

Teachers Attitude Toward Inclusive Education for Pupils with Visual Impairments in Ilorin Metropolis, Nigeria

Solihu, Mohammed Nma

Department of Special Education

solihu.mohammed@kwasu.edu.ng Or solihu09@gmail.com

08032070200

Abstract

This study examined teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. Historically, individuals with disabilities, particularly those with visual impairments, have endured widespread discrimination, neglect, and social exclusion. In many ancient societies, disabilities were often attributed to witchcraft, curses, or divine punishment, resulting in isolation, rejection, and, in some cases, infanticide, as seen in ancient Greece and certain African communities. Such misconceptions severely limited access to education, healthcare, and social participation, reinforcing the marginalization of persons with disabilities. During the 18th and 19th centuries, early educational efforts were largely custodial and medically oriented, focusing on care rather than empowerment, while in Nigeria, organized special education began to take shape after World War II through missionary and non-governmental initiatives. Over time, these efforts evolved into inclusive education practices aimed at promoting equity, participation, and access to mainstream schools for pupils with disabilities. In this context, the present study employed a descriptive survey design to examine teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in Ilorin, Kwara State. Data were collected from 30 teachers across public and private schools using a validated questionnaire, and findings revealed generally positive attitudes, with a weighted mean of 3.2, indicating growing acceptance of inclusive practices. Nevertheless, gaps were observed in teacher training, confidence, and the effective use of assistive technology. Key factors influencing attitudes included prior experience with visually impaired pupils, support from colleagues and administrators, and professional development opportunities. The study concludes that the effective implementation of inclusive education in Nigeria depends on continuous teacher training, strong institutional commitment, adequate learning resources, and collaborative engagement among stakeholders, which together will enhance teacher competence, improve learning outcomes, and promote the full inclusion of pupils with visual impairments in mainstream educational settings.

Keywords: *Inclusive Education, Visual Impairment, Teacher Attitudes, Special Needs Education*

Introduction

In those days in ancient times in Nigeria, particularly before the 17th century, individuals with disabilities, including those with visual impairments, often faced widespread rejection and neglect. In many traditional societies, disabilities were viewed negatively, often associated with witchcraft, curses, or divine punishment for past misdeeds. Such conditions were thought to be contagious, leading to the isolation of those affected and the neglect of their needs by both

families and the wider community. In ancient Greece, particularly in Sparta, infants born with visible disabilities were frequently killed. Influential philosophers like Plato and Socrates believed that people with disabilities lacked the capacity for reasoning and learning, thereby denying them the right to education. According to Randiki (2002), similar harsh practices were observed in some African communities, where children born with physical or sensory impairments, such as blindness, were abandoned in the wilderness or denied the right to live, being seen as burdensome. Families with disabled members, especially those with visual impairments, faced discrimination, and it was common for society to avoid marrying into such families due to perceived hereditary stigma. Survivors were often hidden away, and families with disabled members faced social stigma and discrimination. In fact, it was common for people to avoid marrying into families with a known history of disabilities, including visual impairments, due to deep-rooted cultural prejudices.

These negative societal attitudes toward persons with disabilities have persisted throughout the history of special needs education. Early terms used to describe them were abusive and dehumanizing, such as *idiot*, *moron*, *imbecile*, *dumb*, and *cripple*. In Yoruba, words like *Odi* (deaf), *Afoju* (blind), and *Aro* (cripple) were similarly used in derogatory ways. Such attitudes greatly influenced the kind of services provided for children with special needs. However, by the 18th century, some individuals began to recognize the potential of persons with disabilities and initiated home-based teaching. For instance, in 1685 AD, Didymus in Alexandria developed the first touch reading materials for the visually impaired, while Juan Martin Pablo Bonet (1579–1620) created a one-hand manual alphabet. In the 19th century, Europe and the U.S. adopted *institutionalization* housing children with disabilities in residential facilities to protect them from neglect (Randiki, 2002). Early education for persons with disabilities was largely rehabilitative and medically oriented, focusing on reversing disability rather than empowerment. Even then, they were still regarded as inferior. In Nigeria, according to Ndurumo (1993), after World War II, churches and service providers began offering special education and care through a *custodial approach*, marking the beginning of organized support for people with disabilities.

Inclusive education is increasingly being practiced across many countries of the world, including Nigeria, as part of a global commitment to ensuring equal educational opportunities for all learners regardless of their abilities. In Nigeria, the movement toward inclusive education has been supported by various stakeholders, including churches, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and community-based groups that provide educational, social welfare, and health services for children with special needs (Randiki, 2002). Early efforts to support individuals with disabilities led to the establishment of societies and associations aimed at advocacy and service provision. One of the earliest organizations, the Nigeria Society for the Blind (NSB), was founded in 1956 to promote education and rehabilitation for persons with visual impairments. Subsequently, individuals with disabilities began forming their own advocacy groups referred to as “organizations of persons with disabilities” such as the Nigerian Union of the Blind (NUB), which sought to lobby for their rights and improve social inclusion and access to quality education.

Over time, more structured support systems emerged through the collaborative efforts of parents, volunteers, and charitable organizations. Groups such as the Blinded Mission, Parent Mobilization Group (PMG), and Sight Savers International (SSI) played significant roles in providing services, advocacy, and educational materials for children with visual impairments.

These organizations not only helped improve access to education but also fostered awareness and acceptance of persons with disabilities in Nigerian society. In the educational sector, provisions were made for the evaluation and assessment of learners with special needs through the Nigerian National Examination Council (NNEC) and classroom teachers. Examination materials were adapted for visually impaired students through Braille or large print formats, and extra time allowances were granted to accommodate their needs. For students who were completely blind, tactile diagrams and assistive tools were provided to ensure equitable participation. These initiatives collectively boosted the morale and academic performance of learners with visual impairments, enabling them to thrive alongside their sighted peers.

Despite these advancements, the implementation of inclusive education in Nigeria remains a developing process that requires continuous support and improvement. The inclusive education movement emphasizes that all learners regardless of physical, intellectual, or emotional differences should have equitable access to quality education within regular school environments. Pupils with visual impairments stand to benefit greatly from this approach, as it promotes their academic, social, and emotional integration. However, challenges such as negative societal attitudes, inadequate teacher training, and insufficient resources persist. Many teachers still struggle to effectively accommodate visually impaired learners due to limited exposure to inclusive teaching methods and assistive technologies. As highlighted by researchers such as Kuyini and Desai (2007) and Eleweke and Rodda (2002), the success of inclusive education in Nigeria depends largely on the preparedness, awareness, and attitudes of teachers. Therefore, fostering positive teacher attitudes, strengthening institutional support, and addressing infrastructural gaps are essential steps toward achieving a more inclusive and equitable education system for all learners, particularly those with visual impairments.

Statement of the problem

Despite the importance of inclusive education in promoting equal opportunities for all pupils, inclusive education for pupil with visually impaired remain a significant challenge in Ilorin, Nigeria. Are hindering, inadequate training and negative perceptions among teachers continue to hinder the successful implementation of inclusive education, leading to a denial of quality education for pupils with visually impaired in Ilorin, Nigeria and explore the factors influencing these attitudes.

Objectives

The general objective of this study was to examine teachers' attitudes towards the implementation of inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in mainstream schools.

The specific objectives were:

1. To examine the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.
2. To determine the level of teachers' awareness of inclusive education and visual impairment in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Oyun, Ilorin.
3. To identify the factors influencing teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Oyun, Ilorin.

Research Questions

1. What are the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria?
2. How do teachers' levels of awareness of visual impairment influence their attitudes towards inclusive education in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Oyun, Ilorin?
3. What are the key factors influence teachers' attitude toward inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Oyun, Ilorin.?

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design, which was considered appropriate for obtaining factual information and describing teachers' opinions, attitudes, and perceptions toward inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments without manipulating any variables. The research was conducted in Ilorin South Local Government Area of Kwara State, Nigeria, an area characterized by both urban and semi-urban communities with a range of public and private schools implementing varying levels of inclusive education. The population comprised all 30 primary school teachers in the area where inclusive education policies are either practiced or considered, and the entire population was selected as the sample using a stratified random sampling technique to ensure fair representation across gender, teaching experience, and school type (public and private). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled *Teachers' Attitudes and Practices Toward Inclusive Education for Pupils with Visual Impairments (TAPIE-VI)*, which consisted of sections on demographic information, attitudes, preparedness, and perceived challenges. The instrument was validated by experts in Special Education, Measurement and Evaluation, and Educational Psychology, and a pilot test yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.79 using the Cronbach Alpha method, confirming its internal consistency. Data collection was carried out personally by the researcher, assisted by trained personnel, after obtaining informed consent and assuring participants of confidentiality. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean scores, standard deviations, frequency counts, simple percentages, and ranking, to summarize teachers' attitudes, levels of preparedness, and challenges encountered in implementing inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in Ilorin Metropolis, Nigeria.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria?

Table1:

Showing the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

SN	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	STD
1	I believe that pupils with visual impairments can learn effectively in a regular classroom. .	6(20.0)	12(40.0)	7(23.3)	5(16.7)	2.6	1.99
2	How comfortable do you feel teaching pupils with visual impairments?	8(26.7)	9(30.0)	13(43.3)	-	2.8	0.83
3	Inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments is a priority in my teaching practice.	22(73.3)	8(26.7)	-	-	3.7	0.45
4	I believe that pupils with visual impairments require specialized instruction.	15(50.0)	15(50.0)	-	-	3.5	0.51
5	How willing are you to adapt your teaching methods for pupils with visual impairments?	9(30.0)	12(40.0)	9(30.0)	-	3.0	0.78
6	I believe that technology can enhance learning for pupils with visual impairments.	12(40.0)	10(33.3)	8(26.7)	-	3.1	0.81
7	How confident do you feel in assessing the learning needs of pupils with visual impairments?	2(6.7)	14(46.7)	14(46.7)	-	2.6	0.62
8	I believe that pupils with visual impairments can participate fully in classroom activities.	-	15(50.0)	15(50.0)	-	2.5	0.51
9	How important is it for you to collaborate with other professionals when teaching pupils with visual impairments.	5(16.7)	15(50.0)	10(33.3)	-	2.8	0.70
10	10. I believe that inclusive education benefits all pupils, not just those with visual impairments.	18(60.0)	7(23.3)	5(16.7)	-	3.4	0.77
Weighted mean		3.2					

Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentages

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 1: showed the attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria as follows: Table 1 presents the attitudes of teachers toward inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in Ilorin, Kwara State. The results indicate that a substantial majority of teachers (73.3%) view inclusive education as a priority in their teaching practice, suggesting a strong acknowledgment of its importance in providing equal learning opportunities. Half of the respondents (50%) also believe that pupils with visual impairments require specialized instruction, reflecting an awareness of the unique learning needs of these students. Furthermore, 60% of teachers agreed that inclusive education benefits all pupils, not just those with visual impairments, demonstrating an understanding of the broader educational advantages of inclusion. Despite these positive perceptions, only

26.7% of teachers reported feeling comfortable teaching pupils with visual impairments, and less than half (46.7%) felt confident in assessing their learning needs, highlighting areas of hesitation and lack of preparedness. Teachers were moderately willing to adapt their teaching methods (mean = 3.0) and generally recognized the potential of technology to enhance learning for visually impaired pupils (mean = 3.1). However, participation of visually impaired pupils in classroom activities received lower agreement (mean = 2.5), and collaboration with other professionals, such as special educators or therapists, was viewed as moderately important (mean = 2.8), indicating some gaps in practical engagement and inter-professional cooperation. Overall, the weighted mean of 3.2 suggests that while teachers generally hold positive attitudes toward inclusive education, there remains a cautious approach, with significant uncertainties regarding their ability to implement inclusive practices effectively, underscoring the need for targeted training, support, and resources to enhance teacher confidence and competence in this area in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria is positive.

Research Question 2: How do teachers' levels of awareness and understanding of visual impairment influence their attitudes towards in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Oyun, Ilorin?

Table2:

Showing teachers' levels of awareness and understanding of visual impairment influence their attitudes towards inclusive education in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

SN	ITEMS	VHE	HE	LE	VLE	MEAN	STD
1	How would you rate your understanding of visual impairment and its effects on learning?	11(36.7)	16(53.3)	3(10.0)	-	3.3	0.64
2	Have you received any training or professional development on teaching pupils with visual impairments.	10(33.3)	9(30.0)	11(36.7)	-	3.9	0.85
3	How aware are you of the different types of visual impairments and their varying effects on pupils.	14(46.7)	3(10.0)	13(43.3)	-	3.0	0.96
4	Do you know how to adapt your teaching methods to meet the needs of pupils with visual impairments?	9(30.0)	6(20.0)	15(50.0)	-	2.8	0.89
5	How confident do you feel in using assistive technology to support pupils with visual impairments?	7(23.3)	11(36.7)	12(40.0)	-	2.8	0.79
6	How do you think visual impairment affects a pupil's ability to participate in classroom activities?	17(56.7)	6(20.0)	7(23.3)	-	3.3	0.84
7	Are you aware of the emotional and social challenges faced by pupils with visual impairments?	17(56.7)	3(10.0)	10(33.3)	-	3.2	0.94
8	How do you think your own attitudes and beliefs about visual impairment impact your teaching practices?	8(26.7)	14(46.7)	8(26.7)	-	3.0	0.74

9	Have you had any personal experience with visual impairment or worked with pupils with visual impairments.	11(36.7)	16(53.3)	3(10.0)	-	3.3	0.64
10	How do you think your level of awareness and understanding of visual impairment influences your attitudes towards inclusive education?	5(16.7)	13(43.3)	12(40.0)	-	2.8	0.73
Weighted mean 3.2							

Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentages

Source: Field Survey 2024

Table 2 presents teachers’ levels of awareness and understanding of visual impairment and how these influence their attitudes toward inclusive education in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The results show that most teachers reported moderate to high understanding of visual impairment and its effects on learning, with a mean score of 3.3 for general understanding (Item 1) and 3.3 for personal experience with visually impaired pupils (Item 9). However, awareness of specific types of visual impairment (Item 3) and the ability to adapt teaching methods (Item 4) varied, with means of 3.0 and 2.8, respectively, indicating gaps in practical knowledge. Similarly, teachers’ confidence in using assistive technology (Item 5) and perception of how their awareness affects attitudes toward inclusive education (Item 10) were relatively low (mean = 2.8), suggesting limited preparedness. Teachers were generally aware of the emotional and social challenges faced by visually impaired pupils (Item 7, mean = 3.2) and recognized the impact of visual impairment on classroom participation (Item 6, mean = 3.3). Overall, the weighted mean of 3.2 indicates that while teachers possess a moderate level of awareness and understanding, there are significant areas particularly in practical application and use of assistive technology where additional training and support are needed to enhance positive attitudes toward inclusive education. The weighted average was 3.2 which is greater than 2.50, Based on the findings it was shows that the teachers' levels of awareness and understanding of visual impairment influence their attitudes towards inclusive education was high.

Research Question 3: What are the key factors that influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments?

Table 3:

Showing the key factors that influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

SN	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	MEAN	RANK
1	Pre-service training and education.	9(30.0)	12(40.0)	7(23.3)	2(6.7)	2.9	6 th
2	In-service training and professional development.	12(40.0)	8(26.7)	10(33.3)	-	3.1	4 th
3	Experience working with pupils with visual impairments.	22(73.3)	8(26.7)	-	-	3.7	1 st
4	Support from colleagues and administrators.	17(56.7)	13(43.3)	-	-	3.6	2 nd
5	Availability of resources and materials.	11(36.7)	9(30.0)	10(33.3)	-	3.0	5 th

6	Classroom environment and accessibility.	and	8(26.7)	11(36.7)	11(36.7)	-	2.9	6 th
7	Parent-teacher relationships and communication.	and	-	13(43.3)	17(56.7)	-	2.4	10 th
8	Teacher self-efficacy and confidence.	and	-	15(50.0)	15(50.0)	-	2.5	9 th
9	Beliefs about ability and potential of pupils with visual impairments.		2(6.7)	17(56.7)	11(36.7)	-	2.7	8 th
10	School culture and leadership support for inclusive education.		14(46.7)	9(30.0)	7(23.3)	-	3.2	3 rd
Weighted mean 3.2								

Note: The figures in parentheses are in percentages

Source: *Field Survey 2024*

Table 3 illustrates the key factors influencing teachers' attitudes toward inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The findings indicate that teachers' direct experience working with pupils with visual impairments is the most influential factor, with a mean score of 3.7, followed by support from colleagues and administrators (mean = 3.6) and school culture and leadership support for inclusive education (mean = 3.2). In-service training and professional development (mean = 3.1), availability of resources and materials (mean = 3.0), as well as pre-service training and education and classroom environment and accessibility (both mean = 2.9) were moderately influential. Conversely, parent-teacher relationships (mean = 2.4), teacher self-efficacy and confidence (mean = 2.5), and teachers' beliefs about the abilities and potential of pupils with visual impairments (mean = 2.7) were among the least influential factors. The overall weighted mean of 3.2 suggests that while multiple factors affect teachers' attitudes, practical experience and institutional support play the most significant role in shaping positive attitudes toward inclusive education. From the ranking it was shown that Experience working with pupils with visual impairments, Support from colleagues and administrators, School culture and leadership support for inclusive education, In-service training and professional development, were the key factors that influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments.

Discussion of the findings

The findings indicate that teachers generally hold a positive attitude toward inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments, as reflected by the weighted mean score of 3.2, which is above the benchmark of 2.5. Most respondents agreed that inclusive education benefits all pupils (mean = 3.4) and acknowledged that it should be a priority in their teaching practice (mean = 3.7), suggesting a growing acceptance of inclusive education among teachers in the study area. However, there were mixed feelings regarding confidence in assessing the learning needs of visually impaired pupils (mean = 2.6) and belief in their full participation in classroom activities (mean = 2.5). This supports the assertion by Avramidis and Norwich (2002) that although teachers may express support for inclusion in principle, their attitudes are often moderated by their perceived competence and the availability of support structures. In contrast, studies such as Forlin and Chambers (2011) have reported contexts where teachers demonstrated predominantly negative attitudes toward inclusive education, citing heavy workloads, lack of training, and insufficient resources as key barriers, suggesting that positive

attitudes are not universal and can be strongly influenced by environmental and institutional factors.

The results showed that teachers' *awareness and understanding* of visual impairments positively influence their attitudes towards inclusion, with a weighted mean score of **3.2**. Notably, the majority had a good understanding of visual impairment and its impact on learning (mean = 3.3), and many had personal or professional experience working with pupils with visual impairments (mean = 3.3). Nevertheless, awareness of specific types of visual impairments (mean = 3.0) and knowledge of assistive technology (mean = 2.8) were less robust. This supports the view by Sharma, Forlin, and Loreman (2008) that teacher preparedness, which includes awareness and training, significantly shapes their attitudes and readiness to embrace inclusive practices. Therefore, increasing awareness through targeted training can further promote positive attitudes toward inclusive education.

The study found that *experience working with visually impaired pupils* (mean = 3.7) and *support from colleagues and administrators* (mean = 3.6) were the most influential factors. These were followed by *school culture and leadership support* (mean = 3.2) and *in-service training and professional development* (mean = 3.1). Conversely, *parent-teacher communication* (mean = 2.4) and *teacher self-efficacy* (mean = 2.5) ranked lowest. This suggests that institutional and experiential factors are more impactful than individual confidence levels. This supports the findings of Monsen, Ewing, and Kwoka (2014), who emphasized that supportive leadership and collaborative school culture enhance teacher engagement in inclusive education. Furthermore, Florian and Black-Hawkins (2011) argue that practical experience and access to resources empower teachers to better meet the diverse needs of learners.

Conclusion

The study examined teachers' attitudes toward the implementation of inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that teachers generally hold positive attitudes toward inclusive education, recognizing its importance for all pupils and prioritizing it in their teaching practices. Teachers' awareness and understanding of visual impairment were moderately high, particularly regarding general knowledge and personal experience with visually impaired pupils, though gaps existed in knowledge of specific impairments, teaching adaptations, and assistive technologies. Key factors influencing teachers' attitudes included direct experience with visually impaired pupils, support from colleagues and administrators, school culture, and leadership support, whereas personal confidence, parent-teacher communication, and beliefs about pupil potential were less influential. Overall, the study underscores that while teachers' attitudes are largely positive, limitations in practical skills, confidence, and institutional resources may hinder the effective implementation of inclusive education for pupils with visual impairments in the study area.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study recommends the following:

1. **Targeted Teacher Training:** Regular in-service and pre-service training programs should be organized to enhance teachers' knowledge of visual impairments, inclusive teaching methods, and the use of assistive technologies. This will improve confidence and practical competence in handling visually impaired pupils.

2. **Strengthening Institutional Support:** School administrators should provide greater support through mentorship, guidance, and collaborative planning to ensure teachers feel supported in implementing inclusive practices.
3. **Enhancing Access to Resources:** Schools should be equipped with adequate teaching aids, assistive devices, and accessible classroom environments to facilitate effective participation of visually impaired pupils.
4. **Promoting Inter-professional Collaboration:** Teachers should be encouraged to collaborate with special educators, therapists, and parents to address the diverse needs of visually impaired learners.
5. **Raising Awareness and Advocacy:** Sensitization programs should be implemented at community and school levels to reduce societal stigma, increase acceptance, and foster inclusive attitudes toward pupils with visual impairments.
6. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Education authorities should regularly assess the implementation of inclusive education policies, teacher preparedness, and pupil outcomes to ensure continuous improvement.

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