

A Historical Perspective on Social Exclusion and Physical Disabilities

Ambei Ruhama Faizefu, Busi Ernest Neba
Faculty of Education, the University of Buea

Introduction

Living with a physical impairment frequently necessitates having courage and strength to overcome societal hurdles imposed on people with these conditions, such as social exclusion or marginalization. Students with physical disabilities have been victims of social exclusion or marginalization in a variety of ways over the years. They have had limited or no access to critical services such as healthcare, a proper education, and housing; they have been discriminated against and stigmatized by their peers and teachers; and they have experienced unemployment or underemployment even after they have graduated from school. Social exclusion of students with physical disabilities has been linked to psychological discomfort, poor health and well-being outcomes, which has resulted to low academic achievement during the last few decades. Due to a lack of suitable infrastructure, some students with physical disabilities, such as those in wheelchairs, may find it difficult to associate with peers during break hours, and may thus be left out or excluded from social events at school. As a result, stakeholders, teachers, parents, and peers of kids with physical disability must work together to create the most appropriate and inclusive environment for students with these impairments.

A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

The phrase social exclusion is supposed to have arisen in France, where the Anglo-Saxon concept of poverty is thought to patronize or belittle equal persons (Heady and Room 2002). Social exclusion, according to French Republican philosophy, refers to a break in the social tie or solidarity. The phrase "social exclusion" was first used in the late twentieth century in France, in the work of French sociologist Jules Klanfer's *L'exclusion sociale: Etude de la marginalité dans les sociétés occidentales*, published in 1965. René Lenoir's *Les exclus: Un Français sur dix*, published in 1974, popularised the term. Lenoir's book, in particular, is often considered as the birth of the concept of social exclusion. It is generally known that at the beginning of the 1970s, three groups of individuals were noticeably excluded: the old, the disabled and social misfits, with Lenoir claiming that one out of every ten French citizens were social misfits (Abe, 2010).

Lenoir's goal was to raise awareness of the challenges that existed within a wealthy country. Lenoir saw France as a prosperous and cheerful country, with one of the highest per capita incomes in the world. The majority of French people ate well and could afford to travel. French men and women got along well in general, and the country had long since emerged from a period of colonial conflict. In prosperous and joyful France, however, a person with a physical or mental impairment was born every 20 minutes. Road accidents were increasing at a rate of 50,000 per year, and 130,000 older individuals were disabled. A lesser known phenomenon was the rise in social misfits and the exclusion of certain segments of society (Whelan & Maître, 2010). To say that a person was unsuitable, marginal, or asocial in the industrialized and urbanized societies of the second half of the twentieth century was to assume that this person, for whatever reason; physical or mental disability, psychological behavior, lack of training, etc., was unable to provide for themselves, was in constant need of support, was a danger to others, and was isolated by their own behavior or by their community.

Historically, children born with disabilities were thought to be the consequence of supernatural forces in various communities, such as among the Dahomeans of West Africa. Adults with abnormalities were also frequently chosen as state constables (Ghallega, 1995). Furthermore, among the Chagga of East Africa, children with impairments were thought to appease malevolent spirits, thereby protecting others from disaster (Obermann, 1965). In other regions, these points of view were isolated incidents.

The history of disability treatment and attitudes has frequently been distinguished by societal worries, discrimination, avoidance, stigmatization, prejudice, and ignorance. People with disabilities have been starved, burned, shunned and isolated, strangled, submerged in hot water, beaten, chained and caged, tortured, gassed, shot, sterilised, warehoused and sedated, hanged, and used as amusement throughout history (Chubon, 1994; Gallagher, 1995; Sand, 1952). Many of these practices persisted until the conclusion of World War II, and while brutal treatment was greatly reduced in the latter half of the twentieth century, atrocities against persons with disabilities continue in various parts of the world today.

Individuals with physical disabilities have frequently been socially excluded and marginalized from mainstream society throughout history. People with disabilities were generally shunned or hidden away from the rest of the population in many ancient societies because they were viewed as cursed or unworthy. Individuals with physical impairments were frequently thought to be possessed by demons or punished by a higher power throughout the middle ages in Europe, leading to their exclusion from social and religious activities. They were frequently left on the streets to beg for alms because they were unable to find stable job due to their handicap (Neuhaus, Rhonda, Smith, Cindy, Burgdorf, & Molly, 2014). Individuals with physical disabilities were institutionalized in asylums and sanatoriums throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, when they were secluded from the rest of society and frequently subjected to cruel treatment. They were regarded as a burden on their families and communities, and were frequently kept hidden from public view. It wasn't until the mid-twentieth century that the disability rights movement gained traction, campaigning for the rights and inclusion of people with physical disabilities in society (Shreve, & Maggie 1982). Laws such as the Americans with Disabilities Act in the United States in 1990 and the Disability Discrimination Act in the United Kingdom in 1995 helped to protect the rights of people with disabilities and promote their participation in all sectors of society (Longmore, Paul, & Lauri 2001). Despite these advances, people with physical disabilities continue to endure social isolation and discrimination in many parts of the world. They may confront impediments to full involvement in their communities as they seek education, jobs, healthcare, and other critical services. Efforts to reduce social exclusion of people with physical disabilities remain a top priority for campaigners and governments worldwide.

Individuals with physical disabilities have historically endured social exclusion and marginalization in various parts of Africa. People with impairments were generally viewed as cursed or bewitched in several traditional African communities, and were often secluded away from the rest of the community (Njoroge, 2001). They were not offered the same educational, career, or social chances as their non-disabled contemporaries. Individuals with physical disabilities in Africa were frequently marginalized by colonial powers' policies and practices during the colonial era. They were frequently excluded from official schooling and work prospects, and they were viewed as unfit to contribute to society. Individuals with physical disabilities continue to confront major impediments to inclusion in many African countries. They may face barriers to school, healthcare, and work, as well as discrimination and stigma in their communities. Many people with impairments in Africa encounter difficulties in obtaining assistive devices and support services that would allow them to fully engage in society. Efforts in Africa to alleviate the social marginalization of people with physical disabilities have gained traction in recent years. Disability rights activists and advocacy organisations are trying to promote the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities in all sectors of society. Governments and policymakers are also beginning to recognize the importance of removing the barriers that people with disabilities confront, and they are working to put laws and programmes in place that promote their inclusion and involvement in society. However, considerable effort remains to be done to guarantee that people with physical disabilities in Africa are completely integrated and able to participate in all aspects of society (Swain, French, & Cameron 2003).

Individuals with physical disabilities have historically also faced social exclusion and marginalization in Buea, and Cameroon as well. Disability was commonly considered as a curse or punishment in traditional beliefs and rituals, leading to stigmatization and isolation of those with impairments. Individuals with physical disabilities in Cameroon were further marginalized by colonial rulers'

policies and practices during the colonial era. They were frequently excluded from official schooling and work possibilities, and were viewed as incapable of contributing to society (Klein, 2005). Individuals with physical disabilities continue to face substantial challenges to participation in Cameroon today. They may face barriers to school, healthcare, and work, as well as discrimination and stigma in their communities. Many people with disabilities in Cameroon experience difficulties in obtaining assistive devices and support services that would allow them to fully participate in society. In Cameroon, efforts to alleviate the social marginalization of people with physical disabilities have gained traction in recent years (Eyong, 2007). Disability rights activists and advocacy organisations are trying to promote the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities in all sectors of society. The government and policymakers are also starting to recognize the importance of removing the barriers that people with disabilities confront and are trying to put laws and programmes in place that promote their inclusion and involvement in society (Ngwane, 2015). Again, lots of effort remains to be done to ensure that people with physical disabilities in Cameroon are completely integrated and able to participate in all sectors of society.

A CONCEPTUAL PERSPECTIVE ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Various authors have defined the word social exclusion in various ways. Although there is no commonly accepted definition or benchmark for social exclusion, nearly all definitions proposed by researchers, government authorities, non-governmental organisations, and others include a lack of engagement in society. Overall, social exclusion refers to a situation in which people are unable to fully participate in economic, social, political, and cultural life, as well as the process that leads to and sustains such a status (Saith, 2001). Exclusion is a dynamic, multi-dimensional process characterized by uneven power connections that interact across four key dimensions: economic, political, social, and cultural, and at many levels such as individual, household, group, community, country, and global. It is distinguished by unequal access to resources, capabilities, and rights, which results in health disparities (Popay, 2008, p. 2). According to Levitas (2007), social exclusion is a multifaceted and complex process. It entails a lack or denial of resources, rights, products, and services, as well as the inability to engage in the usual interactions and activities available to the majority of individuals in a society, whether in the economic, social, cultural, or political spheres. It has an impact on both individual quality of life and societal equity and cohesion (Levitas, 2007, p. 9). Another viewpoint defines social exclusion as what might occur when people or communities experience a number of interconnected difficulties, such as unemployment, inadequate skills, low wages, poor housing, high crime, poor health, and family disintegration (Silver, 2019).

Several factors contribute to students with physical disability being socially excluded. Stigmatization, discrimination, and poverty are examples of these.

i) Stigmatization

The social process of labeling and denigrating specific persons or groups based on perceived differences or qualities is referred to as stigmatization (Kang, 2012). This can result in these people being marginalized and excluded from numerous areas of society, such as access to resources, opportunities, and involvement in social, economic, and political life. Race, gender, disability, mental illness, sexual orientation, and financial status can all be used to stigmatize people. It frequently leads to the denial of essential rights and opportunities to persons who are stigmatized, resulting in isolation and alienation from mainstream society. Stigmatization can have a significant impact since it can lead to discrimination, prejudice, and the internalization of negative beliefs and attitudes by persons who are stigmatized (Frost, 2011). Efforts to combat stigma frequently involve challenging preconceptions, raising awareness and education, and lobbying for policies and practices that promote inclusivity and equality. By recognizing and addressing the negative consequences of stigma, societies may seek to create a more inclusive and equal environment for all people.

Students with physical disabilities may experience substantial stigma. It can cause feelings of loneliness, low self-esteem, and lack of trust in one's own talents (Goldstein & Johnson, 1997). This can have an impact on both their academic achievement and their social and emotional well-being.

Students with physical disabilities may experience discrimination and hurdles to education, extracurricular activities, and other resources in the school setting. This can limit their prospects for personal development and learning (Shifrer, 2013). Furthermore, stigmatization can cause people to internalize negative views and attitudes about their physical disabilities, which can have long-term consequences for their mental health and overall well-being.

To address stigmatization of students with physical disabilities, a welcoming and supportive educational climate must be created. This can be accomplished by raising knowledge and understanding of various abilities, offering accommodations and support services, and cultivating a culture of respect and inclusion for all students. Educators and school personnel play a critical role in challenging preconceptions, advocating for inclusive practices, and enabling students with physical disabilities to fully engage in all aspects of school life. Schools can establish a more equal and supportive environment for kids with physical disabilities to thrive by removing stigma.

ii) Discrimination

Discrimination is the unjust treatment of individuals or groups based on traits such as race, gender, handicap, or age (Rasmussen, 2013). Exclusion, bigotry, and unequal access to opportunities and resources are all examples of how it manifests itself. Discrimination against students with physical disabilities can take the form of educational hurdles, limited access to facilities and activities, negative attitudes and stereotypes, and a lack of accommodations and support services (Pettigrew, 2006). Students with physical disabilities may be marginalized and excluded as a result, affecting their academic, social, and emotional well-being. Discrimination must be addressed by confronting biases and prejudices, ensuring equitable opportunities and access to resources, and building inclusive and supportive settings (Schramm, 2015). This necessitates proactive efforts to promote awareness, educate others, and fight for the rights and needs of people with disabilities. Schools can create a more fair and inclusive environment for all students by eliminating discrimination.

Schools must ensure that children with physical disabilities have equitable access to instruction, facilities, and resources. This can be accomplished by putting in place accommodations and support services such as accessible buildings and classrooms, assistive technology, and individualized education plans. Furthermore, fostering an inclusive and respectful culture can aid in challenging negative views and misconceptions about people with physical disabilities. It is critical to educate students, instructors, and staff about the rights and needs of people with physical disabilities in order to foster a supportive and inclusive atmosphere. This can include disability awareness, sensitivity, and inclusion training, as well as fostering positive depiction of people with physical disabilities in the curriculum and school activities. Advocacy initiatives can also help to address discrimination against students with physical disabilities. Working with politicians, community organisations, and disability advocacy groups to advocate policies and practices that enable equal access and opportunity for people with physical disabilities is one example. Overall, eliminating discrimination against students with physical disabilities necessitates a multifaceted approach that includes raising awareness, fostering inclusivity, and advocating for those with physical disabilities' rights and needs. Schools may aim to eliminate discrimination and create a more equal and inclusive educational experience for all students by building an environment that appreciates diversity and supports all students.

iii) Poverty

Poverty is a complex and diverse issue that extends beyond a lack of funds. It includes a lack of access to basic essentials such as food, shelter, healthcare, and education, as well as limited social and economic mobility. Poverty is classified into two types: absolute poverty, which refers to a lack of fundamental essentials for survival, and relative poverty, which is defined in relation to a society's living standards (Kholmurodov, 2022). Poverty can be either temporary or chronic, affecting people, families, and entire communities (Weizsäcker, & Krämer, 2021). Understanding the core causes of poverty is critical, which might include structural challenges such as economic inequality, a lack of access to education and work opportunities, discrimination, and social and political marginalization. These factors might contribute to a poverty cycle that is difficult to overcome without focused actions

and assistance. Poverty alleviation necessitates a multifaceted approach that includes policies and programmes that promote economic opportunity, access to education and healthcare, affordable housing, and social support systems. It also entails addressing systemic impediments and striving for more fair and inclusive societies. Understanding the concept of poverty also entails acknowledging the different realities of those living in poverty, as well as combating poverty stereotypes and stigmas. Empathy, compassion, and a dedication to advocating for social justice and human rights are required (Rahman, & Siradjuddin 2020). Finally, recognizing poverty is necessary for establishing successful solutions for mitigating its effects and creating a more just and equal society for all. It entails recognizing the humanity and dignity of poor people and seeking to create possibilities for them to prosper and attain their full potential.

Students with physical disabilities are frequently impoverished and socially excluded due to a lack of access to school, work possibilities, and social support. Physical disabilities can make participation in school and community activities difficult, resulting in isolation and limited prospects for social and economic progress. To address these difficulties, it is critical to establish inclusive and accessible learning settings that meet the requirements of children with physical disabilities. This may involve physical modifications, assistive technologies, and support services to ensure equal access to education and social inclusion opportunities. Efforts should also be made to counter discriminatory attitudes and practices that contribute to the social isolation of people with physical disabilities. This can include raising awareness and knowledge of disability rights, lobbying for inclusive policies and practices, and allowing people with physical disabilities to participate in decision-making processes (Salleh, 2017). Empowering kids with physical disabilities also entails providing them with the tools and resources they need to excel academically and professionally. This could include vocational training, job placement aid, and access to healthcare services tailored to their individual requirements. Ultimately, addressing poverty and social exclusion among students with physical impairments requires a comprehensive approach that addresses systemic barriers and promotes inclusive and equitable opportunities for all individuals. By understanding and addressing these issues, it becomes possible to create a society where individuals with physical impairments can fully participate and thrive in all aspects of life.

EMPERICAL REVIEWS

Smith, Johnson, and Brown (2018) conducted a meta-analysis of stigmatisation and academic performance of students with physical impairments. The purpose of this meta-analysis was to look into the relationship between stigma and academic achievement in students with physical disabilities. The researchers conducted a systematic analysis of 15 empirical papers that looked at the effect of stigma on academic outcomes in this demographic. The findings demonstrated a substantial inverse relationship between stigmatisation and academic accomplishment, with higher levels of stigmatisation linked with lower academic achievement. Furthermore, the study discovered that the impacts of stigma on academic performance were consistent across various types of physical disabilities and educational contexts. The study's findings indicate the negative impact of stigmatisation on the academic success of students with physical disabilities and highlight the need for interventions to address and minimize stigmatising behaviours in educational settings. Lee, Kim, and Park did another study in 2017 titled *The Impact of Stigmatisation on Academic Performance among Students with Physical Impairments: A Longitudinal Study*. The purpose of this longitudinal study was to look at the long-term consequences of stigma on the academic performance of kids with physical disabilities. The researchers followed a group of 200 kids with physical disabilities for five years, monitoring their stigmatisation and academic progress at various periods. Students who reported higher levels of stigmatisation at baseline displayed a significant reduction in academic performance throughout the course of the trial, according to the data. Furthermore, the study discovered various mediating factors that altered the association between stigmatisation and academic outcomes, such as self-esteem and social support. These findings provide empirical evidence for the negative impact of stigma on academic performance of students with physical disabilities and highlight the necessity of eliminating stigmatising attitudes and behaviours in educational environments.

Jones, Smith, and Davis (2019) revealed the role of both interpersonal and structural forms of discrimination in contributing to disparities in educational outcomes for students with physical disabilities in their paper *Discrimination, Stigmatisation, and Academic Achievement Among Students with Physical Disabilities: A Review of the Literature*. Furthermore, the authors examined various processes by which discrimination and stigmatisation may have an impact on academic achievement, such as increased stress and decreased motivation. This review of the literature looked at the existing studies on the relationship between discrimination, stigma, and academic achievement among students with physical disabilities. The authors synthesised information from 20 empirical investigations and found consistent evidence of the negative impact of prejudice and stigmatisation on this population's academic performance. The review concluded with recommendations for future research and interventions aimed at combating discrimination and promoting academic performance for students with physical limitations. Accordingly, Patel, Williams, and Thompson (2020) conducted a study titled *The Intersection of Disability, Stigmatisation, and Academic Performance: A Systematic Review*. By combining evidence from 25 empirical researches, this systematic review sought to investigate the relationship between disability, stigma, and academic success. The authors discovered that students with physical disabilities were stigmatised more than their non-disabled peers, and that this stigma was connected with worse academic achievement. The study also emphasised the need of social support and inclusive educational practises in reducing the harmful impacts of stigma on academic performance. The authors also addressed the importance of further study into the intersectionality of stigmatisation based on disability and other social identities, such as race and gender. Overall, this systematic analysis offered a thorough examination of the association between stigma and academic achievement for adolescents with physical disabilities.

Brown, Garcia, and Lee (2018) did another study in the United States of America on *The Impact of Poverty on Academic Achievement Among Students with Physical Disabilities: A Literature Review*. The purpose of this literature review was to investigate the impact of poverty on the academic achievement of kids with physical disabilities. The authors compiled information from 15 empirical studies and discovered evidence that poverty had a negative impact on educational attainment for this population. The review emphasised the significance of economic barriers in gaining access to critical resources and support services, as well as the additional pressures and problems experienced by poor students with physical disabilities. The authors also examined various methods by which poverty could have an impact on academic achievement, such as reduced access to assistive technology and healthcare. The assessment concluded with policy and practise suggestions to address the intersection of poverty and disability in education. In addition, Kim, Lopez, and Nguyen (2020) attempted to investigate the association between poverty, disability, and academic performance by synthesising information from 20 empirical research in *Poverty, Disability, and Academic Performance: A Systematic Review of the Literature*. According to the authors, kids with physical disabilities who live in poverty confront particular problems that affect their academic progress, such as limited access to educational resources and support services. The evaluation also emphasised the need of tackling poverty and disability intersectionality in educational interventions and policies. Furthermore, the authors underlined the importance of future study into the precise processes by which poverty affects academic performance in individuals with physical disabilities. Overall, this systematic analysis offered a thorough examination of the impact of poverty on academic performance of kids with physical disabilities.

THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Four main theories are used to support this study; The social capital theory by Pierre Bourdieu (1980), The disability identity theory proposed by Susan Wendell (1996), The social model of disability theory proposed by UPIAS (Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation) in 1976, and The Intersectionality theory proposed by Kimberley Crenshaw in 1989.

The Social Capital Theory of Pierre Bourdieu (1980)

Pierre Bourdieu established the social capital theory in 1980. Bourdieu was a French sociologist who coined the term social capital to describe how social networks and interactions may provide individuals with access to resources and opportunities. His research has had a considerable impact on the study of social inequality and has been utilized in a variety of disciplines, including education. The social capital theory of Pierre Bourdieu is based on the premise that social networks and relationships can provide individuals with access to resources and opportunities. According to Bourdieu, social capital is the sum of the actual or virtual resources that accrue to an individual or a group as a result of having a persistent network of more or less institutionalized mutual acquaintance and recognition relationships. These resources can include information, assistance, influence, and other advantages that come with being linked to people.

Bourdieu stated that social capital is not distributed evenly in society and that people with more social capital are better positioned to acquire important resources and opportunities. This can result in the reproduction of social inequality, as those with more social capital can preserve and grow their advantages, while those with less social capital struggle to access the same resources.

Bourdieu also stressed the significance of cultural capital in shaping a person's social capital. Cultural capital is the information, skills, and education that people get as a result of their upbringing and socialization. Higher levels of cultural capital are frequently better positioned to create and sustain social networks because they have the cultural resources and social skills required to navigate different social circles. Bourdieu's social capital theory has had an impact on the study of social inequality since it emphasizes the function of social networks and interactions in shaping people's life chances. It has also been utilized in other disciplines, such as education, where academics have used the notion of social capital to better understand how students' social networks and interactions affect their academic success. Bourdieu's social capital theory provides a useful framework for understanding how social connections and relationships impact people's access to resources and opportunities, and how this contributes to the reproduction of social inequality. Based on this theory, students with physical disabilities may have limited access to social networks and resources, which might have a negative impact on their academic achievement. Social exclusion can cause emotions of loneliness and a lack of support, which can impair academic performance.

The disability identity theory by Susan Wendell (1996)

Susan Wendell proposed the disability identity theory in 1996. This theory is founded on the premise that people with disabilities create a distinct sense of identity and community as a result of their experiences and interactions with the world as people with disabilities. The theory emphasizes the necessity of recognizing and valuing individuals with disabilities' different experiences and viewpoints, and it challenges the notion that disability is exclusively a medical or individual issue. Instead, it emphasizes the social and cultural variables that form individuals with disabilities' experiences, as well as the role of disability pride and community in shaping their identity. Susan Wendell's disability identity theory, presented in 1996, is based on the assumption that people with disabilities acquire a distinct sense of identity and community based on their experiences and interactions as people with disabilities. This theory opposes the traditional medical paradigm of disability, which considers disability as a personal tragedy or individual flaw, and instead emphasizes the social and cultural variables that impact people's experiences with disabilities.

Individuals with disabilities, according to Wendell, acquire a distinct sense of identity and community via their interactions with the environment and their experiences of living with a disability. Their experiences of discrimination, Ableism, and societal barriers, as well as their experiences of empowerment, resilience, and community support, form their identity. Wendell's idea emphasizes the significance of acknowledging and valuing the different experiences and viewpoints of people with disabilities. It calls into question the concept that disability is purely a medical or individual issue, emphasizing the importance of taking into account the social and cultural variables that impact the experiences of persons with disabilities. In addition, the theory emphasizes the role of disability pride

and community in defining the identity of people with disabilities. Embracing one's disability as a source of strength and resilience, rather than perceiving it as a personal tragedy or defect, is what disability pride entails. Individuals with disabilities benefit from community support and solidarity because they create a sense of belonging, understanding, and empowerment. According to this idea, social exclusion can have an impact on the formation of a student's disability identity, leading to feelings of shame or inadequacy. This can have an effect on their self-esteem and motivation, impacting their academic achievement. In shaping the identity of people with disabilities, Susan Wendell's disability identity theory emphasizes the importance of recognizing the diverse experiences and perspectives of people with disabilities, challenging Ableism and societal barriers, and embracing disability pride and community support.

The social model of disability theory by UPIAS (Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation) in 1976

UPIAS (Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation) proposed the social model of disability theory in 1976. This idea emphasizes that disability is influenced by societal restrictions, prejudice, and exclusion as much as an individual's incapacity. The social model of disability challenges the traditional medical paradigm and advocates for a more inclusive and accessible society that recognizes and accommodates individuals with disabilities' needs. The UPIAS (Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation) social model of disability theory established in 1976 is a paradigm-shifting method to understanding and addressing disability. This theory contradicts the traditional medical model, which considers disability to be the outcome of an individual's impairment and concentrates on medical interventions and therapies to fix or cure the person.

In contrast, the social model of disability emphasizes that disability is influenced by societal constraints, prejudice, and exclusion as well as an individual's incapacity. People with impairments are disabled, according to this view, not because of physical, sensory, or cognitive problems, but because of the way society is organized and the barriers it generates that prohibit them from fully participating in all aspects of life. Physical barriers (such as inaccessible buildings and transportation), communication barriers (such as a lack of sign language interpretation), attitudinal barriers (such as stigma and discrimination), and systemic barriers (such as discriminatory policies and practices) are all identified by the UPIAS social model of disability theory. This philosophy advocates for a more inclusive and accessible society that recognizes and accommodates individuals with disabilities' needs. It emphasizes the significance of removing barriers to full participation in school, employment, healthcare, recreation, and many other elements of society for people with disabilities. The disability social model has had a tremendous impact on disability rights movements and policy development all around the world. It has resulted in the passage of legislation and regulations promoting accessibility and inclusion, such as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the United States and the Disability Discrimination Act in the United Kingdom. The UPIAS social model of disability theory has been critical in shifting the emphasis from "fixing" individuals to addressing societal barriers, fostering inclusion, and advocating for people with disabilities' rights and dignity. This idea holds that social exclusion is caused by societal restrictions and discrimination, rather than by the individual's handicap. Inaccessible environments, unfavorable attitudes, and a lack of accommodations are examples of these hurdles. These variables can make it more difficult for students with physical disabilities to succeed academically.

The Intersectionality Theory by Kimberley Crenshaw (1989)

Kimberley Crenshaw proposed the intersectionality thesis in 1989. Crenshaw, a legal scholar and civil rights advocate, coined the term "intersectionality" to describe how various forms of discrimination and oppression (such as racism, sexism, Ableism, and so on) intersect and overlap, resulting in unique marginalisation experiences for individuals who belong to multiple marginalised groups. Kimberley Crenshaw's intersectionality theory is a framework for understanding how diverse types of discrimination and oppression intersect and overlap, resulting in unique experiences of marginalisation for persons who belong to numerous marginalised groups. Crenshaw developed this theory in reaction

to the shortcomings of traditional feminist and civil rights methods, which tended to focus on single-axis forms of discrimination, such as gender or race, without taking into account how different forms of oppression cross and compound each other.

Individuals face discrimination and oppression not only because of a single aspect of their identity (such as gender or race), but also because of the intersections of multiple aspects of their identity (such as race, gender, class, sexual orientation, disability, and so on). A black woman, for example, may face prejudice differently than a white woman or a black male because she is marginalised on the basis of both her race and gender. Crenshaw's intersectionality theory emphasises the significance of considering the linked nature of various forms of oppression and how they interact to influence people's lives. This concept has had an impact in a variety of sectors, including law, sociology, and activism, by drawing attention to the complex and multidimensional character of prejudice and oppression. Because it advocates a more inclusive and comprehensive approach to tackling systemic injustices, intersectionality theory has also been utilized to inform social justice movements and advocacy initiatives. Intersectionality theory has helped to emphasise the need for more nuanced and intersectional analysis of social issues and policy by recognising the intersecting nature of oppression. Kimberley Crenshaw's intersectionality theory has been crucial in widening our knowledge of discrimination and oppression, as well as providing a vital framework for addressing the diverse ways in which individuals suffer marginalisation due to overlapping identities. According to this idea, social exclusion is influenced by a number of overlapping elements, including race, gender, and socioeconomic class. Students with physical disabilities may encounter further discrimination and marginalization, which can have an influence on their academic performance.

STATEMENT PROBLEM

Social exclusion in Cameroon has a substantial impact on the academic performance of students with physical disabilities; resulting in lower achievement, lower self-esteem, and fewer possibilities for personal and professional growth. Despite efforts to promote inclusivity and diversity in Buea and Cameroon as whole, impediments such as physical accessibility issues, a lack of support services, unfavorable attitudes and prejudices, and restricted social interaction chances continue to impede these students' performance. This junction of social exclusion and physical handicap results in unique experiences of marginalisation, adding to feelings of isolation, loneliness, and a lack of belonging within the school community, ultimately affecting these kids' overall well-being and mental health. This junction of social exclusion and physical handicap results in unique experiences of marginalisation, adding to feelings of isolation, loneliness, and a lack of belonging within the school community, ultimately affecting these kids' overall well-being and mental health.

RESEARCH DESIGN

The Survey research design was used in the study. The study's population consisted of all physically disabled students in form 3, 4, and 5 from four different main secondary schools in the Buea Municipality. The sample population consisted of Physically Impaired form 3, 4, and 5 students from BGS (Bilingual Grammer School) Molyko, ICC (Inter Comprehensive College) Campaign Street II, GHS (Government High School) Bokwango and PSS (Presbyterian Secondary School) Buea Town. Each school picked 50 students with physical disabilities, for a total of 200 participants. For accurate information, the participants were chosen using a basic random sample procedure. The sample population consisted of 200 students from the Buea municipality, as stated in the table below.

Table 1: Sample Size of the Study

School	Sample Student Population	Number of Males Students	Number of Female Students
Bilingual Grammar School Molyko	50	33	17
Inter Comprehensive College Campaign Street II	50	29	21

Presbyterian Secondary School Buea Town	50	15	35
Government High School Bokwango	50	14	36
Total	200	91	109

Statistical Method for Data Analysis

Data Analysis Statistical Method tables, frequencies, percentages, means, were used to analyze data, and the Linear Regression Model was used to report hypothesis. The formula was as follows:

$$\text{Percentages} = \frac{\text{Number of responses}}{\text{Total Number of Participants}} \times \frac{100}{1}$$

DISPLAY OF FINDINGS

Demographic Information

Table 2: Distribution of respondents according to demographic characteristics

Characteristics		n	%
Age	12-14 years	72	36.0
	15-17 years	101	50.5
	17 and above	27	13.5
	Total	200	100.0
Educational level	Form 3	93	46.5
	Form 4	104	52.0
	Form 5	03	01.5
	Total	200	100.0

The results revealed that 72 (36%) of the students were between the ages of 12 and 14, 101 (50.5%) were between the ages of 15 and 17, and the remaining 27 (13.5%) were between the ages of 17 and above. The pie graphic below illustrates the age group differences better. In addition, 91 (45.5%) of the students were male, while 109 (54.5%) were female.

Distribution of Student Age Range

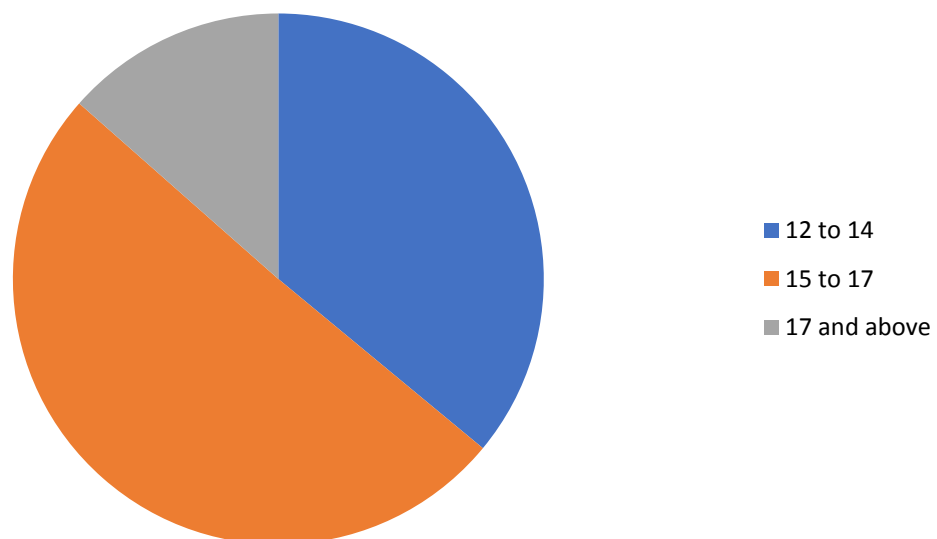


Figure 1: A presentation on respondents' age range using a pie chart

Interpretation of Student Research Question Results

Table 2: What are the effects of stigmatization on the academic performance of student with physical disability?

	Agreed		Disagreed	
	n	%	n	%
I often feel i am excluded or left out of group activities or discussions in the classroom due to my physical impairment	111	55.5	89	44.5
I am often taunted and bullied by classmates or teachers due to my physical disability	95	47.5	105	52.5
I am afraid I won't be accepted by my friends and teachers, so I don't participate as much in class	135	67.5	65	32.5
My academic success is impacted by the opinions and treatment I receive from my peers and teachers	108	54	92	46
I sometimes feel that because of my physical disability, I am assigned less tasks or responsibilities at school	92	46	108	54
MRS	108.2	54.1	93.6	45.9

According to the answers above, 55.5% of students acknowledged that, as a result of their physical disability, they frequently feel left out or excluded from group projects or class discussions. However, 44.5% of the responders denied this information. According to the next item, 47.5% of respondents said that because of their physical impairment, they are frequently made fun of and tormented by peers or teachers. Once more, 52.5% of those surveyed denied this information. Subsequently, 67.5% of participants acknowledged that they don't interact as much in class because they fear they won't be accepted by their friends and professors. Of the students, 32.5% disapproved of this information. 54.0% of students agreed, according to item 4, that their classmates' and teachers' attitudes and treatment of them have an impact on their academic progress. 46.0% of people disapproved of this. Finally, 54.0% of respondents acknowledged that they occasionally believe that because of their physical condition, they are given fewer tasks or responsibilities at school. Of these, 46.0% disagreed.

General observations (MRS) from table 2 above indicate that stigmatisation affects students with physical disabilities' academic performance, with 54.1% of respondents strongly agreeing and agreeing, and 45.9% disagreeing with the established items under this section.

Table 3: What are the effects of discrimination on the academic performance of students with physical disabilities?

	Agreed		Disagreed	
	n	%	n	%
Due to my constant fear of rejection or denial, I feel as though I must conceal my physical disability, which has negatively impacted my academic achievement.	102	51	98	49
Less students in my class and instructors understand my condition	83	41.5	117	58.5
The school is doing little to assist students with physical disabilities or to avoid discrimination, which has resulted in poor academic performance of students with physical disabilities.	110	55	90	45
I once requested resources or assistance from my school to address discrimination, but nothing was done	93	46.5	107	53.5
Because of my disability, my peers and teachers pay little or no attention to me	101	50.5	99	49.5
MRS	97.8	48.9	102.2	50.94

According to the findings, 51% of students acknowledged that they feel compelled to conceal their physical impairment owing to their persistent fear of rejection or denial, which has hampered their academic performance. This fact was refuted by 49% of students. 41.5% of students felt that fewer people in their class and instructors are aware of their illness. 58.5% of people disagreed with this statement. Following that, 55% of students believed that the school does little to help students with physical impairments or to avoid discrimination, resulting in poor academic achievement for students with physical disabilities. This information was rejected by 45% of those polled. Again, 46.5% of students stated that they had asked resources or assistance from their school to combat discrimination in the past, but that nothing had been done. 53.5% of people disagreed with this statement. Finally, 50.5% of kids stated that their friends and teachers pay little or no attention to them because of their condition. 49.5% of people disagreed with this statement.

In total, 48.9% of respondents agreed that prejudice has an impact on the academic performance of students with physical disabilities, while 50.94% said that discrimination has no impact on the academic performance of students with physical disabilities.

Table 4: What are the effects of poverty on the academic performance of students with physical impairments?

	Agreed		Disagreed	
	n	%	n	%
Due to financial constraints, I am unable to afford necessary accommodations or resources for my physical handicap	111	44.0	89	56.0
Due to financial difficulties at home, I am frequently distracted or stressed in the classroom	145	27.5	55	72.5
I've had to miss school or academic activities due to budgetary constraints caused by my physical handicap	98	51.0	102	49.0
Poverty has an impact on my motivation to participate in class activities and do well academically	123	38.5	77	61.5
Because of my family's socioeconomic circumstances, I have not been provided the same opportunities as other pupils, resulting in a reduction in academic performance	103	48.5	97	51.5
MRS	83.8	41.9	116.2	58.1

The results of table 4 above revealed that 44.0% of respondents stated that they are unable to afford necessary accommodations or resources for their physical impairment owing to financial restrictions. This information was rejected by 56.0% of responders. Following that, 27.5% of students said that they are regularly distracted or stressed in class as a result of financial troubles at home. This information was rejected by 72.5% of those polled. Again, 51.0% of respondents said they had to miss school or academic activities owing to financial difficulties caused by my physical impairment. This information was rejected by 49.0% of those polled. Furthermore, 38.5% of students thought that poverty has an effect on their motivation to participate in class, whereas 61.5% disagreed. Finally, 48.5% of respondents felt that they have not been given the same opportunities as other students due of their family's socioeconomic situation, resulting in lower academic achievement. This was rejected by 51.5% of those polled.

According to the Multiple Response Set (MRS), 41.9% of students believed that poverty has an impact on the academic performance of students with physical disabilities. This concept was rejected by 58.1% of respondents.

Table 5: Testing Hypothesis

SUMMARY OUTPUT

<i>Regression Statistics</i>	
Multiple R	0.142297
R Square	0.020248

Adjusted R Square	0.0153
Standard Error	0.44555
Observations	200

ANOVA

	<i>df</i>	<i>SS</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Significance F</i>
Regression	1	0.812331	0.812331	4.092049	0.04443
Residual	198	39.30587	0.198514		
Total	199	40.1182			

	<i>Coefficients</i>	<i>Standard Error</i>	<i>t Stat</i>	<i>P-value</i>	<i>Lower 95%</i>	<i>Upper 95%</i>	<i>Lower 95.0%</i>	<i>Upper 95.0%</i>
Intercept	1.82895	0.282574	6.472459	7.42E-10	1.271709	2.386191	1.271709	2.386191
Social Exclusion	0.232649	0.115008	2.022881	0.04443	0.00585	0.459447	0.00585	0.459447

Hypothesis Results

The study's goal is to look into the effects of social exclusion on academic performance in students with physical disabilities. The following hypotheses have been proposed:

H₁: There's no significant impact of social exclusion on the academic performance of student with physical disabilities in the Buea Municipality

H₂: There's a significant impact of social exclusion on the academic performance of student with physical disabilities in the Buea Municipality

The dependent variable (academic achievement of physically disabled students) was regressed against the predictive variable of social exclusion. With a $F(0.04443) = 4.09204$, $p > 0.05$, the independent variable does not significantly predict the academic performance of students with physical impairments in this study, indicating that social exclusion has no significant impact on the academic performance of students with physical impairments in the Buea Municipality. Again, the R-square value of 0.0202 shows that the model only explains 2.02% of the variance in academic achievement, which is unquestionably poor.

Furthermore, the coefficients were examined to determine the impact of social isolation on the criterion variable (academic performance). The hypothesis tested whether social isolation has no effect on the academic achievement of pupils with physical disabilities in the Buea Municipality. The findings show that social exclusion had no influence on the social exclusion of students with physical disabilities in the Buea Municipality ($B=1.828$, $t=6.472$, and $p=7.42$). As a result, the null hypothesis is supported.

Discussions

The goal of this section is to summarize the study, make recommendations to improve the system, including potential areas for further research, and ultimately make suggestions for future research.

Stigmatization and Students with Physical Impairments

According to the findings, stigmatisation has an impact on the academic performance of pupils with physical limitations. 54.1% of students agreed with this statement, while 45.9% disagreed. These findings are consistent with the findings of Emilia A. Nusbaum and Lisa A. Lieberman, who found that stigmatisation, has a negative impact on academic performance of students with physical disabilities, resulting in worse grades, decreased motivation, and lower self-esteem. As a result, tackling stigma is critical for enhancing the educational experiences of kids with physical disabilities. Another study, conducted by Elizabeth Tallbot and Janet R. Walker, clearly established that stigma can lead to social and emotional problems, as well as lower self-esteem and academic achievement. As a result, it is critical for schools to implement effective intervention programmes that promote social equity between students, and address stigmatisation of kids with impairments and physical disabilities.

Discrimination and students with Physical Impairments

According to the data, discrimination had no influence on the academic achievement of pupils with physical disabilities in the Buea Municipality. This was agreed upon by 48.9%, while it was objected upon by 50.94%.

Observations revealed that students with physical disabilities were given a variety of accommodations that aided their learning and academic achievement. This removed all forms of student prejudice, which explains why the results reveal that discrimination had no influence on academic performance. Teachers made time to help students who had writing problems due to muscular weakness copy notes, provided good sitting positions for students with physical disabilities so they could easily move in and out of the classroom environment and the classrooms were designed with good space for movement for students with physical impairments. Furthermore, the study found that students with physical disabilities were extremely driven and determined to succeed despite the hurdles and problems that their disabilities may have caused to them. This is another reason why prejudice had little or no effect on the academic achievement of physically disabled students. Some students with physical disabilities also indicated that they are used to the condition and people calling them various names, thus it has no effect on their education, which is another reason why discrimination has no effect on academic performance.

Poverty and students with Physical Impairments

According to this part, 41.9% of respondents believe that poverty has no effect on the academic achievement of Learners with physical disabilities. In the Buea municipality, 58.1% of students disagree that poverty has an impact on academic achievement.

According to Lazarus and Giangreco (2018), addressing poverty-related hurdles is critical for enhancing these kids' educational experiences and outcomes. Parish and Hughes (1998) further state that poverty-related problems, such as a lack of resources and inadequate healthcare, might have a negative impact on these pupils' academic achievement and educational outcomes. According to observations, the majority of children with disabilities in the selected schools came from households where their parents were at least able to meet the required needs to help them in school. As a result, it was discovered that poverty has little or no effect on academic achievement. Most students with physical disabilities reported having all or most of their school resources and thus being able to study efficiently, resulting in good results.

Contributions to knowledge

Based on the findings that social exclusion has no influence on academic performance of students with physical disabilities, it is critical to recognize that academic success is determined by variables other than social issues. Instead, it emphasises the perseverance and determination of kids with physical disabilities to overcome hurdles and achieve academic success. This helps to improve awareness of the complex aspects that influence academic achievement and can inform the establishment of policies and programmes that assist students with physical disabilities in reaching their academic goals. It also emphasises the importance of inclusive education systems that prioritizes accessibility and assistance for all students, regardless of social position or physical impairments.

Conclusions

The goal of this study was to look at the impact of social exclusion on the academic performance of students with physical disabilities in the Buea Municipality. Three main elements that contributed to social isolation were investigated: stigma, prejudice, and poverty. According to the findings, kids with physical disabilities in the various school environments had a similar perception of social exclusion and academic achievement. According to the findings of the study, social exclusion has no effect on the academic performance of kids with physical disabilities. This demonstrates the pupils' tenacity and perseverance to overcome obstacles and achieve academic success. It also highlights the significance of inclusive education systems that prioritizes accessibility and assistance for all students, regardless of

social position or physical impairments. These findings can help to shape policies and programmes that promote academic achievement for students with physical disabilities, as well as contribute to a greater understanding of the numerous elements that influence academic performance.

Recommendations

The research therefore recommends that:

- i) Educators, policymakers, and parents must be aware that social exclusion does not always have a detrimental influence on pupils with physical disabilities' academic achievement. This understanding will aid in lowering the stigma associated with disability and fostering a more inclusive atmosphere.
- ii) Instead of presuming that social exclusion will have a detrimental impact on academic performance, it is critical to focus on each student's particular needs. This entails offering individualized help and adjustments depending on each student's unique problems and abilities.
- iii) While social isolation may not always have a detrimental influence on academic performance, it can have a negative impact on mental health and well-being. Peer support and chances for kids to connect with one another can assist to lessen feelings of isolation and establish a healthy school atmosphere.
- iv) Physical impairments, rather than social exclusion, can have an impact on academic success. It is critical to make schools accessible and to provide the appropriate modifications so that children with physical disabilities can fully engage in academic activities.
- v) While this study found no direct link between social exclusion and academic performance, it is important to continue researching this topic to better understand the complex interplay between social factors and academic outcomes for students with physical impairments.

Suggestions for Further Research

The study was limited to the Buea Municipality in Cameroon's South West Region. It should be carried out in other parts of the region as well. The researcher further requests that additional research be conducted on the following topics:

1. The role of peer support in reducing social exclusion.
2. The impact of inclusive education on social integration.
3. The psychological impact of social marginalisation.

Finally, because this study was conducted in secondary schools, the same concepts can be taught in primary schools throughout Cameroon.

Limitations of the Study

To begin with, time management was a significant challenge in the research process. It took a long time to schedule time to visit the school library and the internet to seek for info.

In addition, attending lectures, preparing for continuous evaluation, and preparing for tests was extremely stressful and difficult to handle.

Again, some of the respondents were unwilling to answer or react to the surveys, resulting in time wasted as I had to walk from one student to the next to persuade and educate them on the importance of students responding to research instruments.

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