

Collaboration Role of Head Teachers in Addressing Educational Needs of Vulnerable Pupils in Iringa and Mufindi Districts in Tanzania

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Abstract: *This study explored how public primary school head teachers in Iringa and Mufindi Districts, Tanzania, collaborate to address the educational needs of vulnerable pupils. Grounded in Joyce Epstein's theory of collaboration, the research used a mixed-methods convergent design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data. A sample of 32 schools, 32 head teachers, 64 welfare teachers, and 394 vulnerable pupils was selected using both probability and non-probability techniques. Data were gathered through validated questionnaires, interviews, and observation guides, with reliability confirmed using Cronbach's alpha 0.791 for welfare teachers and 0.716 for vulnerable pupils. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, while qualitative data were thematically analyzed with QDA Miner and Turbo Scribe. Results showed that collaborative strategies such as engaging businessmen, charities, community groups and conducting pupil clubs-positively impacted vulnerable pupils' education. It was concluded that a significant relationship was found between head teachers' collaboration efforts and addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils. The study recommended head teachers to strengthening partnerships and inclusive school activities.*

Keywords: collaboration, role of public primary school head teachers, educational needs, vulnerable pupils

INTRODUCTION

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal number four target five seeks to eliminate all forms of discrimination in education for marginalized groups and vulnerable pupils like orphans and those in vulnerable situations (UNESCO, 2017). Research has shown that learner vulnerabilities pose serious challenges not only to learners themselves but also to teachers, head teachers and parents (Ajoodha, 2022; Chidakwa, 2020; Chidakwa & Hlalele, 2021). Collaboration among stakeholders is vital for reflection of practices and knowledge exchange as a strategy to foster creativity and innovation necessary for effective

implementation of educational support to vulnerable pupils (Atuhaire et al., 2024). Effective collaboration means to identify and integrate educational resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices and support vulnerable pupils learning and development. In this regard, it is the role of head teachers in public primary schools to maintain active collaboration practices to ensure that educational needs for vulnerable children are not compromised.

In a collaborative culture, head teachers help to establish clarity of purpose and empower others to share in the decision-making process, so that teams may engage in collaborative work that leads to effective and innovative problem-solving activities especially in helping vulnerable learners (AITSL, 2024). The more one educator's learning is shared and supported by others, the more quickly the culture of continuous improvement, collective responsibility and high expectations for vulnerable pupils, teachers and parents grows (Kiral, 2024). In Tanzania, the government has implemented various policies and regulations such as the National Guidelines for Identification of Most Vulnerable Children and Linkage to Care, Support and Protection and National Guidelines for Supportive Supervision of Most Vulnerable Children Programs (URT, 2017 & URT, 2021) in order to make all educational stakeholders national-wise to collaborate for supporting vulnerable pupils attaining their educational needs.

Scholars have underlined vulnerable children as those under the age of 18 years falling under extreme conditions characterized by severe deprivation as to endanger their health, well-being and long-term development. Such conditions include living in extreme poverty, children with disabilities, orphans, abused, abandoned, neglected, infected/affected by HIV/AIDS, street children, children from marginalized communities, children facing socioeconomic and socio-cultural factors among conditions that hinder their academic progress and overall well-being (USAID, 2008; URT, 2017; Nyakaleji, 2020; Dutta & Rajkonwar, 2024). Precisely, children in these extreme conditions are most likely to be in public primary schools (URT, 2024). Hence, head teachers are uniquely positioned to spearhead collaborative initiatives that support these vulnerable pupils' educational needs (URT, 2017, 2021).

Educational needs is the major concern for all vulnerable pupils at all schools. Nyakaleji (2020) addressed that, educational needs refer to what is done by the school to ensure that all children including orphans and other vulnerable children (OVC) have access to and benefit from high quality learning opportunities. Losioki, (2020); Lauterbach & Dembek, (2023); Dutta & Rajkonwar, (2024) and Ackim, (2024), highlighted that basic educational needs are basic needs and school requirements including food, learning materials, school uniform, and monetary fees for school contributions. UNICEF (2024) pointed out that, the major reason for persistence of the problem of children from poor family is the lack of access to schooling, even when school fees are abolished, money must still be found to pay for things like uniforms and books. This leads to some children to either fail to attend to school or drop from school before completing standard seven as compulsory basic education.

In Tanzania Educational policy of 2014, revised in 2023 recognise the basic educational needs for most vulnerable children. Then, the government issued circular No. 6 (URT, 2015b) to clarify the role of parents with regard to fee-free public basic education. The circular, among other things, states that parents should meet the costs for the following items: school uniforms and uniforms for sports activities; learning materials such as exercise books, pens and pencils. The provision of food for children attending day schools (in cooperation with the school leadership) and medical expenses for the child and travel expenses for both day and boarding school pupils. In that case, it is the role of head teacher to make sure that collaboration was effectively made to parents and keep in touch with them to ensure the basic educational needs of vulnerable pupils are met.

Heads of public primary school according to URT, 2017; URT, 2021; ADEM, (2023) and UNESCO, (2024) perform different roles at their schools. The Tanzania education policy of 2014 version 2023 emphasizes the critical role of head teachers in promoting inclusive education and addressing the educational needs of vulnerable pupils. In addition, community engagement, resource allocation, communication, sensitization, collaboration and professional development. Furthermore, supervising management issues such as financial and human resources, ensuring cross-cutting issues like environmental education, gender issues, HIV and AIDS are part of the teaching and learning activities in order to make sure that the basic educational needs are advocated and met.

The educational landscape is evolving and the responsibilities of head teachers must adapt to meet the complexities associated with educational needs of vulnerable pupils. Various studies have shed light on collaboration role of head teachers play globally, from Serbia Milosavljević Đukić et al., (2022) conducted a study to examine the connection between the collaboration between family and school and parental involvement in education. The research findings show the willingness of parents to gradually change their education techniques and requirements under the influence of various forms of parental participation in school activities, which provide them with more information and ensure the necessary professional knowledge for parents. In Slovakia Tóblová et al., (2020) assessed the effectiveness of cooperation between a school and family as the starting point for a quality and satisfactory course of education. The main findings show that teachers, both at primary and secondary schools, consider cooperation with pupils' parents as very important in explaining educational needs of pupils. Among the traditional forms of cooperation, the most preferred are parents' meetings, written communication, parents' visits to the school, open day and activities for parents.

In Africa, Chidakwa et al., (2024). Viewed on a collaborative approach to promote sustainable learning for vulnerable learners in Zimbabwe. Results show that there is a need to develop a good learning environment, community engagement and untap opportunities in local capitals to support the vulnerable learners and enhancing sustainable learning. In Tanzania, Msangi (2023) conducted a study focusing on the outcomes of collaborative initiatives led by head teachers to enhance the academic performance and well-being of vulnerable pupils in primary schools. The study indicated that there was improved vulnerable pupils engagement, increased academic achievement, enhanced emotional well-being and better social integration.

Despite efforts made by Tanzanian government and the foundation laid down for head teachers to execute their collaboration roles with regards to the needs of vulnerable pupils, the needs are not that very much addressed (Losioki, 2020 & Ackim, 2024). This situation leaves a lacuna in addressing the needs of vulnerable pupils in public primary schools a thing which raises concern on the roles of head teachers to effectively addressing this problem. Despite the fact that head teachers perform their collaboration roles, information on specific roles played is still limited. Few studies have been done in Tanzania on effectiveness of collaboration roles of head teachers in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils in Mufindi and Iringa Districts, Tanzania. This study was undertaken to fill this gap.

Statement of the Problem

Vulnerable pupils in Tanzania, including those from low-income households, orphans and marginalized communities, often have unmet educational needs. Although head teachers address these needs, the growing number of vulnerable pupils exacerbates their disadvantages, making it harder to meet their educational needs (Losioki, 2020; Ndalichako, 2021; Ackim, 2024). These children face significant hurdles due to unmet social needs, such as shortages of basic necessities, educational materials, sports equipment and poor

health services, which impede their overall well-being and development (Bimha & Sibiya, 2023; Vedasto et al., 2023; Dutta & Rajkonwar, 2024). Studies have highlighted some roles of head teachers, such as fostering partnerships, community collaboration and parental involvement, but often fail to address the specific educational needs of vulnerable pupils (Tabaro & Uwamahoro, 2020; Msangi, 2023; Chidakwa et al., 2024). There is limited information on how head teachers collaborate to address these educational needs, which is a critical concern. To bridge this gap, this study aims to examine the contributions of collaboration roles of public primary school head teachers in addressing the educational needs of vulnerable pupils in Iringa and Mufindi Districts, Iringa Region, Tanzania.

Research Question

The study was guided by this research question

To what extent does the collaboration of public primary school head teachers address educational needs of vulnerable pupils in Iringa and Mufindi Districts?

Hypothesis

The study tested the following hypothesis

Ha: There is a significant relationship between collaboration strategies of public primary school head teachers and addressed educational needs of vulnerable pupils.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study provide valuable insights for education planners and policymakers by offering empirical evidence with regard to addressing the needs of vulnerable pupils. These insights facilitate evidence-based decision-making to more effectively plan for and support the educational needs of vulnerable pupils. The study is directly of benefits to vulnerable pupils by highlighting collaboration role of head teachers in addressing their educational needs, that contributing to improved access. Moreover, the study raises awareness among key educational stakeholders including, teachers, parents, government bodies and non-governmental organizations on the importance of strengthening collaborative mechanisms to support vulnerable pupils. Additionally, the study adds to the existing body of literature on collaboration role of head teachers in supporting vulnerable pupils and it provides empirical justification for the application of Epstein's theory.

Theoretical Framework

This study was guided by Epstein's theory, developed by Joyce Epstein in the late 1980s. The theory is based on the concept that for pupils to succeed academically, it is essential for schools, families and communities to collaborate and support each other. The theory proposes six typologies of parental involvement which are parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community (Bauch, 1994; Epstein et al., 2002). This is in line with head teachers' collaboration role in addressing education needs of vulnerable pupils which are uniforms, food, stationery and access to remedial classes and make sure that their needs are being met (Losioki, 2020).

Strength of the theory recognizes the multifaceted nature of supporting vulnerable pupils, encompassing the school, family and community as interrelated spheres of influence (Epstein, 2011). Collaboration acts as a catalyst as it provided comprehensive approach, emphasis on collaboration, partnerships, sensitization, emphasizes the value of networking and hence establishment of support systems for vulnerable pupils (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). As parents and caregivers, head teachers have to play very well their collaboration role by identifying vulnerable pupils and addressing their education needs accordingly (Sanders, 2008; Losioki, 2020; Rani et al., 2023).

The weaknesses of the Theory, Epstein's theory is limited in its consideration of cultural diversity and inadequate attention to external factors. It may not adequately consider external factors such as community resources, family dynamics and socio-economic conditions that can significantly impact a pupil's well-being. By overlooking these external influences, the theory may present an overly simplistic view of how schools can support vulnerable pupils. Head teachers can use six typologies of parental involvement which are parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community by putting much efforts on addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils.

The theory was used in this study since it provides six typology which are parenting, communication, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community. These emphasize the crucial role of collaboration between head teachers, teachers, parents and the community in supporting vulnerable pupils learning (Epstein & Sanders, 2006; Epstein et al., 2019). The theory underscores sensitizing stakeholders on the educational needs of vulnerable pupils and investigates how head teachers' collaboration role contribute to raise awareness by addressing these educational needs. Epstein's model also highlights the importance of collaborative partnerships, networking and support systems for vulnerable pupils. By grounding the study in Epstein's theory, the study was explored the contributions of head teachers collaboration role in addressing the education needs of vulnerable pupils in Iringa and Mufindi Districts in Iringa region, Tanzania.

Empirical Review

Collaboration role of head teachers in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils in Public Primary Schools was reviewed in this section. This theme aims to analyze collaboration role performed by head teachers in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils that could help head teachers to form good joint with different education stakeholders in addressing education needs of vulnerable pupils. A study conducted in Indonesia by Habibullah, et al. (2024) assessed the importance of teacher and parent collaboration in supporting children's learning. This research used a qualitative approach with analysis based on literature review and Interviews were conducted with five teachers and five parents of pupils to gain direct perspectives on the challenges and benefits of collaboration. Results show that regular and effective communication between teachers and parents is able to create a conducive learning environment both at school and at home. This support has a positive impact on vulnerable pupils, including increasing their self-confidence and involvement in the learning process. In the Tanzanian setting, the current study examined how collaboration role of head teacher addresses educational needs of vulnerable pupils. In addition, the reviewed study adopted a qualitative research approach that allows gathering only exploratory information that could not be generalized outside the study area. The current study adopted mixed method approaches that combines both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to gain a deeper understanding of complex phenomena. Mixed methods research employs triangulation as a validation strategy to enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of findings on the contributions of collaboration role of head teachers in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils (Cuofano, 2024).

In German Muckenthaler et al. (2020) conducted a study on teacher collaboration as a core objective of school development. The sample of the study was generated by interested teachers who had the opportunity to participate in the study by filling in a questionnaire that was distributed online through a webpage. The sample consisted of 175 teachers working in schools providing general education within the German school system. The results shows that collaboration benefits was a positive fundamental attitude towards collaboration and was an important condition for team work. Results also revealed that teachers' openness to collaborate can be enhanced through their participation in those common agreements especially helping vulnerable pupils. The previous study revealed that collaboration enhance team work among teachers and are strong predictor of school climate in helping vulnerable pupils.

However, it is essential to reflect on the contextual differences of German and Tanzania where the system of work performance and service delivery to pupils are different. Also, the setting where the study was conducted was at public primary and secondary schools using teachers to give their options on collaboration among teachers to enhance school performance. This study was conducted at public primary schools with the main focus on contributions of head teachers' collaboration role in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils. Moreover, the study used only questionnaires as instrument of data collection and one category of participant (teachers). In order, to ensure robust and reliable findings (Sharma, 2022), this study used questionnaire, interview guide and observational guide as tools for data collection.

Moreover, in Slovakia Tóblová et al. (2020) conducted a study on effective cooperation between a school and family as the starting point for a quality and satisfactory course of education. The study was carried out on a sample of 130 respondents with 68 teachers and 62 legal guardians of pupils at primary and secondary schools. The main findings of the research showed that teachers both at primary and secondary schools consider cooperation with pupils' legal representatives as very important. They identified forms of cooperation, the most preferred are parents' meetings, written communication, parents' visits to the school, Open Day, activities for parents.

Also, teachers consider contact with parents to be sufficient and they also believe that cooperation can affect pupils' performance, even their behaviour at school. This study informed the current study on forms of cooperation between school and parents which are parents' meetings, written communication, parents' visits to the school, Open Day, activities for parents. In this regard, a need raised to carry a similar study in Tanzania and see the practice of these strategies used by head teachers and teachers to maintain collaboration with educational stakeholders specifically in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils. Also, this study was conducted at primary and secondary schools, the current study was conducted only at primary school specifically looking on head teacher collaboration role in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils.

In Zimbabwe Chidakwa, et al. (2024) assessed a collaborative approach to promote sustainable learning for vulnerable learners. The study employed a qualitative methodology using Participatory Action Research (PAR) and Critical Emancipatory Research (CER) paradigms. Data were generated through discussion meetings and photo voice with learners, teachers and parents from two rural secondary schools. Results show that there is a need to develop a good learning environment, community engagement and to tap opportunities in local capitals to support the vulnerable learners, enhancing sustainable learning. The study also stresses the need for a positive relationship and engagement with communities, alongside leveraging all the types of capital in the community including human, cultural and social capital to mitigate some of the risks that learners may face. This study enlightens the current study on how head teachers can

collaboration with different educational stakeholders to support learning materials for vulnerable learners. The reviewed study was conducted at secondary level the current study was conducted at primary school level and specifically examining head teachers' role in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils.

The reviewed study employed a qualitative methodology collecting data through discussion meetings and photo voice with learners, teachers and parents. Whereas, using multiple data sources and methods enhance credibility, transferability, dependability and conformability. Also, use of using mixed methods research including the use of multiple tools and respondents address the limitations of single-method studies enhances triangulation, complementarity, contextualization and flexibility during data analysis which this study did (Sharma, 2022). In Rwanda, Tabaro and Uwamahoro (2020) conducted a study aimed at examining parental involvement in children's education with a particular focus to vulnerable families. The study utilized a mixed method that integrated both qualitative and quantitative approaches. A questionnaire was administered to parents and a total number was 1118 of respondents was used. Interviews were conducted with head teachers and teachers while focus group interviews were conducted with children from Mbare primary school. Results indicated that a big number of parents try to get involved in their children's education, but at moderate level. This implies that, even if there are many challenges faced by vulnerable families, they do their best to help their children.

This study shed light of how parents from vulnerable families in Rwanda are involved in supporting their children's education despite their financial constraints.

However, the current study aimed at looking how head teachers integrate with different educational stakeholders and collaborate to address educational needs of vulnerable pupils. Even though this reviewed study used mixed method approach, the selection of participant and their number were not well explained. Creswell and Creswell (2023) explains that unclear sampling methods can compromise the validity and reliability of research findings as the basis for selecting participants is not well-defined. The current study used mixed method approach showing clearly how participants of the study were selected using probability and non- probability sampling procedures showing how 32 public primary schools, 32 head teachers, 64 welfare teachers and 394 vulnerable pupils were selected.

Msangi (2023) conducted a study focusing on collaborative initiatives led by head teachers to enhance the academic performance and well-being of vulnerable pupils in primary schools in Mwanza, Tanzania. A mixed-methods approach combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods was used. The study involved 200 respondents including head teachers, teachers, parents and vulnerable pupils. Results indicated that there were improved vulnerable pupils' engagement, increased academic achievement, enhanced emotional well-being and better social integration. The study focused outcomes of collaborative initiatives led by head teachers to enhance the academic performance and well-being of vulnerable pupils. Nevertheless, the current study aimed at examining the contributions of collaborative role of head teacher in addressing education needs of vulnerable pupils in Iringa and Mufindi Districts.

Demonstration of Research Gap

Reviewed existing studies on collaboration role of head teacher in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils in public primary schools revealed various gaps. Methodological gaps (Muckenthaler et al., 2020 & Chidakwa, et al., 2024), where most of the reviewed studies relied on a single research method for data collection, limiting triangulation. The review indicates that most studies relied on either qualitative

or quantitative methods, often neglecting the benefits of mixed approach to provide a more nuanced understanding of the complexities of the subject matter. Also, the knowledge gap (Tabaro & Uwamahoro 2020 & Tóblová et al., 2020), those reviewed existing research did not adequately address the collaboration role of head teacher in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils. Furthermore, contextual gap is also observed (Muckenthaler et al., 2020 & Habibullah, et al., 2024) many reviewed studies conducted outside of Tanzania. Despite these findings, from the reviewed studies, there is a significant lack of studies in Tanzania specifically focusing on the collaboration role of head teacher in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils in public primary schools. The knowledge gap existing since these studies focused on good learning environment, community engagement, community participation vulnerable pupils' participation in education and untap opportunities in local capitals to support the vulnerable learners, leaving a gap in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils. This study specifically focused on collaboration role of head teachers in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils in Iringa and Mufindi Districts in Iringa region, Tanzania.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a convergent design in a single-phase mixed research approach, involving the collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data sets simultaneously to complement each other (Creswell & Creswell, 2018); Okendo et al., 2020; Creswell & Creswell, 2023). Therefore, the target population for this study was 321 public primary schools found in Iringa and Mufindi districts, 321 head teachers, 26,815 vulnerable pupils and 642 welfare teachers (URT 2024). Hence total target population was 27,778. The study applied both probability and non-probability sampling techniques to select a sample for the study. The sample size ranged between 10% and 30% as recommended by Asenahabi and Ikoha (2023). The sample size for this study was 490 in the following distribution: Thirty-two (32) public primary schools and 32 head teachers selected to participate in this study using total purposive sampling technique. A total of 64 welfare teachers participated in the study whereby 2 teachers per school were selected using Olonite Proportional Allocation sampling based on gender (Olonite.2022). Moreover, the sample included 394 vulnerable pupils of the VPs targeted population. The selection of the VPs sample was done using proportionate Stratified Sampling based on genders. The sampling procedures ensured the quality and validity of the research findings by addressing issues such as representativeness, bias, and the statistical significance of the sample and ethical considerations.

The study employed both quantitative and qualitative instruments namely; an interview guide for head teachers, a questionnaire for welfare teachers and questionnaire for vulnerable pupils and observational guide by checking the vulnerable pupils appearance, access to food and extra curriculum activities. Instruments' validity was ensured by three academic experts from Mwenge Catholic University were consulted. These experts were from the field of Educational Planning and Administration who thoroughly checked the wording, content coverage, spelling, vocabulary and arrangement of instrument items. Their feedback led to adjustments such as adding the number of Likert scale items from 8 to 10, adjusting probing questions in the interview guide, ensuring clarity in some Likert scale items and maintaining the main questions in the interview guide. All suggestions were implemented to strengthen the research instruments.

A pilot study was conducted in three (3) public primary schools that were excluded from the study whereby 45 respondents participated. The three (3) public primary schools were selected proportionally from a list of public primary schools 171 of Mufindi two (2) school were selected and 153 of Iringa districts one (1)

school was selected depending on proportional of schools per each Districts. The sample size ranged between 10% and 30% as recommended by Creswell & Plano Clark, (2018). The reliability of the instruments was assessed and attained general Cronbach Alpha of 0.791 for questionnaire welfare teachers and 0.716 for questionnaire vulnerable pupils respectively. According to Creswell & Creswell, (2023) the Cronbach Alpha for rating scale questions is expressed as a digit between 0 and 1, with optimal values ranging between .7 and above considered acceptable for soliciting the required information.

The reliability of qualitative data was ensured through triangulation of information and peer review. The quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics to organize the data collected through copies of questionnaires. Descriptive analysis involved organizing data in terms of frequency, percentages and mean, utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27 software. Also, inferential statistics used Ordinal Logistic Regression Model to test the hypothesis. The qualitative data analysis was done with the assistance of the turbo-scribe and QDA Miner software program by following all stages that are transcribing, familiarizing, coding, categorizing and develop themes, interpretation, validation and trustworthiness, then reporting findings. Moreover, notes from lesson observation was analyzed manually. Thematic analysis was employed to identify common themes coded from the transcribed data, aiding in the interpretation and discussion of the findings and presented through narrations and supported by direct quotations. The researcher ensured ethical considerations including permissions, informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity and acknowledging all cited works to avoid plagiarism.

Data Presentation and Discussion of the Findings

This section presents findings and discussions on the extent collaboration role of head teachers in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils in Iringa and Mufindi Districts, Tanzania. The main respondents were welfare teachers and vulnerable pupils who provided quantitative data through questionnaire and head teachers who provided qualitative data through interview guide and observation guide administered to vulnerable pupils. Quantitative data are presented through tables. Moreover, qualitative data is presented in form of quotations and narration. Lindner and Lindner (2024) proposed that interpretation of data collected using unidimensional, summated and Likert-type can be interpreted as follows: to very small extent = 1-1.5, to small extent = 1.51-2.5, to moderate extent =2.51- 3.5, to a great extent = 3.51- 4.5, to a very great extent = 4.51- 5. In addition, the responses to a very great extent and to a great extent were treated together as great extent, moderate level and responses to very small extent and to small extent were regarded as small extent. Variables for welfare teachers and vulnerable pupils were discussed as presented on Table 1 and Table 2.

S/N	Statement	VSE f (%)	SE f (%)	ME f (%)	GE f (%)	VGE f (%)	MEAN
1	HT creates opportunities for teachers and pupils to collaborate with VPs to discuss their needs.	0 (0.0)	4(6.5)	0 (0.0)	36 (58.1)	24 (38.7)	4.21
2	HT collaborate with community organizations to provide resources for VPs.	4 (6.5)	6 (9.7)	0 (0.0)	25 (40.3)	27(43.5)	4.05
3	HT engages parents in joint planning to support VPs.	2 (3.2)	8(12.9)	0 (0.0)	27 (43.5)	25(40.3)	4.05
4	HT supports WFTs to collaborate with VPs families discuss their educational needs	3 (4.8)	5 (8.1)	2(3.2)	33 (53.2)	19(30.6)	3.97
5	HT collaborative efforts have addressed the unique needs of VPs	2 (3.2)	11(17.7)	2(3.2)	22 (35.5)	25(40.3)	3.92
6	HT creates opportunities for all teachers to collaborate to supporting VPs	4 (6.5)	3 (4.8)	1 (1.6)	40 (64.5)	14 (22.6)	3.92
7	HT collaborates with educational stakeholders to ensured provision of adequate resources for VPs.	3 (4.8)	7 (11.3)	3 (4.8)	28 (45.2)	21(33.9)	3.92
8	HT collaborates with teachers to monitor the progress and wellbeing of VPs	3 (4.8)	4(6.5)	3(4.8)	38 (61.3)	14 (22.6)	3.90
9	HT conducts regular meetings to share strategies to support VPs	1(1.6)	9 (14.5)	3(4.8)	38 (61.3)	11 (17.7)	3.79
10	HT involves teachers in organizing support activities to VPs such as games and clubs that include all pupils.	4(6.5)	9 (14.5)	3 (4.8)	28(45.2)	18(29.0)	3.76
Overall mean							3.95

Source: Field Data, 2025 Key: F= Frequency, %= percentage VSE= To Very Small Extent, SE= To Small extent. ME= To Moderate Extent, GE= To a great extent VGE= To a very great extent

Table 1

Welfare Teachers Responses on Collaboration Role Done by Public Primary School Head Teachers in Addressing Educational Needs of Vulnerable Pupils in Iringa and Mufindi Districts (WFTs n=62).

Results on Table 1 show that, welfare teachers had a mean score of 4.21on head teachers create opportunities for all teachers to collaborate to support vulnerable pupils' educational needs. This finding implies that head teachers and teachers play their role to be near with vulnerable pupils and advocate their educational needs through their individual person supports. In supporting welfare teachers' response, the researcher interviewed head teachers. One of the head teachers narrates that:

You see, as teachers, we feel very sorry for vulnerable pupils. Sometimes, if we have cooked ugali and there is some left, we call them and give it to them. In the past, during meetings, we have been asking parents to support their children, as they know them. It becomes difficult; for example, in a year, they contribute one bag of maize and four kilograms of beans and twelve thousand shillings for the cook. We really please these parents, but this year, during the meeting that took place in June, the parents were very firm and refused. Once the parents refuse, we as teachers cannot interfere with the food they contribute. They say, "Why can't they buy maize with the TASAF money they receive?" (Head Teacher 6, Interview, 11th October, 2024).

Again, HT7 added that,

In our school, we have the "Tuseme" clubs and through these clubs, we help vulnerable pupils to overcome the fear of speaking up if they have a problem. They feel comfortable sharing their issues with people who can help them, especially teachers. We bring them close so that they can freely tell us about the challenges they are facing and always teachers cheap in to solve their problems (HT7, Interview, 9 October, 2024).

These responses show how head teachers and welfare teachers struggle to make sure the needs of VPs are addressed and met. That's why all teachers come in and make sure they support educational needs as educational stakeholders. Teachers feel to support these VPs as they feel unhappy seeing some VPs suffering lacking their educational needs. The finding is in agreement with those of Muckenthaler et al. (2020) who stress that, successful schools are measured by pupils' academic performance and are characterized by a high level of collaboration and cohesion among teachers especially to support learning of pupils.

Data on head teachers to collaborate with community organizations to provide resources for vulnerable pupils show that the mean score for welfare teachers was 4.05. This indicates to a high extent collaboration with community organizations to provide resources for vulnerable pupils. The study found that even though some parents are fulfilling their responsibility, still there are some who do not want to show cooperation on contributing food for their children. It was revealed during interview by head teachers that:

We even have such parents here who do not want to contribute food for their children. For example, you find parents do not want their children to eat at school, but they do not have time to prepare food for their children on time, perhaps around six o'clock. In rural schools, children come from far distances. So, going back and forth, a child walks up to twenty kilometres. When you ask them if they have time to cook lunch for their children, they say no. During the day, children just play football and beg some from their fellow pupils they cannot return home because it is too far. Even those who live nearby in rural areas parents are busy with farming they farm far away (Head Teacher 7, Interview, 15th October, 2024).

HT6 added that,

The participation of stakeholders is there, but it has challenges and it may be influenced by their understanding of these issues. There are communities that seem to have no problems

in life, they are doing well, but helping a child who is not theirs to succeed becomes a challenge due to selfishness (Head Teacher 6, Interview, 11th October, 2024).

These responses imply that head teachers have to increase efforts in mobilizing the whole community to contribute resources for VPs. In this regard, that's why we can see some parents were not ready to participate and collaborate to provide contributions for their children. This might be influenced by their historical background on accessing education, whereby HTs have to advocate for educational needs of VPs during parent meetings whenever time allows. These findings were supported by Massucco (2021) who found that, barriers such as parents' background, culture, race, ethnicity, language, socioeconomic status, parenting and education beliefs (traditional and modernized), type of home life, lack of time, patience and level of education can tremendously impact parental involvement and academic achievement of their children's education.

Data on Table 1 indicates a mean score of 4.05 for welfare teachers on head teachers engage parents in joint planning to support VPs educational needs. This mean score shows that to a great extent HTs engage parents to make decisions on how to contribute and support their children. This implies that head teachers jointly plan with different educational stakeholders' acts as a catalyst to making all educational stakeholders to be in line and believe their voice is heard. This was supported by Chidakwa et al. (2024) who highlighted that community engagement entails collaboration and reciprocity among all parties involved. The engagement facilitates the exchange of information. Real community participation promotes independence and trust in the community based on mutual respect, as well as collective decision-making and action. A study done by Atuhaire et al. (2024) in Uganda concluded that, collaboration can be enhanced through a multi-sectorial approach that brings all actors on board in planning for vulnerable pupils especially street children. In this regard, head teachers' collaboration strategy of joint planning is very important in enhancing all parties to be onboard in supporting educational needs of VPs.

On the other hand, Data on Table 1 on head teachers supports welfare teachers to collaborate with VPs families to discuss their educational needs, indicate that WFTs had a mean score of 3.97. This implies that to a great extent HTs facilitate and emphasize WFTs to collaborate with VPs families to discuss educational needs of VPs. This was evidenced during the interview conducted to head teachers whereby on head teacher had this to say: *Once I discover a child has challenges with their needs, we write a letter to the guardian. When they arrive here, we inform them about the challenge that child has and we discuss together how to solve it* (Head Teacher 4, Interview, 9th October, 2024).

Collaboration of welfare teachers and VPs families enhanced by head teachers facilitate in discussing detailed educational needs of VPs and hence to find way out how to help them.

Furthermore, Data on Table 1 on head teachers create opportunities for teachers and pupils to collaborate with vulnerable pupils to discuss their needs show that the mean score was 3.92. This implies that to a great extent head teacher actively create opportunities for teachers and pupils to collaborate with vulnerable pupils to discuss their needs. The act of creating opportunities brings a strong commitment of head teachers in supporting partnership and collaboration among teachers and pupils which is essential for supporting vulnerable pupils. This finding was supported by Muckenthaler et al. (2020) who asserted that, collaboration leads to benefits for the vulnerable pupils as collaborating teachers all feel responsible for vulnerable pupils' learning processes and therefore can address their needs better. This contributes to prevailing opportunities and forum to discuss the prevailing needs of VPs and find a way on how to help them. This forum like Tuseme clubs helps pupils together with their teachers to discuss needs and challenges facing VPs.

Also, data on head teachers collaborate with teachers in monitoring the progress and wellbeing of vulnerable pupils show that welfare teachers' responses were 16.1% at a small extent, 4.8% moderate extent and 79% at a great extent. This implies that head teachers collaborate with teachers and other educational stakeholders like parents, school committee and UWAWA (Umoja wa Walimu wa Madarasa na Wazazi) to come together and monitor the progress and wellbeing of VPs. The study finding is supported by Ackim (2024) who assert that, support mechanisms for orphans and vulnerable pupils include government mechanisms, civil society organizations (CSOs) mechanisms and community mechanisms to ensure availability of what? and support to vulnerable pupils' wellbeing. However, a small number of scores from respondents should not be ignored because they have shown their concern that head teachers are not collaborating with them. Monitoring progress and wellbeing of vulnerable pupils has an impact in addressing their educational needs hence calling for joint action.

Also, data on Table 1 on conducting regular meeting with parents and educational stakeholders to discuss the needs of VPs show that welfare teachers' responses were 21% at a small extent, 4.8% moderate extent and 74.2% at a great extent. This implies that, head teachers are taking good initiatives to conduct regular meetings with parents and educational stakeholders to discuss the needs of VPs; hence a positive impact on addressing educational needs of VPs. During interviews with 10 head teachers on meetings conducted by head teachers, one of the head teachers supported the views by saying: *"We have two official meetings, one before June and another before the December holiday. However, sometimes, if there is a need, we call the parents or other stakeholders to meet in between to discuss the problems raised"* (HT10, Interview, 6 December, 2024).

The same response was resonated by HT7 on the same issues during the interview who had this to say:

We have pupil's parliament that meets every three months. For example, if you go outside, you will find a notice board with their slogans and everything is explained there. Also, the school committee has two meetings. However, for stakeholders, we have two meetings each year and there are many emergency meetings that are not counted because this is an institution (Head Teacher 9, Interview, 5th December, 2024).

Head teachers to conduct school meetings and share views with educational stakeholders for the sake of discussing the needs of vulnerable pupils is important for a common dealing addressing the educational needs of VPs. This is because some head teachers are conducting prescribed meetings while others are not to discuss the educational needs of vulnerable pupils.

The study finding is supported by Epstein's theory which highlights the importance of collaboration between head teachers, parents and community. Epstein stresses that collaboration is essential for creating a supportive ecosystem for vulnerable pupils. Schools cannot address these challenges alone, they need the active involvement of families and communities to ensure availability of educational needs of vulnerable pupils (Epstein, et al., 2002). However, this is in contrast with Kuboja (2019) in Arusha Tanzania who shows that a great number of parents were not attending school meetings and giving the required educational support for their children. The said support is such as buying books, school uniforms etc. Kuboja (2019) further asserts that many parents feel uncomfortable to face the school administration to discuss their children's progress due to low self-esteem syndrome.

S/N	Statement	VSE f (%)	SE f (%)	ME f (%)	GE f (%)	VGE f (%)	MEAN
1	HT engages classroom teachers and pupils to identify VPs	3 (0.8)	17 (4.4)	3 (0.8)	98 (25.1)	269(69.0)	4.57
2	HT ensures your needs are available	3 (0.8)	22 (5.6)	5(1.3)	95(24.4)	265 (67.9)	4.53
3	HT creates opportunities for welfare teachers to collaborate with you	4 (1.0)	18(4.6)	2 (0.5)	108 (27.7)	258(66.2)	4.53
4	HT involves teachers to organise support activities to VPs	6(1.5)	19(4.9)	5 (1.3)	119(30.5)	241 (61.8)	4.46
5	HT works very much to foster collaboration to support VPs	8(2.1)	22 (5.6)	3 (0.8)	126(32.3)	231 (59.2)	4.41
6	HT collaborates with teachers to support my needs	9(2.3)	30 (7.7)	3 (0.8)	110 (28.2)	238 (61.0)	4.38
7	HT engages with community organizations to provide resources for you	8(2.1)	27(6.9)	4 (1.0)	126(32.3)	286 (73.3)	4.37
8	HT involved in monitoring your academic progress and well-being	7 (1.8)	14(3.6)	3(0.8)	178 (45.6)	188(48.2)	4.35
9	HT organizes activities such as games and clubs that include all pupils	3 (0.8)	20(5.1)	7(1.8)	191(49.0)	169(43.3)	4.29
10	HT encourages teachers to collaborate with my family to discuss your educational needs	15 (3.8)	33 (8.5)	6 (1.5)	124 (31.8)	212(54.4)	4.24
GRAND MEAN							4.41

Source: Field Data, 2025 Key: F= Frequency, %= percentage VSE= To Very Small Extent, SE= To Small extent. ME= To Moderate Extent, GE= To a great extent VGE= To a very great extent.

Table 2

Vulnerable Pupils Responses on Collaboration Role Done by Public Primary School Head Teachers in Addressing Educational Needs of Vulnerable Pupils in Iringa and Mufindi Districts (VPs n=390).

Data on Table 2 present the responses from vulnerable pupils (n=490) regarding the extent to which head teachers fulfil collaboration roles in addressing the needs of vulnerable pupils. The data indicate consistently high mean scores across all ten items ranging from 4.57 to 4.24 with VPs grand mean scores of 4.41. This suggests that, head teachers' strategies used contribute to a great extent to addressing

educational needs of VPs. On the other hand, the collaboration role strategies used by HTs were rated above grand mean in five statements out of 10 statements. These statements include, head teachers to engage class teachers and pupils to identify VPs, to ensure needs are available, to create room for WFTs to collaborate with VPs, involving teachers to organise support activities and to foster collaborations in supporting VPs educational needs.

However, statements about head teachers collaborate with teachers to support VPs, to engage community organization, get involved in monitoring progress and wellbeing of VPs and encourage teachers to collaborate with VPs family to discuss your educational needs were below the grand mean. Even though, some variables were below grand mean all weigh to a great extent in contributing to address educational needs of VPs. These results imply that, head teachers have to make sure that they enforce and consider all strategies as a major indicator in addressing educational needs for VPs.

In the research question number three that was about to what extent collaboration role of public primary school head teachers address educational needs of vulnerable pupils, an ordinal logistics regression model was used to test the relationship between head teachers' collaboration roles in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils. The model Goodness-of-fit tests was performed to assess how well the model fits the data. Pseudo R-squared metrics like Cox & Snell's R-squared and Nagelkerke's R-squared were tested to indicate the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the model and Parameter Estimates (Coefficients) that are SPSS output were tested to provide coefficients (β) for each independent variable as shown in Ordinal Logistic Regression Model Output on Table 3. The research question three on collaboration of head teachers in addressing educational needs of vulnerable pupils had the following hypothesis and model assumptions:

Null hypothesis

Ho: There is no significant relationship between the collaboration role of public primary school head teachers and addressed educational needs of vulnerable pupils.

Assumptions of Ordinal logistic regression

- Dependent variables should be measured at the ordinal level meaning that categories have a meaningful order.
- Linearity of the Log-Odds: Logistic regression assumes a linear relationship between the independent variables and the log-odds of the dependent variable.
- Independence of Observations: Each observation in the dataset should be independent of others. There should be one or more independent variables that are continuous, ordinal or categories
- Absence of Multicollinearity: Independent variables should not be highly correlated with each other.
- No Outliers: Outliers can disproportionately influence the model potentially leading to inaccurate results.

Decisions rules

- If the p-value is less than the significance level (0.05), reject the null hypothesis.
- If the p-value is greater than the significance level (0.05), accept the null hypothesis.

S/N	Variables	Estimate Coefficient (β)	Std. Error	Wald	Sig.
1	HT creates opportunities for all teachers to collaborate to supporting VPs	2.703	1.685	2.575	.109
2	HT collaborates with teachers to monitor the progress and wellbeing of VPs	.689	1.298	.281	.596
3	HT conducts regular meetings to share strategies to support VPs	4.217	1.372	9.451*	.002
4	HT collaborate with community organizations to provide resources for VPs	-1.022	1.178	.752	.386
5	HT creates opportunities for teachers and pupils to collaborate with VPs to discuss their needs	6.070	1.928	9.916*	.002
6	HT collaborates with educational stakeholders to ensured provision of adequate resources for VPs	-8.563	2.983	8.242*	.004
7	HT involves teachers in organizing support activities to VPs such as games and clubs that include all pupils	-2.715	1.631	2.770	.096
8	HT supports teachers to collaborate with VPs families discuss their educational needs	-3.700	1.443	6.574*	.010
9	HT collaborative efforts have addressed the unique needs of VPs	5.392	1.429	14.246*	.000
10	HT engages parents in joint planning to support VPs	2.470	1.484	2.770	.096
Vulnerable pupils Output					
1	HT engages classroom teachers and pupils to identify VPs.	-.853	.374	5.202*	.023
2	HT ensures your needs are available	.416	.394	1.116	.291
3	HT creates opportunities for welfare teachers to collaborate with you	.311	.311	1.000	.317
4	HT involves teachers in organizing support activities to VPs	-.698	.299	5.470*	.019
5	HT works very much to foster collaboration to support VPs	.150	.334	.203	.653
6	HT collaborates with teachers to support my needs	.032	.331	.009	.923
7	HT engages with community organizations to provide resources for VPs	-.028	.310	.008	.929
8	HT involved in monitoring your academic progress and well-being	-.809	.303	7.133*	.008
9	HT organizes activities such as games and clubs that include all pupils	.341	.270	1.598	.206
10	HT encourages teachers to collaborate with your family to discuss your educational needs	.221	.268	.678	.410

Source: Field Data, 2025: Note: * WFTs Variables significant at 0.05, -2 Log Likelihood (model Fitting) = 90.328 (P = 0.000), Goodness-of-fit: Pearson Chi-square = 107.934 (P = 1.000); Pseudo R-Square (Cox

& Snell R Square= 0.744, Nagelkerke R Square = .792) Vulnerable pupils Key: Note: * VPs Variables significant at 0.05, -2 Log Likelihood (model Fitting) = 651.149 (P= .013), Goodness-of-fit: Pearson Chi-square = 802.453 (P = 0.24); Pseudo R-Square (Cox & Snell R Square= 0.148, Nagelkerke R Square = 0.166).

Table 3

Output of Ordinal Logistic Regression Model for welfare teachers and vulnerable pupils (WFTs n=62) and (VPs n=390)

Welfare teachers' data show that five variables were significant, if the $p\text{-value} \leq \alpha$: we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between collaboration strategies of public primary school head teachers and levels of access of educational needs of vulnerable pupils. The strongest predictor was head teacher collaborative efforts have addressed the unique needs of vulnerable pupils. $p= 0.000$) and Wald statistic= 5.470 if the $p\text{-value} \leq \alpha$: we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between teacher collaborative efforts and addressed the unique needs of vulnerable pupils. This implies that collaborative efforts made by head teacher was the strongest predictor of addressed the unique needs of vulnerable pupils.

It was further shown that the Nagelkerke R^2 statistics that represents the adjusted Cox and Snell R^2 statistics was 0.744 which implies that 74% of the variance the unique needs of vulnerable pupils were explained by the independent variables that were entered in the model. This implies that head teacher put much efforts to address educational needs of vulnerable pupils. It means that head teachers make sure that all educational stakeholders are in line and aware on the existing educational needs of VPs. The DfE's Supporting Vulnerable Pupils guidance (2021) emphasizes the importance of a whole-school approach in addressing the needs of disadvantaged pupils. Ensure that all staff, from teachers to administrative personnel are aligned in their efforts to support vulnerable pupils. The findings align with the idea that head teachers play a pivotal role in building trust and fostering collaboration. Epstein theory emphasizes the importance of collaboration among schools, families, and communities to support vulnerable pupils (Epstein, 2011).

The study findings as presented on Table 3 reveal that the relationship between head teachers support teachers to collaborate with vulnerable pupils' families and discuss their educational needs is statistically significant ($p \leq 0.01$) and Wald statistic = 6.574. This implies that head teachers' collaboration with teachers and families of vulnerable pupils is a significant predictor of access to educational needs of vulnerable pupils. It was further shown that the Nagelkerke R^2 statistics that represents the adjusted Cox and Snell R^2 statistics was 0.744 which implies that 74% of the variance on access to educational needs of vulnerable pupils was explained by the independent variables that were entered in the model. This percentage was high indicating that head teachers' collaborative initiatives with teachers and VPs families help to come out with good thoughtful on how to meet their educational needs. This was supported by Naite (2021) who indicated that pupils with highly involved parents had better academic performance and higher test scores in all the subjects compared to pupils whose parents were not involved in their education. The findings, also suggested that parents should grow more awareness on the importance of visiting and supporting their children in school.

Also, concerning head teachers create opportunities for teachers to collaborate with vulnerable pupils to discuss vulnerable pupils' needs, it was statistically significant at $p= 0.002$) and Wald statistic= 9.916 if the $p\text{-value} \leq \alpha$: we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between head teachers create opportunities for teachers to collaborate with vulnerable pupils and discussion

of vulnerable pupils' needs. This implies that opportunities created by head teachers to collaborate with teachers was a significant predictor to discuss educational needs of VPs. It was further shown that the Nagelkerke R^2 statistics that represents the adjusted Cox and Snell R^2 statistics was 0.744 which implies that 74% of the variance on head teacher creates opportunities for teachers to collaborate with vulnerable pupils to discuss vulnerable pupils needs were explained by the independent variables that were entered in the model. This shows that collaboration of head teachers and teachers to discuss educational needs of vulnerable pupils make it possible for the needs being known. This was supported by Muckenthaler et al. (2020) who asserted that, collaboration leads to benefits for the vulnerable pupils as collaborating teachers all feel responsible for vulnerable pupils' learning processes and therefore can address their needs better.

Furthermore, the study data as presented on Table 3 reveal that the relationship between head teachers conducting regular meetings to share strategies of supporting vulnerable pupils and access to educational needs is statistically significant ($p \leq 0.002$) and Wald statistic = 9.451. This implies that head teachers use different strategies such as acknowledging parent condition, providing regular update to parents on VPs and celebrate success of VPs makes teachers and families of vulnerable pupils share their ideas on how to support their children's which is a significant predictor of access to educational needs of vulnerable pupils. It was further shown that the Nagelkerke R^2 statistics that represents the adjusted Cox and Snell R^2 statistics was 0.744 which implies that 74% of the variance on access to educational needs of vulnerable pupils was explained by the independent variables that were entered in the model.

Harris and Goodall (2020) asserted that, regular communication between schools and parents is a key to maintaining engagement and trust. The study maintained that, the use a variety of communication methods, such as emails, phone calls, or face-to-face meetings ensure accessibility. Moreover, a report by Ofsted (2022) emphasizes the importance of building trusting relationships with parents, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to ensure they feel supported rather than judged. It was also advised head teacher to avoid blaming or stigmatizing language when communicating with parents rather to focus on solutions especially to meet educational needs of VPs.

Furthermore, the study data as presented on Table 3 reveal that the relationship between head teachers and educational stakeholders collaborates and ensured provision of adequate resources for vulnerable pupils is statistically significant ($p \leq 0.004$) and Wald statistic = 8.242 This implies that head teachers partnership with business men, charities and community organization, together with parent and neighbouring schools is a significant predictor of to ensure on going provision of educational needs of VPs. It was further shown that the Nagelkerke R^2 statistics that represents the adjusted Cox and Snell R^2 statistics was 0.744 which implies that 74% of the variance on access to educational needs of vulnerable pupils was explained by the independent variables that were entered in the model. This result was supported by a report by the National Literacy Trust (2022) which highlights the role of partnerships with charities in improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. Goodall (2021) emphasizes the importance of parental engagement in securing and utilizing resources effectively. The study added that, involve parents in decision-making processes and keep them informed about available resources and support helps to cuter needs of vulnerable pupils.

The study findings as presented on Table 3 reveal that the relationship between head teachers is involved in monitoring academic progress and well-being is statistically significant ($p \leq 0.01$) and Wald statistic = 7.133. This implies that head teachers make effort to collaborative and advertise for VPs with charities and community organization, together with parents and neighbouring schools is a significant predictor to ensure support resources for vulnerable pupils. It was further shown that the Nagelkerke R^2 statistics that represents the adjusted Cox and Snell R^2 statistics was 0.166 which implies that 16% of the variance access to

educational needs of vulnerable pupils was explained by the independent variables that were entered in the model. Even though that the percentage was small, head teachers involved in monitoring academic progress and well-being is statistically significant. This implies that head teachers have to put more efforts in monitoring the progress and wellbeing of VPs. This was evidenced during the study that there are some schools which had collaborated with TASAF and had the project of avocado farms to support school and vulnerable pupils. Also, WVT in collaboration with some schools and parents of vulnerable pupils had supported vulnerable pupils' families with pigs, cows, goats and chicken so as to raise their capital in order to support their children. Figure one and two indicate the support from WVT and figure three indicate some of the avocado farms prepared by TASAF for one of sponsored schools.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3

Figure 1 and 2 show the support from World Vision to families of vulnerable pupils and Figure 3 shows one of TASAF avocado farm to one of schools for income generating supporting of vulnerable pupils.

The study observed that, even though the poor families are supported by WVT and TASAF still it takes a long time to show the impact since avocado farms and animal keeping take time to produce the products hence making it difficult for vulnerable pupils to access support timely. It was also evidenced during the interview that, for pupils who are supported by TASAF their money are received by their parents and hence to be used to support the whole family in-steady of responsible pupils from poor family. One of the head teachers' interviews supported by saying:

During meeting, we have been asking parents to support vulnerable pupils since they know them. It becomes difficult; for example, in a year, they contribute one bag of maize and four kilograms of beans and twelve thousand shillings for the cooks. We really please these parents, but this year, during the meeting that took place in June, the parents were very firm and refused. They say, "Why can't they buy maize with the TASAF money they receive? You see, as teachers, we feel very sorry for them. Sometimes, if we have cooked ugali and there is some left, we call them and give it to them. (Head Teacher 6, Interview, 11th October, 2024).

The close monitoring of income generating activities was established to support the attainment of educational needs of vulnerable pupils in need. That is why we see that money generating is spent in other activities contrary to the plan. If it is not done, vulnerable pupils' educational needs will still be a challenge

hence unable to reach the desired goal. The findings underscore that head teachers' collaboration with charities, community organizations, parents and neighbouring schools is a significant predictor of success in ensuring support resources for vulnerable pupils. By leveraging external expertise, pooling resources and fostering a culture of shared responsibility, head teachers create a robust support system that addresses the diverse needs of vulnerable pupils.

This was supported by a study done by Harris & Goodall (2021) who emphasize the importance of collaboration between schools, parents, and external organizations in identifying and supporting vulnerable pupils. White et al. (2024) suggested that an effective head teacher actively works to build supportive communities within and outside of the school premises. This includes establishing partnerships with local organizations, families and other stakeholders to create a network of support for students, particularly those from underrepresented backgrounds.

Data represented on Table 3 reveal that the relationship between head teachers' collaboration with classroom teachers to identify vulnerable pupils is statistically significant at $p=0.02$) and Wald statistic = 5.202. if the $p\text{-value} \leq \alpha$: we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant relationship between head teachers' collaboration with classroom teachers and to identify vulnerable pupils. This implies that head teachers' collaboration with classroom teachers was the strongest predictor to identify vulnerable pupils. It was further shown that the Negelkerke R^2 statistics that represents the adjusted Cox and Snell R^2 statistics was 0.166 which implies that 16% of the variance access to educational needs of vulnerable pupils was explained by the independent variables that were entered in the model. This means that head teachers' collaboration with classroom teachers to identify vulnerable pupils was statistically significant that influence in addressing educational needs of VPs. The study found that when the vulnerable pupils are known it is easier for them go get support. Further, this was justified by HT7 who revealed that:

In our school, we have "Tuseme" clubs and through these clubs, we help children overcome the fear of speaking up if they have a problem. They feel comfortable sharing their issues with people who can help them, especially teachers. We bring them close so that they can freely tell us about the challenges they are facing; that is the first step. Second, the children who are not from a challenging environment come and tell us about the problems their peers are facing and they explain these issues to us clearly. Third, we observe their appearance when they are at school. Even before we are told, you can see physically if a child does not have shoes, if they do not have the correct uniform, or if their sweater is torn (HT7, Interview, 9 October, 2024).

Responses underscore that head teacher engaging classroom teachers and pupils in identifying vulnerable pupils is a powerful strategy that ensures early identification, targeted support and a collaborative school culture. This promotes a school-wide ethos of care and support, where pupils and staff feel responsible for helping vulnerable peers and celebrate acts of kindness and inclusion. This is supported by Desforges and Abouchaar (2021) who highlights the role of school culture in supporting vulnerable pupils. A report by NAHT (2022) highlights the benefits of peer support programs in schools. The report suggested head teachers to train pupils to act as peer mentors or buddies for vulnerable classmates and to use peer support to address social isolation and promote inclusion.

Furthermore, the Data on Table 3 show that, the relationship between head teachers collaborates with teachers and support my needs is statistically significant ($p \leq 0.02$) and Wald statistic = 5.470. It was further shown that the Negelkerke R^2 statistics that represents the adjusted Cox and Snell R^2 statistics was 0.166

which implies that 16% of the variance access to educational needs of vulnerable pupils was explained by the independent variables that were entered in the model. This means that head teachers collaborate with teachers to support VPs needs. This was supported by Harris and Jones (2020) argue that collaborative practices between school leaders and teachers are critical for addressing the diverse needs of students, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Gómez-Hurtado et al. (2021) and Holland & Fitzgerald (2023) found that, head teachers who engage in collaboration leverage the strengths and perspectives of diverse stakeholders, including teachers, parents and community members. This collaboration not only enhances decision-making but also helps ensure that various voices are represented and considered, which is crucial for fostering an inclusive atmosphere. Leithwood et al. (2020) highlight the importance of collaborative leadership in schools, emphasizing that head teachers who work closely with teachers create a more inclusive and supportive environment for all pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable.

Testing the hypothesis, 'There is a significant relationship between head teacher collaboration role and access to educational needs of vulnerable pupils', it shown that the relationship between collaboration strategies of public primary school head teachers and access of educational needs of vulnerable pupils was found to be statistically significant at $p \leq 0.05$. Also, the grand mean of WFTs and VPs were 3.95 and 4.41 respectively, perceived as to a high extent due to head teachers' collaboration with teachers, parents, vulnerable pupils and vulnerable pupils' families. The study also found that, the use of appropriate collaboration strategies such as partnership with business men, charities, community organization and neighbouring schools helped the attainment of educational needs of vulnerable pupils. However, the support from TASAF and World Vision had an impact on vulnerable pupils needs even though to work perfect it will take time due to the nature of the project. An example for avocado field and small scale keeping of animals it takes time to gain a profit that can bring impact to vulnerable pupils needs. The study also found that regular meetings with parents and support activities like inclusive games, arts and clubs made needs of vulnerable being discussed and vulnerable pupils feel cared. The aspect of effectiveness should be brought out clearly in this section of generalisation.

CONCLUSIONS

The use of collaboration strategies such as partnership with business men, charities, community organization and neighboring schools contributed to address educational needs of vulnerable pupils. Moreover, the support from TASAF, WORLD VISION and Afya Women had an impact on vulnerable pupils needs.

Recommendations

The study recommended that head teacher should strengthen collaboration mechanism with business men, charities, community organization a neighbouring school, TASAF, WORLD VISION and Afya Women for ensuring continue support to vulnerable educational needs. Also head teacher should conduct regular meetings to parents and support activities like inclusive games and clubs to all pupils in order to provide insight on the existing educational needs of vulnerable pupils.

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