

Effective Implementation of Inclusive Education in Enhancing Quality Education in Public Primary Schools in Tanzania: The role of school culture

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Abstract

This study assessed the effective implementation of inclusive education in enhancing quality education in public primary schools in Tanzania. It specifically aimed at assessing the contribution of school culture in the implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Karagwe district. The study employed a mixed method approach and was guided by behaviorism theory. Respondents were sampled by purposive sampling and simple random sampling techniques. The target population included teachers, head teachers, Primary District Education Officer, Ward Education Officer, District Special Education Officer and Quality Assurance Officers. The sample size comprised of seventy-six respondents. Data were gathered using questionnaire, interview and observation methods. Quantitative data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20 and thematic analysis method for qualitative data. The study findings revealed that schools' culture plays a major role in the implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Karagwe district. The study recommends that, heads of schools should be given in-service trainings on the importance of school culture and its role in the promotion of school effectiveness. This is because the heads of schools have a major role to play in building the school cultures in their schools.

Keywords— *Inclusive education, Quality Education, school culture, behaviorism.*

I. INTRODUCTION

This article focuses on effective implementation of inclusive education in enhancing quality education in public primary schools in Tanzania. This article is specifically focusing on the role of school culture in the implementation of inclusive education in enhancing quality education in public primary schools in Tanzania. School culture shapes the school behaviors, plans and expectations. School culture is very important in the construction of educational systems, educational policies,

practices and performance. This is because the school culture acts as a walking stick for the school leaders. This is supported by Carrington, (1999) who argues that, the school culture therefore should direct the school leaders to the school image that they would like their schools to have. Moreover, Carrington (1999) adds that policy makers, educators, school leaders ought to consider the importance of school culture in order to promote school effectiveness and inclusion.

II. BACKGROUND AND LITERATURE REVIEW

According to UNESCO (2009), inclusive education is a process of addressing and responding to the variety of wants of all learners through cumulative participation in learning culture and communities and reducing their segregation from education. UNESCO (2009) adds that the goal of inclusive education is to enable the entire education systems to facilitate learning situations where teachers and learners embrace and welcome the challenges and benefits of diversity. In an inclusive education, learning environments are nurtured whereby individual needs are met and every student has a chance to prosper.

According to Kozleski and Yu (2016), research in inclusive education started in the 1980s. By then it was framed as an alternative to special education. Inclusive education later expanded its activities in schools and the school system to increased access, participation and opportunities to marginalized learners.

Mbwambo (2015) state that the term inclusive education was coined as a result of the Salamanca Conference of 6th -7th June 1994 in Salamanca Spain organized by UNESCO. This conference advocated for children's rights to education, with special emphasis being placed on children with special needs. The Salamanca conference was an international inclusive education stakeholders' forum which provided a framework on how children with special needs should be accommodated in education systems all over the World.

Possi and Milinga (2017) confirm that the government of Tanzania ratified the 1994 Salamanca statement which emphasized the need to provide basic education to exceptional individuals in Tanzania. The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action have reinforced the obligation for schools to accommodate all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions.

Mbwambo (2015) reveals that the government of Tanzania ratified inclusive education conventions and agreements

including the Salamanca statement of 1994 and the UN Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), and prepared National Inclusive Education Strategies of 2014-2017. The current inclusive education strategy of 2018-2021 aims at providing better and inclusive education environment for children with special needs.

As a result of the Salamanca statement, the Government of Tanzania put in place some strategies that would ensure proper implementation of the inclusive education agenda. Among the strategies put in place were the formulation of the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP)1 of 2002-2006 and PEDP 2 of 2007 -2011. Mbwambo (2015) argues that the aim of these plans was to translate Tanzania Development Vision 2025 and education and training policy of 1995 into specific priorities and achievable targets and to realize the goals and targets agreed upon in the Salamanca statement and the framework of actions of 1995, Dakar Framework of Action for Education for All (EFA) and the summit for Millennium Development Goal (MDGs).

The implementation of inclusive education in Tanzania started in 1998 in Temeke Municipality in Dar es Salaam region when the Ministry of Education, the Salvation Army and UNESCO conducted a pilot study (Mbwambo, 2015). Currently, inclusive education schools are found in all regions across Tanzania.

According to Mbwambo (2015) the history of inclusive education is divided into four phases which are, the phase of segregation, extermination and total isolation of people with disabilities in all aspects of life. In the first phase, people with disabilities all over the world did not have access to education at all. The second phase is the institutionalization phase. In this phase, institutions to accommodate persons with disabilities were formed in the Western World. The third phase was about integration and mainstreaming. Integration means the inclusion of people with disabilities in regular settings for a particular period

of time based on their skills. On the other hand, mainstreaming means that children with disabilities have a little time for networking with their non-disabled peers as they attend special classes for most time of the day. The fourth and last stage is the stage of transition from integration to inclusion (Mbwambo, 2015). Inclusive education which will be discussed in this study is therefore, the one that commences from the fourth stage.

Othman (2015) considers inclusive education as an act of integrating learners with special needs into the general education classes and that it is primarily for social purposes. He further notes that inclusive education entails all activities which ensure the integration of students physically, instructionally and socially irrespective of their disabilities. Inclusive education brings diverse learners, families, educators and the community members together to create school and their social institutions based on acceptance and belongingness to the community.

Possi and Milinga (2017) argue that inclusive education is basically a broader field of special education. It challenges the previous forms of special education and its practices. Carrington (1999) maintains that special education has failed to provide educational for all learners. The history of special education has progressed from the separation and integration or mainstreaming to inclusion with a new inventiveness in the area of special needs education which deliberates people with special needs within a wider viewpoint. Inclusive education is, therefore, a holistic, contemporary and up to date mechanism of accommodating children with special needs in the regular education systems.

Possi and Milinga (2017) assert that inclusive education is a method in which all children have the ability to partake in general education programs. They add that inclusive education is a social equity and is fundamentally a social construction viewpoint in which students with disabilities get socially accommodated by all school community members. Inclusive education transmits the rudiments of

mainstreaming, integration, normalization, least restrictive environment, deinstitutionalization and regular education ingenuities.

Tanzania National Strategy for Inclusive Education (2018-2021) states that the core aim of inclusive education is to enhance the human right access to education as stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by recognizing diversity as the main characteristic of humanity. Education, as a human right, must be attained by all individuals regardless of their differences. Persons with disabilities have no exception when it comes to education. And indeed, education should not be discriminative. It should be inclusive so as to accommodate the children with disabilities in the social structures so as to enable them get integrated in society for their own and national development.

UNICEF (2018) asserts that inclusive education is a key factor for the attainment of a quality education. In other words, there can never be quality education without inclusive education. UNICEF adds that quality education can only be attained when the education systems embrace diversity and allows every child, including children with disabilities (CWDs) to study together receiving inclusive quality education that provides them with the learning required for life.

According to Open Society Foundation (2019), inclusive education provides better quality education for all children as it embraces diversity and socialization among the children with different backgrounds. Inclusive education helps teachers to train children on how to interact with the external World outside their families. This enhances social relationship and interactions. Open Society Foundation adds that inclusive education enhance respect and understanding among children with diverse abilities and backgrounds as they play, socialize and learn together.

Mwambo (2015) and Possi and Milinga (2017) have stipulated the challenges facing inclusive education in Tanzania. They point out that some of the challenges

include insufficient funds to implement inclusive education policies, insufficient teaching and learning facilities, absence of support services, lack of supportive infrastructure and lack of properly trained personnel. They further note that stigmatization, physical punishment and nuisance and exclusion by teachers and students and other members of the community are serious challenges facing inclusivity in education in the country.

Several scholars have put forward some suggestions to improve the implementation of inclusive education in Tanzania. Mbwambo (2015) and Hamad (2015) suggest that the ministry of education should provide inclusive education courses to all teachers. They also recommend that inclusive education should be accommodated in the teachers' training curriculum so that all teachers get inclusive education knowledge which they can apply in their schools. Also, they suggest that policy makers should formulate adequate policies and regulations to accommodate the need for implementation of quality education in the country. Furthermore, they recommend that the central government should allocate enough budget to the ministry of education so that the needs for inclusive education can be met. Lastly, they suggest that since parents should play a vital role in the provision of their children education, they should always be supportive to the teachers. This will motivate teachers to teach the children with special needs with commitment.

This study therefore sets out to assess the level of efficiency of the implementation of inclusive education in Karagwe district Tanzania since it is so far not known.

III. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study was guided by Behaviorism theory. Behaviorism theory was established by John. B. Watson and Burrhus. G. Skinner in 19th Century. These psychologists sought to focus on observable, quantifiable events and behaviors. They claimed that science ought to take into account only apparent indicators. They helped

make psychology more relevant by viewing that it might be precisely measured and understood, and it was not just grounded on sentiments. Watson and Skinner supposed that if given a group of infants, the way they raised them and the environment they put them in would be the eventual decisive factor for how they behaved, but not the influence of their parents or genetics.

Western Governors University (2020) asserts that Behaviourism is a prevalent concept that emphasizes on how students learn. Behaviourism focuses on the impression that all behaviours are learned through interaction with the environment. The theory states that behaviours are learnt from the context and that inborn factors have quite little impact on one's behaviour.

Behaviourists argue that learning takes places when there is a change in behaviour. They also assert that one's behaviour occurs when consequences are allied with stimuli and response and is maintained by reinforcement. Al-Shammari, Faulkner, and Forlin (2019) asserts that the key principle of behaviourism that support education are that behaviour is learned. Behaviour is governed by the context in which it transpires, hence, teaching and learning can be equated to changing behaviour. Also, behaviour is governed by what follows actions and is observable.

Behaviourism theory is related to the best practices in inclusive education because the classrooms conditions are the basis of functional behavioural analysis. This theory is very applicable in inclusive education because we have witnessed a lot of biases against the vulnerable students in accessing education services. The root cause of this has been reported to be the negative attitude of the society towards children with disabilities or those from the marginalized population. This is in line with the findings by Liliane Foundation(nd) which argues that about 65 million school-aged children in developing countries have disabilities, out of which 50% are out of school.

In addition, in places like Asia, Africa and Latin America where poverty is high, less than 10 per cent of children

with disabilities have never been in a classroom. In fact, even those children with disabilities that are in school, are less likely to stay or are being promoted. Children with disabilities are similarly often excepted from mainstream education. Nevertheless, a disability of a child is not the main barrier to education. The utmost barriers include the attitudes of people in society (Liliane foundation (n.d); Possi and Millinga (2017), Mbwambo (2005). In this regard, in order to achieve inclusive education, we need a total change of the behaviour and total cultural set ups and beliefs of the entire society.

IV. METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Approach and Research Design

This study applied mixed method approach whereby qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to study the same phenomena, from data collection to analysis stages. The researcher opted for this approach because it helped him explore knowledge from both qualitative and quantitative sources through the use of observation, interviews and questionnaires respectively.

This study applied convergent parallel research design. By applying the convergent parallel research design, the researcher simultaneously collected data in one phase. Then, the collected data were analyzed separately, compared and combined. The researcher used convergent parallel research design because it is time convenient and cost efficient. This is because; convergent parallel design allowed the researcher to apply both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods simultaneously in one phase.

4.2 Area of the Study

This research was carried out in Karagwe District of Kagera region in Tanzania. The researcher selected Karagwe district as a study area because the district is already implementing inclusive education. Also, the researcher is familiar with the district, a situation that simplified the data collection activity. The implementation

of inclusive education is challenging in many parts of the world and Tanzania in particular. Therefore, the researcher opted to conduct the study in Karagwe District to determine the effectiveness of the implementation of inclusive education in enhancing quality education in public primary school in Tanzania.

4.3 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size

The researcher applied two sampling techniques both purposive and simple random sampling to select the study respondents. The researcher applied purposive sampling technique to select the respondents due to their roles in implementing the inclusive education policy in Karagwe District. Purposive sampling technique was also used to select the four inclusive public primary schools under this study, because they are the schools already implementing the inclusive education in the district. Other respondents were sampled by simple random sampling technique. This study had a sample size of sixty respondents.

4.4 Data collection methods

This study employed both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. The methods included questionnaires for quantitative data and interviews and observations for qualitative data.

The quantitative findings were later analyzed by the help of SPSS and presented in figures, numbers and diagrams. Qualitative data were analyzed using thematic analysis.

V. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 The contribution of the school culture in the implementation of inclusive education

In order to explore the contribution of school culture in the implementation of inclusive education in Tanzania, both quantitative and qualitative data were presented.

Figure 1.1 presents a summarized set of replies from the field on the contribution of school culture in the implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Karagwe district Tanzania.

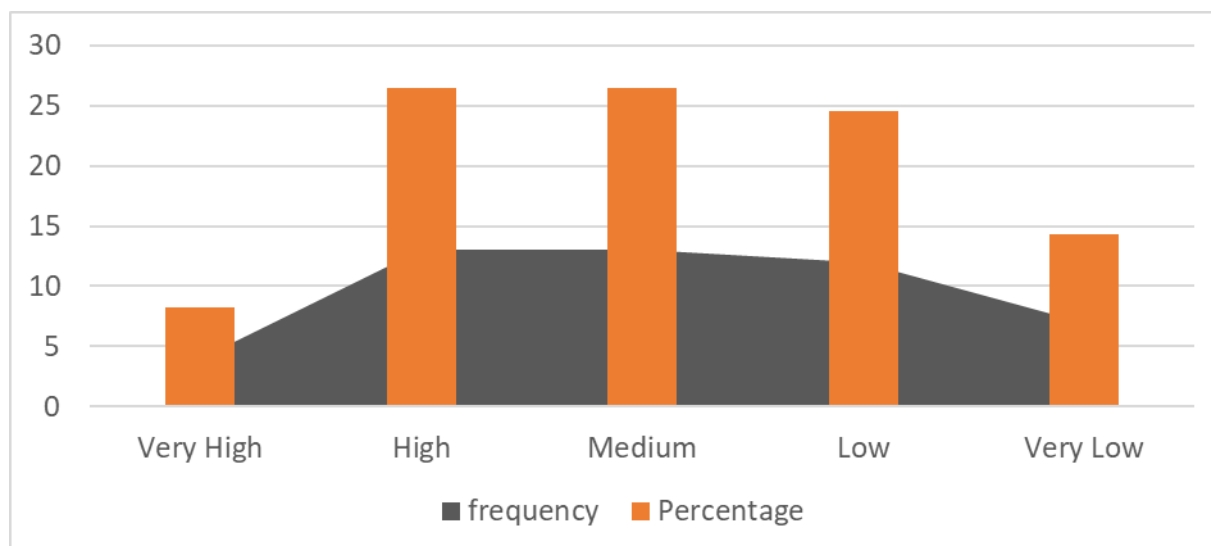


Fig.1.1 Teachers views on the contribution of school culture in the implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Karagwe district

According to Figure 1.1, 34 per cent of the respondents commented that school culture highly contributes in the implementation of inclusive education in public primary schools in Karagwe district. Again, 26 per cent of the informants had views that the level of contribution of school culture in the implementation of inclusive education is medium while 38 per cent of the respondents commented that it the contribution of school culture in the implementation of inclusive education is low.

The findings in Figure 4.1 imply that school culture has a big part to play as far as the implementation of inclusive education in Karagwe district is concerned. The findings concur with the behaviorism theory because school culture is all about how teachers and students behave within the school environment. Their behavior shapes the school culture hence affect all the activities conducted in the school including inclusive education. Indeed, the availability of inclusive behavior depends much on the teacher's awareness about inclusive education. The researcher believes that, when the teachers are aware about inclusive education, it will be easy for them to inculcate inclusive culture within the schools.

Again, the researcher had an opportunity to explore

qualitative data pertaining to the contribution school culture. The discussion was guided by the following themes.

5.1.1 Meaning of school culture

Through interviews the head teachers commented differently on the meaning of school culture. Most of them commented that school culture is the way teachers and students live and behave in a school setting. School culture entails all activities on how teachers and students interact, and relate to each other within the school setting. In this regard, school culture is a set of shared values, beliefs and norms that influence the way educators and administrators think, feel and behave in the school setting (Stoll, 1998).

Therefore, the researcher believes that, in order for the school leaders to apply inclusive school cultures, they should first of all be conversant with what the school culture means. The school leader's comprehension of school culture is fundamental in ensuring the actual implementation of inclusive education. This holds water as the school leaders cannot implement a phenomenon, they are not aware of. In this regard, sufficient teacher's comprehension of school culture enhances the

implementation of inclusive education in the school.

5.1.2 Types of school culture

School culture is of two types which are positive school culture and less positive school culture. The study findings revealed that both types of school culture are applied in inclusive public primary schools in Karagwe district. Through interviews, most of the head teachers said that that both positive school culture and the less positive school culture exist in the district. The study further revealed that, the positive school culture is more inclusive than the less positive school. This is because the positive school culture embraces diversity among its members compared to the less positive school culture.

A positive school culture is the one which aims at a higher degree of school effectiveness. In addition, positive school culture is allied with increased teacher collaboration, higher student inspiration and achievement and improved attitudes amongst teachers towards their jobs. Unlike, the positive school culture, the less positive school culture sees lower degree of school effectiveness and it is not recommended to be applied in schools because it slows down the school success as it limits the student's motivation and achievements (Dogan, 2017).

The researcher believes that, school leader and the teachers in general should be able to apply different types of school culture that are concurrent with their context. Therefore, the teachers and school leaders in general should be able to know how and when to apply a certain type of school culture that will yield good results for the school development. The researcher therefore believes that, the positive school culture is the most appropriate in the implementation of inclusive education. This is because it embraces cooperation, diversity and inclusion.

5.1.3 The role of school culture in inclusive education

Through interview, most head teachers had views that school culture plays a big role on inclusive education. One of the roles of school culture is to shape every activity that takes place in the school setting. In the visited schools it

was found that school culture shapes teachers' and students' behaviours, school vision and mission, school strategic plans and policies and school management practices and promotes inclusive culture within the school. To justify this one respondent had this to say:

The school culture matters a lot as far as inclusive education is concerned. The school culture is the epitome of everything happening within the school compound. Therefore, school culture has a big role to play in the realisation of inclusive education as it shapes the behaviour of the school members (Teacher, September, 2021).

In addition to the above argument, the PDEO said:

The role of school culture in the implementation of inclusive education can never be taken for granted. This is because inclusion is all about behavioural change. There is therefore a big relationship between culture and behaviour whereby the former shapes the latter. This is to say, the type of culture within the school will definitely shape the behaviour within the school environment (PDEO, September, 2021).

The statements of the head teacher and the PDEO were complemented by answers from one QAO who commented:

The contribution of school culture in the implementation of inclusive education is very high. I see that inclusive education is not well implemented in Karagwe district because the school leaderships are not putting much efforts in the creation of inclusive cultures in their schools (QAO, September, 2021).

The school culture is very important in the construction of educational systems, policies, practices and performance. This is because the school culture acts as a walking stone for the school leaders. This is supported by Carrington, (1999) who argues that, the school culture therefore should direct the school leaders to the school image that they would like their schools to have. Moreover, Carrington (1999) adds that policy makers, educators, school leaders

ought to consider the importance of school culture in order to promote school effectiveness and inclusion

Furthermore, the government should modify educational curriculum by considering the students' historical and cultural background. The education that the schools provide to the children must reflect their culture. This will make the education they get to be relevant and applicable in their context. The education should therefore consider the students' geographical situation, the economic activities, the political and economic situation and the like. Therefore, School culture is essential for schools and educational systems to support cultural responsiveness and effectiveness in schools. A good school has its culture that necessitates the best of students and teachers in both realms doing their best work and being one's best ethical self. Performance and ethical excellence are instantiated from a positive school culture (Dogan, 2017).

Further, the role of school culture in enhancing quality education concurs with the behaviourism theory that guided this study. Behaviourism theory believes that the way people behave in the society or institution determines their success, effectiveness and inclusivity. Indeed, the relationship between behaviourism theory and school culture was evident in the schools the researcher visited.

The school culture was found to be very crucial in inclusive education. This is because the totality way of life at the school setting definitely affects every one's behaviour in the school environment. This is supported by Kampen, (2019) who argues that school culture will always shape the behaviour of every school member.

In this regard, for inclusive education to be implemented, the schools must have inclusive culture which embraces inclusion and diversity. Therefore, inclusive education is a product of an inclusive school culture. An inclusive school culture opens doors to everyone, embrace diversity and promotes cooperation, team working and love among the school members. We can therefore not expect inclusive education implemented at a school which has no inclusive

culture.

5.1.4 The role of school leaders in building the school culture

Through interview, most of head teachers, Quality assurance officers and ward Education officers agreed that the school leaders have a big role to play in promoting a positive school culture that embraces, cooperation, diversity and inclusion within a school setting.

The findings of this study concur with the study done by Zollers, Ramanathan and Yu (1999) who asserts that "A school culture that prioritizes the building and maintaining of positive relationships is fundamental to the establishment of an inclusive school". This means that the school culture should be open to welcome every one despite his/her situation, rich or poor, disabled or not disabled so as to embrace inclusion.

As stated, leadership is very important in the realization of inclusion at a school. This is because all school activities are planned, implemented and coordinated by the school leadership. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the school leadership to cultivate a culture which is inclusive so as to accommodate the needs of different people/groups within the school (Kalkan, Aksal, Ganzi, Atasory & Dagli, 2020).

Generally, school culture is defined as the representation of how things are done which is vital for the advancement of inclusive practices. School administrators and teachers play a vivacious role in augmenting inclusive practices through their performance of their duties. The school culture features such as the outcome-based curriculum and ecological assessment appear to have the impending to influence the outcome of the procedure of inclusion (Rombo, 2007).

Therefore, school culture is nurtured by the school administrators and the teachers and ultimately shapes the behaviors of individual people within the school and ultimately determines the presence of inclusion within that particular school. This eventually communicates that; the school culture contributes a lot in the realization of

inclusion in a particular school (Dogan, 2017).

The findings of this study and the literatures from other scholars discussed above, concur with Behaviorism theory that guided this study. The school culture is made up by individual behaviors within the school. The behaviors of the teachers and school administrators nurtures the school culture (Rombo, 2017). In this regard, the school culture which is made by the behaviors of individuals in the school determines the type of school, if it embraces inclusion or not. Therefore, the school behaviours (Behaviourism) determine the school culture which in turn determines the type of school (Inclusive or Non-Inclusive). In this regard, for the school to have inclusive culture, there should be comprehensive leadership, extensive vision of school community and shared language and values. In fact, cultivating an inclusive culture within a school community can significantly contribute to the accomplishment of an inclusion within the school (Zoller, Ramanathan & Yu, 1999).

VI. CONCLUSION

The study findings reveal that school culture plays a major role in the implementation of inclusive education. This is because, the school culture shapes the behaviors, relationships, time table and activities within the school setting. The school culture is therefore a walking stick in which the school operates. Heads of schools have a big role to play in the creation of school culture. Therefore, heads of schools are the main players in the realization of inclusive education in their respective schools. This is because, the culture they create in their schools determines the nature of inclusiveness that prevails in the schools.

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