



The Need to Raise Awareness of Dyslexia in the African Diaspora Communities

Accredited Community Research Course

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The student group

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Executive Summary

This research project to raise awareness of the impact of dyslexia in the African diaspora community in London follows a more qualitative approach. The report tried to show why the lack of knowledge about dyslexia has a great impact on people with the condition and the wider community. It also established the impact of having Dyslexia and to investigate what the community knows about the condition and how it affects the local community. This also explored why the public are not concerned about dyslexia and the lack of knowledge and how it might impact on the children's futures. Although the condition does not affect many, according to (dyslexia international, 2014) only affects 10% of the population globally, the problem of stigmatisation is very widespread among the ethnic minorities and worldwide

This report is concerned with the need to raise awareness of the impact of dyslexia in the African community and sets out to:

- a) Understand what's known about dyslexia in the African diaspora communities and general perception.
- b) Identify the long term effects of dyslexia when not diagnosed at an early stage and what normally happens to people with the condition long term?
- c) Provide evidence that there is need to raise awareness.
- d) To show that there is a lack of structures to raise awareness available and also lack of knowledge and recognition by the community and the professionals.
- e) To initiate a campaign to raise awareness of the condition and services and structures available to the wider communities.

In the literature review much has been written on the condition and less on diaspora communities but through some articles, journals, written by medical professionals will try and show the impact that the condition has in the wider communities. The lack of recognition by the wider community. The review also shows how dyslexia can be diagnosed by someone who is trained and the impact that dyslexia has on the people with the condition in the African communities.

Participants involved in the research on the need to raise awareness on dyslexia were men and women of an African origin living in London. The views of the African community were gathered from a sample collected across London. The topic was mainly based on issues affecting people with the condition, what help was available and what was known about dyslexia. Charities who offered these services were contacted from London in some cases some were located outside London due to lack of funding.

It can be safely said that although there are a few organisations providing services for dyslexic sufferers which are open to everyone and not specifically to ethnic minorities, it is evident that people from the African diaspora do not access these services.

Digital media played a major role on the research. Questionnaires and interviews were applied for the main part of the research. Facebook was used for engaging a wider audience as part of the community discussion. The first part was introducing them to the research. Telephone interviews were also done with some service providers across London. All participants did it out of free will and were notified of the confidentiality prior to the survey.

The summary and recommendations shows the results of the community research raised a lot of challenging issues which needs to be acted upon.

Chapter 1

(i) Central aim and research plan

“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.”
“He did not speak until the age of three and teachers labelled him mentally slow:
“Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new.”

Albert Einstein

It is important to understand that dyslexia is a common type of specific learning difficulty that mainly affects the skills involved in the reading and spelling of words, it's lack of acceptance and awareness makes it different and difficult for many. One of the main problems in the diaspora communities is that they do not want to share most of the issues affecting them including conditions such as dyslexia.

Most of the people in the diaspora community would not want to admit that they have the condition because anyone who cannot read and write properly is classed as being dull, stupid or in some instances having a mental health issue and that they would end up being laughed at. In most cases they do not want to admit that they have been affected by this condition. There is ignorance with this condition and stigma in African communities. As a result this seriously affects the level of help and support they are willing to seek in order for them to lead a normal life

As a member of the diaspora I am concerned to see that many people affected by this condition are wasting their lives by dropping out of school and isolating themselves because of the stigma faced in the community.

Part of my study is that I want the community to understand and take advantage and use the services available to them.

The government does not have centres for people with dyslexia although there are a few centres available through charities and NGOs that lack funding from the government as the condition was not considered as a barrier until as early as 2010.

(ii) The purpose of this research

The main purpose of this research is to raise awareness about dyslexia and services available to the African diaspora community. Below are the main factors that this research process will be based upon.

What's known about dyslexia in the African diasporas communities?

What dyslexia is?

What level of awareness is there in the families and carers of dyslexia sufferers among the African community?

What structures and procedures are there to support dyslexia sufferers?

What support services are there in the voluntary sector to support the dyslexia sufferers?

(iii) Literature review

There is very little literature written on dyslexia in the African diaspora communities. The term Diaspora sometimes means the movement of the population from its homeland or according to the **Merriam Webster** dictionary its defined as a group of people who live outside the area in which they had lived for a long time or in which their ancestors lived.

The (BBC, 2014) cites the 2011 census and states there are 1.3 million African-born residents in England and Wales.

According to the government department the (NHS) dyslexia is a common type of specific learning difficulty that mainly affects the skills involved in the reading and spelling of words. Dyslexia can be said that it's a hidden condition or disability (Riddick, 1996) meaning it's a disability that is not visible to the naked eye or simply there are no external signs for people to notice.

The term dyslexia is one of the many words used to describe people with literacy difficulties, as recent as the 1900s , many writers were expressing reservations over using the word dyslexia and also this term was not very much recognised as part of other

learning difficulties until the publication of the government document *The Code of Practice* (Department for Education And Employment,1994) that dyslexia was officially recognised. Before this document was made available the phrases used at the time 'specific developmental dyslexia' (Pumphrey, 1996) or 'specific learning difficulties' (Rutter and Yule, 1975) had always figured prominently in the literature to describe this group of people. According to (Mcgraw hill) Although dyslexia is now accepted as an official category of a specific learning difficulty, there is continuing debate among parents, wider public and all concerned about whether any kind of label is necessary to describe this category of people especially children with learning difficulties.

In some parts of the world there are some teachers even after many years of a doctor writing about a child with a reading disability called dyslexia, still say it does not exist (the ledger). In the African diaspora people that are labelled as being dull often have a negative impact on their lives if they get stigmatised from it. (Schafer and Olexa 1971). Although, (Riddick 2000), argued that stigmatisation can happen even though no one has been labelled. Many people assumed that it automatically lead to stigmatisation, but in her study she provided evidence of children being stigmatised way before a label being attached to their difficulties.

Under the equality act 2010, dyslexia is classed as a disability as it is a specific learning difficulty mostly affecting reading and spelling. Dyslexia is also sometimes described as a difficulty in learning to read and write fluently (Raymond, 1997). This includes difficulty with phonological awareness, phonological decoding, and processing speed. Dyslexia is often characterized by difficulties with accurate word recognition, decoding, spelling and sometimes speaking. Dyslexia is not a sign of poor intelligence or laziness as is perceived in most places including the diaspora communities and it is also not as a result of impaired vision. Children and adults with dyslexia simply have a neurological disorder that causes their brains to process and interpret information differently. (NCLD, national center for learning disabilities, 2013)

Without help, children often get frustrated with learning. The stress of dealing with schoolwork often makes children with dyslexia lose the motivation to continue and overcome the hurdles they face.

According to (Marshall, 2013) a typical example of a person who is dyslexic is and not to a single difficulty, and might have any of the following problems:

- Might not be able to tell the difference between letters that look similar such as c, e, o;

- Might see letters backwards or upside down;
- Might not be able to read words and remember;
- Words might appear bunched together or out of order;
- Include a difficulty identifying or generating rhyming words;
- Very poor spelling.

According to (red apple dyslexia association, 2014) Individuals with dyslexia are better identified by reading accuracy, fluency, and writing skills that do not seem to match their level of intelligence from prior observations.

According to the British Dyslexia Association (BDA, 2014), 10% of the British population are dyslexic with 4% affected severely. In the 2010 equality act Dyslexia is defined as a disability. Across the United Kingdom most people with dyslexia be it children or adults are not able to fulfil their full potential as a big percentage of the population until now still don't understand what dyslexia is and the barriers or difficulties that it presents.

(iv) Methodology

A various number of research tools were used. Some of these included survey questionnaires, selective targeted interviews, online discussions and secondary data analysis.

The main method I used for this research was a questionnaire through survey monkey. A questionnaire is a set of questions given to people used for collecting statistically useful information or personal data. A questionnaire was designed to collect information about what's known of dyslexia in the diaspora community mainly with an African background the services available to them and also how easily it is to access them.

Questionnaires are a common research method used to collect data from subjects who respond to a series of questions about behaviours and opinions. Surveys allows people to remain anonymous if the so wish. In this situation I was able to ask yes-or-no or multiple-choice questions, allowing they participants to choose possible responses to each question and also allowed respondents to provide comments to share their views , the data collected was both quantitative and qualitative this made it a bit easier to tabulate.

Qualitative data deals with descriptions, this data can be observed but not measured and qualitative data is any type of data that contains numbers. (Silverman, 2000).

I distributed about 70 questionnaires through email and the target audience was male or females from age 16+ and mostly from the African diaspora, this had over 32 respondents and proved a good channel. The survey link was also added to the Evelyn Oldfield Unit e-bulleting calling on all diaspora Africans to take part.

I also designed a special survey questionnaire for service providers like the British Dyslexia Association (BDA) etc. which was to find out what sort of services they provided.

Telephone interviews were also conducted with service providers.

Telephone interviews in most cases are done to cover a factual and a meaning level, but sometimes it is usually difficult to interview on a meaningful level (Kvale, 1996). Interviews are a far more personal form of research than other methods like questionnaires. In interviews it allowed me to work directly with the respondents, I was also able to ask follow up questions. Telephone interviews allowed me to gather information quicker than other research methods used.

I also made telephone calls to government institutions like the local councils, NHS, Job centres etc. In calling these institutions I was trying to get information about dyslexia and what services they provide. I did not get much response. The British Dyslexia association were contacted by telephone call and managed to get a bit of information as to who they were.

The Job Centre was contacted asking them if they could help someone who was dyslexic and did not have a qualification they said "they had procedures in place to offer information to anyone who needed it".

People with dyslexia were contacted through e-mails, telephone and by physically meeting them to introduce the research and if they wished to participate in this research and on another hand was to tell them what was required from them.

A large part of the research was done through digital media. Facebook was used for participants across London. The discussions on the page included the questions from the structured questionnaire. 1 question was asked and kept active every 4 days so that a lot of participants would participate on that particular question and so on. 10 questions were put up for views and discussions, a post of a question from the questionnaire had a reach of over 500 people. This allowed a lot of participants for easy access and made it a lot easier

for them to engage in a discussion. Most of the participants were of African origin and residing in the United Kingdom.

I had a few months to start and complete the research project which ran for 7 months. The research project had about 7 stages and involved the following:

The month of September was about understanding the requirements of the research, which also involved the definition of my research topic. At this stage the literature review started and was ongoing until the end of the research project.

In the month of December the research topic and questions were submitted to the ethical panel for approval. During this time the methodology for the research was designed.

From the month of December to January I started conducting the fieldwork which involved going to job centres and local councils. At this stage questionnaires were also distributed and online discussions were set up and running.

Between the month of January and February a large amount of data was gathered mostly from questionnaires and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

The analysis of the data collected began in February, this involved decoding the data from the questionnaires which was relevant and tabulating it. During this period the writing of the report draft was completed and handed to the course tutor for review.

The final writing and editing of the report was done and completed in the month of March and submitted to the course tutor electronically.

(v) Ethical considerations

Core to any research is to bring into considerations all of the participants who formed much of the information gathered and provide total confidentiality. To ensure that my research abided to all the rules and regulations of providing confidentiality and privacy, the Evelyn Oldfield unit ethical panel approved my research and questionnaires.

Prior to the research I got full consent from all participants by asking them to fill out the consent forms and signing them, because as it was a very sensitive issue I assured every participant that the information given was strictly private and confidential.

All data collected was going to be kept in a safe place and destroyed after the research accordingly. I also let it be known to everyone that participation was based on free will and participants could withdraw at any time, also everyone was aware of the purpose of the study and how the findings would help the community.

Questionnaires sent through emails to participants had an attached form that clarified confidentiality. Before the interviews participants were given consent forms to sign and agree to the format. They were also made aware that they could stop at any time if they so wished. The ethical considerations process concerning the research was adhered to throughout the entire research process.

Chapter 2: Research findings

Key findings

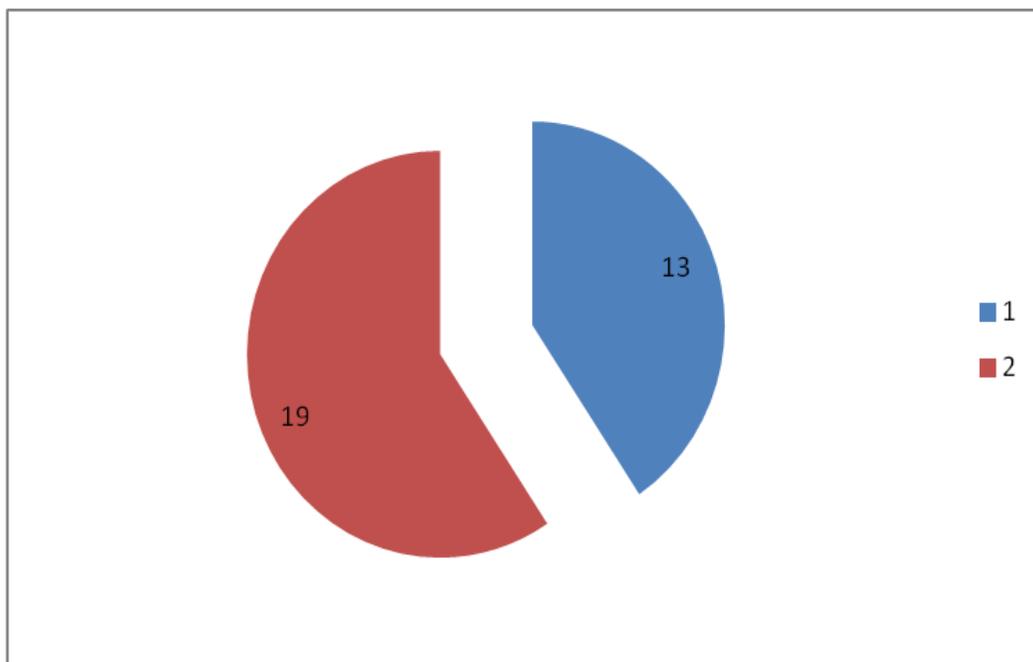
Gender:

The diagram below shows how many males and females took part in the survey.

19 out of the 32 respondents were men.

13 out of the 32 respondents were female.

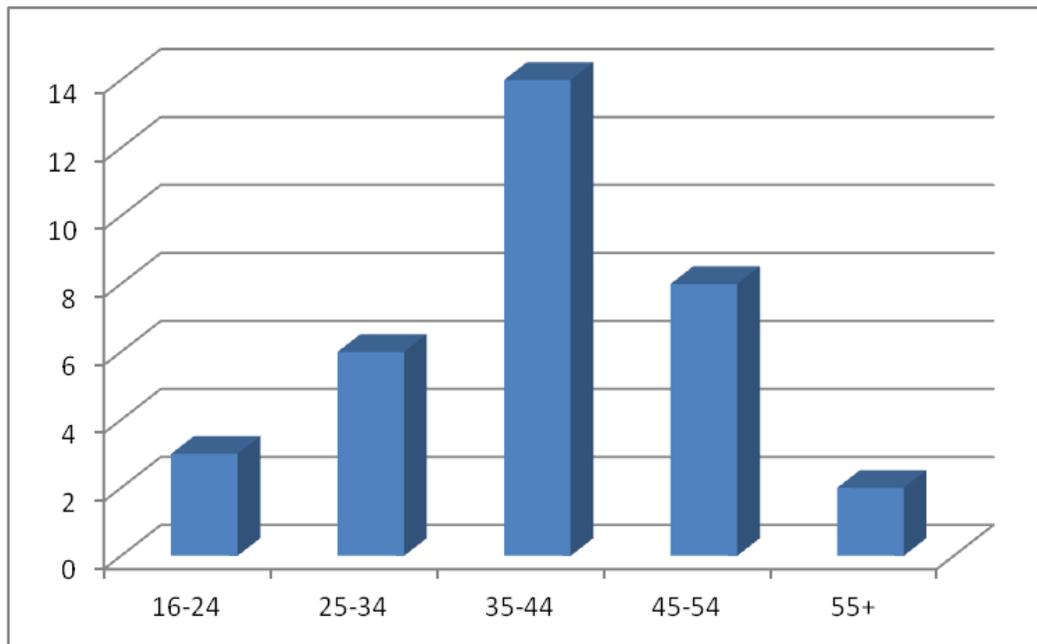
The majority of those that took part in the survey were men. All participants answered this question.



NB 1= Women 2=Men

Age:

The diagram below shows the age of the respondents from 16 to 55+ years old.



3 out of the total respondents were 16 to 24 year old

6 out of the total 32 participants were 25 to 34 year old

14 out of the total respondents were 35 to 44 year old

8 out of the total respondents were 45 to 54 year old

2 out of the total participants were aged over 55+ years

Participants aged between 35 to 44 years were the majority of the respondents

All the 32 participants responded to this question.

Ethnicity:

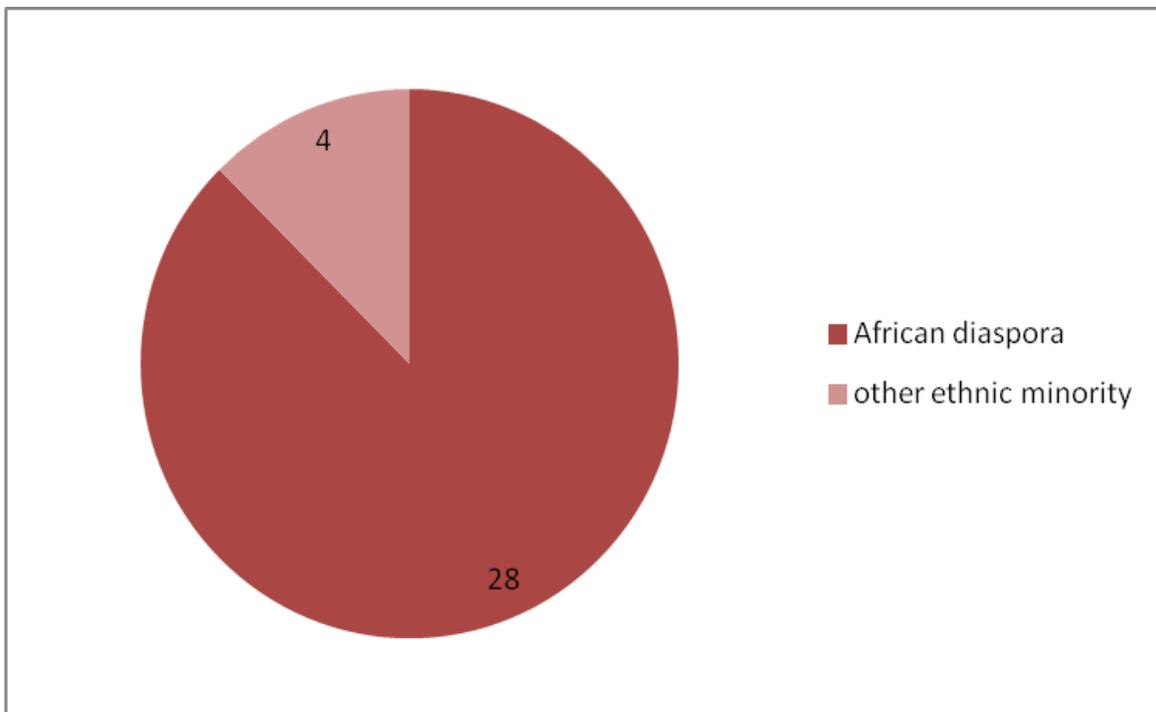
- The figure below shows how many African diaspora respondents who took part and shows that out of a 100% over 87.5% of those surveyed were from the African diaspora and the rest were from the other ethnic minority backgrounds.

The participants were asked if they belonged to the African diaspora and this was a yes or no question.

28 out of the 32 respondents said they belonged to the African diaspora.

4 out of the total 32 participants said that they belonged to other ethnic minority countries.

- All participants responded to this question and it is significant that the majority were from the African diaspora.

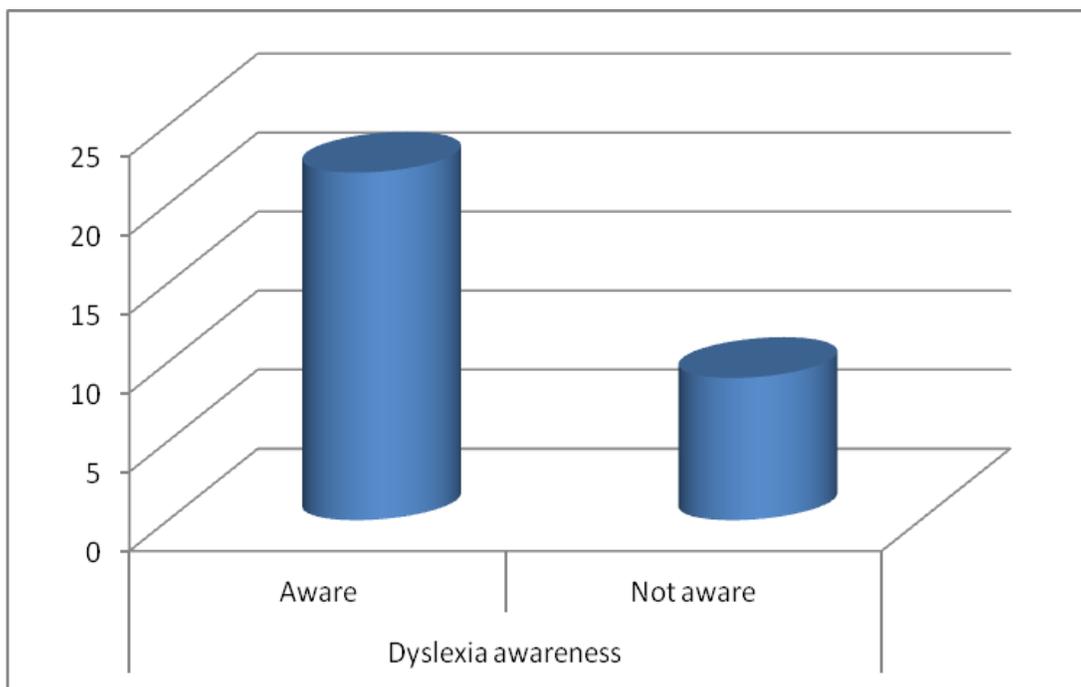


Dyslexia awareness:

The diagram below shows how many respondents were aware about dyslexia.

- The participants were asked if they were aware about a condition called dyslexia. 70% said they were aware of the condition and 30% said no.
- 22 out of the total 31 were aware of the condition called dyslexia.
- 9 out of the 31 respondents said they were not aware of the condition known as dyslexia.

31 out of the 32 respondents responded to this question.



Dyslexia:

- The following shows that 60% of the respondents said that they have never been assessed as being dyslexic and do not know someone who is and 40% answered yes. The majority of the respondents to this question said that they had never been assessed officially.
- The survey showed that 13 out of the 31 respondents to this question were identified (assessed) as being dyslexic.
- 19 out of the 31 participants answered no to this question.
- It is very important to note this part of the research and this proved significant that over 40% of respondents to this question were officially identified as being dyslexic.

Dyslexia definition:

In question 6 of the survey the respondents were asked the following question;

How would you define dyslexia?

- It is significant that almost 60% of those surveyed did not know what the definition of dyslexia is. This meant the majority of the respondents surveyed had no clue to what dyslexia was.

The following is a sample of the respondent's comments from the original questionnaires.

- "It is just made up people are just thick"
- "It's a myth"
- "It's a myth it does not exist people are dumb"
- "Dyslexia does not exist"
- "I don't know what dyslexia is"
- "I Don't know"
- "Someone who's brain is faster than his or her eyes"
- "A condition that makes it difficult to learn or assimilate knowledge normally"
- "Disability"

- “Dumb”
- “Normal”
- “A difference between your verbal and non-verbal (IQ) on one hand and your working memory speed and reading speed on the other. You could also describe it as strong right brain / creative thinking.”
- “Dyslexia is a person who does not know how to read”
- “It is significant to note that 50% of participants who commented on this question did not know the definition of dyslexia.”

26 out of the 32 participants commented on this question.

Dyslexia population:

The participants were also asked the following question:

How many people in the UK do you think have Dyslexia?

- Significantly the majority of those surveyed on this question about 90% did not know how many people were dyslexics in the United Kingdom.

26 out of the 32 participants responded to this question.

Impact of having dyslexia:

Participants were asked what they thought the impact of having dyslexia was.

26 out of the 32 participants responded to this question.

- 6 out of the total participants cited social isolation.
- 3 out of the 26 participants said that they found it difficult at school.
- 10 out of 26 respondents said that they were being labelled and subsequently were stigmatised by being called names.
- 3 out of the 26 respondents said that it affected their career prospects.

- 4 out of the 26 respondents mentioned dropping out of school.

Dyslexia awareness:

The participants were asked if there was a need to raise awareness and understanding of dyslexia in the African diaspora communities.

- 25 out 26 respondents cited the need to raise awareness.
- 1 out of the 26 respondents said that they were no need to raise awareness as dyslexia was a “myth”.

26 out of the 32 participants responded to this particular question.

Educational/professional attainment

Significantly the majority of the participants who took part in the survey were educated to a degree level and above and it is disheartening to find out that 50% of the respondents did not know what dyslexia was according to this research.

This confirms Adams (2008)¹, and that even some doctors don't know what dyslexia is?

- 32 Out of all the 32 participants all had at least a degree and above.
- Getting information about services available for people with dyslexia from charity organisations proved very difficult. Most organisations that helped people with dyslexia did not retain e-mails and after following up numerous times still did not get the answers needed. The British dyslexia association (BDA) was also contacted but blamed a lack of funding to achieve their goals.

¹ Available at: <<http://www.theledger.com/article/20080328/NEWS/527509844?tc=ar>> (Accessed on 3 March 2014)

Chapter 3: Discussion

The findings for the research confirmed already existing research showing the impact that dyslexia has on individuals and parents of those with the condition and the results further shows a lot more issues that need to be acted upon like the stigma in the communities (Schafer and Olexa, 1971) The majority of the respondents who are part of the African diaspora have no clue to what dyslexia is. According to past research and some articles, professionals like doctors and also some teachers don't believe that dyslexia exists (the ledger) how would they be able to assist their students?

About 50% of the respondents described dyslexia as being stupid or lazy as previous research has found Fawcett (1995). This shows that most of the participants did not know what dyslexia was.

Also the number of people that are asking for dyslexia awareness seems to have increased. The majority of the respondents surveyed said that there was need to raise awareness in the African diaspora communities according to this research.

Although they are no known statistics on the number of school drop outs in the African diaspora communities affected by dyslexia most participants agreed with the fact that a lot of youths stopped attending school and were looked down upon.

Labelling was also cited by many as a major problem because it lead them to being stigmatised (Barga, 1996). This was especially bad when they were growing up and in school.

Adults that could not read or write properly are often neglected or labelled as being inept or incompetent. These and many other issues often came up during surveys and online discussions.

Isolation also came up a number of times during online discussions and the survey. People that were isolated found it difficult in finding jobs as they felt left out according to this research.

They are a few number of structures and procedures in place to support dyslexia sufferers in local communities, most of these services are provided by local NGOs, charities and most of them are the voluntary sectors.

Most of the participants didn't know of any structures, procedures and services available to them. However, from my own research I know there is a voluntary sector, but people are not accessing or are unaware of the services.

Chapter 4

(i) Conclusions

This report suggests that there is a responsibility at every level, cultural background, parents, communities, and the government.

As this report has found, a lot of the participants surveyed were unaware about dyslexia, services and support available to them.

Most of the respondents confused dyslexia with other conditions.

Most of the participants did not know what to do if they had the condition and parents of those with the condition did not know much about dyslexia, what to do if they thought the child could not read or write properly. Some of the respondents thought dyslexia was being dull or dumb. Respondents surveyed confused dyslexia with fits and other conditions. Respondents were not aware of the services available in their communities and most participants were also not aware of any structures and procedures in place to support individuals with dyslexia.

Having dyslexia does not mean that one cannot achieve what you aspire to be in life e.g. medical doctor, engineer, actor etc. they are a lot of famous people with dyslexia who have archived a lot in life like Albert Einstein (scientist) sir Richard Branson (business magnate), Tom Cruise (actor), sir Winston Churchill (politician) Leonardo da Vinci (Artist) Michael Faraday (Chemist and Physicist) Bill Gates (programmer/inventor) to mention a few (BDA, 2014 [online] Available at <<http://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/about-dyslexia/famous-dyslexics.html>>(Accessed on 16 January 2014)).

(ii) Recommendations

I am very much hopeful that this report will bring about awareness on a large scale and also attract attention from all stake holders and institutions to bring about awareness and educate the diaspora communities on dyslexia.

It's fundamental for the governments to look at the needs of the communities and to find ways on how to make them integrate and aware of services available to them. It is also

imperative that hosting governments make a mass advertising campaign to raise awareness of dyslexia and not only in the diaspora but world over. Introducing community awareness day sessions for every borough will play a major role and would be the best way of raising awareness about dyslexia; this would also be done by advertising for the awareness day or week through social media which is now a powerful tool to get a message across diverse communities.

Making the diaspora communities aware of the help and services available to them through organisations like the British dyslexia association and other charity organisations would be a welcome idea. Having the dyslexia test readily available to everyone for example, in schools and universities would also make it very use full and helpful to the communities and also to make it mandatory for every school teacher to be trained to deal with children who have dyslexia, this might be part of the curriculum for their teacher training courses. Handing out leaflets to every parent on how to tell if your child might need to take a dyslexia test would be a good idea as it might help the children and the teachers.

There is also a need for more specialist support for families.

Also with adults it would be an ideal calling for all universities to test all new enrolling students for dyslexia and make it mandatory for all universities to test all new students for dyslexia.

Furthermore, it would be good to make government community centres for dyslexic people to meet and also get help and information they might need. Also there is a need for Government funding for charities working towards raising awareness.

There is a need to raise awareness about the services available and were the can get help with dyslexia diagnosis tests. There is also need to look into social barriers of the diaspora that makes certain individuals to act ignorant.

(iii) The strengths and limitations of research

As this was my first research I ever did I faced a lot of challenges through the entire project. The most challenging was gathering information through survey questions, government departments, NGOs and the research could have benefited from a larger sample of people with dyslexia which was not possible because of the limited time and resources that I had. The nature of the work would also require a lot of time and effort. Decoding what data was

relevant for the report proved difficult as they were a lot of uncompleted and part completed forms. Many questionnaires were returned very late. Getting people involved proved troublesome as well as a lot of people didn't want to discuss or talk about the subject.

Lack of funding and volunteers was also a major problem.

Online surveys sent out were taking a lot of time to be sent back and monitored, some of them were sent back half completed and any follow up made it almost impossible considering the amount of surveys/ questionnaires sent out.

Online survey was also the best method used to reach a wider community with the limited resources.

The interview provided participants with a great opportunity to share their views and experiences and worked very well in giving insight to the research.

Using different research methods made it easier to gather more information.

Getting Information from dyslexia organisations proved extremely difficult.

As regards to the time scale, it worked well for me as I managed to complete the research in the limited time.

I managed to get 32 respondents who took part in online questionnaires.

Questions for the questionnaires worked out well for the research.

All the research tools worked well as they allowed each of the respondents to comment and express their views more openly.

Online discussions proved very useful as over 20 participants took part and also this allowed them to express their views more openly.

For future research the wider community will have to be reached and a more diverse African population included.

More people will have to be reached to get them involved.

More time will be needed in order to get a large amount of data and participants engaged. I would use the same tools again which worked extremely well and proved easy to tabulate.

New methods will have to be used like radio and leaflets to promote the research.

Future research will have to be definitely funded and get more volunteers to take part.

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Available at: <<http://www.nclcd.org/types-learning-disabilities/dyslexia/what-is-dyslexia>>
(Accessed 01 December 2014)

Available at: <<http://etheses.bham.ac.uk/1055/1/Michail10PhD.pdf>>

Available at:

<http://www.academia.edu/1541446/Is_the_use_of_labels_in_special_education_helpful>
(Accessed 25 February 2014)

Appendices

Dyslexia is covered under the law.

A disabled person is defined as having "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities." Substantial is defined as 'more than trivial'.

"In some cases, people have coping or avoidance strategies which cease to work in certain circumstances (for example, where someone who has dyslexia is placed under stress). If it is possible that a person's ability to manage the effects of an impairment will break down so that effects will sometimes still occur, this possibility must be taken into account when assessing the effects of the impairment." [Paragraph B10, Guidance to the Definitions of Disability, Equality Act].

Look out for the following areas of weaknesses which will appear alongside abilities, which may be in areas of creativity or in highly developed verbal skills:

General

- speed of processing: spoken and/or written language slow
- poor concentration
- has difficulty following instructions
- forgetful of words

Written Work

- has a poor standard of written work compared with oral ability
- produces messy work with many crossings out and words tried several times, eg wippe, wype, wiep, wipe
- is persistently confused by letters which look similar, particularly b/d, p/g, p/q, n/u, m/w
- has poor handwriting with many 'reversals' and badly formed letters
- spells a word several different ways in one piece of writing
- makes anagrams of words, eg tired for tried, breaded for bearded
- produces badly set-out written work, doesn't stay close to the margin
- has poor pencil grip

- produces phonetic and bizarre spelling: not age/ability appropriate
- uses unusual sequencing of letters or words

Reading

- makes poor reading progress, especially using look and say methods
- finds its difficulty to blend letters together
- has difficulty in establishing syllable division or knowing the beginnings and endings of words
- pronunciation of words unusual
- no expression in reading comprehension poor
- is hesitant and laboured in reading, especially when reading aloud
- misses out words when reading, or adds extra words
- fails to recognise familiar words
- loses the point of a story being read or written
- has difficulty in picking out the most important points from a passage

Numeracy

- shows confusion with number order, eg units, tens, hundreds
- is confused by symbols such as + and x signs
- has difficulty remembering anything in a sequential order, eg tables, days of the week, the alphabet

Time

- has difficulty in learning to tell the time
- shows poor time keeping and general awareness
- has poor personal organisation
- has difficulty remembering what day of the week it is, their birth date, seasons of the year, months of the year
- difficulty with concepts – yesterday, today, tomorrow

Skills

- has poor motor skills, leading to weaknesses in speed, control and accuracy of the pencil
- has a limited understanding of non verbal communication
- is confused by the difference between left and right, up and down, east and west
- has indeterminate hand preference
- performs unevenly from day to day

Behaviour

- employs work avoidance tactics, such as sharpening pencils and looking for books
- seems to 'dream', does not seem to listen
- is easily distracted
- is the class clown or is disruptive or withdrawn (these are often cries for help)
- is excessively tired due to amount of concentration and effort required

A child who has a cluster of these difficulties together with some abilities may be dyslexic.

Your next step should be to consult the school's SENCo immediately and to decide whether the parents should be informed and the child given appropriate help.