudes towards the participation of pupils with VI in PE&S. The negative attitudes were illuminated through four major areas of focus, (as shall be noted in the paper). The research findings showed that the negative attitudes demonstrated by teachers and the learners, as highlighted through their personal practices, impacted negatively to efforts of whole school curriculum and Education for All (EFA) initiative of school inclusivity. While the findings of this study are peculiar to a particular primary school (name withheld for ethical reasons). Such findings may not be generalisable to similar institutions. The findings illuminate a gap between the ideal/intended curriculum, on the one hand, and the transacted/actual curriculum on the other hand.*

Keywords: *Adaptation, Attitude, Doppler Effect, Ideal/intended curriculum, Judgemental views of self, Kinaesthetic, Learned helplessness, Mobility, Orientation, Participation, Perception, Physical Education and Sport(PE&S), Practice, School inclusiveness, Skill transfer, Transacted/actual curriculum, Vision, Visual Impairment (VI), Whole curriculum,*

I. Background

Seeing children with visual impairment (VI) creates a feeling of discomfort in most teachers. For this reason, these children have been embarrassingly denied access to a number of rights, even those considered most fundamental, like education. This is because of the incongruence between what is expected of these children and reality on the ground. Some teachers still consider these learners as helpless and unable to learn. Such responses to children with VI are essentially a societal reflection of negative attitudes towards persons with disabilities inclusive of those with VI.

In recent years, however, there has been a growing interest in the welfare of persons with VI. There is some evidence that those with VI have been gradually accepted in mainstream communities and learning institutions. There is considerable evidence, even from a cursory review of literature, that efforts are being made to also consider these children in a number of school curriculum subjects, courtesy of Education for All (EFA) initiatives, whose provisions are enacted in the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975. Referring to this Act, which emanates from the Public Law 94-142 (PL 94-142), Siedentop (1994) emphasises that, "...every child has a fundamental right to education, and must be given the opportunity to achieve and maintain an acceptable level of learning..." Such has been mandated by the Salamanca Statement on Special Needs Education (1994), which has ever since been celebrated as the brainchild of Inclusive Education. A closer study of the inclusive ideal in education seems to suggest that the goal here is to meet the needs of all learners. To achieve this idea, all most restrictive attitudinal and physical barriers seen to frustrate EFA effort have to be minimised or outrightly removed! There is need to, therefore, reduce those barriers that have, from time immemorial, segregated pupils with VI from the mainstream education.

While total participation of all pupils appears implicit in curriculum implementation, most teachers tend to be very selective and inconsistent in the manner they teach practically oriented subjects like PE&S. There is still evidence, from studies and teaching experience, that teachers show a low judgement or perception of their pupils' competence in physical education and sporting activities. Teaching experience has also shown that teachers and learners react indifferently to the demands of PE&S at implementation stage. It is through such reactions that different attitudes are shown, as exhibited through certain practices. Teachers' attitudes and practices, associated with the subject, have been known to have some impact on pupils with VI's participation in PE&S. Judd and Buell (1991) make an observation that pupils' willingness to participate and/or try new experiences in any physical activity, is strongly driven by factors such as: (i) How teachers perceive and/or feel about the concerned subject and (ii) How pupils (personally) perceive their competence and ability levels.

Lee, Kehand Magill (1993) have made a similar observation in the assertion that teachers' attitudes, practices and perceptions contribute to the way children view any subject. Stakes and Hornby (1997:55) further assert, "...the attitudes displayed towards children with VI by teachers, has had a major impact on their acceptance and participation in physical activities." From such observations, one may develop a notion that teachers' attitudes and practices have a profound influence on pupils' encounters with such practically oriented subjects of the school curriculum.

While one body of literature posit that teachers' attitudes may have profound influence on how pupils with VI participate in PE&S, some authorities like Hallahan and Kauffman (1997), have perceptively inferred that pupils' personal attitudes may also influence their opportunities and willingness to either participate or not, as has also been hinted by Judd and Buell (1996). Similar studies have also shown that pupils with VI differ greatly in their motives for engaging in physical activities. However, a recurring question is: 'What influences initial or continued participation of learners with VI in practically oriented subjects like Physical Education & Sport?'

For now, one may say that very little is known about the teachers' and pupils' attitudes towards the participation of pupils with VI in PE&S. It is, therefore, in the context of inclusive curriculum, as enshrined in Education for All (EFA) initiative, that it became apparent to undertake a study that aims at illuminating the teachers' and learners' attitudes and practices associated with their (learners') participation in PE&S. This constitutes the justification of this research study.

Statement of the problem

Learners with VI and teachers have been known to be inconsistent in their practices and the manner they perceive practically oriented subjects like PE&S, especially at implementation stage. Such inconsistency translates into a failure to bridge the gaps between the intended and the actual curriculum. This research, therefore, sets out to study the teachers' and learners' attitudes and practices associated with the participation of learners with VI in PE&S in a certain primary school (Name/ identity withheld for ethical reasons).

Objectives of the study

In line with the research problem, this study sought to:

- find out teachers' attitudes and practices associated with the participation of learners with VI in PE&S.
- find out learners' personal views towards their participation in PE&S.
- find out teachers' knowledge regarding sight saving and utilisation concepts for learners with VI.
- find out teachers' knowledge about concepts of spatial awareness and kinaesthetic.

Research Questions.

It is hoped that the research problem would be addressed by answering the following research questions, which constitute the main themes of the study:

- a) What views and practices are held by teachers towards the participation of learners with VI in PE&S, with regards to sight saving and utilisation concepts?
- b) What role do teachers accord concepts of spatial awareness and kinaesthetic in PE&S?
- c) How do pupils with VI view their participation in PE&S?

Assumptions of the study

A number of assumptions guided this study. It was assumed that:

- a) the views and practices held by teachers, impact, either positively or negatively, towards the participation of pupils with VI in PE&S
- b) attitudes and practices held by the learners with VI, have a bearing on their participation in PE&S

Significance of the study

It is hoped that the findings of this study are of both theoretical and practical significance to: school heads, teachers and pupils with VI. The school heads would find the research useful, with regards to better understanding of teachers' and learners' attitudes and practices. It is also hoped that findings, in this study, shall make teachers appreciate that their attitudes and practices, be it positive or negative, have a strong impact on pupils' participation in curriculum subject areas like PE&S. It is also hoped that findings of this study shall be used as a way to improve curriculum implementation by both headteachers and school teachers. Presumably, the study may help to illuminate factors which point towards certain practices as informed by teachers' attitudes towards the subject. It is also hoped that findings of the study will help pupils with VI to develop positive attitudes towards their participation in practical activities.

The Legislation

Any form of disability presents harsh realities to any individual. The consequence of VI, as Marinelli and Ort (1984) assert, causes deep seated social, emotional and educational challenges. As problems of negative attitudes towards disability became increasingly visible in education, responses have been legislatively made to improve rights and services of people with disabilities. The most noteworthy pieces of legislation, which seem to wield the greatest influence in ensuring that all pupils with disabilities receive appropriate educational provisions and other services, have been given by Siedentop (1994) as, 'The Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (PL 94-142) and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (PL 93-112).' The mandate of these pieces of legislation is the provision of appropriate curriculum programmes, in which all pupils with disabilities should equally participate through the EFA initiative. Heavily borrowing from the above enactment, the 1987 Education Act of Zimbabwe, for example, mandates that schools should accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions, (The 1987 Education Act, Zimbabwe). It is also encouraging to note that in the same principle, the Swaziland Education and Training Sector Policy of 2011 also explicitly put it as: "Inclusive education is concerned with the development and provision of quality education characterised by access and equity... It recognises that every learner is unique and should be treated equitably by teachers and the system." For implementation of school inclusivity, one may say that the type of curriculum envisaged by the cited legislative instruments is one that includes and meets the needs of all learners.

Taken together, the above pieces of legislation virtually guarantee full curriculum entitlement to all children with VI, as a positive educational feature, with basically the same rights that are granted to any other citizen (Anderson, 1980). It is of special interest that instruction in PE&S is one of the few curriculum areas included in the defined demands of education for pupils with disabilities, as mandated by the raised pieces of legislation. From a legal point of view, as Barber (1992:18) puts it, "...Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 states that no handicapped persons shall be excluded from participating in any physical activity or programme of school curriculum." Readings and teaching experience have shown that the acceptability of learners with VI, in PE&S programmes, have been found dependent on a wide range of considerations, teachers' attitudes and practices being among the most fundamental.

Many advocates to the above legislations, the likes of Marinelli et al (1984) and Siedentop (1994), believe that the Public Laws regarding the curriculum for pupils with VI, should not only be taken as a series of highly relevant theoretical points, but also to have pupils with VI physically and/or practically participate, in all curriculum related activities. By complying with the regulations of both pieces of legislations given above, Marinelli et al (Ibid) hope that teachers will then develop favourable attitudes towards the participation of pupils with VI in curriculum matters like PE&S. As exhibited through their practices, teachers have been generally known to have negative attitudes towards the participation of pupils with VI in PE&S. To state the matter more precisely, Stakes and Hornby (1997:55) assert, "If the negative attitudes of others affect children with disabilities it is, therefore, necessary to also study the attitudes of school teachers towards pupils with VI in PE&S learning programmes."

What views and practices are held by teachers towards the participation of learners with VI in PE&S, with regards to sight saving and utilisation concepts?

While the acceptance of the rights of children with VI in society has educationally gained momentum, pupils, especially who bear such a label as VI, are still major targets of prejudices and remain discriminated against in some curriculum matters. Notwithstanding the legislative enactments, which mandate educational inclusivity commitment, it would appear that practically oriented subject teachers in general, and PE&S in particular, are still least tolerant of pupils with VI in their practical lessons. Evidence from some writings by the likes of Anderson (1980), Kitchner (1985) and Siedentop (1994) indicate that teachers were generally more negative than positive in their response to pupils with VI's skill acquisition attempts in PE&S. This has also been noted by Judd and Buell (1991) who make a somewhat saddening observation that some teachers are not interested in giving their pupils with VI an opportunity to explore their movement potentials through PE&S

lessons. In some literature review, Murch (1976) notes numerous variables as correlated to teachers' negative attitudes towards the participation of pupils with VI in some curriculum subject areas like PE&S. Some of the findings were that the majority of PE&S teachers have mistaken beliefs about VI, especially the use of residual sight. It is not without reason, therefore, that for many years, as Gwitima and Sibanda (2000) trace, there has been such a resistance from PE&S teachers to allow learners with partial sight (B₂), to use their residual sight. Such a practice has always deprived pupils with VI the opportunity to participate in PE&S.

A far reaching misconception towards the participation of pupils with partial sight comes from the myth that the use of residual sight, especially during outdoor PE&S practical tasks, causes further damage to the eyes because of the uncontrolled high levels of light illumination. Instead of including pupils with VI in outdoor activities, teachers' practice has been known as deliberately excluding these pupils, in an ill-advised attempt to save vision. Teachers, as Barber (1992) asserts, mistakenly believe that by excluding pupils with VI from participating in physical activities, they actually will be protecting pupils from further sight deterioration or total loss, what a misconception!

In support of their warped and misinformed notions of sight saving and utilisation concepts, some teachers caution that all pupils with VI, who dared to venture in PE&S outdoor tasks, do so at their risk. Teachers end up adopting what Lowenfield (1993:6) calls, "...the prohibition against eye strenuous activity attitude." From the above assertion, one may learn as to how uncomfortable teachers are in having pupils with VI participate in PE&S lessons, especially when it comes to outdoor tasks. It is because of the cited attitudes and practices, which translate to the non-participation of pupils with VI in PE&S.

Experiential contact with persons with VI and some literature, do not support the prohibition against eye strenuous notion, hence this writer takes this sight saving and utilisation view as nothing, but myth! A seemingly telling study carried out by Barraga and Enrin (1992) may be used to dispel the above myth: "...even low vision children of very limited visual acuity 6/200 or less, can learn to use their vision through training... Vision improves with use." Added to the above study is the information that in recent years, medical specialists have increasingly emphasised the importance of using residual vision, rather than saving it. To augment the above, Cady (1989) makes an observation that members of the medical profession, concerned with the treatment of deformities and other forms of impairment, have always included physical activities in their treatment. Winnick (1990) explains this further by saying that proper use of residual sight has an ameliorating effect on the sight of pupils in the B₂ category. A renowned anatomist, as Churcher (1980:113) analogously explains, was quoted as saying, "...like muscles which increase (hypertrophy) with use, and decrease (atrophy) with disuse, vision also improves with use..."

Although, more researches may be needed before definite conclusions may be drawn in this area of residual sight utilisation, the body of literature apparent in this area of study and experiential contact with these learners seem to suggest that pupils with VI are not accorded the opportunity to participate in PE&S lessons because of the teachers' negative attitude, which emanate from ignorance of sight saving and utilisation principles. This study will, therefore, help to adequately prepare teachers with sight saving and utilisation facts through staff development programmes like seminars and workshops.

Teachers' concept of spatial awareness and kinaesthetic in PE&S

Naturally, these learners with VI show poor motoric co-ordination and diminished kinaesthetic perception, due to visual deficiency. Studies and teaching experience have shown that it is in the area of practical subjects, like PE&S, where pupils with VI are most discriminated against. Because of the nature of the subject that entails a lot of movement, one major problem that continues to show effects of sightlessness is the need to motorically participate in PE&S related tasks.

Although studies have shown that lack of vision has significant effect on one's educational endeavours, especially in kinetics, many of the limiting stereotypes those pupils with VI endure are caused by teachers' attitudes and practices (Fait and Dunn, 1988). To augment, Mawer (1995) also believes that teachers rarely think of what pupils with VI are capable of doing in PE&S lessons, if anything, teachers only see inabilities in these pupils. This observation has been put better by Mawer (1995), who says that since VI limits perceptions and cognition in the ability to get out and move about, a very common mistake by PE&S teachers is to think of one with VI as both helpless and incapable of participating in PE&S tasks. Judd and Buell (1996) further assert that teachers lower their expectations for pupils with VI because of their (pupils') inherent awkwardness in motor skills and unstable balance. Such a notion has been equally observed and highlighted by numerous other authorities, the likes of Davidson and Simmons (1984), Fait and Dunn (1988) and Barber (1992). Fait and Dunn (1988), for example, explain that teachers erroneously develop negative attitudes as they concentrate on pupils' deficits and limitations imposed by their sensory condition, without trying to see how much these pupils can learn. These teachers do not even give a second thought about these learners' assets, which come through their compensatory senses, and how much the environment can be adapted to allow full participation of pupils with VI in PE&S. Instead of involving these pupils in physical activities, teachers feel challenged by the task difficulty for

those with VI. Legislatively, Siedentop (1994) notes that teachers deliberately ignore the PL 94-142 which explicitly specifies that equal opportunities and access for all learners is rule of thumb, also as mandated by the EFA commitment.

Task analysis

While the value of a curriculum for all has credibility by its inclusive nature, in practice, the majority of teachers have always faced a formidable task in an attempt to address the unique needs for pupils with VI in PE&S. As a subject that is highly task oriented, the majority of teachers have always been bogged down by what adaptations to adopt to benefit pupils with VI. A somewhat interesting observation, on this score, is that very few teachers know how to task analyse physical activities in order to have pupils with VI comfortably participate in PE&S lessons. Instead of task analysing physical activities, to ensure conceptualisation, some teachers tend to become over enthusiastic about the subject and adopt what Zimbardo and Ruch (1979) call the Gestalt Field Theory which states that one learns best by grasping whole concepts. Spurred by this theory, as Mawer (1995) observes, teachers expect pupils with VI to perform too many whole chunks of tasks which are even visual in nature. Teachers forget that such tasks are both abstract and inappropriate for these pupils, who are predominantly auditory and/or tactual/ kinaesthetic learners. Lerner (1985) draws a link to the above observation by saying that some teachers tend to be over zealous by giving continuous instructions in the hope of establishing superior abilities in pupils with VI. Unfortunately, these teachers forget that expecting too much from pupils with VI results in these learners withdrawing because of continued failure.

A review of similar writings by the likes of Crafty (1986) has shown that teachers fail to realise that many PE&S activities require a chain of tasks, all which must be gradually mastered to perform a routine. At the heart of this problem, is the observation that teachers develop negative attitudes towards the participation of pupils with VI in PE&S because they cannot programme their lessons in well-ordered activities. What may also be noted is that pupils with VI fail to rise to the occasion because physical tasks of lesser difficulty are not given, as a prerequisite to acquisitions of tasks of greater difficulty, if theories of Cattell, B., Brunner, J., Vygotsky, L and like-minded psychology theorists are anything to go by. On the same score, Siedentop (1991:170) aptly says, "These teachers sometimes forget that effectiveness and expertise in teaching the blind is a result of a long sometimes difficult struggle to be good at what one does..." There is a realisation that some PE&S teachers forget that the steps taken in a PE&S learning programme have to be sufficiently small to ensure pupils with VI's full participation.

While Beashel and Tylor (1996) warn that no programme for pupils with VI should be considered complete unless it is highly task analysed and hierarchically structured, the majority of teachers would rather make pupils with VI not participate in PE&S lessons than to display their (teachers') ignorance.

Use of compensatory senses in Physical Education and Sport

Since pupils with VI are not ordinarily exposed to exploratory tasks, as noted by Judd and Buell (1991), a great number of PE&S teachers are not aware of how to organise pupils with VI in successive and harmonious ways to achieve movement patterns and/or skills. Teachers are generally not comfortable with how to organise and sharpen pupils' other senses, in order to engage them in mental orientation and mapping, an important factor for the participation of these pupils in PE&S.

Proponents of the whole school curriculum and inclusive education ideology, the likes of Hallahan and Kauffman (1997), have observed that teachers have negative attitudes towards the participation of pupils with VI in PE&S because of the demands of these pupils, who, because of the nature of their disability, would naturally not profit from visual-based cues as feedback. Since pupils with impaired vision lack the natural and concrete experiences necessary for obtaining meaningful concepts, teachers tend to forget that such pupils rely much more on tactile (haptics) and auditory information to learn PE&S skills, than do those who are sighted (Dhemba, 2015). The PE&S instructors should, therefore, prepare tactual and auditory readiness materials, like jingle balls, goal ball or such auditory materials, just as seeing pupils need visual readiness equipment/materials (Sandhu and Mann, 2000).

Due to poor obstacle perception in pupils with VI, the majority of teachers are not sure of how these pupils can be made to recognise their surroundings for both pitch and distance discrimination, as they take up certain activities in PE&S. Teachers find it as an insurmountable task to train and sharpen the other senses, an exercise needed to give learners with VI opportunities to motorically explore environments they will be working in. Grisogono (1991) also attributes the teachers' negative attitudes, as reflected in their practices, to their education and training levels. This authority says that the teachers' inadequate training deprives them of the needed adaptations, regarding to what should be done in depth and breadth for pupils with VI, in order to freely participate in PE&S lessons. Teachers lack the information that the senses of pupils with VI naturally remain dormant, unless specifically trained to circumvent environmental hazards, by means of say the Doppler Effect, an obstacle detecting ability through distant pitch sounds (Tooze, 1981).

For lack of differentiated instructions to accommodate diversity in learning and performance variability, these teachers adopt what Barber (1992) calls a 'pencil down attitude', which is characterised by depriving pupils the opportunity to participate in certain subjects of the curriculum. Such attitudes and practices naturally frustrate learners' zeal and academic effort. Such may be perceived as one way that signals a gap that lies between the PE&S intended and transacted curriculum.

Fear of accidents

Some studies have also shown that certain attitudes and practices by teachers are out of fear of accidents. Although PE&S lessons include activities in which pupils with VI can have adventurous and joyful experiences, it is also important to note that many of the physical activities and games can be equally dangerous to these pupils. For fear of accountability, teachers have been known to always overprotect pupils with VI. They do this by sayplacing these pupils in positions of by-standers, in the name of safety precautions. Such a practice by teachers usurps children's adventurous desire culminating in stopping them from participating in PE&S lessons (Grisogono, 1991).

This over protective practice by teachers is typical and a common feature wherever learners with VI are to be engaged. Most schools around, for example, are still at a stage where pupils with VI have no access to special ultrasonic aids and devices which warn of hazards, by fluctuations in audible sounds, as pupils participate either in outdoor or indoor games (Gwitimah and Sibanda, 2000). Because teachers are not aware of how pupils with VI can actively participate in PE&S lessons, through the use of other sensory media other than vision, the majority of teachers see the whole environment as hazardous to one with impaired sight, resulting in such teachers totally excluding pupils with VI from other curriculum areas, thereby defeating the whole purpose of school inclusiveness.

It may remain undisputable that many sporting activities are dangerous, and hence need to be approached cautiously by both the instructors and one with VI. That caution should not, however, control pupils to an extent that they stop growing. It has to be noted that with proper mobility training, good instruction, proper guidance coupled with well sharpened and good use of compensatory senses a PE&S practical classes need not to be any more potentially dangerous than any other curriculum subject (Ignoffo, 1996). Although play areas have to be relatively free of hazards, it would not only be educationally foolish, but also not practical to remove all hazardous facilitates and objects from the pupils' environments and experiences. If anything, these pupils must learn early in life how to survive in ever increasingly danger filled world.

Although the line of reasoning in the above assertion seems intuitively appealing, Winnick (1990) slightly departs from certain parts of the above observation by warning that teachers should always guide pupils with VI around life threatening pitfalls through the use of compensatory senses. Whilst an argument is not taken against the above authority's line of thought, it is, however, important to emphasise that teachers should stress how to play wisely and safely, in order that pupils with VI may play longer as they take up PE&S activities. Although it makes sense to keep pupils' play areas clean and free of hazards, Winnick (ibid) contends that teachers are naturally uncomfortable with a situation where they are held accountable, in the event of accidents during PE&S lessons. Teachers feel that they would rather have pupils not participating in PE&S lessons, than shouldering all the blame in the event of injuries that are sport related.

Conclusions that may be drawn from literature reviewed, on this aspect of teachers' attitudes and practices associated with the participation of pupils with VI in PE&S are that: To some extent, the teachers' ignorance, as to the demands of the subject and how to handle classes of pupils with VI, may be seen as like entirely responsible for the teachers' reluctance to having pupils with VI participate in PE&S practical activities. To a larger extent, teachers' negative attitudes and practices may also be understood to emanate from their belief that VI, as a condition, totally bars one from all physical activities. Taken together, factors raised from the reviewed literature seem to indicate that teachers' attitudes and practices completely block pupils from participating in PE&S practical lessons, thereby impacting negatively on PE&S curriculum of inclusivity.

Teachers' views about Manual Guidance Technique (MGT) in Physical Education and Sport.

It has to always be remembered that learners with VI are non-visual learners. For that reason, to enable participation of such learners in physical activities, instructors are expected to employ other learning styles like tactile/kinaesthetic, auditory, etc. The major premise of this argument may be through the understanding that pupils with VI, especially the totally blind (B₁), have been known to also be totally lacking in coordination. Although there may be dangers to strictly draw reasons as to the causes of teachers' negative attitudes at this juncture, Lee, Keh and Magill (1993) observe that teachers are not prepared to go through the processes of manual manipulation, an engagement informed by the MGT. Commenting on the nature of tasks related to this technique, Vannier and Gallahue (1978:161) say...often, the feet and hands of the sightless should be guided by the teacher so that pupils get the tactual feel of the desired movement,...teachers must also be skilled in giving brief and accurate verbal communication as they practically demonstrate.

Impressions emerging from the above seem to suggest that in order for pupils to understand body posture and movement during physical activities, the teacher should demonstrate by manually manipulating the body for one with blindness through the desired movement. Such manual manipulation literally enables the child to get the tactual feel of the illustrations and movements needed.

The above recommendations seem to crystallise how the teachers/ instructors should operate, in order to make pupils with VI participate in PE&S lessons. Since the manual manipulation is directed to individual pupils, experience has shown that very few teachers will have the patience needed to motorically guide pupils with VI. A review of writings by Sandhu and Mann (2000) may also help to further explain teachers' attitudes towards participation of pupils with VI in PE&S. In their findings, these authorities explicitly indicate that taking pupils with VI in PE&S lessons requires much more stamina, on the part of the teacher/ instructor, than handling a similar lesson for sighted pupils. So is so since one has to be physically fit to with-stand the wear and tear, of manually instructing a learner with VI PE&S, even for a very short period of time.

It may be noted that the demands of the subject and the expectations of pupils with VI would, as Sandhu and Mann (2000) observe, make many teachers hate the whole idea of including pupils with VI in PE&S practical lessons. Very few teachers are enthusiastic about the extra 'burden' imposed by such tasks like: adapting facilities, equipment and/or activities, in order to make pupils with VI participate in various sporting activities.

Inadequate knowledge about causes of blindness has resulted in teachers failing to assist pupils with VI through the much needed tactual manipulation for skill conceptualisation and acquisition. Drawing a link to the discussed sources of negative attitudes, there are also those teachers who believe that blindness is contagious. Such teachers are also not prepared to use the much recommended MGT.

Pupils' views and practices towards their participation in Physical Education and Sport.

While some research has been done in the area of pupils' attitudes and practices in a variety of other subjects areas, with equal emphasis, the views pupils with VI hold about their participation in PE&S need to also be explored. It may be noted that personal views and perception of self, among other factors, have been known to highly influence pupils' attitudes and practices towards their participation in PE&S. It is these personal attitudes, as it shall further be crystallised, which determine these pupils' willingness to either participate, continue to participate or not in PE&S.

Defects or total lack of sight, as Ignoffo (1996) observes, leads to learners with visual impairment lacking faith in themselves, especially due to utterances some teachers make during PE&S lessons. Abosi (1995:34) has the following observation to make:

The teachers' words, tone or voice, as directly or indirectly transmitted to pupils with visual impairment, tend to have a crucial impact of the formation of attitudes... Derogatory feedback and labels such as 'you are stupid, goofed up, cannot ever do anything right, etc, have resulted in the visually impaired, who already feel constrained by their disabilities, manufacturing self-doubt and poor self-confidence through the self-fulfilling prophecy...

By drawing a direct analogy in relation to Abosi's above assertion, Vannier and Gallahue (1978) assert that just as many people fear a visit to the dentist because of the pain incurred there, many pupils with VI may hate PE&S practical participation, because of the teachers' attitudes exhibited through their hostile remarks.

Due to lack of sight, one of the major tools needed for learning, coupled with insufficient motor experiences and gaps in motor learning, pupils with VI always perceive themselves as victims, seeing reality as beyond their control. Macions (1997) augment the above by explaining that pupils with VI do not just miss activities keenly, but perceive themselves as not fit enough to meet the physical requirements of the subject. It's saddening to realise that pupils with VI always think negatively about their potentials to participate in physical activities, to the extent of even hating themselves.

The learners with VI's self-defeating thoughts have always kept them from participating in physical activities. Knowing the nature of their inco-ordination and warped perceptions, as Mawer (1995) explains, these learners manufacture low self-confidence because of the movement difficulties they experience in an attempt to take up any form of physical activities. Teaching experience has shown that a feeling of low self-confidence, on the part of pupils with VI, makes these pupils withdraw from participation, thereby thwarting efforts for PE&S inclusive curriculum implementation.

Perfectionism Concept

Whilst all people want to avoid making mistakes, this seems even more compelling in people with VI than the sighted (Tooze 1981). A review of Scholl's (1986) writings has shown that some pupils with VI develop negative attitudes towards participation in PE&S because of the perfectionism concept they always grapple with. Failure to reach the desired heights and positively achieve, with the overzealous teacher spurring them to continue even harder, results in these learners getting both anxious and frustrated. Such feelings result in pupils

developing a helpless orientation and defeatist attitude, as they end up perceiving and judging their attempts to learn as always futile. Pupils end up reacting negatively to almost all future PE&S related participation campaigns. On this note Vannier and Gallahue (1978) comment that those with VI do not look at failure from a stand point of learning. Pupils tend to be overly harsh with themselves and give themselves fewer rewards than even teachers would deem appropriate. Learners develop negative attitudes out of inaccurate and unrealistic self-evaluation. Scholl (1986) explains that since pupils with VI are generally not accepted in physical activities, they then erroneously try to be very perfect in whatever they do, for fear of making mistakes. In the process, the tendency is that these learners set themselves very high standards, in whatever they do, in order to be accepted by their teachers/ instructors.

Apart from raising their standards bars to unrealistic heights, it may further be noted that with that sense of anxiety, the pupils with VI may tend to also play it safe by withdrawing from participating in PE&S related activities. Out of frustration and fear of failure, as has been discussed earlier, pupils spend a great deal of their time and energy fantasising that the disability should disappear. Instead of accepting their limitations and finding ways to circumvent limitations, pupils with VI end up not only developing negative attitudes towards participation, but also transfer their anger towards their PE&S teachers/ instructors. DePauw (1984), however, opines that pupils with VI tend to forget that negative judgment, not only alienates them from people who naturally might help them, but also cause them to fail at whatever they try to do. On this note, a more telling explanation may be one given by Davidson and Simmons (1984:36) who say:...if a person has negative attitude towards something, it is difficult for him/her to escape without causing considerable harm to the spirit of effort...As pupils with VI withdraw from attempting as they continue locking themselves inside their mental prison, they eventually destroy their confidence and remain frustrated thinking that they cannot do anything well.

The above observations, therefore, seem to raise important issues which are indicative of how negative attitudes can grow out of inappropriate self-evaluation.

A striking feature towards pupils' views and practices glaringly points towards these learners' self-defeating thoughts, where they almost always think negatively about their potentials. Such has also been known as translating towards negative attitudes towards these pupils' attempts to participate in PE&S.

II. Discussion Of Study Findings

Findings from the themes were separately presented and predominantly interpreted. All data which were captured by means of interviews, observation and document analysis, received 'thick' discussions.

Interview findings on the the attitudes and practices held by teachers aboutsight saving and utilisation concepts in PE&S:

Findings to the above theme, as structured around items in the interview schedule, showed that teachers were generally opposed to the participation of pupils with VI in PE&S outdoor activities. Three out of the four teachers interviewed, did not like having learners with B₂ use their residual sight. Only one teacher had some idea about the use of residual sight by learners with partial sight. The three teachers pointed out that the use of residual sight, especially in outdoor physical activities, causes further damage to the eyes. For that reason, these teachers find it prudent to exclude pupils with VI from participating in PE&S related activities.

Probed to further justify their exclusionary practices, the three teachers gave the following reasons:

Teacher 1: I do not allow pupils with VI to take part in outdoor activities in order to protect them from further sight deterioration.

Teacher 2: If the pupils with VI are allowed to use their remaining sight, especiallyin outdooractivities, they will eventually have total sight loss. As teachers, we should be seen as trying tosavepupils' vision [sic].

Teacher 3: If pupils with low vision use their eyes too much, their sight willsignificantly deteriorate.Such pupils should, therefore, not be seen performing outdoor activities.

From the above statements, one may learn of teachers' warped knowledge, which then informs their attitudes and practices. Since there are great similarities among the teachers' claims, as described above, one important assumption may be evident. Teachers are uncomfortably aware of issues to do with blindness. Because of their ignorance, as suggested by the above claims, teachers have mistaken beliefs about the use of residual sight in outdoor physical activities. Ignorance about how to handle PE&S for pupils with partial sight, in this case, has been noted as causes of negative attitudes.

With specific wording details varying, teachers also made comments like: We should not be bothered much about making pupils with VI participate in PE&S; after all, the majority of working age adults, with VI are not in PE&S related careers. Because of their rather indifferent notions towards the participation of pupils with VI in PE&S, these teachers claim that they avoided all kinds of physical activities and 'actively' discourage pupils with VI from participating in such lessons. Since good teachers should produce a sense of industry rather than inferiority in pupils, chances are high that these teachers' negative notions end up negatively influencing pupils, since everyone's life is affected, in one way or another, by teachers.

Observation findings on the attitudes and practices held by teachers about sight saving and utilisation concepts in PE&S:

Although one, out of the four teachers, seemed to understand the sight saving and utilization concept, as learnt through interview findings earlier discussed, such knowledge was, however, not evident through lesson observations.

A careful observation of activities, as guided by the Observation Guide, showed that this teacher, like his colleagues, was not light-glare-sensitive and hence equally ignorant of the glare facts. This was evidenced by wrong standing positions, for both the teachers and pupils, especially during the teacher's demonstrations of physical skills. The teachers' ignorance about sight saving and utilization facts, disrupted all lesson procedures as pupils were haphazardly positioned. This was coupled with the nature of physical activities given to pupils, which were observed as causing visual distress. Outdoor activities such as fish-fish were seen as undesirable to pupils with B₂, who may also be photophobic. The practice of lack of thoroughness in teachers' work, as they prepare and practice for PE&S lessons, may be taken as teachers' negligence and hence perceived as a negative attitude towards the participation of pupils with VI in PE&S.

Documentary findings on the attitudes and practices held by teachers about sight saving and utilisation concepts in PE&S:

Schemes of work, lesson plans and related documents analysed, like charts, time-tables, pupils' progress record books and pupils' writing sheets, have also confirmed the teachers' ignorance about sight saving and utilisation concept.

The analysed documents did not, in any way, reveal that teachers prepared PE&S lessons with the sight saving and utilisation concepts in mind. Such a practice may be viewed as a manifestation of negative attitudes on the part of the teachers. One teacher, however, sounded apologetic for not having the needed documents. Although this teacher apologized, s/he did not, however, proffer an explanation for the non-availability of the documentary entries needed.

Overview on conceptions on teachers' attitudes and practices about sight saving and utilisation concepts:

What could be gleaned from interview findings, lesson observed and documents analysed was that teachers were not aware of true facts about blindness. For this reason, they develop negative attitudes towards the participation of pupils with VI in PE&S. Such negative attitudes were expressed, and hence illuminated through the teachers' practices of not adequately preparing and not efficiently demonstrating PE&S lessons. To a larger extent, it would seem that these negative attitudes emanate from lack of knowledge about sight saving and utilisation facts.

Interview findings on teachers' concept of spatial awareness and kinaesthetic perception in PE&S.

In response to Interview Schedule, all the four respondents interviewed, generally confessed that spatial awareness and kinaesthetic skills development is paramount in children with VI. Teachers explained that pupils' coping levels in physical activities depend, to a greater extent, on how these pupils are able to move about. During interviews, teachers frequently pointed out that good orientation in spatial awareness and well developed kinaesthetic skills enhance pupils' self-image and confidence, as they take up physical activities.

Responding to the role played by the use of compensatory senses to pupils with VI in PE&S, some teachers were not very sure as to how the other senses help in the participation of these pupils in PE&S. One teacher, however, acknowledged the importance of using compensatory senses for various skill development. This teacher, however, readily confessed the difficulties she encountered in trying to instruct pupils with VI through the other sense functions. Such insufficient knowledge, on the part of the teachers, resulted in pupils being denied the chance to participate in PE&S.

Follow up questioning, as a way of probing, yielded further reactions, with one teacher making a confession along these lines: Although I am aware of the need for PE&S to pupils with VI, I am challenged by the task of instructing and orienting these pupils to make use of their other sense functions. I would rather fill-in the PE&S periods with other lessons like music! I cannot endure the burden of instructing pupils with poor co-ordination, or with no kinaesthetic perception. Probed to elaborate even further on this point, the interviewee was

quick to say that music was an area in which pupils with VI have been known to; at least, achieve more success than in PE&S. To further validate his point, the teacher reminded this researcher of a number of professional musicians living with VI (Names were narrated, but herein withheld for ethical reasons).

On the same issue, one other teacher also indicated that she was not comfortable with how to simulate and/ sharpen the other senses, in order to engage these pupils in mental orientation through the use of say, auditory and tactual/tactile information, which is important in PE&S activities. It, therefore, became apparent, from the interviews that, teachers end up not exposing pupils to participating opportunities in PE&S, a practice that one may interpret as negative on the part of the teachers.

Documentary findings on teachers' concepts of spatial awareness and kinaesthetic perception in PE&S:

While teachers talked highly about the importance of spatial awareness kinaesthetic skill development to enhance participation of pupils with VI in PE&S, such interview responses were seen as suspect, in light of documentary evidence. Analysis of progress record books, schemes and lesson plans, did not have entries to signify the importance of the use of compensatory senses for the development of the said skills. To say the least, there was paucity of evidence to suggest and support the use of compensatory senses in PE&S skill acquisition.

The lack of important documents, as a practice, indicated some teachers' negative attitudes towards the involvement of learners with VI in PE&S. Lack of progress records seem to imply that teachers do not take these PE&S documents seriously, an unfortunate scenario that may be understood as translating to negative attitudes.

Observation findings on teachers' concepts of spatial awareness and kinaesthetic perception in PE&S:

The lessons observed did not show pupils' ability to perceptually recognize their surroundings (spatial awareness). Pupils were observed bumping into each other failing to promptly adhere to teachers' instructions like: STOP!, TURN!, or any such commands that relate to direction and directionality.

For fear of accidents and hurt, those congenitally blind, for example, were observed as restraining themselves from participating in any physical activity. Pupils could not motorically explore given environments independently, safely, gracefully and confidently. Throughout the four lessons observed, it emerged that pupils were not taken through the paces of obstacle perception, an important skill in PE&S. Teachers were also not focusing on Doppler background awareness, as a prerequisite to prevent and/or reduce accidents during pupils' participation in physical activities.

Overview findings on teachers' concepts of spatial awareness and kinaesthetic perception in PE&S:

Interview findings were found to be at great variance with what was discovered through document analysis and lesson observations. Practices like falsification of entries and lack of related documentary data, with lesson observations not showing anything related to conceptualisation of compensatory senses, explain teachers' negative attitudes towards the participation of pupils in PE&S. It would appear that teachers do not favour the participation of pupils with VI in PE&S because of their ignorance of the demands of the subject. It would also appear that the findings confirm the view advanced by Cady (1989), who makes the observation that if you have difficulties in a certain discipline, you may be inclined to discourage others from participating in activities related to that discipline.

Interview findings on how pupils with VI view their participation in PE&S (Evidence on self-judgmental view):

Analysis of teachers' attitudes and practices associated with participation of pupils with VI in PE&S would remain void unless issues on how these learners view their participation in PE&S are addressed. Findings to this theme will be fundamental to this study since Wright (1980:38) makes an observation that, "Learners are often seen as the best judges of their own needs, because they know what they can and cannot do." For this reason, data analysis for this theme was based on pupils' judgmental views of self.

In seeking the pupils' views on their participation in PE&S, all the six pupils responded to Interview Schedule. Although details of the specific wording varied, from one learner to the other, four pupils said that their willingness to either participate or not, in PE&S, was largely influenced by teachers' attitudes and practices. On nature of participation, one pupil was very explicit and quick to point out, "Pupils with VI generally rate themselves lowly, thereby ending up not taking part in PE&S activities. This is further aggravated by the utterances and derogatory remark made by teachers, if one makes an error. Further probes into the issues of errors, one pupil bluntly said, "...pupils with blindness just avoid participating in these physical activities in order not to make errors, for fear of teachers' wrathful reactions..." Such a practice may be interpreted and understood as a 'pain avoidance mechanism' on the part of the learners.

Although there can be several problems that constrain their participation in PE&S, many pupils registered dissatisfaction with the manner in which teachers coerce them into participation, as one of the problems. Somewhere in this paper, it was highlighted that pupils tend to develop negative attitudes about their

participation in PE&S because of the perfectionism concept. It has to be emphasised that learners erroneously thrive to be such perfectionists out of fear of retribution by their somewhat arrogant teachers.

Referring to on-spot-practical remediation from teachers, (also known as coach-on-site method), three pupils were unanimous in stressing that teachers were not prepared to help. These pupils said that teachers had hostile feelings about their (pupils) abilities to participate in PE&S. Probed even further; two pupils admittedly stated that they always needed their teacher's help, since they could not comfortably express themselves motorically. As pupils create of themselves a low image and negative self-value, it would appear that it also negatively affects their practical participation.

Observation findings on how pupils with VI view their participation in PE&S (Evidence on self-judgmental view):

Findings through observations confirm that the level of enthusiasm, performance location and level of motivation revealed that pupils' level of enthusiasm was alarmingly low, especially when pupils were called upon to participate in outdoor activities. It was observed that a number of pupils recurrently gave flimsy excuses, a practice interpreted as just to keep themselves away from participating in PE&S practical lessons. From such a practice, it appeared that pupils were not particularly well motivated to freely participate in these practical lessons.

For lack of proper spatial awareness and kinaesthetic training, which culminates into improper use of compensatory senses, it was observed that pupils' level of confidence during participation was always at its lowest ebb, when it come practically oriented activities like offered in PE&S.

Although some of the pupils said that they freely participated in both outdoor and indoor PE&S activities, evidence through observation indicators, made this researcher speculate otherwise. A close analysis of pupils' behaviour, as guided by items which focused on general learning atmosphere, seemed to suggest strained relations between teachers and pupils. This culminated in very low participation levels, on the part of the pupils. It was noted that pupils were not exposed to skills that led to them learning physical skills independently. Lack of confidence, on the part of the learners, culminated in them developing a sense of low self-rating, thereby withdrawing from participating in PE&S practical lessons.

Documentary findings on how pupils with VI view their participation in PE&S (Evidence on self-judgmental view):

No pupils' written work was available as documentary evidence related to pupils' participation in PE&S, as was required by the Document Analysis Schedule. Since school pupils do not, normally, initiate their writing of exercises, it may, therefore, be concluded that lack of learners' written work may be seen as translating to teachers' negative attitudes towards the participation of learners with VI in this practical subject, PE&S.

III. Summary of findings

Below are the major highlights of study findings

Teachers' views and practices about sight saving and utilisation concept in PE&S.

From the collected and interpreted data, it emerged that teachers develop negative attitudes towards the participation of pupils with VI in PE&S because of a number of factors, chief among them being IGNORANCE, as it emerged that:

- Teachers did not have accurate facts about blindness and how pupils bereft of vision can be made to participate in practical subjects like PE&S.
- Teachers were least aware of sight utilisation facts.
- Teachers hold no idea about sight saving and utilisation concept. Teachers' warped ideas could be learnt through a practice where they would 'not allow pupils with PE&S to take part in outdoor activities in order to protect them from further sight deteriorations.' (Such practices and far reaching misconceptions are in cross purpose, and hence inconsistent with the view that even low vision children of very limited visual acuity (VA) of say 6/200 or less, can learn to use their vision through training, since vision improves with use).
- Teachers are afraid of having their weaknesses constantly exposed.
- Teachers assume that learners with VI cannot participate in PE&S because of poor kinaesthetic perception and diminished spatial awareness.
- Teachers felt that pupils with VI were not diligent enough to learn and participate in physical activities. (Teachers underestimate the abilities of these pupils to actively participate in PE&S. Since it is typical of some teachers that if they reach certain conclusions, it is rare that they shift from such conclusions, pupils

were seen withdrawing from participation so as to live by the label such pupils commonly get from some arrogant teachers/ instructors).

- Teachers pour derogatory remarks and such utterances associated with the nature of pupils' disability, instead of being patient with these pupils. (For fear of 'retribution' by teachers, pupils will in turn, withdraw from participation in PE&S).
- Teachers were not knowledgeable about what adaptations to make in order to make pupils use their residual sight, to the full, as they participate in PE&S.

Teachers' concepts of spatial awareness and kinaesthetic perception in PE&S:

There was a split of opinion from the collected and interpreted data surrounding this theme. Some teachers:

- were not aware of the need for the use of compensatory senses, in PE&S. These teachers, as revealed by the study, rarely thought of what pupils with VI could do. As they explained, they thought that since pupils with VI exhibited poor kinaesthetic perception, in addition to diminished spatial awareness, these pupils were unable to motorically explore given environments in an attempt to take up physical activities.
- concentrated on deficits and limitations imposed by the pupils' impairment, these teachers prevented pupils with VI from participating in PE&S, thinking that such pupils were incapable of learning PE&S skills.
- confessed that they would rather have pupils do some other activities in other lessons, than PE&S work-out-programmes, whose tasks are uncomfortable to tackle.
- admitted that involving children with VI in PE&S programmes was too difficult for them to implement, since it becomes the duty of the teacher to prepare natural and concrete experiences for such learners.

On the other hand, data showed that some of the teachers:

- knew of the need to sharpen and use the compensatory senses in the development of PE&S related skills.
- appreciate the need to use compensatory senses in developing spatial awareness and kinaesthetic skills as prerequisite for PE&S skill development.

Pupils' views and practices about their participation in Physical Education and Sport.

Findings of this study have shown that:

- pupils with VI also develop a set of attitudes about themselves
- pupils' personal attitudes and practices highly influence their willingness to either participate in PE&S or not
- learners manufacture low self-confidence, because of the amount of physical in-coordination found in them, and the amount of veer they also experience in an attempt to take up physical activities. (because of their insufficient motor experiences, pupils with VI lacked faith in themselves)
- pupils have low self-esteem and appeared unmotivated when it comes to their participating in PE&S practical lessons (it is this low self-confidence harboured by pupils, which has always kept them away from participating in PE&S activities)
- for lack of vision, these pupils think that they cannot meet the physical rigors and/or demands of PE&S practical lessons
- learners always thought negatively about their abilities, thereby translating into self-defeating views, which culminates in keeping themselves away from participating in PE&S activities.
- for lack of history in sport related life span career involvement for people with VI, it was difficult for these pupils to seriously participate in a subject that does not prepare them for employment (pupils, therefore, harbour negative attitudes towards participation in PE&S because they saw no influence of the subject in their future career)
- pupils think that it was difficult for them to grow in self-esteem and improve their self-concept, if they do not learn skills that are valued later in career life
- pupils believe that getting involvement in PE&S was a waste of their time

The above compares favourably with findings by Anderson, Hall and Martin (2000), which were also consistent with Siedentop's (1991) observation that pupils' willingness to either participate or not, in PE&S lessons is strongly dependent on the value the learners attach to the subject.

IV. Conclusion

The conclusions arrived at were drawn from the evidence of what the data revealed in relation to the research problems and reviewed literature. Teachers' and pupils' views and/or practices were sought through formal interviews, observations and document analysis. For the purpose of this study, these techniques became the principal data collection tools. The interview results mirrored both emic and etic views and opinions, where

participants' and researchers' views were analysed. The overall findings of this research study seem to give an impression that both teachers' and pupils' practices portray negative attitudes towards the participation of pupils with VI in PE&S. Recurring in the study is the view that such negative attitudes emerge from a combination of factors, IGNORANCE prominently sticking out, coupled with ideological basis of the subject and the novelty of the skills embodied in the subject. It was discovered that teachers' ignorance about sight saving and utilisation facts prevented meaningful participation of pupils with VI in PE&S. Apart from teachers' perceptions; the study has also revealed that learners also develop negative attitudes towards their participation in PE&S, also because of a number of reasons. Included in the reasons are: Pupils' low expectations of the subject, self-judgmental view about personal abilities, insufficient motor experiences, and other stereotypical views. On judgement of self, it was noted that pupils with VI generally loose self-confidence and optimism about the future and/or the carry over value of the subject, PE&S. These self-defeating views about themselves are generally a result of these learners considering their participation in PE&S as a waste of their time. It is important to state that the findings in this study, although they may not be conclusive, seem to suggest that both teachers' and pupils' attitudes and practices are more negative than positive towards the participation of pupils with VI in PE&S.

V. Recommendations

In order to fold this research study, practical suggestions, for educational practice and future research, have been forwarded as recommendations. Following are the recommendations which have been based on the research findings.

- There is need to adequately staff develop teachers on facts about the use of residual
- sight for these pupils.
- Concepts of spatial awareness and kinaesthetic skill development should be accorded
- to pre-service, in-service, and qualified teachers, in order to prepare them for handling
- Learners with VI in any practical curriculum subject, in line with school inclusivity.
- Teachers should receive relevant information from knowledgeable personnel, (gurus),
- in the area of PE&S for persons with VI.
- Teachers should desist from pouring derogatory remarks which make pupils with VI
- feel despondent.
- Since it was revealed that conducting PE&S lessons, for pupils with VI, is a demanding task, there is, therefore, need for incentives for teachers in this special education field.

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