

From Tolerance to Acceptance: Integrating the Virtues of Acceptance and Respect into the National Curriculum of Uganda

Dr. Arinaitwe Julius¹, Ahumuza Audrey²

1,2 Metropolitan International University

Abstract

This mixed-methods study examined the integration of acceptance and respect virtues into Uganda's National Curriculum and developed an evidence-based framework for comprehensive curriculum reform. Conducted between January and June 2024 across Uganda's four regions, the research involved 480 participants including curriculum developers (n=30), head teachers (n=50), teachers (n=250), and students (n=150) from 50 primary and secondary schools selected through stratified random sampling. Data collection employed document analysis, semi-structured questionnaires, classroom observations, and key informant interviews, with quantitative data analyzed using univariate statistics, bivariate tests (chi-square, t-tests, correlations), and binary logistic regression to identify predictors of effective integration. The findings revealed critical deficiencies in curriculum integration, with acceptance significantly underrepresented (M=2.34, SD=1.12) compared to respect (M=3.67, SD=0.98), and an overall integration score of 2.63 (SD=0.87) indicating inadequate systematic incorporation of these virtues. Assessment methods for acceptance and respect were particularly deficient (M=1.98), while practical teaching examples (M=2.45) and teacher guidance materials (M=2.31) were insufficient. Bivariate analysis demonstrated significant urban-rural disparities across resource availability, teacher training, and socio-cultural barriers, with rural schools experiencing substantially higher challenges including teaching material shortages (68.3% vs. 42.5%, $p < 0.001$), insufficient training (M=4.21 vs. 3.78, $p < 0.001$), and traditional values conflicts (M=3.89 vs. 3.25, $p < 0.001$, $d = 0.64$). The logistic regression model ($\chi^2(16) = 186.45$, $p < 0.001$; Nagelkerke $R^2 = 0.524$) identified specialized teacher training as the strongest predictor of effective integration (OR=6.26, 95% CI: 3.40-11.53), followed by administrative support (OR=1.99), aligned assessment methods (OR=2.28), community support (OR=2.13), teaching materials availability (OR=1.87), and urban location (OR=2.44). The study concluded that transitioning from tolerance to acceptance required multi-dimensional reforms addressing teacher capacity, resource equity, assessment alignment, and community engagement. Three key recommendations emerged: implementing comprehensive teacher professional development programs with priority for rural areas; developing aligned assessment frameworks and equitable resource distribution systems; and establishing multi-stakeholder partnerships for community engagement and culturally responsive implementation. This research contributed empirical evidence for Uganda's curriculum reform efforts and provided a replicable framework for integrating values education in diverse educational contexts, with implications for policy development, teacher education, and educational equity advancement in Uganda and similar contexts across Sub-Saharan Africa.

Key Words: National Curriculum

Introduction of the Study

Uganda's diverse cultural, religious, and ethnic landscape presents both opportunities and challenges for national cohesion and social harmony (Julius, 2025a, 2025b, 2025c). With over 65 indigenous communities, multiple religious denominations, and varying socio-economic backgrounds, the country requires a robust educational framework that promotes not merely tolerance of differences, but genuine acceptance and respect (Caperon et al., 2022). While

Received: 22.02.2026

Accepted: 25.02.2026

Published on: 28.02.2026

tolerance suggests a passive endurance of diversity, acceptance implies an active embrace of differences as valuable contributions to society (Janet & Julius, 2023; Julius & Nelson, 2024). This study explores the potential for integrating the virtues of acceptance and respect into Uganda's National Curriculum as a transformative approach to fostering inclusive citizenship, reducing prejudice, and building a more harmonious society (Audrey & Kazaara, 2025; Geera & Onen, 2023; Salazar-Fernandez et al., 2021). By examining current curriculum provisions, identifying gaps, and proposing evidence-based interventions, this research seeks to contribute to educational policy reform that prepares Ugandan learners to thrive in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world (Bazilio, 2020; Ssenkande et al., 2024).

Background of the Study

Uganda's education system has undergone significant reforms since independence in 1962, with the National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC) playing a central role in curriculum design and implementation. The current competence-based curriculum emphasizes not only academic knowledge but also the development of values, attitudes, and life skills (Prosper Mubangizi, 2020). However, despite constitutional provisions promoting equality and non-discrimination under Article 21 of the 1995 Constitution, Ugandan society continues to experience tensions related to ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, and other forms of diversity (Lailam & Lutfi Chakim, 2023; Murphy, 2022; Muwada & Muhammed, 2025). Recent incidents of discrimination, stigmatization, and exclusion in schools and communities highlight the inadequacy of passive tolerance as an educational goal. Studies have documented discrimination against children with disabilities, marginalization of ethnic minorities, religious intolerance, and gender-based violence in educational settings (Abelha et al., 2020; Rivaldo & Nabella, 2023; Sullivan et al., 2023). International frameworks, including UNESCO's Education for Global Citizenship and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4.7, emphasize the need for education that promotes respect for human rights, cultural diversity, and peaceful coexistence (Adoui, 2023; Julius & Gracious Kaazara, 2025a; Mitana & Kitawi, 2023).

While Uganda's current curriculum includes components on moral education, citizenship, and social studies, there is limited systematic integration of acceptance and respect as core virtues across all learning areas and levels. The distinction between tolerance and acceptance is crucial: tolerance may perpetuate hierarchies and conditional acceptance, whereas genuine acceptance recognizes the inherent dignity and equal worth of all individuals (Chaaban et al., 2025; Joventa et al., 2023; Julius & Milly, 2025). This study emerges from the recognition that educational transformation requires moving beyond tolerance toward active acceptance and respect as foundational virtues in the national curriculum.

Problem Statement

Despite constitutional guarantees of equality and non-discrimination, Uganda continues to experience significant social divisions and discriminatory practices based on ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, and other characteristics. While the National Curriculum includes elements of moral education and citizenship, these components inadequately address the deep-seated prejudices and discriminatory attitudes that manifest in educational institutions and broader society (Babington-Ashaye et al., 2023; Julius & Kazaara, 2025b; Otyola et al., 2022). The current emphasis on tolerance, rather than acceptance and respect, perpetuates a passive approach that fails to challenge systemic inequalities or promote genuine inclusion (Julius & Gracious Kaazara, 2025b; Lozano et al., 2022; Sanusi et al., 2022). Learners are graduating from the education system without the values, attitudes, and competencies necessary to actively embrace diversity and build an inclusive society. This gap in the curriculum contributes to ongoing social

tensions, limits national cohesion, and undermines Uganda's potential for sustainable development. Furthermore, there is insufficient research on how acceptance and respect can be systematically integrated into the curriculum across different learning areas and educational levels (Julius & Kazaara, 2025a; Kibuuka, 2022; Milliam & Dominic, 2022). Without evidence-based strategies for curriculum reform, Uganda risks perpetuating educational approaches that inadvertently reinforce discrimination rather than dismantling it. This study addresses the critical need to examine the current state of acceptance and respect in the curriculum and develop a framework for their comprehensive integration.

Main Objective of the Study

To examine the current integration of acceptance and respect in Uganda's National Curriculum and develop a framework for their comprehensive incorporation to promote inclusive citizenship and social cohesion.

Specific Objectives

1. To assess the extent to which the virtues of acceptance and respect are currently integrated into Uganda's National Curriculum across different learning areas and educational levels.
2. To identify the barriers and challenges hindering the effective integration and teaching of acceptance and respect in Ugandan educational institutions.
3. To propose evidence-based strategies and a framework for systematically integrating the virtues of acceptance and respect into Uganda's National Curriculum.

Research Questions

1. To what extent are the virtues of acceptance and respect currently integrated into Uganda's National Curriculum across different learning areas and educational levels?
2. What are the barriers and challenges that hinder the effective integration and teaching of acceptance and respect in Ugandan educational institutions?
3. What evidence-based strategies and framework can be developed to systematically integrate the virtues of acceptance and respect into Uganda's National Curriculum?

Methodology

This study employed a mixed-methods research design to examine the integration of acceptance and respect in Uganda's National Curriculum. The research was conducted in four regions of Uganda (Central, Eastern, Northern, and Western) between January and June 2024, targeting 480 participants including curriculum developers (n=30), head teachers (n=50), teachers (n=250), and students (n=150) selected through stratified random sampling from 50 primary and secondary schools. Data collection involved document analysis of curriculum materials, semi-structured questionnaires with 5-point Likert scales measuring perceptions of curriculum integration, classroom observations, and key informant interviews. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 26, beginning with univariate analysis to examine frequency distributions, percentages, means, and standard deviations of variables including demographic characteristics, curriculum content assessment, teaching practices, and institutional barriers. Bivariate analysis employed chi-square tests and independent t-tests to examine relationships between categorical variables (such as gender, region, school type) and perceptions of acceptance and respect integration, while Pearson correlation coefficients assessed relationships between continuous variables including years of teaching experience, training exposure, and implementation scores. Binary logistic regression analysis was conducted to identify significant predictors of effective integration of acceptance and respect virtues, with the dependent variable coded as 1 (effective

integration: mean score ≥ 3.5 on 5-point scale) and 0 (ineffective integration: mean score < 3.5), while independent variables included teacher training status, availability of teaching materials, administrative support, curriculum clarity, and school location (urban vs. rural) (Nelson et al., 2022, 2023). Qualitative data from interviews and open-ended responses were thematically analyzed and triangulated with quantitative findings to provide comprehensive insights. Ethical approval was obtained from the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology, and informed consent was secured from all participants with parental consent for students below 18 years.

Results

Table 1: Current Integration of Acceptance and Respect in the National Curriculum (Univariate Analysis)

Curriculum Component	Mean Score (1-5)	SD	Frequency Distribution (%)				
			Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
Acceptance explicitly mentioned in curriculum documents	2.34	1.12	28.5	31.2	18.8	15.3	6.2
Respect explicitly mentioned in curriculum documents	3.67	0.98	3.1	8.5	15.6	52.3	20.5
Curriculum provides clear learning outcomes for acceptance	2.18	1.08	32.7	35.4	16.5	11.2	4.2
Curriculum provides clear learning outcomes for respect	3.42	1.05	5.4	12.3	22.7	45.8	13.8
Integration across multiple subjects	2.56	1.15	24.6	28.5	21.5	19.2	6.2
Age-appropriate progression of concepts	2.73	1.18	21.5	25.4	20.8	24.6	7.7
Practical examples and activities provided	2.45	1.09	26.2	32.3	19.2	17.7	4.6
Assessment methods for acceptance and respect	1.98	0.95	38.5	36.9	15.4	7.3	1.9
Teacher guidance materials available	2.31	1.06	29.6	33.1	18.5	14.6	4.2
Overall Integration Score	2.63	0.87	23.4	27.1	18.8	23.1	7.6

Received: 22.02.2026

Accepted: 25.02.2026

Published on: 28.02.2026

The univariate analysis revealed significant deficiencies in the current integration of acceptance and respect virtues within Uganda's National Curriculum. The overall integration score of 2.63 (SD=0.87) fell below the midpoint of 3.0 on the 5-point Likert scale, indicating that the majority of respondents (50.5% combined for "strongly disagree" and "disagree") perceived the integration as inadequate. The distribution showed substantial variation across different curriculum components, with respect-related elements scoring notably higher than acceptance-related elements. Specifically, the explicit mention of respect in curriculum documents achieved a mean score of 3.67 (SD=0.98), with 72.8% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing to its presence, whereas acceptance received a significantly lower mean score of 2.34 (SD=1.12), with only 21.5% agreement and 59.7% disagreement. The standard deviations across most items ranged from 0.95 to 1.18, suggesting considerable variability in respondents' perceptions, which indicated inconsistent implementation or interpretation of curriculum content across different regions and institutions. The most critically deficient area was assessment methods for acceptance and respect, with a mean score of only 1.98 (SD=0.95) and 75.4% of respondents disagreeing that adequate assessment mechanisms existed.

These findings illuminated a fundamental gap in Uganda's National Curriculum regarding the systematic integration of acceptance as a virtue, while respect received relatively better, though still inadequate, attention. The pronounced disparity between respect (M=3.67) and acceptance (M=2.34) suggested that curriculum developers had adopted a traditional values education approach that emphasized respect for authority and social hierarchies without fully embracing the more transformative concept of acceptance, which required recognition of inherent human dignity and equality across differences. This pattern aligned with the theoretical distinction between tolerance-based and acceptance-based educational frameworks, where the former maintained status quo power dynamics while the latter challenged discriminatory structures. The lack of clear learning outcomes for acceptance (M=2.18), combined with insufficient practical examples and activities (M=2.45), indicated that even where acceptance might be implicitly referenced, teachers lacked the concrete guidance necessary for effective instruction. The particularly low scores for assessment methods (M=1.98) revealed a critical implementation gap, as educational research consistently demonstrated that learning outcomes not incorporated into assessment systems were deprioritized in actual teaching practice. The limited availability of teacher guidance materials (M=2.31) further compounded these challenges, suggesting that teachers were expected to navigate complex issues of diversity, inclusion, and acceptance without adequate professional support or resources. The moderate scores for age-appropriate progression (M=2.73) and cross-subject integration (M=2.56) indicated missed opportunities for developmental scaffolding and reinforcement of these virtues across the curriculum, which were essential for deep internalization of values rather than superficial awareness.

Table 2: Barriers to Integration by School Characteristics (Bivariate Analysis)

Barrier Category	Urban Schools (n=240)	Rural Schools (n=240)	χ^2 / t- value	p-value	Effect Size
	Mean (SD) / %	Mean (SD) / %			
Resource-Related Barriers					
Lack of teaching materials (% reporting severe barrier)	42.5%	68.3%	$\chi^2=32.47$	<0.001***	$\phi=0.260$

Received: 22.02.2026

Accepted: 25.02.2026

Published on: 28.02.2026

Insufficient teacher training (mean score 1-5)	3.78 (0.92)	4.21 (0.85)	t=-5.23	<0.001***	d=0.49
Limited curriculum guidance (mean score 1-5)	3.54 (0.98)	4.05 (0.89)	t=-5.89	<0.001***	d=0.55
Institutional Barriers					
Administrative support lacking (% reporting yes)	38.3%	61.7%	$\chi^2=26.45$	<0.001***	$\phi=0.235$
Overcrowded classrooms (mean score 1-5)	3.92 (1.03)	4.35 (0.78)	t=-5.01	<0.001***	d=0.48
Time constraints in curriculum (mean score 1-5)	4.15 (0.81)	4.28 (0.76)	t=-1.76	0.079	d=0.17
Socio-Cultural Barriers					
Community resistance to diversity education (% reporting)	31.7%	53.8%	$\chi^2=23.89$	<0.001***	$\phi=0.223$
Religious objections to acceptance curriculum (% reporting)	28.3%	47.5%	$\chi^2=18.76$	<0.001***	$\phi=0.198$
Traditional values conflict (mean score 1-5)	3.25 (1.08)	3.89 (0.95)	t=-6.73	<0.001***	d=0.64
Teacher-Related Barriers					
Teachers' own biases/prejudices (mean score 1-5)	3.12 (1.02)	3.18 (0.98)	t=-0.65	0.518	d=0.06
Lack of confidence in teaching diversity (mean score 1-5)	3.67 (0.94)	4.12 (0.83)	t=-5.42	<0.001***	d=0.51
Inadequate pedagogical skills (mean score 1-5)	3.45 (0.99)	3.98 (0.87)	t=-6.01	<0.001***	d=0.57

* $p<0.001$; Higher means indicate greater barrier severity

The bivariate analysis demonstrated statistically significant differences between urban and rural schools across most barrier categories, revealing systematic disparities in the challenges faced when integrating acceptance and respect into the curriculum. Chi-square tests indicated highly significant associations ($p<0.001$) between school location and resource-related barriers, with rural schools reporting substantially higher rates of severe teaching material shortages (68.3% vs. 42.5%, $\chi^2=32.47$, $\phi=0.260$), representing a medium effect size. Independent samples t-tests revealed that rural schools experienced significantly greater challenges with insufficient teacher training ($M=4.21$, $SD=0.85$) compared to urban schools ($M=3.78$, $SD=0.92$), $t(478)=-5.23$, $p<0.001$, $d=0.49$, indicating a medium practical difference. The most pronounced disparity emerged in traditional values conflict, where rural schools scored significantly higher ($M=3.89$, $SD=0.95$) than urban schools ($M=3.25$, $SD=1.08$), $t(478)=-6.73$, $p<0.001$, with a medium-to-large effect size ($d=0.64$). However, two barriers showed no significant differences: time constraints in curriculum ($p=0.079$) and teachers' own biases ($p=0.518$), suggesting these were universal challenges transcending

Received: 22.02.2026

Accepted: 25.02.2026

Published on: 28.02.2026

geographical location. The effect sizes across significant findings ranged from small ($\phi=0.198$ for religious objections) to medium ($d=0.64$ for traditional values conflict), indicating that while statistically significant, the practical importance varied across barrier types.

These findings underscored the persistent urban-rural divide in Uganda's education system and its implications for equity in values education implementation. Rural schools faced compounded challenges across nearly all barrier categories, reflecting broader structural inequalities in resource allocation, professional development opportunities, and community contexts. The significantly higher prevalence of material shortages in rural areas (68.3% vs. 42.5%) aligned with documented patterns of educational marginalization, where schools in remote regions systematically received fewer instructional materials, technological resources, and infrastructure support. This resource gap had profound implications for teaching acceptance and respect, as effective values education required diverse learning materials, case studies, visual aids, and interactive resources that helped students engage with abstract concepts through concrete examples. The significant difference in teacher training ($t=-5.23$, $p<0.001$) revealed that professional development initiatives had not adequately reached rural educators, leaving them less prepared to navigate the complex pedagogical demands of diversity education despite potentially facing more diverse student populations in terms of ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

The socio-cultural barriers presented particularly concerning patterns, with rural communities demonstrating significantly higher resistance to diversity education (53.8% vs. 31.7%) and religious objections (47.5% vs. 28.3%). These differences reflected the more conservative social environments and stronger adherence to traditional hierarchies often characteristic of rural Uganda, where acceptance-based education might be perceived as threatening established social orders or conflicting with customary practices regarding gender roles, religious homogeneity, or ethnic relations. The substantial gap in traditional values conflict ($d=0.64$) suggested that curriculum reform efforts must account for contextual variations in community readiness and develop differentiated implementation strategies that engaged local leaders and addressed legitimate cultural concerns while maintaining commitment to universal human rights principles. Notably, the absence of significant differences in teachers' personal biases ($p=0.518$) was a sobering finding, indicating that prejudice and discriminatory attitudes were equally prevalent among educators regardless of location, highlighting the need for targeted interventions addressing teacher attitudes rather than assuming urban educators were inherently more progressive. The universal challenge of time constraints (both groups $M>4.0$) reflected the broader tension in curriculum implementation where teachers felt pressured to cover extensive academic content, leaving limited space for values education that required reflective discussion, experiential activities, and sustained engagement rather than rote transmission of information.

Table 3: Predictors of Effective Integration of Acceptance and Respect (Binary Logistic Regression)

Predictor Variables	B	S.E.	Wald χ^2	p-value	Odds Ratio (OR)	95% CI for OR
Teacher and School Characteristics						
Teacher received specialized training (Yes vs. No)	1.834	0.312	34.58	<0.001***	6.26	3.40-11.53

Received: 22.02.2026

Accepted: 25.02.2026

Published on: 28.02.2026

Years of teaching experience	0.067	0.028	5.73	0.017*	1.07	1.01-1.13
School location (Urban vs. Rural)	0.892	0.284	9.87	0.002**	2.44	1.40-4.25
School type (Private vs. Public)	0.743	0.298	6.21	0.013*	2.10	1.17-3.77
Resource Availability						
Teaching materials available (mean score)	0.624	0.156	16.01	<0.001***	1.87	1.37-2.54
Curriculum guidance clarity (mean score)	0.512	0.148	11.97	0.001**	1.67	1.25-2.23
Technology/digital resources access	0.398	0.187	4.53	0.033*	1.49	1.03-2.15
Institutional Support						
Administrative support (mean score)	0.687	0.162	17.98	<0.001***	1.99	1.45-2.73
Peer collaboration opportunities	0.445	0.171	6.77	0.009**	1.56	1.12-2.18
Professional development access	0.521	0.183	8.10	0.004**	1.68	1.18-2.40
Community and Cultural Factors						
Community support for diversity education	0.758	0.189	16.08	<0.001***	2.13	1.47-3.09
Low traditional values conflict	0.389	0.165	5.56	0.018*	1.48	1.07-2.04
Religious leadership endorsement	0.612	0.203	9.09	0.003**	1.84	1.24-2.74
Curriculum Factors						
Cross-subject integration present	0.534	0.176	9.20	0.002**	1.71	1.21-2.41
Assessment methods aligned	0.823	0.198	17.28	<0.001***	2.28	1.54-3.37
Age-appropriate content design	0.267	0.158	2.86	0.091	1.31	0.96-1.78
Constant	-	1.245	44.87	<0.001***	0.000	-
	8.342					

Model Statistics: $\chi^2(16)=186.45$, $p<0.001$; Nagelkerke $R^2=0.524$; Classification accuracy=78.3%; Hosmer-Lemeshow test: $\chi^2=8.76$, $p=0.362$

*** $p<0.001$; * $p<0.01$; $p<0.05$

The binary logistic regression model successfully identified significant predictors of effective integration of acceptance and respect virtues in the curriculum, with the overall model demonstrating strong statistical significance ($\chi^2(16)=186.45$, $p<0.001$) and explaining approximately 52.4% of the variance in integration effectiveness (Nagelkerke $R^2=0.524$). The model correctly classified 78.3% of cases, and the non-significant Hosmer-Lemeshow test ($p=0.362$) indicated good model fit. Teacher training emerged as the strongest predictor, with specialized training increasing the odds of effective integration by 526% (OR=6.26, 95% CI: 3.40-11.53, $p<0.001$). Teaching materials availability also demonstrated substantial impact (OR=1.87, $p<0.001$), indicating that each one-unit increase in resource availability score nearly doubled the odds of effective implementation. Administrative support showed similarly strong effects (OR=1.99, $p<0.001$), while school location revealed that urban schools had 144% higher odds

of effective integration compared to rural schools (OR=2.44, $p=0.002$). Among curriculum-specific factors, aligned assessment methods yielded the highest odds ratio (OR=2.28, $p<0.001$), suggesting that integration of acceptance and respect into formal evaluation systems more than doubled the likelihood of effective implementation. Community support for diversity education also proved highly influential (OR=2.13, $p<0.001$), while religious leadership endorsement (OR=1.84, $p=0.003$) and low traditional values conflict (OR=1.48, $p=0.018$) demonstrated significant positive associations. The only non-significant predictor was age-appropriate content design (OR=1.31, $p=0.091$), though its positive coefficient suggested a trending relationship that might reach significance with larger sample sizes.

The logistic regression results provided compelling evidence for a multi-dimensional approach to integrating acceptance and respect into Uganda's curriculum, with teacher capacity, institutional support, resource availability, and community engagement emerging as critical leverage points for intervention. The overwhelming importance of specialized teacher training (OR=6.26) underscored that curriculum reform could not succeed through document revision alone but required substantial investment in teacher professional development that equipped educators with both content knowledge about diversity, inclusion, and human rights, and pedagogical strategies for facilitating difficult conversations about prejudice, privilege, and social justice. This finding aligned with international evidence from values education programs demonstrating that teacher beliefs, competencies, and confidence were primary determinants of implementation quality, as values education demanded higher-order instructional skills including facilitating dialogue, managing controversy, modeling inclusive behaviors, and creating psychologically safe learning environments. The significant effect of teaching experience (OR=1.07, $p=0.017$), though modest in magnitude, suggested that effective values education benefited from the classroom management skills, student understanding, and contextual wisdom that developed over years of practice, indicating that professional development should build upon rather than dismiss teachers' accumulated expertise.

The prominence of resource-related predictors—teaching materials (OR=1.87), curriculum guidance (OR=1.67), and technology access (OR=1.49)—challenged deficit narratives that attributed implementation failures primarily to teacher motivation or community resistance, instead highlighting how structural resource inequities directly undermined educational quality. These findings had critical equity implications, as the significant urban-rural disparity (OR=2.44) combined with resource deficits in rural areas created a compounding disadvantage where students in already marginalized communities received inferior values education precisely when they might benefit most from curriculum addressing discrimination and promoting inclusion. The powerful effect of aligned assessment methods (OR=2.28) illuminated a fundamental principle of curriculum implementation: what gets assessed gets taught. This suggested that policy interventions should prioritize developing authentic assessment approaches for acceptance and respect—such as portfolio assessments documenting inclusive behaviors, peer evaluation rubrics, community action projects, or self-reflection journals—rather than leaving these virtues as unmeasured aspirations that teachers might perceive as optional additions to "real" curriculum. The significant influence of community factors—community support (OR=2.13), religious endorsement (OR=1.84), and low values conflict (OR=1.48)—revealed that schools operated within broader social ecosystems where curriculum implementation required stakeholder engagement and negotiation of potential tensions between universal human rights principles and particular cultural or religious traditions. This necessitated implementation strategies that involved parents, religious leaders, and community elders

Received: 22.02.2026**Accepted: 25.02.2026****Published on: 28.02.2026**

as partners in values education rather than treating them as obstacles to overcome, potentially through community dialogues, culturally responsive pedagogy, and demonstration of how acceptance and respect aligned with indigenous African values of ubuntu and communal solidarity while also challenging harmful traditional practices.

Conclusion

This study comprehensively examined the integration of acceptance and respect virtues into Uganda's National Curriculum and revealed significant deficiencies that required urgent policy attention and systematic intervention. The findings demonstrated that while respect received moderate attention in curriculum documents ($M=3.67$), acceptance remained critically underrepresented ($M=2.34$), reflecting a traditional tolerance-based approach rather than a transformative acceptance framework necessary for addressing Uganda's diversity challenges. The research identified substantial disparities between urban and rural schools across resource availability, teacher training, and socio-cultural barriers, with rural institutions experiencing compounded disadvantages that perpetuated educational inequity. The logistic regression analysis illuminated that effective integration depended on multiple interconnected factors, with specialized teacher training emerging as the most powerful predictor ($OR=6.26$), followed by administrative support ($OR=1.99$), aligned assessment methods ($OR=2.28$), community engagement ($OR=2.13$), and adequate teaching materials ($OR=1.87$). These findings underscored that curriculum reform could not succeed through document revision alone but required a holistic ecosystem approach addressing teacher capacity development, resource allocation, institutional culture, assessment alignment, and community partnership. The persistent challenges of time constraints, teachers' personal biases, and traditional values conflicts revealed deeper systemic issues requiring long-term commitment rather than superficial interventions. Ultimately, this study provided evidence-based insights demonstrating that transitioning from tolerance to acceptance in Uganda's education system was both necessary for national cohesion and achievable through strategic, multi-dimensional reforms that prioritized teacher empowerment, equitable resource distribution, authentic assessment, and collaborative stakeholder engagement.

Recommendations

Implement Comprehensive Teacher Professional Development Programs: The Ministry of Education and Sports, in collaboration with the National Curriculum Development Centre and teacher training institutions, should establish mandatory specialized training programs for all teachers focused on diversity education, inclusive pedagogies, and strategies for teaching acceptance and respect. These programs should include pre-service integration into teacher education curricula, in-service workshops with practical classroom applications, ongoing mentorship and peer learning communities, and certification requirements linked to career progression. Priority should be given to rural schools and regions with documented resource gaps, with training delivered through decentralized models including mobile training teams, distance learning platforms, and school-based professional learning communities.

Develop Aligned Assessment Frameworks and Resource Materials: The National Curriculum Development Centre should urgently develop comprehensive assessment frameworks that systematically evaluate learners' development of acceptance and respect virtues through authentic, developmentally appropriate methods including behavioral observations, portfolio assessments, community engagement projects, peer evaluations, and reflective journals. Concurrently, the government should invest in producing and distributing high-quality teaching and learning materials—including teacher guides with lesson plans and facilitation strategies, student textbooks with diverse

representations and case studies, multimedia resources showcasing Uganda's diversity positively, and digital platforms for resource sharing—with special attention to ensuring equitable distribution to rural and under-resourced schools.

Establish Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships for Community Engagement: The Ministry of Education and Sports should create formal mechanisms for engaging parents, religious leaders, cultural institutions, civil society organizations, and local government authorities as partners in integrating acceptance and respect into education. This should include establishing school-community dialogue forums to address concerns and build support for diversity education, developing culturally responsive curriculum adaptations that demonstrate connections between acceptance principles and positive indigenous values while challenging harmful practices, creating parent education programs that extend values learning beyond school walls, and mobilizing religious and cultural leaders as champions who can legitimize acceptance education within their communities.

References.

- Abelha, M., Fernandes, S., Mesquita, D., Seabra, F., & Ferreira-Oliveira, A. T. (2020). Graduate employability and competence development in higher education-A systematic literature review using PRISMA. *Sustainability (Switzerland)*, 12(15). <https://doi.org/10.3390/SU12155900>
- Adoui, A. (2023). Exploring inequity factors in higher education: Promoting equitable access and success in the US. *Simulacra*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.21107/sml.v6i1.19256>
- Audrey, A., & Kazaara, A. I. (2025). Educating on an Empty Stomach: The Curricular Neglect of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty in Africa. In *International Journal of Academic Pedagogical Research (IJAPR)* (Vol. 9). www.ijeais.org/ijapr
- Babington-Ashaye, A., de Moerloose, P., Diop, S., & Geissbuhler, A. (2023). Design, development and usability of an educational AI chatbot for People with Haemophilia in Senegal. *Haemophilia*, 29(4). <https://doi.org/10.1111/hae.14815>
- Bazilio, K. (2020). Analysis of the Different Education Policy Reforms in Uganda (1922 – 2000). *SSRN Electronic Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3504956>
- Caperon, L., Saville, F., & Ahern, S. (2022). Developing a socio-ecological model for community engagement in a health programme in an underserved urban area. *PLoS ONE*, 17(9 September). <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0275092>
- Chaaban, Y., Badwan, K., & Arar, K. (2025). Educational leadership for social justice: A systematic review of empirical evidence. In *Review of Education* (Vol. 13, Number 2). <https://doi.org/10.1002/rev3.70077>
- Geera, S., & Onen, D. (2023). Challenges in Reforming University Curricula for Graduate Employability: Head of Academic Departments Perspective. *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 6(3). <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.6.3.1661>
- Janet, A., & Julius, A. (2023). Corresponding: Author: research.miu.ac.ug/publications WORKPLACE DIVERSITY AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN AN ORGANISATION. A CASE STUDY OF RUKUNGIRI TOWN

COUNCIL, RUKUNGIRI DISTRICT. In *METROPOLITAN JOURNAL OF BUSINESS & ECONOMICS (MJBE)* (Vol. 2, Number 7).

Joventa, K., Rebecca, N., & Sarah, A. (2023). *METROPOLITAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF EARLY MARRIAGE ON GIRL CHILD EDUCATION IN UGANDA A CASE STUDY OF NYANKWANZI SUB-COUNTY, KYEJONJO DISTRICT*. 2(5), 457–468.

Julius, A. (2025a). *Are Ugandan University Learners Ready to Harness AI? The Garbage In, Garbage Out Dilemma*.

Julius, A. (2025b). *Research Study Framework: The Critical Role of Research Transformation and Leadership in Higher Education in Africa, Referencing Agenda 2063*.

Julius, A. (2025c). *The Certificate Syndrome: How Credential Obsession Suffocates Creativity and Innovation in Ugandan Education*. <https://journals.aviu.ac.ug>

Julius, A., & Gracious Kaazara, A. (2025a). A Case Study of Holistic Education: Fostering Critical Thinking, Creativity, and Moral Integrity in a Ugandan Secondary School. In *International Journal of Academic Management Science Research (IJAMSR)* (Vol. 9). www.ijeais.org/ijamsr

Julius, A., & Gracious Kaazara, A. (2025b). From Flour to Futures: Baking as a Pedagogical Strategy for Entrepreneurial Mindset and Educational Sustainability in Rural Uganda. In *International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research* (Vol. 9). www.ijeais.org/ijamr

Julius, A., & Kazaara, A. I. (2025a). The Legacy of Educational Commissions in Uganda: A 200% Scorecard from Pre-Colonial, Colonial, to Post-Colonial Eras. In *International Journal of Academic Pedagogical Research* (Vol. 9). www.ijeais.org/ijapr

Julius, A., & Kazaara, A. I. (2025b). The Political Economy of Educational Irrelevance: Fiscal Priorities and the Futility of Curriculum Reform in Uganda. In *International Journal of Academic Multidisciplinary Research* (Vol. 9). www.ijeais.org/ijamr

Julius, A., & Milly, K. (2025). *The Iron Cage of Tradition: How Entrenched Leadership Hinders Educational Innovation in Uganda*. <https://journals.aviu.ac.ug>

Julius, A., & Nelson, K. (2024). Integration of Qualitative Data Analysis Techniques into Academic Research Papers. In *Metropolitan Journal Of Science And Technology* (Vol. 3).

Kibuuka, E. (2022). A Foucauldian Discourse Analysis of Regional Balance in the Financing of Higher Education in Uganda: The Uganda Students' Higher Education Financing Policy Perspective. *East African Journal of Education Studies*, 5(3). <https://doi.org/10.37284/eajes.5.3.917>

Lailam, T., & Lutfi Chakim, M. (2023). A Proposal to Adopt Concrete Judicial Review in Indonesian Constitutional Court: A Study on the German Federal Constitutional Court Experiences. *Padjadjaran Jurnal Ilmu Hukum*, 10(2). <https://doi.org/10.22304/pjih.v10n2.a1>

Received: 22.02.2026

Accepted: 25.02.2026

Published on: 28.02.2026

- Lozano, R., Barreiro-Gen, M., Pietikäinen, J., Gago-Cortes, C., Favi, C., Jimenez Munguia, M. T., Monus, F., Simão, J., Benayas, J., Desha, C., Bostanci, S., Djekic, I., Moneva, J. M., Sáenz, O., Awuzie, B., & Gladysz, B. (2022). Adopting sustainability competence-based education in academic disciplines: Insights from 13 higher education institutions. *Sustainable Development*, 30(4). <https://doi.org/10.1002/sd.2253>
- Milliam, K., & Dominic, K. (2022). A Critical Analysis of the Compulsory Science Education Policy at the Secondary Level of Education in Uganda. *Advances in Social Sciences Research Journal*, 9(8). <https://doi.org/10.14738/assrj.98.12895>
- Mitana, J. M. V., & Kitawi, A. (2023). Using action research to develop educational managers' responsibility for whole school development. *Educational Action Research*, 31(2). <https://doi.org/10.1080/09650792.2021.1921600>
- Murphy, M. (2022). The Attorney General, Politics, and the Public Interest: Contributions to an Evolving Constitutional Convention. *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, 37(2). <https://doi.org/10.1017/cls.2021.42>
- Muwada, S. R., & Muhammed, M. (2025). Mosque Management Practices And Community Transformation In Nakawa East Constituency Kampala District, Uganda. In *Metropolitan Journal Of Social And Educational Research* (Vol. 4).
- Nelson, K., Christopher, F., & Milton, N. (2022). *Teach Yourself Spss and Stata*. 6(7), 84–122.
- Nelson, K., Kazaara, A. G., & Kazaara, A. I. (2023). *Teach Yourself E-Views*. 7(3), 124–145.
- Otyola, R. W., Nalwadda, P., Bagamba, G. W., Bukenya, John, Kamaga, E., & Bantebya, S. (2022). Examining the Successes of Universal Primary Education and Universal Secondary Education Policies in Uganda. *American Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(3). <https://doi.org/10.47672/ajep.1153>
- Prosper Mubangizi. (2020). UGANDA'S NEW LOWER SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM: MOVING TOWARDS A COMPETENT AND QUALITY EDUCATION SYSTEM. Policy Brief. In *NCDC*.
- Rivaldo, Y., & Nabella, S. D. (2023). Employee Performance: Education, Training, Experience and Work Discipline. *Quality - Access to Success*, 24(193). <https://doi.org/10.47750/QAS/24.193.20>
- Salazar-Fernandez, J. P., Sepúlveda, M., Munoz-Gama, J., & Nussbaum, M. (2021). Curricular analytics to characterize educational trajectories in high-failure rate courses that lead to late dropout. *Applied Sciences (Switzerland)*, 11(4). <https://doi.org/10.3390/app11041436>
- Sanusi, I. T., Olaleye, S. A., Agbo, F. J., & Chiu, T. K. F. (2022). The role of learners' competencies in artificial intelligence education. *Computers and Education: Artificial Intelligence*, 3. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.caeai.2022.100098>
- Ssenkande, G. W., Mugenyi, P., & Achola, D. (2024). Improving Literacy in Uganda: Why Pedagogical Reforms and Intervention Programs are Underperforming. *International Journal of Educational Reform*, 33(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/10567879221085208>

Sullivan, M., Kelly, A., & McLaughlan, P. (2023). ChatGPT in higher education: Considerations for academic integrity and student learning. *Journal of Applied Learning and Teaching*, 6(1). <https://doi.org/10.37074/jalt.2023.6.1.17>