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RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION IN CHILD FIND

A MASTER'S THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY
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BY
EUCABETH KIMAIGA

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
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RESPONSE TO INTERVENTION IN CHILD FIND

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APPROVED

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Abstract

This thesis highlights RTI and child-find under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA) federal law, revised in the special edition of 2011. In 2011, the child-find mandate was the focus of the IDEA regarding the education for learners with special needs. This concept mandated school districts in each state to acknowledge, find, and assess all children, from birth to 22 years of age with special needs and disabilities, who could need early care or special educational services. Children who were perceived to have a Specific Learning Disability (SLD) used to be found eligible for special education services after demonstrating significant variations in their academic capacity and learning performance. The proportion of learners who wanted help also struggled until their difference was substantial enough to consent for the special services. The Response to Intervention (RTI) strategy was identified by instructors and introduced in legislative notes to recognize learners with particular learning needs. The primary purpose of this study is to establish how schools can incorporate the RTI model while closely meeting each student's learning needs. Specifically, the paper aims at determining whether the child-find mandate and RTI can effectively be used together by schools. Specifically, the study was guided by research questions, including whether students struggling with regular education interventions complete RTI procedures before conducting IDEA evaluations. The second research question involved if a student is identified to have a learning disability during intervention programs, what are the effects of the “one size fits all” curriculum in which the said student receives regular interventions before a school initiates the IDEA evaluation? Lastly, the research addressed ways in which schools can make use of high-quality research-based interventions while at the same time avoiding potentially child-find legal claims.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

The Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) has been decisive in improving the educational life of young learners. These improvements have been recorded and protected many learners in the country for many years. The Act ensures that any learner in the United States of America is granted access to a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). The IDEA deals with school-aged children and babies who are between the ages of 0 and 22 years. In 2011, the child-find mandate was the focus of the IDEA regarding the education for learners with special needs. The child-find directive obligates the schools to identify, locate, and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the children with special needs within their districts. Implementing the find mandate targeted special needs children that require assistance to get into the education system. To fulfill the find mandate, the schools did not need to consider either the child's disability or socioeconomic status. The IDEA eased learners' learning experiences with special needs and positively impacted their intellectual development and academic achievements.

Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD) of learners with special needs is achieved by measuring intellectual ability and learning achievements. The SLD was initially used to determine who could be protected under the IDEA, but with reforms and amendments to the Act, every learner with special needs has the right to receive the IDEA covered Act (Keenan et al., 2018). This was done considering the time wasted when the schools waited for the learners with special needs to have a more severe discrepancy. The time wasted could not be recovered, yet most of the cases led to extreme differences. This means that once the school notices a child within the schooling age bracket, the school is obligated to take up the child as spelled out in the

IDEA. Therefore, all children with special needs are entitled to enjoy their rights under the IDEA.

Ruling out the learner's discrepancy shows dissonance resulting in the emergence of the Response to Intervention (RTI) method. The school district adopted the RTI method to identify learners with special needs who need special education. The RTI method gained preference. As a result, the Office of Special Programs (OSEP) and the US legislatures gave directives to school districts not to use the discrepancy model but rather adapt the RTI model. The school districts followed the direction, and currently, they use the interventions in the RTI model. Still, in some cases where the RTI model interventions fail, they incorporate other learning models. This, therefore, shows that despite the merits of the interventions in the RTI model, the model cannot be entirely depended on.

Background History

The IDEA is a body in American legislation that guarantees students with a disability get free and appropriate public education meant to benefit them. In 1954, an education format that segregated black and white students into different schools was established. The system was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of the United States. As a result, the declaration created an atmosphere of political unrest. This marked a gateway moment in the Civil Rights Movement since education was one of their essential elements.

At this time, America was under pressure due to the assassination of John Kennedy in 1963 and the Vietnam War, which took place from 1955 to 1975. At the top of these events, the Civil Rights Movement was in full force in the United States (Preston-Grimes, 2020). Intervention programs for children from low socioeconomic and social backgrounds like the

Head start program ramped up in the country. As a result of the interventions, education became the primary priority of many political agendas.

In the early 70s, only one out of five children with special needs were accommodated in the United States' public schools. Previously, many states enforced laws that limited students living with disabilities from attending public schools (Flores & García, 2017). The number of children with disabilities who attended school at the time was approximately 3.5 million, and they were set aside from the others and kept in segregated facilities where they received little or no adequate directions.

In 1975, the first law that provided a sense of relief was made. It was the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Longmore, 2020). Congress enacted the Education for All Handicapped Children Act to reduce the financial burden of the Rehabilitation Act. Also, public schools were to create a plan that required the parents' input to closely monitor the learners' educational experience for students with disabilities (Chamusco, 2017). The Act also required school districts to provide administrative procedures to enable students' parents living with disabilities to be involved in their children's educational matters. The involvement was an advantage to the parents as they were authorized to seek judicial review of the administration's decision.

Previously, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was known as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EAHCA) (Bicehouse & Faieta, 2017). This body was first introduced to the American Senate on October 31, 1989, by Tom Harkin and was passed by the senate as a legal body on November 16, 1989. It led to its approval by the house on June 18, 1990, without objection and was later signed into law by the then-president George H.W. Bush on October 30, 1990. At the time, EHA had changed to IDEA, and also many improvements had been made to it. The upgrades included promoting research and technology

consisting of national development, details on transition programs for students after high school, and programs that made sure children are educated in their neighborhood schools instead of separate schools. As the years went by, more and more amendments were made to the Individuals with Disabilities Act. In 1997, the definition of disabled children expanded to include children with “developmental delay” aged between three and nine years (Marlow, Servili, & Tomlinson, 2019). Similarly, the IDEA required parents to make an attempt and resolve disputes with schools and local educational agencies through the mediation process. The amendments also authorized additional grants to infants and toddlers with disabilities and professionals for technological development.

IDEA was later amended by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004, now known as IDEIA in 2004. The reauthorization in 2004 Russo et al. (2015) introduced a new concept: Response to Intervention (RTI). RTI is generally a tiered instruction process that allows schools to identify students struggling in their education at an early stage and provide appropriate instructional intervention henceforth. Several provisions outlined IDEA with the No Child Left behind Act of 2001, signed by President George Bush. The Act authorized fifteen states to implement three-year IEPs on a trial basis when parents would continually agree (White, 2020). The law also revised the requirements for evaluating children with learning disabilities, drawn from the President's Commission on Excellence in Special Education. More concrete provisions that had a connection to the discipline of outstanding education students were also added. In 2009, following the campaign promise in the manifesto for 'Funding the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, President Barack Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA), including additional 12.2 billion dollars (Keenan et al., 2018).

Definition of Terms

Referral

Referral refers to the process of contacting the school district and requesting an evaluation after finding out that a child needs special education. It can be initiated by parents, teachers, or any licensed individual who caters to the children. However, a referral is not a strategic path to special education.

Specific Learning Disability

Specific learning disability refers to a disorder in one or more of the psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may affect the ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculations. Specific Learning Disability is an umbrella term that can describe different types of learning issues, including dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia. In addition, different types of specific learning disabilities require various interventions.

Person with Disabilities

Under the Equality Act 2010, section 6 of the act defined a disabled person as having a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and continuing negative effect on usual daily activities (Blanck, Hyseni, & Wise, 2020). This includes people with a record of such an impairment, even if they currently don't show you a disability.

Treatment Integrity

According to Kovaleski (2021), treatment integrity is the degree to which an intervention or treatment is implemented as planned, intended, or originally designed. Interventions are progressively divided at intervals depending on the severity of the problem in reference. Individuals are assigned interventions to carry out.

Special Education

According to Pierangelo (2007), special education is an instruction designed explicitly at no cost to meet the special needs of the students. It is implemented by well-trained special education teachers and not commonly seen or used by untrained teachers in a regular classroom.

Research Questions

Under the child-find mandate, school districts should identify, locate, evaluate, and potentially serve all children with disabilities. Within this mandate, RTI has enabled the education system to implement an evidence-based intervention model in the regular programs. The primary purpose of this study is to establish how schools can incorporate the RTI model while closely meeting each student's learning needs. Specifically, the paper aims at determining whether the child-find mandate and RTI can effectively be used together by schools.

The first question focused on if students struggling with regular education intervention should complete RTI procedures before conducting IDEA evaluations. Second, suppose a student is identified to have a learning disability during an intervention program, what are the effects of the “one size fits all” curriculum in which the said student receives regular interventions before a school initiates the IDEA evaluation? Lastly, how can schools make use of high-quality research-based interventions while at the same time avoiding potentially child-find legal claims?

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This literature considers Response to Intervention and child find interventions. It also reviews the literature on the procedure for collecting information, the disabled children, legislation on RTI, impacts of RTI, education of disabled children, parent involvement with RTI, and the importance of IDEA legislation.

Consequently, this research uses a specific way of gathering information regarding the child find mandate to schools. Researchers used several sites like PsycInfo, ERIC, Web of Science, and ProQuest to obtain second-hand details on interventions for the child. These websites led to identifying, recommending, and implementing essential in identifying learners with special needs at a tender age. This research on IDEA also emphasizes the difference between child find procedures without implementing RTI and child find approach centered on the implementation of RTI. During studying the child find and implementations that necessitate it, the research done is limited to publication done after the year 2000 but before 2020. It is also worth noting that the journals require a specific way of gathering information regarding the child's mandate obligated to schools. To obtain second-hand details on interventions for child find, researchers used several sites like PsycInfo, ERIC, Web of Science, and ProQuest.

It is also worth noting that the journals were selected because they were peer-reviewed, which implies that comprehensive studies have been done regarding the child find and the IDEA requirements. Thus, this research is driven towards the opportunities available to innovate a new system that will enhance the tracking process and the identification process for learners with special needs that require intervention for them to get special education for learners with disabilities.

Definition of Disability General Overview

Under its social security advisory board, the federal government began provisioning funds for running disability assistance programs where eligible beneficiaries were defined as those who are totally and permanently disabled. The Disability Insurance Program (1956) described it as the inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity because of any medically determinable mental or physical impairment resulting in death. However, critics have argued that the language used to define disability limits the concept of disability in terms of occupational scope and that disability is a universal human experience since each person can experience disability in one form or another in the course of their life.

The current agreement on disability in the sociological, medical, and governmental realms in the United States comprises either impaired individuals who are mentally or physically disabled individuals. Such conditions deter individuals from engaging in substantial life activities. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2013) appraised disability into five proportions: mobility, vision, self-care, cognition, mobility, and independent living. Shree and Shukla (2016) defined intellectual disability as a disorder where a child's cognitive abilities are impaired to the point where they cannot correctly interpret the information in their surroundings. On the other hand, their research stated that disability is an impairment that limits a person's activities by restricting participation in their daily activities. To properly define a disability, a proper understanding of what a disability might be is necessary, and many aspects have to be considered before the term is defined.

Describing Special Education

Education is among the essential requirements for human beings in the current society. The government encourages education for youngsters because they are the potential country's

future and development determinants. Every person has the right to get access to education without any discrimination. The education and learning process in America begins for a person while they are young (Clapp et al., 2016). However, it is essential to note that education, in this case, is free will, and no one in America is forced to attend it. When thinking about education matters in America, children with disabilities are currently given a priority. Children with disabilities make up 14% of the young population in the country who access education. They should not be discriminated against from the rest due to their inabilities. An equal opportunity to education for these learners with disabilities is significant. As a result, the Individuals with Disability Education Act was enforced to ensure that students with disabilities get equal access to education.

Special education is the unique system for teaching purposes and delivery of learning strategies for learners with learning difficulties, and this may be done in regular or special schools. Special education is designed to be uniquely different from the standard type of education due to the difficulty in learners with special needs (Ashman & Conway, 2017). It involves specially designed instruction, which refers to the adaptation of the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to fulfill several objectives, including addressing the special needs of the students resulting from their disability and ensuring the student's access to the overall curriculum so that they can meet the educational standards that apply to all the students (Pierangelo, 2007). When referring to learners with special needs, these are students in the American education system with hearing, walking, speaking, or any other disability that may hinder the learning process. In other cases, these learners with special needs may have two or more difficulties, challenging education's standard delivery. These learners do not have the same

ability to grasp educational content, which calls for a unique education system that will deliver the learning strategies suitable for them.

In the education system, the teachers must clearly understand every learner's special abilities within their class. Teachers who are successful in the unique education system have a positive attitude in doing their job, which helps them and their students (Buli-Holmberg &Jeyaprabhan, 2016). For this to be possible, the teachers must have a positive attitude towards the teaching process. With a positive attitude, the teachers will desire to get close to every learner in their class. Some learners have a slower ability to grasp the teachings they get in class, while others are relatively faster. The speed of these learners, therefore, has an impact on their intellectual scores and academic achievements. When they get close to the learners, these teachers will understand their learners' specific difficulties and abilities and thus make the delivery of the learning strategies more beneficial to their learners. The special needs education system teachers should always aim to successfully help the learners with special needs to improve their academic performance and intellectual score. By doing so, they would have therefore fulfilled the requirements of special education as outlined by the IDEA.

The special education system requires teachers to understand the best way to teach their learners. Since the learners have disabilities, it may not be possible to employ the typical teaching strategies when teaching them (Popenici & Kerr, 2017). This gives the teacher the task of identifying the most suitable method to use. This is not difficult for these teachers considering their training before teaching in institutions for special education. As these teachers deliver their teachings, they should not isolate learners who are not successful in the process or do not learn well. Instead, the teachers should focus on developing new strategies that will be effective for these learners (Han et al., 2016). Doing this will prevent using the wrong teaching strategy and

instruction delivery process to cause some students' poor performance. Therefore, this makes the learners in these education systems unique since they are handled differently than regular learners.

The needs of learners with special needs cannot be met by just general education alone. The general education system is central to support learners with the standard capabilities to understand what is being taught (Billingsley & Bettini, 2019). However, this is not the case for learners with disabilities. Some of these learners have a low intellectual capacity, which hinders their academic performance. The U.S. Department of Education has not fully developed an exact blueprint for education for these learners with special needs. Still, it has supported special education for learners with a disability brought about by the IDEA. The IDEA defined a rough requirement for special education in the United States of America concerning special needs learners. However, the special needs are rarely similar, making it challenging to develop a specific system that will be general to all learners with disabilities. Therefore, this makes the current special education for learners with disabilities to be the most effective.

In the past, people with disabilities were primarily put in hospitals and other medical care units on a permanent or semi-permanent period. These health institutions provided very little or even no education in most cases (Steele, 2017). The inability to access education made their improvement of their condition stagnate. But a good understanding of these people entails that their state does not necessarily require medical intervention. People with disabilities should be accepted by society and allowed to live freely. Living freely in a community means having equal access to public amenities, services, and other facilities accessed by other people. Among these services, education is one of the essential services that people with disabilities should

freely access. Therefore, special education under the IDEA is crucial in addressing the needs of the students struggling with academics in the general education system.

Eligibility for Special Education in The United States

Under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, students are entitled to receive special education services. These unique educational services are offered through their local school district (Wilson & Hagerty, 2019). All students with special needs aged from 3 to 18 or 21, depending on the state in which a student is in, qualify for IDEA's special education services. According to Nowicki (2019), IDEA allowed states to define or expand their eligibility criteria in addition to those provided in the IDEA statute and regulation as long as they do not exclude children covered by the IDEA definition. However, there are general categories that determine the eligibility of a student for these special education services. To receive special education services, a student must demonstrate a disability in one of the categories discussed. Some of these categories involving disabling conditions include autism, deaf and blindness, developmental delay, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment, mental retardation, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, specific learning disabilities, speech impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment (Pierangelo, 2007).

Referral

Martin (2021), while exploring the legal implications of RTI and special education, discovered that a school exploring the difficulties a student is facing academically is free to consider and apply a range of intervention alternatives before deciding on a referral for special education evaluation. Additionally, if a parent recognizes that their child is struggling academically, they have the right to inquire about RTI services. A parent asks about these

services by reaching out to the child's teacher and requesting referrals for these services. The RTI program is made of supplemental instructions, which utilize research-based interventions.

It is essential to mention that the RTI team consists of the child's teachers, school counselor, school administrator, the parent, and speech therapist. This team is responsible for monitoring the child's progress and determines if the child should be moved up the tiers of the RTI pyramid over several weeks. Sharp et al. (2016) examined the relationship between RTI implementation integrity and student outcomes, substantiating that the amount and type of service a student receives are based on continuous progress monitoring. Bruce (2012) asserted that as the child moves from tier 1 to tier 2 in the RTI model, parents should be informed about what is happening and their rights. Bruce further stated that parents should be notified that their child is not making the expected academic progress.

Additionally, parents are informed about the possible intervention services and strategies used to enhance the child's academic progress. Lastly, parents are advised about other options available to them, which include the right to request an evaluation under the IDEA at any time (Bruce, 2012). Therefore, according to Martin (2021), a school addressing a child's academic difficulties might be forced to change its intervention course because of a parent's input. Specifically, a parent may request the school to subject the child to special education evaluation. This is because the parent not only has the right to request an assessment but also elicits legal action against a school that fails to implement its request (Martin, 2021).

However, federal regulations for referrals to special education, in the all-essential context of possible learning disabilities, envisions that interventions will be reflected for the affected child. At the same time, it respects the parents' rights to request an evaluation at any time (Martin, 2021). Notably, this regulation stipulates that schools must promptly seek parental

consent to evaluate a child for special education, under the usual timeframes, if the child has not made significant progress after a given period when provided with appropriate instruction, and whenever the child is referred for an evaluation (Department of Education, 2006). In addition to the right of the parent to make a request, a public agency has the right to initiate a request for an initial evaluation to establish whether a child has a disability (Martin, 2021).

Referral Decisions vs. Eligibility Decisions

With recognizing the significance of preventing unnecessary referrals to special education through evidence-based interventions, it is essential to acknowledge that IDEA eligibility requires two different findings. One of the findings revolves around meeting state and federal criteria for at least one IDEA disability eligibility category. The other finding includes a resulting need for special education (a uniquely designed instruction) (Martin, 2021). Notably, complexity exists when a school can successfully provide effective and beneficial personalized instruction to a child with disabilities as part of its regular intervention programs (Martin, 2021).

Therefore, this circumstance gives rise to a legislative question revolving around whether a 35-year-old definition of specially designed instruction requires reconstruction as a wide and deep variety of instructional intervention options becomes available within regular education. This issue is possibly going to be fodder for future legislative conversations when IDEA is again re-authorized in a timeline within the RTI era (Martin, 2021). Notably, as a broad range of struggling children's needs can be met outside the special education structure, IDEA might expand to consider this reality by renovating its definition of education services (Modern, 2021). Furthermore, this legislative discussion may lead to reforms in the child-find and referral rules while considering schools' local expertise and resources investments in practical and beneficial

intervention programs. Nevertheless, the education system is in an era characterized by reforms and changes on a system-wide basis, which inevitably results in some degree of tension and confusion (Martin, 2021).

How Special Education Works in the USA

Special education in the United States of America is governed by government legislation first established in 1975. Special education is, in most respects, a 20th-century phenomenon. In its most recent reauthorization in 2004, the federal law required a free appropriate public education for all students living with disabilities (Willis, 2019). It also requires a full continuum of alternative placements ranging from the hospital or residential care to inclusion of general education, placement in the least restrictive environment that is believed to be best for implementing the special education, and establishment of an individual education plan or program for each student qualifying for the unique education program. The legislation gives parents the legal authority to be actively involved in their children's education. In 2004-2005, approximately 14 percent of public-school students were identified as qualified for the unique education program (Mitchell, Kern, & Conroy, 2019). This number has declined in recent years. In 2010, all categories dropped to approximately 8.5 percent of public-school students. The drop can be credited to the fact that The Individuals with Disabilities Act made several pieces of evidence-based interventions, including helping modify the behavioral needs of students with disabilities and their families. One significant advantage of this program is that it provides necessary equipment and resources at the government's cost where parents or legal guardians have to pay less or nothing for their children to be catered for.

The unique education system begins by identifying students eligible for the program. As the weakness is identified, so is the strength. The weakness is what is catered for first by

providing necessary therapy or any medical requirement essential in making the learner as comfortable as possible. The learner is cleared to commence any form of study after constant follow-up, which yields positive results to the point of achieving stability.

The learner is then provided with trained personnel who will be responsible for developing the disabled learner. These personnel then focus on the learner's strength to develop the learner's awareness (Wehman et al., 2018). This is essential in boosting the individual's esteem, thus developing a passion for learning.

After identification and focusing on the strength, the learners are then made aware of their disability. They are hence taught strategic ways to overcome the disability, if possible, and if not, they are taught to accept their condition and how to live with it. This enables the learners to overcome their challenges and even learn how to live with their condition (Newman, 2019). Beyond this stage, the learner is now ready to receive the critical skill of their choice. The trained personnel then deliver the skill under close supervision. The knowledge delivered is meant to prepare the student with a disability for employment and life. As learning continues, more and more motivation is delivered to the learner to develop self-determination, self-awareness, and communication skills within the learner. At this point, students view themselves as equal to the latter, who are not challenged in any way and ready to compete with them academically and in all other life perspectives. At this stage, the learner can set personal goals and explore ways to reach the community, work, and life goals successfully.

Response to Intervention (RTI)

RTI is a term coined with the reauthorization of IDEA; RTI is a layered process of information that guides schools to pinpoint children who struggle in school and provides proper

interventions (Taylor, 2017). If a struggling student is identified early, then early interventions can take place, which will ensure less need for special education services. Additionally, children who did not qualify for special education earlier will be rectified by RTI. The concept of RTI attracts both fear and hope in parents and advocates. Notably, response to intervention has been applied to other areas; however, to parents, schools, and IDEA, it is a new term that has to be learned.

RTI reinforces that the quality of instructions children receive should be high. RTI serves the purpose of identifying struggling children early, provision of proper instructions, and prevention in passing children through special education (Bratten, 2020). The U.S. Department of Education attempts to break down the wall that separates regular education and special education; hence traditional education incorporates RTI by using 15% of funding for IDEA to perform early intervention methods to eradicate the need for special education. RTI is a method that provides alternative ways to identify children who have certain specific learning limitations. Thus, it gives hope that children will receive quality and adequate instructions on reading and math. It should be noted that RTI is not a method of making life easy for those who have been identified as having specific learning needs. Thus, RTI is not fewer assignments, retention or suspension, parent-teacher conference, and a special seat in the class.

Legislation on RTI

Response to Intervention has allowed the education system in the U.S. to evolve. Rather than letting students deteriorate in their studies, RTI has allowed early intervention to occur. In the study concerned with factors influencing special education referral and identification rates, Turnbull (2019) posited that pre-referral interventions are an essential stage in subjecting students to special education. It has also prevented the misdiagnosis between a specific learning

disability and lack of proper instruction or lack of experience as factors that hinder learning (Turnbull, 2019). However, the change brought by RTI is governed by laws and regulations that have not changed in decades. The controversy lies in RTI innovations versus IDEA of 2004; it is a clash of a modern era and the past era. The legal disputes and misconceptions that have arisen due to this clash have stained both IDEA and the RTI model.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004) imposes public schools' legal duty to locate children who may have a disability and provide them with special education. The law stipulates that schools have the duty of affirmative action to identify and find and evaluate students who are suspected of suffering from a specific disability to take the necessary intervention methods (IDEA, 2004). Schools are mandated to be two steps ahead in matters concerning children; thus, they acquire a parent's consent to evaluate a child. Schools should always keep parents informed of evaluation, processes, intervention methods, monitoring data, and staff training as all this will affect their children in one way or another.

Once the above steps are carried out, a school must spend the least possible time to evaluate a child as a preventive measure against legal challenges. The legal framework of IDEA has hardly changed since its enactment in 1975. However, this framework permits RTI to fit in its framework but still allows it the freedom to perform its task. Also, RTI offers so many benefits to young children. Hence, society is embracing this learning model as children are assisted before they deteriorate further in their studies.

The U.S. congress became aware and worried about the increasing number of students who were receiving special education. Hence, came the suspicions that early interventions and appropriate instructions might have helped steer most children off the path of special education

(Darrow, 2016). This situation sets the motion of reforms in the laws that guided education among children with disabilities. This reform came when technology and innovation were addressing the struggling needs of students with disabilities. Thus, as experts noted, IDEA was reauthorized. The current education system of that time was bound to fail sooner rather than later; the last thirty years have seen reforms and improvement in matters concerning the education of people with disabilities. The conflict between traditions of IDEA and RTI's modern methods of intervention might create legal challenges for schools.

Currently, public schools are expected to provide regular high-quality education. In their study, Lemons et al. (2018) examined the main models of service delivery. Lemons et al. (2018) concluded that there is an opportunity for the special education community to ensure learners with learning disabilities have access to individualized, data-driven, comprehensive interventions. Therefore, schools should utilize these interventions before referring a student for IDEA evaluation. There are requirements that teachers should keep documentation of the intervention methods that have been applied to a child before the child is referred to an evaluation. RTI methods have created tensions with the school's duty to comply with the requirements of IDEA as the child-find rules have hardly changed. Several questions that arise due to this conflict: when should a school suspect that a child might have a learning disability; the length of time that interventions should be used on a child before an IDEA evaluation; does IDEA still intervene if a child improves in interventions, but he or she fails to show achievement; and how do schools avoid legal issues that arise due to IDEA and RTI conflicting? In examining persistence and fade-out of educational intervention effects, Bailey et al. (2020) established that the existing legal rules support RTI initiatives and interventions that schools are putting in place.

Federal regulations have some guidelines on referrals; intervention methods must strike a balance between parents' rights to request an evaluation; thus, the parents' consent for an evaluation is vital (IDEA, 2004). Also, an agency or a parent might initiate intervention methods (IDEA, 2004). There should also be a time limit for interventions and monitoring of the students to ensure progress.

Evidence-based Interventions and Avoiding RTI-based Child-find Disputes

According to Fletcher and Vaughn (2011), RTI frameworks rely on the implementation of evidence-based interventions established to prevent or manage academic difficulties among children. Ecker (2016) posits that teachers dealing with students with disabilities need to be aware of what interventions are effective. Specifically, these teachers need to know what practices have research and scientific evidence that substantiate their effectiveness based upon students' personal needs, the features of their disability, and other skill strengths and deficits. According to Ecker (2016), to enhance the outcomes for students with special needs, the No Child Left behind Act of 2001 and the Individuals with Disabilities Act of 2004 stipulated implementation of instructional programs and practices that are based on scientific research.

Over time, the school fraternity and researchers have demonstrated an increased interest in identifying and implementing evidence-based practices. According to Deshmukh (2017), as an approach, evidenced-based practice began as evidence of democratic values and respect for human rights in the field of medicine. This approach later spread to the field of education. Ecker (2016) established that evidence-based practices in education are instructional tools designed to meet a recommended criteria associated with research design and have substantial potential in

improving constructive outcomes for students with disabilities. According to Morgan (2018), also known as standard protocols, research-based interventions are practices that have already been validated by research evidence as effective. Therefore, these interventions are studied in settings with appropriate experimental and control groups to demonstrate that the interventions work. Mainly, Morgan (2018) substantiates that these standard protocols can be designed to facilitate learner acquisition of new skills or to remediate a given weakness. It is worth mentioning that these evidence-based protocols employ small group instructional settings, focus on mastery for the students' majority, reduce transitions while maintaining fast instructional progress, and involve self-control strategies to enhance goal-oriented behavior (Morgan, 2018).

In addition to clarifying the definition of evidence-based practices, Ecker (2016) highlights four critical characteristics of the practices. These characteristics include lack of guarantee that it works for everyone, difficulty in implementation on a large scale, they are not the only component of instructional decision-making, and differing standards can lead to confusion concerning what entails an evidence-based practice (Ecker, 2016). Examples of evidence-based interventions include targeted teaching, teacher preparation for inclusive outcomes through teacher collection of comprehensive data. Notably, according to Cowan and Maxwell (2015), showing enhanced outcomes calls for schools to effectively implement the RTI framework. Effective implementation of RTI based on high-quality interventions such as Frayer models, morphemic analysis, and 6-minute resolution (Savitz et al., 2018) is instrumental in avoiding potentially child-find legal claims. Mainly, effective implementation of high-quality research-based interventions calls for teachers to be knowledgeable in their curriculum state standards for their grades while mapping instruction into a timeframe and evaluating the skills of the students (VanDerHeyden, Witt, & Gilbertson, 2007).

Additionally, the use of high-quality research-based intervention while avoiding child-find claims requires the administration of a low-cost-screening tool. Notably, in their study that reviewed the screening tools used in identifying autism, Marlow et al. (2019) shows that screening tools are short questionnaires integral in locating children at risk of developmental disability. According to VanDerHeyden et al. (2007), one low-cost screening tool is integral in ruling out systematic core instruction problems first. Therefore, practitioners providing firm core instruction can potentially decrease the number of at-risk students, enabling children who require comprehensive intervention to receive them. Furthermore, teachers should carry out several brief follow-up assessments with students who seem to struggle with academic and behavioral performances. These assessments are vital in identifying skill deficits among the students. However, aligning the interventions with students' needs can be a complex activity. Specifically, in tier 2 and 3, interventions may last for 20 weeks, with most struggling students receiving similar interventions whether they need them or not. Effective interventions at the level of the RFI model should model the skill, provide students with practice, give feedback, and establish whether the students require further interventions.

Most importantly, treatment integrity is a critical element of any successful intervention (Morgan, 2018). In this regard, a successful intervention is one without child-find legal issues. Despite being based on research or evidence, interventions implemented without integrity are ineffective. According to Morgan (2018), interventions, which do not have treatment integrity, do not work. Mainly, without treatment integrity, it is not possible to identify whether poor learner outcomes are attributed to poor implementation of a potentially effective intervention or an ineffective intervention implemented with integrity. Educators rely on informal supervision of students' progress, with a self-defined confidence level to describe student responsiveness to

instruction (Morgan, 2018). Morgan (2018) further confirms that the surrounding organization of the school determines and sustains the level of resource allocation that directly influences the abilities of the teachers to respond to personal learner differences. Thus, the varying levels of teacher tolerance of students' progress and the availability of resources, the integrity of interventions may vary considerably throughout the school fraternity.

According to Martin (2021) from an IDEA liability perspective, the primary challenge for academic institutions trying to implement research-based interventions for struggling students with academic performance before referral for a special education evaluation is avoiding conflicts with parents. A successful school is characterized by its ability to effectively use research-based interventions while promoting or upholding parents' rights and child-find obligations under the law. According to Martin (2021), to strike the balance between the use of interventions and respecting parents' rights and IDEA obligation, it is essential to ensure parent involvement in the decisions concerning interventions and the timing of a special education evaluation.

Notably, parent involvement can be achieved through organizing parents' meetings to discuss intervention measures, timelines, and available courses of action (Martin, 2021). Including them as a partner in the decision-making process reduces the likelihood of parents raising any legal challenges. Besides, evidence of consensual action can be referred to should the matter reach the litigation stage (Martin, 2021). According to Martin (2021), parent involvement and availability of consensual action is critical because situations where the adoption of high-quality evidence-based interventions may occur where the student does not demonstrate sufficient academic progress. Such a situation may lead to IDEA evaluation and the student is

subjected to special education (Martin, 2021). Hence, parents should be informed that there is no assurance that a particular intervention will work.

Additionally, schools allocating time and resources on interventions based on RTI programs should apply RTI's data-based approach to evaluate the effectiveness of a program on a school-wide and district-wide scope (Martin, 2021). According to Morgan (2018), RTI programs are composed of a multi-tiered process that involves several decision-making points about the students involved in interventions. Morgan (2018) confirms that these decisions are based on student data that is reviewed periodically during the RTI process. Therefore, students are placed in an intervention program based on the learners' needs and data. Mainly, Martin (2021) substantiates that data is instrumental in establishing the degree to which the interventions are proving worthwhile in decreasing the need for special education referrals. Therefore, schools need to determine whether the RTI intervention is generating positive results or improvements, reducing the need for IDEA referrals. Notably, when the data demonstrate a high number of students who, in the past, would have been assessed improve considerably with the research-based interventions and thus do not meet criteria for referral, then the program is successful (Martin, 2021). On the contrary, when most students who would have been referred in the past get referred later, after an extended intervention period, then the program can be deemed to be simply slowing down the eventual referral and evaluation process.

Implementation of RTI with Child-Find Mandate

Alahmari (2019) reviewed the RTI framework and its implementation is facilitated by IDEA and NCLB in general education classrooms. Alahmari (2019) established that there is no standard process of implementing RTI. Alahmari (2019) substantiates that Alahmari (2019) RTI

entails the application of high-quality instruction and assessments in general education classrooms. Teachers provide instruction based on scientifically proven research and collect data on a student's performance. McDaniel, Albritton, and Roach (2012), while highlighting the need for further response to intervention research in general education agreed that effective implementation of the RTI process calls for a foundation of early intervention, tiered instruction with evidence-based interventions, collaboration with parents and school fraternity, and progress monitoring assessments. McDaniel et al. (2012) further state that an effective RTI model should involve screening, primary prevention, secondary targeted intervention, tertiary personalized intervention, progress monitoring, and multidisciplinary evaluation and collaboration. In other words, RTI models are divided into three tiers of interventions that are based on the recognized needs and academic success of students involved in the tiers (Morgan, 2018; Sharp et al., 2016).

The primary tier, according to Raben (2017), features high-quality instructions utilizing strategies that are scientific with periodic screening to identify struggling students. Wise (2017) agrees that the first tier facilitates early intervention for students who are struggling with academics. Choi, Oh, and Hong (2012) conducted a literature review concerning the implementation of RTI on English learners. Choi et al. (2012) established that screening is paramount in providing valuable instructional information to the teachers and administrative staff. Upon identification of students performing below expectations, supplemental instruction is provided in the classroom through the different research-based interventions (Raben, 2017). At this stage, when the student fails to demonstrate progress, he or she is moved to the second tier.

The second tier, according to Alahmari (2019), delivers targeted and systematic interventions. Alahmari (2019) further states that these interventions are applied in small group environments to reinforce the instruction that is taking place in the first tier. However, the level

of intensity and the size of the group depends on the needs of each student (Raben, 2017). Most importantly, students at this tier are constantly progress-monitored using curriculum-based measurements (Raben, 2017). Lastly, the third is made of students who are continuing to struggle even after being provided with targeted interventions (Morgan, 2018). According to Alahmari (2019), students in this level are usually between 2-5% of all the students. These students receive individualized instructional and behavioral intervention within the general education program. Raben (2017) substantiates that these interventions target the specific skill deficit of the students with a limited focus. Most importantly, students are closely supervised.

This model reinforces the child find mandate because, through the tiered program, students who do not attain the desired progress standard are referred for a detailed evaluation and eligibility determination for special education services. Notably, in 2004, the reauthorization of IDEA changed the eligibility standards for LD (Alahmari, 2019). Based on the RTI model, children should be placed under effective instruction programs with progress monitoring before being referred for special education services. Besides, school districts are authorized to use 15% of special education to finance the provision of early intervention support through the implementation of school-wide academic and behavior assessments. According to Parks (2011), many state departments of education and local school structures have shifted to the adoption of the RTI education model to address the requirements of IDEA. However, according to the Texas Education Agency (2019), involved parties should not deny a referral or cause a delay in evaluation because the interventions have not been implemented or exhausted on a student.

Children and RTI

Each child, when they go to school, has his or her own experiences and abilities. While summarizing research based on the INCAP longitudinal study, Behrman, Hoddinott, and Maluccio (2020) established that IDEA makes it necessary to properly distinguish between those who have an educational disability that hinders learning; from those who have suffered from a lack of instruction or experience therefore impeding them from learning. The bedrock for IDEA is high quality instruction. The instructions provided in RTI must be found early and be properly researched to meet the unique individual needs of all children who have been identified as suffering from a disability. Berkeley et al. (2020) conducted a systematic review to provide an overview of the interpretation of RTI ten years later after the enactment of IDEA regulations. Berkeley et al. (2020) found out that considerable progress has been made towards and supporting students through the implementation of multi-tiered systems of support models.

There are various forms of interventions, and these are family interventions, classroom interventions, and non-classroom interventions. All these interventions work in the best interest of a child who has been found to have a specific learning disability. Additionally, the RTI model guides how each intervention should occur and the methods of monitoring the children based on the intervention applied to them.

To establish effective problem-solving methods, then teamwork and collaboration are key elements. Agencies that must intervene in children with specific learning disabilities must try to foster and sustain connections through various methods and strategies. Some strategies that agencies might adopt are agreements and cross-training between the agencies. This agreement will allow the smooth flow of each party's roles and responsibilities, provisions, and documentation of instructions based on research.

Parents and RTI

There are vital issues that parents need to be aware of concerning RTI to ensure that schools are able to identify all children who suffer from specific learning disabilities. Currently, most children have failed to receive the appropriate instruction to help them be successful in other areas of life (Trawick-Smith, 2019). Regular education, more often than not, fails to address five crucial elements that are effective for reading instructions; thus, if RTI is properly administered, it will fix this problem. The vital components of instructions that parents should be aware of are: in the classroom, children should receive research based reading instruction; schools should screen all children early to identify those who might be at risk; continuous monitoring of those identified to be at risk is essential; schools should be loyal and trustworthy by ensuring proper use of the curriculum that has been stipulated; and, finally, the school should inform parents of their rights including those of their children.

There should always be a criterion for identifying whether or not a child has SLD. Children should first receive regular education before being referred to or transferred to special education; further, RTI is not a replacement for a comprehensive evaluation. Instead, it is an alternative (Berkeley et al., 2020). Additionally, parents should always be aware of the instruction's strategy and the data collected from monitoring their child in an RTI model. Since RTI is an alternative model for evaluating a child, parents still have the right to request a comprehensive evaluation of their child. Lastly, if a child makes no progress when provided with proper instructions, the school must attain the parents' consent so as to perform an evaluation.

Effects of RTI

The IDEA outlines that the school districts are obligated with the child find mandate where they have to follow the set criteria in identification, location, evaluation and provide

service to all learners with special needs without putting into consideration the capacity of the school in the provision of the services or the extent of disability for these learners. School districts have been credited for being able to do this by implementing the interventions outlined in response to the Intervention (RTI) model. This model has made schools an evidence-based intervention model for implementing the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA).

The discrepancy intervention model had been the only means of identifying learners who need special education for about thirty years before the RTI intervention model replaced it. Mundschenk and Fuchs (2016) established that the RTI model strongly depends on the strong leadership in school districts, good training for teachers, and an excellent teacher buy-in for its success (Mundschenk & Fuchs, 2016). Therefore, a strong administration team in the school districts is essential in the success of the RTI model's interventions. The discrepancy model is often referred to as the wait-to-fail model since it waits until the students' performance is deficient before identifying intervention. This aspect called for the innovation of a new intervention model and, thus, the emergence of the RTI model.

The comparison between the intellectual and academic achievements was the primary measure of identifying the learners with disabilities in the discrepancy model. Comparing intellectual capability and academic achievements have been criticized for being a disadvantageous intervention due to its inconsistency and unfairness. This is because of the level of injustice presented in the discrepancy model, where many school districts have opted to implement the RTI intervention model (Yiu, 2020). As a result of the RTI model's adoption, there has been a decrease in special education referrals. According to the U.S. Department of Education (2009), the RTI intervention model has successfully identified learners who need special education at an early age before they fall behind. Data from previous research show that

when a learner is not responding to the interventions even after an increase in the interventions, they shall require extra assistance, including special education services. But before these referrals to special education are done, these students are repetitively given the intervention to identify and help resolve their areas of weakness.

Although schools have channeled more resources on interventions other than the Special Learning Disability (SLD) requirements, the child's needs are still present in these schools. The main arising question has been examining how possible it can be to incorporate the RTI model and the IDEA requirements. The IDEA's primary challenge, together with the RTI model, has been the incapability to incorporate the intellectual score measures as an effective way to monitor intelligence. This raises the question about the validity of the RTI model as a whole. It is also worth noting that the measures of intervention vary in different states. This is viewed as a form of discrepancy. The view is because the result can differ for the same subject who moves to other states within the USA. This called for most states to implement the RTI model and make it a mandatory approach. The law gives a loophole for any state to consider the use of the SLD intervention, but again, it is not preferred.

Everyone should consider putting the needs of learners with special needs at the forefront and, at the same time, embrace the child find laws outlined by the IDEA. This is a strong mandate that the institutions that use implementations that delay the learners' initial starting time with special needs need to be looked into (Voulgarides, 2018). Apart from just following the child find laws and the RTI implementation model, schools are also required to use standard care practices, which will enable them to reduce the risks that often come along in the path of implementing these laws. This means that the schools are not just tied to the IDEAs but can also act in the right way where their ethical and moral evaluation of the issue may be required.

Also, the RTI model is commonly an external aspect in the education system and, as a result, is faced with adverse barriers to implementation. Funding the program in educational institutions is the major set-back that lowers the success rate of the model. IDEA and Title I usually fund the intervention services. This factor raises the challenge institutions are tasked with to meet the eligibility criteria for selection. Concerning the above aspect, institutions are encouraged to maximize the RTI model's success on little finances to provide sustainable support to individuals with SLD (Savitz, Allington, & Wilkins, 2018). Also of notable concern is the lack of trained personnel in educational institutions equipped with enough knowledge to implement the RTI model.

The RTI model approach is for the early identification of students with SLD compared to the discrepancy model. As a result, the individuals receive the attention they need at an early stage of their education hence guarantee overall performance as they progress in their studies. The fact that the RTI approach in individuals with SLD is a proactive model, implementation of research-based methods may have better outcomes, thus facing the need for special education services. In addition to the positive effects of the RTI model, it has enabled the teachers to be fully aware of the student's strengths and weaknesses in various education fields, hence educating the development of an appropriate approach to the student's condition.

In a study, Kashdan et al. (2018) classified individuals with SLD based on the RTI screening analysis. They found that the individuals depicted a unique growth curve in their reading skills and performance (Kashdan et al., 2018). This aspect notably highlights the positive attributes of implementing the model at an early stage of learning for students who present SLD instead of waiting for them to fail. In comparison to the old screening model, the RTI model has a more clearly outlined screening process. As a result of this factor, the model can wholly

identify if other factors such as emotional aspects, for example, poverty, are the cause of underachievement in their studies rather than an SLD.

The RTI model is also accredited to the changes in educational policies and procedures in academic institutions to cater to the approach in identifying students with SLD. Some of these include Differentiated Instruction (DI), Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Culturally Responsive Instruction (CRI), Positive Behavioral Support system (PBS), Curriculum-Based Measurement (CBM), Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIEBLS), Precision Teaching (P.T.), and Assessment Intervention Monitoring System (AIMS). The universal design of learning involves incorporating students' contributions in making curricular goals and, as a result, the exhibition of students' different learning styles and abilities. Culturally responsive instruction strives to create a friendly environment where the students feel that they are cared for. A positive behavioral support system is a more proactive prospecting approach in screening analysis.

On the other hand, curriculum-based measurements help teachers measure students' different academic strengths to construct well-defined approaches to the student's condition. Implementation of Dynamic indicators of necessary early literacy skills aids in assessing a student's literacy skills at an early age. Precision teaching aims to improve the academic and social aspects of students. Lastly, an assessment intervention monitoring system is a web-based monitoring platform to track students' academic achievements.

However, the RTI approach is also attributed to some adverse effects. The model is limited and unable to identify with students performing at grade level in certain aspects of their studies classified as their strengths (Peryer et al.,2019). As a result of failure to acknowledge this factor in the discrepancy model was easily identifiable, the success rate of the RTI model is

lowered. Such individuals are not referred to the RTI model service and hence fail to receive adequate assistance as they are not categorized as SLD individuals and fail in certain aspects of their studies.

CHAPTER III: DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Summary

The first chapter gives an introduction to the research area and describes the background of the present thesis. It broadly introduces the federal law of IDEA (Individual with Disability Education Act) and states its significance in improving the educational system of young students with special needs. Based on the Act, every learner in the United States who is between the ages of 0 to 22 years has been able to access free education. The chapter subsequently describes the child-find mandate as the main focus of the IDEA, where education for learners with special needs is given more emphasis. In the Act, the learning experiences of special needs learners are eased hence ensuring positive intellectual development and good academic performances. There have been amendments and reforms to the Act and by now, every student with a special condition has a right to be covered by the IDEA (Keenan et al., 2018). The chapter has also introduced the Response to Intervention (RTI) method as one of the preferred methods used by schools to identify those learners with special needs and requires special education. However, there are some cases where the RTI model fails, and the schools have opted to use the model of dissonance. This tells that despite the significance of the RTI model, it cannot be wholly depended upon.

The background history of the study topic forms a brief discussion of the most important aspect of the study in a chronological manner. The IDEA is described as a body in the legislation of America that offers an opportunity to students with special needs to acquire free public education. The history began in early 1954 when there was segregation in the education system where the black and white students could attend different schools. This system of education was

declared unconstitutional in the United States Supreme Court, and the journey of political unrest began marking a gateway of the civil rights movement. The chapter explains how America was under great pressure of assassination in the Vietnam War that took place between the periods of 1955 to 1975, and this is the period when the Civil Rights Movement was powerful in the US (Preston-Grimes, 2020). In the early 70s, it is evident that the total population of learners who attended the learning institutions was about 3.5 million. Sadly, these students were isolated from the rest and given very little or zero attention. Happy, the first law of relief was made in 1975; this was the first amendment of the Rehabilitation Act (Longmore, 2020). The Congress supported the Education for all children act and primarily, schools were asked to create a perfect plan that needed the parents' help in monitoring the educational experiences of students with special needs (Chiamussu, 2017).

In the study, the IDEA was previously referred to as the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHA) (Bicehouse & Faieta, 2017). Later on, it was signed to the current law on 30th October 1990 by George H.W Bush, who was the president by then. Inevitably, many improvements and transition programs of learners with special needs are outlined to have been done in favor of the Act. Also, several amendments were made to the Act such as the inclusivity of children experiencing “developmental delays” aging between 3 to 9 years and others (Marlow et al., 2019). The history of IDEA was later amended by the Individual with Disabilities Education Improvement Act in 2004 which was referred to as the IDEIA 2004 thus introducing the concept of Response to Intervention. In the chapter, various terms have been used to ensure a prior understanding of the topic. The use of a word such as referral has been used to mean a procedure of contacting schools and requesting them to give an evaluation after realizing that a learner requires special education. Treatment integrity also refers to the degree to which

treatment is offered as intended. The research question of the study model is to establish how different schools can effectively incorporate the model of RTI while meeting the needs of each learning student. Specifically, the focus of this paper is stated to determine if the RTI and the child-find mandate can be used effectively together in schools.

The second chapter consists of a brilliant literature review of the major topics of the study. The chapter gives a discussion of who RTI and the child-find interventions at large. Theoretically, the study depicts the basic procedure used for collecting information for the research while thoroughly analyzing the topic of disabled children. The chapter has also tackled the concept of RTI legislation, the RTI impacts, parents' involvement with RTI, and the significance of the IDEA. The information gathered concerning the child-find intervention is obtained from various sites such as the ERIC, PsycInfo, and ProQuest which have led to the implementation of essentials that identify the learners with disabilities. More emphasis on this chapter is a research-based model that focuses on the available opportunities for innovation of the current system. This will improve the process of tracking and identifying learners living with special needs and need intervention to acquire special education.

A general definition of disability, according to the Disability Insurance Program (1956) is defined as the inability to participate in substantial and gainful activity due to any medical condition or physical impairment. However, the chapter states that the current agreement on the issue of disability in the United States consists of individuals who are impaired mentally or physically hence making them unable to engage in different activities of life. However, a proper definition of the disability requires a proper understanding of what exactly necessitates the disability and many aspects should be outlined before defining the term. Consequently, special education is described as a unique teaching system that aims to deliver learning strategies to

learners with special learning conditions. Special education is unique because of difficulties that learners with special needs face (Ashman & Conway, 2017). The number of disabled children who acquire education in the United States is at 14%; these children are not supposed to face any form of discrimination since their engagement in the education is significant in the society. Each teacher needs to have a positive attitude towards learners with special needs to understand the learner's special abilities in the class. This will ensure that the learner is guided properly hence resulting in an improvement in the academic performances and the student's score. This would show the fulfillment of the requirements as outlined in the IDEA. The thesis discusses the uniqueness of special education as a result of difficulties that learners with special needs face (Ashman & Conway, 2017).

Acceptance of people with disabilities is very crucial in society. According to the review, these people should be allowed to live freely and access all public amenities and other facilities as used by other people, among this, education should be the first essential. Thus, the chapter describes special education under IDEA as the basis for addressing the cries of learners struggling with special conditions. The issue of eligibility for those supposed to acquire special education in the United States has been discussed under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Learners should receive special education in their school's district (Wilson & Hagerty, 2019). The age of those eligible to receive education is between 3 to 21 years. However, a student should demonstrate disabling conditions to receive special education; conditions such as autism, blindness, deaf, hearing impairment, among the rest are common conditions that necessitate special education (Pierangelo, 2007). The chapter has discussed the basic concept used to identify learners with special needs. The unique form of the education system begins by acknowledging those learners eligible for special programs, the teacher

identifies the strengths and weaknesses hence providing the necessary therapy to make the learner as comfortable as possible. Consequently, the study depicts the idea of referral as an important concept of seeking help and understanding the special condition of a child. For instance, a parent should seek to inquire about the services of RTI when he/she recognizes a certain struggle in a child. It is the work of the RTI team to monitor how a child progresses and give direction on whether the child should be moved to another lever of the RTI pyramid in the near future. Analytically, the study describes the theory of referral decisions versus eligibility decisions in two different findings. The first finding entails meeting all the federal and state criteria of the IDEA disability category. The second finding entails a resulting need to obtain special education. In the United States, special education is governed by the legislation of the government, and the federal law requires that each student with a disability acquire special education. The learner is given a teacher who focuses on developing him/her, and the teacher focuses on strength of the learner hence boosting self-esteem and enhancing the learner's passion (Wehman et al., 2018).

The legislation of the RTI has enabled the evolution of the system of education in the United States. The RTI has focused on ensuring that early intervention of students with special needs is attained. In the study, Turnbull (2020) describes the pre-referral intervention as an essential stage in putting students in special education. The federal law gives various directions on referrals, it is clearly stated that the methods of interventions should strike a balance between the rights of parents to request the evaluation hence making the parent consent for intervention a vital aspect. Ideally, a parent should also initiate methods of intervention (IDEA, 2004). There are evidence-based interventions and attempts to avoid the RTI-based Child-find disputes in the study. According to Fletcher and Vaughn (2011), the framework of RTI relies heavily on

the implementation of these evidence-based interventions to prevent academic problems among learners. In recent times, there have been attempts by the school fraternity to demonstrate a high interest in implementing evidence-based practices. Deshmukh (2017) states that these practices began as evidence of democratic values and honesty for human rights in the medical field. Also, the study has used high-quality research-based intervention and tries to avoid the child-find claims which require the administration of a low-cost screening tool. In the study that reviewed the screening tool used to identify autism, Marow et al. (2019) explain that screening tools are integral in locating children with risks of disability in their development.

The implementation of RTI with the Child-Find Mandate is regulated by the IDEA and NCLB in the educational classes. According to Alahmari (2019), there is no standard process for implementing the RTI. Consequently, Muluccio (2020) stated that IDEA has made it necessary to distinguish children with educational disabilities that hinder them from learning from those children suffering due to lack of proper instruction thus impeding them from learning. Parents are supposed to be aware of the issues concerning the RTI to ensure that schools identify children suffering from learning disabilities.

The study has discussed various impacts that accompany the RTI. The primary challenge that the IDEA together with the RTI model faces is the inability to incorporate the intellectual measures of monitoring the intelligence of the learner. This has raised the question of the validity of the whole model of RTI. It is also evident that the intervention measures can vary from different countries. Since the RTI model is a basic external aspect in the system of education, it is accompanied by adverse challenges in its implementation. The process of funding this program in the learning institution is a common setback that reduces the success rates of the model. Additionally, the model is accredited to changes prevailing in the educational procedures and

policies in learning institutions to cater to the approach of acknowledging these students with special needs. The study has shown how the RTI approach has experienced diverse effects, this is specifically seen in its limited ability to identify students' performance at the grade level commonly classified as the learner's strengths (Peryer et al., 2019). The success rate of RTI is reduced due to its inability to acknowledge the factors of the discrepancy model.

Limitations of the Research

Data collected only from the internet and online resources limit this research. The data in the internet resources were collected in the past decade back. This means that the data and information could be affected by the difference in time. The research also talked about the qualitative measurement of the performance of learners with disability. It failed to tackle the quantitative way of analyzing this performance. Thus, it does not give a clear understanding of the impact of the interventions under the RTI model.

Recommendation for Future Research

The study of the child-find act, and the interventions stipulated under the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) requires the information to be analyzed to be as accurate as possible. In the course of this research paper, there were numerous areas which were identified for further research by future researchers. The areas identified were believed to have covered a shallow context of the topic and thus necessitating detailed analysis more in-depth into the subject. Some of them are arguable and even not clear at some point. Once thorough studies and analysis will be done to the areas, the research will then be more accurate and more sensible. The

recommendations given do not rule out this research, but instead, they should be a means of strengthening it.

Analyzing the performance of learners with disabilities under special education with the use of RTI interventions and without RTI interventions is needed. In this review, RTI interventions have been credited to the success of improving the academic achievements and intellectual score of learners with disability. But the research was not able to give measurable arguments for this performance. Therefore, future researchers should come up with a quantifiable way of comparing the performance of learners with a disability under the use of RTI interventions and without its use.

Future researchers should be keen on employing all types of data sources. The research majored on journals and online sites that gave data about the topic of study. In the future, researchers should incorporate a way of collecting information and data directly from the source. As they collect the data from the source, they should also consider doing the exercise in different states across the USA.

Professional Application

This research-based RTI and child-find mandate can be used in the education system in improving education access and learning of students with disabilities. Specifically, this study will benefit the education in implementing the RTI framework in alignment with the child-find mandate. In other words, the study highlights ways in which the education system will utilize the RTI while still adhering to the child-find requirement. Mainly, the study sheds light on how an education system can utilize RTI in identifying and locating students with special needs, which is a requirement under the child-find mandate. Secondly, the schools use the RTI interventions to improve the learner's outcomes. However, if the learners appear unresponsive to the

interventions, they are recommended for referrals, under the child-find mandate. Therefore, the study enables schools to implement interventions according to the IDEA.

Secondly, this research emphasizes the importance of using evidence-based interventions in the RTI framework. Therefore, it encourages the education system to use these interventions. This is because of their effectiveness in improving the learners' academic progress and reducing the number of referrals. Most importantly, it enables schools to adhere to the No Child Left Behind Act and the IDEA, which requires teachers to use academic and behavioral practices grounded in scientifically validated research. More so, it provides critical guidelines in implementing these evidence-based academic and behavioral practices and programs while avoiding child-find disputes. Therefore, the education system while implementing these practices should consider steps such as ensuring availability of treatment integrity, parent involvement, and parent consent to avoid child-find legal claims.

Furthermore, this study can be used in the education system because it provides a detailed framework for implementing RTI based on research-based interventions that revolve around three tiers. School entities can use this model to implement RTI because of its role in providing information about students and recommending them for evaluation if they fail to make sufficient academic progress.

Lastly, this study has been insightful in strengthening my understanding of RTI, Child-find mandate, evidence-based interventions, eligibility criteria for special education, referral procedures, and implementation of RTI. These discoveries have changed my perspective about special education. Most importantly, my professional work will improve because it will be based on evidence-based practices. Furthermore, while practicing my career, I will ensure that I conform to the law, especially the IDEA and NCLB Act. Specifically, I will be able to integrate

RFI with the child-find mandate in enhancing learners' outcomes struggling with academic performance.

Conclusion

The child find's mandate was a core component of the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act) federal law, which was regarded in the special edition of 2011. This concept mandated school districts in each state to recognize, find and assess all children, from birth to 22 years of age with special needs and disabilities, who might require early care or special educational services irrespective of the degree of the condition of the child or the social and economic background of the child. IDEA “child find” brought about the implementation of the Response-to-Intervention (RTI), which has enabled the nation's public education system to advance from a reactive stance to an earlier and high-quality evidence-based intervention model in the regular programs. RTI is a layered process of information that guides schools to pinpoint children who struggle in school and provide proper interventions. School districts have been credited for implementing the interventions outlined in response to the Intervention (RTI) model. This model has made schools an evidence-based intervention model for implementing the Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA).

However, the primary challenge for academic institutions trying to implement research-based interventions for struggling students with academic performance before referral for a special education evaluation revolves around RFI integration with the child-find requirement. Therefore, as mandated by the law, schools are required to use evidence-based interventions under the RFI framework before the schools initiate an IDEA evaluation. However, such interventions should not deny or delay the process of a child receiving special education services.

Secondly, to strike the balance between the use of interventions and respecting parents' rights and IDEA obligation, it is essential to ensure parent involvement in the decisions concerning interventions, their consent, and the timing of a special education evaluation.

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