Inclusive Education Strategies for Equitable Development of Learners with Special Needs

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Abstract
This study investigated the inclusive education strategies for equitable development of learners with special needs. This research explored methods aimed at promoting equal educational opportunities for students with disabilities. Emphasizing the significance of welcoming differences and fostering tolerance within an inclusive educational environment is crucial for all disabled learners. The study elucidates the significance of integrating disabled children in regular classrooms and highlights the positive views held by educators, principles, and pupils on promoting inclusivity within educational settings. Several obstacles impede its adoption due to issues like insufficient teacher training programmes, limited resources for education infrastructure, difficulties fostering student interactions, insufficiencies related to parents' involvement or support, and gaps in legal frameworks supporting its application. Various theoretical frameworks including social constructivism, humanistic, and UDL were explored to highlight their significance in tackling issues encountered within inclusive schooling contexts. The social constructionist perspective elucidates how cooperative group activities within educational settings help reduce instances of student exclusion among peers. Humanistic focuses on fostering holistic advancement for everyone's well-being; it also caters to those who have special learning requirements. The outcomes of this research is to highlight the significant impact of integrating inclusivity into regular educational settings, demonstrating its ability to positively affect both children with disabilities and those without additional challenges.

Keywords: Equitable Development, Inclusive Education, Strategies, Learning, Special Needs

Introduction
In many parts of the globe, children who have impairments face challenges when it comes to schooling; historically they've often fallen through educational cracks instead of being integrated into classrooms alongside peers without such conditions. The concept of inclusive education posits that every student – irrespective of physical limitations or cognitive differences – ought to be educated within shared spaces where everyone can benefit equally from an enriched academic atmosphere. Moreover, this strategy enhances learning opportunities for students with disabilities whole fostering inclusivity across all aspects of education. The concept of inclusion is understood through its principles and methods applied within regular educational environments for children who have special needs (Block, & Cramer, 2009). Education remains central pillar for national development, and the effectiveness of its delivery is closely linked to the quality of teaching and the conditions under which learning occurs. But for years, the exclusion of diverse student groups and disadvantaged communities has been a problem in educational institutions around the world such as those with disabilities, individuals of various ethnic backgrounds, and individuals with lower socioeconomic status. Faced with this difficulty, the idea of inclusive education has becomes a transformative catalyst for today's teaching and learning processes (Ahmad, & Rahman,

2017).

According to Lere in 2007, the approach is grounded in the belief that each student deserves to be considered as equally important part within the educational community environment. Believers within the inclusive movement advocate for placing children with special needs alongside their typically developing classmates in mainstream schools, ensuring both groups benefit equally; students with disabilities learn effectively in traditional classrooms, whereas those without impairments can enrich themselves by interacting with individuals of various backgrounds, skills and personalities. Education stands as an indispensable cornerstone in nation-building efforts; it directly correlates with how well is conducted and the environment conducive to education. For many decades, it's remained an issue across numerous countries where students belonging to underrepresented categories like disabled learners, people from different racial groups, and those from low-income families have faced discrimination within schools globally. In light of these challenges, the concept of universal schooling serves as an innovative force driving current educational practices today. Inclusive education's core principle transcends mere classroom placements; instead, it fosters an atmosphere wherein all learners experience acceptance, respect, and assistance. It involves creating conditions where differences are honored, talents are recognized, and various student requirements are met.

The essence of inclusive education is an innovative approach where our understanding and execution of teaching and learning fundamentally changes. It's important to acknowledge that differences within humanity form part of what makes us diverse, ensuring every student receives equitable educational opportunities without regard for personal backgrounds or capabilities; they must be able to learn comfortably in environments where individuality is honored and supported. Inclusive schooling extends far beyond it advantages for children with disabilities by enhancing the entire educational environment (Avcioglu, 2017).

Numerous studies demonstrate that fostering inclusivity in education enhances students' ability to empathize, understand others better, and embrace diversity. In this environment, diversity is honored, leading to an inclusive community characterized by unity, self-assurance, and reciprocal admiration across every student group. Research on students with learning difficulties within integrated classrooms has expanded significantly due to its impact on educational outcomes. Extensive investigations now examine how inclusion affects both pedagogical approaches and student achievement. Recent meta-analysis and systematic reviews indicate that including students with LD has yielded beneficial outcomes for academic; many findings suggest this practice allows these individuals to form friendships within regular educational settings and engage more closely with typically developing classmates, ultimately enhancing overall academic achievement. other psychological elements such as peer approval, confidence levels, and integration into society have similarly played crucial roles in determine how well students with cognitive impairments fare academically within mixed-ability educational settings. Educational inclusivity fosters belonging among learners, potentially boosting engagement, active involvement, and ultimate achievement outcomes according to Slee's research findings (2018).

Various factors have been proposed as potential intermediaries or influences in relation to how inclusive educational environments impact the academic achievements of students with special needs. Research indicates that classroom strategies such as individualized teaching methods and incorporation of adaptive tools significantly contribute to addressing the diverse educational requirements of every student (Griggs & Moore, 2023).Additionally, studies show how teachers' beliefs about inclusivity, confidence in handling diverse students, and readiness for teaching all types of learners significantly influence the effectiveness of inclusive educational practices worldwide, few comprehensive and culturally specific investigations exist examining how diverse elements influence students with special needs when taught inclusively across many Africa (Ainscow & Miles, 2020. Moreover, while integration is widely implemented across many advanced nations presently, educational settings in less-developed regions like parts of Sub-Saharan Africa necessitate deeper examination into how students, their guardians, and educators perceive these systems and its effects (as per Graham and Slee's study). Nigeria particularly highlights inclusivity in its approach to improving education (Jacob & Olisaemeka, 2016).

Despite insufficient data regarding the impact of inclusivity strategies among students with special needs in this nation's regions, studies have been scarce. The issue at hand becomes more intricate due to the diverse social, economic, cultural, and educational contexts faced by disabled students in this nation. Consequently, the objective this research is to thoroughly examine how inclusive educational practices influence students' academic achievements within the state of Abia, Nigeria. This investigation seeks to identify intricate relationships among various elements involved in inclusive educational approaches, teaching strategies, emotional and social dimensions affecting student success for children with special needs with Abia State by integrating data-driven insights into its design. The study aims at collecting insights and viewpoints from diverse parties involved, thereby

enriching discussions about accessible learning environments within Nigeria's educational systems. It seeks to inform policy formulation and instructional strategies designed especially for children with unique requirements. Education tailored towards inclusivity guarantees equitable access to knowledge by accommodating diverse learners based on factors such as socio-economic status, physical capabilities, cognitive impairments, and individual variations (Jacob, & Olisaemeka, 2016).

Its mission is to enhance inclusivity in learning environments through an atmosphere of support where every student's individual traits and abilities are acknowledged and valued. Education for everyone seeks to eliminate obstacles to knowledge acquisition by offering necessary adjustments and resources while fully involving every learner in their educational journey. This strategy focuses on teamwork between teachers, guardians, and society as a whole to foster an inclusive learning atmosphere for all students. At heart, inclusive education is defined by the belief that all students deserve equal opportunities for learning within settings where differences among individuals are acknowledged and valued. Beyond merely being physically present, this approach involves establishing an environment rich in support and care for students who require additional assistance, fostering their sense of worth, respect, and belonging throughout every facet of educational experiences. An inclusive educational framework emphasizes valuing individual differences among learners while fostering equal access for everyone in academic settings. Its goal is to establish an educational setting where every student feels included, encouraged, and able to participate fully. Educators who support students with special needs significantly contribute to creating accessible learning environments within schools. Strategies proven effective involve multiple facets such as adhering to UDL tailored differently for each learner, implementing personalized educational programs, utilizing adaptive tools, and fostering cooperative learning environments between teachers, aides, and parents in classrooms (Block, & Cramer, 2009).

Modifying educational materials, offering assistance for students' needs, and fostering an accommodating classroom setting play crucial roles in achieving inclusivity within schooling systems. The equitable approach involves creating frameworks focused on equality, righteousness, and ensuring representation for underprivileged communities when determining future directions within society. It involves striking a balance between promoting economic development while also addressing societal needs by providing equal access to opportunities and resources for all individuals. Involvement of community members in governance decisions while fostering an environment where they can express their opinions is crucial for empowerment (Coelho, 2019). Accessing secure, economical living spaces while safeguarding against eviction is crucial for affordability in housing matters; Emphasizing eco-friendly actions and climate adaptability is crucial for sustainability; Encouraging access to employment opportunities, nurturing thriving microenterprises, and enhancing vocational education programs. Protecting cultural traditions and fostering local identity through celebration of communal history and values. Constructing welcoming educational settings fosters inclusivity by promoting connection and tolerance amongst all learners. It requires nurturing good connections, encouraging collaborative groups, and imparting compassion and insight instead. Through valuing all students' unique backgrounds and fostering acceptance in classrooms, teachers establish educational settings where each pupil thrives without limitations based on physical capabilities or personal characteristics (Ford, 2013).

Traditional learning environments
Traditional education spaces encompass schools where children of various abilities, cultural origins, and academic challenges study side by side. Many educational spaces commonly reside within standard public or private institutions, where pupils encompass various backgrounds but lack focused attention on advanced learning programs. Across typical educational settings, teachers utilize standardized teaching methods tailored for accommodating every student's requirements, striving towards establishing a cohesive classroom atmosphere wherein various abilities coexist in their studies. Incorporating inclusivity in educational settings encounters obstacles such as requiring specific teacher training programs, managing resources effectively, and accommodating diverse student requirements. Addressing mindset obstacles, fostering understanding, and providing robust assistance networks play vital roles when striving for equitable educational opportunities (Graham & Slee, 2018). The significance of this research lies in its contribution towards promoting equality and non-discrimination by implementing inclusive education methods which enhance learning opportunities for all children regardless of their abilities. Fosters an inclusive environment; through accessible educational opportunities, diverse learning experiences help eliminate prejudices and foster equality in communities. Creating an inclusive environment in schools fosters understanding among peers, encouraging mutual respect and admiration of differences, thereby enhancing

Equitable Development as a Concept
Equitable development refers to a planning and policy framework that prioritizes fairness, justice, and inclusion

of marginalized groups in shaping community futures. It's about balancing economic growth with social benefits, ensuring everyone has access or right to opportunities and resources.

i. Community Engagement and Empowerment: Involving residents in decision-making processes and ensuring their voices are heard.
ii. Affordability and Housing: Providing access to safe, affordable housing and preventing displacement.
iii. Sustainability and Climate Resilience: Prioritizing environmentally friendly practices and climate resilience.
iv. Economic Opportunity and Inclusion: Fostering local economic growth, supportive small businesses, and promoting job training.
v. Cultural Preservation and Community Identity: Celebrating and preserving community culture and heritage.

Strategies for Equitable Development
The strategies for equitable development of learners with special needs include the following:

i. Promotes Equality/Non-Discrimination: Inclusive education fosters a sense of belonging and self-worth among students with additional educational needs, empowering them to learn alongside their peers;
ii. Prepares Students for a Diverse Society: By ensuring all students have equal access or right to quality education, inclusive education helps break down barriers and stereotypes, promoting a more equitable society;
iii. Enhancing Learning for All: Inclusive classrooms cultivate empathy, respect, and appreciation for diversity, providing a richer and more engaging learning experience for all students; and
iv. Fosters Social Cohesion and Mutual Respect: By reflecting the diversity of society within the classroom, inclusive education better prepares students for real-world experiences, promoting social cohesion and mutual respect.

Conclusion/Recommendation
The study on the inclusive education strategies for equitable development of learners with special needs encourages that teachers must significantly participate in designing inclusive educational settings which promote comprehensive student growth despite their varying academic requirements. The research indicates that ongoing training is necessary for teachers, along with joint initiatives aimed at establishing education frameworks that emphasize student inclusivity.

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