

Ascertaining the Understanding Level of Service Providers for Implementing Inclusive Education in Kaduna State

Mairo Hamid Ipadeola PhD^{1*}, Martha Onjewu PhD², Rasheedah Adebola Zibiri MSc¹, Zainab Suraj Inuwa B.ed¹

¹Department of Special Needs Education and Rehabilitation Sciences, Kaduna Polytechnic Nigeria

²Department of Languages, Kaduna Polytechnic Nigeria

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2025.12040022>

Received: 03 April 2025; Accepted: 10 April 2025; Published: 30 April 2025

ABSTRACT

Nigeria is among the countries implementing Inclusive Education; educating children with special needs alongside normal children within the same school setting. To guarantee its success in Kaduna State of Nigeria, there was the need to ascertain the level of the understanding of the stakeholders especially Service Providers. Hence, the aim of this paper was to determine the level of the understanding of the Service Providers in the study population and whether there was difference between such understanding according to local government areas, public or private school. Data was generated using a set of questionnaire in order to provide answers to the research questions and hypotheses formulated which was analyzed using the Descriptive Statistics and Independent sample t-test. The findings revealed that the Service Providers had a Moderate level of Understanding and in terms of the difference in the understanding level of Service Providers, a significant difference was established between Kaduna North and Kaduna South local government areas. The conclusion is that there was still need to raise the level of the understanding of the Service Providers resolve the existing difference a more successful and uniform implementation of Inclusive Education in Kaduna state. Among the recommendations proffered was the need for the state government to seek the means to resolve the difference established, improve the remuneration and working environment with enough resources for the Service Providers and provide more training to equip them with more knowledge and latest developments for the implementing Inclusive Education in the State.

Key words: Understanding. Service Providers, Inclusive education, stakeholders, Implementing

INTRODUCTION

The National Policy on Inclusive Education in Nigeria being implemented by the Federal Ministry of Education (FME) spells out categorically that Inclusive Education is about providing equity, justice and quality education for all learners who are segregated for the reason of disability or otherwise (FME, 2020). Inclusive Education is a concept that aims to provide equal educational opportunities for all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. It promotes the idea of integrating students with special needs into regular classrooms and fostering an inclusive learning environment that goes beyond merely including students with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. It encompasses the idea that every learner should be actively engaged and supported in their learning journey. The approach fosters an inclusive environment where each student feels valued, It allows for personalized learning experiences tailored to meet the specific needs of each student. Inclusive Education also benefits society as a whole by promoting social cohesion and breaking down barriers between individuals.

The approach fosters an inclusive environment where each student feels valued, respected, and empowered to reach their full potential and allows for personalized learning experiences tailored to meet the specific needs of each student, benefits society as a whole by promoting social cohesion and breaking down barriers between individuals. It teaches empathy, understanding, and acceptance of differences from an early age, preparing future generations to build inclusive communities. The benefit of Inclusive Education is that children with special needs can access education close to home or within their communities in order to reduce segregation and enhance the

building of a more positive attitude towards them, since, People with Disability would eventually live as adults within the same communities together with normal people. The federal government, recognizing such needs, passed into law the disability Act in 2021, which protects the rights of children and adults with disabilities to education, living, and employment (FME, 2016).

Various policies geared towards Inclusive Education in Nigeria have been made but most of them have met various challenges probably because of the negligence of the non-inclusion of the Service Providers in the execution. Stakeholders, such as Service Providers' and school administrators are directly or indirectly responsible for the implementation of Inclusive Education at both public and private primary schools, hence, their understanding and perception are paramount towards its successful implementation. Cornelius-Ukpepi & Opuwari, (2019) are of the view that the determinant of the implementation of Inclusive Education at the basic level includes information for planning, provision of school libraries, provision of qualified personnel and funding and recommend that government should provide infrastructural facilities and funds for effective implementation. Various policies geared towards Inclusive Education in Nigeria have been made but most of them have met various challenges probably because of the negligence of the non-inclusion of the Service Providers in the execution.

Therefore, the aim of this study was to determine the understanding of Service Providers towards the implementation of Inclusive Education in Nigeria, ascertain who has more understanding of Inclusive Education between the Service Providers of public and private primary schools with the view to establish the importance of Service Providers in the implementation of Inclusive Education in Nigeria.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Inclusive Education allows students of all backgrounds to learn and grow side by side, to the benefit of all (UNICEF 2019). Although Inclusive Education is frequently connected with Children with Disabilities (CWD), its goal is to provide all children with a secure and supportive learning environment while taking into account their specific needs (Brydges & Mkandawire, 2020). As opposed to the segregated special education model, the move towards inclusive schooling was significantly influenced by the disability rights movement in the global North (Armstrong, Armstrong, & Spandagou, 2009). The history of Inclusive Education can be traced back to the mid-20th century when there was a shift in how society viewed individuals with disabilities. Prior to that time, students with disabilities were excluded from mainstream schools and placed in separate institutions known as special schools.

The approach emphasized individualized support and accommodation for students with disabilities while promoting acceptance and understanding among their peers. Today, Inclusive Education is recognized as a fundamental right for all children as it not only benefits students with disabilities by providing them access to quality education but also fosters a sense of belonging and social integration among all learners. According to the Salamanca Statement, the basis for the strategy, Inclusive Education ought to enable all marginalized groups while taking into account the many interrelated challenges they may encounter (Miles & Singal 2010).

Following the civil war (1967 – 1970) to the early 2000s, different policies have been made towards the implementation of Inclusive Education including the adoption of the Universal Primary Education in 1976, National Policy on Education (NPE) in 1977, The Universal Basic Education Act in 2004 geared towards providing a free compulsory nine year education that recognizes Inclusive Education. Yet, CWDs in Nigeria still face numerous difficulties despite the policies' commitment to Inclusive Education as discrimination and stigma towards people with CWDs are still pervasive.

The evolution of national policies and laws to assist the implementation of Inclusive Education is guided by changes in our knowledge of where disabilities originate (Kozleski & Yu, 2021). Educators must be able to offer learning opportunities to all students in their classrooms as well as have the conviction that every student, regardless of race, language, religion, gender, or ability should have the chance to receive top-notch education if they are to support Inclusive Education (Kozleski & Yu, 2021) according to whom Service Providers play vital roles in Inclusive Education because it is only when Service Providers' understand and begin to accommodate inclusive practices and leaders (leaders in the educational industries) who sustain and implement

the Inclusive Educational model can Inclusive Education really be achieved. Additionally, studies have shown that the lackadaisical attitude of Service Providers have made CWD's vulnerable to their abled peers (Brydges & Mkandawire, 2020) which is liable to hinder their academic performance and even defeat the purpose of Inclusive Education.

Statement of the Problem and Justification of the Study

Nigeria has accepted to implement Inclusive Education which means educating special needs children alongside normal children in a regular school setting and most states have keyed into the development by providing a blue print for its implementation which indicates the need for effective and proactive actions by Service Provider in providing enabling environment for all, particularly in both public and private primary schools in Kaduna State. However, school administrators seem oblivious of the concept and implementation strategy, hence, this study aims to determine the understanding of Service Providers which is crucial in the successful implementation of inclusive Education in Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

This study was based on the achievement of the following objective:

1. To ascertain the understanding level of Service Providers on the implementation of Inclusive Education.

Research Question

The investigation undertaken in this research was guided by these question:

1. What is the level of the understanding of Service Providers on the implementation of Inclusive Education?

Research Hypotheses

1. There is no significant gender difference between Service Providers' understanding of the implementation of inclusive education H_0
2. There is no significant difference between the understanding of Service Providers from Kaduna north and Kaduna south local Government on the implementation of inclusive education H_0

Purpose of the Study

Inclusive Education has been ratified by 37 countries including Nigeria at the Salamanca conference in Spain after which many states have embraced the ideology and drafted the implementation guidelines for its implementation. Since, the guidelines require Service Providers to implement the policy, ascertaining their understanding of it is crucial for its successful implementation.

Significance of the Study

The significance of this study cannot be overemphasized as the impact of a successful implementation of inclusive Education would be felt by all students as participants and the multiplying effects thereafter by other stakeholders including the people with disabilities, researchers and the general public.

METHODOLOGY

The Study Area is Kaduna State in the Northwest geopolitical zone of Nigeria, the 4th largest and 3rd most populous state in the country. Her slogan is "the center of learning". She is made up of twenty three local governments with three senatorial districts namely: Kaduna North Senatorial District, Kaduna South Senatorial District and Kaduna Central Senatorial District. The Descriptive Design was engaged to establish the opinion of Service Provider's perception towards the implementation of Inclusive Education from the population that included the Service Providers with administrators of both public and private primary schools. Thereafter, engaging the Simple random sampling technique, two (2) local government areas of the state were selected because they were within the Kaduna metropolis and relatively safe for data collection. Then the proportionate stratified simple random sampling technique was engaged in the selection of schools with certain criteria such as space, staff strength, and year of existence, sound financial background and qualified personnel to obtain the

Sample of the study. From the selected local government areas namely Kaduna North and Kaduna South, a total of fifty-three (53) administrators of the seventy-seven (77) public primary schools in Kaduna North and Kaduna South local government areas and seventy-two (72) Private Primary Schools were selected representing 50% of the total population for the administration of a set of questionnaire` developed by the researchers and earlier pilot tested which ascertained its validity.

Instrument for Data Collection

The items for the questionnaire was developed by the researchers from the policy document on inclusive Education. It has 45 items and was given to experts in the field of Special Education to appraise after which their observations were embedded in the final instrument before pilot testing. The instrument was made up of three sections: the first section dealt with the demographic variables of the respondents while the other two sections was concerned with questions on understanding and implementation of Inclusive Education. The questionnaire was hosted on google form and sent to the WhatsApp platforms of the participants during the pilot testing. The filling of the questionnaire commenced before the researchers moved to other schools. The responses started trickling in from the participants and this continued till the following week. The data generated was inputted into the SPSS version 26 to determine the validity of the instrument which was 0.79.

Method of Data Collection

The researchers wrote a letter to the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) to seek permission to access the Executive Secretary of the two local government areas. Upon receipt of approval, a list of all public and Private schools was provided which was then visited to administer the electronic questionnaire. On getting to the schools, the researchers introduced themselves and explained the purpose of the visit to the head teachers, proprietors and administrators to seek their consent to participate in the study. On granting of the request, the internet connectivity device to switch on to afford many respondents the opportunity of filling the questionnaire promptly. Thereafter the questionnaire was posted on the whatsApp pages of the different schools to enable more participants partake in the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained was analyzed using Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA. The decision rule for interpreting the results obtained from the questionnaire was decided thus: 15 marks and below translated to Low level of Understanding, 16-30 was Medium level of Understanding and 31-45 was High level of understanding. The parameters for scoring the understanding aspect of the questionnaire was one (1) mark for each question.

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

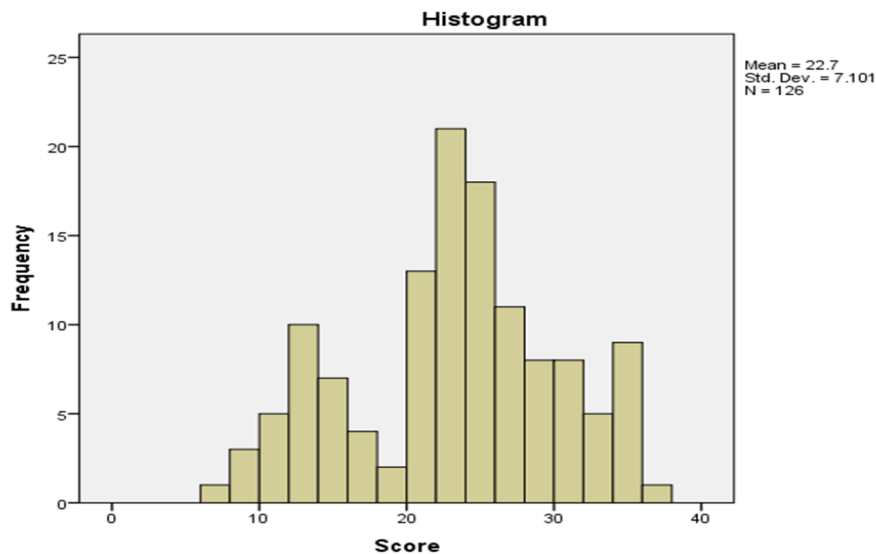
The data obtained are hereby tabulated and analyzed as follows:

Table 1: Demographic Information of Respondents

		Count
Gender of respondent	male	64
	female	62
Type of School	private owned school	60
	Government owned school	16
Local government of School	Kaduna North Local Government	59
	Kaduna South Local Government	67
Highest educational qualification	Diploma	2
	NCE	27
	HND	80
	Masters	11
	PhD	6
Years of teaching experience	10 years to 20 Years	53
	20 years to 30 years	73

The total number of all the respondents were 126 with 64 males and 62 females comprising 59 from Kaduna North local government and 67 from Kaduna South Local Government area. The respondents with Diploma were 27, HND 80, 11 with Masters Degree and only 6 has PhD. The year of experience of those with working experience of 10 years to 20 years were 53 while those for between 20 years to 30 were 73.

Figure 1: Level of Understanding of Service Providers



The above figure indicates the level of understanding of Service Providers in the implementation of inclusive education. The table shows that the lowest score of the respondents being 7 while the highest score was 37 with a mean is 22.7 and a standard deviation of 7.101 while the number of clients is 12

Table2: Independent Sample Test of Understanding According to Gender of Respondents

Independent Samples Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
Score	Equal variances assumed	.101	.751	1.779	124	.078	2.232	1.255	- .251 4.715
	Equal variances not assumed			1.779	123.672	.078	2.232	1.255	- .251 4.716

From the output there is no significant difference existing between gender of the Service Providers and the understanding of the implementation of inclusive education as the significant value was 1.779 while the significance of two tails was 0.078 which is greater than the value of 0.05. Hence we accepted the null hypothesis.

The findings revealed that there was no difference between genders of Service Providers in the understanding of implementation of inclusive education in both Local governments areas which means that both male and female Service Providers have equal understanding on what it takes to implement inclusive education to which many reasons could be attributed, including the location of the Local Government Areas where the personnel are situated because both Local governments are in the main city of Kaduna State with equal access to information. Also, it could have been due to the efforts of the immediate past State government on education as lot of Service Providers were put on their toes to learn the rudiments of education including special education too as well as the implementation of inclusive education. The lack of gender difference could be as a result of equal access to education, equal Access to Employment opportunities and equal access to information. This part of the country does not witness discrimination between males and females nor work against women advancement but education for all gender is taken seriously. It is from this state that the policy document for the implementation of inclusive education referenced in this study was adopted. This findings is in contrast to the work of Prathama et al, (2020); Salahu jr, (2018) identified the challenge of inadequate knowledge associated with the implementation of inclusive education. It could then be inferred that understanding as well as adequate

knowledge of the implementation of inclusive education is pivotal to its eventual success. A lot is involved in combining special needs learners and their normal counterpart in the same space for education purposes, including infrastructure, school design, and training of teachers and retraining of special teachers to facilitate the implementation and support by the government.

In another study, Zwale and malale (2018) observed that teachers lacked competence in identifying children with learning challenge as part of the problems facing inclusive education implementation which could be due to the lack of the understanding of the implementation of inclusive education. Lebona (2013) also attributed as part of the problems facing successful implementation of inclusive education to be the lack of the understanding of its implementation. It was brought to light that inclusive education was not rightly implemented in primary schools in the Lejweleputswa District. With this body of research to support the deficiency of understanding of implementation of inclusive education by Service Providers in Kaduna North and Kaduna South Local Governments Areas of Kaduna State, one can infer that it's because the implementation is still at its infancy stage.

Table3: Independent Sample Test of Understanding according to Local Government Area of Respondents

Independent Samples Test									
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference
Score	Equal variances assumed	.971	.326	3.894	124	.000	4.679	1.201	2.301 7.057
	Equal variances not assumed			3.848	112.888	.000	4.679	1.216	2.270 7.088

From the output there was a significant difference between the understanding of Service Providers in Kaduna North and Kaduna South Local Government Areas with a significant value of 3.89 and t value for Kaduna north as 3.89 and 3.844 was less than 0.05 which indicated that there was a significant difference between the understanding of Service Providers in Kaduna North and Kaduna South Local Government Areas. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. Taking a cursory look at both Local Government Areas, it can be found that their organizational pedigree differs. One of the Local Government Areas is receptive and willing to share information unlike the other one that presented a lot administrative bottlenecks. It can thus be inferred that the Service Providers in the more receptive Local Government Area that was more willing to share, disseminate and communicate new ideas, was more willing to see to the success of educational programs within their jurisdiction a claim supported by the research of Budiarti & Sugito (2018), who demonstrated the interaction that existed within school members that can foster the spirit of inclusiveness. In their study that involved 7 inclusive schools in Karangmojo sub-district they found that there must be interaction, mutual respect, support, partnership, engagement and encouragement between schools, its members, parents and the community to foster greater understanding of the implementation of a concept as important as inclusive education. Though, it was the Executive Director of one of the Local Government area who demonstrated the lack of an open door policy, research abounds that emphasizes the importance of leadership in promoting inclusive education (Ainscow and Miles, 2008).

Findings from the Study

Based on all the data presented and analyzed above, the following are the findings:

- There was no difference between the genders of Service Providers in the understanding of the implementation of Inclusive Education in both local government areas; both males and female Service Providers have equal Understanding on what it takes to implement Inclusive Education.
- There is a **moderate** understanding of the implementation of inclusive education by Service Providers in both Kaduna North and Kaduna South Local Government Areas of Kaduna state.

- There was a significant difference between the understanding of Service Providers in Kaduna North and Kaduna South indicating that there was a **significant** difference between the understanding of Service Provider in Kaduna North and Kaduna South Local Government Areas.
- One of the local government areas was more receptive and willing to share information unlike the other one that presented a lot administrative bottlenecks. It can thus be inferred that Service Providers in the more receptive local government would be more willing to share, disseminate or communicate new ideas and be more willing to see to the success of educational programs within their jurisdiction as supported by the research finding of Budiarti & Sugito (2018), that a good interaction existing within school members can foster the spirit of inclusiveness

CONCLUSION

The **Moderate** understanding of the implementation of Inclusive Education by the Service Providers in both Kaduna North and Kaduna South Local Government Areas of Kaduna state which though commendable as the Programme implementation is still in its infancy stage still needs further investigation on how to improve it as well an investigation of the strategies to minimize or completely eradicate the difference between the understanding of Service Providers in Kaduna North and Kaduna South Local Government Areas in order to have a balance in the Programme implementation in both Local Government Areas and eventually across the entire state .

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations if implemented could improve the situation of implementing Inclusive Education in Kaduna State:

- A higher understanding of all stakeholders especially Service Providers is required for the successful implementation of inclusive education in Kaduna state to which end the State Government needs to be more committed, and the setting up of a committee to review the prevailing situation for improvement is desirable.
- There is need by government and school managements to ensure routine training of the teachers with the relevant knowledge and the skills they require to educate learners with special needs.
- The roles of teachers are crucial for the successful implementation of inclusive education. Hence, both teachers and school proprietors should participate in the pre-service and in-service training, workshops, seminars and conferences on inclusive education to enhance their understanding on inclusive education.
- The local governments and private school proprietors should ensure that they have sufficient funds to provide quality education to both special needs students and other students in the inclusion.
- There is need for the Provision of adequate resources and support for special needs and exposure of regular teachers to learn with special needs children to help them develop a positive attitude.
- It is also important that the Local Government Administrators, school proprietors and educators work in partnership to ensure that education policies and practices meet the desired needs of all learners especially in an inclusive setting.
- The Implementation of Inclusive Education requires a collective effort from educators, stakeholders, administrators, policymakers, and communities. It demands a commitment to providing necessary resources, teacher training, and a supportive learning environment for all students, so, governments at the local and state levels should ensure adequate public enlightenment at all schools and institutions in the Local Government Areas.

REFERENCES

1. Ainscow, M., & Miles, S. (2008). Making education for all inclusive: Where next? *Prospects*, 38(1), 15-34.
2. Armstrong, Ann Cheryl; Derrick Armstrong, & Ilektra Spandagou. (2009). *Inclusive Education*. London: SAGE
3. Brydges, C., & Mkandawire, P. (2020). Perceptions and experiences of Inclusive Education among parents of children with disabilities in Lagos, Nigeria. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 24(6), 645-659.
4. Budiarti, Nugraheni D., and Sugito Sugito. "Implementation of Inclusive Education of Elementary Schools: a Case Study in Karangmojo Sub-District, Gunungkidul Regency." *Journal of Education and Learning*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1 May. 2018, pp. 214-223, doi:10.11591/edulearn.v12i2.8727.
5. Cornelius-Ukepebi, B.U. & Opuwari, O.S. (2019). Determinants of Effective Implementation of Inclusive Education at the Basic Education Level in Nigeria. *British Journal of Education*, 4 (2): 1 – 17.
6. Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria. (2020). *National Policy on Education*. Federal Ministry of Education. Lagos: NERDC
7. Federal Ministry of Education Nigeria. (2016). *National Policy on Education*. Federal Ministry of Education. Lagos: NERDC
8. Kozleski, E. B., & Yu, I. (2021). *Inclusive Education*. Oxford Journal. <https://doi.org/DOI:10.1093/OBO/9780199756810-0162>
9. Lebona T.G. (2013). Thesis (M. Ed.) Central University of Technology, Free State.
10. Miles, Susie, & Nidhi Singal. (2010). "The Education for all and Inclusive Education Debate: Conflict, Contradiction or Opportunity?" *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 14 (1): 1–15. doi:10.1080/13603110802265125.
11. Prathama, S. K., Kusumaningrum, S. R., & Dewi, R. S. I. (2022). Problems with the implementation of inclusive education policies for students with special needs in public schools. *sentri: Jurnal Riset Ilmiah*, 1(4), 986-995. <https://doi.org/10.55681/sentri.v1i4.316>.
12. Salahu Jr, M. (2018). Understanding Inclusive Education in Nigeria: Policies, practices, successes, and challenges. *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 22(7), 802-815.
13. UNICEF, (2019). *Inclusive Education Every child has the right to quality education and learning*. Unicef. Retrieved September 6, 2023, from <https://www.unicef.org/education/inclusive-education>
14. Zwane, S. L. Malale, M. M., (2018). Investigating barriers teachers face in the implementation of inclusive education in high schools in Gege branch, Swaziland. *African Journal of disability*. Vol 7 (1).