

Inclusive Education Practices and Student Achievement in Kenya

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Abstract

This desktop analysis discusses the relationship between inclusive education practice and the achievement of Students in Kenya's basic education. Inclusive education is built on the belief that all Students, regardless of ability, socioeconomic status, gender, or physical condition, are equally entitled to good quality education in ordinary schools. It calls for deliberate adaptation of pedagogy, curriculum, learning materials, and school organization to cater to varied learning needs of all Students. The review identifies four constructs as essential: differentiated learning, access to learning materials, teacher preparedness, and school-level inclusivity policies. The review invokes recent research, national-level policy documents, and international frameworks, and synthesizes empirical and conceptual knowledge that is relevant in the Kenyan situation. Inclusive education, where it is implemented well, has been shown to raise academic attainment, social inclusion, and students' well-being. Teacher teamwork and instruction differentiation were particularly noted to be effective. Nevertheless, degrading infrastructure, inadequate teachers' professional development, and irregular application of inclusive policies still remain obstacles to

progress. In addition, stigma and attitudinal barriers remain an obstacle for students with disabilities and marginalized group students. Consistent with these findings, the research recommends heightened investment in teacher capacity development in line with inclusive pedagogy, access to assistive technologies and infrastructure development, and mainstreaming in the adoption of inclusive policy through school audits at regular intervals and community sensitization. Scaling these up will help Kenya achieve its ambition of realizing equity, inclusion, and improved Student outcomes, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4. Overall, inclusive practices hold much potential to transform the learning experience and outcome of all Kenyan Students.

Introduction

Establishing learning environments that are inclusive and supportive is increasingly being known as a key driver of improved student performance. In Kenya, efforts towards inclusive education have been facilitated through national education reforms, including the introduction of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC). The reforms aim to offer equal education opportunities to all Students by conforming to their diverse needs and learning contexts. However, the implementation of inclusive practices continues to be unequal, and some

students continue to face barriers that hinder their performance. This desktop review considers the impact of some inclusive education practices on student performance in Kenyan schools. It focuses on four main areas: the role of a safe and supportive school environment, how students are classified and addressed with different learning needs, the level of teacher preparation for inclusive instruction, and establishing positive teacher–student relationships. The chapter presents the study background, identifies the research issue, and establishes the objectives and questions that framed the study.

1.1 Background of the study

Education is a powerful force for personal growth and societal improvement. Education enables Students to acquire knowledge and skills essential to their growth, develop character, and produce work of enduring value. Student success, in this regard, is one of the key indicators of the success of education, reflecting growth in cognitive, emotional, and social development (Peterson, 2025). The World Bank (2022) quotes that, at a worldwide level, learning results have persistently increased since 2002, with achievements in literacy and school attendance. Moreover, each additional year of schooling is associated with a 10% increase in hourly earnings, showing the growing value of education for national

economies and individuals. Education also relates to broader social benefits, including long-term growth, institutional stability, and social cohesion.

Despite these global gains, deep inequalities in education persist, primarily in low- and middle-income countries. More than 250 million children remain out of school, and seven in ten are unable to read a simple sentence by the time they turn ten years old. The situation is particularly bad in sub-Saharan Africa, where Kenya is located, where nine in ten children lack basic reading skills. This is a serious challenge, especially given the fact that the region's youth population is set to grow by 40% by 2050 (World Bank, 2022). The impact of environmental disruptions and insecurity-related school shutdowns between 2022 and 2024, affecting over 400 million Students, further demonstrates the imperative to ensure a safe and stable learning environment. In Kenya, the phased disbursement of education funds has given rise to concerns over delays and adequacy in the midst of rising inflation. Such budgetary constraints have eroded the ability of schools to offer conducive conditions that facilitate learning, safety, and equity.

In addition to infrastructure and funding, there must also be attention to how education systems respond to the diverse needs of students. Although Kenya has

embraced inclusive education as a flagship reform, in conformity with the Basic Education Act (2015), Sustainable Development Goal 4, and the Continental Education Strategy for Africa, its operationalization is not consistent. Student achievement continues to be shaped by access to individualized support, teacher preparedness, and the quality of interpersonal relationships in school. For example, even as high as teacher trainees in Kenya report satisfaction with teaching practice experiences (Mwache, Odigi, & Khatelehhhh, 2015), issues of assessment transparency and inclusive pedagogy continue to be of concern. Literature also shows that teacher–student relationships have a powerful influence on students' motivation and academic participation (Ngetich, 2020). However, this element is typically overlooked in classroom practices, particularly in low-income schools. Hence, improving student outcomes in Kenya requires ongoing focus on safe learning environments, adequate identification of Student needs, teacher professional growth, and strengthening positive school relationships.

1.1.2: Inclusive education practices in relation to student achievement

Inclusive education, within the Kenyan context, is more than just an ideal. It refers to creating school environments where every student, regardless of background,

disability, gender, or ability, is given a fair opportunity to succeed. Rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach, inclusive teaching involves identifying what each student needs and adjusting classroom strategies accordingly (Diegan, 2022). Teachers are often the first to notice when a student is struggling to keep up or participate fully. Their efforts to adapt lessons, modify assessments, or simply offer encouragement play a central role in fostering participation and academic growth.

Research by Mtimba (2021) highlights how critical a positive and safe learning environment is for academic success. Students are more likely to be attentive and motivated when they feel accepted, respected, and secure. This goes beyond emotional support; the physical setup of the school matters too. Clean, maintained classrooms, libraries, computer labs, and proper ventilation have all been linked to better student outcomes. Something as basic as classroom temperature can affect how well students learn. In some rural areas of Kenya, where classrooms may lack windows or fans, both teachers and students have voiced frustrations over how uncomfortable conditions disrupt focus and lesson delivery.

Orado and Kadenyi (2022) emphasize that inclusive strategies, such as differentiated instruction and collaborative learning, within the Kenyan context, are more than

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Responding to individual learning needs has also been shown to make a meaningful difference. According to Wadana, Kakim, and Haitu (2019), when teachers tailor instruction to students' interests, levels, and preferred learning styles, they notice better engagement and overall academic progress. This idea is closely tied to the aims of Kenya's Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC), which encourages a shift from rigid content delivery to practical, Student-centered teaching. Orado and Kadenyi (2022) emphasize that inclusive strategies, such as differentiated instruction and collaborative learning, are essential for helping all students build 21st-century competencies. However, the path hasn't been smooth. Although policy frameworks support inclusivity, issues like insufficient training, overcrowded classrooms, and underfunded infrastructure continue to challenge effective implementation (Ministry of Education, 2021).

Moreover, building rapport between students and teachers is often overlooked but is deeply important. Webb and Barrett (2021) argue that a sense of connection, where Students feel that their teacher knows and values them, can boost confidence and learning outcomes. Frisby (2018) adds that this can be as simple as learning students' names or using storytelling to make lessons more relatable. In Kenya, many teachers do this naturally, especially in smaller schools where staff

are closely involved with Students and their families.

While teaching is undeniably demanding, especially in inclusive settings, this study reinforces the view that planning, flexibility, and awareness of student diversity are not optional; they are indispensable to academic success.

1.2 Statement of problem

Inclusive education is now perceived as a strategic strategy for ensuring equitable access and improved student achievement. Kenya has adopted a number of policy guidelines, including the Basic Education Act (2015) and Special Needs Education Policy (Ministry of Education, 2018), to promote the inclusion of all students regardless of capability, context, or background. They align with the broader global and regional agendas, for example, Sustainable Development Goal 4 and the African Union's Continental Education Strategy for Africa, that give priority to removing barriers to participation and achievement in education systems.

Even as these policy reforms are being implemented, school-level implementation gaps remain. Learning spaces are mostly still unsafe or inaccessible, limiting the student potential, especially for children with special needs. There is also poor assessment of students' individualized needs, low levels of teacher preparedness for inclusive classroom

instructions, and inadequate student-teacher relationships. These are the reasons for low enrollment, high dropouts, and imbalance in students' performance from different backgrounds.

It is rare empirical work in the Kenyan context connecting inclusive strategies to quantifiable student achievements. More is required to be known about safe school environments, effective student needs assessment, adequate teacher preparation, and positive teacher interaction in enhancing academic achievement. This study bridges this knowledge gap by a review of current literature and education policy to discern how these four indicators are associated with Student outcomes in inclusive classrooms across Kenya.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1.3.1: General objectives

To investigate the influence of Inclusive Education Practices and Student Achievement in Kenya

1.3.2: Specific objectives

This study is guided by the following specific objectives:

1. To examine the influence of a safe environment on student achievement in Kenya
2. To analyze the influence of students' needs determination on student achievement in Kenya

3. To evaluate the influence of teachers' preparedness on student achievement in Kenya
4. To examine the influence of student rapport creation on student achievement in Kenya

1.4: Research hypothesis

1. A safe environment does not influence student achievement in Kenya
2. Learner's needs determination does not influence student achievement in Kenya
3. Teacher preparedness does not influence student achievement in Kenya
4. Learner Rapport creation does not influence student achievement in Kenya

2.0 Literature review

This chapter summarizes the existing literature on inclusive education through a presentation of key theoretical frameworks. It also give a summary of research that explored inclusive practices' impact on pupil attainment, with a specific focus on global perspectives and the Kenyan context. Inclusive education tends to be expressed in a social justice perspective, underscoring the fact that inclusion is not only physical integration but equal opportunity for all students to learn (UNESCO, 2020).

Studies indicate several themes that are critical to the establishment of effective inclusive education systems. Differentiated instruction has been identified as one of the major responses to students' diverse needs, and fair access to learning materials assures all students equal opportunities to participate fully in education (Florian & Black, Hawkins, 2011). Continuous teacher professional development is also crucial because it equips educators with skills and knowledge to implement inclusive approaches effectively (Forlin, 2013). Secondly, designing and implementing inclusive policies provides a structural foundation on which such practice can be sustained in different schooling contexts (Ministry of Education, 2018).

All these contribute towards the creation of inclusive environments that enable adequate rich learning and equitable results among all Students regardless of what their abilities or backgrounds are.

2.1 Theoretical framework

This desktop review draws on two interconnected theoretical frameworks, Informed Pedagogy and Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory. Together, these theoretical frameworks offer a comprehensive description for making sense of inclusive education practice and its influence on student performance, especially in learning environments that

are affected by emotional, social, or structural difficulties.

2.2.1: Trauma-Informed Pedagogy

Trauma-Informed Pedagogy provides a critical framework for recognizing how inclusive school practices can positively affect student achievement, particularly in environments like Kenya, where many students have experienced emotional, social, and economic trauma. Developed by Brunzell, Waters, and Stokes (2021), the model promotes secure, predictable, and responsive classroom environments that set the stage for the emotional safety and academic engagement of all students. This model becomes particularly relevant in the study of four key inclusive education dimensions as they relate to student success in Kenya: safe learning environments, students' needs identification, teacher preparedness, and student-teacher relationship.

At the top of the list is creating a safe environment, at the core of which is trauma-informed teaching. For Brunzell et al. (2021), a psychologically safe learning environment, where children feel physically and emotionally safe, allows for increased focus, engagement, and resilience. In the Kenyan setting, where children may be arriving from conflict, impacted, low-income, or precarious family backgrounds, safety is essential for learning. Trauma-informed strategies such as plain routines, respectful speech,

and predictability help reduce anxiety levels and enhance learning readiness (Harrison, Burke, & Clarke, 2023).

Second, determination of each student's distinct needs is a priority. Trauma-Informed Pedagogy favors differentiated support meeting the individual background and capability and challenge of each student. In Kenyan inclusive classrooms, the practice is in harmony with competency-based and child-centered instruction favored by the Basic Education Curriculum Framework (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2018). Differentiation of instruction and response to social, emotional, and intellectual strengths and requirements of students allow teachers to better guarantee fair learning outcomes.

Third, teacher readiness is critical in the implementation of trauma-responsive practices. Teachers should be equipped with information and emotional abilities to recognize signs of trauma, react appropriately, and integrate facilitation approaches into pedagogical practice (Brunzell et al., 2021). In Kenya, professionalization of teachers in inclusive strategies, e.g., emotional scaffolding, inclusive assessment, and classroom management, is critical to ensure that teachers are able to develop to address the diverse needs of students and consequently enhance academic performance.

Finally, the construction of student rapport has a significant contribution to the construction of connected, trust-based classrooms. Positive relationships between students and teachers construct emotional safety, motivation, and belonging. Harrison et al. (2023) recognizes that such rapport has an important impact on students who have been traumatized or marginalized. In inclusive classrooms, a relational approach, where students are made to feel visible, respected, and empowered, has a direct impact on engagement and academic outcomes.

More broadly, trauma-informed pedagogy provides an integrative structure within which to examine inclusive practice in Kenya as a way of reducing barriers to learning and enhancing student success. The convergence of conditions for safety, personalized support, well-educated teachers, and supportive student-teacher relationships is an integrative model for equity and achievement.

2.2.2 Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory

The theory of Intersectionality, as extended by Collins (2021), provides a critical foundation for analyzing how overlapping social identities, such as gender, socioeconomic status, disability, ethnicity, and language, shape students' experiences within educational systems. This framework is especially relevant in inclusive education, where understanding

the layered and diverse realities of students is crucial to fostering environments that support equitable academic achievement. In the Kenyan context, where students often face multiple, compounding forms of disadvantage, intersectionality offers a way to interrogate how policies and practices can be reshaped to better serve all students.

In relation to the first objective, which focuses on the influence of safe environments on student achievement, intersectionality encourages educators and policymakers to examine how safety is experienced differently across student identities. For instance, girls with disabilities or students from minority communities may feel unsafe due to both gendered and social stigmas. Intersectional analysis ensures that interventions are not generalized but rather tailored to specific risks faced by diverse groups, enhancing their ability to engage and excel in school.

Addressing the second objective, which explores how students' needs are identified, intersectionality reveals how conventional approaches often fail to capture the full spectrum of student needs. For example, a boy from a low-income, rural background with a learning difficulty may be overlooked in standard needs assessments. Intersectionality advocates for inclusive diagnostic tools and support mechanisms that consider the multiple barriers students face, thereby

allowing for more accurate and equitable educational responses.

The third objective, evaluating the influence of teacher preparedness, benefits from intersectionality by highlighting the necessity of equipping teachers with the cultural competence, bias awareness, and inclusive strategies required to address diverse student profiles. In Kenya, where classrooms include students from varied ethnic, linguistic, and economic backgrounds, teacher training grounded in intersectional awareness is key to ensuring all students are engaged and supported in ways that reflect their lived realities.

Regarding the fourth objective, examining how student-teacher rapport influences achievement, intersectionality underscores that student-teacher relationships are shaped by power dynamics and identity. Students who feel excluded or misunderstood because of their background may struggle to build trust with educators. Teachers who recognize and affirm the multifaceted identities of their students are more likely to foster meaningful connections that lead to increased motivation, confidence, and academic performance.

This review applies Intersectionality Theory to examine how inclusive education in Kenya is shaped by the social and cultural experiences of students. It highlights that raising student

performance involves more than providing access or materials. It requires teaching approaches that understand each student's background and remove the obstacles they face so that all children have a fair chance to succeed.

2.3: Empirical Literature

2.3.1: Safe environment and academic Achievement

Successful teaching and learning require a safe and supportive school environment. School safety encompasses all those actions that students, teachers, parents, and stakeholders take to reduce or eliminate physically, emotionally, or psychologically dangerous conditions. According to the Ministry of Education (2018), these actions go beyond physical accident prevention to establishing an environment that supports emotional and psychological well-being.

Physical accidents within the school setting can result in serious injury or even loss of life, while emotional distress and psychological trauma may diminish students' self-esteem and hinder their academic performance. A safe environment nurtures students' ability to concentrate, engage, and perform effectively in school. As such, the concept of school safety includes both physical protection and the cultivation of a positive, inclusive atmosphere where students feel valued, respected, and free from harm.

In the Kenyan context, school safety promotion has been embedded in policy documents that focus on student-centered and inclusive learning environments. Creating "safe zones" within schools is not merely a matter of eliminating threats but also a matter of actively involving educators, students, and the wider community to preserve dignity, emotional health, and equity for all Students (Ministry of Education, 2018).

Kamote and Mbirithi (2024) define the classroom environment as a dynamic blend of social, emotional, and intellectual conditions shaped by the interactions between teachers and students, as well as by the classroom's physical layout and organizational structure. This environment encompasses multiple elements, ranging from physical space and social interactions to emotional support and instructional strategies, that collectively influence how students learn and grow.

Research further supports the significance of the learning environment in shaping student outcomes. For example, a meta-analysis conducted by Lei and Liu (2020), which synthesized findings from 109 studies across various Asian countries, found that reduced class sizes had a notable positive impact on academic performance. This effect was especially prominent among younger students and in subjects such as mathematics and science.

2.3.2: Students need determination and academic Achievement

Learning needs analysis is an important component in educational effectiveness improvement as it pinpoints skill gaps and allows for the establishment of necessary competencies among students as well as teachers. According to the African Curriculum Management (ACM) Report (2023), matching curriculum and learning activities to student needs guarantees relevance and maximizes meaningful educational attainment. An effective learning needs assessment can inform curriculum design with data, allowing institutions to adopt a student-focused strategy to foster learning and academic growth. Referring to some of the advantages linked to an analysis towards such an assessment, they are reported to encompass improvement areas, alignment with student goals, enhancing teaching strategies, and facilitating individualized learning plans based on individual needs (ACM Report, 2023).

2.3.3: Teacher preparedness and academic achievement

Nishan and Matzin (2020), and Miller et al. (2020) point out that the cultivation of a positive attitude towards teaching students with and without disabilities in regular classrooms is a crucial component in assuring successful inclusion. Under the human rights perspective, inclusive education is not a static model but a

dynamic process relying on the will and positive involvement of all the stakeholders concerned. In the case of Kenya, Rasugu, Otube, and Murugami (2023) noted that the majority of teachers were not professionally prepared to recognize and take care of students with special needs in mainstream settings. Mucherah et al. (2023) also noted that while a majority of educators were generally supportive of inclusion, their readiness and confidence for the implementation of inclusive strategies were low. But teachers who had received special training for teaching special needs children were far better equipped.

Halder, Dada, and Banerjee (2023) highlight the need to prepare teachers with skills to respond to the needs of diverse students in an inclusive classroom. They argue that embedding values of inclusive education into initial teacher education and ongoing professional development is essential to establishing responsive pedagogy and equity in learning opportunities. Though many teachers state a preference for embracing inclusive education, they often comment that they are not prepared since training is not readily available. Whenever teachers engage in continuous professional development and peer learning, however, they become more confident and competent in the application of inclusive practices.

2.3.4: Student rapport creation and academic achievement

Positive rapport between teachers and students is the development of positive and mutual respect relationships between the two to facilitate open communication and efficient problem-solving.

Obermeier et al. (2024) found that when students experience their teachers as being authentic and attentive, they build close emotional bonds with the learning environment. This kind of relationship is likely to find its way into higher academic motivation and engagement, ultimately affecting performance. Their findings identify that rapport is not just small talk, as it is a foundational element in positive learning experiences and results.

Developing the strong rapport between the teachers and students is a process that develops over time and is a crucial element in developing learning outcomes. As Teys (2024) describes, when the teachers show real interest in their students' lives and experiences beyond the classroom, students return the favor with more attention and commitment to the classwork. Small acts, like admitting students' out-of-school success, participating in curricular activities, or making mention of students' hobbies in class, can make students feel a sense of belonging that affects performance positively.

A positive classroom environment based on respect for each other and empathy also creates this relationship. Students are able to take intellectual risks and participate actively when they can be themselves and feel that their voices are heard. Involving students in developing classroom expectations and inclusive discussion creates a shared sense of purpose and responsibility.

Attentive listening when students are addressed, also called active listening, not only verifies their perspectives but also allows teachers to better address unique needs. Being available and present, either through open-door policies, regular check-ins, or timely communication, builds trust and encourages students to seek academic assistance when they need it.

Additionally, giving constructive, individualized, and developmentally targeted feedback enhances students' work and their academic self-efficacy. According to Teys (2024), such feedback is not merely correcting mistakes but affirming growth and motivating further growth. In sum, teacher-student rapport is not a social construct; it is an impetus to student achievement, especially in multiracial classroom settings.

3.0 Research methodology

This study used a qualitative desktop review approach, drawing from a wide

array of scholarly literature, policy documents, and empirical studies from global, continental, and Kenyan educational settings. The selection of materials was done in a way that sought to choose works from within the past five years to capture current developments and evidence-based interventions. Emphasis was placed on studies that considered the relationship between inclusive practice, such as differentiated instruction, equitable access to teaching and learning resources, professional development for teachers, and school-level inclusive policies, and their implications on student academic performance. The review tried to synthesize these findings to achieve a broader comprehension of whether inclusive practices lead to enhanced education results. Through close analysis of both thematic trends and context gaps, the study reveals best practices and persistent challenges alike, thus offering insights transferable to Kenya's education system but taking note of wider regional and global contexts.

Research gaps

There is little empirical evidence on the cost, effectiveness, and sustainability of inclusive education programs in Kenya. Among the chief challenges that have been recurring are low literacy levels, high dropout rates, poor funding, poor capitation, and poor attendance of students, among others. Even after

increased advocacy, there is limited research that has critically interrogated how these barriers undermine the long-term sustainability of inclusive practices. In addition, longitudinal studies will be necessary to track students for a longer period of time and investigate further the impact of inclusive interventions on academic achievement and persistence among students in diverse school environments.

4.0: Findings and discussions

This chapter integrates and explains the key findings derived from the reviewed literature, policy reports, and empirical studies. The key themes are brought out below:

1. Differentiated instruction and student achievement

Evidence is there to corroborate that differentiated instruction, if effectively implemented by competent teachers, has a positive effect on students' academic performance. In changing instruction to meet various learning styles and needs, teachers develop more inclusive and engaging class settings (Halder, Dada, & Banerjee, 2023; Rasugu, Otube, & Murugami, 2023).

2. Barriers to inclusive access

Despite policy measures, access to quality education for students with diverse needs continues to face serious issues. These

include a lack of proper infrastructure, poor access to assistive technology, and existing societal stigmatization of people with disability and learning difficulties. These issues keep students with diverse needs away from schools and contribute to low achievement for these affected students (MOE, 2018; Mucherah et al., 2023).

3. Teacher preparation for inclusion

A persistent issue in the literature reviewed here is the insufficient readiness of teachers to manage inclusive classrooms. Most teachers indicate limited professional training in inclusive approaches, which impinges on their confidence and effectiveness in responding to the needs of all Students. Ongoing professional development and inclusive pedagogy training are needed to enhance the condition (Kamote & Mbirithi, 2024; Miller et al., 2020).

4. Inclusive policy implementation at the school level

Although inclusive models of education do exist, application at the school level is very uneven. Schools where inclusive values are infused into everyday practice through such strategies as curriculum modification, collaborative planning, and parental participation exhibit greater student interest and achievement. Conversely, inconsistent policy application

continues to limit progress in most settings (UNESCO, 2021; Halder et al., 2023).

5.0 Conclusion and recommendations

This chapter consolidates the study findings and recommendations in terms of the four specific research objectives.

5.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to determine the ways in which inclusive education practice promotes student achievement in Kenya. The conclusions are stated in accordance with the four research objectives.

Objective 1: Influence of a safe environment on student achievement

Creating and maintaining a physically and emotionally safe learning environment was a key determinant of student performance. Efficiently run safety protocols, good relationships with teachers, and a zero-tolerance approach to prejudice were all indicators of successful school achievement in maintaining good academic performance.

Conclusion:

The hypothesis "a safe environment does not affect student achievement in Kenya" is invalidated. There is evidence to suggest that a secure and transparent school setting significantly increases student

engagement, attendance, and performance.

Objective 2: Student needs determination and student achievement

Research suggests that student learning needs identification and response, through strategies such as differentiated instruction and individualized support plans, leads to better academic outcomes. Nevertheless, a lack of formal learning needs assessment remains a problem in most schools.

Conclusion

The assumption that "student needs determination does not impact student achievement in Kenya" is rejected. A need, a responsive learning environment, lifts students' academic potential and interest.

Objective 3: Teacher competence and student performance

Teacher confidence and ability to implement inclusive practices were strongly related to improved student performance. Shortcomings in pre-service and in-service education continue to limit the effectiveness of inclusive practices.

Conclusion:

The hypothesis that "teacher preparedness has no effect on student achievement in Kenya" is falsified. Teacher competence in inclusive pedagogy bears a direct relationship with student academic growth.

Objective 4: Student rapport building impact on student success

Teachers' ability to build strong rapport with students, characterized by trust, respect, and open communication, was found to significantly influence the motivation and academic performance of students. Rapport goes beyond friendliness by building a climate of emotional safety that encourages learning.

Conclusion

The hypothesis that "student rapport creation does not influence student achievement in Kenya" is also rejected. Positive student-teacher relationships boost student motivation and success.

5.2 Recommendations

1. Enhance the creation of safe learning spaces

- Schools need to adopt inclusive safety policies that protect all Students, especially students with disabilities or members of marginalized groups.
- School boards and the government need to invest in infrastructure improvement and psycho-social support programs.

2. Institutionalize learning needs assessments

- Create systematic procedures to identify and respond to students' academic, emotional, and physical needs.
- Integrate individualized education planning as part of the Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) for all school levels.

3. Enhance teacher preparation and professional development

- Modify teacher training courses to incorporate inclusive education courses as integral components.
- Create sustained in-service on differentiated instruction, inclusive classroom management, and collaborative planning.

4. Promote student-teacher rapport as a pedagogical strategy

- Train educators in emotional intelligence, active listening, and responsive teaching to build rapport.
- Invite school leaders to embed relational pedagogy into practice and school culture.

General summary of key findings

The policy and literature review indicate that inclusive education practice has a

significant impact on Students' performance in learning environments across Kenya. Based on the findings, it can be indicated that:

Three factors are essential in the creation of a positive and healthy school climate for learning:

1. An emotionally healthy environment, reduced absenteeism, and higher student involvement. Greater academic success is attained by schools that emphasize safety.
2. Finding students' individual needs through assessment and responsive instruction increases engagement and achievement. Modifying instruction for diverse learning profiles helps to promote inclusive academic growth.
3. Teacher preparedness remains a source of concern. Though the majority of teachers report support for inclusive education, lack of adequate training hinders them from adjusting educational methods to accommodate all children properly.
4. Positive teacher–student relationships (student rapport) make major contributions to motivation and trust, which, in turn, enhance the academic confidence and achievement of students.

Despite policy advances, challenges remain, including limited resources, inadequate preparation of teachers, and inconsistent implementation of inclusive practices at the school level.

Overarching recommendations

1. Advocate safe, supportive learning environments through investing in infrastructure, offering assistive technologies, and implementing policies that safeguard all students from harm and discrimination.
2. Incorporate students' needs assessments into the daily instructional process to facilitate the development of individualized learning paths and bridge achievement gaps between students with varying abilities.
3. Develop strong teacher–student relationships by training teachers in communication, empathy, and relationship-building skills that create a sense of belonging and academic resilience.
4. Strengthen policy implementation and school accountability through frequent monitoring, adequate finances, and inclusive leadership processes centered on student performance and welfare.
5. Development on these priority areas will steer the Kenyan education sector towards more inclusive, equitable, and effective

learning spaces for every child to thrive.

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