

**INFLUNCE OF INCLUSIVENESS ON THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN PUBLIC
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI AND KAJIADO COUNTIES, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of inclusiveness on the quality of education. This research adopted mixed methods design specifically the explanatory sequential design. The study was carried out in Nairobi and Kajiado Counties. The sample size comprised of 25 head teachers, 150 teachers, 300 pupils and 4 QASO's. Purposive sampling was used to select pupils and QASO's while stratified random sampling was used to select teachers. Data was collected by use of questionnaires, interview guide and observation checklist. Qualitative data was analysed thematically while Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics namely, means and percentages. For inferential statistics, simple linear regression was used. The major finding of this study was that implementation of inclusion of learners with special needs in regular schools positively influenced the quality of education. The study recommends that the government provides regular schools with funds to support inclusiveness.

Key words: Inclusion, Child-friendly schools, Special needs, Implementation

1.0 Introduction

The child- friendly schools initiative is a Unicef programme which aims at ensuring that all learners, regardless of their disabilities and differences have access to a basic education of good quality. The CFS framework is informed by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). The application of CRC to education provides a rights-based approach, which stresses that all children are rights-holders and therefore have a right to education of good quality.

1.1 Background to the study

One of the dimensions of the Child- Friendly schools framework is inclusiveness, which promotes inclusion of learners with special needs in regular schools. Inclusiveness requires schools to be welcoming to all learners and also actively seek out all eligible children for enrolment, including those with special needs (UNICEF, 2009). Once enrolled, children are assisted to stay in school and attend regularly and excel in their studies. Child-friendly schools cater for the individual needs of learners.

According to United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] (2012) there are over seventy million children who do not attend school worldwide. Such children miss out on the private and public benefits of education. The need for inclusive education is therefore pressing.

Child friendly schools strive to provide quality education by utilizing processes such as flexible teaching methods, together with social support, which eventually make the learning experiences of all children rewarding (Clair, 2011). When schools implement the dimension of inclusiveness, they are expected to provide quality education by ensuring the physical environment is disability friendly

to enable learners with special needs to independently and safely navigate the school compound. The learners are provided with specialized teaching and learning resources and are taught by specialized teachers (UNICEF, 2009). In some cases, the physical design and infrastructure of the schools may hinder inclusion of learners with special needs to access quality education in the regular schools and this is the concern of this study.

The global evaluation of CFS reported that in Thailand, 92% of the schools had written policies on enrolling all children in schools regardless of their special needs (AIR, 2009). In Philippines, teachers reported that children with exceptionalities were given the chance to enrol in the schools (AIR, 2009). However, the same evaluation report indicates that most schools do not have the capacity to cater for the needs of learners with special needs (AIR, 2009). In Nigeria and South Africa, 83% and 92% of the schools respectively, had embraced inclusiveness and welcomed all learners regardless of their disabilities. Concerns of the learning environment not being disability friendly were raised. Mariam (2010) also noted that CFS had put in place policies which did not exclude learners with special needs but noted that teachers were yet to be trained to handle learners with special needs. The Child- friendly schools manual insists that learners with special needs should learn in the regular schools and advocate for non- discrimination. A study by Manduku, Gichaba and Cheruse (2012) on the assessment of effects of child-friendly schools on learners' performance in selected public primary schools in Londiani established that 83.3% of the teachers strongly agreed that their schools did not discriminate on the basis of difference. However the same study indicated that the environment was not disability friendly in terms of infrastructure and teacher readiness (Manduku et al, 2012). The Ministry of Education in Kenya envisions inclusiveness as a vehicle towards the achievement of the EFA goals (MOE, 2009).

The government is emphasizing on inclusive education through regular schools for children with SNE instead of the common practice of enrolling such learners in special schools or in special units within the regular schools. Due to increased demand for special needs education and in compliance with the international development, the government has adopted the inclusion of learners with special needs in regular schools (MOE, 2009). There major concern is whether the regular schools have the capacity to accommodate learners with special needs and provide them with quality education in terms of the environment, content and teachers.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Ideally, Child friendly schools are expected to enrol all children regardless of their disabilities and provide quality education. Concerns on whether regular schools are well equipped to cater for learners with special needs and provide quality education have been raised by many scholars. In Kenya, the CFS initiative was rolled out nationally in 2008. Ten years down the line, it is important to find out whether the regular schools are actually implementing the dimension of inclusiveness and how it is influencing the quality of education.

2.0 Literature review

2.1 Implementation of inclusiveness

Inclusiveness is one of the Child-Friendly Schools Initiative's dimensions which emphasize the right of every child regardless of their disabilities to quality basic education. According to the child friendly schools manual, the indicators of inclusiveness include enrolment of learners with special needs in regular schools. Schools are required to have policies on inclusiveness and non-discrimination. Inclusiveness requires that children are not discriminated in any way on the basis of difference.

Child friendly schools are child-seeking. The aspect of child-seeking makes child-friendly schools different from non-CFS schools who passively wait for students to visit schools and seek admission (UNICEF, 2009). Once schools enroll learners with special needs, they are expected to provide the necessary support services. In Nicaragua, 100% of the head teachers reported that teachers conducted house to house visits to enrol children with disabilities who were not yet enrolled. In Guyana, 19% of the school heads indicated that the staff went out to the community to seek out for all eligible children who were not yet in schools. In Thailand, the global evaluation report indicated that 68% of the school heads said that teachers went out into the community to encourage enrollment of children with disabilities who were not yet enrolled in schools (AIR, 2009). In South Africa, only 16% of the head teachers agreed that teachers actively participated in seeking out for children with special needs for enrolment in schools. In Kenya, Koskey (2017) did a study on the influence of schools' inclusiveness on the learning environment in public primary schools and reported that majority of the headteachers 59(79.8%) disagreed that teachers reached out to the community to encourage enrolment of children with disabilities. The study by Koskey (2017) used concurrent mixed methods. The current study used explanatory sequential mixed method.

2.2 Quality of education offered in regular schools in relation to inclusiveness

Many students with special needs have been excluded from schools worldwide. Most schools especially those with few resources are not well equipped to cater for learners with special needs. The indicators of quality education according to Unicef, include environment, content and teachers. The school environment includes the infrastructure and physical facilities, which are supposed to be disability friendly. The content taught should be according to the level of the learners and the instruction should be individualized. The schools should have teachers who are trained to handle learners with special needs (UNICEF, 2009; AIR, 2009). In the schools evaluated in the global evaluation, many of the school buildings and grounds were not designed to accommodate students with special needs. Only 9% of schools in Thailand and 13% in Nicaragua had disability friendly toilets and sinks. In South Africa, 59% of the schools had latrines and sinks that were not accessible to student who were physically challenged. Most of the schools in South Africa had no ramps or any enabling easy access for children with were physically challenged, which was common in most of the schools evaluated in Nicaragua, 50% of the schools were fully fitted with ramps (AIR, 2009). Eleweke and Rodda (2002) observe that most schools in the low income areas of Uganda are not equipped to respond to special needs. They further note that specialized resources

are a major obstacle to the provision of inclusive education of high quality. According to Anderson and Mundy (2014) there are many barriers such as lack of wide doors and passageways, stairs, no ramps and recreational areas in most schools in the developing countries. In Kenya, the learning environment, as well as the location of schools; buildings; amenities; and furniture pose accessibility challenge to learners with special needs and disabilities (Chabbott, 2008). The ministry of education advises that the school compounds where children with special needs operate should enable them to access education with no hindrance (MOE, 2009; ROK, 2005).

Studies by Kadima (2006) and Kithuka (2008) found out that physical facilities were inadequate; classrooms were overcrowded while toilets were narrow and had no seats for comfortable use by special needs learners. The two studies focused on the factors influencing the implementation of inclusive education but did not establish the extent to which schools were implementing the dimension of inclusive education, which the current study sought to do. Teachers regard themselves as poorly prepared for inclusive education because they lack the necessary training (Malone, 2001). Professional development of teachers is crucial in order to achieve inclusive education. Avramidis (2000); Opdal and Wormnaes (2001), have indicated the benefit of professional development in the creation of positive attitudes towards inclusion. This consists of both the initial and continuous training of teachers, the practice of in-service seminars and distance learning. These approaches ensure a wide distribution of teachers with skills in special needs education in all schools. For proper implementation of inclusive education in the classrooms, teachers should provide an effective and stimulating learning environment for all children. In addition, teaching experience and training significantly influence teachers' attitudes (Meng, 2008).

Although it is essential for inclusive classes to have skilled and trained teachers, there is a shortage of inclusive teacher training programmes. This is a problem that needs to be solved if the quota of trained teachers is to be achieved (Hossain, 2004; Kibria, 2005). In addition, support personnel such as audiologists, psychologists, speech and language pathologists, communication support workers and interpreters are very few in most of the developing countries (Eleweke & Rodda, 2002). According to AIR (2009), in an evaluation of CFS, in Guyana and South Africa, learners with disabilities were frustrated due to lack of specialized teachers. The physical infrastructure of the school was also not friendly for the physically challenged learners. In the six schools evaluated, very few had successfully included learners with special needs and were providing quality education.

In Kenya, training of teachers on inclusion is integrated in pre-service and in-service courses (Ministry of Education, 2003). However, not many teachers in public primary schools have skills to handle learners with special needs because of having been trained in primary teacher colleges where pedagogy of inclusion is inadequate (MOE, 2013). This means that majority of teachers in public primary schools lack the necessary knowledge and skills for inclusion. McKenzie (2010) established in Victoria, Australia, that teachers are likely to resist inclusive practices on account of lack of

adequate training on special needs education. There is need to incorporate special education curriculum in teacher training colleges if the knowledge is to reach all primary school teachers.

Kadima (2006) established that special needs children were not adequately catered for in public primary schools due to lack of specialized skills and knowledge on inclusion. This has seen many special needs children unable to access schooling in normal learning settings.

Mwangi (2014) in his study on the influence of child-friendly schools on pupils participation in Mathare informal settlement also revealed that majority of the teachers were not adequately trained to handle learners with special needs. This study failed to establish the status of implementation of child-friendly dimensions. It also focused on the influence of CFSI on pupil's participation. The current study established the implementation of CFSI dimensions and their influence on the quality of education. The Ministry of Education in Kenya envisions inclusion of learners with special needs in regular schools as a vehicle towards the achievement of the EFA goals (MOE, 2009). It is therefore important to establish the status of implementation of inclusiveness and its influence in the provision of quality education.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

To achieve the study objective, the researcher used mixed methods design specifically the explanatory sequential design. This design has two phases. The first phase involved collection of quantitative data first and the second phase involved collecting qualitative data to explain or elaborate on the quantitative results. The rationale for this approach is that it helps to provide a general picture of the research problem through the results of quantitative data. The qualitative data is used to refine, extend or explain the general picture (Creswell & Plano, 2011).

3.2 Target Population

The study was carried out in 110 public primary schools situated in the informal settlements of Nairobi and 90 public primary schools in Kajiado that were implementing the Child-friendly schools initiative. Therefore the target population for the study comprised of 200 public primary schools. The study targeted head teachers, teachers and pupils from the 200 schools and County Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (CQASO's) from the two counties.

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Sizes

From a total of 200 schools, 25 schools which were 12.5% of the total number of schools participated in the study. A sample size of 10% is the minimum acceptable sample size for small samples (Gay, 1992). From Nairobi, 15 (7.5%) schools drawn from the informal settlements were used for the study while in Kajiado 10 (5%) schools participated in the study. All the 25 head teachers of the selected schools were included in the study. Head teachers were included in the study because they are in charge of the schools.

A total of 150 teachers were selected to participate in the study. Stratified random sampling based on gender was used to select the specific study respondents. Stratified random sampling allows all the sub-groups to be represented in the study (Amin, 2005). A total of 300 pupils were selected to participate in the study. Pupils from standard seven and eight were sampled purposively. The two classes were chosen because they would comprehend the questions better so as to give objective and accurate responses. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to use the cases that have the required information (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). Stratified random sampling based on gender was used to select pupils from class 7 and 8 who participated in the study. A total of 4 CQASO'S in the two counties participated in the study. CQASO's were included in the study because they are in-charge of maintaining quality education standards in the schools. Purposive sampling was used to select the CQASO'S. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to use the cases that have the required information (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003).

3.6 Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using questionnaires that had open-ended and closed questions. An interview guide was also used.

3.7 Data Analysis

The objectives generated both qualitative and quantitative data. Qualitative data was organized into themes. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics namely; frequencies, percentages and means (Creswell & Plano, 2011) and the inferential statistic used was simple linear regression. The findings of the study were presented in tables, figures and graphs. Qualitative data was presented in textual form.

4.0 Research findings and Discussion

The study sought to establish from the head teachers, the implementation of inclusion of learners with special needs in regular public primary schools and the results are shown in Table 4.9. The responses from head teachers were obtained from questions using 5-point Likert scale (1 - 5). The scale was; 5 for Strongly Agree, 4 for Agree, 3 for Neutral, 2 for Disagree, and 1 for strongly disagree. Means of various indicators were established. The scale used to interpret the implementation according to means was 1-1.80 (very low), 1.81-2.60 (low), 2.61-3.40(moderate), 3.41-4.20 (high) and 4.21-5 (very high) according to (Boone and Bonne, 2012).

Table 1: Implementation of inclusion of learners with special needs in regular schools

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	Standard Deviation
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
The school admits learners with special needs	6	24	13	52	2	8	3	12	1	4	3.8	1.08
Teachers seek out for children with special needs who are not yet enrolled in schools	0	0	0	0	4	16	9	36	12	48	1.68	0.75
All stakeholders are sensitized on inclusion of learners with special needs	10	40	10	40	1	4	4	16	0	0	4.04	1.06
The school has a policy on inclusion of learners with special needs	8	32	9	36	2	8	5	20	1	4	3.72	1.24
Learners with special needs are not discriminated against in the school	17	68	8	32	0	0	0	0	0	0	4.68	0.48

n=25

It is explicit from Table 1 that learners with special needs were not discriminated against in the schools as shown by 17(68%) and 8(32%) of the head teachers, who strongly agreed and agreed respectively that learners with special needs were not discriminated against in the schools. In terms of means, the indicator that stated that learners with special needs were not discriminated against had the highest mean (4.48) which indicated very high implementation.

The schools admitted learners with special needs as reported by 6 (24%) and 13(52%) of the head teachers who strongly agreed and agreed respectively that schools admitted learners with special needs. In majority of the schools, teachers did not seek out for children with special needs who were not yet enrolled in schools, as reported by 12(48%) and 9(36%) of the head teachers who strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that teachers seek out for children with special needs who were not yet enrolled in schools. In terms of means, the indicator that stated that teachers seek out for children with special needs who were not yet enrolled in schools had the lowest mean (1.68) which indicated very low implementation.

According to an interview with one QASO officer, this observation could be attributed to the fact that many teachers had heavy workload and therefore did not get time to go door to door in the community.

Another QASO officer said,

Proactively seeking out pupils from their homes is a good idea but I don't think we are ready for it now.... Teachers are overworked and not motivated to go that extra mile you also know. The insecurity in this country especially here in the slums complicates the issue further not forgetting that not all homes will be welcoming.

The findings on seeking out for children with special needs who were not enrolled in schools concur with Koskey (2017) whose study on the influence of schools' inclusiveness in the learning environment in Public Primary Schools in Nandi North Sub-county, found that majority of the head teachers disagreed that teachers reached out to the community to encourage enrolment of children with disabilities.

The study also sought to establish from the head teachers, the quality of education provided in regular schools in reference to inclusion of learners with special needs. A 5-point Likert scale was used as follows; 5 for Strongly Agree, 4 for Agree, 3 for Neutral, 2 for Disagree, and 1 for Strongly Disagree. The items generated continuous data. The results are reported in Table 1. Means of various indicators were established. The scale used to interpret the implementation according to means was 1-1.80 (very low), 1.81-2.60 (low), 2.61-3.40 (moderate), 3.41-4.20 (high) and 4.21-5 (very high) according to (Boone and Bonne, 2012).

Table 2 Quality of Education in terms of disability friendly learning environment in Public Primary Schools in Nairobi and Kajiado counties n=25

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Mean	Std Deviation
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
The school has adapted toilets for learners with special needs	2	8	2	8	8	32	8	32	5	20	2.52	1.16
The school has enough specialized teaching resources for learners with special needs	1	4	7	28	8	32	7	28	2	8	2.92	1.04
Learners with special needs are encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities	10	40	9	36	4	16	2	8	0	0	4.08	0.95
The school has ramps for use by physically challenged persons	2	8	3	12	5	20	8	32	7	28	2.40	1.26
The school provides counselling services to pupils with special needs and their parents	9	36	9	36	6	24	1	4	0	0	4.04	0.89
Teachers and pupils are friendly to learners with special needs	8	32	9	36	5	20	3	12	0	0	3.88	1.01
The school has enough adapted desks and chairs for learners with special needs	2	8	2	8	5	20	12	48	4	16	2.44	1.12
The school has enough special needs teachers to handle learners with special needs	3	12	9	36	2	8	5	20	6	24	3.40	0.96

Table 2 shows that learners with special needs were encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities, as indicated by 10(40%) and 9(36%) of the head teachers who strongly agreed and agreed respectively that learners with special needs were encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities. The schools provided counselling services to pupils with special needs and their parents as shown by 9(36%) head teachers who strongly agreed and another 9(36%) who agreed that their schools provided counselling services to pupils with special needs and their parents.

On the aspect of adapted desks and chairs, 4(16%) and 12(48%) of the head teachers strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that the schools had enough adapted desks and chairs for use by learners with special needs. The findings on lack of adapted toilets concur with Manduku et al (2016) whose study on effects of child-friendly schools on learner's performance in selected public primary schools in Londiani sub-county reported that infrastructural facilities were not friendly to learners who were physically impaired. On whether schools had ramps for use by the physically challenged, 7(28%) and 8(32%) of the head teachers strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively that the schools had provided ramps for use by the physically challenged persons. The findings on ramps for the physically challenged concur with Kanamba (2014) whose study on school factors influencing the provision of child friendly school environments reported that 68 of the schools surveyed lacked disability friendly infrastructure such as ramps.

To test the null hypothesis: Implementation of inclusion of learners with special needs has no statistically significant influence on the quality of education, simple linear regression was used.

Firstly, the relationship between the independent and dependent variables was established. The scale used was; 0.10 to 0.29-weak correlation, 0.30 to 0.49-medium correlation, 0.50 to 1.0-strong correlation according to (Cohen, 1988). The percentage of variance in the dependent variable as a result of the independent variable was also established. The results are recorded in Table 3

Table 3 Model summary for Implementation of Inclusion of learners with special needs in regular primary schools and its influence on the quality of education

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.756 ^a	.571	.552	3.91147

a. Predictors: (Constant), implementation of inclusion of learners with special needs

The results on Table 3 indicate that R was 0.756 which means that there was a strong and positive relationship between the dependent and independent variables. The R Square was 0.571, indicating that 57.1% of the variance in the dependent (quality of education) was as a result of the independent variable (implementation of inclusion of learners with special needs).

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was done to establish the significance level. A significance level that is equal or less than 0.001, ($p < 0.001$) indicates that there is a statistical significance. The results are recorded in Table 4

Table 4 ANOVA^a on the inclusion of learners with special needs and quality of education

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	468.350	1	468.350	30.612	.000 ^b
	Residual	351.890	23	15.300		
	Total	820.240	24			

a. Dependent Variable: quality of education

b. Predictors: (Constant), implementation of inclusion of learners with special needs

The results on Table 4 show that the significance level was 0.000, ($p < 0.001$) implying that implementation of inclusion of learners with special needs in regular schools had a statistically significant influence on the quality of education. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

Table 5 Coefficients^a for the implementation of inclusion of learners with special needs and quality education

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Coefficients		
1	(Constant)	77.445	6.739		11.492	.000
	implementation of inclusion of learners with special needs	1.192	.215	.756	5.533	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Quality of education

Table 5 shows that the predicted quality of education is equal to $77.44 + 1.192$. This means that the quality of education increased by 1.192 for each unit of increase of the implementation of inclusion of learners with special needs.

The findings on the model summary show that there is a strong and positive relationship between the implementation of inclusion of learners with special needs and quality of education. The findings on inclusion of learners with special needs and its influence on quality education concur

with Koskey (2017) who established that there was a positive relationship between inclusiveness and the school learning environment.

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Conclusion

The study established that learners with special needs were not discriminated against in all the regular schools. Majority of the head teachers indicated that all stakeholders in the schools were sensitized on inclusion of learners with special needs. The study however found that teachers did not go to seek for the children with special needs who were of school going age and were not yet enrolled in the schools. Majority of the head teachers reported that they used sensitization through public barazas as a strategy to seek out for learners with special needs to enrol in the regular schools. The study found that learners with special needs were encouraged to participate in co-curricular activities. The schools also provided counselling services to the learners with special needs and their parents. The study established that most schools did not have adopted desks and chairs for learners with special needs. Most schools had no ramps for use by the physically challenged. The study established that implementation of inclusion of learners with special needs positively influenced the quality of education.

5.2 Recommendations

This study recommends that there should be a department in each school charged with the task of proactively seeking out for learners with special needs in the community who are not enrolled in any schools.

The study also recommends that the government should allocate resources to regular school to enable them provide disability friendly learning environments and purchase of specialised teaching and learning resources.

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