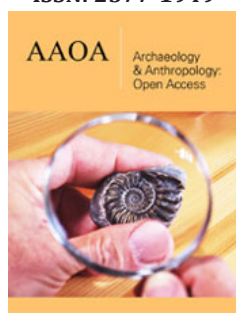


Risk of Generalizing Parents's Narratives in South African Literature: South African Ethnography for Engaging Leading Organizations for Inclusive Assistance

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Abstract

This article explored notable examples of cross-cultural studies on the experiences of disability through a comprehensive literature review. It primarily focused on the feelings and experiences of parents caring for their children, as drawn from existing literature. The findings generated from the life histories of parents demonstrate varying perceptions and societal attitudes towards cognitive disabilities, emphasizing the impact on individuals and their families. Central to this discussion was the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which has established itself as a major global agency for promoting world peace and security through international cooperation in education, arts, sciences and culture and monitoring health issues, including the mental strain that parents endure in the process of caring for a child with disability. Literature provided extensive dimensions for understanding the intersections between personal, social and environmental factors that influence the experiences of parents as caregivers of children with cognitive disabilities. The key findings reveal that parents often feel dejected because communication about narrative reporting, urgency and long-term support for caregivers of children with cognitive disabilities in many local schools in South Africa lacks cultural relativism. This gap remains despite the impact of historical factors such as colonization, apartheid, gender, socio-economic status, and education on disability experiences. This review contributes to the academic discourse on cognitive disabilities and offers practical implications for policymakers and practitioners aiming to enhance support for affected families. By exploring the dimensions of literature, the article advocates for urgency and intent in representing and supporting systems for inclusive practices in education and community settings, as derived from relevant ethnography.

Key Topic Breakdown and Key Words

Ethnographic insights

Refers to anthropological in-depth studies or observations about people's lives and cultures.

Reporting case-specific narratives

This is telling detailed specific (cultural context) stories or giving examples about subjective parental experiences.

Caregivers of children with cognitive disabilities

In the context of this paper, these were either biological, culturally and legally recognized parents or guardians who had children living with cognitive disability.

To the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

This means that the information is being shared with a global agency for promoting world peace and security through international cooperation in education, arts, sciences and culture.

Keywords: Literature; United nations educational scientific and cultural organization (UNESCO); Ethnography; Case-specific narratives; Local setting; Culture sensitivity; Cultural relativism; Education for All EFA; Teacher assistance; Urgency; cognitive disability

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Acknowledgment of Key Cross-Cultural Studies Contributing to Understanding of Disability Experiences

These studies contribute to a more comprehensive knowledge of disability by emphasizing the various cultural settings and practices that impact the lives of people with disabilities across worldwide.

The who world report on disability

The World Health Organization's comprehensive study covers disability in a variety of different countries, stressing the social, economic, and environmental aspects that influence people with disabilities worldwide.

The disability studies quarterly

This journal often features cross-cultural studies that explore how different societies perceive and address disability, offering insights into diverse cultural contexts.

The global burden of disease study

Examines the global impact of disability, gathering information on the prevalence and implications of various disabilities across cultures and geographies.

The International Classification of Functioning, disability and health (ICF)

The ICF framework, developed by the WHO, is used globally to comprehend disability holistically, considering biological, individual, and societal aspects across cultures.

Cultural models of disability project

This research looks into how diverse societies relate to and react to disabilities, exploring the beliefs and practices that surround disability in various countries.

Comparative studies on education and inclusion

Focus on research about educational methods for disabled children in many nations, focusing on how cultural views influence inclusive education legislation and practice.

Global perspectives on mental health disability

Research examines how emotional and behavioral disorders are understood and managed in various cultural contexts. It indicates differences in stigma, support systems, and treatment approaches.

Introduction

Ethnographies have long been regarded as culturally sensitive and suitable narratives in anthropology. They are thought of as serving as a representation of specific cultural contexts where informed decisions are to be made. Addressing the challenges faced by parents of children with disabilities often feels unattainable, especially in deeply rooted traditional areas like uMkhambathini. This is largely because effective support relies on narratives that blend emotional and subjective parental experiences. Generalizations can oversimplify, failing to capture the deep nuances of these diverse experiences. While the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has made effort to bridge communication gaps and has tirelessly worked to collect stories through various platforms to assist those in need, these efforts have often proven futile in many local settings in South Africa. This article argues that the support provided, both immediate and long-term, does not align with the tone of the narratives shared by parents in the abundance of literature. This discrepancy raises critical questions, such as: who reports the in-depth stories and observations of parents' lives as they unfold within their unique cultural contexts? How have reporters been sure that the intended tone is preserved in reporting, especially when parents lack immediate reporting channels? Why are local communities, schools, and educational departments being unresponsive to the revived and recommended laws for inclusion or inclusive education? The paper aims to advocate for case-specific narrative reports to inform inclusive support efforts. Moreover, it offers recommendations based on the teacher assistance initiatives

implemented by the Department of Education in South Africa during COVID-19 as a trial that may be exported to the initiative of inclusion and immediate tracking and reporting in real time. To foster permanent awareness, I also propose a suggested placard for inclusive education awareness, highlighting its absence in local mainstream schools, despite inclusive education being an established law in all ordinary schools across the country.

An exploration of the intersection between disability experiences and concern for anthropology in South Africa

It is important to highlight that while South Africa has made significant strides in establishing a legal framework for inclusive education, it cannot be ignored that the country still requires assistance from major leading agencies that support inclusive education and provide support for families throughout their journey [1]. As a developing nation, South Africa faces numerous challenges in education and healthcare that necessitate the involvement of international organizations like the WHO and UNICEF. These agencies can offer crucial resources, expertise and funding to help address systemic issues and improve educational outcomes. The structure presented in the South African education white paper 6: Special needs education: Developing an inclusive education and training system (EWP6) emphasizes enhancements in the operation and role of schools across the educational framework. This policy addresses the needs of mainstream, full-service and Special Needs Schools (SNS) [2]. Special needs schools are specifically established to offer tailored assistance catering to the varying levels of needs, whether low, medium, or high, of students. This policy further

underscores the government's commitment to enhancing special schools and aims to implement inclusivity while improving the quality of education and service delivery through infrastructure development and resource mobilization [2]. The Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS) framework provides a blueprint for the identification and evaluation of learners, ensuring that relevant interventions are available for those experiencing barriers to learning, including students with disabilities [2].

Meanwhile, the Integrated School Health Programme (ISHP) plays a crucial role in the development of inclusive education by focusing on the provision of health services in schools. This initiative addresses health-related issues and helps to minimize barriers to learning, ensuring that all students have the support they need to succeed [1]. It is necessary to shed light on the complex ways in which cultural context influences the socialization of children with disabilities and their parents' experiences. This to ensure that their stories are understood within the larger fabric of their socio-cultural beliefs and practices. This insight can help to shape more effective assistance programs that are relevant to the lived reality of families and schools in uMkhambathini. In such local settings, the personal stories of parents are to be looked at with amount of sensitivity as they reflect the complex interplay of cultural beliefs, community support systems, and individual circumstances. These narratives provide insight into the unique challenges parents face. Such include stigma, limited resources and differing societal expectations. Emphasizing the importance of advocacy for case-specific narrative, these individualized experiences can develop more effective and culturally sensitive support mechanisms that resonate with the realities of families navigating disability within their specific cultural frameworks [3]. This approach not only acknowledge their stories but also fosters a deeper understanding of their needs and aspirations as cultural relativism suggests in anthropology.

Review on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) initiatives to collect narratives and address communication gaps

As demonstrated in the literature, UNESCO and Education for All (EFA) initiatives embodied a comprehensive commitment to ensure that every individual, especially those in marginalized countries has access to quality education [4]. This global movement emphasizes the importance of inclusive education as a fundamental human right, advocating for the removal of barriers that hinder equitable access to education for all learners, including those with disabilities (Mkenzi & Kahonde 2012). The Education for All (EFA) echoed promotion of a child-centered pedagogy that recognizes diverse learning needs, thereby fostering environments where children can thrive academically and socially [4]. The initiative underscores that education is not merely a pathway to knowledge but a critical vehicle for social inclusion and empowerment, transforming the lives of individuals and communities (McKenzie & Kahonde 2012). Education for All (EFA) emphases on collaborative approaches highlights the necessity for partnerships among governments, educational institutions and communities to create supportive structures that accommodate all learners, especially those facing

cognitive barriers (Mantey, 2014). In this context, the integration of UNESCO's principles into local educational frameworks, such as in South African communities (uMkhambathini), is essential for addressing the systemic challenges faced by parents of children with cognitive disabilities, thus promoting a more inclusive and just educational landscape [5].

International research indicates that functional families offer the most conducive environment for children's growth, protection, support and socialization. However, the definition of family varies significantly across different states and regions, complicating efforts to establish a standardized definition. Reid-Cunningham (2009: 99-101), the author of anthropological theories of disability, argues that anthropology provides a theoretical framework for understanding disability. Furthermore, ethnographic research in this field has shown that parenting confers a social and symbolic identity, position and status in relation to one's children. A disabled individual may be socially perceived as the "other". These social and symbolic identities, along with the roles and statuses assumed by parents, can be particularly burdensome, especially when a caregiver must navigate the challenges of raising, accepting and socializing a child with a disability. The position paper of the United Nations Children's Fund (2012) effectively promotes the right of children with disabilities to receive an education, emphasizing an inclusive educational approach grounded in human rights. The report features the slogan "Education for All" (EFA), which represents a global commitment to providing quality basic education to every child and adult. This initiative is based on human rights principles and the widely held belief that education is fundamental to individual well-being and national development.

How literature demonstrates gaps as South Africa follows behind despite support from major agencies

Cognitive disability presents a complex and multifaceted challenge. Some parents are adept at reading their children's behaviors, enabling them to make informed choices that foster their intellectual development. In contrast, other parents may find it difficult to accept their children's needs and struggle to provide the necessary support. As a result, parental experiences with cognitive disabilities vary widely across different cultural settings [6]. This diversity remains a significant area of interest for many parents, emphasizing the necessity for approaches that are sensitive to individual circumstances and cultural contexts. Inclusive education in South Africa is a cornerstone of the post-apartheid educational reform agenda, aiming to provide equitable access to quality education for all learners, including those with disabilities or learning barriers. This approach is enshrined in the country's Constitution, which guarantees the right to basic education for every child [7].

The South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996 laid the legislative foundation for inclusive education by mandating that public schools, where feasible, accommodate learners with special education needs alongside their peers in mainstream settings. Section 29(3) of the Act stipulates that the Member of the Executive Council must, where reasonably practicable, provide education for

learners with special education needs at ordinary public schools and provide relevant educational support services for such learners [8]. Building upon this, the education white paper 6 on special needs education (2001) articulated a vision for transforming the education system into one that is inclusive, emphasizing the need for curriculum adaptation, teacher training and the establishment of support structures to facilitate the participation of all learners [2]. Furthermore, operationalization of inclusive education is provided by the policy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support (SIAS, 2014), which offers a standardized framework for identifying and addressing barriers to learning, ensuring that appropriate support is provided to learners in need. These legislative and policy frameworks collectively aim to create an education system that is responsive to the diverse needs of learners, promoting social justice and equity in education. Anthropology can play a vital role in this discourse by examining how cultural beliefs and practices shape parental perceptions and responses to cognitive disabilities. By exploring the lived experiences of parents in various communities through ethnographies, anthropologists can uncover the social, economic, and emotional factors that influence their decisions. This understanding can contribute to developing more effective interventions and support systems tailored to the unique needs of families, ultimately fostering a more inclusive environment for children with cognitive disabilities.

Engaging anthropology can help guide agencies by providing insights into the cultural backgrounds and social dynamics of South Africa that shape education and health in the country [6]. Anthropologists can help communities by studying their beliefs, customs, and needs, allowing them to develop solutions that are both effective and culturally appropriate. This collaborative strategy can promote sustainable development and empower local stakeholders, resulting in a more inclusive and equitable educational system. [9] emphasized that disability is an inevitable human experience across cultures that deserves greater attention from anthropology, a discipline focused on understanding the complexities of human life [10]. Research in anthropology is highly valued because it provides contextualized knowledge that illuminates human experiences, ultimately shaping public policy to positively impact people's lives. This discipline adopts a holistic approach to studying human existence. Ethnographic studies in anthropology have enabled a deeper exploration of how disability is woven into the fabric of collective social realities [11]. Social relationships are understood as more than just individual hardships; families and communities are also seen as collectively experiencing the challenges associated with disability. Anthropologists dedicate their research skills and theoretical insights to documenting experiences that are often overlooked, contributing to the revision of policies and the development of public policy issues.

According to Kang, Choi and Jin Ju (2016: 2), "the birth of a disabled child leads to conflict and self-blame within families and society". Parents are generally unprepared for raising a child with disabilities, as this is not typically an expectation during pregnancy. While they may anticipate the possibility of disability, they remain optimistic until the child is born. Once a child is diagnosed with

a disability or begins to show symptoms, parents encounter considerable stress and are expected to swiftly adapt to their child's needs. The uniqueness of family dynamics and lived experiences is said to take shape right in those moments. Cultural relativism plays a crucial role in this exploration, as it encourages us to understand and interpret disability within the specific cultural contexts of uMkhambathini. This perspective recognizes that perceptions of disability are not universal; rather, they are shaped by local beliefs, values, and social norms [12]. In some cultures, disability may be viewed as a challenge to be overcome, while in others, it might be seen as a part of the community's diversity that enriches social life. Looking through the lens of cultural relativism, the study sought to uncover how parents of children with Cognitive Learning Disabilities (CLD) navigate their experiences within their unique cultural framework. Understanding their stories requires acknowledging the local customs and societal expectations that influence their perceptions and responses to disability [12]. This approach not only highlights the parent's lived experiences but also fosters a deeper appreciation for how cultural factors shape the support systems available to them.

Theoretical Framework

This study sought the lenses of the ecological theory and identity theory, providing a framework for understanding how micro, meso, exo and macrosystems function as stages of social development that shape identities and influence individual experiences. These theoretical frameworks were particularly relevant, allowing the paper to capture the experiences of parents in the rural community of uMkhambathini, whose children face exclusion from mainstream education due to cognitive learning disabilities. By employing these lenses, I was able to delve into the multifaceted challenges that parents encounter in raising a child with such disabilities. The research revealed significant insights into identity, community and family dynamics, highlighting the intricate social factors that affect their parenting experiences that agencies main take into consideration when collaborating with South African local communities and schools for inclusive support. Moreover, these theoretical frameworks facilitated a comprehensive review of existing literature concerning educational practices in uMkhambathini's rural schools. They helped contextualize the challenges faced by families within broader socio-cultural dynamics, thus contributing to a deeper understanding of the intersection between disability and education in this specific South African context.

Methodology

Qualitative research focuses on collecting people's personal insights and perspectives on various concepts. The decision to adopt a qualitative approach is driven by the desire to understand the experiences of parents in implementing support related to inclusive policies in local mainstream schools [1]. This approach aims to provide a deeper understanding of their daily challenges and coping strategies. In this anthropological paper, I primarily employed the qualitative interpretive research paradigm. This approach enabled me to effectively gather personal "emic"

experiences through direct engagement, such as life-history interviews and focus groups with parents who were directly affected by the topic and chose to participate. As I discussed using the insights from [13], qualitative research is particularly valuable for capturing the intricate sentiments of human life within their socio-cultural contexts. My analysis cantered on the detailed personal stories of parents, reinforcing my choice of a qualitative methodology to achieve the aims of this study.

Sampling and Research Setting

I purposively recruited fifteen parents to voluntarily participate in this anthropological study. Their significance to the research stemmed from the fact that their children were born with cognitive learning disabilities and had been excluded from the South African inclusive education policy, making them particularly relevant to my investigation. These parents had children enrolled in three local mainstream schools: Asi Zenzele, Inkanyezini, and Table Mountain Primary School. After several years of attendance, their children were completely excluded from the educational system due to not meeting the progression requirements set for typical learners, yet there were no nearby institutions to address their specific learning needs. The selection of participants began with an initial meeting that included me, the school principals, governing bodies from the three schools, and the parents.

Research setting

The uMkhambathini area is a rural community located within the uMsunduzi local municipality in KwaZulu-Natal. It falls under the category of a Class B municipality and is situated along the southeastern edge of the uMgungundlovu District. Notably, it is the second smallest of the seven municipalities in this district. The municipality consists of seven wards, with a significant portion characterized by its rural nature and considered underdeveloped. My study focuses on the remote, yet neighbouring schools located in two of these wards (4 and 5). The following map illustrates the location of the uMkhambathini region in relation to Pieter Maritz Burg (PMB).

Data Collection

Data collection took eight months, during which I conducted a series of life-history interviews and focus group talks with a sample of fifteen parents whose children have cognitive learning difficulties. According to Du Plooy-Cilliers et al. (2014), qualitative research entails adopting the participant's worldview of experiences, which allows researchers to immerse themselves in a thorough comprehension of the phenomenon. I supervised the data gathering with a set of sixteen qualitatively phrased questions that allowed for open-ended conversations between me and the participants.

Ethical Consideration

Parents provided signed consent for their participation and each school hosted two sessions for data collection, which collectively lasted over one week. Before initiating data collection, I obtained gatekeeper clearance from local dignitaries. The study

was also approved by the University of KwaZulu-Natal Human Research Council. Participants were assured of the confidentiality of their information, with the promise of using pseudonyms to protect their identities. They were informed that their voluntary participation would be respected and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time if they chose to do so. In the end, I can affirm that the data collection process fully complied with ethical clearance requirements.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using thematic analysis, which was considered appropriate for interpreting qualitative data. This method placed the parents of children at the core of the analysis and interpretation process. I followed all stages of thematic analysis, ensuring that the dataset was thoroughly examined and meaningfully contributed to the study.

Result

The lived experiences of parents emerged as invaluable for contextualizing and addressing socio-cultural challenges, positioning them as essential stakeholders in the research process. Their diverse experiences proved crucial in formulating the research problem and contemplating solutions, reflecting a range of opinions and fostering consensus.

PARENT "This must start with us as parents in uMkhambathini. You see, the inclusive support and trained teachers must come as support that we have advocated for. Parents, I am saying this because today I am 46 years old, but I have never seen or heard of people who fight for such problems in this community. Yes, we need support from education, but it should find us ready to accept and implement without having to worry about finger-pointing and labels."*

The comprehensive national strategy on support services for children with disabilities [14] highlights that the South African education system is currently inadequate in providing basic education access for individuals with disabilities. There are insufficient appropriate placements for special needs learners, and the constitutional mandate to ensure quality education for all children, regardless of location, has not been met. The limited availability of schools and resources in rural areas prevents children with disabilities from leaving their families to pursue education. This lack of integration hinders many children from contributing to society, placing undue financial strain on both parents and the community.

PARENT "After learning about her condition, I took her to the psychologists, where she went through a series of tests, and I took counseling for a month, because the school or the department does not provide any. She was found to be okay, and I brought her back here, but the teachers keep on saying that she is not coping in this environment. I even tried to look for a school that could accommodate her situation, but I went without any success."*

PARENT on Provision of inclusive support/ Generalization of support/learning barriers*

"They need to come to us, maybe that way they can even see that we cannot afford schools elsewhere because of our home situations, as some of us do not work, those who assist children with this problem. The only nearby school in this area is for physically challenged learners, which is why they end up here, because it won't make sense to put them there.

According to the literature, the discovery of a child's limitations frequently results in heated internal discussions among parents. They are concerned about the nature of their child's ailment, its causes and the implications for his or her future. Parents frequently consider concerns such as educational options, the child's acceptability and capacity to manage in school settings, identity protection and the preparation required for the child to embrace their identity [15]. These inquiries demonstrate a deep concern for the child's well-being and future, highlighting the difficult emotional scenery that parents must negotiate in the aftermath of such revelations. Utilizing an anthropological ethnographic inquiry to explore the integration of disability within social realities highlighted the significance of situated knowledge derived from natural settings. This approach not only clarifies the roles of collaborative agents but also ensures holistic stakeholder involvement in systemic change, particularly in the formulation and implementation of inclusive practices. Parents face numerous demands and constraints that have largely been generalized or overlooked in many of the public policies in the country. Consequently, their children often endure significant exclusion and isolation, lacking access to the rights and opportunities enjoyed by their peers. [16] highlight that extensive research indicates that parents of children with disabilities experience markedly higher levels of parenting stress compared to those with non-disabled children. This proposed study recognizes the valuable contributions of the existing literature while underscoring its own significance in addressing a notable gap. Specifically, it seeks to illuminate the lived experiences of parents with children facing cognitive learning barriers, an area that has not been sufficiently explored in prior research.

PARENT* *"I also wish they could just come to us (sighs), I don't know whether to say teachers or the people from the department of education. But they need to know about our challenges and grievances just so they can see what we go through or the type of assistance that we plead for because we get scared to talk about these things even in our parents' meetings. The teachers never understand when we talk about these challenges in association with the impending cultural rituals; they see us as if we are running away from our problems."* responded to clarify some of the challenges that are not considered in the education system. Parents felt that there was a need for education, making personnel try to learn about their unknown problems through better research on parent's day-to-day experiences.

PARENT* *"Other than coming forward when our churches pray for general issues, there is no constant support that I can recall, especially in our area. Sometimes people can be supportive, sometimes they cannot be. Although I am happy with this inclusion and what it can do for most children who do not have such problems as my son.*

You see, my son is almost eleven years old now, but he does not grasp anything that is learnt here, and I feel he is not pushed enough. I like other parents I know here; we are always called to meetings to discuss whether they should progress to the next grade or not. It is tiring..."

Discussion

This study makes a significant contribution by illuminating the concerns of parents, who expressed that existing inclusive efforts often neglect their narratives. Furthermore, it underscores the relative scarcity of anthropological research addressing these narratives, thus highlighting a critical area for further exploration. The experience of parenting a child with a cognitive disability encompasses a wide range of emotions and often leads to social isolation. However, this study found that over time, parents increasingly accept and articulate their life stories. They express a willingness to share their experiences and perspectives on how they can be supported, as well as the roles they can assume in the intervention process.

This assertion is grounded in the narratives of parents, which reveal their beliefs and concerns regarding the inclusion and placement processes in uMkhambathini. Parents emphasized the importance of professionals being culturally sensitive to the practices and treatments they utilize for their children, fostering an environment where parents feel comfortable sharing their experiences openly. Such suggestions are crucial for alleviating parental stress and enhancing collaboration between professionals, parents, and their children in the care process.

Contribution of the Study

This study significantly enhances the understanding of parental narratives within the context of cognitive disabilities, emphasizing the intricate relationship between individual experiences and broader cultural, socio-political and historical factors. By employing an anthropological lens, the research reveals the nuanced challenges faced by parents in uMkhambathini who care for children with cognitive disabilities attending mainstream schools. The literature highlights a paradox: While ethnographic stories provide rich insights into the lived experiences of these parents, they often suffer from misrepresentation or simplification. This distortion undermines the urgency of their struggles, ultimately hindering efforts to secure necessary support for inclusive education. The findings demonstrate that when the realities of these parents' experiences are toned down or inadequately communicated, it leads to a lack of visibility regarding their challenges. Consequently, this invisibility not only affects parents' narratives but also diminishes the potential for local stakeholders and global organizations such as (UNESCO), UNICEF or Education for All to engage effectively in providing the needed assistance. By exposing these gaps, the study advocates for a more authentic representation of parental experiences that can drive meaningful change in inclusive education policies.

Visibility of inclusion

The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers and all relevant stakeholders involved in the socio-cultural context

of UMkhambathini educators aiming to develop more inclusive educational practices. In the context of culture, symbols are of paramount importance to indicate phenomena as happening, accepted, or rejected for many reasons. For parents to be supported and inclusion to be fully recognized, the prompt must start from within, in the simplest form of communicating true experiences as happening, advocating for agency and painting the local areas with relevant and related signage or symbols that will help with everyday observation. This doing would then prompt and promote collaborative effort with major leading global agencies (UNESCO). Signs and placards are an important part of any culture. They are important because they increase visibility, promote cultural change, maintain legal compliance and stimulate community involvement, ultimately building a more inclusive educational

environment in South Africa. The first-person narratives from parents indicated that they face significant challenges within their social environment, particularly as their children gain exposure to broader contexts. These difficulties are often intensified by the cultural norms and values upheld by both immediate families and the larger society. The literature highlights a critical lack of support and identifies the reasons behind the insufficient outcomes of inclusive education, which many parents attributed to shortcomings within the Department of Education in that. The above assertion then prompted the contribution of the suggested following placard for inclusive education awareness, which is missing in many local communities so indicate that ordinary mainstream schools as operating under inclusive education (Figure 1).



Figure 1: The above picture depicts a thought-concept (unpublished or simulated) placard that can be adopted in South African Schools or within communities to demonstrate emblematic and act to familiarize the people about inclusive education and support towards initiatives.

Cultural shift

The showing of inclusive signs/messages can challenge negative stereotypes and stigmas associated with disabilities, promoting a culture of acceptance and understanding. Anthropology recognizes culture as an integral part of human life and is carried out throughout the life-long development of humans. Anthropology has accepted disability as a human trait that impacts human societies and is impartial to any social environment [17]. However, lack of education on disability discourses in traditional and conservative communities like UMkhambathini can hamper the support. Displaying such signs can help to visibly communicate the principles of inclusive education, fostering greater awareness about the rights and needs of individuals with disabilities. Moreover, inclusivity will be enforced in schools and communities encouraging all to actively participate together with all relevant stakeholders, including parents, educators, and students. The current atmosphere regarding inclusion and inclusive support demonstrates lack of commitment as evident in the lack of basic symbolism which has encouraged

cultural stigma surrounding disabilities remaining prevalent in South Africa. Similar issues are observed globally, but the intensity and manifestation does not compare to South Africa. Stigma on parents and children has hindered the acceptance and integration of children with disabilities in educational and communal settings.

Broader contribution of this study

The aim on writing up on the side of literature was to underline the work and urgency that is needed in South African education scene. Studies like this one missing in uMkhambathini have exacerbated the inadequate handling of problems the community faces and the lack of social activism pushing for the inclusion of cognitive disabilities into the educational system. In literature, the reporting of case particular stories about the South African instances does not seem as clear. Like the instructions and policies in the South African education white paper 6: Special needs education, the conversation is delivered with a measured tone. This has made it challenging for parents as well as children to get help as they desire in their contexts. The global agencies seem to navigate

the fog similarly to all others, tending to be out of reach or offer general help as stories surface. The community struggle with these challenges in their social environments, which are influenced by the disadvantages of the defining culture.

Recommendations

Continuity of teacher assistant initiative as a trial in inclusion and inclusive support

The problems with disability, inclusion and inclusive support become more evident as children grow and become exposed to school system or general communal socialization. For the longest time, teachers have been expected to provide academic instruction, social-emotional support, support families, often without adequate training about discourses of disability in mainstream schools, compensation or support from their department. Again, the socio-economy status of Umkhambathini as a rural village in a developing country has meant that parent only considered sending their children to the accessible formal mainstream schools. This has only led to the cycle of stress, frustration, burnout and ultimately imprecise reporting of issues, causing mistrust between teachers and parents. Although other parents appreciated inclusive education policy in that it attempts to eliminate communal segregation and discrimination through the creation of accommodating learning environment, this renders school setting as the only space where the experiences of parents, children and teachers overlap, creating an ideal setting for tracking and reporting the narratives as they occur in context. Given that stress and other factors that strain mental health of parents and teachers within a multiple layer of caring for children with cognitive disability, the initiative of teacher-assistant, however, for inclusive education support this time is recommended by this study. The employment of teacher-assistants can provide training to mitigate the situation in South Africa in the following ways.

- a. Provide solutions while there still are insufficient appropriate places for special needs learners.
- b. Helping support constitutional mandate to ensure quality education for all children, regardless of location, has not been met. The limited availability of schools and resources in rural areas prevents children with disabilities from leaving their families to pursue education.
- c. During Covid-19 employment of teacher assistants was a revelation that the multifaceted dimensions and demands of education daily can be managed with extra hands provided. This would leave normal teachers taking up their routine delivering of academic content [18].
- d. Narrative reporting/Case-specific narrative report as ethnographers.

The above aligns with the goals of the UNICEF and other organizations in the effort to assist inclusive education and learning for children with disabilities in developing countries which include.

- a. Technical support and capacity building to help implement inclusive education practices, ensuring that schools can

effectively meet the needs of all children, including those with disabilities [19].

- b. Partnership with various stakeholders, including governments and NGOs, is essential for creating inclusive educational environments and addressing the specific needs of children with disabilities.
- c. Cross-Sectoral Improvement in education, health, and social policy can help combat poverty and promote economic growth, benefiting children with disabilities.
- d. Advocacy and early investments in child development, believed to yield higher returns. UNICEF advocates for inclusive education as part of broader child development strategies.

In a complex and complicated phenomenon of caring for children with cognitive disability, an appropriate agent is needed for monitoring and reporting the situation, a further recommendation for this study. It must be imperative for communities in the developing well to narrate and take initiative to signal first, their ordinary schools as playing duality role of accommodating both learners with special need and those who are considered as normal children, which is the mark that is missed in all the ordinary schools across Umkhambathini; Leaving parents to only generalise their stories and children's based on ordinary schools. This to inform the leading organisations for inclusive education of the source of the problem. Secondly, prioritize the stories of parents as day-to-day caregivers so the literature is well-informed with relevant ethnographies. This is largely because effective support relies on narratives that blend emotional and subjective parental experiences in real time. When roles and responsibilities are unclear, stakeholders and supportive agencies may misinterpret the information, leading to poor coordination and ineffective actions [19]. Teacher assistants can be trained and workshopped as interim "ethnographers" within their communities and school settings to explore how individuals with disabilities navigate their identities and assert agency within their communities, challenging stereotypes and advocating for social change. It will be a missed opportunities to address needs promptly should the role of teacher assistants be under looked in the meantime while searching for adequate solutions.

The principal theories in this study played a central role in delineating the cause of adversity of relationships within one environment [20]. The lack of provisions and society's failure in accounting for the needs of people with cognitive disability creates and influences a multitude of forms of social exclusions and cultural stigmatization. As of various literature and findings of this study, people with disabilities have been described as restricted people because their bodies or mental conditions have restricted their ability to achieve independence, self-reliance and personal autonomy and they are socially excluded [21]. Advocacy within this study emphasizes the necessity of incorporating cultural considerations into policymaking, particularly policies that have the potential to transform social structures and enhance accessibility to resources, as those provided and influenced by global culture [22].

Conclusion

The paper highlighted the significant risks associated with generalizing parents' narratives in South African literature, particularly in the context of experiences of parents who care for children with cognitive disabilities. It emphasized the need for culturally sensitive and accurate representations of these experiences as they are communicated to foster genuine engagement from both local and global stakeholders. The invisibility of parental challenges, compounded by the lack of signage and symbols indicating the need for support, further exacerbate the related issues. Parents have consistently identified the absence of culturally relevant signage that resonates with the local community as a crucial barrier to help. This lack of visibility not only obscured their children's stories but also hinders calls for necessary assistance [23]. To address these challenges, the paper found it imperative to collaborate with leading organizations focused on inclusive education (UNESCO). By developing and disseminating relevant materials and signage within the community, the course and message may be amplified leading to global agency attention and provision of essential resources, such as training for teachers and local organizations on the importance of visibility and effective communication of family needs. Such initiatives can help create a more supportive environment, ultimately ensuring that the voices of parents and their children are heard and respected.

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