Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in primary schools in Lagos State, Nigeria

(overview essay)

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Abstract: *Primary Teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in Lagos State Nigeria is under-reported in the research literature. The purpose of the current study, therefore, was to bridge the gap in knowledge about inclusive education, children with special educational needs and/or disability and teachers' attitudes in primary school settings in Lagos, Nigeria. Participant schools were randomly selected, and 120 questionnaires were distributed. Data comprised participants' demographics, and a questionnaire, which was analysed using descriptive statistics, mean scores and standard deviation. Results of this mixed methods study showed that most primary teachers in Lagos had a negative attitude towards the inclusion of children with SEN/D. One of the key factors found to influence teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education was individual teachers' level of understanding about inclusive educational practices. Contrary to similar studies conducted in developed countries, our findings showed that Teachers' attitudes were not significantly affected by their academic achievement, years of teaching experience and /or exposure to people with SEN/D, nor were attitudes affected by engaging in professional Special Educational Needs training. It is proposed therefore, that initial teacher education for primary teachers in Lagos State should focus on specific training for inclusive practices. Programmes should comprise knowledge and skills to help change teachers' attitudes towards those children with SEN/D who attend regular schools.*

Keywords: *inclusion, teacher attitudes, children with special educational needs, Nigeria*

1 Introduction

Inclusive education (IE) and Teachers' Attitudes (TAtt) has been at the forefront of educational research since Salamanca (UNESCO, 1994). The ratification of IE (UNESCO, 1994) by 92 countries further implored research into how inclusion was

practised, and resultant interpretations of inclusive practice have been both diverse and culturally determined (Amr et al., 2016). From the rights-based approach and access to regular schools, the concept of IE developed into a broader perspective that embraced not just the identification of Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEN/D) and their inclusion into regular schools, but breaking down of socially constructed barriers within education systems (Forlin & Lian, 2008; Frederickson & Cline, 2009; Garner, 2009; Forlin, 2010c).

The practice of IE, however, is affected by TAtt, motivation, and training. Key factors noted within African research literature state that, common to many countries, cultural and historical factors have affected classroom practices. To date, however, research on TAtt conducted within African states has focused only on teachers and pupils in secondary schools (Fakolade et al., 2009; Ajuwon, 2012). The purpose of the current research, therefore, is to initiate an exploration of TAtt towards the inclusion of children with SEN/D in primary schools, as according to Emanuelsson, Haug and Persson (2005) "inclusive education is most developed, and the challenges are most visible" (p. 114) within this sector.

1.1 Key factors to emerge from international literature: Teacher attitudes

A review of international literature concerning TAtt revealed the most important factor to influence inclusive classroom practices were teacher attitudes towards children with SEN/D (e.g., de Boer, Pijl & Minnaert, 2011; Forlin, Au & Chong, 2008). TAtt has been found to affect psychological and sociological factors of pupils, and inclusive strategies underpin the pupil outcomes. According to Johnson and Howell (2009), TAtt has three components, which are behavioural, affective and cognitive. In addition, Rouse and Florian (2012) determined that aspects of the head (knowledge), the heart (passion) and the hand (practice) are learned by apprenticeship. Other variables found to affect a teacher's attitude according to Avramidis & Norwich (2002), and Kraska & Boyle (2014) comprise gender, education, age, training and prior contact with individuals with SEN/D.

1.2 Factors to affect teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education in Nigeria

There is a dearth of literature concerning primary teacher's attitudes towards inclusion in Nigeria. A search of the university electronic repository revealed seven research articles published between 2007–2021.

Agbenyega, (2007a), Fakolade et al. (2009), Chhabra et al (2010), Kuyini and Mangope, (2011) Mukhopadhyay, (2014) findings indicated that African teachers predominantly had negative attitudes towards inclusive education. Other factors found to affect TAtt included marital status, professional qualification and level of

teachers' qualification, whilst years of teaching experience was found to be insignificant (Fakolade et al, 2009).

Ajuwon (2012) examined the attitude of 141 special educators in Nigeria and discovered that despite their tolerance towards the different behaviours of students in the classroom, special educators are not sure of their ability to handle students with SEN. This low professional self-confidence reflected inadequate training and experience in inclusive practices and negatively perceived incidences.

Ajuwon (2012) found that confidence and competence in female teachers to teach students with SEN was better than their male counterparts. Special educators based in the northern part of Nigeria, unlike their counterparts in the South, believed that attending neighbourhood schools had a positive impact on students with behavioural problems. The architectural design of classrooms and buildings to support inclusion was an additional finding (Ajuwon, 2012).

Determinants of successful inclusive education practice in Lagos State, Nigeria (Adeniyi et al., 2015) comprised a survey of 47 head teachers and 180 teachers from designated inclusive centres in Lagos. Findings indicated that materials, experience, mind-set and manpower showed a statistical significant relationship with inclusive education practice and that identified independent variables e.g., availability of materials contributed to the dependent variable e.g., teacher experience. Conclusions made focused on a positive mind-set from major stakeholders, availability of materials, and the recruitment of adequate qualified personnel when implementing inclusive education.

2 Methodology

The study was conducted in accordance with the ethical guidelines by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) and the University of Northampton (UoN, 2010). A letter was sent to Lagos State Government (LSG) outlining the aim, relevance and significance of the research and a guarantee of participant anonymity. Approval was issued by LSG and the research study was conducted in five schools in Ikeja Local Government Education Authority (LGEA). Without LGS approval school principals would not have consented to data collection. Participation in the study was voluntary without any obligation to complete the research, and data collected were secured.

2.1 Setting and sample

The study was situated within The State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) in Lagos State, Nigeria. The SUBEB oversees 20 LGEAs. Responsibilities of LGEA's include the implementation of the Universal Basic Education in primary schools and school management. The random sample for the study consisted of 103 teachers

from five schools as directed by Ikeja LGEA department of planning, research and development.

2.2 Research instruments

Data were generated using two instruments; 1) a rated-response questionnaire based on Bailey, (2004) and 2) an open-ended questionnaire. Quantitative and qualitative data collection enabled the researchers to adopt a mixed-method approach. The rated questionnaire was adapted for use with teachers. Sections focused on Teachers academic attainment, experience, and their experience of teaching students with special educational needs, age and gender. Teachers also responded to an open-ended questionnaire that comprised 14 questions. The validity and reliability of the questionnaire based on Bailey (2004), was verified using Cronbach's alpha and a score of 0.911 was found. Open ended questions in section B corresponded to the attitudes measured in section A for data triangulation.

2.3 Data gathering procedures

Questionnaires were administered collectively to ensure a good response rate and participants' concerns were addressed in situ. Researcher stance, therefore, was unbiased and minimal involvement during the questionnaire administration was observed.

2.4 Data Analysis

Responses to independent variables (i.e. teachers' academic attainment, teaching experience, teaching experience with children with SEN, exposure to individual with SEN and professional training) employed descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, appropriate graphical charts together with their respective mean and standard deviations. Furthermore, inferential statistics (One Way ANOVA) was used to test for significant differences in the dependent variables (i.e. teachers' attitude towards inclusive education). Data analysis comprised the Statistical Package for Social Sciences-SPSS, and hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance for either rejection or acceptance. Qualitative responses in section B underwent thematic coding analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2006).

3 Results

The modified questionnaire was administered to 120 respondents. Table 1 illustrates the response rates obtained.

Table 1: *Response rate to Section A and B combined*

Questionnaire	No of respondents	% of respondents
Administered	120	100.0
Returned	103	85.8
Not returned	17	14.2

3.1 What is the extent of teachers' attitudes towards Inclusive education within Lagos State?

The attitudes of teachers towards inclusive education are depicted in Table 2. The five components of the questionnaire were teachers' attitude towards exclusion, professional training, learning challenges in inclusive education, benefits and level of disability and implementation.

The evidence shown in the first subscale indicates that most of primary school teachers support the exclusion of students from mainstream education. The grand mean of 2.67 was higher than an average of 2.50 with regard to attitudes towards the exclusion of students.

The second subscale indicates that most teachers feel their professional training for children with SEN/D was adequate and a grand mean of 3.22 was higher than the averages of 2.50 and 3.00 as shown in Table 2. With the use of a 5-point Likert scale type, the expected average (mean) response per item is 3.00; but with the emergence of missing responses (or unidentified responses), the expected average (mean) response per item is 2.50 (either in approval or disapproval of the attributes being measured, i.e. attitude to inclusion).

The third subscale indicated that the majority of teachers were not in favour of inclusion because of the learning challenges of students with SEN. Here the grand mean response of 3.21 was higher when compared to the required mean of 2.50 and 3.00.

The fourth subscale related to the teachers' response and a mean of $3.54 > 2.50$ (2.50 – being the expected mean response) suggested that inclusive education implementation was hindered by many challenges as highlighted by Bailey (2004) attitudes scale (e.g., disruption to other students learning).

With a mean of $3.59 > 2.50$ (expected mean) the fifth subscale indicated that Teachers saw the benefit of inclusive education for both students with and without special educational needs, and the inclusion of students with mild and moderate disabilities.

Table 2: *Teachers' Attitude towards Inclusive Education in Lagos State*

	Items	Unidentified Responses	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean / Std. Error of the mean
Attitude towards Exclusion of Students								
8.		2 1.9%	13 12.6%	30 29.1%	12 11.7%	33 32.0%	13 12.6%	***2.97*** ***0.13***
15.		2 1.9%	36 35.0%	35 34.0%	12 11.7%	13 12.6%	5 4.9%	***2.13*** ***0.12***
20.		2 1.9%	16 15.5%	32 31.1%	5 4.9%	34 33.0%	14 13.6%	***2.92*** ***0.14***
		Grand Mean **Standard Error of the Mean**						***2.67*** ***0.13***
On Teachers' Professional Training								
3.		2 1.9%	9 8.7%	8 7.8%	5 4.95	38 36.9%	41 39.8%	***3.85*** ***0.13***
10.		0 0.0%	18 17.5%	32 31.1%	22 21.4%	18 17.5%	13 12.6%	***2.77*** ***0.13***
18.		1 1.0%	16 15.5%	24 23.3%	17 16.5%	28 27.2%	17 16.5%	***3.03*** ***0.14***
		Grand Mean **Standard Error of the Mean**						***3.22*** ***0.13***
Attitude to Learning Challenges in Inclusive Education								
2.		6 5.8%	10 9.7%	31 30.1%	18 17.5%	27 26.2%	11 10.7%	***2.81*** ***0.14***
7.		1 1.0%	15 14.6%	27 26.2%	18 17.5%	23 22.3%	19 18.4%	***3.01*** ***0.14***

	Items	Unidentified Responses	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean / Std. Error of the mean
11.		1 1.0%	5 4.95	19 18.4%	4 3..9%	47 45.6%	27 26.2%	***3.67*** ***0.12***
13.		0 0.0%	10 9.7%	26 25.2%	4 3.9%	37 35.6%	26 25.2%	***3.42*** ***0.13***
16.		1 1.0%	17 16.5%	25 24.3%	5 4.9%	35 34.0%	20 19.4%	***3.13*** ***0.14***
		Grand Mean **Standard Error of the Mean**						***3.21*** ***0.13***
Attitude towards Implementation of Inclusion								
4.		3 2.9%	12 11.7%	24 23.3%	12 11.7%	33 32.0%	19 18.4%	***3.14*** ***0.14***
6.		2 1.9%	2 1.9%	10 9.7%	9 8.7%	31 30.1%	49 47.6%	***4.06*** ***0.12***
9.		0 0.0%	5 4.9%	17 16.5%	3 2.9%	52 50.5%	26 25.2%	***3.75*** ***0.11***
12.		5 4.9%	9 8.7%	15 14.6%	15 14.65	45 43.7%	14 13.6%	***3.24*** ***0.13***
17.		1 1.0%	2 1.9%	18 17.5%	9 8.7%	52 50.5%	21 20.4%	***3.67*** ***0.11***
22.		2 1.9%	9 8.7%	5 4.9%	2 1.95	50 48.5%	35 34.0%	***3.88*** ***0.13***
23.		3 2.9%	7 6.8%	31 30.1%	16 15.5%	30 29.1%	16 15.5%	***3.08*** ***0.13***
24.		2 1.9%	2 1.9%	11 10.7%	5 4.9%	54 52.4%	29 28.2%	***3.88*** ***0.11***
		Grand Mean **Standard Error of the Mean**						***3.54*** ***0.13***

	Items	Unidentified Responses	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean / Std. Error of the mean
Attitude towards Inclusion Benefit & level of Disability								
1.		4 3.9%	13 12.6%	5 4.9%	14 13.65	33 32.0%	34 33.0%	***3.56*** ***0.15***
5.		5 4.9%	3 2.9%	6 5.8%	14 13.6%	41 39.8%	34 33.0%	***3.80*** ***0.13***
14.		7 6.8%	6 5.8%	17 16.5%	11 10.75	48 46.6%	14 13.6%	***3.25*** ***0.14***
19.		2 1.9%	7 6.8%	19 18.4%	16 15.5%	47 45.6%	12 11.7%	***3.31*** ***0.12***
21.		1 1.0%	1 1.0%	10 9.7%	13 12.65	62 60.2%	16 15.5%	***3.77*** ***0.09***
		Grand Mean **Standard Error of the Mean**						***3.59*** ***0.12***
		Grand Mean **Standard Error of the Mean**						***3.20*** ***0.13***

Note: With the use of a 5-point Likert scale type, the expected average (mean) response per item is 3.00; but with the emergence of missing responses (or unidentified responses), the expected average (mean) response per item is 2.50 (either in approval or disapproval of the attributes being measured, i.e. attitude to inclusion).

In conclusion, according to the results obtained, teachers' attitudes tended to be unfavourable towards inclusive education. Teachers did not support total inclusion, however, attitudes about inclusion varied according to students' disability type. Students with mild and moderate disabilities were more likely to be included than students with severe disabilities and behavioural and emotional difficulties, and students with severe speech difficulties and learning disabilities teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education practices were found to be negative. Figures indicated factors such as heavy workload, disruption and poor classroom management, demands on teachers' time and disadvantages on regular students were prominent despite teachers' agreement that inclusive education benefits students with SEN and regular students. A finding to note was that training in pedagogy for children with SEN did not align with the preferences for inclusive education.

3.2 What do teachers in Lagos understand by Inclusive Education?

Two major themes emerged from the responses: knowledge of IE and implementation of IE.

Knowledge of IE

The theme Knowledge of IE comprised teachers' understanding of IE, perceived beneficiaries, teacher responsibility regarding IE, and awareness of policy on IE in Lagos state.

Teachers expressed a wide range in views about their understanding of IE for example

"Inclusive education means that all students attend and are welcomed by their neighbourhood schools in age-appropriate, regular classes and are supported to learn, contribute and participate in all aspects of life in the school" (Teacher (T) 34). Similarly, T102 stated "All children benefit from inclusive education. It develops individual strength and gifts, friendship, and it works on individual goals while participating in the life of the classroom with other students of their age". Others simply stated IE was the placement of pupils with SEN into the regular school or classroom, "having the students with special needs in the same school with regular students but separate some blocks of classroom for the students with special needs under the umbrella of the same school and management" (T4). Most teachers lacked understanding of the meaning of inclusion, "It is education for special children" (T67).

Beneficiaries of IE extracted a good range of responses from T27, "The pupils with special needs are the ones who benefit from inclusive education" to T34 "Students benefit from inclusive education; teachers benefit from inclusive education". Some attributed the beneficiaries of IE to be the entire society. Most teachers' responses showed that they felt the responsibility for IE relied upon them having had previous training for IE. T4, for example, stated "It's more or less no role since the teacher is

not trained in such aspect of education", which was reiterated by T45: "The regular teachers may not be able to handle or manage them because the disabled children need special teachers that have acquired the skill not the normal classroom teacher". A key component of IE and inclusion found to affect classroom practice was teacher awareness of policy on inclusive education in Nigeria (2015). Only half the number of teachers within the sample said they were aware of the policy.

Implementation of Inclusive Education

This theme comprised teachers' attitudes towards the Lagos State Policy on Inclusive Education (LSPIE) (2015), constraints envisaged by teachers concerning policy implementation, professional training and frequency, academic qualifications and teaching experience, recommendations towards actualizing the policy.

Teachers were asked what they thought about LSPIE (2015) and the inclusion of children with SEN in regular schools. The majority of responses indicated that teachers perceived the policy was unfeasible. Reasons given included; the program was demanding, children with SEN would encounter stigmatization and discrimination, the availability of specific equipment, setbacks for regular students, teachers and the school at large, and lastly that the society was not ready to accept children with SEN. Responses ranged from T83 " I don't think so, it is a good idea but the society is not ready yet to accept children with SEN, and there will be a lot of discrimination and stigmatization", to T38 "Inclusion of children with special education needs will stop stigmatization and promote love among students learning at the same level". T51 felt "It is a good development. Some parents with children with special needs have the privilege of sending their children to school".

Constraints on the implementation of the policy.

Many teachers implied that advocacy for IE would create additional problems for teachers such as increased lesson planning and teachers' workload, challenges for class management, the use of appropriate teaching strategies, coping with students learning at different pace, time management, training, the need for curriculum restructuring and communication challenges. An example was provided by T56 "Yes, once they are included, the curriculum and time limit for teaching and learning would be affected because special time will be created for SEN for proper understanding and require special training activities". T75 concurred "This is an additional burden on me as a teacher because I need to apply new techniques and methods in taking the class effectively".

Have you received any training in supporting children with SEN?

Very few teachers in this instance, 11 out of the total sample, indicated they had received professional training in catering for children with SEN and only a few

teachers claimed to have had access to annual training sessions. Teachers' professional development concerning SEN, therefore, was not sufficient to positively influence teachers' attitudes and/or enhance the implementation of inclusive education. In response to the question "Do you think with your academic qualification and years of teaching experience you will be able to teach students with SEN?", some teachers maintained they would be able to teach children with SEN while others were doubtful if the skills they had acquired via academic achievement and teaching experience would be enough to make an impact on children with SEN. Responses ranged from T52 "No, I cannot cope with disable child, reason: less teaching experience", to T30 " My academic qualification and years of experience will not be enough for me to teach students with SEN because I am not trained specially". Furthermore, teacher suggestions included frequent and up-to-date training of both regular and teachers SEN, provision of teaching and learning aids, restructuring of the environment and facilities, government financial responsibility, creation of suitable curriculum, creating awareness and educating the communities about inclusive education, which is reflected by T39 "provision of funds, training of teachers, provision of teaching materials and equipment, developing an inclusive culture in the society at large".

Are teachers' attitudes to Inclusive education affected by their academic achievement? Table 3 depicts the teachers' responses gathered from the closed-ended questionnaire.

Table 3: *Average (Mean) of Teachers' Attitude based on their Academic Qualification*

Teachers' Academic Qualification	Number of Teachers	Average Teachers' Attitude	Std. Error of the Mean
N.C. E	54	80.80	1.21
B.Sc.(Ed.)/B.Ed./B.A.(Ed.)	40	79.63	1.47
M.Ed.	1	68.00	0.00
O.N.D.	2	84.50	14.50
H.N.D/B.Sc./B.A/B.Tech.	5	79.80	5.57
Unidentified Respondents	1	65.00	0.00
Total	103	80.09	0.93

Observations from Table 3 indicate that teachers with O.N.D certificates expressed a more favourable attitude towards inclusion than other teacher categories. In the order of magnitude, they were followed by teachers with NCE certificates, HND/BSc/BA/B.Tech, B.Sc(Ed)/B.Ed./B.A(Ed), M.Ed. and unidentified respondents.

Table 4: *Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in Teachers' Attitude based on their Academic Qualification*

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F-calculated	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups (i.e. Academic qualification)	448.779	5	89.756	1.008	0.417	***Not significant***
Within Groups (i.e. Academic qualification)	8637.434	97	89.046			
Total	9086.214	102				

F-Critical = 2.30; F-cal < F-critical; p = 0.417 > 0.05

Even though there was a difference in teachers' attitude towards inclusion from Table 3, the evidence from Table 4 shows that the difference was not statistically significant because the obtained p-value of 0.417 was greater than the statistical benchmark of 0.05. Furthermore, the F-calculated was less than the F-critical (obtained from the statistical Table). Hence, teachers' attitude towards inclusive education was not significantly affected by their academic qualification.

Table 5: *Average (Mean) Teachers' Attitude based on Teachers' Teaching Experience with students with Special Educational Needs*

Teachers' Teaching Experience	Number of Teachers	Average Influence	Std. Error of the Mean
1–5 years	18	77.50	1.19
6–10 years	6	80.50	2.15
11–15 years	3	74.67	2.40
16–20 years	3	72.33	4.48
Above 20 years	8	78.00	4.84
Unidentified Respondents	65	81.63	3.72
Total	103	80.09	0.93

Numerical values in Table 5 indicated that teachers who did not identify their years of teaching experience with SEN (no experience with SEN) showed a better attitude towards inclusion than other categories of teachers.

Table 6: *Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in Teachers' Attitude based on their Teaching Experience with students with Special Educational Needs*

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F-calculated	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups (i.e. Teaching Experience)	579.742	5	115.948	1.322	0.261	***Not significant***
Within Groups (i.e. Teaching Experience)	8506.472	97	87.696			
Total	9086.214	102				

F-Critical = 2.30; F-cal < F-critical; p = 0.261 > 0.05

Although there were variations in teachers' attitude towards inclusion in Table 5, Table 6 presented the difference to be not statistically significant since the obtained p-value of 0.261 was more than the statistical standard of 0.05. Also, the F-calculated was lower than the F-critical from the statistical Table. Thus, teachers' attitudes towards inclusive education was not significantly affected by their years of teaching experience with students with SEN.

Table 7: *Average (Mean) Teachers' Attitude based on Teachers' Teaching Experience*

Teachers' Teaching Experience	Number of Teachers	Average Influence	Std. Error of the Mean
5 years below	18	85.56	2.13
6–10 years	8	77.88	2.40
11–15 years	16	81.75	2.31
16–20 years	13	78.00	3.50
Above 20 years	44	79.02	1.27
Unidentified Respondents	4	71.75	3.40
Total	103	80.09	0.93

Information from Table 7 shows that teachers with below five years of teaching experience indicated a more positive attitude towards inclusion.

Table 8: *Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in Teachers' Attitude based on their Teaching Experience*

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F-calculated	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups (i.e. Teaching Experience)	1006.167	5	201.233	2.416	0.041	***Significant***
Within Groups (i.e. Teaching Experience)	8080.047	97	83.299			
Total	9086.214	102				

F-Critical = 2.30; F-cal < F-critical; p = 0.041 < 0.05

Table 8 displays different evidence than Table 7 and is statistically significant due to the obtained p-value of 0.041, which was less than the statistical measure of 0.05. While, the F-calculated was greater than the F-critical. Therefore, teachers' attitude towards inclusive education was significantly affected by their years of teaching experience.

Table 9: *Average (Mean) of Teachers' Attitude based on Teachers' Professional Training in Special Educational Needs*

Teachers' Professional Training in SENs	Number of Teachers	Average Influence	Std. Error of the Mean
Yes	11	73.91	1.95
No	89	80.79	1.01
Unidentified Respondents	3	82.00	5.51
Total	103	80.09	0.93

Table 9 shows that teachers who have not received professional training in SEN are more in favour of inclusive education than those who claimed to have received professional training.

Table 10: *Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in Teachers' Attitude based on their Professional Training in Special Educational Needs*

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F-calculated	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups (i.e. Professional Training in SEN)	474.361	2	237.180	2.754	0.068	***Not significant***
Within Groups (i.e. Professional Training in SEN)	8611.853	100	86.119			
Total	9086.214	102				

F-Critical = 3.09; F-cal < F-critical; p = 0.068 > 0.05

The difference in teachers' attitude towards inclusion observed in Table 9 was not statistically significant as seen in Table 10, because the obtained p-value of 0.068 was greater than the statistical benchmark of 0.05. Likewise, the F-calculated was less than the F-critical from the statistical Table. Consequently, teachers' attitude towards inclusive education was not significantly affected by their professional training in SEN.

Table 11: *Average (Mean) of Teachers' Attitude based on their Exposure to people with Special Educational needs*

Teachers' Exposure to people with SENs	Number of Teachers	Average Influence	Std. Error of the Mean
Yes	27	77.30	1.65
No	64	81.80	1.20
Unidentified Respondents	12	77.25	2.61
Total	103	80.09	0.93

From Table 11, teachers who were not exposed to people with SEN displayed a better attitude towards inclusion than those who claimed to have been exposed.

Table 12: *Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) in Teachers' Attitude based on their Exposure to people with Special Educational Needs*

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	d.f.	Mean Square	F-calculated	Sig.	Remark
Between Groups (i.e. Exposure to people with SENs)	493.975	2	246.987	2.875	0.061	***Not significant***
Within Groups (i.e. Exposure to people with SENs)	8592.239	100	85.922			
Total	9086.214	102				

F-Critical = 3.09; F-cal < F-critical; p = 0.061 > 0.05

Table 12 reveals that the difference in Table 11 was not statistically significant, as a result the obtained p-value of 0.061 was greater than the statistical benchmark of 0.05, and the F-calculated was less than the F-critical. Hence, teachers' attitude towards inclusive education was not significantly affected by their exposure to people with SEN.

4 Discussion

The findings reveal that Nigerian primary school teachers in Lagos state have negative attitudes towards the inclusion of learners with SEN, mainly because of inadequate knowledge and training for inclusive education. This finding corresponds with the findings of Agbenyega (2007), Fakolade et al. (2009), Chhabra et al. (2010) and Mukhopadhyay (2014). More concerning is that primary teachers do not support the inclusion of all pupils into regular schools; that their attitudes are influenced by a student's disability and perceived severity. There is, however, a preference amongst regular primary teachers for children with physical disabilities in addition to those with mild to moderate learning disabilities. Children with severe speech difficulties,

behavioural difficulties and severe learning disabilities however are less favourably perceived, which is supported by the findings of Boer et al., (2011).

Additional findings reveal that teachers' understanding about inclusion is limited. In defining inclusive education, some teachers have a solid explanation, while the majority did not. What is noticeable is that teachers' understanding of inclusive education takes no cognizance of the need for differentiation of curriculum, pedagogy, learning environment and society to facilitate the learning of all pupils. Similar findings to Al-Natour et al., (2016) are found where teachers' opinions about the beneficiaries of inclusive education are students with SEN, moreover these benefits are only social and psychological in nature.

The exploration of the inclusive teacher's role for most of the teachers within the study is their ability to sympathize and be patient with students with SEN and not teach these children. This finding is supported by Gaad and Khan (2007), and similarly teachers in the study felt their knowledge on how to adapt instructions for students with SEN was inadequate. Other teachers believe that teaching children with SEN is the sole responsibility of the special education teachers, which was a finding of Al-Natour et al., (2016). A recommendation then is for accurate and sufficient information and knowledge to promote a better understanding of inclusion, in addition to increasing teacher awareness of the new policy on inclusive education. Findings indicate a mixed reaction amongst teachers towards the Nigerian policy for inclusive education, which ranges from the idea of IE as difficult, to the noble, to the requirement for a solid foundation before its implementation. These findings reflect those of Hunter-Johnson and Newton (2014).

Teachers' negative attitudes towards IE implementation centre on constraints such as excessive workload, difficulty in covering the scheme of work, class and time management, choosing appropriate pedagogy and coping with a variety of students' learning pace. They point out prerequisites for the success of inclusive education as being; environmental and facilities restructuring, adequate training of mainstream and SEN teachers, creating a suitable curriculum, provision of teaching and learning materials, in addition to Societal and Parental enlightenment. These findings are reflected globally in the works of Avramidis and Norwich, (2002), Gilmore, Campbell and Cuskelly (2003), Gaad and Khan (2009), Peters and Forlin (2011), De Boer, Pijl and Minnaert, 2011), Anati (2012), David and Kuyini (2010), and Ahmed et al., (2012).

The findings of this study's report on years of teaching experience and TAtt towards inclusion, contradict the results of pre-existing studies (e.g., Ross-Hill, 2009; Muhanna, 2010; Batsiou et al., 2008; Gyimah et al., 2009; Kalyva et al., 2007; Ahmed et al., 2012). Moreover, academic qualifications, years of teaching experience with students with SEN, professional training or exposure to people with SEN show no significant effect. Overall, teachers expressed their years of teaching experience

have not equipped them to teach children with SEN, thus the need for training at initial teacher education level. These findings reflect those of Kuyini and Mangope (2011) and Galovic et al. (2014). Findings also indicate that years of teaching students with SEN are insignificant in determining teachers' attitude towards inclusion, which aligns with Rajovic and Jovanovic (2010) and Galovic et al., (2014). The emphasis is when teachers have pleasant experiences of teaching children with SEN alongside genuine support, knowledge and the acquisition of pedagogical skills for inclusion. In this research, professional training in SEN did not influence teachers' attitude towards inclusive education. This finding is consistent with Kuyini and Mangope (2011) and Ahmed et al., (2012). The substantial number of teachers without professional training on SEN in the current research could have influenced the teachers' feelings about the lack of professional training and its effect on teacher attitude.

5 Conclusion

The Lagos State government has taken a bold step towards the inclusion of students with SEN into the regular classroom by the enactment of the 2015 State Policy on Inclusive Education. As a result of conducting the research the following recommendations have emerged;

- A positive change in teachers' attitude is requisite for the success of inclusion.
- Primary teachers need to be trained with relevant knowledge and skills to educate learners with SEN.
- The government must ensure that the curriculum of all Colleges and faculties of Education teach the fundamental aspects of special educational needs and inclusion that will empower future teachers to creatively respond to the demands of inclusion.
- Incorporation of teaching practice that will expose pre-service teachers to the experience of teaching students with SEN in teacher training programs.
- Special and general education courses at higher institutions should stress and encourage collaboration between general teachers and special educators, in order to enhance their teaching skills and provide them with appropriate strategies to work together in an inclusive classroom.
- Every primary school in Lagos State should have an inclusive unit. This would increase access to education and help the government obtain information on school age children with SEN.
- Provision of adequate resources and support for SEN teachers and exposure of regular teachers to learners with SEN to help develop a positive attitude from the teachers towards inclusion
- The physical structure of the learning environment should be inclusion friendly.

- Government and non-governmental organizations should partner to provide the needed human, financial and training resources needed to encourage learners and teachers in the system.
- Responsibilities of school staff toward inclusion should be made explicit.
- Proper sensitization, collaboration and a positive change in attitude of stakeholders such as teachers, students, school administrators, families and community towards inclusive education.

The current study was highly useful in giving a snapshot of some of the primary school teachers in Lagos State. It will be essential to change Teachers' negative perceptions towards inclusive education and introduce more robust and expansive teachers' education programmes that support teachers' development for inclusive education if the policy is to succeed. Beyond providing more insight into the situation in Lagos state, the implications of the study show the need for education for all to ensure that Inclusive education development is successful for all. Inclusion agendas therefore, should be tailored to localities so that teachers are enabled in developing culturally appropriate strategies to overcome barriers.

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