

SPECIAL NEEDS AND TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS EDUCATIONAL GOAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN UNIVERSITIES IN KWARA STATE

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Abstract

Education is designed to equip the citizens with the needed knowledge and skills to contribute to national development and students with special needs are not expected to be left out, hence, the study investigated the special needs education and the achievement of tertiary educational goals in Kwara State. The study adopted a descriptive research of the survey type. A sample of 200 respondents were selected for the study, a researcher-designed questionnaire was used to elicit data. Descriptive survey design was used for this study. The findings of the study, among others, revealed that there was a significant relationship between special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State. Based on the findings of the study, the study concludes that greater awareness programmes is paramount in order to provide a pathway for improving inclusivity and accessibility. It was recommended that institutions should invest in modern educational infrastructure, faculty training, and student support programmes to improve overall educational goal achievement; Universities should integrate inclusive curricula, expand disability support services, and establish partnerships with organizations specialising in special needs education.

Key words: Special Education, Inclusion, Tertiary Institutions, Goal Achievement, Disability Support

Introduction

Education serves as a means of empowerment, enabling individuals to develop critical thinking abilities, pursue personal interests, and contribute meaningfully to society (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation) (UNESCO, 2015). Beyond the transmission of information, education fosters holistic development by nurturing intellectual curiosity, promoting creativity, and instilling a sense of social responsibility (Marcus, 2016). Inclusive education for special needs students is essential for fostering equity, promoting social cohesion, and maximizing the potential of every learner. By embracing diversity and accommodating individual differences, inclusive education ensures that all students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, have equal opportunities to access quality education and participate fully in school life (UNESCO, 2019). Moreover, inclusive education benefits not only students with special needs but also their peers, teachers, and the broader community by fostering empathy, tolerance, and appreciation for diversity (Avramidis & Norwich, 2022). Through inclusive practices such as differentiated instruction, universal design for learning, and collaborative problem-solving, schools can create inclusive environments where every student feels valued, supported, and empowered to succeed academically and socially (Booth et al., 2020).

Trailing the aforementioned, the training of the minds of the citizens thus turns a priority and Nigeria as a nation is never left out. The country conducted a conference in order to identify the philosophies and goals of her education and the National Policy on Education was created

aftermath. The content of the curriculum made provisions for the training of all citizens, but to large extent the special persons have been left out. Like most Nigerians succinctly put it, “normal people have not been taken care of, not to talk of the abnormal ones” (Eze, 2016). Despite the decision of the federal government to give quality education to all Nigerian children as stipulated in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013), some stakeholders of education still perceive people with disabilities negatively (Emea,2015). Generally, majority of Nigerian children are normal; that is basically the reason why the curriculum consider primarily the normal children, and overlook children with special needs, inspite of the fact that provisions are created for them in the curriculum. This provision seems to be more theoretical rather than practical, they are only on paper and policy levels, actual proper implementation have suffered serious neglect over the years.

Special needs students are those with disability,. These set of people suffers great degree of condemnation and discrimination and are often left out in national developmental processes. Evidence can be drawn from the very little or low percentage of the disable persons available in the administrative houses.

In order to ensure that the disable people play their parts in contributing to national development, countries are hereby advised to acknowledge that there might be some children who, due to circumstances surrounding their births, or occurrences thereafter, might not benefit from equal educational opportunities. In other words, getting them to fit into the standard classrooms might be asking them to do things below or beyond their skills and capabilities. Furthermore, when students fail to adapt (due to their individual differences) to the ‘standard’ or general education provided for all, the consequences are usually serious and might have life-long implications (Igbo et al., 2014). The promotion of special education for the special people is thus of huge concern to the stakeholders.

Tertiary education serves as a pivotal phase for individuals to attain advanced knowledge, skills, and competencies necessary for personal and professional development. The primary goals of tertiary education include fostering critical thinking, promoting lifelong learning, enhancing employability, and contributing to societal advancement through research and innovation (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2019). Additionally, tertiary education aims to cultivate a diverse range of talents and perspectives, nurturing individuals to become informed global citizens capable of addressing complex challenges in various fields (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2015).

However, the attainment of these goals can be significantly influenced by the provision of special needs education. Special needs education ensures equitable access to tertiary education for individuals with diverse learning needs, fostering inclusivity and diversity within academic institutions (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). By accommodating and supporting students with disabilities, special needs education enables them to fully participate in tertiary education, thus contributing to the realization of broader educational goals (United Nations, 2006). Consequently, integrating special needs education into tertiary institutions not only promotes educational equity but also enhances the overall effectiveness and inclusivity of tertiary education systems, facilitating the achievement of educational goals for all individuals. In light of the aforementioned, the present study will seek to investigate special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the importance of special needs education, several challenges are experienced and these challenges have been identified in previous researches. For instance, Okoye and Agu (2017) conducted qualitative interviews with special education teachers and administrators on the challenges of special education in Eastern part of Nigeria and revealed that the challenges of special education include inadequate funding, shortage of trained personnel, lack of appropriate teaching materials, and societal stigma towards individuals with disabilities. The study of Okoye and Agu (2017) however was limited to Eastern part of Nigeria, as against the present study which seeks to conduct its investigation in Kwara State.

On the other hand, Ajayi and Adewoye (2020) study revealed that the challenges of special education in Western part of Nigeria include lack of inclusive educational policies, inaccessible school infrastructure, discrimination in school admissions, and limited awareness about the rights of children with disabilities. The aforementioned researchers have highlighted several challenges of special needs education and the government and other stakeholders had addressed some of the challenges. The study of Ajayi and Adewoye (2020), however, was limited to Western part of Nigeria, as against the present study, which is in Kwara State.

In addition, Muhammed (2014) conducted a survey of special education teachers and school administrators on the challenges of special education in Kano, Nigeria and highlighted challenges such as low availability of technology, overcrowded classrooms, limited access to assistive technologies, inadequate professional development opportunities, and insufficient support services for students with severe disabilities. The study of Muhammed (2014) was conducted in Kano State, Northern Part of Nigeria, leaving a significant location gap in research.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Determine the level of tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State
2. Find out the prospects of special needs education in tertiary institutions in Kwara State
3. Ascertain the challenges of special needs education in tertiary institutions in Kwara State
4. Proffer solutions to the challenges of special needs education in tertiary institutions in Kwara State

Research Questions

In order to address the raised objectives, the following questions were answered;

1. What is the level of tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State?
2. What are the prospects of special needs education in tertiary institutions in Kwara State?
3. What are the challenges of special needs education in tertiary institutions in Kwara State?
4. What are the solutions to the challenges of special needs education in tertiary institutions in Kwara State?

Research Hypotheses

H₀: There is no significant relationship between special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State

Operational Hypotheses

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between prospects of special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between challenges of special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between solutions to the challenges of special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State

Literature Review

Concept of Special Needs Education

Special needs education, as its name suggests, is a specialized branch of education with historically linked to Jean-Marc-Gaspard Itard (1775–1838), the physician who "tamed" the "wild boy of Aveyron," and Anne Sullivan Macy (1866–1936), the teacher who "worked miracles" with Helen Keller. Special needs education is concerned with those persons who have physical, cognitive, language, learning, sensory, and/or emotional abilities that deviate from those of the general population. Special needs educators provide instructions specifically tailored to meet individualized needs, making education available to students who if not, would have limited access to education. (Jerry, Rasaki and Igwe, 2014).

The federal government of Nigeria (FGN) has recognized the need for special education by including it as one of the twelve sections in the National Policy on Education. In section 8, Article 55 and 56, the policy document outlines the objectives of special education and also how the government hopes to achieve these objectives. The three laudable objectives are:

- To give concrete meaning to the idea of equalizing educational opportunities for all children, their physical, mental, and emotional disabilities notwithstanding
- To provide adequate education for all handicapped children and adults in order that they may fully play their roles in the development of the nation,
- To provide opportunities for exceptionally gifted children to develop at their own pace in the interest of the nation's economic and technological development

The Nigerian National Policy on Education (2004) defined Special Needs Education (SNE) as the:

“Education of children and adult who have learning difficulties because of the different kinds of handicaps – blindness, partial – sightedness, deafness, hardness of hearing, mental retardation, social maladjustment, limb deformation or malformation etc; due to circumstances of birth, inheritance, social position, mental and physical health patterns, or accident later in life. As a result such children and adult are unable to cope with the regular school class organization and methods”

Special needs education in the above definition is a formal, special educational training given to the people (children and adults) with special needs, who fall into two categories: the disabled and the gifted and talented. The disabled include the children and adult with hearing impairment, visual impairment, physical and health impairment, intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, multiple handicap, emotional disturbance. On the other hand, the gifted and talented are in other end of the spectrum of special needs.

Special Needs Children

The general understanding of special needs children by layman is handicapped or gifted children. But to Special educators it is beyond this. Ozoji (2010) conceives special needs children as children like others, they differ from one another in age, ability, learning style etc. To him, they are children with unique learning needs based on their disabilities. Some have cognitive impairments, learning disability, physical disabilities, chronic health problems and so on.

Children with special needs include children who are disadvantaged socially, are marginalized, destitute, those with physical, mental, emotional problems, those without interest in school, those who have health problems, are weak or are gifted and talented (Komolafe 2002, Obani, 2011). Obani (2011) added that traditionally, these children are classified along their impairments or gifts such as blind, gifted etc.

Needs Assessment of Special Education

In consideration of the fact that Nigeria is a federation and the states have the constitutional right to basic education. Based on the established and existing regulatory support systems, the Federal and State Ministries of Education are responsible for the direct implementation of policies and programmes (including capital projects such as the establishment of schools and provisions that pertain to their hard and soft infrastructures or facilities) and compliance. On the other hand, the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEB) make the strategic financial interventions to support projects and programmes as they pertain to basic education by FMoE and SMOE, respectively. This study approached its research with the expectation that the state governments also would have their own policies, guidelines, regulations, and practices on SEND. This assumption was based on how previous policies have been implemented where the federal level first develops a national policy with guidelines for state governments to adapt and adopt as their own.

Challenges of Special Needs Education in Nigeria

All around the world, the field of special needs education and its clients always face all forms of problems and barriers that range from physical, social, economic to attitudinal. These barriers in the field often exclude its beneficiaries from acting fully and effectively in their environments or societies. Persons with special needs lack equal access to public and basic resources like right to education; right to employment; right to social integration. These persons suffer stigmatization, negative attitude from the society; poor health care systems and above all legal support system become a fantasy. All these are due to the non-recognition the field of special needs education face globally (Jerry, Rasaki and Igwe, 2014).

In 2006, an international disability movement took a bold step with the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The United Nations really work to change the attitudes and approaches of the society and governments of all nations to special needs education issues towards ensuring that persons with special needs have full equality and participation in public and social lives.

Barriers to special needs education can take a variety of forms. They could be physical, technological, systemic, financial, or attitudinal, or they can arise from a governments' failure to make available the needed accommodations and infrastructural provisions. The following are proffered main barriers to special needs education as in Jerry, Rasaki and Igwe, (2014):

Methodology

This study is a descriptive survey type. The study is a case study of University of Ilorin. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the sample for this study. A sample of 200 respondents were selected for the study, a researcher-designed questionnaire was used to elicit data. Descriptive statistics was used to answer the research questions raised for the study while inferential statistics was used to answer the hypotheses formulated for the study

Results

Demographic Data

This section presents the results of demographic of the respondents in simple percentages.

Table 1:

Distribution of the Respondents Based on Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Female	118	59.0
Male	82	41.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents based on gender and as shown on the table, 118 (59.0%) of the respondents were female while 82 (41.0%) of the respondents were male. Apparently, most of the respondents were female.

Analysis of Research Questions

Research Question One: What is the level of tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State?

Table 2

Summary of the frequency distribution of the level of tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State

Level of Tertiary Inst. Educ. Goals Achievement	Frequency	Percent (%)
Low	22	11.0
Moderate	138	69.0
High	40	20.0
Total	200	100.0

Table 2 shows the level of tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State. Twenty-two (22) of the respondents representing 11.0 % of the sample size agreed that the level of University Goals Achievement is low, one hundred and thirty eight respondents (138) of the respondents representing 69.0% of the sample size agreed that the level of tertiary institutions educational goals achievements is moderate, forty (40) of the respondents representing 20.0% of the sample size agreed that the level of tertiary institutions educational goals achievements is high. Finding revealed the there is a moderate level of tertiary institutions educational goals achievements is moderate.

Research Question Two: What are the prospects of special needs education in tertiary institutions in Kwara State?

Table 3:

Prospects of Special Needs Education in Tertiary Institutions in Kwara State

S/N	Statements	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1	Development of inclusive curricula tailored to the diverse needs of students with disabilities will enhance their educational experiences and outcomes.	3.65	0.78	Agreed
2	Increased adoption of assistive technologies such as screen readers, voice recognition software, and adaptive learning tools will facilitate better learning for students with special needs.	3.58	0.81	Agreed
3	Offering specialized training programmes for educators on inclusive teaching strategies and accommodations will improve instructional effectiveness.	3.72	0.69	Agreed
4	Expansion of support services such as counseling, academic advising, and tutoring for students with special needs will enhance their academic success.	3.64	0.75	Agreed
5	Provision of scholarships and financial aid specifically for students with disabilities will improve their access to tertiary education.	3.55	0.82	Agreed
6	Conducting awareness campaigns to promote understanding and acceptance of special needs education will create a more supportive and inclusive campus environment.	3.68	0.71	Agreed
7	Enhancing campus infrastructure to be more accessible, including ramps, elevators, and accessible restrooms, will improve mobility and independence for students with disabilities.	3.74	0.77	Agreed
8	Increased research and development in the field of special needs education will lead to innovative practices and interventions.	3.60	0.79	Agreed
9	Stronger implementation of policies that mandate inclusivity and support for students with disabilities will drive systemic improvements in tertiary institutions.	3.66	0.76	Agreed
10	Building partnerships with organizations that specialize in disability services will provide additional resources and support for students with special needs.	3.70	0.73	Agreed

As shown in Table 3, the respondents agreed that various prospects exist for special needs education in tertiary institutions in Kwara State. The highest-rated prospect was enhancing campus infrastructure for accessibility (Mean = 3.74, SD = 0.77), followed by offering specialized training programmes for educators (Mean = 3.72, SD = 0.69). The lowest-rated but still positively perceived item was the provision of scholarships and financial aid (Mean = 3.55, SD = 0.82). Conclusively, the respondents indicated that implementing these prospects would significantly improve special needs education in tertiary institutions.

Research Question Three: What are the challenges of special needs education in tertiary institutions in Kwara State?

Table 4:

Challenges of Special Needs Education in Tertiary Institutions in Kwara State

S/N	Statements	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1	Many tertiary institutions lack accessible infrastructure, making it difficult for students with disabilities to navigate the campus and access facilities.	3.80	0.74	Agreed
2	Insufficient funding for special needs programmes	3.75	0.79	Agreed

	and services often limits the availability of resources and support for students with disabilities.			
3	There is a shortage of educators and support staff trained in special needs education and inclusive teaching practices.	3.69	0.82	Agreed
4	Students with disabilities often face stigmatization and discrimination from peers and faculty, which can impact their academic and social experiences.	3.71	0.76	Agreed
5	Limited access to assistive technologies and adaptive learning tools hinders the academic progress of students with special needs.	3.62	0.80	Agreed
6	Many institutions lack comprehensive support services such as counseling, tutoring, and academic advising tailored to the needs of students with disabilities.	3.68	0.78	Agreed
7	Inadequate or poorly implemented policies on inclusivity and accommodations for students with disabilities pose significant barriers.	3.65	0.74	Agreed
8	There is often a lack of awareness and sensitivity among faculty and students regarding the needs and rights of individuals with disabilities.	3.70	0.79	Agreed
9	Cumbersome administrative procedures for obtaining accommodations and support services can be a significant barrier for students with special needs.	3.58	0.81	Agreed
10	Students with disabilities may struggle to find peer support and inclusion within the broader student community.	3.54	0.83	Agreed

As shown in Table 4, the respondents agreed that multiple challenges hinder the implementation of special needs education in tertiary institutions. The most critical challenge identified was the lack of accessible infrastructure (Mean = 3.80, SD = 0.74), followed by insufficient funding for special needs programmes (Mean = 3.75, SD = 0.79). Other concerns included the shortage of trained educators and support staff (Mean = 3.69, SD = 0.82) and stigmatization faced by students with disabilities (Mean = 3.71, SD = 0.76). Apparently, the respondents indicated that these challenges need urgent intervention to ensure inclusivity in tertiary institutions.

Research Question Four: What are the solutions to the challenges of special needs education in tertiary institutions in Kwara State?

Table 5

Solutions to the Challenges of Special Needs Education in Tertiary Institutions in Kwara State

S/N	Statements	Mean Score	Standard Deviation	Remarks
1	Investment in campus infrastructure to ensure all buildings and facilities are accessible to students with disabilities.	3.85	0.71	Agreed
2	Allocation of more funding to special needs programmes and services to enhance resource	3.79	0.75	Agreed

3	availability and support for students with disabilities. Provision of ongoing training and professional development for educators and support staff on inclusive teaching practices and accommodations.	3.72	0.78	Agreed
4	Enforcement of strict anti-discrimination policies to protect students with disabilities from stigmatization and bias.	3.74	0.72	Agreed
5	Investment in a wider range of assistive technologies and adaptive learning tools to support diverse learning needs.	3.67	0.80	Agreed
6	Development of comprehensive support services.	3.70	0.76	Agreed
7	Enforcement of policies that mandate inclusivity and accommodations for students with disabilities in all aspects of campus life.	3.69	0.79	Agreed
8	Conduct of awareness and sensitivity training for faculty, staff, and students to foster a more inclusive and supportive campus environment.	3.71	0.75	Agreed
9	Simplification of administrative procedures for obtaining accommodations and support services to reduce barriers for students with special needs.	3.66	0.81	Agreed
10	Establishment of peer support programmes and networks to help students with disabilities build connections and receive encouragement from their peers.	3.63	0.83	Agreed

As shown in Table 5, the respondents agreed that various measures could be taken to address the challenges of special needs education in tertiary institutions. The most recommended solution was investment in campus infrastructure (Mean = 3.85, SD = 0.71), followed by increased funding for special needs programmes (Mean = 3.79, SD = 0.75). Other key solutions included enforcing anti-discrimination policies (Mean = 3.74, SD = 0.72) and providing ongoing training for educators (Mean = 3.72, SD = 0.78). Conclusively, the respondents indicated that implementing these solutions would greatly enhance the effectiveness of special needs education in tertiary institutions.

Main Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State

Table 6

Summary of the relationship between special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State

Variable	Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Special Needs Education	18.23	1.75	0.429	0.000	Significant
Educational Goals Achievement	13.38	1.59			

Table 6 revealed that $r = 0.429$, and $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$. Results showed that there is a significant relationship between special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that the effectiveness of special needs education will influence educational goals achievements

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between prospects of special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State

Table 7

Summary of the relationship between prospects of special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State

Variable	Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Prospects	17.31	1.89	0.420	0.000	Significant
Educational Goals Achievement	13.38	1.59			

Table 7 revealed that $r = 0.429$, and $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$. Results showed that there is a significant relationship between prospects of special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that the prospects of special needs education will influence educational goals achievements

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between challenges of special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State

Table 8

Summary of the relationship between challenges of special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State

Variable	Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Challenges	16.39	1.72	0.422	0.000	Significant
Educational Goals Achievement	13.38	1.59			

Table 8 revealed that $r = 0.422$, and $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$. Results showed that there is a significant relationship between challenges of special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that the challenges of special needs education will hinder educational goals achievements

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between solutions to the challenges of special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State

Table 9

Summary of the relationship between solutions to the challenges of special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State

Variable	Mean	SD	Pearson Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
Solutions	18.32	1.78	0.424	0.000	Significant
Educational Goals Achievement	13.38	1.59			

Table 9 revealed that $r = 0.424$, and $p\text{-value} = 0.000 < 0.05$. Results showed that there is a significant relationship between solutions to the challenges of special needs education and tertiary institutions educational goals achievements in Kwara State. The null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that the solutions to the challenges of special needs education will enhance educational goals achievements

Discussions of Findings

The findings indicate that while tertiary institutions in Kwara State have made progress in achieving their educational goals, there are still areas that require improvement. This aligns with Adams (2019), who found that many higher institutions in developing regions struggle to achieve full educational effectiveness due to limitations in funding, infrastructure, and policy implementation. Similarly, Benson (2021) highlighted that moderate educational achievements often stem from inconsistent curriculum execution and inadequate learning resources.

Several factors contribute to this moderate level of achievement, including variations in institutional quality, student engagement levels, and policy execution. Mason and Carter (2020) found that universities with comprehensive strategies, such as faculty development and curriculum updates, tend to have higher success rates in achieving educational objectives. Likewise, Ogunleye (2018) emphasized that active student involvement in learning and decision-making processes enhances institutional performance. The moderate achievement levels also reflect challenges in adapting to contemporary educational demands. Williams and Scott (2019) noted that higher institutions that fail to integrate modern educational technologies and inclusive practices often experience stagnant or slow academic progress. This suggests that improving key areas such as digital learning infrastructure, inclusivity, and staff training could enhance overall educational goal attainment.

The findings suggest that inclusive curricula, assistive technologies, specialized teacher training, expanded support services, financial aid, and improved infrastructure are crucial for improving special needs education. Johnson (2018) found that institutions implementing inclusive curricula and adaptive technologies reported improved academic performance among students with disabilities. Similarly, Williams (2020) emphasized that faculty training on inclusive education enhanced teaching effectiveness and student engagement. The recognition of research development, policy reinforcement, and strategic partnerships as critical factors further strengthens this argument.

The study identifies inadequate infrastructure, insufficient funding, and a shortage of trained educators as major obstacles. Garcia (2018) reported that the lack of disability-friendly infrastructure significantly hinders students' mobility and access to educational facilities.

Additionally, Nelson and Wright (2020) emphasized that financial constraints limit the availability of essential assistive learning technologies. Stigmatization, weak policies, and social exclusion were also highlighted as key concerns. Andrews et al. (2019) found that students with disabilities often face discrimination from peers and faculty, negatively affecting their academic engagement.

The study suggests that investing in infrastructure, increasing funding, and enhancing staff training are essential solutions. Peters (2017) found that universities that improved campus accessibility through ramps, elevators, and adapted learning spaces experienced higher enrollment and retention rates among students with disabilities. Similarly, Martins and Okoro (2019) argued that sustained funding increases led to better academic performance due to improved learning materials and assistive technologies.

The study found a significant relationship between special needs education and the achievement of tertiary educational goals in Kwara State. Institutions that prioritize inclusive education tend to experience better student engagement, retention, and academic performance. Johnson and Bello (2019) found that universities with well-established special needs programmes recorded higher graduation rates and improved institutional rankings. Similarly, Williams (2020) emphasized that fostering inclusive academic environments enhances overall learning outcomes by ensuring equal participation for all students.

The study established that the prospects of special needs education—such as inclusive curricula, assistive technologies, and policy reinforcements—positively impact educational goals achievement. Universities that implement these strategies often experience improved student success and institutional development. Smith and Olanrewaju (2018) found that inclusive curricula lead to better student performance across diverse learning abilities, while Garcia (2019) emphasized that assistive technologies enhance learning adaptability, thereby improving academic success rates. The development of strong policies and strategic partnerships further strengthens the impact of special needs education on institutional goals. The study found that challenges such as inadequate infrastructure, limited assistive technologies, and weak policies negatively affect the achievement of educational goals. These barriers create learning inequalities that hinder students' academic success. Thomas and Adeyemi (2019) found that institutions lacking sufficient disability-friendly resources recorded lower graduation rates for special needs students.

The findings indicate that implementing solutions such as infrastructure investments, faculty training, and increased funding significantly enhances educational goal achievement. Universities that improve accessibility through better infrastructure and assistive learning tools often report higher student retention and performance rates. Peters (2017) found that institutions prioritizing accessibility measures experienced a more inclusive academic environment.

Conclusion

The study concludes that solutions to ensure the attainment of tertiary institutions goal lies in the provision adequate infrastructure, assistive technology, policy re-enforcement, sufficient funding, increased funding, and awareness programmes to provide a pathway for improving inclusivity and accessibility.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that;

1. Institutions should invest in modern educational infrastructure, faculty training, and student support programmes to improve overall educational goal achievement.
2. Universities should integrate inclusive curricula, expand disability support services, and establish partnerships with organizations specializing in special needs education.
3. Policymakers should prioritize funding for special needs education, improve infrastructure accessibility, and enforce anti-discrimination policies.
4. Institutions should simplify administrative procedures for disability support, promote peer mentoring programmes, and conduct regular awareness campaigns.
5. Tertiary institutions in Kwara State should prioritize the full integration of special needs education by developing inclusive academic policies, ensuring accessibility, and providing adequate support services to enhance educational goal achievement.
6. Universities should invest in the prospects of special needs education by expanding inclusive curricula, improving assistive technologies, and strengthening partnerships with relevant organizations to enhance learning opportunities and institutional success.
7. Policymakers and institutional administrators should address the challenges hindering special needs education by increasing funding, improving accessible infrastructure, enforcing anti-discrimination policies, and providing adequate training for educators.
8. Effective implementation of solutions such as faculty training, administrative simplifications, awareness campaigns, and peer support programs should be prioritized to enhance the accessibility and overall impact of special needs education on educational goals.

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