

International Perspectives on Preparing Pre-Service Teachers for Inclusive Education Pedagogies: Implications for Developing Countries

Mooka Godfrey Mukelabai¹, Daniel Siakalima², Magdalene Simalalo³,
Gistered Muleya², Thomas Musankuleni Kaputa⁴, Francis Simui^{2,*}

¹Mufulira College of Education,

²Institute of Distance Education, University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia

³School of Education, University of Zambia, Lusaka, Zambia

⁴Zimbabwe Open University

*Corresponding author: francis.simui@unza.zm

Received October 21, 2020; Revised November 22, 2020; Accepted December 01, 2020

Abstract The Dakar World Education Conference (2000) committed governments to ensure that their education systems are inclusive and specifically cater for the needs of disadvantaged, vulnerable and marginalized learners. For Zambia as one of the developing countries, in its Persons with disability Act of 2012, it affirms the government's commitment for persons with disabilities to access an inclusive, quality and free primary, secondary and higher education on an equal basis with others in the communities in which they live. The debates on how best to prepare pre-service teachers for diverse, inclusive classrooms have led to some teacher educators working more closely with schools in trialing new approaches. In this discourse, we explore literature on preparation of pre-service teachers in inclusive pedagogies worldwide. Emerging from this study is the strong emphasis on inclusive pedagogy with a bias on improving the quality of mainstream education and addressing educational inequality among others. The findings contribute to inclusive education policy development in institutions of higher learning and pedagogical practices among others. The study further adds on to scanty literature on inclusive education pedagogies.

Keywords: disability, preparation, pre-service, teachers, inclusive education, pedagogies

Cite This Article: Mooka Godfrey Mukelabai, Daniel Siakalima, Magdalene Simalalo, Gistered Muleya, Thomas Musankuleni Kaputa, and Francis Simui, "International Perspectives on Preparing Pre-Service Teachers for Inclusive Education Pedagogies: Implications for Developing Countries." *American Journal of Educational Research*, vol. 8, no. 12 (2020): 885-892. doi: 10.12691/education-8-12-1.

1. Introduction

Educational prerogatives around the world have embraced the vocabulary of inclusive education and invested significant resources into making schools more inclusive. This development can be somewhat attributed to among many other factors some level of civic awareness and civic knowledge within the educational processes [1-13]. However, exclusion still remains a real and present danger [14] and [15]. In order to be inclusive and to avoid segregation, a key area in which schools must respond is that of pedagogy. Without effective pedagogy, we have no operative method of education and without purposeful and effective inclusive pedagogy, we have no basis for meaningful inclusion. This article is part of the principal researcher's master's thesis exploring preservice teachers' preparation in inclusive pedagogical approaches that may be useful and have been shown to be adaptable regardless of context. The researchers reviewed literature on preparing Pre-Service Teachers for Inclusive Pedagogies

for the last 12 years linked to 15 countries namely; Australia, England, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Montana, Scotland, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Thailand, Uganda, Zambia & Zimbabwe.

2. Theoretical Underpinnings

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory which blends so well with Tomlinson's differentiated instruction was applied within this study to illuminate understanding on the concept of preparing teachers for inclusive education pedagogy. Inclusive pedagogy reflects Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, the main tenet of which lies in the social, interaction relationship between teacher and student. [16] points out that the teacher is the professional in the classroom, an individual who has been suitably trained to mentor and lead her wards, using appropriate techniques, assisting each to reach their potential within the learning context. Teachers are legally and ethically bound to be the expert leading the child to full development [17].

Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) has been shown in research as a valuable tool towards assisting students with successful problem solving outcomes through student-to-student interaction, and through student and teacher interaction [18]. Vygotsky's theory relates to learner readiness and ability to actively construct own knowledge and meaning from their experiences by perceiving various things around them and making sense out of those objects in particular learning situation [19]. The learning is adaptive as it integrates new knowledge with the existing knowledge and allows for generation of innovative idea or work; it involves more of exploration and discovery through scaffolding learning at various stages of learning [20]. At present, the idea of building a pedagogy of inclusion, with well-defined characteristics, is becoming more and more evident. It is promoted by individual researchers [21] and [22].

3. Procedure for the Literature Review

The literature review procedure was guided by [23]. In this study, literature review was delimited to the following databases accessible to the researcher, namely, the Education Resources Information Center (ERIC), Directory of Open Access Resources (OpenDOAR); JSTOR, SAGE Knowledge, SAGE Online, Taylor and Francis online, University of Zambia Repository, among others. The literature review search in each of the listed databases was conducted through refining key terms that encompassed pedagogy in various inclusive education formats. The literature search was limited to journals published in the past 13 years, out of which 68% of the literature identified and used had been published in the past 7 years (2013-2020). After an initial literature search across various databases, specific articles were purposively sampled based on their relevance and relatedness to the study at hand. The sampled journals were then studied in detail using an in-depth literature search guide of experiences of preservice teachers in inclusive Pedagogy in foreign Developed countries.

4. International Perspectives on Preparing Preservice Teachers in inclusive Pedagogy

Research perspectives from European and Asian continents provide experiences of practice. For example, [24] examined how three very culturally different secondary schools in the South-East of England interpreted inclusive policies and illuminated the various constraints to inclusive practices' implementation as experienced by senior leaders, teachers, parents and pupils in these schools. Conceptual unpreparedness towards inclusion verses integration, knowledge and false conceptualisations of special educational needs and difficulties associated with differentiation and time limitations were the main barriers presented. The implications for teacher initial and professional education were posited and suggested that inclusion can work by removing the diagnostic paradigm associated with special

educational needs and by creating a framework for teachers' lifelong learning focusing on a social justice oriented pedagogy (inclusive pedagogy) that will empower teachers conceptually and practically.

[25] embarked on education reform for inclusion in Asia through an inquiry about teacher education. While teacher preparation courses needed to have an appropriate curriculum it was also critical to ensure that they utilize appropriate pedagogy that wherever possible reflects the type of pedagogies to be employed in an inclusive school. Based on an analysis of a very large data set of teachers with one to five years teaching experience (N = 10,952), [25] set out to investigate to what extent preparation in pedagogy and practice teaching as compared with only content knowledge contributed to a highly qualified teacher status. Their results unequivocally demonstrated that teachers with extensive preparation in pedagogy (e.g. selecting curricular materials, planning effective lessons, employing a range of instructional strategies and assessing students) and practice teaching (taken within a school environment) received significantly higher levels on their full certification than those with little or no preparation in these areas. Such practices regarding learning inclusive techniques cannot occur in an isolated study but must be infused within and across all discipline areas. In addition, how can an inclusive philosophy be promoted when many universities and colleges themselves adopt an exclusive attitude towards whom they will select to train to become a teacher? This research weighs and draws significant inquiry on the preservice preparations in inclusive pedagogical practices by singling exclusive attitudes demonstrated by universities and colleges.

[26] in a study embarked on educating the heart and the mind through conceptualizing inclusive pedagogy for sustainable development revealed that there was growing global consensus that inequality is making sustainable development goals unattainable. Social inclusion of the historically marginalized and equality of opportunity is crucial for sustainable development. Inclusive quality education for all is therefore considered as one of the three main targets for sustainable development according to UNESCO's Incheon declaration in 2015. The paper applied an institutional ethnography of a globally interconnected old colonial school's inclusive pedagogic work in postcolonial India. The paper argues that the school's conception of inclusive education addressing the diverse learning needs of children developed as a syncretic cultural formation drawing on its institutional mission for social justice, as well as indigenous history of educational reform and philosophy of community engagement.

In a related development of searching for ideal inclusive practices, [27] pursued a novel study of graduates from a one year Professional Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) course at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. The study explored how beginning teachers in their various contexts used the theoretical ideas of inclusive pedagogy. Observation and interview data were analysed to reveal linkages between the principles that informed the course and the practices of programme graduates. By drawing on examples from the data that illustrate inclusive pedagogy in action, questions are addressed about how teachers in diverse classrooms create learning environments with opportunities that are

available to everybody. These findings provide further evidence that an inclusive pedagogical approach cannot be summarised as a simplistic list of 'how to' tips, but instead it requires teachers to make thoughtful choices, underpinned by a sound professional knowledge, in order to provide opportunities for all to participate in the learning community of the classroom.

The other research experiences are drawn from [28] who explored a proactive partnership model designed to equip pre-service teachers with deeper role understandings in teaching students with disabilities in Australia. Their study involved ten pre-service teachers consisting of seven female and three male; aged 20-25 years with one mature-aged male, five school leaders/principals consisting of all female; aged 48-62 years old; with 25-42 years teaching and leadership experience; and one of whom had gifted/talented/ multicultural qualification, six special education mentors consisting of five female and one male; aged 29-54 years; 2-22 years inclusive teaching experience; and three had special education qualifications. The study employed a collaborative model which involved sustained professional experiences in schools on four mornings each week over 38 weeks, offered in conjunction with their final-year teacher education studies in Diversity and Inclusive Education. A unique emphasis of this qualitative study was a focus on identifying conducive real-life experiences and ideal teacher qualities for undertaking challenging inclusive practitioner roles. Findings highlighted the perspectives of school leaders, special education mentors and pre-service teachers in improving inclusive learning outcomes for all students while developing an effective collaborative partnership model for teacher education. It emphasized on the need to understand diversity and effective inclusive pedagogy for enhancing inclusive practices.

In a related research inquiry, [29] reported on a Thai Bureau of Special Education professional development partnership program with an Australian inclusive school in which 16 early childhood teachers from Thailand participated. This community of practice inquiry project generated qualitative data from pre- and post-professional workshops semi-structured interviews and analysis of teachers' professional learning journals during the inquiry phases of the project. Thematic analysis of the data showed that the international professional learning immersion program exerted an influential impact on the teachers who participated suggesting; teachers developed better understandings of children with special education needs by creating a positive mind-set for inclusive pedagogical change.

[30] utilised a community of practice approach to investigate teachers' understandings of inclusive pedagogy and found that inclusive pedagogy represents a significant paradigm shift from teacher directed teaching to students with special educational needs (SEN) as contributors of knowledge. Florian's paradigm shift idea is significant for transforming traditional beliefs about children with SEN, thus many teachers found it difficult to implement. [21] examined teachers' professional being, knowing and acting as inclusive teachers using the Inclusive Pedagogical Approach in Action (IPAA) framework in two Scottish primary schools. They found that IPAA framework extends what is ordinarily available

to every student whether they are labelled as SEN or not. They stressed that it is a pedagogical approach that "focuses on everybody in the community of the classroom" (p. 820). IPAA is based on a philosophy that transforms deterministic views of ability and children's cognitive development and replaces them with the concept of transformability [31].

Another study on community of practice is that done by [32] that focussed on a professional development program for science teachers near or on American Indian reservations in Montana. The study employed a quasi-experimental design and quantitative methods to examine the impact of the program on teachers' practice and beliefs, and to determine the relationship between student-centred equity focused instruction and students' science test score gains. Results of the analyses indicate that after 2 years in the program teachers changed their teaching practices and beliefs about their ability to teach science and to implement equitable instruction in a way that positively impacted students' performance. A brief review of six pedagogical and theoretical approaches used in education and science education that were grouped as inclusive pedagogies collectively contribute to making science teaching and learning more inclusive to a broader population of learners, such as students from diverse cultural, linguistic, and social backgrounds and students with physical and learning differences who have traditionally been marginalized in learning science. Furthermore, these inclusive pedagogies aim to decrease educational inequities and raise the level of academic rigor and access for all students. Teaching through cultural points of intersection is an example of inclusive pedagogies for teacher professional development that showed both positive teacher and student gains.

As a specific focus on teacher education, [33] considered the perceptions of pre-service teachers undertaking the first year of the Diploma of Teaching in the one university in the Solomon Islands, the only university that prepares teachers to work across the entire archipelago. Data are collected pre and post participation in a course on inclusive education to identify its impact on pre-service teachers' intentions, attitudes, concerns and teaching efficacy to teach in inclusive classrooms. The findings reveal that teaching inclusive strategies to pre-service teachers which has been a major focus of the revised course, without linking this to the broader context of inclusive education and applying this across all curriculum areas appears to be insufficient for improving positive attitudes, teaching efficacy, or reducing concerns in general. Continued reflection and review of the compulsory course on inclusive education is expected to occur. Consideration also needs to be given to how strategies for inclusive education can be broadened and infused across all curricula areas.

[34] embarked on a mixed methods study in the USA that examined 120 early childhood and elementary preservice teachers from two universities, from both general and special education programs on their perceptions related to inclusion. Descriptive statistics, analysis of variance, and multiple regression were used to examine the quantitative results. The findings indicated that preservice teachers lacked a coherent understanding of inclusion and perceived themselves as needing

additional development to be fully prepared to teach in an inclusive setting. The results suggest that teacher preparation programs need to provide a more coherent conceptual framework to guide the enhancement of both course and field work related to inclusion and effective inclusive practices.

[35] explored for the first time the pedagogical orientations of Indonesian teachers in the context of inclusive education. A mixed methods approach was used for an analysis of questionnaire data from 140 teachers and qualitative interviews from 20 teachers in four inclusive schools. The findings suggest that, in general, the implicit orientation of teachers is social constructivist. This orientation is also reflected in their reported classroom practices. Although less common, more directive pedagogical approaches, appear to have an impact upon the flexibility of roles within two teacher inclusive classrooms. Whilst the number of pupils with disabilities within each class was a significant issue for interviewees, no pupils were deemed unteachable in their classrooms. Furthermore, what teachers described as a 'special pedagogy' typically entailed additional teaching time and modified assessments, and consequently framed as 'good teaching for all.' The questionnaires also contained responses from student and special schoolteachers which supported the view that teachers' beliefs about inclusive pedagogy are mediated by experience and occupation.

[36] shared experiences about designing University Courses to improve Pre-Service teachers' Pedagogical Content Knowledge of Evidence-Based Inclusive Practice. The study described here is part of a program of research investigating the application of a theoretical course design approach to pre-service teacher education. In this study the focus was to establish the effects of the design approach on pre-service teachers' mastery of pedagogical content knowledge about inclusive education. A quasi-experimental comparison group design was employed to establish the differential effects of two course designs, one based on the theoretical principle of embedded design derived from self-organization and the other based on classroom instruction and practicum-type experience. The results indicated statistically significant findings in favour of the embedded design group for pedagogical content knowledge. Recommendations were made for the design of pre-service teacher inclusive education courses.

However, in another study that examined the meaning of inclusion among pre-service teachers, [37] found that the adoption of inclusive practices occurs when teachers are "comfortable with the use of appropriate pedagogy and when they believe that all students can learn and should be included in heterogeneous classrooms" (p. 894). She adds that developing the capacity of pre-service teachers as well as their competency for inclusive practices is challenging [37].

[38] conducted a qualitative research to explore the teaching practice experiences of student teachers enrolled in the Special Education program at the University of Botswana using individual and focus group interviews. The findings indicated that teaching learners with SENs was challenging for the student teachers. The participants expressed both positive and negative experiences of teaching practice relating to knowledge and skills, mentor

relationship and how teaching practice is organised. They recommended that teacher trainers should ensure that student teachers being prepared for entry into the teaching profession are exposed to positive inclusive experiences and equipped with relevant pedagogical skills around inclusive education as they progress through the special education program.

Similarly, [39] pursued a study on pedagogical practices in Ghana in relation to inclusive education. Using a critical post-colonial discursive framework from three focus groups with 21 student teachers, a total of 42 hours of non-participant observation of their classroom teaching and existing research commentaries. Their findings revealed that pedagogical practices were prescriptive, mechanistic, and did not value student diversity and different learning styles. They concluded with new directions for teacher education programs in Ghana that value and celebrate diversity, and difference.

Another research in this field is by [40] who explored inclusive pedagogy with selected inclusive practitioners in one education district of South Africa. The research adopted a qualitative approach. Interviews were used to generate data from the six purposefully selected inclusive practitioners in secondary schools due to their interest and involvement in inclusive education. An interview schedule was used to ensure that all six practitioners were asked the same open-ended questions and were therefore free to express their own opinions. The interviews were transcribed for analysis. An inductive analytical framework was used to analyse the data, which were read several times to obtain a holistic picture of the depth involved. The data were then divided into categories from which the themes were derived. The findings indicated that the teachers did not have a universally accepted definition of inclusive pedagogy but the different meanings the teachers associated with inclusive pedagogy, were related to their context, philosophies, and underlying assumptions of SEN and ability. These perspectives are consistent with earlier findings that teacher beliefs and practices of inclusion if situated in positivist orientations, advocates a change of behaviour in the learner.

Similar to [40] study above is the one by [41] who investigated the extent to which teachers at a Full Service School in Soweto understand and practice the principles of a Full Service School by focussing on three teachers in the foundation phase. Classroom observations, individual semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used to generate data. This qualitative study was framed theoretically by Florian's framework of inclusive pedagogy. Extrapolation of data suggests that teachers understood the concept of inclusion, made use of different teaching approaches and indicated that there are quite a number of challenges they face on a daily basis.

In a related study to [40] and [41], [42] embarked on a study of framing heuristics in inclusive education among Uganda's preservice teacher education programme. A conceptual vocabulary of frame and qualitative analysis of individual, group interviews and classroom observations were employed. The sample size comprised of 17 participants in phase one and 15 participants in phase two of the research. Three main findings emerged; Firstly, interpretations of inclusive education displayed a narrow framing heuristic of inclusive education as a perfunctory,

daily practice rather than a pathway for reflective, inclusive pedagogical engagement. Secondly, the heuristic encouraged the treatment of inclusive pedagogy as a 'label' under a specific rubric referring to sensory impairments or disabilities - a historical device for sociocultural exclusion. Thirdly, inclusive education as a praxis was misframed from its original intentions, causing tension and resentment among practitioners. These findings contribute to the debates on the sustainability of inclusive education pedagogical practices beyond preservice teacher education in Uganda.

[43] pursued a study that examined pre-service teachers' understanding, attitudes, preparation and concerns regarding inclusion in early childhood education (ECE) in Zimbabwe. Entrenched within inclusive pedagogy, this descriptive study draws on a sample of 24 pre-service teachers purposively selected from the largest teachers' college with the oldest specialized department for ECE in the country. Throughout the analysis, a constant comparative approach of organizing data with continual adjustment was used. Participants understood and held positive attitudes towards inclusion, but felt ill prepared for it and revealed social and cultural contextual barriers to its practice. Several strategies including the infusion of inclusive education training into regular teacher preparation courses, the development of advocacy expertise in pre-service teachers, pooling resources, fostering positive attitudes among stakeholders and considering teachers' concerns in designing and implementing teacher preparation programmes would enhance inclusion in ECE in Zimbabwe. The study serves as a springboard for future studies on teacher preparation for inclusion.

[44] investigated the challenges facing the implementation of inclusive education programme in public secondary schools in Migori Kenya. The study sample comprised of 5 students with special educational needs per school from all the types of school as boarding and day mixed, yielding a total of 170 students, all school principals, 3 teachers per school and the Sub-County Quality Assurance and Standards Officer. Data was collected using questionnaires for students and teachers and interview schedules for school principals and the District Quality Assurance Standards Officer. The main research instruments used were questionnaires, interview guides and observation checklists. The major findings were that, first, physical and critical teaching learning resources were either inadequate or were quite dilapidated. Secondly, there were inadequate specialized teachers to handle the special needs education curriculum. Third, there were several socioeconomic and cultural variables that constraints effective teaching and learning in most sampled schools.

In a related development, [45] focussed on in-Service Primary School Teachers' Knowledge of Inclusive Pedagogy (IP) in Ethiopia. The researcher used embedded concurrent mixed methods research design: cross-sectional survey and case study methods. The result of the study indicated that the study participants had marginal level of knowledge of IP ($M = 2.44$, $SD = 0.85$). This result mainly attributed to the participants' inadequate training on knowledge of IP and lack of teaching materials and facilities that foster the development of the IP. The study result implies that these teachers could not meet diverse students' needs because of their lack of knowledge IP.

[46] carried out a study that focused on lived experiences of seven (7) students with visual Impairments (SwVI) while pursuing their studies at 'Sim' University (Pseudonym) in Zambia using a qualitative methodology driven by Hermeneutics Phenomenology research. The researcher generated data through unstructured interview schedules, focused group discussion guide and observation guide. The findings among other affirm that inclusive pedagogy played a critical part in the academic progression and success of SwVI and observed that progression and success of students could be attributed to the support by their lecturers and tutors. However, the preparation aspect of preservice teachers or SwVI nor the sighted in inclusive pedagogies are not fully addressed.

Earlier on [47] focused on a study entitled 'Preparing Teachers for Inclusive Education: A Study of the English Approach.' This a qualitative study whose focus was modelled on the British way of preparing teachers for inclusive education to inform developing countries. Emergent in the study was a stern reality that there is no pre-packaged solutions to preparing teachers for inclusive education since the target beneficiaries and contexts were heterogeneous in nature. Thus, there was need to ride on reflective practice as a critical tool to empower teachers to welcome diversity and challenge disablers in their learning contexts [48] & [49]. Equally, ICTs were recommended as enablers to academic success of learners for inclusive education [50].

[51] examined the reality of inclusive education for learners with learning disabilities in two selected primary schools of Kabwe District in Central province-Zambia. A Qualitative research approach was used in the generation of data from sample that consisted of 50 participants; twenty teachers (20) teaching learners with learning disabilities and (30) thirty learners with learning disabilities. A purposive sampling technique was used in selecting teachers while the Quota sampling technique was used in selecting learners suspected of having learning disabilities. Data were analysed in themes guided by the research questions. Findings revealed the presence of learners with learning disabilities but teachers did not demonstrate understanding of the concept of learning disabilities. As a result of limited understanding of the concept of learning disabilities, learners with the learning disabilities did not receive attention within inclusive education classrooms, thereby questioning the reality of inclusive education. This research clearly reveals the failure by these teachers to provide attention within inclusive classroom settings thereby probing their preparation in inclusive pedagogies at their initial preservice training.

Related to [51], [52] in their study focused on inclusive education in the Harare Metropolitan Province of Zimbabwe. The thrust of their study was to interrogate the possibility of moving from rhetoric to action in order to include the excluded. This study therefore explored the implementation status of inclusive education in all primary schools in the capital city of Zimbabwe. A quantitative research using a survey design was used for this study. The sample included all the heads of primary schools in Harare Metropolitan Province. Key findings confirmed that most primary schools had embraced the concept of inclusive education by having children with

disabilities in their schools. They also indicated the different types of disability in their schools [53]. This study did not focus on preparing teacher for inclusive education, which is a critical ingredient to the success of inclusive education. However, it confirmed the antecedents such as positive attitudes, for preparing teachers in inclusive education needed to be in place in schools for inclusive education to thrive.

[54] examined Zambian university students' attitudes towards including students with disabilities in general education classrooms. Questionnaires were distributed to 497 Zambian university students. Four hundred and eighty-four questionnaires were included in the analysis, resulting in a response rate of 97%. Results of the study indicated that, overall, Zambian university students hold positive attitudes towards inclusion. Several factors were found to be related to the students' attitudes towards inclusion.

A conference that provided a platform to bring together teachers, teacher educators, policy makers, government representatives, researchers and education partners in Zambia was held. It included the Impact Network, the Norwegian Association of Disabled, JICA, and USAID who presented and examined their knowledge, experiences and research in pedagogy in order to develop theories, practices, and a common perspective to transform pedagogy shared diverse experiences [55]. Despite progress, school performance remains below the minimum standards established by Zambia's Ministry of Education. Challenges remain such as quality, relevance, efficiency, and equity. To help tackle these challenges, a National Conference on Pedagogy was held in Lusaka, on 29-30 November 2018, supported by the Capacity Development for Education (CapED) Programme, UNESCO's delivery platform for the Education 2030 Agenda. The findings reveal that teachers in Zambia need to take an introspection of their practices in class. They have relied on the use of teaching approaches which promote rote learning and memorization of facts hence Zambian learners have not performed well in any assessment which required them to display real conceptual understanding [55,56]. This research similar to [46], [51] probes the nature of preservice teachers' preparation in inclusive pedagogies by pointing out the practices of serving teachers who seem to rely on approaches that promote rote learning and memorisation of facts which are attributes that deviate from inclusive pedagogy [57].

5. Conclusion

The reviewed literature has demonstrated how the notion of inclusion seems to be conceptualised differently as countries have varying contexts which influence how it is understood and implemented. It has highlighted the diverse nature of the pedagogical practices in inclusive classrooms among preservice and in-service teachers which require anchoring pedagogical practices at initial teacher training. Thus, most higher learning institutions in developing countries have less documented preservice preparation experiences to guide policy formulation, implementation and evaluation on inclusive pedagogies.

The literature has also displayed how general educators are responsible for facilitating inclusion that correlate with their higher levels of self-efficacy related to inclusion, however inclusive pedagogy remains an area of inclusive practices that requires research in developing countries.

6. Study Implications

Given the emergent findings above, the following are the implications of the study worthy pursuing further:

- i. There is need for emphasis on positive attitudes weaved within the inclusive education pedagogy for all preservice teachers.
- ii. There is need for customization of inclusive education pedagogy within local contexts during preparation for pre-service teachers for inclusion. This is a sure way of ensuring sustainability of local interventions.
- iii. In addition, there is need to ride on Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development as a valuable tool towards assisting students during their inclusive education pedagogical preparations.
- iv. Finally, there is need to harness already existing promising inclusive education pedagogy to inform policy and guide practice. Thus avoid duplicity of efforts and wastage of resources.

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