Strategies Teachers Use in the Management of Inclusive Classrooms in Primary Schools: Lessons from Kazungula and Livingstone Districts, Zambia

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Abstract

The article examined the strategies teachers used to manage learners and learning process in selected inclusive primary classrooms in Kazungula and Livingstone Districts of Southern Province of Zambia. An interpretive research design supported by qualitative data collection approaches were used in the study. The sample comprised of 52 participants: two District Standard Education Officers, two Education Standard Officers-Special Education, two members of staff from Community Based Rehabilitation Project, eight head teachers handling inclusive classes, two members of the multidisciplinary team, four parents of learners with disabilities and thirty-two classroom teachers. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants while, data was collected through use of interview and focused group discussion guides. Thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data. This involved grouping and categorising data in order to establish the emerging themes. Use of open, axial and selective coding process helped to clearly identify emerging themes which were presented descriptively. The findings revealed that teachers were either oriented or trained in inclusive education methodologies before they were assigned to teach and manage learners and learning process in inclusive classes; a variety of strategies were being used to manage the learners and learning process. These ranged from: use of multi-tasking approaches; leaner-preparatory approaches; attention seeking mechanism, use of user-friendly curriculum; increased talking walls to tolerance and patience building approaches among learners. The study recommended the strengthening of school-based in-service training of teachers with a focus on strategies for managing learners and learning process in inclusive classrooms in the study districts.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education; strategies; management; Inclusive Classrooms; Learners*

Introduction and Context

There has been a growing agreement world over that all children have the right to be educated and where possible do practicals together, in the same learning environment (UNESCO, 1994; 1996; MoE, 1996). Arising from the resolutions of about 1500 delegates drawn from 155 countries and representatives of governmental, non-governmental and inter-governmental organisations who met at the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, the world community recognised and appreciated the need to make all children access quality education. The outcome of the conference was a Declaration of Education for All (EFA) goals. This reaffirmed the notion of education being a fundamental human right for all. The conference delegates resolved to develop a Framework of Action(FA) to provide guidance to member countries on how to attain the set goals for EFA, aimed at every child, youth and adults, regardless

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of their socio-economic, physical, sensory and intellectual status benefit from educational opportunities the world communities was able to offer to its citizens (UNESCO, 1994; 1996). The Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action, a follow up to the EFA and with a focus on special needs education reported the need for every child to have access to quality education (UNESCO, 1994). Through the EFA (1990) and Salamanca World Conference on special needs education, vulnerable children and those with special educational needs were allowed to have access to quality education and indeed through bringing schools closer to their places of residence. Central to this thought, was the advocacy for promotion of inclusive education practices in schools. As a result of this paradigm shift in the education of children, promotion of increased access to education, ensuring equity in education as well as promotion of quality education for all, were given special attention.

The merit of such systems is not only that they are capable of providing quality education to all children, but their establishment is also a crucial stepping stone towards changing discriminatory attitudes and creating welcoming communities, building inclusive societies and in the final analysis, achieving the goal of education for all. Furthermore, such systems provide an effective education to the majority of children and improve the efficiency and ultimately the cost-effectiveness of the entire education system (UNESCO, 2009). The more recent UNESCO guidelines for inclusive education reiterates the idea that inclusive education, notion can be more cost-effective than separate education as it provides educators, learners and communities a rare opportunity to subscribe to the same principles of provision (UNESCO, 2005). According to this document, inclusion is underpinned not solely by the notion of rights or by ensuring that the needs of all children are met, but by further viewing it as an effective way of achieving the millennium development goals, The document further widens the definition of inclusion to address issues of exclusion and marginalisation that seemed to have characterised the provision of education in the world (UNESCO (2000).

Although developed countries were closely moving towards the attainment of full social mode of education provision for all children, many countries are still glued to the medical model of offering education for persons with disabilities. A survey carried out by UNESCO (2000), revealed that in countries where inclusive education was prominent, there was a law reinforcing it. Countries like South Africa, Namibia and Botswana for example, have enshrined inclusive practices in all sectors of human life (UNESCO, 2011). Even when a country like Namibia learnt a lot from the Zambian education policies and regulations on special education practice, social care and maintenance of the vulnerable groups in the society, the realities on the ground were quite different. O'Keefe (1998), argues that Namibia and South Africa, have had a more practical approach to giving meaning to inclusion than was the case in many African countries.

The reports on Zambia's inclusive schooling such as Katwishi (1995), sees inclusion as simply an issue of increased access and not a process of participation and achievement for all learners. However, Ensa and Muzata (2019:14) explain that "inclusive teaching should be seen as a talent tapping hook in which a wealthy collection of abilities is brought within the same learning environment. When all such talents are brought in one place, they should be allowed to grow and overcome the weaknesses within the group or collection." The risks of marginalisation and exclusion of learners continue to be dominant in the design and implementation of inclusive school practices (Mandyata, Kasonde-Ng'andu and Chakulimba, 2015). It has been, however, pleasing to note that, Article 23, Section 6 of *Education Act* of 2011 in Zambia has made mention of the need, to the greatest extent possible to be integrative in the provision of education, the vulnerable including children with disabilities. The *Education Act* however, is short of committing Zambia to the provision of full inclusion hence, the loose use of the concept integration in it.

With respect to the strides the Zambian government has made towards promotion of inclusive education, one sees attempts to still hold on to a separate education for the less privileged members of the Zambian society like the disabled. Emphasis on segregative rather than inclusive education practices still remain the land scape of the education to the disabled (Manda, 2013) and Simui, (2019). It is against this background that we see the Alma-Ata Declaration on public health care for all of 1978 (WHO, 1978), setting the tone for the promotion of Community-Based Development Initiatives (CBDI) and Community Rehabilitation (CBR) programmes and activities. The objectives these global initiatives have put across are to supplement the quality of education available to the vulnerable children and indeed children with disabilities and their families. Further, this initiative seeks to promote inclusion and participation of differently abled individuals in community development agendas. It was primarily a service delivery initiative, making best possible use of primary health care and community resources to fight social exclusion. It was aimed at bringing primary health care and rehabilitation services closer to vulnerable people and people with disabilities, with high chances of integrating such individuals in the community and indeed political decision-making systems (Mandyata, 2015 and Simui, 2019).

In Zambia, the implementation of CBR is more recent than in other African countries such as Uganda. It is also not yet a comprehensive, country-wide development strategy adopted by the Zambian government. There have been no attempts to institutionalise CBDI nor CBR but with the support of well-wishers and non-governmental organizations, government personnel and volunteers in Zambia have been oriented on CBDI and CBR agenda. Among the first implementers of the inclusive education programme has been the Catholic Church, which focused on the rehabilitation of persons with disabilities through its different dioceses (CAMFED, 2009). Other institutions have been the Sight Savers of Zambia, the Cheshire Homes Association of Zambia, Finnish Disabled People's International

Development Association (FIDIDA, 2011) and now the Norwegian Association of the Disabled (NAD). The NAD with the support of the Nordkapp Municipality of Norway, the District Health and Education boards of Kazungula, Zimba and Livingstone in southern Zambia, resolved to pilot inclusive education in the three districts of Southern Province of Zambia in 2013. The Norwegian-funded and government-led CBR programme decided to have pilot inclusive schools in Kazungula, Zimba and Livingstone, with a view to improving access to quality education, promoting equity in education and ensuring quality of education for all children (Community Based Rehabilitation/Norwegian Association of the Disabled Report, (2017). It is against this background that this study sought to investigate strategies teachers use in the management of learners and learning process in inclusive classrooms in selected primary schools of Kazungula and Livingstone, Districts in Southern Province of Zambia.

Problem and Objectives

Studies on inclusive education in Zambia have been conducted such as: Manda (2013) and Mandyata (2011, 2015) with a focus on inclusive education policy, perceptions of teachers on inclusive education; community and teachers' partnership and, teacher education and inclusive education. Although these studies did provide a baseline for understanding inclusive education in Zambia, the question still remains as what strategies do teachers use in the management of classes in schools practicing inclusive education in Zambia? The present study was, therefore, an attempt to explore strategies teachers use in inclusive classes in selected schools of Kazungula and Livingstone Districts in southern Zambia. The following objectives guided the study:

(i) Assess the preparation of teachers for effective management of inclusive education classes in the study districts.

(ii) Establish strategies teachers use to manage assigned inclusive classes in the study districts.

(iii) Ascertain efforts inclusive schools were making to strengthen the management of inclusive classes in the study districts.

Significance

It was hoped that the findings of the study might help to enhance the understanding on how teachers were managing their inclusive classes and, in the process, establish gaps, if any, requiring attention in the implementation of the inclusive education policy. Further, it was hoped that teachers, head teachers, education managers and indeed cooperating partners in the study districts might find the information generated more beneficial and contribute towards an effective class management system surrounding inclusive school practices.

Topographical Features of Study Site

The research area was in Livingstone and Kazungula districts of Southern Province of Zambia. Southern Province is one of the ten provinces in the Republic of Zambia. As a country, Zambia is divided into ten provinces and 118 administrative Districts (Electoral Commission of Zambia, 2018). It is also a land-locked nation. It is surrounded by several countries namely; on the southern front; Zimbabwe and Botswana; on western side; Namibia; Angola and on the northern front; Tanzania; Democratic Republic of Congo and on the eastern front, Malawi and Mozambique. The country has approximately, 752, 614 square kilometres with a national population of 15.4 million of which 60.5 per cent reside in rural and 39.5 in urban areas (Zambia Health Demographic Survey, 2018). The southern province, in which Livingstone and Kazungula Districts-study area is located, has a population of 1, 865, 391 (Zambia Health Demographic Survey, 2016).

The province is administratively divided into thirteen districts. A greater part of the population in each of the study district, is made up of children below the age of eighteen years and just above 60 per cent of them accessing school due to several factors, ranging from disability to poverty. The districts themselves have had a rich and eventful history over time starting from the colonial (British) rule. The two study districts form part of the rich tourist base and indeed a commercial hub for Southern Province. It reached the height of its glory in the late 2000 with an increased tourist population on the annual basis. The place has been famous because of historical, cultural and tourist attractions. The study area's population depends mainly on informal sector with most of the people living round 112 United States dollars per day (Zambia Health Demographic Survey, 2018), a situation which has contributed to fewer children accessing quality education.

Method and Design

The study employed an interpretative research design supported by qualitative approaches in data collection. The selected research design allowed an in-depth study of strategies teachers used to manage learners as well as the learning process in the study schools. The design helped to understand, in detail, continuous professional development of regular teachers in the area of inclusive education practices. The study used qualitative methodology to generate the required data on strategies teachers used to manage the classes. Qualitative inquiry, according to Mudau (2004), gives a researcher the opportunity to enter into a person's experience, and by so doing one gets a different response regarding particular aspects of concern in a study. The ideas, motives and feelings of the respondents in the study yielded useful descriptive data to support the findings.

The study population consisted of Special Education Standards Officers, District Education Standards Officers, members of staff from CBR, parents of children with learning barriers, members of the multi-disciplinary team from the districts where the study was done, head teachers, and class teachers in all the districts of

Southern Province practicing inclusive schooling. This population was carefully and purposefully chosen in that it was directly involved in the implementation of the ongoing project on inclusive schooling that had been piloted in Southern Province of Zambia in the respective districts, Kazungula, Zimba and Livingstone. There were only three districts in which the project was being piloted from which two were chosen. Due to logistical challenges the study opted to base the study on two instead of all the pilot districts.

A sample size is a smaller group with the relevant characteristics derived from the target population as a representative of the whole population from which the data is obtained for the study (Best et al, 2005). This simply means that a sample should be large enough to be representative of the population which the researcher wishes to generalise but small enough to be selected economically. The study sample comprised of fifty-two participants consisting of: Education Standards officers (ESO's-Special education), District Education Standard Officers (DESO), parents, members from CBR project, class teachers, head teachers and members from the multi-disciplinary team in the study districts. In order to easily identify, the participants in the study, they were given codes such HT-1 head teacher 1; GT 2= grade teacher 2 ESO- Education Standards officer, CBR – Community Based Rehabilitation personnel and so on. Table 1 provides a profile of the participants drawn from the study districts.

Table 1: Profile of the Participants

S./ No.	Personal Profile of Participants							
1	Gender	Male				Female		
		20				32		
2	Location of study school in district	High density		Medium density		Low density		
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Male	Female
		4	12	7	14	6	9	9
3	Age	Below 15 years	15-24 years	25-34 years	35-44 years	45-54	45-54 years	55 & above	55 & above
			10	23	13	5	2	1	3
5	Socio-economic Status of participants	District Standard Education Officers	Education Standard Officers-	Head teachers	Multi disciplinary team	Staff from Community Based Rehabilitation (CBR) Project	Parents of learners with disabilities	Classroom teachers
		2	2	8	2	2	4	32
6	Place of living of participants	Rural – Kazungula				Urban-Livingstone		
		23(43%)				29 (57%)		

Source Researchers field work

Data analysis was done using qualitative methods. Thematic analysis was used to analyse data qualitatively. The process involved grouping and categorising the emerging themes. Using open, axial and selective coding, the data was coded to provide emerging themes which was then presented descriptively.

In an attempt to be informative on the characteristics of the participants, gender was one of the major elements considered during the study. The views held by male and female stakeholders were considered to be significant in appreciating the strategies teachers used in the management of inclusive classes assigned to them. In the study, there were twenty-nine (57%) males while twenty-three (43%) of the participants were females. The location of participants with the study districts, was yet another factor that was considered important in this study. Out of the fifty-two participants twenty-three (44.2 %) were from a rural study district while, twenty-nine (55.7 %) of the participants were drawn from an urban study district. In terms of the location within the study district, sixteen (30.8%) participants were from high density area; twenty-one (40.4%) from medium density area while the remaining fifteen (28.8%) participants came from low density areas of the study districts. The idea of selecting participants from across various locations in the study districts provided an opportunity to cross-tabulate the views of the participants as well as a balance in the information generated to support the study. With regard to the

age of the participants, it was evident from the study that, majority of participants twenty-three (44.2%) interviewed were aged between twenty-five to thirty-four years, followed by those between thirty-five to fourty-four years who made a study population of thirteen (25%). The least category of participants represented were those aged 55 years and above who made up one (1.9%) of the sample size. Additionally, it was believed that their socio-economic livelihood might have a bearing on the quality of support available to teachers and learners on issues on inclusive schooling. It was clear from the study that majority of the participants thirty-two (62.5%) were teachers, eight (15.4%) were head teachers, four (7.7%) parents while, the remaining two (3.8%) were district education officers. Further, two (3.8%) were education standards officer- special education while, two (3.8%) were community-based rehabilitation team members. The study believed that the participating teachers and head teachers had vast experiences in working with learners with diverse learning needs in inclusive learning environments to contribute significantly to the study.

Findings

The findings of the study conducted from 2017 to 2019 on strategies teachers used in the management of inclusive classrooms with a focus on two pilot districts of Kazungula and Livingstone Districts of Southern Province of Zambia are presented. The section provides highlights on the findings and presented on the basis of: Teacher preparedness for management of learners as well as learning process in inclusive classrooms; strategies teachers use to manage inclusive classes, and efforts schools were making to strengthen teachers' capacity to manage learners and learning process in inclusive class setting in the study districts.

Teachers' Preparedness for Teaching and Management of Learners in Inclusive Classrooms

The study revealed that before a teacher was allowed to practise inclusive schooling, he or she was required to receive orientation or trained on how to teach and manage learners in inclusive class settings. fourty-one of the fifty-two participants reported that school-based in-service training programme was provided. These helped them to acquire the desired teaching and class management skills before they were deployed to their respective inclusive classes. In line with findings, one female teacher GT- 4, had this to say:

Excerpt 1:

> The support which we are first give as teachers in the school is that we are trained on inclusive education methodologies as well as on how to manage classes with diverse learning needs. This helps us to deliver lessons and effectively handle inclusive classes. At inception of the programme of inclusive schooling most teachers were in doubt on how they would teach such classes and manage learners themselves but this was resolved after the training was done.

In support of the findings above, one male education official ESO-1 observed that:

Excerpt 2:

> *The support which we first give to a school is training on how to manage pupils because a trained teacher will be able to manage class and deliver lessons more competently. Without training, it is quite difficult to manage an inclusive class.*

In line with the observation made by the education official ESO-1, one female CBR-R2 official noted that:

Excerpt 3:

> *At inception of the inclusive education programme most teachers were in doubt on how they would be able to teach and manage children with diverse learning needs in one. But after a critical intervention through in house training on inclusive education methodologies, teachers found class teaching and management of such classes much easier to handle.*

It was evident from the findings, that teachers were often trained in inclusive education methodologies. The training included exposure to various strategies in the management of the learners as well as learning process in inclusive education classroom settings. The teachers, for example, were supported and equipped with skills to use interactive inclusive education methodologies to have learners actively kept on-task during lesson delivery in inclusive classes.

Strategies Teachers Used to Manage Classes
Multi-Tasking Approaches
During the focus group discussion, twenty-seven participants out of the thirty teacher participants reported that it took one to have special class management skills and competences to be able to effectively handle learners and learning process in inclusive classrooms. The study went on to cite multi-tasking approaches as some of the approaches teachers were using to manage learners and learning process in inclusive classes. Contributing on these findings, one female participant GT-A3 noted that:

Excerpt 4:

> *I had difficulties at first to sign for the deaf in class and talk nicely to make the hearing learners understand which often landed me into class management problems. But now I have learnt the skill of multi-tasking and I find class a management interesting now.* In support of the observation made above, one female teacher GT-6 had this to say:

Excerpt 5*:*

> *We have been equipped with class management skills such as multi-tasking when teaching in an inclusive classroom. For example, as a teacher during a lesson, I will be able to use different learning aids for me to be able to have all learners aboard."*

Contributing on the same, one female head teacher –HT- 2 said that:

Excerpt 6:

> *"As I am giving work to those without learning barriers, I make sure that I have different tasks for the differently abled learners included in my class. This approach helps me to have a clear control over my assigned inclusive class of learners.*

Arising from the above findings, it was clear that teachers had difficulties at first in using the multi-tasking approach to manage their classes. The teachers, however, with time were able to acquire and develop skills to use multi-tasking approaches to manage the learners as well as learning process in inclusive classroom settings in the study schools.

Communication and Cooperation as a Tool for Class Management
On the issue of communication as a means of winning classroom cooperation, the study found that communication was important in winning learners' cooperation in inclusive classes. The way teachers communicated and interacted with the classes had the potential to enhance or inhibit the ability to control learners and the learning process in an inclusive class. This view was echoed also by one female head teacher– HT-1 who noted that teachers were confident when they were supported with necessary management skills, especially on how to communicate with learners with diverse learning needs in the classrooms. Further, the study reported that communication skills were often impacted through the inclusive education methodologies that the teachers were exposed to during training. The teachers needed to possess necessary class room communication skills, to enhance classroom curriculum management as evidenced by one female teacher, GT-5, who had this to say:

Excerpt 7:

> *At first it was difficult for me to sign and talk at the same time which affected control of learners in class. Now I am okay with teaching the hearing impaired and the so-called normal learners in one class. They are all comfortable in use of talking and signing at the same time in the classroom.*

Additionally, on the issues of classroom communication as a tool in the management of learners in inclusive classes, the findings revealed that among many other competent skills a teacher was needed to have was the ability to use a more

learner friendly oral or signed language in communication. It was evident from the findings that teachers who often used a more positive descriptive language towards the learners as noted by one male teacher GT 3, who cited" *well behaved*," "*well done*," *over achiever*," *keep it up*,' tended to have a better control on the behaviour of learners in an inclusive class. On the other hand, one female teacher GT-10, observed that teachers who often used a judgmental or labelling language such as "a *problem child*," "*dull child*," "*disabled child*," in inclusive class settings experienced challenges in winning cooperation of their learners including those with disabilities because of increased use of inappropriate language. The study emphasised the need to equip teachers with necessary communicative skills to effectively control their learners in inclusive class settings. It was evident from the findings, too, that teachers believed that strategies employed in communicating with learners in inclusive classes had either positive or negative impact on teachers' capacity to manage the learners as well as the learning process in the classrooms. For example, proactive expressions such as *well done*, *well behaved*, *good work*, encouraged and motivated learners and consequently, eased inclusive class management while teachers who used negative expressions such as *dull child*, *poor child*, *problem child* found it difficult to manage and make such children learn.

Strategy of Preparing Appropriate/ Suitable Work for Learners

On the issue of learners' suitable work as a tool for managing learners, it was evident that preparation of appropriate or suitable class tasks helped to engage learners during learning time. The strategy assisted teachers to keep learners on task instead of being off task. It consequently, became easier to the teachers to manage a class of learners who were on-task as opposed to those on off-task. In support of this view, one male grade teacher, GT-8 had this to say:

Excerpt 8:

> *The use of the Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) as lesson preparation makes it easier for teachers to manage their inclusive education classes. I have come to find out that if I decide to just go in class and teach without taking time to prepare according to learning levels of children, I tend not to meet all the demands of all learners and class become difficult to control. But when I prepare the work taking into account the barriers of individual learners, my delivery and class control becomes easy.*

Contributing on the same, one female teacher, GT-12 shared her experience by stating that:

> *When a child has lost concentration during a lesson you give them toys to go and play as part of the class management process. And you don't have to give them toys everyday sometimes you take the child to the garden and say let's go you make a bed we go and plant something. As a teacher you go back and continue teaching.*

It was evident from the findings that the study saw effective preparation for teaching as a strategy for actually managing the learning process as well as the behaviour of learners with diverse learning needs. It was also evident from the responses of the participants that when preparing the work, teachers often provided alternative but suitable tasks and resources to occupy learners in inclusive classes. Teachers who hardly prepared for their classes found managing learners in classes rather difficult. Among the skills cited, was the preparation of the Individualised Educational Programme (IEP) as a class management tool. During the observation of the lesson demonstration, for example, it was evident that a teacher who had adequate class control skills got to deliver lessons well. Not only were the lessons well prepared, but the quality of the lesson and class management was evident.

Strategy of Capturing Attention and Concentration

On the issues of attention and concentration of the learners as a class management tool, the study revealed that, teachers who possessed the skills of winning the attention and concentration of the learners during lesson delivery experienced less class management challenges than those who did not. This view was supported by one female class teacher, GT-6 who observed the following:

Excerpt 9:

> *When a child has lost concentration during a lesson you give them toys to go and play as part of the class management process. And you don't have to give them toys every day. Sometimes you take the child to the garden and say, let's go you make a bed, we go and plant something.*

It was evident from the study that for learners' attention to be under teachers' control in an inclusive class, teachers needed to have relevant class management skills to effectively control the assigned learners. The study, however, revealed that a teacher who was able to bring back attention of the learner with barriers when they strayed during lessons had to be skilful by lining up more attractive activities which, at the end of the day, would not only offer therapy to the learner but offer a lasting solution too. One hyperactive child, for example, started singing a song which had nothing to do with the lesson. The teacher then got the learner and helped him to sit on a mat where there were toys, games, puzzles and the like as well as showing pictures of the different seasons Zambia experienced in a year. Through such actions, the teachers were able to capture the learner's attention.

Learner-Tolerance as a Strategy

With regard to use of tolerance as a class management strategy, the study found that, teachers who were tolerant and accommodative to learners experienced less class management challenges as compared to those who were not. The study concluded by calling for teachers in inclusive classes to be tolerant to learners to reduce on challenges arising from intolerance of teachers as they managed their classes. This view was supported by one male teacher, GT-25 who acknowledged:

Excerpt 10:

> There is this learner in my class who used to come late for class on almost a daily basis. The child is a slow learner and at first, I used to punish the child. After being taught that we have to visit children so that we know exactly what is causing certain behaviours, I decided to visit this child at her home. I almost cried when I went there. I came to discover that she was staying with her elder sister, who was bed ridden. The environment around left much to be desired. It is from there that I learned to be more tolerant with this girl, offering assistance where I can and give her extra work to help her catch up.

In support of this view, one female GT-14 observed that:

Excerpt 11:

> We have learned to rush these children with barriers. Like in my class, I have one child with learning disability. I allow him to do work at his own pace. For example, if it is literacy hour, the friends will finish the activities within the stipulated time. For him, some extra time is needed for him to catch up. Some days he will not even complete the assigned task. As a teacher I tolerate him and at the same time do encourage him to do his work by giving him rewards sometimes. This how I managed the child in my class.

The present study, therefore, established that the tolerance skills were necessary in teachers' attempt to have classes under control and for purpose of effective learning. It was equally noted from the study that although teachers were generally exposed to orientation and training in the use of tolerance as a class management strategy, they continued to show signs of intolerance in the management of certain learner in inclusive classes. The study attributed teachers' failure to tolerate learners to several factors including negative attitudes towards the disabled and limited exposure to special education practices.

Making the Curriculum User-Friendly as a Class Management Tool
On the issue of making the curriculum user-friendly as a class management strategy, the study found that teachers felt comfortable with their work when each learner was given work that suited one's ability. Making the class curriculum user-friendly, was seen as important because of its flexibility, accommodativeness and responsiveness to the learning needs of learners. Learners became more engaged in class work with a user-friendly curriculum. Less challenges of class control were experienced. Contributing on these findings, one female HT-4 had this to say:

Excerpt 12:

> The other matter that act as a barrier to effective management of inclusive classroom practices is the unfriendly curriculum" it has not been easy for us to modify work for those with learning disabilities especially. Some of these learners just require survival skills..

The study however, felt that even when the current curriculum had been revised, it was still not user friendly and teachers had no sufficient skills to localise it to meet the unique learning needs of learners thereby contributing to teachers' inability to effectively have their inclusive classes under control. This view was supported by a contribution made by one male education officer – special education, who observed that:

Excerpt 13:

> One of the challenge that we have is that as a school we have no one who is a special education oriented teacher. As such this has been difficulty for us when we come across challenges with learners with certain barriers which might require a speciality teacher. For example, one who is hard of hearing or visually impaired? The school has ended up limiting the admission of learners because of this challenge although have chosen to have inclusive classes.

Though a user-friendly curriculum might have been in place, participants expressed a concern on ill-preparation of teachers to deliver such a curriculum to learners in inclusive classes. It was evident that teachers did not have sufficient skills in inclusive education methodologies as well as skills to manage learners in inclusive classes.

Efforts in Making Inclusive Classrooms Manageable

On the question of efforts schools were making to improve on the management of learners in inclusive classes, the study established that the orderly setting in an inclusive classroom spoke volumes in the management of learners. The manner the classroom was arranged told it all, teachers' ability to manage learners as well as the learning process itself was evident in the setting up of classes. The findings further revealed that schools were making efforts in ensuring that classrooms were inclusive. As a result, learners with barriers tended to sense acceptance in the way the classroom was set thereby easing management challenges. The classrooms allowed very good interactions among learners and less management demands on the learners. For example, learners were made to sit in cluster formation and not rolls for easy communication among them, teamwork was encouraged; classroom walls were reflective of what was happening in the classroom. Further, schools ensured that posters had basic sign language, room allowed easy movement for mobility appliances such as: wheelchair, callipers and indeed ensured that learners desks did not distract the visually impaired, and the classroom did not expose learners to too much light. In support of the evidence on efforts schools made to ensure a barrier free learning environment, one female head teacher HT- 3 observed that:

Excerpt 14:

> *Although the preparation of an inclusive learning environment and learning materials was quite demanding for most of my teachers, it has contributed to their ability to manage the assigned classes well.*

It was evident for the study that an inclusive learning environment was quite demanding hence, required teachers with adequate knowledge and class management skills. A conducive learning environment often helped learners and prevented unwelcoming behaviour among learners.

Discussion

The findings of the question on the preparedness of teachers to manage inclusive education classes revealed that before teachers were allowed to practise inclusive schooling, they were given orientation and training on how to manage learners and learning process in inclusive class settings. Teachers through school-based in-service training acquired the desired inclusive class management skills. These findings were in line with those of Hay, Smit and Paulsen (2001) and Manda, (2013) who stated that "… the effective implementation of inclusive education practices depends on the high quality of professional preparedness of teachers at pre- and in-service levels on how to manage their classes, P. 72." In the study sites, it was evident that Ministry of Education and the Community based Rehabilitation (CBR) had significantly invested in the orientation and training of teachers on how to handle inclusive classes. The preparation of teachers significantly invested in equipping teachers with classroom management skills and updating their knowledge in meeting the needs of a diverse classroom management demands. These findings were in agreement with Mandyata, Kasonde-Ng'andu and Chakulimba, 2015) and Muzata & Ndonyo, (2019) who reported of ill-preparedness of teachers for inclusive classroom practices, as a major weakness in the attempt to implement the inclusive education policy in Zambia.

In support of the findings, Jorgensen (2003) cited best practices for learners with special educational needs in an inclusive classroom arrangement which demand that teachers acquire a different set of class management skills during their initial and continuing professional education for them to be relevant to the philosophy of inclusive education. This tended to impact positively on teachers' ability to use a variety of strategies to control inclusive classes assigned to them. Banja and Mandyata (2018), report that teachers employ workable strategies which help to manage their classes. With support of manageable skills, teachers create socially acceptable classroom communities, facilitate authentic friendships, and embed service learning which support delivery of class curriculum to all learners. Through effective class management, teachers become accountable to every learner's achievement, and promote practical inclusion practices.

The study equally, revealed that for a teacher to fully be able to manage an inclusive classroom, there was a great need for such a teacher to be equipped with necessary class management styles. The teachers, for example, through school based in-service training were supported and equipped with skills to use interactive inclusive education methodologies which helped them to have firm control over the class. Since inclusive classroom practice encompasses everybody, regardless of their status, a teacher requires skills on how to manage the class as well as the learning process itself. In line with these findings, Chilufya (2011) and Mandyata, (2011) both reported that with training in inclusive education methodologies, teachers gain the desired class room confidence with necessary control over their inclusive classes. Solis (2012), equally reports the complexities of providing meaningful education to students with disabilities with an open learning environment because it requires a high degree of ability to win cooperation and ensure effective communication among teachers, learners and other school personnel, particularly school psychologists. This further requires evidence-based practices and understanding of collaborative practices in a school setting. Inclusion and co-teaching provide an empirical foundation for decision making, which is significant to effective management of inclusive practices. It is worth-noting that inclusion can take place with or without additional support from a special education teacher so long teachers have necessary classroom management knowhow and skills.

It was evident from the findings of the study that teachers were using multi-tasking approaches in an effort to manage the learners with diverse learning needs in inclusive education classes. Through a multi-tasking approach, teachers help the class to develop mutual relationships which indeed help to bring the class under control and promote co-existence among learners with diverse learning needs and experiences. As stated by Mandyata, Kasonde-Ngandu and Chakulimba (2015), teachers needed inclusive teaching and classroom management skills that address the unique learning needs while at the same time encouraging participation, build team work and observe mutual understanding and respect for all learners despite diversity in learning needs. Preparation of teachers for inclusive school practices needed inclusion training in use of various classroom management approaches for effective classroom practices. It was however, evident that teachers in the study schools, had undergone training in the use of multi-tasking skills hence were able to manage assigned classes effectively. Simui (2019), identified areas of concerns including lack of classroom and administrative support to special education teachers for them to effectively manage classes, increased pupil-participation and promote individual psychosocial support through promotion of approaches such as multi-tasking which positively influence learning outcomes in inclusive classes. The study concluded by calling for refocusing of the preparation of special education teachers by equipping them with necessary class management skills to

more accurately reflect on the differentiated roles special education teachers are required to play including use of a multi- tasking approach in the handling of their inclusive classes.

On the question of teachers' communication with learners and winning of learners' cooperation, in their inclusive classes, it was evident from the findings that teachers believed that the class communicative language had a significant effect on teachers' ability to manage assigned inclusive classes. The study revealed that the approach where teachers used negative language such as, *too dull, under achiever* child, *disabled child*, they experienced more challenges in the control of the classes, teachers; believed in never denying or ignoring children's feelings, avoiding depersonalisation of negative relation, reducing dependence on teachers, limiting criticism arising from their class work. These actions were believed to help build confidence among learners thereby easing control of learners as well as learning process. These findings were in agreement with the works done by Jorgensen (2003) and Mandyata *et al*, (2017) in which it was observed that teachers, among other management skills, needed to be competent in how to communicate with their learners and wining their cooperation. It was clear from the study that teachers used various approaches to communicate with learners which eased the management of inclusive classes.

Among the additional management skills used by teachers in inclusive classes, was the preparation of the Individualised Educational Programme (IEP) aimed at addressing individual learning needs. The study however, showed that there was no emphasis on preparation of IEPs as a management strategy to support or provide a lasting solution to their learning and easing the learner management challenges. This finding is similar to what Muzata (2017) found in a study of the curriculum implementation for learners with special education needs in selected inclusive and special schools in Zambia. During the observation of the lesson demonstration, it was very evident that a teacher who possessed adequate class control skills tended to deliver lessons well than those who did not take time to prepare for their inclusive classes. Not only were the lessons well prepared among those who believed in lessons being a class man, but the quality of the lesson and class management was evident in their attempt to manage classes. Each individual learner was engaged during the lesson and the teachers took time to involve the learners with special educational needs (Mandyata and Kamukwamba, 2018). It was clear from the study that when teachers decided to go to class and teach without preparation, they tended to fail to meet all demands of all learners and experienced more class control difficulties than when they are ready for the class.

On the question of strategies teachers used to capture attention and concentration of learners, the study revealed that teachers used the acquired and developed tolerant skills to support the learning of children and as an approach to manage well their inclusive classes. It was also observed that for a teacher to be able to manage inclusive classes effectively, tolerance was one of the vital skills they needed to

possess to learners with diverse learning needs. This was in agreement with Zyl, (2002); Chifinda and Mandyata, (2017) who listed the tolerance and competences of teachers as tools for effective class management in the learning of learners with hearing impairment. Further, Bragiel and Kaniok (2016), supported the view of training teachers in developing tolerance on how to adapt the curriculum to the individual learners' needs and flexible evaluation methods based on the learner's pace. These were seen to be necessary in the promotion of tolerance, patience and accommodativeness which were vital tools in the management of inclusive classes. Teachers needed to understand the thinking behind a teaching approach or the curriculum in general. No wonder Kabombwe and Mulenga (2019:36) cautions that 'it is crucial for teachers to know the theoretical underpinning of a curriculum in order to interpret it accurately.'

With regards to making the curriculum user-friendly as a class management strategy, the study found that, teachers felt comfortable with their work when each learner was given work that suited one's ability. Making the class curriculum user-friendly, was seen as important because of its flexibility, accommodativeness and responsiveness to the learning needs of learners. Learners became more engaged in class work with a user-friendly curriculum. Less challenges of class control were experienced. The study however, showed that even when the current curriculum had been revised, it was still not user friendly and teachers had no sufficient skills to localise it to meet the unique learning needs of learners. The findings were in agreement with the expectations of the 2013 Zambian Ministry of Education curriculum framework (MoGE, 2013) which supports the call for a differentiated curriculum. Through a user-friendly curriculum, all learners become engaged at classroom level, thereby, easing management problems.

This study was positively linked to that of Alban-Metcalfe (2001), who stated that there is need to establish an environment that is conducive to learning and preventing behavioural challenge while, Simui, (2019), showed potential barriers in effective management of inclusive classes. These included: ill-preparedness of teacher for inclusive class management; lack of resources to meet the learning needs for all learners well because failure differentiated the curriculum in their respective classes. The study called for classroom arrangement that allow learners to move and learn freely and interact with each other as part of the learning process. Among other important facilities, a library or a quiet reading centre with books and magazines contributed significantly to the control of learners and helped them access information as they wished. Bargiel and Kaniok (2016), advices that since teachers gave projects to learners in class that needed to be displayed for assessment purposes and used as a class management tool, there was a need for work stations within or outside the classroom even in corridors to allow flexibility in the learning the environment in order to allow learners to manage their own learning and conduct.

Conclusion

From what has been established throughout this study, effective inclusive classroom management is vital in the delivery of inclusive schooling. The study revealed that effective management of inclusive education classes, required concerted efforts through normalisation of the learning environment, practice, and teachers possessing the right knowledge and skills to manage the learning process in an inclusive education learning environment. This can be done through a wide range of inclusive education methodologies such as: ensuring curriculum was user-friendly; promoting learner-tolerance; using appropriate classroom communicative strategies and ensuring good teacher preparedness for inclusive education classroom practices.

Implications

The preparation of teachers for inclusive school practice has serious implication on how they manage their assigned inclusive classes as well as learners themselves. To this end, pre and in-service training programmes are very important for teachers in order to equip and update their knowledge, skills and expertise not only in inclusive teaching but equally in the management of learner and learning process in inclusive classes. The findings of the study also have serious implication for well-designed capacity. The building programmes for teachers involved in inclusive education as well as on the job training being provided in the study on inclusive education practice need to focus on the acquisition of knowledge and skills which should support effective management of inclusive classes.

The findings also have implications for the provision of appropriate school infrastructure, facilities and resources to support the management of learners and the learning process in inclusive school settings. The learning environment should be stimulating to ease management. This is particularly important in the study schools with a very high learner-teacher ratio. This would help the teachers observe and track the traits of the learners in the assigned inclusive classes hence, work in favour of the effective management of such classes. Further, the findings have implications for effective class and school supervision as well as enhance working conditions. The study schools will be called up to enable teachers develop requisite skills and expertise needed in the management of inclusive education classes and schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings in this conclusion, the following recommendations are made:

1. School based capacity building programmes on management of inclusive learning process and learners should be regularly organised.
2. In-service training programmes for teachers should be re-introduced to enable teachers acquire the requisite skills, knowledge, and expertise necessary for successful management of inclusive classes.

3. Minimum standards regarding learner-teacher ratio should be set and implanted in inclusive schools. This will enhance and stimulate a learning environment necessary for effective learner and learning process management in inclusive classes.

4. Facilities and resources for effective inclusive education practice should be regularly provided and made available to teachers for them to effectively manage inclusive classes.

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