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# The Adequacy of Physical Learning Facilities Supporting Students with Physical Disabilities (SWPDs) In Tanzania Secondary Schools

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## ABSTRACT

The goal of this study was to determine the suitability of the available physical learning facilities for students with physical limitations (SWPDs) in Tanzania Secondary Schools. The study was conducted in Dodoma region where two district councils were involved, namely Chamwino district council and Dodoma city council. The study covered classrooms, ramps, toilets, and laboratory and sports grounds facilities. The study took a quantitative approach and used a descriptive survey research design. A total of 327 people, comprising 294 teachers and 33 SWPDs, were randomly selected and asked to participate in the survey by responding to the questionnaires. It used questionnaires as a data collection instrument and a multistage procedure was also employed to get the participants who were teachers and students with physical disabilities. Frequencies and mean were used in a descriptive data analysis technique. Validity and reliability issues were well considered in this study in order to ensure achievement of the intended goals, dependability and consistency of the results. On the other hand, the study adhered to the ethical issues by considering privacy and confidentiality an act that ensured voluntarily and privacy participation of the respondents. The study discovered that the majority of schools lacked suitable basic physical facilities, resulting in a lot of children with special needs in the society being denied their right to attend and participate in learning activities at school. This implies that educational stakeholders ought to work hard ensuring availability of adequate and suitable supportive physical learning facilities for SWPDs in secondary schools.

Keywords: Students with physical disabilities; physical facilities; disability; secondary schools

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#### 1. Introduction

Physical learning facilities refer to all materials used in facilitating learning activities consisting infrastructure, buildings, equipment and sports and games areas and tools. The focus of this study was on adequacy of physical learning facilities involving constructions such as classrooms, ramps, laboratories, toilets, and play grounds.

In deciding their academic performance, childhood handicap had a stronger impact on their future lives than the learning environment. Hertler, Figueredo, Peñaherrera-Aguirre and Fernandes (2018) showed that the ecological system that surrounds an individual has a bigger influence on their interactions at various levels, and that active engagement may be felt in the interaction between the environment and the person on their involvement. Students with physical disabilities (SWPDs) have environmental constraints that limit and impair their well-being as well as active involvement in their learning.

When opposed to those who do not have a physical handicap, the situation of SWPDs has an impact on their everyday learning progress. According to Eriksson (2005), the organization of chores and activities, particularly in schools, presents learning hurdles for students with physical disabilities (SWPDs). As a result, exclusion from a variety of activities, which limits impaired students' access to opportunities and limits their potential. This must be addressed. The physical environment plays a larger role in improving SWPD education. For example, thanks to advances in science and modern technology, the town and its urban planning and organization contribute significantly to the isolating environment. Greater separation between houses and schools has occurred from increased industrialization, resulting in longer travel lengths to schools as well as transportation challenges. The separation of kids' homes and regions of instruction makes it difficult for pupils with physical disabilities to integrate into mainstream education and study. As a result, physical facilities that support the effective and efficient learning process of SWPDs must be provided in their learning environment. In terms of social and cultural environment, SWPD frequently have experienced isolation in their everyday lives, in contrast to their deserved home setting, which caused students with disabilities to feel social unfairness, which is not supported by such moral ideals.

In contrast to students with disabilities who do not have access to an assistant. Lundberg et al. (2007) found that students with disabilities who had access to an aide perceived the school environment as more and well accessible. According to the study, students with the most severe disabilities were perceived to have helpers, and their presence in the classroom was a barrier to their involvement. Students with disabilities are perceived to have relatively little political influence and participation, especially in student leadership, due to the institutional setting (Lundberg, Hemmingsson & Hogstedt, 2007). As a result of their active participation in school

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student leadership, students gained the idea that they had power in society and had access to decision-making, which is a step toward their future political and social life.

Another factor that influences SWPDs performance is the school's management climate. The function of school management (teachers and principals), according to Praisner (2003), has radically impacted the operational environment. Principals are expected to manage, lead, implement, and establish new duties, staff, and other obligations for all students, including those with physical disabilities. In that scenario, whole-school transformation, a principal's (managerial) leadership is viewed as critical to success (Hipp & Huffman, 2000). As a result, it is critical that principals demonstrate behaviors that promote the integration, acceptance, and achievement of students with disabilities in general education classes in order to ensure the success of SWPDs inclusion. Students who participate actively in educational settings are more likely to have successful, good social relationships with classmates, teachers, and others. Such encounters form the foundation for social and cognitive development. The investigations were motivated by a strong desire to learn more about the impact of environmental factors in student with disabilities results, particularly school features in relation to student engagement.

Worldwide, there is a cry and a call for all the International community to form and renovate physical learning facilities into a friendly and sensitive to all vulnerable groups such as girls, disabled students and children (Barrett, Treves, Shmis & Ambasz, 2019; & Chambers, Varoglu & Kasinskaite-Buddeberg, 2016). Studies show that adequacy of physical learning facilities impacts students' health, achievement, enjoyment, and motivation to actively participate in learning for self-efficacy and actualization.

In Tanzania, the government has been taking several initiatives to address the challenge related to learning environment. The initiatives include; renovation of old schools, building new schools, classrooms and establishment of boarding schools' facilities (URT 2019). Besides these, there are different unanswered questions in relation to learning environment in secondary schools and the performance of students with physical disabilities (SWPDs). Adequacy of supportive facilities such as classrooms, ramps, toilets, laboratory and sports grounds available in Tanzania secondary schools for students with physical disabilities is not well known. Therefore, it was imperative to conduct a study on the adequacy of physical learning environment.

## 2. Material and Methods

#### 2.1. Research Design

This is a descriptive study that used a cross-sectional approach to collect data from a large population in multiple districts in the Dodoma region at the same time. The quantitative research approach was used to analyze the adequacy of the school's available supportive physical facilities

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in serving students with physical disabilities (SWPDs). One of the motivations for using a crosssectional survey approach in this study is to address this issue.

## 2.2. Study Population and Sample Size

Based on the schools enrolled, the population and sample of this study comprise all students with motor and physical disabilities enrolled in secondary schools, as well as their respective teachers. The study sample distribution is given in Table 1, with a total sample of 327 respondents purposively selected based on the schools with available SWPDs. There were 297 teachers chosen at random from the target demographic, 30 of whom were SWPDs.

Category	Target Population	Sample Size	Percentage of Sample Size (%)
Teacher	571	297	52.01
SWPDs	32	30	93.75
Total	603	327	54.23

#### Table1.1: Distribution of the study sample by specialization

*Source: researcher* (*based on the pilot study*)

## 2.3 Data Collection

This study relied on primary data acquired from respondents via a semi-structured questionnaire that was given to students and teachers. Following the theoretical literature (Busljeta, 2013), this study used the same approach and physical facilities such as Classroom facilities, Ramp facilities, Toilet facilities, Laboratory facilities, and Sports facilities to categorize the facilities/dimensions based on the indicator for supporting SWPDs.

## 2.4 Data Analysis Techniques and Procedures

In this study, acquired data was loaded into MS-Excel 2016 for data cleaning and sorting based on information from students and teachers. The data was then organized and entered into IBM-SPSS version 25 for analysis. In this study, descriptive statistics were utilized to conduct quantitative analysis, which included a frequency distribution table for counts, percentages, and chart presentation. The data was evaluated and presented based on each specific adequacy of

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learning facilities among students with physical disabilities, which was then shown using charts based on the general interpretation of sufficiency on each indicator variable.

#### 3. Results

#### The adequacy of the supportive facilities available for the SWPDs in the schools

Several aspects were reviewed in regard to the supportive environment of SWPD study while assessing the sufficiency of supporting facilities. This includes testing the effectiveness of supportive interventions in laboratories, restrooms, sports & activities, ramps, and classrooms. The presence of availability was determined using descriptive statistics based on the frequency count of the adequacy metrics reported in percentage, as indicated in the tables below. Furthermore, as judged on a five-likert scale of "Very low, Low, Unaware, High, and Very high," the generalized knowledge of the given facility contributes to supporting SWPDs. The data gathered is a composite of results from both SWPDs (n = 30) and teachers (n = 327) in order to acquire a basic understanding of the scenario under investigation as described in the subsection that follows.

#### **3.1. Adequacy of Classroom Facilities**

Three variables were used to determine the sufficiency of classroom facilities: the ability of the class to allow SWPDs to move freely, the accessibility of the classrooms to SWPDs, and the availability of customized furniture to accommodate SWPDs. The results in Table 2 reveal that, when assessing the sufficiency of classroom facilities based on the class's capacity to allow SWPDs to move freely, the majority of respondents (113, or 35.09 percent) reported a lack of space, indicating a low class's ability to allow SWPDs to move freely. However, only 15 (4.66%) of respondents felt that the class has a high competence to allow SWPDs to move freely. When it came to the availability of customized furniture to support SWPDs, the majority of respondents (145.03 percent) had positive experiences a shortage of available modified furniture to support SWPDs as ranked low. However, a shortage of only about 11 (3.42%) respondents believed that there is a lot of customized furniture available to help SWPDs. In the survey of classroom accessibility to SWPDs, the majority of respondents (127, or 39.32 percent) reported that classroom accessibility was poor. However, only about 17 percent of respondents (5.26 percent) believe that classes are very accessible to SWPDs.

The findings in Table 2 show that there are insufficient classrooms and facilities to help SWPDs in studying in a suitable and friendly school environment.

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		Frequenc	Percentage %
		У	
Capability of class to allow SWPDs to move	Very low	86	26.71%
freely	Low	113	35.09%
	Unaware	62	19.25%
	High	46	14.29%
	Very high	15	4.66%
	Total	322	100.00%
Availability of the modified furniture to	Very low	145	45.03%
accommodate SWPDs	Low	94	29.19%
	Unaware	43	13.35%
	High	29	9.01%
	Very high	11	3.42%
	Total	322	100.00%
Accessibility of the classrooms to the	Very low	75	23.22%
SWPDs	Low	127	39.32%
	Unaware	52	16.10%
	High	52	16.10%
	Very high	17	5.26%
	Total	323	100.00%

#### Table 2: Adequacy of classroom facilities (n=327)

## **3.2. Adequacy of Ramps Facilities**

There are three elements to consider: the availability of ramps to help SWPDs get in and out of classes, the safety requirements of accessible ramps, and the presence of railings on both sides. Table 3 shows that the majority of responders (111 (35.71%) and 100 (32.26%) agree on low and very low ramp availability for assisting SWPDs in and out of classrooms, respectively. However, just 9 percent (2.9 percent) and 35 percent (11.29 percent) of respondents said ramps that help SWPDs go in and out of classrooms are available in schools. When it comes to ramp standards for wheelchair users' safety, the majority of respondents (119.57 percent) and 99.23 percent) believe that there are low and very low standards available ramps in terms of wheelchair users' safety. Majority of respondents 119(37.57%) and 99(31.23%) agree low and very low standards available.

However, only 6 percent (1.89 percent) and 40 percent (12.62 percent) of respondents said that there are available ramp standards in schools for wheelchair users' safety.

The majority of respondents believe that the presence of handrails on both sides is low or extremely low, with 140 (44.03 percent) and 84 (26.42 percent) agreeing that the presence of

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handrails on both sides is low or very low. However, only 10 percent (10.69 percent) and 34 percent (3.14 percent) of respondents said that there are available ramp standards in schools for wheelchair users' safety. As a consequence of the findings in Table 3, there is an inadequacy of ramps, standards of ramp facilities, and the absence of a handrail that enables and supports SWPDs to continue learning efficiently and effectively in the school environment.

		Frequency	Percentage %
Availability of ramps supporting	Very low	100	32.26%
SWPDs move in and out of classrooms	Low	111	35.81%
	Unaware	55	17.74%
	High	35	11.29%
	Very high	9	2.90%
	Total	310	100.00%
Standards of available ramps in terms	Very low	119	37.54%
of wheelchair users' safety	Low	99	31.23%
	Unaware	53	16.72%
	High	40	12.62%
	Very high	6	1.89%
	Total	317	100.00%
Presence of handrails on both sides	Very low	140	44.03%
	Low	84	26.42%
	Unaware	50	15.72%
	High	34	10.69%
	Very high	10	3.14%
	Total	318	100.00%

## Table 3: Assessment of adequacy of ramp facilities (n=327)

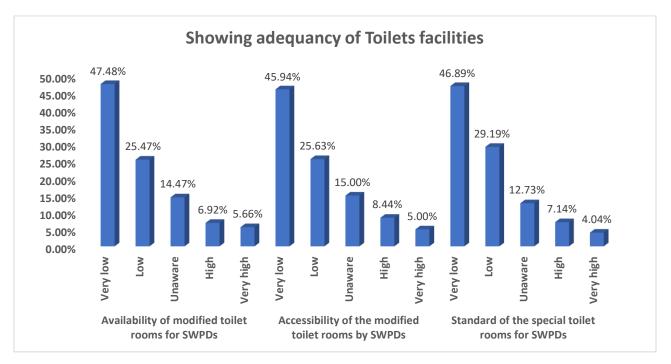
## **3.3. Adequacy of Toilets Facilities**

The adequacy of toilets and facilities was measured by the availability of modified toilet rooms for SWPDs, their accessibility by SWPDs, and the standard of the customized toilet rooms for SWPDs. To begin with, the results in Figure 1 show that the majority of respondents, 151 (47.48 percent) and 81 (25.47 percent), classified modified toilet availability as extremely low and low, respectively. Few respondents (18.66%) and 22.92%), on the other hand, believed that the availability of customized toilet rooms for SWPDs is extremely high and high, respectively. The majority of respondents 147 (45.94 percent) and 82 (25.63 percent) assessed the accessibility of the adapted toilet rooms by SWPDs as extremely low and low available, respectively.

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On the other side, only 16 (5.00 percent) and 27 (8.44 percent) of respondents believed that the accessibility of modified toilet rooms for SWPDs is very high and high, respectively. The majority of respondents 151 (46.89 percent) and 94 (29.19 percent) ranked very low and low available, respectively, based on SWPD standards for special toilet rooms. On the other side, only 13 (4.04%) and 23 (7.14%) respondents agreed that separate toilet rooms for SWPDs should have very high and high standards, respectively. As a result, the findings suggest that rest-room facilities are insufficient, resulting in unsuitable surroundings for SWPDs to learn successfully and efficiently at school.



## Figure 1: Adequacy of toilets facilities

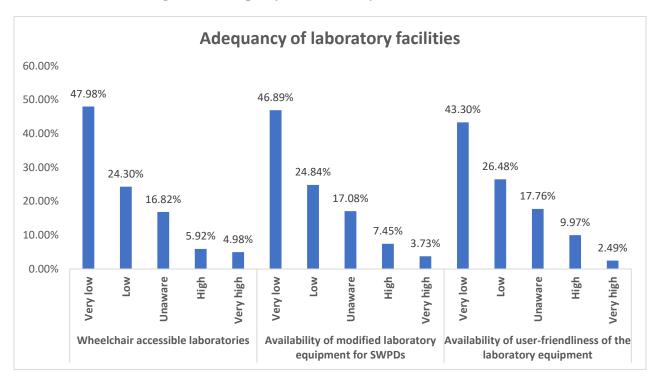
## 3.4. Adequacy of Laboratory Facilities

The suitability of laboratory facilities was assessed using three criteria: wheelchair accessibility, availability of customized laboratory equipment for SWPDs, and laboratory equipment user-friendliness. Figure 2 demonstrates that the majority of respondents, 154(47.98%) and 78(24.30%), believe that wheelchair accessible laboratories are very low and low, respectively, compared to 16(4.98) and 19(5.92%) students who believe that they are extremely high and high, respectively. Based on the availability of laboratory equipment, the results in Figure 2 show that the majority of respondents, 151 (46.89 percent) and 80 (24.84 percent), believe there is very low and low, respectively, as opposed to 12 (3.73%) and 24 (7.45 percent) students who believe there is very high and high, respectively.

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When it comes to the availability of user-friendly laboratory equipment, the results in Figure 2 show that the majority of respondents disagree, with 139 (43.30 percent) and 85 (26.48 percent) saying there is very low and low, respectively, compared to 16 (4.98) and 19(5.92 percent) saying there is very high and high, respectively. As a result, the findings suggest that laboratory facilities are insufficient to support SWPD students' practical learning at school.



## Figure 2: Adequacy of laboratory facilities variation

## **3.5. Adequacy of Sports Facilities**

In examining the suitability of sports facilities in Tanzania secondary schools that influence SWPDs in learning, user-friendliness of sports grounds, accessibility of sports fields, and availability of sport kits were taken into account. Table 4 shows that the majority of respondents disagree that the user friendliness of sports grounds is very low and low, respectively, as contrasted to 8(2.49 percent) and 29(9.03 percent) respondents who agreed very high and high, respectively. According to the results in Table 4, the majority of 140(43.75 percent) and 88(27.50 percent) of respondents believe that the accessibility of sports grounds is very low and low, respectively, as opposed to 9(2.81 percent) and 29(9.06 percent) respondents who believe that the accessibility of sports grounds is very high and high, respectively. In terms of sports grounds is very high and high, respectively. In terms of sports grounds is very high and high, respectively. In terms of sports grounds is very high and high, respectively. In terms of sports grounds is very high and high, respectively. In terms of sports grounds is very high and high, respectively. In terms of sports equipment availability, the results in Table 4 show that the majority of respondents (158(49.22 percent) and 84(26.17 percent) said there is very low and low availability, respectively, as

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opposed to 5(1.56) and 22(6.85 percent) who said there is very high and high availability, respectively. As a consequence of the findings, it can be concluded that sport facilities in Tanzanian secondary schools are insufficient to allow SWPD students to participate in various sports and games.

		Frequency	Percentage %
User-friendliness of sportsgrounds to SWPDs	Very low	142	44.24%
	Low	91	28.35%
	Unaware	51	15.89%
	High	29	9.03%
	Very high	8	2.49%
	Total	321	100.00%
Accessibility of the sports grounds to the	Very low	140	43.75%
SWPDs	Low	88	27.50%
	Unaware	54	16.88%
	High	29	9.06%
	Very high	9	2.81%
	Total	320	100.00%
Availability of the sport kits for SWPDs	Very low	158	49.22%
	Low	84	26.17%
	Unaware	52	16.20%
	High	22	6.85%
	Very high	5	1.56%
	Total	321	100.00%

Table 4: The adequacy of sports facilities to support SWPDs (n=327)

## 4. Discussion of the Findings

The discussion in this section is based on the findings from the study on the appropriateness of physical infrastructure in secondary schools to support SWPDs. Many studies have shown how important teaching and learning resources are for disabled children (Deku & Vanderpuye, 2008; Kapur, 2020). The findings of these research clearly reveal that inadequacy of teaching and learning materials impairs students' capacity to study and achieve their goals, thereby acting as hurdles to their success and portraying a negative image in the community at large.

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#### 4.1. Adequacy of Classroom Facilities

The findings suggest that most secondary schools in Dodoma still have a limited capability of allowing SWPDs to roam freely in lessons. This means that, in order to deal with the situation, school infrastructure must be updated. Furthermore, research findings show that the availability of modified furniture to accommodate SWPDs and accessibility of classrooms to SWPDs is still low. This is in line with a study conducted by (Olsen, 2005) who found that students with disabilities are given low priority in the modification of their classroom environment to improve effective learning.

#### 4.2. Adequacy of ramps Facilities

According to the findings, most secondary schools in Dodoma still have insufficient classroom capacity to allow SWPDs to roam freely within them. This means that in order to deal with the situation, school infrastructure must be updated. Furthermore, research findings show that the availability of modified furniture to accommodate SWPDs and accessibility of classrooms to SWPDs is still low. This is in line with a study conducted by (Olsen, 2005), which found that students with disabilities are given low priority in the modification of their classroom environment to improve effective learning. According to the findings in table 3, the provision of ramps in many secondary schools in Dodoma is insufficient to meet the needs of disabled students. As a result, railings along hallways should be carefully considered, with a sufficient handrail height to accommodate both SWPDs. Furthermore, providing well-designed ramps between relatively slight changes in level on sloping sites will ensure that they are wheelchair accessible. At changes in level more than 300mm, a choice between stairs and a ramp should be available."

## **4.3.** Adequacy of Toilets Facilities

The availability of toilet facilities, that is, the presence of modified toilets to fit SWPDs and ease of accessible, is still very low among secondary schools in Dodoma, according to the findings. This suggests that SWPDs are at a significant risk of contracting illnesses and other health problems. Findings from services (Mwakyambiki, 2006) show that having appropriate sanitary facilities allows children with disabilities to learn comfortably without being discriminated against by their peers if they do not have access to these services.

## 4.4. Adequacy of Laboratory Equipment and Facilities

According to the findings, the majority of secondary schools in Dodoma lacked laboratory support facilities, which made it difficult for SWPDs to learn. In addition, the UK publication 'Building Bulletin 102 Designing for disabled children and children with special educational

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needs' from 2008 includes a template design for a science laboratory that includes a wheelchairaccessible workbench and a height-adjustable sink, insisting on the laboratory needs for students with disabilities. Which is the assistive technology that allows all impaired students to participate in hands-on experiments and demonstrations that are an important part of teaching and learning?

#### **4.5. Adequacy of Sports Facilities**

The findings suggest that SWPDs' interactions with other students on sports and games is severely limited due to a lack of disability sport's supporting facilities in schools. Williams (2014) states in a paper on integrating impaired students into athletic programs that having a considerable availability of supportive facilities for disabled SWPDs improves their performance. Interaction in sports is rare in Dodoma. This could be owing to a dearth of specially designed games for disabled students, as well as facilitators and facilities tailored to SWPDs. Students with disabilities feel oppressed, discriminated against, and excluded from athletics as a result of this circumstance.

#### 5. Conclusion and Recommendation

#### 5.1. Conclusion

The outcomes of this study were significant enough to draw the conclusion that various school facilities, including as classrooms, restrooms, ramps, laboratories, and sports, were available but insufficient to meet the needs of SWPDs. Furthermore, the results of this investigation demonstrated that just a few facilities are standard for dealing with the peculiarities of SWPDs. As a result, there is a shortage of quality and equitable education in secondary schools across the country, despite the country's slogan of "leaving no one behind." In Tanzania, a good learning environment with appealing designs, pleasant staff, and easily accessible amenities are essential for achieving this critical SDG 4. Lack of funds, inadequate planning, implementation, and misinformed employees may all contribute to the difficulty in achieving this optimal learning environment for SWPDs.

#### **5.2. Recommendations**

This paper proposes the following based on the research findings and conclusions obtained in the preceding section: First, the Tanzanian government, through policymakers and other stakeholders, should reformulate the policy to comprehensively address all issues related to SWPDs, including how those issues can be clearly implemented in Tanzanian secondary schools. Second, all secondary schools should have trained teachers who deal with SWPDs. Third, the ministry of education should establish a dedicated department in each school with professionals who are skilled and knowledgeable in managing and caring for SWPD activities and learning

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environments in Tanzanian secondary schools. Finally, analogous research in other sectors, such as primary schools, colleges, and higher learning institutions, should be conducted.

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