

Teachers' Instructional Skills and Effective Implementation of Inclusive Classroom Practice in Akwa Ibom State

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Abstract: This study investigated the relationship between teachers' instructional skills and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State. Four null hypotheses were postulated to guide the study. Correlational research design was employed and used for this study. The population of the study consisted of all 845 teachers in all the Special Education Centres in Akwa Ibom State which undergo inclusive education practice. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 412 teachers. Teachers' Instructional Skills and Implementation of Inclusive Classroom Practice Questionnaire` (TISIICPQ) was used as the instrument for the study. The instrument validity and reliability was determined. Cronbach's Alpha statistics was used to determined reliability coefficient which yielded reliability indices of .73, .71, .80, .88 and .70 respectively. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used in testing the hypotheses by comparing it with the critical-r-value at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a significant relationship between teachers' instructional skills and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that teachers should be trained on the rudiments of effective communication. This will make them avoid the use of one-way communication. School administrators should work hard to ensure that teachers are prepared in various ways of classroom management.

Keywords: Teachers' Instructional Skills and Inclusive Classroom Practice.

INTRODUCTION

Education of persons with special needs is going inclusive after several years of exclusivist and separatist paradigm. The change in approach came as a result of a number of influences. Chief among them were the paradigm shift from defect to social model and the UN education programmes (Ozaji, 2008). The defect or "within-child model" is based on the assumption that the origin of learning difficulties lie largely within the child. The social model on the other hand is based on the proposition that society and its institutions account for the child's impairment (Okeke-Oti, 2010). The social model posits that society and its institutions are oppressive, discriminatory and disabling and that if any change is to be effected, attention needs to be focused on the removal of obstacles to the participation of people with disability in the life of the society and in changing institutions, regulations and attitudes that create and maintain exclusion (Mittler, 2000).

Inclusion is educational arrangement that deemphasizes exclusion and emphasizes the restructuring of instructions (schools), classrooms, and

approached to instruction to address and meet diverse needs of all children (Okeke-Oti, 2010). The broad definition of inclusion was that given by UNESCO (2005). It defined inclusion as:

A process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities and reducing exclusion within and from education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all children of the appropriate age range and a conviction that it is the responsibilities of the regular system to educate all children p:12).

This implies that inclusion accommodates all learners whether such learners are disabled or not.

Inclusion is the process of addressing the diverse needs of all learner through increasing participation of all learners in neighbourhood school with matching support (Okeke-Oti; 2010). Okuoyibo (2001) asserted that inclusion means bringing students with disabilities regardless of the nature and severity of their disabilities into all placement activities of genera

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education such as schools, classrooms and the surrounding communities. Further, Okuoyibo explained that the thrust of the matter on inclusion is that children with disabilities should be unconditionally mainstreamed into the regular education system without regard to the nature and severity of their disabilities. Ojogwu (2005) observed that the nature of inclusiveness requires that all learners regardless of disability be educated in the same classroom. The emphasis of inclusion therefore, is to give everybody in the society an equal opportunity to benefit from formal education programme.

Inclusive education denotes three or more shades of meaning according to Ozoji (2005). First, it entails enabling all learners to participate fully in the life and work of mainstream setting. Second, it conveys a continuing process of breaking down barriers to learning and participation for all children and young people. Third, it implies a right to belong to the mainstream or a joint undertaking to and discrimination and to work toward equal opportunities for all pupils and students. Hence, Ozoji defined inclusive education as an education option or programme carefully designed to educate learners with diverse needs within the re-structured mainstream or school, regardless of their strengths and weaknesses in any area and become part of the school community.

Similarly, the Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (2002) of the University of Bristol, England, stated that inclusive education means that all children and young people, with or without disabilities or difficulties should learn together in ordinary pre-school provision, schools, colleges and Universities with appropriate networks of support. In the context of this study, inclusive education is taken to refer to the participation of all primary school pupils in a general curriculum. The researcher is aware that inclusive education goes beyond special needs children but this study does not include such other categories of children as those with legal confinement, ethnic minorities and those with social stigmas.

One of the arguments in favour of inclusive education is the realization that every individual is unique, hence the focus must be on the individual and not on the subjects. According to Deiner (1999), if all children are part of regular settings and all children participate in the general curriculum, then all educators need to know sufficient techniques to care for and educate all children. (Unachukwu, Ozoji and Ifelunni, 2008).

An inclusive classroom is a programme in which all available resources are collaboratively utilized to meet the educational needs and challenges of all children who reside in its attendant area. Furthermore, inclusive classroom have strong site based management and teaching teams when jointly plan, implement and

evaluate their educational programmes. As a working definition in this study therefore, an inclusive classroom is a place where everyone with or without special needs belong, is accepted, and is supported by their peers and other members of the school community in the course of having his or her educational needs met. For inclusion to be successful in the classroom therefore there is the need for teachers to exhibit skills necessary to handle all categories of children with needs. Teachers need to find out how to work with each child rather than assuming someone also will tell them how to do it. Teachers need to know a variety of instructional strategies and how to use them effectively. Teachers in an attempt to ensure maximum participation of pupils in classroom apply certain instructional skills for effective teaching and learning.

These instructional skill needs of teachers are essential for inclusive classroom to function effectively. To understand instructional skills properly there is the need for us to understand the concept of instruction. Instruction has been defined and described differently by different authors in the area of education. Kpanghan and Onwuegbu (2004) describe instruction as the process of communicating information to the learner, stimulating relevant learning activities, evaluating the result of these activities and taking remedial action if necessary. Okeke (2006) also perceived instruction as the process of passing on information from a more knowledgeable person (instructor) to a less knowledgeable person. In the process of instruction, the instructor, through order, command or direction, requires the learner to perform certain tasks or operation. The idea of instruction, judging from the view of Okeke, can be explained in terms of "drill". A command is given and there is compliance implying the stimulus response process of learning. Instruction in the context of this study therefore, is the process of communicating information to the pupils, stimulating relevant learning activities, evaluating the result of these activities and taking remedial action if necessary by teachers in inclusive classroom.

Instructional skills according to Kpanghan and Onwuegbu (2004) are patterns adopted by teachers to interact with their subjects. It is the knowledge and ability the teacher uses to communicate with the students. According to Romiszowski (2004) instructional skills is described as the process teachers use to communicate information to the learner, stimulating relevant learning activities and taking remedial action. Further, instructional skills according to Saylor and Alexander (2004) includes; assessment skills, (that is ability and knowledge of the teacher to assess the learner) communication skills, (that is ability to interact with the learner) management skills, (that is the ability to control human and material resources) motivational skills (that is the ability to arouse the moral of the learner) and evaluation skills (that is the ability to ascertain whether learning has taken place).

Assessment skills are knowledge and ability of the teachers to consider and judge students in the classroom (Okeke, 2006). Assessment skill as part of the instructional skills is an attempt to find out the strengths and weaknesses or the effectiveness of a programme (Anagbogu, 2005). Assessment skills are the knowledge and ability of teachers to determine the strengths and weakness of the learners. In communication skills, teachers ought to pass on veritable lesson objectives to the learner are yet another instructional skill needs of teachers for inclusive classroom. Smith (2005) explained that communication skills are the ability of the teacher to understand what the learner is trying to express and being able to express him/her self to the learner. Through communication skills the teacher is able to clarify his feeling about the topic being taught.

In management skills however, Deczecco and Crawford (2004) explained that management skills are the process or act of controlling or organizing lesson which the teacher adopt to enhance learning. The classroom teacher needs the management skill to be able to organize the learners for effective instruction. In Motivation skills (Anagbogu, 2005) sees it as inner drive or compulsion that is not easily noticeable. Motivation has to do with the struggle to achieve a goal. Motivation skills are the inner drive of teachers which enable them to achieve their goal. All these skills according to Dearden (2003) are needed for teaching and learning to be effective. Instructional skills therefore, in this present study are the teaching strategies or plans adopted by teachers to ensure that children reach their potentials.

Ozaji, (2003), Okeke, (2006), Nwazuoke, (2004) have also pointed to the acute negativity with which Nigerians treat the different categories of special needs children: the hard of hearing, the people with visual impairment, among others. The researchers have also shown that both the society and government have not done much to lessen the burden of these less fortunate members of the society. This shows that they are treated as “burdens” of society with little or no facilities provided for them to afford them the opportunity of realizing their potentials in inclusive classroom. To ameliorate this ugly situation, teachers need to use instructional skills to enable them meet the challenges of inclusive classroom. It is against this background, that the present study investigated the relationship between teachers’ instructional skills and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.

Statement of the Problem

In spite of the general global yearning for high quality education for inclusive classroom, there is an apparent realization by stakeholders that the quality of instruction has declined considerably especially in the primary school classrooms. The quality of training and

retraining provided for teachers were not adequate to ensure optimum service delivery as an assurance to nation building and the realization of the vision of inclusive classroom. Similarly, the quality of instruction of teachers in primary school was out of sync with the objective of inclusive classroom. Inclusive classroom, concerned with a system of education which offers every member of the society an equal opportunity to acquire basic education in the regular school environment is not achieving the expected objective as a result of poor teachers’ instructional skills.

The public perception therefore is that teachers’ instructional skills are low and standard have dropped. Teachers are presumed to be unable to boost their instructional skills and as a result, they perform poorly. However, teachers in were found not to have requisites instructional skills to discharge their duties for effective teaching in inclusive classroom. The causes of failures of the instructional outcomes of teachers have been attributed to diverse factors. Evidence from some of the literature suggests that one of the essential determinants of success or failure in inclusion education is the instructional skills which a teacher adopts in the classroom practice. However, none of the works available to the researcher seem to have focused on the teachers’ instructional skills and effective implementation inclusive classroom practice. As a result of this, all educators need to have the knowledge of these instructional skills for effective implementation inclusive classroom practice. It is against this backdrop that the problem of this study was posed into question form narrowed to: what is the relationship between teachers’ instructional skills and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State?

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between teachers’ instructional skills and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State. Specifically, the study intends to:

- i. determine the relationship between teachers’ assessment skill and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.
- ii. determine the relationship between teachers’ communication technique and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.
- iii. determine the relationship between teachers’ management skill and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.
- iv. determine the relationship between teachers’ motivational technique and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were postulated to guide the this study and tested at 0.05 level of significance

- i. There is no significant relationship between teachers' assessment skill and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between teachers' communication technique and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between teachers' management skill and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.
- iv. There is no significant relationship between teachers' motivational technique and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The correlational research design was adopted for the study. This design is considered suitable for the study because it involves investigating into the magnitude and direction (positive or negative) of relationship that exist between a dependent variable and one or more independent variable(s) (Kpolovie, 2010).

Area of the Study

The study was carried out in Akwa Ibom State. Akwa Ibom is a state in Nigeria. It is located in the Coastal Southern part of the country, lying between latitude 4°32'N and 5°33'N, and longitude 7°25'E and 8°22'E. The state is bordered on the East by Cross River State, on the West by Rivers State and Abia State, and on the South by the Atlantic Ocean and the southernmost top of Cross River State and is currently the highest oil-and gas producing state in the country. The state capital is Uyo, with over 500,000 inhabitants. Akwa Ibom has an airport (Akwa Ibom International Airport) and standard stadium over 30,000 capacities and two major seaports on Atlantic Ocean with a proposed construction of a world-class seaport in Ibaka at Oron. The state has a predominantly civil service working populace, whilst other outside the public service sphere are mainly into informal sector business, farming, fishing and local crafts. Along with English, the main spoken languages are Ibibio, Annang, Eket and Oron language.

Akwa-Ibom also occupies an outstanding position in provision of educational service in Akwa Ibom State. At the tertiary level, three campuses of the University of Uyo and some private University and Polytechnics, there are many secondary, primary and secondary school. The state has three special school two are located in the state capital, there are Government Special Education Center, Mbiabong and St. Vincent

Special School, Uyo as well as St. Louise Special School Ikot Ekpene Local Government Area.

Population of the Study

The population of the study comprised all the 845 teachers in all the Special Education Centres in Akwa Ibom State which undergo inclusive education practice. (Akwa Ibom State Ministry of Education, 2019).

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample for the study consisted of 412 teachers in Special Education Centres in Akwa Ibom State. The sample was drawn from two inclusive schools to include St. Louis Inclusive School, Ikot Ekpene and Special Education Centre, Mbiabong, Uyo Local Government Areas through simple random sampling technique.

Instrumentation

For the purpose of this study, a researcher-made instrument were used for data collection known as: Teachers' Instructional Skills and Implementation of Inclusive Classroom Practice Questionnaire` (TISIICPQ) for teachers. There were a total of (37) items in the (TIS), 12 on assessment skill, 7 on communication skill, 11 on management skill and 9 on motivational skill. Implementation of Inclusive Classroom Practice consisted of (15) items. The instrument was structured on 4-point type Likert Scale of strongly agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points) and strongly disagree (1 point). Effort was made to ensure clarity and brevity in item construction. This removed all uncertainties that the respondents would have come across. Respondents were expected to indicate by ticking the extent to which they agreed or disagreed to statement on the instrument.

Validation of the Instrument

Face and content validity were established for Teachers' Instructional Skills and Implementation of Implementation of Inclusive Classroom Practice Questionnaire` (TISIICPQ) as was given to assessment by two experts in the Department of Early Childhood and Special Education and one from Measurement and Evaluation, Faculty of Education, University of Uyo, who independently assessed the various items to ascertain their relevance to the research questions, hypotheses and language used in developing the items. These experts were required to effect correction, check the contents and appropriateness of items and make useful suggestions that were incorporated into the final version of the instrument. Hence, they carefully made all the necessary corrections. Therefore, it can be said that, the instruments had face and content validation, which is necessary for research purpose.

Reliability of the Instrument

The internal consistency approach was adopted for this study. The reliability of Teachers' Instructional

Skills and Implementation of Inclusive Classroom Practice Questionnaire` (TISIICPQ) was administered to 30 teachers who were randomly selected from the study population but were not included in the study sample. However, the scores obtained from the validated instruments were used to compute the reliability coefficient using Cronbach's Alpha Statistics that yielded the reliability indices, teachers' assessment instructional skill = .73, communication instructional skill = .71, management instructional skill = .80, motivational instructional skill = .88 while .79 was obtained for and Implementation of Inclusive Classroom Practice. These high reliability coefficients confirmed that these variables were internally consistent.

Administration of the Instrument

Prior to the commencement of the study, the researcher visited each of the sampled schools for the administration of the questionnaire. This was personally done by the researcher with the help of some teachers who serve as research assistants. Before the administration, permission was sought from each Head teacher and the researcher explained the purpose of the study and the contents of the questionnaire to the

respondents. 430 copies of questionnaires were given out but 412 were filled and returned.

Method of Data Analysis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used for answering the research questions by comparing the values with the extent scale of correlation also used for testing the hypotheses by comparing it with the critical-r-value. The entire hypotheses formulated were tested at .05 level of significance. In order to take decision as regards the research questions, any r-value that falls between 0.10 – 0.39 was regarded as low, 0.40 – 0.59 was regarded as moderate and 0.60 – 0.99 was high. In terms of hypotheses, whenever the calculated r-value was greater than the critical r-value, the null hypothesis was rejected and also whenever the calculated r-value was less than the critical r-value, the null hypothesis was accepted.

RESULTS

Hypothesis One

There is no significant relationship between assessment skill and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation of relationship between assessment skill and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State (N=412)

Variables	ΣX ΣY	ΣX^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	r-cal.	r-crit.
Assessment skill	3548	56550	117851	0.92	0.139
Effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice	8037	264389			

The result presented in Table 1 revealed that the calculated r-value of .92 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.139 at .05 level of significance with 410 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between assessment 1 skill and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State was rejected. This implies that there is a significant

relationship between assessment skill and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant relationship between communication technique and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 2: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation of significant relationship between communication technique and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State (N=412)

Variables	ΣX ΣY	ΣX^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	r-cal.	r-crit.
Communication technique	3656	60134	121505	0.97	0.139
Effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice	8037	264389			

The result presented in Table 2 revealed that the calculated r-value of .97 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.139 at .05 level of significance with 410 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between communication technique and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State was rejected. This implies that there is a significant

relationship between communication technique and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant relationship between management skill and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 3: Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation of significant relationship between management skill and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State (N=412)

Variables	ΣX ΣY	ΣX^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	r-cal.	r-crit.
Management skill	3584	58264	119284	0.91	0.139
Effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice	8037	264389			

The result presented in Table 3 revealed that the calculated r-value of .91 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.139 at .05 level of significance with 410 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between management skill and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State was rejected. This implies that there is a significant

relationship between management skill and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.

Hypothesis Four

There is no significant relationship between motivational technique and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.

Table 4: Pearson’s Product Moment Correlation of significant relationship between motivational technique and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State (N=412)

Variables	ΣX ΣY	ΣX^2 ΣY^2	ΣXY	r-cal.	r-crit.
Motivational technique	3584	58264	119284	0.97	0.139
Effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice	8037	264389			

The result presented in Table 4 revealed that the calculated r-value of .97 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.139 at .05 level of significance with 410 degrees of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis that says there is no significant relationship between motivational technique and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State was rejected. This implies that there is a significant relationship between motivational technique and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.

motivational skills teachers utilize to improve teaching. The consequences of not using these instructional skills are too grave for any teacher to ignore especially in special needs schools. Therefore, there is need for teachers to make use of these instructional skills for effective teaching /learning process in the inclusive classroom. One of the findings of this study is that teachers in an inclusive classroom need assessment instructional skills for teaching /learning process. Therefore, this indicated the need for special needs teachers to achieve professional growth through instructional skills, for effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice. The result also indicated that the teachers’ communication skill is important. This implies that teachers should utilize skills for effective teaching /learning process. This also applies to management skills, and motivational skills.

Major Findings

- i. There is a strong and significant relationship between teachers’ assessment skill and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.
- ii. There is a strong and significant relationship between teachers’ communication technique and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.
- iii. There is a strong and significant relationship between teachers’ management skill and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.
- iv. There is a strong and significant relationship between teachers’ motivational technique and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State.

RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings of this study, the researcher therefore makes the following recommendations:

- i. Seminars and conferences should be organized by teacher educators for special needs teachers from time to time to keep them abreast of different instructional skills which they would use in implementing inclusive education curriculum.
- ii. School administrators should work hard to ensure that special needs teachers are prepared in various ways of assessing learning.
- iii. Teachers on their own should strive to build energy with other teachers with the view of getting them acquainted with necessary skills for teaching.
- iv. Teachers should be trained on the rudiments of effective communication. This will make them avoid the use of one –way communication.

CONCLUSION

The study has indeed revealed a significant relationship between teachers’ instructional skills and effective implementation of inclusive classroom practice in Akwa Ibom State. These are rooted in the assessment, communication, management and

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