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SENIOR SCHOOL TEACHERS' VIEWS ON THE INTRODUCTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

The high rate of illiteracy especially among children with special needs in Nigeria led to the adoption of Education for All (EFA) which emphasizes inclusive education. This study therefore investigated teachers' views on the introduction and implementation of inclusive education in secondary schools in Oyo state, Nigeria. The study was a descriptive research of the survey type. A total of 270 senior secondary school teachers from six Local Governments in Oyo state were randomly selected as sample for the study. Researcher-designed questionnaire was used to collect data. Four research questions and two hypotheses were raised and generated to guide the study. The four research questions were answered using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using t-test and ANOVA. The results of the study revealed that senior secondary school teachers have positive views of inclusive education (mean = 3.00); teachers perceived inadequate knowledge about inclusive education, inadequate resources required for inclusion, inadequate in-service training for teachers and emphasis on syllabus coverage as barriers to proper implementation of inclusive education (mean = 2.90). Also, there was no significant difference in the views of senior secondary school teachers on the introduction of inclusive education based on gender $t_{(268)} = 1.44$ and teaching experiences $F_{(3,265)} = 1.39$. Based on the findings from the study, it was recommended that teachers should be adequately trained on the effective implementation of inclusive education since they already have positive views of the programme. This can be achieved through capacity building.

Keywords: Views, implementation, inclusive education, teachers

Introduction

Education is a social service and a transformative act that is fundamental to individual and national development. Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits. It offers every individual in the society the opportunity to acquire skills and knowledge necessary for the development of the society (Abimbola & Abolade, 2008). Through education, youths are being prepared for the challenges ahead since it nurtures personal growth which illuminates in the development of our communities. Hence, the importance of education to individual and to the nation at large cannot be over-emphasized.

With the high impact of education to both individual and national development, illiteracy is one of the problems challenging many developing countries of the world including Nigeria and has continued to pose a threat to many of such nation. Obani (2002) stated that children who constitute the larger percentage of illiteracy are children with special needs. These sets of people are marginalized group and are usually excluded from regular schools which in turn lead to discrimination among members of the community. The discrimination practices among members of the society made many children with special needs to stay out of school which led to an increase in the illiteracy

level of Nigerian citizens. The high rate of illiteracy among Nigerians led to the adoption of Education For All (EFA). An attempt to bring the mission of EFA into reality advocated for inclusive education as stated in the National Policy on Education (FGN, 2013).

Bryant, Smith and Bryant (2008) defined inclusive education as the practice of educating students with special needs alongside with their peers (without special needs) in a general educational setting. Children with special needs include the following categories: visual impaired, hearing impaired, physical and health impaired, intellectually disabled, emotionally and behaviorally disordered, speech and language impaired, learning disabled and the albinos (NPE, 2013). Inclusive education is a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of educational needs of all children, youth and adults through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing and eliminating exclusion with and from education. It is an act of strengthening the capacity of the educational system to reach out to all learners and can thus be understood as a key strategy to achieve education for all (UNESCO, 2009). It is the education that caters for the need of every person whether with or without special needs and is premised on the fact that the right to education for all is upheld.

Including students with special needs in general educational settings and particularly in regular classes with their peers without special needs will provide them the opportunity to learn in natural stimulating settings which may lead to increased acceptance and appreciation of individual differences. And with this, every child would be valued as a member of the larger community (Ajuwon, 2008). Making education available for all will lead to economic growth because education will enable poor people to develop their skills and enhance productivity, thus providing essential underpinning for economic growth (Adedokun, 2014). Also, bringing students with and without special needs together shows the younger generation that the community is made up of diverse group of people and hence, barriers to friendship among students could be removed and imbuing in them the spirit of cooperation and team work.

Inclusive education is put into practice in nations where school communities value diversification and nurture the well-being and quality of learning of each of the members of the society. Gamba (2003) pointed out that education cannot be for all until it is received by all. Nigeria as a country has therefore ensure that every child whether with or without special needs is given the right to quality education by introducing inclusive education where they can learn about the societal norms and values, how to relate with other community members bearing in mind that a key pillar of education for all is the fundamental principle of non-discrimination and equality of educational opportunities. Hence, inclusive education is a way of combating discrimination and achieving education for all.

As stated in the National policy on Education (FGN, 2013), *"Persons with special needs shall be provided with inclusive education services in schools which normal persons attend, in age appropriate for general education classes directly supervised by general teachers"*. Despite the recommendation of inclusive education in the National Policy on Education, very little provision has been made to actively involve teachers. Hence this study examined senior secondary school teachers' views on the introduction and implementation of inclusive education.

Statement of the problem

Inclusive education is needed for social and economic transformation, wealth creation, poverty reduction, employment generation and value reorientation as well as meeting the ideas of the Nigeria's transformation agenda of education. Also, inclusive classrooms need to take care of cultural, intellectual,

physical, social and mental diversities among learners. But it is unfortunate that teachers who are observed to be integral in the implementation of inclusive education are rarely involved in the formulation and no training for the implementation was carried out (Igbokwe, Mezieobi & Eke, 2014). That is why currently in Nigeria, the inclusive educational policy formulated by government has not been largely practicalized (Oladele, Ogunwale & Dafwat, 2016). Though the Federal government of Nigeria is a signatory to many global declaration in education, yet Nigerians are yet to feel the impact of these educational reform called inclusive education as no clear guidelines are given for its implementation (Desiree & Fakudze, 2014). Consequently, the reform is haphazardly pursued or in some cases outrightly abandoned as time goes on. Therefore, there is need to examine teachers' views on the introduction and implementation of inclusive education.

The main purpose of this study was to examine senior secondary school teachers' views on the introduction and implementation of inclusive education in Oyo state, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to examine the:

- (i) views of senior secondary school teachers on the introduction of inclusive education;
- (ii) teachers' perceived barriers to proper implementation of inclusive education;
- (iii) influence of gender on senior school teachers' views towards inclusive education; and
- (iv) influence of teaching experience on senior school teachers' views towards inclusive education.

The following questions were raised to guide the study:

- (i) What are the views of secondary school teachers on the introduction of inclusive education?
- (ii) What are the teachers' perceived barriers to proper implementation of inclusive education?
- (iii) Is there any significant difference in the views of senior school teachers on inclusive education based on gender?
- (iv) Is there any significant difference in the views of senior school teachers on inclusive education based on teaching experience?

Methodology

This study was a descriptive research of the survey type. The population for the study comprised of all senior secondary school teachers in Oyo state. Simple random sampling was used to select 270 teachers from six local governments out of the 33 local governments in Oyo state. A researcher-designed

Questionnaire named Introduction and Implementation of Inclusive Education Questionnaire (IIIEQ) was used to collect data. The questionnaire was made up of three sections, Section A, B and C. Section A was based on teachers' bio data which include gender and teaching experience, section B was based on teachers' views on the introduction of inclusive education while section C was on teachers' perceived barriers to proper implementation of inclusive education. Section B and C followed a 5-point likert scale of Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree.

The IIIEQ was subjected to face and content validity, Cronbach alpha was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.75. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions in which the criterion mean of 2.50 was used, implying that mean score of 2.50 and above were positive views while mean score of less than 2.50 were regarded as negative views. The stated hypotheses were tested using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Data analysis and results

Table 1: Demographic Data of Respondents

Gender		Teaching experience	
Male	140	0-5yrs	108
Female	130	6-10yrs	79
Total	270	11-15yrs	45
		16 & above	38
		Total	270

Research Question 1

What are the views of secondary school teachers on the introduction of inclusive education?

Table 2: Mean Responses of Secondary School Teachers Views on the Introduction of Inclusive Education

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1.	Inclusive education if properly planned should not be adopted as an educational practice	270	1.64	0.62	Reject
2.	The aim of inclusive education is to make each and every student feel loved and cared for	270	3.49	0.69	Accept
3.	Inclusive education will pave way for cooperation and friendship among students with and without special needs	270	3.38	0.66	Accept
4.	Inclusive education is a right of individual learner in order to access quality education	270	3.29	0.74	Accept
5.	Combining students with and without special needs in a class is a desirable educational practice	270	3.17	0.70	Accept
6.	Inclusive education should be introduced and encouraged everywhere	270	3.23	0.69	Accept
7.	Physically challenged students should not be in the regular class	270	2.47	1.12	Reject
8.	All students should be given equal education irrespective of disability(ies)	270	3.31	0.86	Accept

Average Mean

3.00

Table 2 shows the mean responses of secondary school teachers' views on the introduction of inclusive education. From table 2, only item 1 and 7 had mean less than 2.50 while items 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 8 were above 2.50. The average mean of all the items

(statements on the introduction of inclusive education in table 2 was 3.00 which was above the criterion mean of 2.50. It is evident that secondary school teachers have positive views towards the introduction of inclusive education.

Research Question 2

What are the teachers' perceived barriers to proper implementation of inclusive education?

Table 3: Mean Responses of Secondary School Teachers' Perceived Barriers to Proper Implementation of Inclusive Education

S/N	Items	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Remark
1.	Inadequate knowledge of teachers on inclusive educational practices prevent full implementation of inclusive education	270	3.17	0.81	Accept
2.	Combining students with and without special needs will affect the academic performance of students without special needs	270	2.83	2.70	Accept
3.	Teaching generally will be slowed down when students with and without special needs are in class	270	2.92	0.99	Accept
4.	Lack of sufficient resources in the school to teach students with special need is a problem of inclusive education	270	3.33	0.69	Accept
5.	Much stress will be associated with planning for lesson which involve students with and without special needs	270	3.10	0.78	Accept
6.	Inadequate in-service training for teachers about inclusive education has nothing to do with its implementation	270	2.38	0.98	Reject
7.	No sensitization has been done to teachers on how to handle students with and without special need	270	2.76	0.84	Accept
8.	Accommodating students with special needs in my regular classes will reduce the rate of syllabus coverage	270	2.72	0.93	Accept
Average Mean ($\bar{x}$) –			2.90		

Table 3 shows the mean responses of secondary school teachers' perceived barriers to proper implementation of inclusive education. From table 3, only item 6 had mean less than 2.50 while items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 were above 2.50 which means that most barriers against proper implementation of inclusive education were accepted by secondary school teachers. The average mean of all the items

(statements on the barriers to proper implementation of inclusive education) in table 3 was 2.90 which was above the criterion mean of 2.50. It can be implied that secondary school teachers perceived inadequate knowledge about inclusive education, inadequate resources required for inclusion, inadequate in-service training for teachers, emphasis on syllabus coverage

barriers to proper implementation of inclusive education.

Research Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the views of male and female teachers towards inclusive education

Table 4: t-test Analysis of Male and Female Teachers' Views on Inclusive Education

Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value	p-value
Male	140	104.70	10.49	268	1.44	.15
Female	130	102.85	10.62			

$p < 0.05$, Not Significant

Table 4 shows the t-test analysis of male and female teachers' views on inclusive education. Hence, $t_{(268)} = 1.44$, $p = 0.15$. Since the p -value was greater than the level of significance (0.05), the corresponding

hypothesis which states that there was no significant difference in the performance of male and female teachers' views on inclusive education was not rejected

Research Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference among the views of less experienced, moderately experienced, experienced and highly experienced teachers towards inclusive education.

Table 5: ANOVA Results of Teachers Views on Inclusive Education Based on Teaching Experience

Source of Variation	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	464.47	3	154.82	1.39	0.25
Within Groups	29496.09	266	111.31		
Total	29960.56	269			

Table 5 shows the ANOVA results of teachers' views on inclusive education based on teaching experience. From table 5, $F_{(3, 266)} = 1.39$, $p = 0.25$. Since the p -value (0.25) was greater than the level of significance (0.05), the corresponding hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference among the views of less experienced, moderately experienced, experienced and highly experienced teachers towards inclusive education was not rejected.

Findings

Findings from the study are as follows:

1. Secondary school teachers have positive views of inclusive education.
2. Secondary school teachers perceived inadequate knowledge about inclusive education, inadequate resources required for inclusion, inadequate in-service training for teachers, and emphasis on syllabus coverage as barriers to proper implementation of inclusive education.
3. There was no significant difference in the views of male and female teachers on inclusive education.
4. There was no significant difference among the views of less experienced, moderately

experienced, experienced and highly experienced teachers towards inclusive education.

Discussion

The findings of the study showed that secondary school teachers have positive views of inclusive education. Hence, they perceive inclusive education as a policy that need to be adopted into our educational practices in order to give equal educational right to every member of the society and avoid discrimination among children with and without special needs. This finding corroborates with the study of Igbokwe, Mezieobi & Eke (2014) which found a positive views of teachers on inclusive education. But this is against the findings of Hussain, Ali, Khan, Ramzam and Quadeer (2011) which found out that majority of teachers do not have positive views towards inclusion.

Also, the result of the study indicated that secondary school teachers perceive some factors to be barrier to proper implementation of inclusive education. Among these factors are inadequate knowledge about inclusive education, inadequate resources required for inclusion, inadequate in-service training for teachers

about inclusive education, and too much emphasis on syllabus coverage. With the positive views possessed by secondary school teachers, it is expected that inclusive education should be adequately implemented by teachers. However, teachers perceived the factors listed above to be some of the factors militating against the proper implementation of inclusion in schools. Hence, this finding agrees with Desiree and Fakudze (2014); Igbokwe, Mezieobi & Eke (2014) and Okeke (1998) who found that out that the major barriers in implementing inclusive education is lack of trained teachers.

Furthermore, there was no significant difference in the views of male and female teachers on inclusive education. This implies that both male and female teachers are of the opinion that inclusive education should be introduced and encouraged in educational practices. Also, there was no significant difference in the views of less experienced, moderately experienced, experienced and highly experienced secondary school teachers towards inclusive education. Therefore, teachers teaching experience had no influence on their views on inclusive education.

Conclusion

Based on the findings from this study, it can be concluded that secondary school teachers in Oyo state have positive views to inclusive education and they were of the opinion that that it should be introduced and adopted in Nigeria's educational practices. With the positive views teachers have towards inclusive education, it will be expected that there should be proper implementation if they are well trained on how to manage inclusive classes. However, teachers perceived several factors to be militating against the proper implementation of the policy of which largely bothers on lack of in-service training about inclusion. Also gender and teaching experience had no influence on the views of secondary school teachers towards inclusive education. In order to achieve "a just and egalitarian society" as stipulated in NPE (2013), inclusive education need to be effectively implemented.

Recommendation

Based on the findings from this study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Teachers should be given in-service training on how to handle classes comprising students with and without special needs and also prepare them for the challenges of inclusive education.
2. In order to properly implement inclusive education for future purposes, teacher training colleges, colleges of education and

faculties of education in Nigeria should incorporate inclusive education into the syllabus so as to train teachers-in-service.

3. Government should provide necessary human and material resources that is required in inclusive schools.
4. Government should endeavor to restructure school environment to suit inclusive standards in order to meet the UNESCO global objectives of inclusion.

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