PRACTICES OF POLICY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS, KENYA

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ABSTRACT
Educational frameworks and Kenyan constitutions mandate schools to adopt, design and implement programmes that enhance inclusive education. Despite the inclusive education policy, disability remains a major course of exclusion in public secondary schools in Kenya. The study evaluated the effectiveness of selected key guiding principles towards the implementation of inclusive education in Kenyan schools. The study employed mixed method research design which employs both qualitative and quantitative methods. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 201 respondents from 18 extra-county and county public secondary schools that had enrolled learners with physical disabilities. Quantitative data was collected using questionnaires while qualitative data was collected through interviews and focus group discussions. A t-test was used to test the significance and determine whether to reject or accept the study hypotheses. An analysis of the findings indicated significant relationships in school guiding principles and the implementation of inclusive education. The Linear Model showed a moderate positive correlation between school guiding principles and inclusion. The model further showed that school guiding principles accounted for some variation towards the implementation of inclusive education. The study recommended that school administrators should sensitize their key stakeholders on inclusive education policy.

Keywords: Inclusion, Guiding principles, Practices, Policy
1.0 Introduction

Building inclusive schools remains one of the biggest challenges facing education system worldwide, (Mitchell, 2010). Inclusion remains complex and a contentious issue as the development of inclusive practices in schools is not well understood. Inclusive education affects not just the conceptualization and the nature of education provided for students with special learning needs, but it calls into questioning the general aims of education, the purpose of schools, the nature of the curriculum, approaches to evaluation, and schools’ accommodation to diversity, (Anastasiou & Kauffman, 2012; Winzer & Mazurek, 2017). The way in which regular schools respond to students with disability can be a measure of quality education for all students (UNESCO, 2015). Weber and Ruch (2012) argue that a good school is good for all students and work for the achievement of all learners. However, there are practices related to school systems and individuals that work against the development of good inclusive practices. Effective school guiding principles and practices can create an inclusive environment that can give every learner fair access and participation to education. This calls for a need to modify the school practices and the environment to accommodate learner diversity (Rickert, 2010; Agarwal & Chakravarti, 2014).

The concept of inclusive education dates back to the 20th century, with many countries striving to adopt and develop education for learners with special education needs. The movement towards inclusive education for learners with varied needs began in the 1960s (Forlin, 2005). The United Nations has made influential declarations regarding inclusive education, such as the Convention against Discrimination in Education (1960) that mandated persons with disability to access education without discrimination. The declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons (1975), guaranteed the respect and dignity of the persons living with disability and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), endorsed the right of every child. Similarly, the World Conference of 1990 (Jomtien Declaration) in Thailand, set goals of Education for All (EFA), which was reaffirmed in the Dakar Framework of 2000 in Senegal. Subsequently, the Salamanca Statement and Framework of Action on Special Needs Education in Spain (UNESCO, 1994), adopted the principle of inclusion and provided a major impetus for inclusive education. The Salamanca Statement is arguably the most significant international document in the field of special education (Budlender, 2015). The major recommendation of Salamanca Statement was that every child with special learning needs has a right to access education in the neighbourhood school. The governments were required to give priority on their policy, legal and budgetary provision to restructure the education system to cater for learner diversity (UNESCO, 2015)

1.2 Inclusive Education in Kenya

Kenya is among the African countries that has made remarkable advances in pursuit for inclusive education (Nungu, 2014). The government has embraced and supported the practices towards inclusive education by domesticating various international agreements in its laws (Njoka et al., 2012). Policies adopted in education frameworks for promoting inclusive education mandate that all learning institutions provide a safe and accessible environment, flexible curriculum, provide adequate and skilled teachers as well as enroll more students with various disabilities. Specifically, all schools are mandated to adopt, design and implement programmes that enhance inclusive education, (Republic of Kenya, 2005; 2008; 2009; 2012). The Constitution of Kenya, (2010) recognizes education as a human right and acknowledges that every person has the right to education. This is reaffirmed in the Basic education Act (2013) that no learner should be denied admission and no child should be discriminated when seeking admission for whatever reason.

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With the implementation of these inclusive education policies, a major responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MoEST) is to achieve universal access to education and training for all learners including those from disadvantaged and vulnerable communities (Ojiambo, 2009). This was reaffirmed by the Basic Education Curriculum Framework Kenya, (2017), that mandates that school core guiding principles ought to enable the learner have equal access to education, actualize a variety of opportunities and identify the students’ learning needs, talents and potentialities. However, there is scarce literature on the effectiveness of context-based school guiding principles towards the implementation of inclusive education. School guiding principles such as; school core values, mission statement, admission policy, orientation programs and pro-social behaviour programs are fundamental for any transformation of systems in a learning institution. Such guiding principles inform schools’ decisions and lay the basis of school strategic plans. Therefore, an evaluation of the effects of school guiding principles would not only prepare a level ground to accommodate learner diversity but also to guide them in their goal to attainment of Kenya Vision 2030 by providing a globally competitive quality education and training to all her citizens thus contributing to the progress of learner achievement (Government of Kenya, 2007)

1.3 Objectives of the Study
Determine the influence of selected guiding principles on the implementation of inclusive education in public secondary school in Kenya

1.4 Null Hypothesis
There is no significant relationship between school guiding principles and the implementation of inclusive education

2.0 Methodology of the Research
The study employed mixed methods research designs, in order to analyze the effects of school guiding principles towards the implementation of inclusive education, (Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2007; McMillan & Schumacher 2006). Quantitative data enabled the study to apply statistical tests and derive important facts on effects of school guiding principles in order to make informed conclusion. Qualitative data enabled the study to obtain data from the real experience of what learners with disabilities go through during the schooling process

2.1 Sampling Procedures and Sample Size
The population of the study included 42 county and extra-county schools. Purposive sampling was used to select 18 schools that had enrolled learners with physical disabilities. A sample of 201 respondents consisting of subject teachers, principals, guidance and counselling teachers, non-disabled learners and learners with physical challenges. This study was interested with learner with physical challenges rather than intellectual disabilities.

2.2 Validity and Reliability
The instruments were reviewed by the researcher’s supervisors at the university, who validated the instruments (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). A Cronbach’s coefficient alpha technique was used to determine internal consistency of the items. In the study, the items were considered reliable if they produced a reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above (Cohen & Swerdlik, 2005). The reliability coefficient of the influence of school guiding principles from the questionnaire was 0.706.
2.3 Data Collection
The researcher obtained written permission from the National Council of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) Nairobi through University of Embu to conduct the research and Ethics approval from Pwani University, an accredited organization. Clearance approval to conduct research was issued by County Education Officers in Tharaka-Nithi County. The questionnaires were delivered, filled and collected from 100 teachers; interviews were conducted from 11 physically challenged learners and 90 non-disabled students participated in focus group discussions.

2.4 Data Analysis
Both qualitative and quantitative data analyses were used.

2.4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis
Quantitative analyses were based of numerical measurements of a specific aspect of the population. Descriptive statistics tables were used to analyze quantitative data by use of frequencies and percentages. Hypothesis testing was carried out via the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and t-tests. The t-test was used to test the significance of the quantitative data to determine whether to reject or to accept the postulated null hypotheses. The data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.

2.4.2 Qualitative Data Analysis
All the interviews were transcribed and organized into meaningful categories, grouped them into codes and organized data into themes and patterns, which were presented in a narrative form (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008).

3.1 Results
The researcher visited 18 county and extra-county schools and gave out 120 questionnaires to the teachers, of which 100 (83.3%) questionnaires were fully filled and returned. The return rate of 75% and above was considered sufficient to provide information about a given population (Fowler, 2007). Majority of the participants were non-disabled students interviewed through focus group discussions.

Table 1: The Effects of School Guiding Principles on the Implementation of Inclusive Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Adequately effective (%)</th>
<th>Moderately effective (%)</th>
<th>Not effective at all (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School Core Values</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission Statement</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Admission policy and practice</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orientation programmes</td>
<td>08</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pro-social behaviour programs</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-curricular activities</td>
<td>03</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings from Table 1 revealed the effects of selected school guiding principles in addressing the needs of students with disabilities as reported by teachers. It is evidently clear that majority of teachers felt that school core values; mission statements, admission policies and pro-social behaviour programs were moderately effective. However, orientation programmes and co-curricular activities were not effective at all in addressing issues on learners with special education needs. Interviewed learners affirmed that they were never involved in such co-curricular activities and their
issues were never mentioned during the orientation programs. The entire group of interviewed learners felt that the schools were segregating them during co-curricular activities. The focus group discussion echoed the same that learners with disabilities were left out to be spectators during games, sports and physical education activities

From the observed p-value of Shapiro-Wilk, p = 0.027, it was less than 5% significance level; hence that data was not normally distributed. However, at 1% significance level, the data is normally distributed. According to Ghasemi and Zahedias (2012), a statistic approaching unity indicates sufficient normality in a data set for carrying out a linear regression assumption. In this study, the Shapiro-Wilk statistic was 0.971, which is near unity hence; it indicates that the data was sufficiently normal. The observed p-value of BP and Koenker tests are 0.315 and 0.213 respectively both of which are less than 5%, hence there is no heteroscedasticity among the independent variables. For the linearity between the independent and the dependent variable, the p-value was 0.000, less than 0.05 hence concluding that there was a significant linear relationship For the assumption of collinearity among independent variables, the VIF value was 1.317 < 5 and the Tolerance was 0.760 > 0.5 was quite high, thus, the predictors were not correlated with each other, each predictor uniquely explained the variance on inclusive education implementation. According to Ranjit (2005), a tolerance of more than 0.5 indicates lack of collinearity amongst the independent variables

Table 2: Model Summary on the Impact of School Guiding Principles on the implementation of Inclusive Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>R</th>
<th>R Square</th>
<th>Adjusted R Square</th>
<th>Std. Error of the Estimate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0.367</td>
<td>0.135</td>
<td>0.126</td>
<td>3.45276</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 shows a moderate positive correlation (36.7%) between the school guiding principles and implementation of inclusive education. The coefficient of determination (R Square) shows that 13.5 percent variations in implementation of inclusive education were due to school guiding principles.

Table 3
ANOVA for Selected School Guiding Principle on the Implementation of Inclusive Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Mean Square</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regression</td>
<td>182.128</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>182.128</td>
<td>15.277</td>
<td>0.000⁶</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>1168.312</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>11.922</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1350.440</td>
<td>99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 also shows that the p-value was 0.000, less than 0.05 hence concluding that there was a significant linear relationship between school guiding principles and the implementation of inclusive education in schools. Hence reject the null hypothesis
Table 4: Regression Coefficients for School Guiding Principle and Implementation of Inclusive Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model</th>
<th>Unstandardized Coefficients</th>
<th>Standardized Coefficients</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>95.0% Confidence Interval for B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B</td>
<td>Std. Error</td>
<td>Beta</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower Bound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Constant)</td>
<td>12.898</td>
<td>1.935</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.666</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Guiding Principles</td>
<td>0.660</td>
<td>0.169</td>
<td>0.367</td>
<td>3.909</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows the results from regression analysis where the school guiding principles was the independent variable while the implementation of inclusive education was the dependent variable. The t-statistic and corresponding p-values formed the basis of concluding on the study’s hypothesis. The unstandardized beta coefficient shows the increment of implementation of inclusive education with respect to the marginal increment on the school guiding principles. The regression equation of the linear regression analysis is:

\[ Y = 12.898 + 0.660X_1 \]

\[ t = \text{statistic} \quad 6.666 \quad 0.909 \]

\[ p = \text{value} \quad 0.000 \quad 0.000 \]

Where

Y – Dependent variable (Implementation of Inclusive Education)

X₁ – School-Guiding Principle

e – Regression error term

3.3 Discussions

The study showed the opinion of sampled teachers concerning the impact of school core values; mission statements, admission policy, pro-social programs, orientation programs and co-curricular activities in addressing the needs of learners with special needs.

Most teachers (62%) felt that school core values that are moderately effective to address the needs of learners with disabilities. This implies that there is some laxity by school administrators and teachers to make core values a driving force behind every component in the school. In contrast, Waldron, McLeskey, & Redd, (2011), have shown that an obligation to instilling core values makes the schools inclusive. These shared values are significant to teachers, who feel inadequately, prepared to meet the needs of students with disabilities and may not support inclusive programs. For core values to be yield fruits, principals require the commitment from both teachers and students, powered by a trusting supportive relationship with all the key stakeholders, (McLeskey & Waldron, 2015)

Similarly, the study findings revealed that majority of schools have mission statements that are moderately effective in addressing the needs of learners with disabilities. This implies the most school mission statements have little impact on how the school operates regarding inclusive education. It also implies that the clear values presented in the mission statements are incoherent with what actually happens in the school. In other words the statement provides little guidance in strategizing and planning for learners with diverse needs. In contrast, Abawi & Oliver, (2013), asserts that for the school to be truly inclusive; it should have a clear mission statement that guides educators to remove barriers that hinder learning opportunities. Further, Frattura & Capper, (2007),
assert that when the school goals are developed from unclear mission statements, the goals and action plans become ambiguous and the mission may not address the needs of all students in the school. Therefore, schools are called revise their mission statements frequently to safeguard the needs of all the students, to embrace the variety of educational priorities and to direct school’s daily actions.

Teachers in majority of schools felt that school admission policies and practices were moderately effective in enabling learner with disabilities get admitted in schools. This implies that some learners are discriminated by the admission policies and practices in schools. According to the Basic Education Act No. 14 of 2013, no school should discriminate any learner, seeking admission on any ground and no child should be denied admission in a public school. This means that the schools should maintain zero rejection admission policy and practice.

The study findings further revealed that some schools had orientation programs that were moderately effective while other teachers felt that orientation some schools that were not effective at all in guiding learners with disabilities on school support systems. This implies that during the orientation process issues addressing learners with disabilities were not handled at all or were partially handled. In contrast, Cook et al, (2006), assert that orientation process is vital because it provides information and guidance in a calm atmosphere, allows parents and students to ask questions in a safe environment. Orientation programs encourage social interaction and enable learners with disabilities to be aware of the support systems provided by the school.

Teachers felt that pro-social behavioural programs that support learners with special education needs were well facilitated in many schools. Several studies assert that pro-social initiatives are important in a school environment as learners are taught to offer unpaid positive services that are beneficial to others, powered by kindness, moral principles and a sense of individual responsibility. Peer supports and associates allow individuals with disabilities to improve social skills, participate in peer activities, nurture positive relationships, and learn social norms in the school (Carter & Hughes, 2005; Lai et al, 2015; McCurdy & Cole, 2014).

Majority of teachers (78%) felt that co-curricular programs were not very effective in involving the learners with disabilities in physical activities. This was affirmed by the learners living with disabilities during the interviewing process. All those learners noted that during games, sports and even physical education classes, they were either left in classes or become spectators or cheerers as the other students enjoyed playing with their colleagues. One student, who was short-limbed dwarf, described how he used to play football in primary but in high school nobody listened to him. This implies that schools do not give learners with physical challenges a chance or plan for them to participate in physical activities. In contrast, a few researchers indicate that co-curricular activities are more significant for learners with disabilities comparative to those without disabilities because such students are more inactive and are prone to obesity, (Jooyeon et al., 2017; Jeffrey, 2013). Students who participated in focus group discussion suggested that schools should put up facilities that promote co-curricular activities for learners with physically challenges.
4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions
The purpose of this research was to determine the impact of school guiding principles in addressing the needs of learners with special education needs as mandated by the education frameworks. While teachers felt strongly about the significant of core guiding principles in making the school inclusive, they realized that commitment of key stakeholders to implementing the guiding principles is fundamental. This required the schools not only re-stating and modifying guiding principles but also to seek support from key stakeholders in order to address the needs of all learners. By focusing on school guiding principles, the administrators have a role to sensitize key stakeholders on inclusive education policy and to focus on support systems that promote learner participation. Effective guiding principles will enable each learner with disabilities to exploit every opportunity and to excel in their areas of interest and ability.

Recommendations

1) Implementation of inclusive education policy in schools benefits not only learners with disabilities but also learners without disabilities. Therefore the school managers need to sensitize key stakeholders on inclusive education policy. The managers should create avenues such as in class meetings, school assemblies, teacher and parents meetings to reinforce the need to practice school guiding principles.

2) Training teachers on special education needs is important to meet the needs of learners with disabilities. Hence, the government should employ adequate numbers of professionally well trained teachers on special needs education. Teacher training colleges should provide special education skills to the students teachers.

3) Key stakeholders play a significant role in determining the success of a learner’s education. They have a responsibility to provide an enabling environment that is conducive to learning to take place. Hence, the rate of their involvement in planning for students with learning needs should be strengthened. This will enhance support from key stakeholders in the implementation of inclusive education policy.

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