

Teachers' Goals Regarding Social Competence of Pupils from Unstable Families in Uganda: A Case of Four Selected Primary Schools in Kabusu Village Rubaga Division, Kampala District

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Abstract

The study examined the teachers' goals regarding the social competence of pupils from unstable families in Uganda, using four selected primary schools in Kabusu village, Rubaga division as a case study. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted for this study. The study had the following objectives: to identify the causes of lack of social competence among the pupils from unstable families, to find out challenges encountered in teaching specific social competence among the pupils from unstable families, and to suggest possible interventions that could be made by the teachers to overcome the challenges of pupils with social competence difficulties from unstable families in selected primary schools in Kabusu village, Rubaga division. This study was grounded by Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) and Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) highlight the interconnected factors influencing children's development, including their learning of social behaviors through observation and modeling, and the impact of their family, school, and community environment. A sample of 210 respondents was drawn from a total population of 5642, as determined by Krejcie & Morgan's (1970) table. The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of investigation, using questionnaires, face-to-face interviews, documentary review, and direct observation as data collection tools. The research findings revealed that children with social competence issues might lack the necessary behavioral competence, meaning they do not act in developmentally appropriate ways or in line with their peers. This was confirmed by 56.8% of respondents who strongly agreed, and 31.6% who agreed, with the statement. The assertion was supported by a mean value of 4.31 and a standard deviation of 1.073. The study further discovered that pupils from unstable homes frequently display a lack of social competence, with some even marrying at an early age. The findings indicated that 68.4% of respondents agreed with this statement, with a mean score of 4.17 and a standard deviation of 0.663. Additionally, the study found that these pupils often use vulgar language, with 49.5% agreeing, and 33.7% strongly agreeing that this behavior was common. This finding was confirmed by a mean score of 4.01 and a standard deviation of 1.047. The study also revealed a significant positive relationship between teachers' goals and social competence ($r=0.634^{**}$,

Sig=0.000), with an adjusted R square value of 0.396. This suggests that changes in teachers' goals played a crucial role in the social competence of the pupils. The study concluded that lack of social competence among pupils from unstable families is primarily rooted in underdeveloped behavioral skills, loss of self-confidence, and limited respect for others. The study recommends that teachers should receive training in trauma-informed practices to better understand and address the emotional and psychological challenges that these students face. By recognizing the signs of trauma and emotional distress, teachers can offer appropriate support and interventions to help students cope with their experiences.

Keywords: Teachers' Goals, Social Competence, Pupils and Unstable Familie

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Social competence is essential for children's development, influencing their ability to interact, manage emotions, and form relationships (Gresham & Elliott, 1990). However, children from unstable family backgrounds, such as those in Kabusu Village, Rubaga Division, often face challenges in these areas due to inconsistent emotional and social support (Luthar, 2003; Mugisha, 2012). Teachers play a critical role in addressing these challenges by setting goals to foster social competence, particularly in emotional regulation, peer relationships, and conflict resolution (Reynolds & Crea, 2015; Zins et al., 2004). This study investigates how teachers in Kabusu Village support the development of these skills in children from unstable families, aiming to identify effective strategies for enhancing social skills, emotional regulation, and interpersonal relationships for academic and personal success.

1.1 Background to the study

Historically, education in Uganda focused primarily on academic learning, with less emphasis on social and emotional development. Over time, however, the importance of nurturing social competence has been recognized, particularly for children from unstable family environments. Family instability, including domestic violence and parental separation, has led to challenges in the social and emotional development of children in urban areas like Kampala. Teachers have increasingly taken on the role of supporting the social and emotional needs of these children, but research on how they specifically address these issues is limited in Uganda.

This study was grounded in **social competence theory** and **attachment theory**. Social competence theory suggests that emotional regulation, social problem-solving, and forming meaningful relationships are crucial for children's development (Gresham & Elliott, 1990). Attachment theory (Bowlby, 1969) explains that early caregiver relationships significantly affect a child's social competence. For children from unstable families, insecure attachments may hinder emotional regulation and social interactions. These theories provide the basis for examining how teachers can support social competence in children facing such challenges.

Social competence is defined as a combination of skills that enable effective interaction, emotional regulation, and conflict resolution (Gresham & Elliott, 1990). For children from unstable families, developing these skills is challenging due to the lack of consistent emotional and social support at home.

Teachers play a crucial role in helping these children develop social competence by setting clear goals and implementing strategies to improve emotional regulation, peer relationships, and conflict resolution.

Kabusu Village, in Rubaga Division, Kampala, faces socio-economic challenges, including poverty, domestic violence, and unemployment, which contribute to family instability. Children in these households often struggle with emotional and behavioral issues that affect their social and academic performance. Teachers in primary schools in this area are tasked with not only delivering academic content but also supporting the social and emotional development of their students. Research on how teachers in Kabusu Village address the social competence of children from unstable families is scarce, making this study important for developing strategies to better support these children.

1.3 Statement of the problem

Pupils from unstable family backgrounds in Kabusu Village, Rubaga Division, often struggle to develop social competence, which is essential for academic success and personal well-being. Issues such as low self-esteem, emotional difficulties, and poor interpersonal relationships are common among these children and can significantly impact their ability to succeed in school (Jones & Bouffard, 2012). Teachers play a key role in supporting these students, but there is limited research on the specific strategies and goals teachers use to foster social competence in children from unstable families. This study seeks to explore how teachers in selected primary schools address these challenges and promote the social development of pupils facing familial instability.

1.4 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study was to explore teachers' goals concerning the social competence of pupils from unstable families, using four selected primary schools in Kabusu Village, Rubaga Division as a case study.

1.5 Objectives of the study

- i. To identify the causes of lack of social competence among the pupils from the unstable families in selected primary schools in Kabusu village, Rubaga division.
- ii. To suggest possible interventions that could be made by the teachers to overcome the challenges of pupils with social competence difficulties from the unstable families in selected primary schools in Kabusu village, Rubaga division.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review examined the causes of social competence difficulties in pupils from unstable families and identified teacher interventions to address these challenges. It highlighted that children from such backgrounds often faced emotional and social issues, while teacher strategies like personalized support and a positive classroom environment were found to improve their social skills.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The study of teachers' goals regarding the social competence of pupils from unstable families in Uganda draws upon several theories that emphasize the development of social competence and the impact of

family structure on children's educational and social outcomes. The key theories relevant to this study are outlined below:

Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1986) suggests that children learn social behaviors through observation and modeling. Teachers, as role models, influence students' social competence, especially for those from unstable family backgrounds. By modeling positive behaviors and reinforcing them, teachers help students develop essential social skills. This theory highlights the importance of creating a supportive classroom environment for social learning.

Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) emphasizes the interconnectedness of various environmental systems, such as family, school, and community, in shaping a child's development. Teachers play a key role in mediating between the child's family life and school environment. Understanding the child's broader context helps teachers provide tailored support. The goal is to create a stable, nurturing classroom that promotes social competence.

2.2 Conceptualizing teachers goal and social competence

Teachers play a critical role in developing social competence in students, particularly those from unstable family backgrounds. Social competence involves skills like effective communication, emotional regulation, empathy, and conflict resolution, which are essential for children's overall growth. In Uganda, teachers focus on creating supportive environments to help children develop these skills, which are vital for overcoming challenges associated with unstable family situations (Rimm-Kaufman & Sandilos, 2016). These goals include fostering resilience, positive relationships, and emotional intelligence, as they are crucial for academic and social success (Juma, 2012; Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Given the socio-economic challenges many Ugandan children face, particularly those in underserved communities, teachers set goals that extend beyond academics to address emotional and social needs (Muwanga-Zake, 2001). Teachers often collaborate with families and communities to provide comprehensive support for vulnerable students (Eisenberg & Spinrad, 2004). These efforts aim to help children navigate social challenges, build self-worth, and develop the skills necessary for future success.

2.3 Causes of lack of specific social competence among the pupils from the unstable families

The development of social competence in children from unstable family backgrounds is shaped by multiple interrelated factors. Research indicates that family dynamics and dysfunction play a pivotal role, as children in such environments often experience high levels of stress, conflict, and instability, impeding their ability to develop social skills. Studies by Duchesne & Larose (2009) suggest that children exposed to parental conflict, divorce, substance abuse, or domestic violence are more likely to struggle with relationship formation and emotional regulation.

In addition to family dysfunction, emotional and psychological effects of instability, such as emotional neglect and trauma, are significant contributors to social competence deficits. Cummings & Davies (2002) argue that children in emotionally neglectful environments may exhibit emotional instability, difficulty identifying and expressing emotions, and may develop trust issues, which undermine their ability to engage in healthy social interactions.

Furthermore, socio-economic factors exacerbate social competence issues. Poverty, inadequate housing, and lack of access to resources create additional stress and limit children's opportunities for socialization. Kowaleski-Jones & Mott (1998) emphasize that financial instability can reduce parental involvement and hinder children's access to developmental opportunities, further isolating them socially.

The lack of parental involvement and support is another crucial factor. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) note that parental engagement is essential in nurturing social skills and children from unstable families often lack this support, leading to feelings of neglect and low self-esteem that affect their social interactions.

Children from unstable families are also vulnerable to peer influence and bullying. Reijntjes et al. (2011) found that these children are more likely to experience peer rejection or engage in aggressive behaviors, reinforcing negative social patterns and hindering their social competence development.

The role of teachers and the school environment is critical in mitigating the effects of family instability. Hamre & Pianta (2001) highlight that schools can either act as protective factors or exacerbate social difficulties if they lack appropriate interventions and support systems for children from unstable families.

Lastly, cultural and societal influences play a role in shaping children's social competence. Wolchik et al. (2000) suggest that societal stigma against children from broken homes or economically disadvantaged backgrounds can limit their social opportunities and reinforce negative perceptions of their own social worth, further hindering their social development.

2.4 Possible intervention or strategies that could be made by the teachers to overcome the challenges of pupils with social competence problems from the unstable families

Children from unstable family backgrounds often face challenges in developing social competence, and teachers play a crucial role in addressing these difficulties. Hamre and Pianta (2001) highlight the importance of teacher-student relationships in fostering emotional regulation, where a supportive environment allows children to manage their emotions and behaviors. Teachers can offer empathetic responses and teach emotional literacy, which aids in children's emotional expression and the development of positive peer interactions.

Duchesne and Larose (2009) suggest that children from such backgrounds often lack opportunities for healthy social development. Teachers can mitigate this by providing structured social activities such as group projects and cooperative learning, which promote collaboration and communication. Moreover, role-playing and the modeling of positive behaviors like active listening and conflict resolution can enhance children's social skills, reducing isolation and aggression.

The significance of parental involvement in children's social and emotional development is emphasized by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997). Teachers can bridge the gap between home and school by fostering communication with parents and guiding them on supporting their child's social development. Schools may also offer parent education programs, which strengthen the partnership between home and school, creating a consistent support system for the child.

Reijntjes et al. (2011) underscore the vulnerability of children from unstable families to bullying and social exclusion. Teachers can counter this by creating an inclusive classroom environment where respect and empathy are prioritized. Setting clear behavioral expectations, implementing anti-bullying measures, and organizing group activities that promote inclusivity can reduce peer rejection and enhance children's confidence in social interactions.

Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs are identified as effective tools in supporting children's social competence. CASEL (2021) reports that SEL programs help children understand and manage their emotions, set goals, and build relationships. For children from unstable backgrounds, these programs are vital for developing emotional regulation and navigating social challenges, improving both their social and emotional skills.

In conclusion, the literature suggests that teachers can enhance the social competence of children from unstable families by creating a nurturing and structured classroom environment. Through emotional support, promoting social skills, encouraging parental involvement, implementing anti-bullying initiatives, and incorporating SEL programs, teachers can help children overcome social difficulties, leading to improved well-being and academic success.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study used a descriptive cross-sectional survey design, which involves explaining and describing variables using frequencies, percentages, and means for easy interpretation. A cross-sectional survey was chosen because it allows data collection at a single point in time, saving time and financial resources. The study adopted both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative approach was used to quantify occurrences and describe current conditions regarding teachers' goals for the social competence of pupils from unstable families, based on information from questionnaires. The qualitative approach aimed to gain deeper insights and perceptions from respondents about the study variables (Creswell, 2004).

3.2 Data quality control

Data Quality Control ensures that the data collected meets specific quality standards, focusing on validity and reliability. Validity refers to the accuracy, precision, and relevance of the research instruments in producing findings that align with theoretical concepts (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). To test validity, the Content Validity Index (CVI) was used, ensuring it did not exceed 1, and the questionnaire was reviewed by experts to assess and enhance its relevance (Dawson, 2005). Reliability refers to the consistency of the instrument in collecting the same data under the same conditions (Amin, 2016). To ensure reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha test was performed on Likert-type scales, with a recommended threshold of 0.7 or higher for analysis (Amin, 2013).

3.3 Data Processing, Analysis and Presentation

3.3.1 Data Processing

Data processing involved various steps such as editing, coding, classification, tabulation, and graphical presentation (Hall, 2016). The collected data was edited to ensure clarity and consistency, making it

unambiguous and accurate. After processing, the data was entered into SPSS version 20.0, where descriptive statistics were applied for analysis.

3.3.2 Data Analysis

According to Mugenda (2003), data analysis is the process of organizing, summarizing, and making data meaningful. Both **quantitative** and **qualitative** analysis methods were used. **Quantitative data** from the questionnaires was analyzed using descriptive statistics, such as frequency tables, charts, and pie charts, generated using SPSS software version 20.0. The data was interpreted according to the research objectives. For **qualitative data**, responses from interviews, notes, and statements were systematically coded and classified into broad descriptive categories. Themes and patterns emerging from the data were explored and linked to the research objectives to derive meaning and insights into the study topic. Additionally, Microsoft Excel and Ms. Access were used for data entry, analysis, and tabulation.

3.3.3 Data Presentation

The analyzed data was presented using SPSS software, and the results were displayed in tables, using descriptive statistics to facilitate a clear understanding of the findings. This presentation method ensured that both primary and secondary data were effectively communicated.

4.2 Findings from teachers on the causes of lack of social competence among the pupils from the unstable families

The study aimed to identify the causes of lack social competence among pupils from unstable families in selected primary schools in Kabusu village, Rubaga division. Teachers were asked to rate various statements on this issue using a Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Not sure, 4 Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree). The data collected was analyzed, and the results are summarized in Table 4.2, which shows the teachers' opinions on the causes of social competence issues among these pupils.

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics from the teachers on the causes of lack of social competence among the pupils from the unstable families

Opinions	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev.
Undeveloped behaviour competence	5 5.3%	4 4.2%	2 2.1%	30 31.6%	54 56.8%	4.31	1.073
Loss of self-confidence	8 8.4%	11 11.6%	5 5.3%	57 60.0%	14 14.7%	3.61	1.133
Unwillingness to take responsibility for one's own actions	20 21.1%	46 48.4%	5 5.3%	10 10.5%	14 14.7%	2.49	1.336
Lack of respect for other people	2 2.1%	5 5.3%	1 1.1%	46 48.4%	41 43.2%	4.25	.887
Lack of social skills	2 2.1%	7 7.4%	4 4.2%	24 25.3%	58 61.1%	4.36	1.010

Lack of knowledge of social rules and manners	4 4.2%	5 5.3%	13 13.7%	49 51.6%	24 25.3%	3.88	.988
Failure to engage with other people	14 14.7%	10 10.5%	1 1.1%	33 34.7%	37 38.9%	3.73	1.447
Least endorsed is democratic attitude	33 34.7%	31 32.6%	16 16.8%	14 14.7%	1 1.1%	2.15	1.091

Source: Primary data, 2023

The research findings revealed that undeveloped behavioral competence is a key factor contributing to the lack of social competence among pupils from unstable families in Kabusu Village. This was supported by 56.8% who strongly agreed and 31.6% who agreed. The mean value of 4.31 and a standard deviation of 1.073 indicated a strong consensus among respondents on the importance of behavioral competence in developing social skills.

One teacher stated, "Many children from unstable families struggle with basic behavioral competencies like self-regulation and empathy. This often leads to difficulties in interacting with peers and teachers, which affects their overall social competence. It's clear that without addressing these behavioral issues, their ability to build positive relationships is severely limited."

A local leader added, "Children from such backgrounds often haven't learned appropriate ways to manage their emotions or resolve conflicts. These behavioral gaps contribute significantly to their social challenges, making it harder for them to integrate well with others in both school and community settings."

The findings imply that teachers should prioritize developing behavioral skills like self-regulation and communication to enhance social competence in pupils from unstable families. This aligns with Gresham and Elliott (1990), who highlighted the importance of social skills for positive interactions. Educational policies should focus on these areas, and teachers may need additional training to support this development effectively.

The research found that loss of self-confidence is a significant cause of lack of social competence among pupils from unstable families in Kabusu Village. This was supported by 60.0% of respondents who agreed and 14.7% who strongly agreed. The mean value of 3.61 suggests a moderate level of agreement, and the standard deviation of 1.133 indicates some variation in teachers' opinions, but not extreme differences. Overall, it suggests that while loss of self-confidence is a significant factor, there may be some differing views among the teachers.

One local leader shared, "Many children in this community have witnessed traumatic events, like losing siblings through suicide or enduring domestic violence. These experiences have a

profound effect on their sense of self-worth, making it difficult for them to develop social competence."

A teacher added, "Children who grow up in unstable family environments often struggle with trusting others or forming positive relationships. Domestic violence, for instance, erodes their self-esteem, and the scars left by these experiences make it hard for them to engage with peers in a healthy way."

This interview was aligned with Luthar's (2003) work on the impact of family instability on children's emotional and psychological well-being, highlighting that children from unstable families often experience trauma that affects their self-esteem and social competence. Additionally, Gresham and Elliott (1990) discussed the importance of emotional regulation and self-confidence in the development of social competence among children.

The research findings indicate mixed views on the impact of personal responsibility on social competence. While 48.4% of respondents disagreed and 21.1% strongly disagreed that unwillingness to take responsibility causes a lack of social competence, 25.2% agreed or strongly agreed, with a mean of 2.49 and a standard deviation of 1.336. This suggests that personal responsibility may not be the main factor influencing social competence.

In contrast, the majority of respondents (46.4% agreed and 43.2% strongly agreed) believed that lack of respect for others contributes to the lack of social competence among pupils from unstable families. This assertion had a mean score of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 0.887, indicating stronger consensus on the importance of respect in developing social competence.

One teacher shared, "While some children from unstable families may struggle with taking responsibility for their actions, it is often a lack of respect for others that causes the most noticeable issues in their social competence. These children may not have learned basic social norms at home, which affect their ability to interact respectfully with peers and adults."

A local leader added, "I've observed that many children who grow up in unstable environments often lack respect for others. This disrespect can manifest in their school behavior and relationships, making it harder for them to integrate socially. It's important that teachers emphasize respect and teach these values as part of the broader social skills curriculum."

This interview was in line with the work of Gresham and Elliott (1990), who emphasized the crucial role of respect and personal responsibility in the development of social competence. Additionally, Luthar (2003) noted that children from unstable family backgrounds often face challenges in these areas, which can impact their social interactions and overall well-being.

The research findings reveal a strong consensus that lack of social skills contributes to the lack of social competence among pupils from unstable families. A total of 61.1% of respondents strongly agreed, and 25.3% agreed with this statement. Only a small percentage (7.4%) disagreed, and 2.1% strongly

disagreed. The mean score of 4.36 and standard deviation of 1.010 indicate strong agreement on the importance of social skills in developing social competence.

One teacher commented, "Children from unstable families often lack basic social skills, which significantly impacts their ability to interact positively with peers. Without these essential skills, they struggle to build meaningful relationships or navigate social situations, which contribute directly to their lack of social competence."

A local leader added, "It's evident that many of these children have not been taught how to communicate effectively or resolve conflicts peacefully. This lack of social skills makes it difficult for them to integrate into group activities and interact well with others, reinforcing their social challenges."

This interview was in line with Gresham and Elliott (1990), who stressed the importance of social skills in developing social competence. They noted that children lacking these skills face difficulties in forming positive relationships. Similarly, Zins et al. (2004) highlighted the critical role of social skills in emotional regulation and overall social competence, particularly for children from unstable family backgrounds.

A majority of 51.6% of pupils agreed, and 25.3% strongly agreed, that they were aware of social rules and manners in class, with a mean score of 3.88 and a standard deviation of 0.988. Only a small percentage disagreed (4.2%) or strongly disagreed (5.3%), while 13.7% were unsure. This suggests that most pupils possess knowledge of social rules and manners, highlighting the importance of social problem-solving and social-communicative skills for students in class.

The majority of respondents (69.6%) indicated difficulty in engaging with others, with a mean score of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 1.447. This suggests challenges in social interaction and the need for improved communication skills. These findings align with research by Goleman (1995), Bandura (1977), Vygotsky (1978), and Eisenberg & Lennon (1983), which emphasize the role of emotional intelligence, social learning, and social interaction in developing communication skills, highlighting the importance of interventions to address social and emotional competence.

Majority of the respondents agree that least endorsed is democratic attitude at home where 34.7% of the respondents strongly disagreed and 32.6% disagreed, 14.7% agreed and 1.1% strongly agreed while 16.6% of the respondents were not sure about the statement. (Mean score = 2.15 and standard deviation = 1.091). It suggests that democratic attitudes may be less commonly practiced in the home environment, and further exploration of family dynamics and parenting styles could be needed. The findings suggest that democratic attitudes are less commonly practiced at home, with a significant portion of respondents disagreeing. This is in line with Baumrind (1966), who identified the limited prevalence of democratic (authoritative) parenting styles, and Darling & Steinberg (1993), who noted the impact of parenting styles on children's social development.

4.3 Findings on possible interventions that could be made by the teachers to overcome the challenges of pupils with social competence difficulties from the unstable families

The study examined the possible interventions that could be made by the teachers to overcome the challenges of pupils with social competence difficulties from the unstable families in selected primary schools in Kabusu village, Rubaga division. Data was collected using Likert Scale since it gives respondents freedom of expression in their responses. The scale used was as follows; 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3- Not sure, 4-Agree and 5-Strongly agree. The data collected was analyzed using both exploratory procedures as had been proposed. Exploratory means included calculation of the mean scores and standard deviations as below;

Table 4.9: Descriptive statistics on possible interventions that could be made to overcome the challenges of pupils with social competence difficulties

Opinions	1	2	3	4	5	Mean	Std. Dev.
Teachers should also understand and sympathize with students who come from unstable homes	3 3.2%	18 18.9%	9 9.5%	40 42.1%	25 26.3%	3.69	1.149
Early investigation on the specific goals of the teacher on social competence	30 31.6%	46 48.4%	1 1.1%	14 14.7%	4 4.2%	2.12	1.138
Developing a model entailing social competence skills	6 6.3%	23 24.2%	7 7.4%	42 44.2%	17 17.9%	3.43	1.217
Providing the teachers with tools and materials needed in teaching	5 5.3%	15 15.8%	18 18.9%	46 48.4%	11 11.6%	3.45	1.060
Ensuring effective communication skills	8 8.4%	39 41.1%	8 8.4%	32 33.7%	8 8.4%	2.93	1.196
Listening to and involving children and parents, listening to parents informally and formally	8 8.4%	7 7.4%	2 2.1%	31 32.6%	47 49.5%	4.07	1.257
Teachers should communicate with parents regularly about their children’s strengths and weaknesses	11 11.6%	9 9.5%	3 3.2%	66 69.5%	6 6.3%	3.49	1.129
Teachers should hold meetings with parents and encourage parents to focus on their children’s best interests	4 4.2%	10 10.5%	7 7.4%	58 61.1%	16 16.8%	3.76	.997

Source: Primary data, 2023

Teachers should also understand and sympathize with students who come from unstable homes, where majority 42.1% agreed and 26.3% strongly agreed, 9.5% were not sure, 18.9% disagreed and 3.2% strongly disagreed with the statement (Mean= 3.69 and SD=1.149). The statement implies that most respondents support teachers showing empathy toward students from unstable homes, but there is some

disagreement (22.1%), indicating differing views on the matter. This aligns with Noddings (2005) concept of care in teaching and the principles of trauma-informed education (Furman & Buber, 2005), which stress the importance of teachers understanding and empathizing with students' personal challenges, especially those from unstable homes, to improve their learning and well-being.

However on the other aspect whether early investigation on the specific goals of the teacher on social competence, whereby 48.4% disagreed, 31.6% strongly disagreed, 1.1% were not sure, 14.7% agreed and 4.2% strongly agreed (Mean= 2.12 and SD=1.138). This implies that most respondents (80%) believe early investigation into teachers' goals for social competence is not prioritized, suggesting a gap in the focus on developing students' social skills in teaching. This is in line with Zins et al. (2004) and Denham et al. (2012) supports the idea that early attention to teachers' goals for social competence is crucial for students' holistic development. When these goals are not prioritized, it creates gaps in social skill development, leaving students unprepared for social challenges. These studies highlight the importance of integrating social competence into the curriculum to ensure students develop the necessary skills for positive social interactions.

The survey shows that most respondents (62.1%) support developing a model for social competence skills, with a mean score of 3.43, indicating general agreement. However, 30.5% either disagree or are unsure, highlighting some uncertainty and variability in opinions. The standard deviation of 1.217 further reflects this diversity in perspectives. To address this, further education, clearer communication, and a flexible model tailored to different needs may be necessary to increase acceptance and understanding. Continued research and dialogue are essential to refine the model and bridge gaps in support. Research by Jones et al. (2018) and Goleman (2006) supports the need for clear communication and tailored approaches when implementing new models, as diverse opinions often stem from differing levels of understanding. They emphasize that addressing these differences through education and ongoing dialogue is crucial for the successful adoption of social competence skills models.

The findings reveal that the majority of respondents (60%) agree or strongly agree on the importance of providing teachers with the necessary tools and materials for effective teaching, with a mean score of 3.45 indicating a strong belief in the value of these resources. However, a notable portion (21.1%) either disagreed or were unsure, suggesting that some individuals may not fully recognize the impact of resources on teaching effectiveness. This variability, reflected in the standard deviation of 1.060, points to differing perspectives on the role of resources in the classroom. The results imply that while many support better resource allocation, further investigation and targeted efforts may be needed to address the concerns of those who are uncertain or opposed, ensuring a more comprehensive and effective approach to resource provision in education.

Table 4.9 shows 33.7% and 8.4% of the respondents agreed and strongly agreed that ensuring effective communication skills while 8.4% strongly disagreed and 41.1% disagreed only 8.4% were not sure about the statement (Mean score 2.93 and Standard deviation 1.196). This implies that communication skills may not be universally viewed as crucial, highlighting a need for greater emphasis or education on their importance.

On the same note respondents were asked whether teachers should communicate with parents regularly about their children's strengths and weaknesses, majority agreed with 69.5% and 6.3% strongly agreed with the statement, 11.6% strongly disagreed, 9.5% disagreed while 3.2% of the respondents were not sure about the statement (Mean score 3.49 and standard deviation 1.129). This highlights the need for schools to prioritize and facilitate better teacher-parent communication to foster student success.

On whether teachers should hold meetings with parents and encourage parents to focus on their children's best interests, majority (61.1%) of the respondents agreed with the statement, 16.8% strongly agreed, 4.2% strongly disagreed and 10.5% disagreed while 7.4% were not sure. (Mean score 3.76 and standard deviation .997). This underscores the importance of organizing such meetings to enhance student outcomes and ensure a supportive environment for children's development. This finding aligns with Smith (2023), who emphasizes the importance of regular teacher-parent meetings focused on children's best interests. Smith argues that such communication enhances student development and academic success. These interactions create a supportive environment essential for students' growth.

5.0 DISCUSSIONS

5.1 Causes of lack of social competence among the pupils from the unstable families in selected primary schools

The research findings from Kabusu Village indicate that undeveloped behavioral competence is a key factor in the lack of social competence among pupils from unstable families. A majority of respondents (88.4%) agreed that skills like self-regulation and empathy are crucial for social success. This aligns with Gresham and Elliott's (1990) assertion that emotional regulation is essential for positive social interactions. Teachers and local leaders noted that many children from unstable families struggle with managing emotions, limiting their ability to form meaningful relationships and integrate socially. Additionally, loss of self-confidence, caused by trauma and unstable family dynamics, was identified as another significant barrier. About 74.7% of respondents emphasized the role of low self-esteem in hindering social competence, echoing Luthar (2003) research on the psychological impact of family instability.

The research also identified that lack of respect for others is a critical factor contributing to social challenges, with 89.6% of respondents agreeing that children from unstable backgrounds often struggle to interact respectfully with peers. This finding supports Gresham and Elliott's (1990) emphasis on respect as a key component of social competence. Additionally, lack of social skills, such as communication and conflict resolution, was identified as another barrier. A significant 86.4% of respondents agreed that many pupils lack the basic social skills needed for positive interactions. This highlights the importance of integrating social skills training into school curricula to address these deficits.

Finally, the research found that democratic parenting was less commonly practiced at home, with 67.3% of respondents disagreeing that authoritative parenting styles were prevalent. This finding supports Baumrind (1966) work on the importance of authoritative parenting for social development. Interventions aimed at improving parenting styles, along with efforts to teach behavioral and social skills in schools, could significantly enhance social competence among children from unstable families.

These findings underline the need for targeted support in both educational and community settings to help these children overcome social and emotional barriers to success.

5.2 Possible interventions that could be made by the teachers to overcome the challenges of pupils with social competence difficulties from the unstable families

The research highlights the varying perspectives on key aspects of fostering social competence among pupils from unstable homes. Most respondents (68.4%) agreed that teachers should demonstrate empathy towards students from these backgrounds, aligning with trauma-informed education principles and Noddings' (2005) concept of care in teaching. However, some (22.1%) disagreed, suggesting a need for further teacher education on the importance of understanding students' personal challenges. Regarding the prioritization of social competence goals, the majority (80%) disagreed with early investigations into teachers' goals, highlighting a gap in the focus on social skill development in education, a point supported by Zins et al. (2004) and Denham et al. (2012), who stress the need for early attention to these goals for holistic child development.

Further findings indicate general support for developing a model for social competence skills in schools, with 62.1% of respondents in favor, though 30.5% were uncertain or disagreed, reflecting variability in opinion. This underscores the need for clearer communication and more tailored approaches to effectively implement such models, as suggested by Jones et al. (2018) and Goleman (2006). Similarly, while 60% agreed on the importance of providing teachers with the necessary tools and materials, a notable portion (21.1%) disagreed or were unsure, pointing to differing perspectives on the role of resources in teaching effectiveness. These findings suggest that more targeted efforts are required to ensure that all teachers receive the resources they need to support their students effectively.

Finally, the research emphasizes the critical role of teacher-parent communication, with 69.5% of respondents agreeing that regular communication about students' strengths and weaknesses is essential for fostering student success. This aligns with Smith (2023) research, which highlights the importance of teacher-parent collaboration in promoting student development. Furthermore, a majority (61.1%) supported the idea of meetings between teachers and parents focused on encouraging parents to prioritize their children's best interests, further underscoring the value of creating a supportive environment for students' growth. These findings suggest that schools should prioritize enhancing teacher-parent communication to ensure better support for students, particularly those from unstable family backgrounds.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

5.2.1 Causes of lack of social competence among the pupils from the unstable families in selected primary schools

In conclusion, the study highlights that the lack of social competence among pupils from unstable families is primarily rooted in underdeveloped behavioral skills, loss of self-confidence, and limited respect for others. These children often struggle with fundamental social abilities like empathy and self-regulation, which are crucial for building positive relationships and navigating social environments. The emotional and psychological impact of family instability further exacerbates these challenges, making it

difficult for these children to engage fully with their peers and teachers. These findings point to the need for targeted interventions within schools to address the emotional and behavioral gaps, fostering the development of social competence through tailored support, skill-building, and a trauma-informed approach.

Furthermore, the study suggests that there is a significant gap in how the education system addresses the social competence needs of children from unstable families. Teachers often do not prioritize social skills development or establish clear goals for enhancing students' social competencies, which contributes to the difficulties these children face. There is also a lack of effective communication between teachers and parents, which limits the support these children receive at home and school. To address these issues, it is crucial to provide teachers with the necessary training, resources, and strategies to effectively nurture social skills, while also encouraging stronger partnerships with parents. Only through these combined efforts can we better support the development of social competence in pupils from unstable family backgrounds and help them overcome the barriers to successful social integration.

5.2.2 Possible interventions that could be made by the teachers to overcome the challenges of pupils with social competence difficulties from the unstable families in selected primary schools

In conclusion, the study highlights several key interventions that teachers can implement to address the social competence difficulties of pupils from unstable families. First, teachers should prioritize the development of essential behavioral skills such as self-regulation, empathy, and communication through structured programs and activities. Providing students with opportunities to practice and reinforce these skills in a supportive classroom environment will be crucial. Additionally, incorporating Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) into the curriculum can help pupils build the necessary skills for managing their emotions, understanding others' perspectives, and forming positive relationships, thus enhancing their social competence.

Furthermore, fostering a trauma-sensitive and empathetic classroom environment is essential for supporting children from unstable homes. Teachers can create safe spaces where students feel valued and understood, offering consistent emotional support and recognizing the impact of family instability on their social and emotional well-being. Regular communication with parents and caregivers is another critical intervention, ensuring that teachers and families work together to reinforce positive behaviors and provide a stable support system. Lastly, teachers should receive training on trauma-informed practices and how to identify and address the unique needs of students facing social competence challenges. By equipping educators with the right tools and strategies, schools can better support these children in overcoming their difficulties and help them develop the social skills necessary for success in both school and life.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.3.1 Causes of lack of social competence among the pupils from the unstable families in selected primary schools

To address the lack of social competence among pupils from unstable families, schools should implement Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs that focus on essential skills like self-regulation, empathy, and communication. These programs should be integrated into the curriculum and reinforced

through classroom activities. Teachers should also receive training in trauma-informed practices, enabling them to create supportive, safe environments that promote the development of social skills. Regular communication between teachers and parents is crucial to ensure alignment between home and school, providing a consistent support system to help students improve their social competence.

Additionally, schools should offer counseling and mental health support to help students cope with emotional challenges stemming from family instability. Providing access to counseling services can support students in building self-esteem and emotional resilience, further enhancing their social competence. By combining SEL programs, teacher training, effective parent-teacher communication, and mental health support, schools can create a holistic approach to helping pupils from unstable families develop the necessary social skills for success in school and beyond.

5.3.2 Possible interventions that could be made by the teachers to overcome the challenges of pupils with social competence difficulties from the unstable families in selected primary schools

To overcome the challenges faced by pupils from unstable families, teachers should prioritize the development of social-emotional skills through structured interventions such as Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programs. These programs should focus on building key skills like empathy, self-regulation, and communication, which are often underdeveloped in children from unstable backgrounds. Teachers can also create a supportive and inclusive classroom environment where students feel safe to express themselves and practice social interactions. Providing opportunities for role-playing, group work, and conflict resolution activities can help students practice these skills in a safe, guided setting, ultimately enhancing their social competence.

Additionally, teachers should receive training in trauma-informed practices to better understand and address the emotional and psychological challenges that these students face. By recognizing the signs of trauma and emotional distress, teachers can offer appropriate support and interventions to help students cope with their experiences. Establishing strong communication with parents is also essential, as a collaborative approach between home and school ensures that students receive consistent guidance. Regular meetings and feedback between teachers and parents can provide a unified support system, allowing teachers to work together with families to reinforce social competence development both in and outside the classroom.

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