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A Review of Sensory-Friendly Classroom Modifications in Kigali's Inclusive Schools: Impact on Off-Task Behaviour for Pupils with Sensory Processing Difficulties

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| Abstract

Inclusive education in Rwanda integrates pupils with diverse needs, including those with sensory processing difficulties (SPD). These difficulties often contribute to off-task behaviour, which disrupts learning. Sensory-friendly classroom modifications are a recognised occupational therapy intervention, but their specific application and efficacy within Kigali's educational context require synthesis. This review aimed to synthesise existing literature on implementing sensory-friendly classroom modification protocols in inclusive schools in Kigali. Its objective was to determine the perceived and measured impact of these environmental adaptations on off-task behaviour in pupils with SPD. A structured narrative review was conducted. A systematic search of electronic databases and grey literature identified relevant materials, including local programme evaluations. Retrieved documents were thematically analysed to extract data on modification types, implementation processes, and outcomes pertaining to off-task behaviour. The review identified a limited but growing body of work. Multi-faceted modifications, particularly those reducing auditory and visual clutter, were most common. A consistent theme was a reported reduction in observable off-task behaviours, such as out-of-seat movements and vocalisations, following implementation. However, robust empirical data quantifying this impact remains scarce. Preliminary, largely qualitative evidence suggests sensory-friendly

modifications in Kigali's inclusive schools are perceived by educators and therapists as beneficial for reducing off-task behaviour in pupils with SPD. This supports their continued use as an occupational therapy strategy within a broader support framework. Future research should prioritise controlled, longitudinal studies to empirically measure behavioural outcomes. Developing cost-effective, culturally relevant modification toolkits and providing teacher training on sensory strategies are recommended to enhance sustainable implementation. sensory processing, inclusive education, classroom modification, off-task behaviour, occupational therapy, Rwanda This review consolidates current knowledge on sensory-friendly classroom modifications in Kigali, highlighting a practice-evidence gap and informing future occupational therapy research and practice in African inclusive education contexts.
