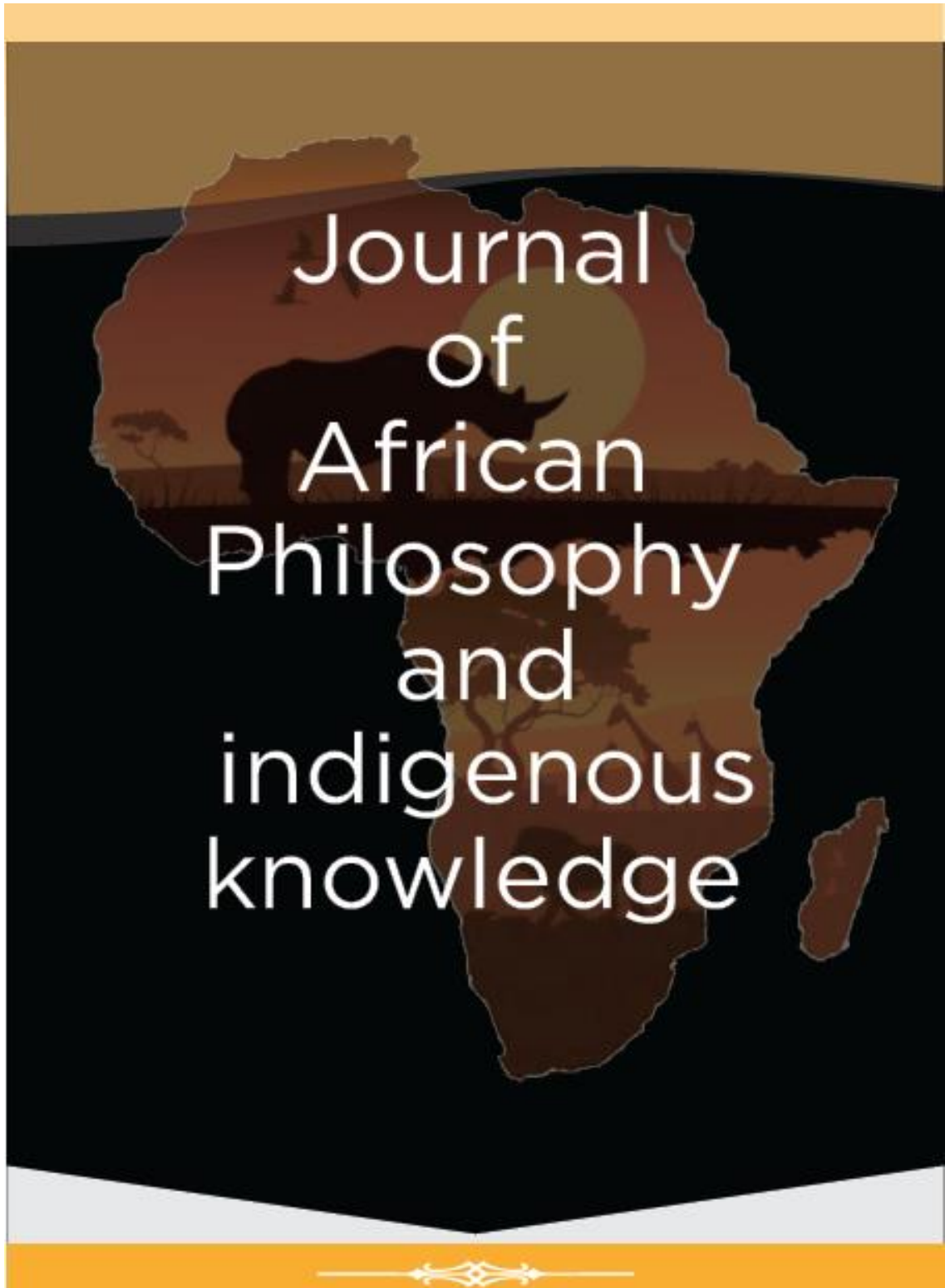




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EDITORIAL NOTE

The articles assembled in this issue collectively advance a compelling argument: that sustainable development in Africa requires a fundamental re-centering of indigenous knowledge systems, cultural practices, and philosophical traditions. While the contexts range from disaster risk reduction in Zimbabwe to digital pedagogy in Yorubaland, from inclusive education in Nigeria to agricultural trade resilience across East and West Africa, a unifying thread runs through each contribution the necessity of culturally grounded, context-specific solutions to African challenges.

Esther Ogunwole and colleagues open this issue with a critical examination of culturally responsive inclusive education in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria. Their study reveals that while teachers demonstrate some familiarity with inclusive practices, significant gaps remain in pedagogical confidence, classroom management, and cultural sensitivity toward learners with practical needs. The findings underscore a vital insight: inclusivity cannot be achieved through Western-derived models alone; it demands teacher training that is both culturally grounded and responsive to local realities.

Complementing this work, Funmilayo Olu-Ajayi makes a persuasive case for integrating indigenous knowledge into Nigeria's science curriculum. Her argument that traditional practices herbal medicine, local farming techniques, ecological wisdom can enrich scientific education challenges the lingering colonial assumption that indigenous knowledge is antithetical to modern science. Instead, she envisions a blended pedagogy that honours both knowledge systems, fostering environmental awareness and community engagement among learners.

The geopolitical dimensions of indigenous resilience are explored in Charles Apokhume and Olileanya Ezugwu's examination of tariff vulnerability in Kenya, Ethiopia, and Nigeria. Their findings challenge conventional narratives of African agricultural vulnerability by demonstrating that external trade shocks, rather than merely destabilising, can catalyse indigenous-led value chain development. This reframing from sites of perpetual dependency to spaces of creative resilience offers a powerful counter-narrative to dependency theory's more deterministic conclusions.

From Zimbabwe, Owen Mafongoya and colleagues interrogate the cosmological approaches to disaster risk reduction among the Ndaue people of Chimanimani. Their documentation of indigenous forecasting indicators, sacred rituals, and cultural practices reveals sophisticated systems of anticipatory action that have sustained communities across generations. Yet these systems face existential threats from climate change, Christianity, and modern science threats that the authors argue must be addressed through genuine integration rather than mere acknowledgement.

This issue presents a groundbreaking study on Másòyínbò (Olálékàn Fábílólá) and the architectures of a decentralised Yoruba knowledge economy. The study reveals how digital technologies, often viewed as instruments of cultural homogenisation, can be strategically indigenised to foster linguistic consciousness, economic sovereignty, and

epistemic repair. Másòyínbò's model transforming Western technological platforms into spaces of Yoruba cultural affirmation offers a replicable framework for African scholars seeking to bridge tradition and innovation in the digital age.

Extending this conversation on epistemic repair, Agbegbedian Anthony Oghenevwoke offers a critical evaluation of the concept of man in Urhobo traditional philosophy. His study directly refutes lingering colonial notions of the "irrational" preliterate African society, demonstrating that the Urhobo, like other African peoples, possess a coherent logical system through which man is understood as both a historical and metaphysical being. This philosophical grounding, the study shows, is not abstract speculation but the very foundation upon which Urhobo norms, values, and survival as a people rest.

Complementing this philosophical inquiry, David O. Ovuede and Agbegbedian Oghenevwoke Anthony examine the impact of modernity on marital dispute resolution within Benin Kingdom, Nigeria. Their research unmasks how the imposition of Native court systems and British morality displaced the traditional Ọkaegbẹe (patriarch) institution, fundamentally altering the power dynamics of conjugal conflict management. By revealing the nexus between modernity and the diminution of indigenous governance structures, the authors demonstrate that contemporary marital discord cannot be fully understood nor effectively addressed without reckoning with the colonial erosion of culturally anchored resolution frameworks.

Together, these articles issue an urgent call: the decolonisation of African knowledge systems is not merely an intellectual exercise but a practical imperative for sustainable development. Whether in education, agriculture, disaster management, or digital economies, the contributors to this issue demonstrate that Africa's future lies not in abandoning indigenous traditions but in creatively reimagining them for contemporary challenges.

We invite our readers to engage deeply with these contributions and to join the ongoing conversation about how African philosophy and indigenous knowledge systems can shape more just, resilient, and culturally affirmed futures across the continent.

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**CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE AND INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN PUBLIC
SECONDARY SCHOOLS ON LEARNERS WITH PRACTICAL NEEDS IN
ADO-EKITI, NIGERIA: ANALYSIS OF TEACHER TRAINING AND
STUDENT PERSPECTIVES**

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Abstract

Inclusive education remains a global priority, yet its implementation in culturally diverse contexts such as Nigeria faces persistent challenges. This study assessed culturally responsive inclusive education practices for learners with practical needs in public secondary schools in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, focusing on teacher training, classroom practices, student experiences, and contextual challenges. A descriptive survey design was adopted, involving 357 students and 26 teachers drawn from three public secondary schools. Data were collected using structured questionnaires and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings revealed that while inclusive practices such as differentiated instruction, group work, and use of audiovisual aids are widely adopted, inconsistencies remain in their application. Teachers demonstrated moderate levels of pre-service and in-service training in inclusive education, but gaps were evident in classroom management strategies and pedagogical confidence. Major challenges identified included inadequate learning materials, infrastructural barriers, limited teacher time, and peer stigmatization, all of which are influenced by cultural beliefs and school norms. Students strongly endorsed measures such as enhanced teacher training, provision of assistive devices, promotion of respect, and improved accessibility. The study concludes that culturally responsive teacher training and whole-school approaches are critical to strengthening inclusive education. Recommendations include systematic professional development, culturally grounded sensitization programs, and improved resource allocation. The study contributes empirical evidence to inclusive education discourse in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Keywords: *Inclusive education, cultural responsiveness, teacher training, learners with practical needs, Nigeria,*

Introduction

Inclusive education has emerged as a central pillar of global educational reform, emphasizing the right of all learners—regardless of ability, disability, or background to access equitable and meaningful learning opportunities. Rooted in international frameworks such as the Salamanca Statement and the Sustainable Development Goals, inclusive education seeks to dismantle barriers that marginalize learners with diverse needs, laid the foundation for inclusive education worldwide by advocating that “schools must recognize and respond to the diverse needs of their students,” and that this principle continued under the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—especially SDG 4, which calls to “ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” The inclusive education agenda seeks to remove barriers that prevent full participation and learning for all, particularly those who are marginalized (UNESCO, 2024).

However, translating these ideals into practice remains challenging, particularly in developing countries where cultural beliefs, limited resources, and inadequate teacher preparation persist.

In Nigeria, public secondary schools operate within complex cultural environments where disability is often interpreted through social, religious, and traditional lenses. These cultural perceptions significantly shape attitudes toward learners with practical needs, influencing classroom interactions, peer relationships, and institutional responses. Teachers, as key agents of inclusion, are expected to implement

culturally responsive pedagogies that recognize learner diversity while respecting sociocultural realities.

Understanding how teachers are trained, how students experience inclusive practices, and how cultural factors mediate these processes is essential for strengthening inclusive education outcomes. This study therefore examines culturally responsive inclusive education practices in public secondary schools in Ado-Ekiti, Nigeria, drawing on both teacher and student perspectives.

Nigeria’s education system has increasingly emphasized inclusive education through national policies and reforms aimed at integrating learners with special and practical needs into regular classrooms (Akinwumi et al, 2024). Public secondary schools, which serve the majority of learners, are central to this agenda. However, implementation often occurs within resource-constrained settings characterized by large class sizes, limited assistive technologies, and insufficient teacher training (Ibe et al, 2025).

Culturally, Nigerian society reflects a blend of communal values, religious beliefs, and traditional norms that shape perceptions of disability. While communalism can foster peer support and cooperation, it may also reinforce stigma and exclusion when disabilities are misunderstood. In school settings, these cultural dynamics influence how learners with practical needs are treated by teachers and peers alike.

Teacher training is a critical factor in bridging policy and practice. Pre-service and in-service training programs are expected to equip teachers with skills in differentiated instruction, classroom

management, and culturally responsive pedagogy. However, disparities in access to professional development and variations in training quality raise concerns about teachers' preparedness to implement inclusive education effectively.

Against this backdrop, the present study investigates inclusive education practices, teacher training, student experiences, and challenges within public secondary schools in Ado-Ekiti, with particular attention to cultural responsiveness.

Statement of the Problem

Despite policy advocacy for inclusive education in Nigeria, learners with practical needs in public secondary schools continue to experience barriers to full participation. These barriers include inadequate instructional materials, inaccessible school infrastructure, limited individualized support, and negative peer attitudes. Teachers often face challenges related to insufficient training, heavy workloads, and limited exposure to culturally responsive inclusive strategies.

Furthermore, existing studies have largely focused on policy analysis or teacher perspectives, with limited integration of student voices and cultural context. There is a paucity of empirical evidence that jointly examines teacher training, student experiences, and culturally embedded challenges within public secondary schools.

Without such evidence, interventions aimed at improving inclusive education risk being disconnected from classroom realities and sociocultural dynamics. This study addresses this gap by providing a comprehensive assessment of inclusive education practices and teacher preparedness from both teacher

and student perspectives in a culturally specific Nigerian context.

Literature Review

Inclusive Education Practices

Inclusive education emphasizes learner diversity, equity, and participation, while culturally responsive education recognizes learners' cultural backgrounds as assets in teaching and learning. Scholars argue that inclusive education is most effective when it aligns with local cultural values and social norms. Inclusion involves ensuring the presence, participation and achievement of all students (Reyes-Parra et al, 2020; Sandoval et al, 2022), which requires actively addressing exclusion. In this context, accessibility, diversity and curricular flexibility are fundamental pillars (Elizondo, 2022; García-Barrera, 2022; Schuelka et al, 2019). These principles are reflected in teaching practices that consider individual learning rhythms, curricular planning, assessment and the involvement of the educational community (Arnaiz et al, 2015; Echeita et al, 2019).

Inclusive education emphasizes equitable participation of all students, using differentiated instruction, group activities, and multi-sensory teaching (Florian et al, 2021; Johnson et al, 2022). Collaborative learning strategies foster peer interaction and enhance social inclusion (Whitley et al, 2024). Studies in Nigeria indicate that group activities and audio-visual aids significantly improve participation of learners with disabilities (Bouwoye et al; 2024). Types of inclusion educational practices include: all students in General in the regular Classroom, Partial inclusion (some students attend special class for

specific support), Reverse inclusion and Social Inclusion (Walelgn, 2025). Some of the inclusive practices and strategies are: Peer tutoring and Mentoring, Culturally responsive teaching, Instructional or Curriculum adaptation, Blended Learning and technology, Collaboration and Building Supportive Environment among others (John, 2018, Azuka, et al, 2024)

.TEACHER TRAINING AND PREPAREDNESS

Teacher Training for Inclusive Education

Teacher preparation remains a cornerstone of successful inclusion. Research shows that teachers with strong pre-service and in-service training are more confident in implementing differentiated instruction, managing diverse classrooms, and supporting learners with practical needs. Teacher competence is pivotal for effective inclusive education. Pre-service and in-service training provide foundational knowledge and practical skills (Sharma et al, 2021; Walton et al, 2025).

Research highlights that in Nigeria's secondary school contexts, teachers' awareness and attitudes toward learners with disabilities are influenced by broader cultural and social interpretations of disability, which can shape inclusion practices and experiences (Balogun, 2025). However, empirical evidence shows that while 61% of Nigerian teachers receive pre-service training, only 58% regularly attend workshops on inclusive strategies, limiting classroom effectiveness (Bouwoye et al, 2024). Confidence in applying inclusive

pedagogical approaches varies, with gaps in classroom management and differentiated instruction reported (Florian et al, 2021; Engelbrecht et al, 2025).

Designing effective pre-service teacher training improves attitudes toward inclusive education and fosters readiness for diverse classroom practices (Kebede et al, 2024). Programs vary in duration and delivery, influencing teachers' confidence and competence (Smith et al, 2024).

In Ghana, teachers' competence in differentiated instruction is positively associated with inclusive teaching practice, emphasizing the role of targeted professional development (Nketsia et al, 2025). According to Ogunlade (2025), a multifaceted approach is required to address barriers to inclusive education, including teacher training and curriculum modification.

Professional training increases teacher efficacy in adapting practices to meet diverse needs, though lack of sustained in-service opportunities limits practical implementation. Teacher training is key to addressing these challenges. It must be both technical and reflective, adapted to specific contexts, and oriented towards continuous improvement (Arnaiz et al, 2019; Cepeda-Sánchez 2023). Evidence from the study of Mayorga-Fernández et al, 2024 shows strong correlation between teacher training quality and student learning correlation between teacher training quality and student learning outcomes. The findings of Panda, 2025 revealed that while most Teachers exhibit moderately positive perceptions, significant differences exist based on training in inclusive education and years of experience. The study recommends

strengthening teacher training and providing institutional support to foster inclusive practices.

Student Experiences in Inclusive Classrooms

Students' perceptions of inclusion provide critical insight into classroom realities. Positive peer interactions, supportive teacher behaviors, and accessible learning environments enhance participation, while stigma and exclusion undermine inclusion (Fasina et al, 2024).

Barriers include inadequate learning materials, inaccessible classrooms, limited teacher attention, and peer teasing (Chirowamhangu, 2024; Thiolate, 2025). Cultural perceptions of disability often exacerbate social exclusion, with learners experiencing stigma in school environments (Omotayo et al, 2022; Woolset al, 2023, Ire et al, 2024). Resource constraints and teacher workload further hinder full participation.

Cultural Perspectives in Inclusive Education

Cultural attitudes significantly influence inclusion practices. Respect for learners with disabilities, awareness campaigns, and culturally responsive teaching promote social integration (Gay, 2021). Studies recommend integrating local cultural values and beliefs into teacher training and school policies to foster a more inclusive environment (Omotayo et al, 2022).

Teachers' perceptions of cultural diversity affect inclusive practice; culturally responsive teaching and intercultural education promote equity when teachers actively value cultural difference (Semião et al, 2023). A study on teachers' perspectives in public

secondary schools that shows how attitudes and awareness of learner diversity (including disability) are shaped by contextual factors in Nigeria (Adesokan, 2024). Research indicates that reliance on traditional, teacher-centered instruction can limit the implementation of differentiated and culturally responsive practices that address the varied needs of diverse learners (Ituma, 2025).

Inclusive Pedagogy and Classroom Practices

Inclusive pedagogy requires adapting instruction through differentiated teaching, flexible grouping, and accessible materials (Ainscom, 2020, Oliver et al, 2012).

Teacher identity transformation in inclusive settings strengthens reflective practice, collegial engagement, and learner-centered approaches (Ibrahim et al, 2025). School cultures that prioritize equity and community partnership enhance the enactment of inclusive practices. Adaptive Resource constraints, and limited teacher training impede effective curriculum adaptation for learners with special needs (Nwashili, 2025).

Implementation Challenges

Teachers often lack practical inclusive skills despite positive beliefs about inclusion, indicating a training-practice gap (Ogunlade, 2025). The study of Osagibare et al, 2025 found that although Nigeria has a national inclusive education policy, only a limited number of states have significantly advanced implementation, with pervasive barriers such as inadequate funding, limited trained teachers, and lack of infrastructure undermining consistent practice across schools.

Inclusive policies frequently fail to translate into practice due to inadequate instructional resources, training, and support structures. The study of Sepadi et al, 2025 highlights persistent gaps between inclusive education policy and classroom practice, noting that limited teacher training, insufficient resources, and lack of adequate support services continue to undermine the translation of policy into meaningful inclusive practice. Overreliance on traditional instruction hinders differentiated and culturally responsive practices in diverse classrooms.

Challenges to Inclusive Education in Developing Contexts

Studies in Sub-Saharan Africa highlight persistent challenges including inadequate resources, infrastructural constraints, cultural stigma, and insufficient professional development (UNESCO & World Bank, 2018; Zickafoose et al, 2024. Nyandwi, 2025). These challenges underscore the need for context-specific, culturally responsive solutions. Zickafoose et al 2024 specifically identify funding constraints, resource shortages, physical barriers to inclusion, and inadequate teacher training as major challenges to achieving quality and inclusive education.

Measures to Enhance Inclusion

Effective strategies to ensure inclusion education include professional development, assistive technologies, accessible infrastructure, and peer support programs (Al-Qallaf et al 2021; UNESCO, 2023). Cultivating a positive school culture that values respect and collaboration strengthens inclusive

education outcomes (Florian et al 2021; Bauwoye et al, 2024).

Research Gap

While prior studies highlight inclusive strategies and teacher training, few examine both teacher and student perspectives simultaneously in Nigerian secondary schools, **incorporating** cultural influences on inclusion. Existing research often neglects practical challenges and students' voices, limiting context-specific interventions (Omotayo et al, 2022). This study addresses this gap by integrating demographic data, teacher training, student experiences, and cultural factors.

Although inclusive education has been widely studied, there is limited empirical research that integrates **teacher training, student perspectives,** and **cultural context** within Nigerian public secondary schools. Existing studies often overlook how cultural beliefs shape inclusive practices and how students experience these practices daily. This study fills this gap by providing a culturally grounded, multi-perspective assessment of inclusive education in Ado-Ekiti.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of this study is to assess the perceptions of both the learners and teachers of inclusive education practices for learners with practical needs in relation to teacher training in public secondary schools in Ado-Ekiti, while the specific objectives are:

- i.** To examine the current inclusive education practices adopted for learners with practical needs in

public secondary schools in Ado-Ekiti.

ii. To investigate the extent to which teachers in public secondary schools in Ado-Ekiti are trained to implement inclusive education practices.

iii. To identify the challenges of learners with practical needs in inclusive educational practice.

iv. To know what measures to adopt in order to make schools in Ado-Ekiti more inclusive for all learners.

Research Questions

The following questions guide the study:

- I. What challenges do students with practical needs face in schools in Ado-Ekiti?
- II. What inclusive education practices are currently adopted for learners with practical needs in public secondary schools in Ado-Ekiti?
- III. To what extent are teachers in public secondary schools in Ado-Ekiti trained to implement inclusive education practices?
- IV. What measures can make your school more inclusive for all learners in Ado-Ekiti?

Methodology

Research Design

A descriptive survey design was employed.

Participants

Participants included 26 teachers and 357 students from three public secondary schools in Ado-Ekiti drawn from the population figure provided by the State Ministry of Education. According to records from the Ministry of Education, Ekiti State (2025), the total number of students in public secondary schools within Ado-Ekiti metropolis is approximately 8,500, while the total number of teachers is about 620. Thus, the entire population of this study is 9,120 respondents.

Instrumentation

The researchers administered the instruments to the participants. Letter of permission were taken to the schools used for the study. Besides, the consents of the participants were sorted and they were made to realize that the study is for research purpose, confidentiality is paramount and that participation is voluntary.

Data Analysis

The data collected were coded, entered, and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages).

Result

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender (Teachers)	Male	10	38.5
	Female	16	61.5
Age (Teachers)	20–29	5	19.2
	30–39	10	38.5
	40–49	6	23.1
	50 and above	5	19.2
Teaching Qualification	NCE	6	23.1
	B.Ed/B.Sc (Ed)	12	46.2
	M.Ed/M.Sc (Ed)	6	23.1
	PhD	2	7.7
Years of Experience	Less than 5 years	3	11.5
	5–10 years	10	38.5
	11–15 years	7	26.9
	More than 15 years	6	23.1
School Type (Teachers)	Public	26	100.0
Gender (Students)	Male	185	51.8
	Female	172	48.2
Age (Students)	10–12	70	19.6
	13–15	160	44.8
	16–18	100	28.0
	19 and above	27	7.6
Class Level	JSS 1	70	19.6
	JSS 2	80	22.4
	JSS 3	85	23.8
	SS 1	60	16.8
	SS 2	45	12.6
	SS 3	57	16.0
School Type (Students)	Public	357	100.0
Schools	Ado Grammar School	120	33.6
	Olaoluwa Muslim Grammar School	120	33.6

Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
	Ado Community High School	117	32.8

The demographic data shows a diverse mix of respondents, comprising both teachers and students, providing a comprehensive view of inclusive education in Ado-Ekiti’s public secondary schools. Teachers varied in gender, age, qualifications, and experience, while students represented diverse age groups and class levels, providing comprehensive insights into inclusive education practices.

For the teachers, there is a near balance in gender distribution, with 10 male teachers (38%) and 16 female teachers (62%), indicating that female teachers slightly outnumber male teachers in this sample. The age distribution of teachers shows that 10 teachers (38%) fall within the 30–39 years age range, representing the largest group, while 6 teachers (23%) are in the 40–49 years age group, and 5 teachers (19%) are aged 20–29 years, with another 5 teachers (19%) aged 50 and above. This diversity in age groups suggests that both younger and more seasoned educators contribute to the understanding and practice of inclusive education in the region.

In terms of teaching qualifications, the sample includes a mix of academic backgrounds. The largest group of teachers, 12 teachers (46%), holds a B.Ed/B.Sc (Ed), followed by 6 teachers (23%) with an NCE, and another 6 teachers (23%) who have completed M.Ed/M.Sc (Ed) programs. Only 2 teachers (8%) have a PhD, and 3 teachers (12%) have other

qualifications. This suggests that the majority of teachers are well-trained at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels, although a small proportion holds higher academic qualifications. When looking at years of teaching experience, 10 teachers (39%) have 5–10 years of experience, while 7 teachers (27%) have 11–15 years, and 6 teachers (23%) have more than 15 years. The remaining 3 teachers (11%) have less than 5 years of teaching experience. This variety in teaching experience provides a broad spectrum of insights into the challenges and practices in inclusive education, with both experienced and relatively new educators contributing to the study.

For the students, the gender distribution shows that there are 185 male students (51.8%) and 172 female students (48.2%), reflecting a fairly balanced gender representation. The age range of students spans from 10 to 19 years, with 160 students (44.8%) falling into the 13–15 years age group, representing the largest segment. The 10–12 years group comprises 70 students (19.6%), while 100 students (28%) are between 16–18 years. The 19 and above group accounts for 27 students (7.6%). This distribution shows that the study includes students from a wide range of age groups, capturing insights from both younger and older secondary school students. In terms of class level, the distribution is spread across various grades, with 85 students (23.8%) in JSS 3, 80 students (22.4%) in JSS 2, and 70 students (19.6%) in JSS 1. The remaining

students are spread across SS 1 (60 students, 16.8%), SS 2 (45 students, 12.6%), and SS 3 (57 students, 16%). Finally, in terms of school type, all the students are from public schools, with 120 students (33.6%) from Ado Grammar School, 120 students (33.6%) from Olaoluwa Muslim Grammar

School, and 117 students (32.8%) from Ado Community High School. These demographics show a wide range of student experiences, ages, and school environments, providing a well-rounded view of the challenges and practices related to inclusive education in public secondary schools.

Analysis of Students’ Questionnaire Responses

Table 2: What challenges do students with practical needs face in your school?

Statement	SA (f/%)	A (f/%)	N (f/%)	D (f/%)	SD (f/%)
There are not enough learning materials for students with special needs	180 (50.4%)	120 (33.6%)	40 (11.2%)	10 (2.8%)	7 (1.9%)
Some students with disabilities find it hard to access classrooms or facilities	170 (47.6%)	130 (36.4%)	40 (11.2%)	10 (2.8%)	7 (1.9%)
Some teachers do not have enough time to attend to all learners	160 (44.8%)	140 (39.2%)	40 (11.2%)	10 (2.8%)	7 (1.9%)
Students with disabilities are sometimes teased by their classmates	150 (42.0%)	130 (36.4%)	50 (14.0%)	20 (5.6%)	7 (1.9%)

The first research question aimed to identify the challenges faced by students with practical needs. A significant 50.4% of students strongly agreed that there are not enough learning materials for students with special needs, and 33.6% agreed, indicating that a majority of students feel the lack of resources is a major barrier to effective inclusive education. The remaining 11.2% were neutral, and 2.8% disagreed, suggesting that while many students face this issue, some may not feel the lack of materials as acutely.

Access to classrooms or facilities remains a challenge for some students, with 47.6% strongly agreeing and 36.4% agreeing that students with disabilities find it hard to access school facilities. This reflects ongoing infrastructural issues in schools, where not all students may have equal access to learning spaces. However, 11.2% of students were neutral, and 2.8% disagreed, showing that the situation is not universal across all schools.

In terms of teacher attention, 44.8% of students strongly agreed and 39.2% agreed that some teachers do not have enough time to attend to all learners. This suggests that large class sizes or teacher workload may hinder individualized attention. Finally, when asked about teasing or bullying, 42.0% of students strongly agreed and 36.4% agreed that students with disabilities are sometimes teased by their classmates. This highlights a significant social

barrier to inclusion, as negative attitudes from peers contribute to the challenges faced by students with practical needs. Despite efforts toward inclusion, Cultural bias and social stigma remain critical issues. The key challenges included insufficient learning materials, poor accessibility, limited teacher time, and peer teasing(cultural orientation)—reflecting both structural and cultural barriers to inclusion.

Table 3: What inclusive education practices are currently adopted for learners with practical needs in your school?

Statement	SA (f/%)	A (f/%)	N (f/%)	D (f/%)	SD (f/%)
My teachers make learning easy for both regular and special needs students(General Inclusion)	180 (50.4%)	130 (36.4%)	30 (8.4%)	10 (2.8%)	7 (1.9%)
Group activities allow every student to participate regardless of ability	190 (53.2%)	120 (33.6%)	30 (8.4%)	10 (2.8%)	7 (1.9%)
Teachers use visual and audio aids to support our understanding	160 (44.8%)	140 (39.2%)	40 (11.2%)	10 (2.8%)	7 (1.9%)
Students with disabilities are encouraged to join all classroom activities	170 (47.6%)	130 (36.4%)	40 (11.2%)	10 (2.8%)	7 (1.9%)

The responses to the second research question indicate that the majority of students feel that General inclusive education practices is being implemented effectively. 50.4% of students strongly agreed that their teachers make learning accessible for both regular and special needs students, while 36.4% agreed, resulting in an

overwhelming 86.8% of students perceiving inclusive teaching practices as a regular part of their educational experience. This shows a strong commitment from teachers to adapt general inclusive teaching for all students. However, a small percentage, 8.4%, were neutral, indicating that not every student feels equally supported.

Regarding group activities, 53.2% of students strongly agreed, and 33.6% agreed, that such activities allow every student to participate, regardless of ability. This suggests that collaborative learning is a key strategy in the schools, though some students (8.4%) were neutral or disagreed, pointing to possible limitations in how group activities are structured or executed in some classrooms. The strong support for group activities also reflects a belief in the value of peer interaction in promoting inclusion.

In terms of teaching methods, 44.8% of students strongly agreed, and 39.2% agreed, that teachers use visual and audio aids to support understanding. This shows that a significant portion of teachers is integrating multi-sensory learning strategies, which are particularly beneficial for students with different learning needs. However, the

fact that 11.2% of students were neutral or disagreed indicates that there may still be inconsistencies in the use of such aids across different classrooms.

Lastly, when asked about the inclusion of students with disabilities in all activities, 47.6% of students strongly agreed, and 36.4% agreed, highlighting that students with disabilities are generally encouraged to participate in classroom activities, though some students were neutral or disagreed, suggesting that full inclusion is not always achieved in practice.

A majority of students agreed that teachers adapt lessons, use group activities, apply audiovisual aids, and encourage participation of learners with disabilities, indicating widespread but uneven implementation of inclusive practices.

Table 4: To what extent are teachers in public secondary schools trained to implement inclusive education practices?

Statement	SA (f/%)	A (f/%)	N (f/%)	D (f/%)	SD (f/%)
I have received pre-service training on inclusive education practices	10 (38%)	6 (23%)	5 (19%)	4 (15%)	1 (4%)
I regularly attend in-service workshops on inclusive education	9 (35%)	6 (23%)	5 (19%)	4 (15%)	2 (8%)
Training programs cover strategies for inclusive classroom management	7 (27%)	6 (23%)	8 (30%)	4 (15%)	1 (4%)
I am confident in applying inclusive pedagogical approaches	8 (31%)	7 (27%)	6 (23%)	3 (12%)	2 (8%)

The table reveals that 61% of teachers have received pre-service training on inclusive education, suggesting a solid foundation of knowledge among teachers. However, 19% of teachers did not receive pre-service training, and an additional 19% were neutral or disagreed, indicating that not all teachers are adequately prepared from the start of their careers. The frequency of in-service workshops is also an area of concern, with 58% of teachers attending regularly. While this is a positive sign, it also means that nearly half of the teachers do not consistently engage in ongoing professional development, potentially hindering their ability to stay updated on inclusive education practices.

In terms of classroom management, only 50% of teachers felt that their training programs adequately covered inclusive classroom management strategies. This suggests that while some teachers feel well-prepared, others may be lacking the practical skills needed to manage inclusive classrooms effectively. This is further reflected in the confidence

teachers have in applying inclusive pedagogical approaches, where 58% of teachers felt confident, but 20% expressed uncertainty or lack of confidence. The data suggests that although many teachers are well-intentioned and somewhat equipped for inclusive teaching, there is a need for more targeted professional development in certain areas, particularly in classroom management and pedagogical confidence.

Overall, the results highlight a need for enhanced pre-service training and more consistent in-service opportunities to ensure teachers are fully equipped to implement inclusive education practices. Teachers are generally positive about their training but still express concerns about specific aspects like classroom management and their ability to apply inclusive methods effectively. Teachers reported moderate exposure to pre-service and in-service training. While many expressed confidence in inclusive pedagogy, gaps were evident in classroom management and continuous professional development.

Table 5: What measures can make your school more inclusive for all learners?

Statement	SA (f/%)	A (f/%)	N (f/%)	D (f/%)	SD (f/%)
More teachers should be trained to support students with special needs	200 (56.0%)	120 (33.6%)	30 (8.4%)	7 (1.9%)	0 (0%)
The school should provide assistive devices and learning aids	210 (58.8%)	120 (33.6%)	20 (5.6%)	7 (1.9%)	0 (0%)
Students should be taught to respect and help one another	220 (61.6%)	110 (30.8%)	20 (5.6%)	7 (1.9%)	0 (0%)
School administrators should ensure classrooms are accessible to all students	230 (64.4%)	100 (28.0%)	20 (5.6%)	7 (1.9%)	0 (0%)

The fourth research question focused on measures that could make schools more inclusive for all learners. 56.0% of students strongly agreed that more teachers should be trained to support students with special needs, and 33.6% agreed, indicating strong support for additional teacher training to better address the needs of all students. This highlights the need for professional development focused on inclusive education strategies to ensure all teachers are adequately prepared.

In terms of resources, 58.8% of students strongly agreed that schools should provide assistive devices and learning aids, with 33.6% agreeing, showing that students recognize the need for additional resources to support students with practical needs. This is further supported by the strong endorsement for teaching respect and helping one another, with 61.6% strongly agreeing and 30.8% agreeing, indicating that fostering a respectful and supportive school culture is viewed as essential for inclusivity.

Finally, 64.4% of students strongly agreed that school administrators should ensure classrooms are accessible to all students, with 28.0% agreeing. This suggests that physical accessibility remains a significant concern, and there is a clear call for improved infrastructure to ensure that all students, regardless of ability, can participate fully in the educational experience. The responses reflect a broad consensus on the need for more resources, teacher training, and infrastructure improvements to foster an inclusive environment in schools.

Students strongly supported enhanced teacher training, provision of assistive devices, promotion of respect, and improved classroom accessibility, emphasizing a whole-school approach to inclusion.

Discussion

The findings from Table 2 shift the focus from pedagogical theory to the harsh realities of the school environment. The data highlights some barriers": insufficient materials, poor physical accessibility, time poverty for teachers, and the social sting of peer teasing (cultural bias). These aren't just logistical hurdles; they represent a mixture of structural failures and cultural friction.

This finding aligns with Zickafoose et al. (2024) point out, funding constraints and resource shortages are the "physical anchors" that hold back inclusive progress. However, the mention of peer teasing in this study adds a layer of complexity that infrastructure alone cannot fix. It suggests that while we can build ramps and buy textbooks, we cannot "buy" belonging. This aligns with the idea that for inclusive education to take root, teachers must be prepared to navigate the specific cultural landscape of their community. Ultimately, making a school "inclusive" is as much about cultural transformation and heart-work as it is about technical interventions and budget allocations. The likely reasons for this finding could be Resource Lag in policy implementation-often, Governments may mandate "Inclusion for All," but schools are often left to implement these mandates using budgets designed for "standard" education. This creates a "resource lag" where teachers are expected to perform specialized tasks (like adapting materials) without the extra time or tools required to do so. And the Persistence of the "Deficit Model" (The "peer teasing" and cultural barriers often stem from a deeply ingrained "deficit model" of disability—where disability is seen as a problem to be fixed rather than a form of human diversity. If the local culture views disability through a lens of pity or "otherness," students will mirror those attitudes, leading to social exclusion and teasing. Even if a school is

physically accessible (ramps and elevators), it may remain socially inaccessible if the "hidden curriculum" of the school doesn't actively teach empathy and neurodiversity.

The data from Table 3 indicates that a majority of students perceive their teachers as active proponents of inclusive pedagogy. Specifically, the frequent use of differentiated lesson adaptation, collaborative group activities, and audiovisual aids suggests a pedagogical shift toward accessibility. However, the results also highlight an "uneven implementation," suggesting that while the *intent* to include learners with disabilities is high, the *execution* remains inconsistent across different subjects or classrooms.

This pattern mirrors findings in current literature concerning developing educational contexts. Specifically, it aligns with the work of Florian et al. (2021) and Johnson et al. (2022), who argue that true inclusive education transcends mere physical presence; it requires a deliberate "triad of support": equitable participation, differentiated instruction, and multi-sensory engagement. The presence of these methods in the surveyed school suggests an emerging framework of inclusivity, even if the systemic application hasn't yet reached full maturity.

The Transition from Theory to Practice could be attributed for this findings. The "widespread but uneven" nature of the findings likely stems from a knowledge-action gap. While teachers may be philosophically aligned with inclusive education (the "widespread" agreement), they may lack the specialized training or resources required to apply these techniques consistently across all complex disability profiles.

Besides, Multi-Modal Engagement as a Universal Design could be another reason for this finding. The high agreement on the use of audiovisual aids and group activities

reflects an adoption of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles. Teachers are likely finding that these strategies don't just benefit learners with disabilities—they improve engagement for the entire "neurotypical" student body as well.

The data from Table 4 paints a picture of a teaching force that is willing but weary. While teachers generally feel positive about their foundational training, there is a clear distinction between theoretical confidence and classroom competence. Many educators reported moderate exposure to inclusive pedagogy during their pre-service years, yet they feel "under-equipped" when faced with the gritty realities of classroom management and the diverse needs of students with disabilities.

This disconnect is a common thread in recent research. Sepadi et al. (2025) aptly describe this as a "persistent gap" between policy and practice. It is one thing for a government policy to mandate inclusion; it is quite another for a teacher to manage a room of thirty students with varying cognitive and physical needs without a robust support system. Essentially, teacher training isn't just a checkbox—it is the pivotal factor that determines whether inclusive education is a lived reality or just a noble ambition on paper.

Possible Reasons for this finding are: the Idealized training environment which involve pre-service training that occurs in controlled, academic settings where "inclusion" is taught as a series of best-case scenarios. And the reality: Once in the field, teachers encounter "low-resource" settings, large class sizes, and a lack of teaching assistants. This most times result in the strategies they learned in university often feel mismatched for the chaotic, high-pressure environment of a real classroom, leading to the "classroom management".

The second possible reason for this finding is the Lack of relevant In-Service Support

Inclusive education training. This training is not a "one and done" skill; it evolves as the student population changes. Hence issue emanates as **many** school systems rely on one-off workshops (in-service training) that provide a lot of information but very little follow-up. The consequence of lack of continuous professional development may be lack of confidence on the part of the teachers.

The results from Table 5 offer a powerful "call to action" from the student body. Their strong support for enhanced teacher training, the provision of assistive devices, and physical accessibility improvements underscores a sophisticated understanding of the barriers they face. Perhaps most importantly, the students' emphasis on the promotion of respect suggests that they view inclusion as a social contract rather than just a logistical arrangement.

This student-centric perspective aligns with the Social Model of Disability, which argues that "disability" is not a trait of the individual, but a failure of the environment to accommodate diversity. As Oliver et al, (2012) and United Nations (2016) emphasize, achieving true inclusion requires a "whole-school approach." This means that technical fixes—like ramps or hearing aids—must be paired with a cultural transformation that fosters mutual respect. When students advocate for these changes, they are essentially asking for an educational ecosystem where they are not just integrated, but truly included. Likely reasons for this finding are: Recognition of the Invisible Barrier because Students are often the first to notice when a teacher is struggling or when a peer is being excluded. Their call for enhanced teacher training and promotion of respect suggests they recognize that human attitudes are often bigger obstacles than physical stairs. Students experience the social climate of the classroom daily; they know that an assistive device is useless if the teacher doesn't know

how to use it or if peers make fun of the student using it.

The Desire for Autonomy and Agency. Students note and demand for **assistive** devices and improved accessibility reflects a desire for independence. Students with disabilities do not want to rely on the charity or "help" of others for every task. By asking for structural changes and tools, they are advocating for the right to navigate their education on their own terms, shifting the dynamic from "dependence" to "empowerment."

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that culturally responsive inclusive education in public secondary schools depends on well-trained teachers, supportive school cultures, and adequate resources. While progress has been made, systemic and cultural barriers persist. Strengthening inclusive education in Nigeria requires sustained professional development, culturally grounded sensitization, and improved infrastructural support.

Recommendations

1. Regular, culturally responsive in-service training for teachers
2. Provision of assistive devices and accessible infrastructure
3. School-wide sensitization programs to reduce stigma
4. Policy support for inclusive education funding.

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