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VIEW OF TEACHERS IN IBADAN ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study sought to find out the view of teachers (Public, Private and Special) in Ibadan on Inclusive Education in Nigeria. It adopted a simple survey method that involved the use of a questionnaire. A total of 100 teachers made up of 40 each from both public and private schools and 20 from special school were sampled for the study. The study revealed that majority of the teachers were of the view that the present curriculum meets the requirements of inclusive education; that special needs children should be included where possible; that regular teachers can adapt their programme to accommodate special needs children; that teachers need special training to be able to handle inclusive classrooms; that Ministry of Education is ready for inclusive education and that Nigeria is ripe for Inclusive Education. Most of the teachers disagreed with the view that any teacher can handle inclusive classroom; that knowledge of special education is not needed to be able to handle inclusive classroom; that inclusion is likely to hurt the emotional development of special needs children and that special needs children will be isolated by regular classroom mates. It was then recommended that Government should explore this positive disposition of teachers to inclusive education by seeing to full implementation of the policy and also providing adequate training for teachers with regard to the policy on inclusion. There is need for more enlightenment programmes for teachers in private schools on the tenets of inclusive education.

INTRODUCTION

The UNESCO Salamanca statement and frame-work for action on special needs education called upon all governments to adopt as a matter of law or policy, the principles of inclusive education. This entails enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise (UNESCO, 1994, Statement, p. ix).

Inclusion is generally believed to mean the extent to which a school or community welcomes children with special needs as full members of the group and values them for the

contribution which they make. The children actively belong to, are welcomed by and participate in a mainstream school and community (Farrell, 2004). Thus, inclusive education is about presence, participation and achievement of all learners (Ainscow, 2005; Engelbrecht and Green, 2007).

Many authors have given varying definitions to inclusive education. In the words of Loreman, Sharma, Forlin and Earle (2005) inclusive education is an educational practice based on the social premise of justice that advocates for equal access to educational opportunities for all children regardless of their physical, intellectual, emotional or learning disability. Nwazuo (2001) sees inclusion as normalization of learning conditions for learners with disabilities so that they can learn and develop alongside their able-bodied counterparts in schools and in community. To Ademokoya (2003), inclusion is an effort to equalize educational opportunities for all children regardless of their physical or mental conditions, gender, colour, creed or language.

The guiding principle in inclusive education is that all children have a right to learn in mainstream schools. Inclusive education is an endeavour to recognize and take into account the sameness of learners while at the same time paying due regard to differences and diversity among individuals concerned (Norwich, 1996). Ainscow (1995) states that the aim of inclusive education is restructuring schools so as to address the learning needs of all learners. That is, schools must change in order to be able to meet the learning needs of all learners in a given community (Kisanji, 1999). In a similar vein, Armstrong (2005) points out that inclusive education means transforming entire educational systems to remove barriers to all learners thereby providing all children with equitable access to quality education.

Children irrespective of their physical status have the right to non discriminatory educational provisions. This was envisaged in The Convention on the Rights of the Child and reaffirmed through the recent UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) (2006). Both conventions clearly uphold the importance of education of all children with special needs and maintain that they must not be excluded from the general educational system. Though member nations have ratified the convention, there have been reports of good practices and violations all over

the world. 'Disability' in children renders them even more vulnerable to violation of their rights. Children with disabilities have universally suffered discrimination, violence and abuse, poverty, exclusion and institutionalization (International Save the Children Alliance, 2001:2). Thus inclusive education is one of the steps being taken to address the issue of discrimination, exclusion and institutionalization.

Nigeria is a signatory to several inclusive education-related international charters and conventions such as the Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education (UNESCO, 1994). The National Policy on Education Revised (1998) recognized the right of children with special needs to education. Eni-Olorunda (2005) observed that in a bid to cater for the educational needs of children with special needs, the Federal Government of Nigeria have established Special Schools and Integrated Schools across the country.

As a way of showing commitment to inclusive education, the Federal Government of Nigeria adopted the policy of integration in her National Policy on Education (1998). The policy stipulates the integration of special needs students into regular classrooms, and free education for exceptional students at all levels.

In response to global initiatives in particular the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and Education For All (EFA), the Federal Government of Nigeria in 2004 backed by the Act of Parliament adopted the 9-year Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme which replaced the former 6-3-3-4 system. The 9-year Basic Education programme which is free and compulsory was geared towards achieving the relevant targets of MDG, EFA and NEEDS (IAEA, 2006). Some of the highlights of the new scheme include the integration of primary and junior secondary schools (JSS) into a continuous system of schooling. This called for a new curriculum and saw the infusion of innovative ideas such as the introduction of Basic Technology as well as positive values and entrepreneurial skills (such as GSM repairs and

other hand tools oriented skills) into the primary school curriculum to make learning more functional and also to meet the noble ideas of MDG, EFA and NEEDS (Obioma, 2005). Many stakeholders in education especially in the education of special needs children lauded this innovative move of the Government as it is believed that it will cater for the needs of special needs persons who often are given to skill acquisition.

Many authors have highlighted the benefits of inclusive education. Eni-Olorunda (2005) comments that inclusive education see to the preservation of human rights of children with special needs, enables non-disabled children develop better understanding of disability and how to live with those with special needs, enhances professionalism on the part of special and regular teachers among other benefits. Also commenting on the gains of inclusive education, Ajuwon (2008) points out that in inclusive education setting, children are more likely to learn social skills in an environment that approximates to normal conditions of growth and development.

Teacher factors have been identified as one the elements that determine successful implementation of inclusive education programme (Ali, Mustapha and Jelas, 2006; Nayak, 2008; Avramidis & Norwich, 2002; Cook, Tankersley, Cook & Landrum, 2000; Gilmore & Cuskelly, 2003; Martinez, 2003; Shade & Stewart, 2001; Shippen, Crites, Houchins, Ramsey & Simon, 2005). A large number of studies on inclusive education and attitudes of the persons who are responsible for implementing inclusive policies, found that the attitude of teachers' is one of the major factors in the successful implementation of inclusive education (Avramiclis & Norwich, 2002; Ali, Mustapha & Jelas, 2006; Nayak, 2008 and Fakolade, Adeniyi & Tella, 2009). The study conducted by Weiner (2003) on the attitude of teachers' towards inclusion found that teachers' attitude is the 1st and 2nd most important condition necessary for successful inclusion. According to Avramidis & Norwich, (2002)

positive attitudes of the teacher reflecting a commitment to develop children with disabilities often determine the extent to which children with disabilities are accepted as part of the school community. Teachers hold a wide range of views when it comes to the topic of inclusion. Some attitudes are optimistic and positive, others are doubtful, and there are those that are highly negative (Bain 2005; Boling, 2007; Bandon, 2006; D'Alonzo, Giordano, Cross, 1996, Mba, 1991; Fakolade, Adeniyi & Tella,, 2009; Idol, 2006; Olson, 1997; Zambelli, 2004; Ogbue, 1995)

Statement of the Problem

The study set out to investigate the current view of teachers on inclusive education in Ibadan, Nigeria.

Research Questions

This study specifically attempted to answer the following question.

- (1) What is the view of teachers in Ibadan on Inclusive Education in Nigeria?

Hypothesis

The study hypothesized that

- (1) there is no significant difference in the view of male and female teachers on inclusive education in Nigeria
- (2) there is no significant difference in the view of trained and untrained teachers on inclusive education in Nigeria
- (3) there is no significant difference in the view of public, private and special school teachers on inclusive education in Nigeria

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study adopted a simple survey research design that elicits information from the respondents through a questionnaire.

Population

All lower and upper basic teachers in private, special and public schools in Ibadan, Oyo State of Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

In all, 100 teachers were selected for the study. This was clustered into 40 each for both private and public schools and 20 for special schools. Twenty (20) were used for special schools because their population is not as large as the other two schools. The schools were then selected by simple random sampling, giving two (2) special schools, five (5) public schools and five (5) private schools.

Research Instrument

The main instrument for the study was a researcher-designed teacher's questionnaire. The instrument is made up of two sections. Section A of the questionnaire deals with demographic information about the respondents. In section B, twelve items were used to tap the view of the respondents on Inclusive education in Nigeria

Validity and Reliability

The draft questionnaire was given to lecturers in Primary Education Studies and Special Education at the University of Ibadan for review. Some comments about wordings and arrangement of items were made. These were incorporated into the final edition of the instrument. Some teachers who were not in the sampled schools were also given the draft questionnaire as a form of trial testing. The data collected from the trial testing was used to establish internal consistency using Cronbach alpha which showed a value of 0.76 reliability index.

Procedure for Data Collection

The researchers directly administered the questionnaire to the respondents. The schools were visited and discussions held with the target teachers to seek their cooperation before they were served with the questionnaire. To prevent loss, Heads of the schools served as anchor persons in case teachers in a particular school could not complete and return the questionnaire immediately. Such schools were later visited to retrieve the instrument.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were pooled and analyzed through descriptive statistics of frequency count and percentages. Inferential statistic of t-test of independent events and analysis of variance (ANOVA) were also used to test for differences. The use of these tools was to make the result accessible to a broad spectrum of educational practitioners, including the teachers themselves.

FINDINGS

Table 1: Analysis of Demographic Data

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Educational Qualification		
School certificate	2	2.0
OND	7	7.0
NCE	48	48.0
B.Sc/HND	15	15.0
B.Ed	27	27.0
Others	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0
Gender		
Female	74	74.0
Male	26	26.0
Total	100	100.0
School Type		
Private	40	40.0
Public	40	40.0
Special	20	20.0
Total	100	100.0

Research Question 1: What is the view of teachers on Inclusive education? Table 2: View of Teachers on Inclusive Education

S/No	Items on the Questionnaire	3	2	1
		AGREED	DISAGREED	UNDECIDED
1	The present curriculum meets the requirement of inclusive education	64 (68.0%)	28 (28.0%)	8 (8.0%)
2	Inclusion does not affect teaching method	55 (55.0%)	41 (41.0%)	4 (4.0%)
3	Any teacher can handle an inclusive classroom	33 (33.0%)	60 (60.0%)	7 (7.0%)
4	Regular class teachers can easily adapt their programme to accommodate special needs children	57 (57.0%)	31 (31.0%)	12 (12.0%)
5	Knowledge of special education is not needed to be able to handle inclusive classroom	14 (14.0%)	82 (82.0%)	4 (4.0%)
6	Teachers need special training to be able to handle inclusive classroom	89 (89.0%)	9 (9.0%)	2 (2.0%)
7	Ministry of Education is prepared for inclusive education	54 (54.0%)	15 (15.0%)	31 (31.0%)
8	Parents of children without	41 (31.0%)	33 (33.0%)	26 (36.0%)
9	Special needs children should be included where possible	82 (82.0%)	11 (11.0%)	7 (7.0%)
10	Inclusion is likely to hurt the emotional development of special needs children and consequently affect their learning outcomes	31 (31.0%)	54 (54.0%)	15 (15.0%)
11	Special needs children will be isolated by regular classroom classmates	43 (43.0%)	51 (51.0%)	6 (6.0%)
12	Nigeria is ripe for inclusive education	56 (56.0%)	29 (29.0%)	15 (15.0%)

As could be seen from Table 1, majority (64%) of the sample teachers believe that the present curriculum of the federal Ministry of Education meets the requirement of inclusive education. A little above average (55%) of the teachers are of the view that inclusion does not affect method of teaching while 57% of the teachers believe that regular class teachers can easily adapt their programme to accommodate special needs children. A large proportion of the teachers (80%) agreed that teachers need special training to be able to handle inclusive classroom, and 82% of the respondents agreed that special children should be included where possible.

On the other hand, majority (82%) of the respondents disagreed with the notion that knowledge of special education is not needed to be able to handle inclusive classroom.

However, 60% of the teachers opined that any teacher can handle an inclusive classroom. Also a little above average (54%) of the respondents does not believe that inclusive is likely to hurt the emotional development of special needs children. On the other hand, 51% of the respondents believe that special needs children will be isolated by regular classroom mates.

Though not up to average, a reasonable number (31%) are not sure whether ministry of Education is prepared for inclusive education.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in the views of male and female teachers on inclusive education in Nigeria.

Table 3: t – test comparison of views of male and female teachers.

Gender	N	Mean	S.D	t-value	Df	P	Remark
Male	74	28.8514	3.39493	0.158	9.85	0.459	Not significant
Female	26	28.7308	3.21941				

The t – test analysis shows that there is no significant difference in the view of male and female teachers on inclusive education (t – value = 0.158, $df = 98$, $p > 0.05$). The mean scores of both male and female teachers are approximately the same.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference in the views of professional teachers and non – professional teachers on inclusive education.

Table 4: t – test comparison of view of professional teachers and non professional teachers

The – t – test analysis shows that there is no significant difference in the views of professional teachers and non professional teachers (t – value = 0.656, $df > 98$ $p > 0.05$). The difference in the mean values could be due to chance.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the views of the teachers in the three school types.

Table 5: ANOVA test of views of public, private and special schools teacher on inclusive education.

Source of variation	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig	Remark
Between group	10.220	2	96.103	10.26	0.000	Significant
Within group	908.550	97	9.366			
Total	1108.760	99				

Scheffe Table

School Type	N	Mean
Private	40	27.2750
Special	20	28.8000
Public	40	30.3750

The ANOVA analysis shows that there is significant difference in the views of the three groups of teachers. The mean values of each group shows that public school teachers have more positive view on inclusion, followed by special teachers while the private school teachers brought up the rear.

DISCUSSION

The belief of the teachers that the present school curriculum of the Federal Ministry of Education meets the need of special needs children; that Ministry of Education is committed to inclusive education and that Nigeria is ripe for inclusive education might not be unconnected to the innovative infusion such as the introduction of Basic Technology as well as positive values and entrepreneurial skills into the primary school curriculum to make learning more functional and also meet the noble ideals of National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS) (Federal Ministry of Education, 2006). It is believed that these laudable innovations will cater to the needs of special needs children who most times are more open to skill acquisition training. It could be said that with the introduction of the present Basic 9 Scheme with its innovative

African Journal of Inclusive Education curriculum, the view of the teachers can be a pointer to a more positive orientation of the Nigerian Government towards inclusive education. Eni – Olorunda (2005) pointed out that the Nigerian Government has taken steps towards the education of the special needs children by establishing integrated schools across the country.

The view of the majority of the teachers is that teachers need special training to be able to handle inclusive classrooms. They however disagreed that knowledge of special education is not needed to be able to handle inclusive classroom. This is consistent with the submissions of many authors that proper training of teachers especially in the field of special education is one of the determinants of success or otherwise in the implementation of inclusive education (Martnez, 2003, Shade and Stewart, 2001, shippen, crites, Houchuns, Ramsey and Simon, 2005). Perceived levels of teacher efficacy and training affected by special education teacher preparation have been identified as factors that influence attitude to inclusion (Michelle 2007). A study carried out by Ogbue (1995) showed that 35% of the teachers would want inclusion if they were adequately trained

This study revealed that majority of the teachers (82%) is of the view that special needs children should be included where possible. This finding is in line with UNESCO's Salamanca statement and framework for action on special needs education (UNESCO, 1994) which entails enrolling all children in regular schools, unless there are compelling reasons for doing otherwise. This indicates that Nigerian teachers sampled are well informed on UNESCO's provisions on inclusive education. More than average number of the teachers does not believe that inclusion will in any way hurt the emotional development of special needs children. They also did not believe that special needs children will be isolated by their regular classmates. These findings which were also reported in other countries (Bain 2005, Boling 2007, Byandon 2006, Idol 2006) and in Nigeria

indicate a positive disposition of Nigerian teachers to inclusive education. Similar positive attitudes towards inclusive education were reported for Malaysian teachers by Ali, Mustapha and Jelas (2006). Nayak (2008) in a separate study also reported the same positive disposition by teachers. The findings of this study which indicate positive attitude of Nigerian teachers to inclusive education is in contrast to earlier studies carried out by some researchers such as Mba (1991) cited in Fakowe Ogbue (1995), Eni – Olorunda (2005) and Fakolade, Adeniyi and Tella (2009). This contradiction may be due to the difference in the time interval between those studies and this. The interval could have witnessed a lot of changes such as the various campaigns against segregation of persons with special needs. Such could have accounted for the differences.

A good number of the teachers are of the view that inclusion will not affect teaching method. This could be due to lack of adequate knowledge of what inclusion entails. Review of literature has indicated that wrong belief of teachers towards inclusion could be due to lack of knowledge (Siegel 1992, Houck, 1992 cited in Fakolade et al, 2009).

The study revealed no significant difference in the view of male and female teachers. In a similar study though with in Service Teacher Trainees carried out by Chireshe (2011), the findings revealed that there is no significant difference in the view of male and female teachers. On the contrary, Fakolade et al (2009) reported a significant difference in the attitude of male and female teachers to inclusion. This contradiction could be due to changes that might have taken place between the time intervals of the two studies.

The findings of the study revealed that there was no significant difference in the views of professional teachers and non – professional teachers. This finding is in line with that of Fakolade et al (2009). On the other hand this finding contradicted some other studies such as Forlun (1995), West et al (1996), which

reported a significant difference in the view of trained and untrained teachers on inclusive education.

The study revealed that there is a significant difference in the view of the three groups of teachers. The findings revealed that that public school teachers have more positive view of inclusion than the teachers of special and private schools. This is in line with the finding of Eni – Olorunda (2005) that regular teachers are more positively disposed to inclusive education than special teachers. Private school teachers have the least positive view of the groups.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has revealed that majority of teachers in Ibadan have positive view of inclusive Education in Nigeria. It also shows that the present curriculum if implemented to the letter will address both the educational and vocational needs of special need children. It further indicated that teachers consider proper and adequate training of teachers especially in special education as vital element in the successful implementation of inclusive education programme.

Arising from the foregoing, the following recommendations are made. First, Government at all levels should see to it that word is followed with action in making sure that the present curriculum is fully implemented, as this will not only address the need of special needs children but will go on to boost the confidence the teachers reposed on the country's educational policy. Secondly government should focus on the training and retraining in special education of all cadres of teachers so as to acquaint them with the necessary skills for the successful implementation of inclusive education programme. Experts in special and inclusive education should embark on campaigns to private schools in particular and all schools in general on the provision, benefit and implementation of inclusive education.

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