ACCEPTABILITY OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AMONG TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN MWANZA

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Abstract
The objective of the study was to examine the level of teachers' and students' acceptability of inclusive education in public schools in Mwanza. The sample of the study was 236 respondents comprising of 200 students, thirty teachers and six head teachers. The study utilized a case study approach to assess the level of teachers' and students' understanding and acceptability of inclusive education and support services to the students with disabilities in public schools in Mwanza. Mean and percentage in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software was used in data analysis based on Likert Scale model for questionnaires. The major findings indicated that inclusive education in public schools in Mwanza is highly accepted by teachers and students. By 84% of respondents accept the concept of inclusive education. Moreover, the study found that students with disabilities accessed high (79%) level of support services and resources to the children with disabilities in their studies in public schools in Mwanza. Hence, the study recommends that there is a great need for the Revolutionary Government of Mwanza and its related institutions, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Agencies, individual scholars and all educational stakeholders to conduct extensive research in this field especially rural area.
Keywords: acceptability, inclusive, education

Introduction

Inclusive education refers to the process of ensuring that all students are welcomed and supported in their neighbourhood schools. This means that they are provided with age-appropriate classes and are involved in all aspects of the school life. Stubbs (2002) defined inclusive education as the process of increasing the participation of students and reducing their exclusion from cultures, curricula and communities of local schools.

UNESCO (2012) adopted an inclusive education strategy that aims to address the diverse needs of different learners. This process involves working with communities and schools to develop policies and procedures that support inclusive education. It involves changes in context,

approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children within an appropriate age range (Rieser, 2008).

Inclusive education is a process that aims to ensure that all children and young people have equal access to learning opportunities. This means that all children have the right to have their needs met in the best way for them; they are seen as being part of the community, even if they need particular help to live a full life within the community (Bruce and Meggitt, 2006). The principles of inclusive education were presented in the UNESCO's statement on special needs education in 1994 (Gillies and Carrington, 2004). Inclusive education involves important shifts and changes at the system as well as societal level. Therefore, the move toward inclusive education is not simply a technical or organizational change, but also a movement which needs clear philosophy. This movement requires a systemic and social change, as well as a clear philosophy on how to implement it. Countries should develop an inclusive education strategy and implement it effectively. They should also have a set of inclusive principles.

Every child has a right to education (Gillies and Carrington, 2004). This right can be denied if the child is not enrolled in a school system. Having the proper resources and teaching methods can help a child learn effectively.

Resources are the essential factors that should be considered when it comes to making sure that all children have equal access to education. Children have a wide diversity of characteristics. Educational systems need to accommodate this diversity in the student population (Gillies and Carrington, 2004). Other children have a wide variety of characteristics. For instance, some of them have the green, red, and purple colored brain processors. They make their decisions based on a formula that uses little information and little analysis (Sood, 2013). Although it accepts

differences in children, inclusive education also acknowledges the importance of having a diverse student body. There should also be schools that cater to the needs of different children. Those with special education needs must have access to regular schools which should accommodate them within child centred pedagogy capable of meeting these needs (Gillies and Carrington, 2004).

Inclusive education is a process that enables schools to meet the expectations of all children. It also helps build an inclusive society by ensuring that all people have equal access to education. According to the principles of inclusive education, every child has a unique set of characteristics and learning needs. The difference is normal. This principle of an inclusive education stipulates that every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs (Gillies and Carrington, 2004). This means that every teacher should be able to identify and support the needs of the different child's classmates. Knowing the basis difference between the different learning styles of different children helps the teachers deliver effective education.

According to UNICEF (1989), Article 1 (Definition of the child): The Convention defines a 'child' as a person below the age of 18, unless the laws of a particular country set the legal age for adulthood younger. In line with this convention, various States have been asked to review their laws to ensure that they provide adequate protection for children under 18.

The term disability refers to an individual who has a long-term or substantial impairment that limits his or her ability to carry out activities. Although the term is often used to describe individuals, other terms such as disabled and school pupils are also used to refer to persons with special needs. Moreover, Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) 2001 defines "a disabled pupil/child with disability" as a school pupil who meets the definition of disabled

person under DDA 1995. Also, Children Act (CA) 1989 includes a definition of disability as a child is disabled if he/she is blind, deaf or dump or suffers from mental disorder of any kind, or is substantially and permanently handicapped by illness, injury or congenital or other such disability as may be prescribed (Bruce and Meggitt 2006).

When it comes to inclusive education, children with special needs should attend their neighborhood schools. Having a welcoming environment and an inclusive orientation is the best way to combat discrimination and build an inclusive society. Regular schools with an inclusive orientation are the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building an inclusive society and achieving education for all (Gillies and Carrington, 2004). This concept also helps differentiate special education from inclusive education. While in the former, different classes and schools are provided for the special needs of the students. In order to achieve inclusive education, communities must play a vital role. This philosophy aims to maximize the participation of all citizens in society and build a society that is equal for all.

Child-centred pedagogy is central to inclusion. Inclusive centres must have based on the science and art of education, specifically an instructional theory. The content of learning activities should be designed according to the theories of Piaget, Bruner, and Vygotsky. A child's learning style should be adapted to meet the needs of the individual. It should also be supported by a variety of resources and programs to enable the child to develop new skills. The learner requires assistance to integrate prior knowledge with new knowledge. Children must also develop met cognition, or the ability to learn how to learn. Flexible curricula should adapt to the child and not vice-versa. Inclusive education must have identified by the Education Policy of a particular state or country.

The policy document should then be followed by a comprehensive Strategic Plan that will outline the goals and actions for the next five to eight years. Then, the Annual Plans are formulated and show the actual activities that will be carried out within the specified time frame.

In order to achieve inclusive education, schools should have the necessary resources and support to cater to the special needs of their students. For instance, in Mwanza, educational materials and equipment were provided for the students with special needs. The support and resources that schools and other institutions provide for inclusive education should be distributed in a way that is most beneficial to the individual with special needs.

The importance of inclusive education is linked to the enjoyment of human dignity and full human rights. As per the UN's Universal Declaration on Human Rights, this concept should apply to all children regardless of their socioeconomic status. The inclusive education acts as an agent for implementing the human dignity and the enjoyment of full human rights (UN, 2006). Teachers are worried about the prospect of teaching students with severe disability. The study conducted by Subban, (2005) found that teacher attitudes were less favourable about including students with multiple and physical disabilities in the regular class. While Avramidis et al. (2002) found that students with emotional and behavioural disorders attract the least positive attitudes from teachers within inclusive classrooms.

The support of the school's principal and other school leaders is also a significant factor that influences the attitudes of teachers toward inclusion. Administrative support has also been cited as a significant factor in determining teacher attitudes toward inclusion, as the teacher feels reaffirmed if the school principal fosters a positive learning environment for both teachers and

students Subban, (2005). Teachers believe that the support of the principal and other school leaders are critical in order for them to implement inclusive practices (Subban, 2005).

However, research suggests that administrators' attitudes toward students with disabilities are less than positive; thereby impacting on the process of inclusion in schools. Clayton noted that administrative staffs lack sufficient understanding and expertise regarding the delivery of services to students with disabilities (Subban, 2005). Further research commented that administrators may hold positive views of inclusion as they are further away than mainstream teachers, in terms of actual experiences (Subban, 2005). Therefore, to achieve a better understanding and acceptability of inclusive education, scholars have relied on the study of teachers' and students' attitudes toward the implementation of inclusion in public schools.

Before the 1964 Mwanzi Revolution, African children were significantly under-represented in their secondary schools. In fact, they were only represented by about 10 percent of the school's enrollment. In terms of education, inclusive education refers to the process of having all students in a school, and they are supported to learn and contribute to the school's success. This concept is regarded as very important in preventing discrimination in the educational sector in Tanzania.

It is estimated that there are about 93 million children and adults living with disability worldwide. Many of them are not enrolled in mainstream education. Estimates for the number of children (0–14 years) living with disabilities range between 93 million and 150 million (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), 2005; World Health Organization (WHO), 2008; and United Nations (UN), 2009). Many children and adults with disabilities historically have been excluded from mainstream education opportunities. According to Booth, (2005) inclusion is a philosophy based on values, aiming to maximise participation of all people in society and

education by minimising exclusionary and discriminatory practices. Education for All (EFA), as a means towards inclusive and equitable education to all members in the society, needs to take into account of diversity, which is by no means limited to disability.

The establishment of inclusive education in public schools will help build an inclusive society by providing access to education and participatory democracy. Inclusive education is gradually in progress, for example in the year of 2011/2012 the Revolutionary Government of Mwanza has succeeded to provide services for 4,500 students with disabilities (2,201 girls and 2,299 boys) from 86 schools in Mwanza. Moreover, two disabled students (both were females) passed well in their standard seven class examination in 2011, and joined special class (Form One) at Vikokotoni Secondary School from Kisiwandui School (MoEVT, 2012).

Although the concept of inclusive education has been acknowledged in Mwanza, many groups of children are still excluded from attending school, even though the term "inclusive education" is often assumed to refer just to disabled children (Stubbs, 2002).. In Tanzania, for instance, there is disadvantaged group, which is represented by the children with disabilities; some of them, they have 15 year old girls and boys who have never been to school in their lifetime because they are blind and deaf. In some countries, such as Tanzania, fathers believe that their kids cannot learn due to their disability.

According to the World Bank's report, India's current attendance rate for children with disability is very poor and is far below the national average. Also, the report noted that the educational attainment of persons with disability is very poor and is significantly lower than the average for the general population. Data suggests that people with disabilities have much lower educational attainment rates, with 52 percent illiteracy against a 35 percent average for the general

population. Illiteracy levels are high across all categories of disability, and extremely so for children with visual, multiple and mental disabilities (and for children with severe disabilities across all the categories) (Singal, 2009).

Despite the various efforts made in the past, the rate of education for children and adults with disability remains very poor. Both the school attendance rate and Illiteracy rate are still significantly higher than that of the general population. The concept of inclusive education is generally accepted in public schools in Tanzania. Therefore, the study critical examined the level of acceptability of the concept of inclusive education as well as the level of the support services to the children with disabilities (CWDs) in public schools in Mwanza.

Purpose of the Study

The major objective of this study was to identify the level of teachers' and pupils' acceptability of inclusive education and the level of support service and resources to the children with disabilities in their studies in public schools in Mwanza. More specific, the study aims to:

1. evaluate the level of teachers' and students' acceptability of inclusive education in public schools in Mwanza.

2. assess the level of support services and resources provided to children with disabilities in their studies in public schools.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. What is the level of teachers' and students' acceptability of inclusive education in public schools in Mwanza?

2. To what level children with disabilities are provided support services and resources in their studies in public schools?

Method

The research approach used in this study was a case study approach. This is because of the type of data that the study needed to collect from the respondents. The study needed to collect opinions, attitudes, beliefs and values of teachers and students about the level of teachers' and students' acceptability of inclusive education in public schools in Mwanza. Moreover, the study is said to be a case study because the data was collected from a large sample. The study used questionnaires to collect data from head teachers, teachers and students. The sample size of this study was consisting of six (6) head teachers, thirty (30) teachers, and expected two hundred and ten (210) students to make a total of 236 respondents. A sample of six (6) public schools out of 404 public schools that existing in the Mwanza (MoEVT, 2022) was selected. For example Urban (two schools), Semi urban (two schools) and Rural (two schools). Moreover, the sampling procedure was applied in selecting 210 students by using systematic random sampling.

Also, six (6) teachers were selected strategically such as head teacher (headmaster) by his position, science teacher, mathematics teacher, English teacher, Kiswahili teacher and class teacher for standard six in every selected school. The instruments used were questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires to obtain important information from teachers and students about their level of acceptability of inclusive education. Each item questionnaire was developed to address a specific objective and research question of the study. The study conducted face-to-face interviews with head teachers to get information about the level of teachers' and students' acceptability of inclusive education. The head teachers' interview guides were semi-structured.

The instruments were validated by experts in the field of inclusive education. A reliability index of .83 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha. The data collected through questionnaire were analysed by using Average and percentage in SPSS computer software. Also, the data gathered through interviews analysed and presented qualitatively via content analysis as per research objective and research questions.

Result

Assessing the Level of Teachers' and Students' Acceptability of Inclusive Education in Public Schools in Mwanza

The first objective of this study was to assess the level of acceptability of the concept of inclusive education by the teachers and students. Therefore, to achieve this objective item 1 to 5. A total number of 236 respondents answered those items 1 to 5 according to their attitudes, experiences, behaviours as well as their perceptions. The results were indicated in the Table 1.

Table 1: The Level of Acceptability of the Concept of Inclusive Education by Teachers and Students

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	N
1.	Children with disabilities should attend to their neighbourhood schools.	154	56	18	07	236
2.	Inclusive education provides opportunities to learn about and accept individual differences, lessening the impact of harassment and bullying.	119	84	18	15	236
3.	Inclusive education develops friendships with a wide variety of other children, each with their own individual needs and abilities.	144	66	19	07	236
4.	Teacher or pupil can teach/learn in the same class, same lesson with disabled people but for some different for some.	110	82	21	23	236
5.	The children with disabilities can be segregated and exploited from the mainstream education system.	141	39	24	32	236
	Average	**134**	**66**	**20**	**17**	**236**
	Percentage	**60%**	**28%**	**7%**	**5%**	**100%**

Source: Field data, (2022)

There results showed that 134 respondents (60%) strongly agree to represent people who accept the inclusive education, 66 (28%) were agreed, 20 respondents (7%) disagreed and 17 (5%) were strongly disagreed. Thus, the findings revealed that, the level of teachers' and students' acceptability of the concept of inclusive education in public schools in Mwanza is high (84%), but on the other hand there are some people (16%) who have low level of acceptability of inclusive education in public schools in Mwanza.

Assessing the Level of Support Services and Resources Provided to the Children with Disabilities in their Schools

Under this objective, the study wanted to assess the level of support services and resource provided to the children with disabilities in their studies. A total number of 236 respondents answered those five questions from questionnaires, according to their attitudes, experiences, behaviours as well as their perceptions. The Table 2 summarizes the results.

Table 2: The Level of Support Services and Resources Provided to Children with Disabilities in their Studies

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	N
6.	In our school, there are ramps that support the movement of the children with disabilities in their studies.	55	56	51	74	236
7.	Government and NGO's distribute sometimes equipments such as wheel chairs, glasses, white sticks, books and Braille machines for disabled persons.	94	99	22	21	236
8.	We are willing to care and helpful for a child with a disability in his/her studies.	188	27	13	08	236
9.	Sometimes disabled persons need extra lessons outside or within school hours.	97	102	20	17	236
10.	The children with disabilities use wheelchairs, glasses, white sticks, books and Braille machines in their studies.	151	49	22	15	236
	Average	**117**	**66**	**26**	**27**	**236**
	Percentage	**52.13%**	**28.4%**	**9.47%**	**9.95%**	**100%**

The findings depicted from questionnaires item number six to ten showed that 117 (52.13%) of respondents strongly agreed that there is high level of support services and resources provided to disabled students, 66 (28.4%) were agreed, 26 respondents (9.47%) and 27 (9.95%) disagree and strongly disagree respectively. Therefore, the findings revealed that, the level of support and resources for children with disabilities in public schools in Mwanza is high but on the other side of the coin, there are some respondents who have believe that there is low level of support services and resources for children with disabilities in public schools.

Discussion of findings

According to the respondents' views gathered and analysed from questionnaires, it can be seen that the level of teachers and students' acceptability the concept of inclusive education in public schools in Mwanza is about 84%. That is to say the level of acceptance for the concept of inclusive education by teachers and students is high. While the 16% of teachers and students are having low level of acceptability of the concept of inclusive education or they are opposing the concept of inclusive education at all.

In addition to that, data proved that in urban areas the level of acceptability of this concept seemed to be higher (95%) compare to the rural areas (65%). This situation shows that the urban areas are less affected with this problem (5%) than in the rural areas (35%). This means that the problem is large in rural areas is bigger than urban; it can be assumed that those parents who have disabled children in rural areas ought to take their children to school because of their deaf and blindness or mental retardation. Also, they argue that the condition of their children is a gift from the God, no right of participation in social and economic activities. For example, Barner

and Mercer (2003) argue that without inclusive education more than 90 per cent of disabled children in developing countries are not in the school system.

Furthermore, the Revolutionary Government of Mwanza will fail to meet the MDGs and EFA Goals towards school planning development because lack of proper statistics on children with disabilities. Thus, further studies are needed for identifying the proper statistics on children with disabilities as well as their contribution in socio-economic aspects in the country like Tanzania.

According to the respondents' views gathered and analysed from questionnaires, it can be seen that the level of accessibility of support services and resources to the children with disabilities in public schools in Mwanza is about 79%. That is to say the level of accessibility of support services and resources to the children with disabilities is high and the rest (21%) are having low level of accessibility of support services and resources in their studies.

In addition to that, data proved that in urban areas the level of accessibility of support services and resources to the children with disabilities in public schools seemed to be higher (95%) compare to the rural areas (65%). This situation justifies that the urban areas are less affected with this problem (5%) than in the rural areas (35%). This means that the problem of less support services and resources for children with disabilities is bigger in rural areas than urban; it can be assumed that there are various factors that lead to this problem. Some them are shortage of training regarding teaching students with a disability it can causes less confidence for teachers.

For example, the studies show that the teachers perceive themselves as unprepared for inclusive education because they lack appropriate training in this area. Inadequate training relating to inclusive education may result in lower teacher confidence as they plan for inclusive education (Subban, 2005).

Also, negative attitudes toward such inclusion, this kind of attitude can be resulted by the shortage of training regarding inclusive education in public schools and the whole society at large. Fore stance, the searchers argue that teachers who have not undertaken training regarding the inclusion of students with disabilities, may exhibit negative attitudes toward such inclusion, while increasing training was associated with more positive attitudes toward the inclusion of students with disabilities (Subban, 2005). Training in the field of special education appears to enhance understanding and improve attitudes regarding inclusion.

Furthermore, less resources and support services from administrative staff is a big challenge for inclusive education. For example, the previous studies show that Administrative support has also been cited as a significant factor in determining teacher attitudes toward inclusion, as the teacher feels reaffirmed if the school principal fosters a positive learning environment for both teachers and students (Subban, 2005). Teachers believe that the support of the principal and other school leaders are critical in order for them to implement inclusive practices (Subban, 2005).

Therefore, further studies are needed to identify the causes of low level of support services and resources provided to the children with disability in their studies especially in public schools situated in rural areas and to suggest the proper ways for solving the problem.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The conclusion of this study is drawn according to the objectives of the study and research questions as well as minor survey of the field of the study. The conclusion is related to each variable as follow here below. For the level of teachers' and students' acceptability towards inclusive education in public schools in Mwanza, the results from the study showed that the level of teachers' and students' acceptability towards inclusive education is very high (84%).

Moreover, the study found that students with disabilities accessed high (79%) level of support services and resources to the children with disabilities in their studies in public schools in Mwanza.

Government action can either create an enabling environment or one that is not enabling for inclusion. Indeed, harassment, corruption, bureaucracy, cumbersome procedures and regulatory framework will definitely negatively impact on micro-enterprises (Berner et al, 2008). In line with such arguments this study has indicated that the restructuring of the clear and high level of teachers' and students' understanding and acceptability of inclusive education in public schools in Mwanza creates opportunities for the emergence of an inclusive society at the ground or lower level group which is ready for providing downstream services to the children with disabilities.

It is therefore prudent to argue here that, policies aimed at attracting businesses (investing in education) should address those aspects that are disabling and prioritize on facilitating, among others easy businesses formalization including security of tenure as well as eliminating corruption and harassment of entrepreneurs. In addition, practical actions to facilitate the entrepreneurs currently engaged in businesses nationwide to have sustainable businesses are necessary. Towards this end, forging public and private sector partnership in providing support infrastructure to enable them access the emerging ideas such as "Education for All" and "Universal Primary Education" could yield positive results.

The study has a positive recommendation to Policy makers of the government that inclusive education policy should be given attention for its role in combating EFA, UPE, creating an opportunity to meet the MDGs and contribute to the economic development by minimizing the illiteracy rate of the disabled people in Mwanza. Government should promote more on the implementation of inclusive education for the wellbeing of its people. It should also create an

enabling environment in which inclusive education and its tools can be easily accessible by the majority of Mwanzais (Tanzanian). Entrepreneurs (investing in education) should assist in improving their small businesses (schools). This means that unnecessary taxes should be removed and enabling environment should be promoted. Technology should be encouraged and IE policy be interpreted to the grass root level.

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