TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE INCLUSION OF CHILDREN IN STREET SITUATIONS IN MAINSTREAM EDUCATION IN KAMPALA DISTRICT, CENTRAL UGANDA

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Abstract

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number four target five seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination in education for marginalized groups including children in vulnerable situations like those in street situations. Inclusion of vulnerable children into mainstream education has not been sufficiently studied. This study assessed teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children in street situations in mainstream education. Adopting convergent-parallel mixed method research design. A total of 264 teachers were randomly selected from 40 public primary schools in Kampala district. Additionally, a purposive sampling method was used to select nine children in street situations who had dropped out of school, and five representatives from governmental and non-governmental organizations. The purpose of these selections was to gather insights into teachers' attitudes towards the inclusion of children in street situations into mainstream education. Qualitative data was generated using semi-structured interviews and analyzed thematically. Quantitative data was generated using questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. This research observed ethical principles and trustworthiness. Quantitative findings revealed that teachers' attitude (F $(3, 259) = 0.807$, $P > 0.05$) was insignificant hence was not a strong predictor for educational inclusion of children in street situations. Qualitative findings revealed that teachers' attitudes do not anticipate educational access to children in street situations. Also, there were mixed reactions regarding teachers' attitude as either negative or positive towards engaging learners from the street in the mainstream classroom. The study concluded that teachers' attitude poorly predicted inclusion of children in street situations in mainstream education and a total of 99.1% of the variation in inclusive education can be explained by other variables or factors other than teachers' attitude. The study recommended that the Government could provide education accessible to children in streets situations. Additionally, there is need for doing further research to assess the significance of teachers' attitudes towards the engagement of learners from the streets in schools and classrooms after they have been initiated into inclusive education. The findings are significant to the Government and teachers in planning and policy formulation for inclusivity of children in street situations in accessing equitable quality education for all provided in the mainstream education.

Key words: *Children in street situations, Attitude, Inclusion, Mainstream Education*

1. Introduction

Uganda's status on implementation of SDG 4 lacks information on children in street situations (ISER, 2019). Among the objectives of Uganda's (ESSP) 2017-2020 aims at achieving equitable access to relevant and quality education and training at all levels as well as the Education Act, (2008) that aims at achieving Universal Primary Education. However, the Retrak enumeration report (2017) revealed how majority of street children in Uganda are excluded from education regardless of their basic right to education as stated by several international declarations and other guidelines for inclusive education (UNCRC, 1989; UNICEF, 2005; UNICEF; 2012; UNESCO, 1990; UNESCO, 2005; UNESCO, 2009; UNESCO, 2012; UNESCO, 2015). Omede. A.A, (2016) mentions some of the inclusive education issues such as teachers and professional resources and how it poses a challenge of lack of qualified personnel. Teachers, teaching materials and learning environments often ignore the benefits of embracing diversity (Global Education Monitoring Report Team, 2020).

Literature also posits that stakeholders' opinions look at education as a way of curbing the phenomenon of street children which supports the fact that education is the surest way to develop self and realize potentials for the good of individuals and society (Fatimayin, 2016). The same study concluded that causes of this phenomenon can be managed and that these children need to be educated/trained to be useful citizens. When they are rehabilitated, education or trained for avocation, stakeholders, i.e. the society and the children themselves will benefit. According to Uthayakumar and Vlamings (2019), it is time to take action so that street children are no longer marginalized and may gain from the efforts being made to provide inclusive and high-quality education for everyone.

Teachers' explanation of how they understand learners who are children in street situations may underlie how the teachers respond to the education needs of such learners who attend school based on how the concept of Children in street situations is socially constructed that influences attitudes about those to whom the term is applied and paves way for various agencies to undertake directions towards addressing the phenomenon (Dladla *et al.,* 2018). Attitudes of those charged with the implementation should not be taken for granted while achieving goals of implementation because positive attitudes enable the implementers to carry out objectives whereas negative attitudes can become a challenge to the implementation of inclusive education of children with disabilities and other special needs (Okech *et al.,* 2021).

Bandyopadhyay *et al.,* (2021), highlight implementation challenges of inclusive education as improper planning and government initiatives, inadequate funding in terms of equipment, infrastructure, materials, and technology to manage and achieve a desired inclusive classroom, lack of a clear vision and understanding of inclusive practices, inadequate investment in training and curriculum of teacher's training program. This in turn reduces the supply of skilled teaching personnel, failure to embrace the philosophical views towards inclusive practices, understanding amongst stakeholders, and attitudes of educators and authorities towards inclusion (Khochen, 2011)

A study done in South Africa by Dladla *et al.,* (2018) shows concern in what is happening in school regarding how learners who are children in street situations are perceived by their teachers since research has consistently shown that some of the children in street situations inhabit the street and also attend school although they lack adult supervision and other resources which contribute to their drop out from school. The advantages of school attendance by children in street situations include; being optimistic about the future, the school providing a safe and secure environment, change in social behavior, and developing resilience and basic skills among others (Malindi *et al.,* 2012) as cited by (Dladla, 2018).

2. Summary of Literature

An inclusive approach in the classroom depends entirely on the attitude of the teachers (Kumar *et al.,* 2020). It is believed that a positive attitude of teachers toward inclusion tends to prepare them to adjust their teaching approaches to accommodate different individual learning needs whereas teachers' negative attitude toward inclusive education affects the effectiveness of the teaching and learning process negatively and also obstructs the successful implementation of teaching and learning process (Gal, Scherer & Engel-Yeger, 2010; Cassady, 2011; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012). Teacher attitude has not shifted to the desired point regardless of their key role in education, teachers ought to have information, and understanding of changes in education and acquire aptitudes to move forward their competency as a teacher who handles all sorts of learners which can be accomplished by enhancing their knowledge of inclusion to effect a positive attitude which would, in turn, predict their thinking, feeling and behavior towards inclusion (Supriyanto, 2019).

Kuparadze (2010) reports that teachers often make adjustments to teaching while working with children in street situations on children's wishes, opinions, advice, intensity, and duration of group reading classes to intensify children's self-confidence which helps teachers to motivate the children, create a learner-friendly environment in which the children express unreservedly which was noteworthy to reveal their character and identity, set their objectives and acquire skills for free and basic examination. Kisirkoi *et al.,* (2016) report that teachers and centre managers proposed that if children in street situations were equipped with education, then, there is a possibility that they would be productive for themselves and society like any other child with access to quality education.

A study done by Mwoma and Pillay (2016) reported a large percentage of teachers and learners who were the respondents confirmed the fact that teachers motivated learners who were orphans and vulnerable that had challenges with their performance to strive harder and achieve their academic goals. This support is accelerated towards ensuring equal access to basic education for all children besides their status. However, this posed challenges in supporting Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) such as insufficient time for special attention to OVC, the inability of OVC to read and write, lack of concentration in school work among OVC, low self-esteem among OVC, absenteeism, and lateness to school, and lack of cooperation between teachers and parents/guardians on their children's matters (Mwoma, 2016).

According to Kuparadze (2010), the attitudes of teachers toward integrating children in street situations into schools is difficult and hard to achieve the ultimate level of development of children in terms of their preparedness for school to manage intensive learning and schools prepare for such challenges by employing appropriate methods of teaching and improving teaching staff loyalty. Teachers' input adds to the knowledge of why the children in street situations phenomenon persist despite the free education for all and teachers' attitudes would lead to refusing or accepting children in street situations into their schools and classrooms (Mtaita, 2015).

Considering a literature review done by Supriyanto (2019) on teacher's attitudes toward inclusive education, suggests education stakeholders in every country engage in improving the attitude of teachers towards inclusive education by providing the right policies, facilitating adequate training for both pre and in-service teachers to enhance the understanding and application of inclusive education principles and skills in a classroom setting, providing necessary resources which include inclusive teaching methods, appropriate accommodation, and individual planning. This review also concluded that the policies should consider the types and severity of the disability, especially where teachers are not in a position to include learners with severe intellectual disabilities and emotional and behavioral disorders in general classrooms (Supriyanto, 2019). The question of whether attitudes influence inclusive education of children in street situations is still left un answered since many scholars have drawn conclusions on inclusion of children with disabilities in education (Woden et al., 2018) and the context of street children is largely un tapped yet the uniqueness in the nature and behavior of street children is different from children with disabilities

3. Methods

3.1 Procedures and Participants

This research adopted a mixed-methods approach employing a convergent design following the guidelines of Creswell et al, (2018). Quantitative data was collected using a questionnaire and analyzed using measures like frequencies, percentages, means, factor analysis, and regression tests. Simultaneously, qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured interviews and subjected to thematic analysis. The themes enabled the researcher to test whether there is a relationship between teachers' attitude and inclusion of children in street situations in education in order to support the quantitative findings.

The study was approved by the Uganda Christian University Research Ethics Committee and the Director of Education and Social Services of Kampala Capital City Authority. Introductory letters were then presented to head teachers, who introduced me to teachers. I shared information about the study, including its purpose, my expectations, and ethical considerations such as privacy, confidentiality, the right to withdraw, and informed consent. The participants were asked to complete the questionnaire after signing the consent forms. They were given one week to complete the questionnaire, after which the researcher collected it for further research purposes.

A total of 260 teachers were sampled using proportional simple random sampling (Teddlie, C. & Fen, Y. (2007) from the target population of 800 teachers participated in the study. The above sample was drawn from 40 public primary schools in Kampala District, Central Uganda across 5 divisions of Rubaga, Kawempe, Makindye, Kampala central and Nakawa. The selection of participants was drawn with the help of Kothari's formula based on conventional standards of a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error (see below) and thereafter the researcher employed a skilful technique of distributing extra questionnaires to eliminate the chances of poor response rate so out of 320 questionnaires that were distributed, 264 were returned with full responses hence a response rate of 82.5 % which was considered sufficient to continue the study (Kothari, 2004).

$$n = \frac{z^2.p.q.N}{e^2(N-1) + z^2.p.q}$$

Where

(N) = Target population

(z) = Z-score at confidence level 95% is 1.96

(e) = Margin of error 5 %

(p) = Population portion assumed to be 50% (0.5)

(q) = 1 – p is 0.5

Table 1: Sample selection

Description	Total Number	Selection procedure
Teachers	264	Proportional simple random sampling
Total	264	

4. Analysis of results and discussion

Twenty-four (24) items measuring teacher's self-efficacy for inclusive practices were tested using a five-point Likert scale ranging from; Nothing (1), Very little (2), Some (3), Quite a bit (4) and a great deal (5).

Table 2: Descriptive analysis

Variable	Items/mean score range	Item most varied/SD range	Items above Grand mean	Conclusion
Independent Variable (Teachers' attitude)	**24 (3.62-4.36)**	**2 (1.002-1.036)**	**12 (4.04-4.36)**	**positive**
Dependent variable (Inclusive Education)	**12 (3.10-3.78)**	**3 (1.325-1.337)**	**6 (3.52-3.78)**	**Some engagement**

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics of 24 survey items on a self-efficacy scale that measures teachers' attitudes towards including children in street situations in mainstream education. The mean scores ranged from 3.62 for "how much can you assist families in helping their children do well in school" to 4.36 for "how much can you do to make learning stimulating and enjoyable." Thirteen (13) items out of twenty-four (24) were below the grand mean of 4.041 implying positive teachers' attitudes towards influence the inclusion of children from the street in mainstream education. The low self-efficacy among teachers also implied a negative teacher's attitude towards the inclusion of children from the street. These items had an overall standard deviation is 0.899 which is a relatively low standard deviation indicating that the variability in the spread of scores was low. The dependent variable inclusive education was measured on a five-point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), and Strongly Disagree (1), respondents were asked to indicate the rate of agreement or disagreement with including children from the street in mainstream classes using twelve (12) items. The results indicated that the mean range of 3.10-3.78 and the overall grand mean was 3.426. The standard deviation ranged between the range of 1.183-1.337 and the overall standard deviation of 1.265. The relatively low standard deviation implied a low variability in the spread of scores. Six items were below the mean with a grand mean of 3.237 implies no influence of teachers' attitudes on the inclusion of children in street situations in mainstream education whereas six other items were slightly above the mean with a grand mean of 3.615 implying a slight influence of teachers' attitude towards inclusion of children in street situations in mainstream education.

4.1 Factor analysis

The Promax approach was used for orthogonal factor rotation to ensure both convergent and discriminant validity, as suggested by Hair et al. (2010). A threshold factor loading of >0.4 was deemed as significant for the purpose of interpretation, with a sample size of 263 participants.

Table 4.3: Factor Analysis

Variable	No.of Items	Factors Extracted	No of Items	Loading range
Teacher's self-efficacy for inclusive practices (Teachers' attitude)	24	Student Behavior	8	0.403-0.592
		Teacher Competence	5	0.424-0.710
		Teacher Motivation	7	0.412-0.615
Inclusive Education	12	Inclusive Education	12	0.538-0.620

The dimension (teachers' attitude) was originally measured on a teachers' self-efficacy scale for inclusive practices with twenty-four (24) items that were subjected to extraction and three predictor factors were extracted from the original teachers' self-efficacy for inclusive practices. The labels were instinctively developed by the researcher based on their suitability for demonstrating the underlying dimensions of a specific factor. The final results were the label that represented each of the derived factors as precisely as possible. One factor was labeled student behavior which included eight items with factor loading scores ranging between 0.403 and 0.592. The second factor was labeled teacher competence which included five items with factor loading scores ranging between 0.424 and 0.710, the third factor was labeled teacher motivation which included seven items with factor loading scores ranging between 0.412 and 0.615. In order to establish a factor, a minimum of four items should load onto that factor. A factor loading threshold of 0.40 or greater was used for interpretation, as recommended by Hair et al. (2018). Some items within the extracted predictor factors were dropped and deleted because they did not meet a threshold of 0.40 and therefore were not considered for further analysis.

The items exhibited internal consistency and were distinct from those associated with other constructs, thus indicating the presence of convergent validity. The factor analysis results showed that items loaded highly onto individual factors, indicating discriminant validity. Cross-loading items were removed, and an oblique rotation was performed using the PROMAX method to improve the organization of variables into distinct groups and to establish a more refined structure for subsequent analysis. The dependent variable had twelve (12) items from the original survey instrument. These items were subjected to extraction and all the twelve items loaded onto a single factor, resulting in a unidimensional factor with factor loadings ranging from 0.538 to 0.620.

4.2 Test of Normality

Data was subjected to tests of the normal distribution to ensure normality of data as a requirement for further statistical analyses. A multivariate perspective was adopted to check for

multivariate outliers within the data set using squared Mahalanobis Distance. Mahalanobis Distance is quite effective in detecting outliers for multivariate data especially if a linear relationship is assumed between variables. Consequently, Mahalanobis Distance values lower than 0.001 are indicative of multivariate outliers. Removing these outliers contributes to enhancing normality, linearity, and homoscedasticity. However, to ensure the accuracy of the data, a significant value was computed using Cumulative Distribution Function (CDF) chi-square and Mahalanobis Distance, and values below 0.001 were also considered outliers and eliminated from the data set. This enabled the researcher to use a Q-Q plot of Mahalanobis Distance against Chi-square to ensure the values within the data set were following a normal distribution.

4.3 Regression Analysis Results for Teachers' Attitudes and Inclusive Education

$H0_1$: There is no statistically significant relationship between teachers' attitudes and the inclusion of children in street situations in mainstream education.

Multiple linear regression was performed at a 95% confidence level. To determine how well teachers' attitudes can predict inclusive education and a regression equation was established as follows: $Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \beta_3 X_3 + \varepsilon$.

Where Y is inclusive education, X_1 is student behavior, X_2 is teacher competence, X_3 is teacher motivation β is the coefficient of correlation, and ε is the residual. Below are the regression results;

Table 4.4: Model summary

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.096[a]	.009	-.002	.78047	1.654

a. Predictors: (Constant), Teacher motivation, Student Behavior, Teacher competence

b. Dependent Variable: Inclusive education

Source: Field data (2022)

Based on the results in table 4.14, The "R" column represents the value of R, which is the coefficient of correlation that can be considered to be one measure of the quality of the prediction of inclusive education. A value of 0.096 indicates a poor level of prediction. This implies that, as much as teachers' attitude is a poor predictor of inclusive education, there exists a very weak positive correlation between teachers' attitude and inclusive education.

The "R^2" represents a value that indicates the coefficient of determination (Rights, J. D., & Sterba, S. K. 2019) which is the proportion of variance in inclusive education that can be

explained by attitude. In this case, 0.9 % of the total variation in inclusive education can be explained by teachers' attitudes. This implies that a total of 99.1% of the variation in inclusive education can be explained by other variables that are outside the model.

An F-test was done to test the hypothesis that there is no statistically significant relationship between teachers' attitudes and inclusive education and the results are shown in the table below;

Table 4.5: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.475	3	.492	.807	.491[b]
	Residual	157.764	259	.609		
	Total	159.239	262			

a. Dependent Variable: Inclusive education
b. Predictors: (Constant), Teacher Motivation, Student Behavior, Teacher Competence
Source: Field data (2022)

Table 4.5 indicates the significance test of the model in predicting inclusive education. The regression model was not significant at an F (3, 259) = 0.807, P > 0.05. The hypothesis tested was that teachers' attitude was not statistically fit to predict inclusive education. Based on the findings, the F-test is not statistically significant since the probability value (0.491) is greater than the significance value (0.05) which implies that teachers' attitude does not predict inclusive education as according to Itoaka. K, (2012) hence we fail to reject the null hypothesis and conclude that teachers' attitude has no statistical influence on inclusive education.

According to the findings in this study, there is no evidence of a statistically significant relationship between each of the independent variables and the inclusion of children in street situations in education. This finding was consistent with the qualitative results, which affirmed that teachers assume responsibility for a learner during the engagement phase of classroom inclusion. As a result, their attitude is expected to carry less significance during the initial stages of inclusive education initiation and their attitudes are negative (Mwarari, 2019).

Whereas previous research has proven that teachers' attitude is imperative for the successful implementation of inclusive education (Sharma, et al, 2008, Hattie, 2009; Gal, Scherer & Engel-Yeger, 2010; Cassady, 2011; Taylor & Ringlaben, 2012; Kumar et al., 2020; Mwarari, 2020), it is evident that inclusive education involves distinct stages which call for the involvement of

different actors at each stage. In Uganda, the majority of children in street situations have limited or no access to education, therefore, it is necessary to put more emphasis on initiating the inclusion of children in street situations in education and prepare teachers to engage them in the classroom.

As much as there exists a very weak positive correlation between teachers' attitude and inclusion of children in street situations in main stream education, the descriptive analysis results of teachers' attitude revealed that teachers' attitude is positive on average (Singh & Kumar, 2020; Radford,J& Khochen, M, 2010) although some teachers are negative towards engaging learners who are from the street. The quantitative findings were consistent with the qualitative findings, which showed that teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education are affected by factors such as their understanding of inclusive education, the availability of resources to implement inclusive practices, and their training and preparation for inclusive education. These results disagree with the findings of Roman and Hossu (2018) who says level of training and teaching experience have no impact on teachers' attitude whereas other studies such as those by Supriyanto (2020) and Bandyopadhyay and Dhara (2021) are in agreement with the findings of this study.

 Genovesi et al. (2021) also reviewed a number of studies and found that teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusive education are hindered by a lack of understanding of disability, inadequate time, skills, and resources. On the other hand, negative teacher attitudes, poor teacher-student relationships, and low student self-confidence are caused by student aggression and disruptiveness. This kind of inappropriate and uncontrollable behavior leads to teachers' negative attitudes toward inclusive education (Chhabra *et al;* 2010). This corroborates with qualitative findings which revealed that the aggressiveness of children in street situations leads to teachers' negative attitude towards them. Sometimes teachers often lack skills and motivation to teach such students effectively (World Bank, 2018).

The qualitative findings revealed that teachers are not prepared enough to handle children from the street and engage them in the main classroom. This is in line with Okyere *et al.,* 2019a). These teachers receive insufficient training to implement inclusive practices and lack understanding of inclusive education principles which includes adapting to the learning needs of individuals besides they are not enough (Mutungi, 2014; Mwangi, 2014; Ogadho, 2015; Okyere *et al;* 2019c). This insufficient training may be due to lack of enough resources (Alhassan, 2017) attributed to inadequate financing due to budget decline for Ministry of Education and Sports leading to reduction in allocation and stagnation of some programs (BMAU, 2017) which require teachers to be trained properly on how to handle the limited available resources in teaching and learning and should also be monitored. Training programs for inclusive education among in-service teachers are rarely provided (Wodon *et al;* 2018; World Bank, 2018) while pre-service teachers are not taught inclusive education skills. According to Global Citizen (2019) on barriers to education that children living in poverty face mentions inadequate teacher training needed to help the children learn effectively. Many teachers are working untrained besides there are not enough teachers to achieve universal

primary education yet teacher effectiveness has been considered as a strong predictor for student learning therefore there is a need for training and on-job mentoring to support teachers and schools (Bannink, F. I, 2016).

General education teachers require significant training (both pre and in-service) in inclusive teaching practices to prepare them for the environment of inclusive education and also to update them on new trends and developments in the area (Alhassan, 2017; Khan, 2017; Mangope, 2017; Mangope, 2018; Khabar; 2020), Teachers are also required of honest, sound ethics and are friendly to motivate the learner. Teachers are also charged with the responsibility of engaging parents in the process of educating their children to facilitate efficient and effective learning. Also, teachers are expected to collaborate with other stakeholders in planning, implementing, and evaluating (Fitria, 2012; Alhassan, 2017). These emphasize the need to offer training to teachers on effective collaborative strategies especially on how to effectively engage parents, community leaders, government and non-governmental organizations. In addition, teachers should also be sensitized to the special needs of street children to reduce discrimination and should be retrained on active learning strategies and on creating a learning friendly environment for all children, so that no child will ever be forced to go to the streets by harsh teachers and an unfriendly school environment (Kisirkoi, 2016; Bannink, F. I, 2016)

4. **Conclusion.**

The study found that teachers' attitudes do not strongly predict inclusive education, especially for children in street situations. This is because teachers' attitudes are determined by their understanding of inclusive education skills and the roles they play in the inclusive education system. However, teachers' attitudes do have a significant impact on the engagement of learners at the classroom level. In order to improve inclusive education for children in street situations, teacher training is necessary. This training should help teachers to appreciate diversity, implement inclusive teaching practices, and deconstruct negative attitudes about the inclusion of these children in education.

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