



PERCEPTION OF CAREGIVERS ON THE ATTITUDE OF PARENTS TOWARDS THE EDUCATION OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITY IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the perception of caregivers on the attitude of parents towards the education of persons with disability in Kwara State, Nigeria. The population comprised all caregivers of persons with disability in Ilorin Metropolis. A two-stage sampling method was also used in this study. Data were collected using a researcher-designed instrument tagged “Attitude Towards Education of Persons with Disability Questionnaire (ATEPDQ)”. The tool has sections A and B. Section A of the instrument elicited information on the respondents’ demographic data while section B contained items on parents’ attitudes towards the education of persons with disability. A reliability coefficient of 0.72 was obtained, which shows that the instrument was reliable for the study. Most respondents perceived that “educating persons with disability is a waste of time” (with a mean score of 3.06). Also, the findings of the study revealed that gender, school type, religion, and years of working experience did not significantly influence parents’ attitudes towards the education of persons with disability as perceived by caregivers in Ilorin metropolis. Based on the findings of the study, it was therefore recommended that the government should provide access to free education for persons with disability. This is expected to encourage parents to send their wards with disabilities to school. This, in turn, will enhance their skills and talents for employability.

KEYWORDS: *Parents Attitude, Care Givers, Persons with Disability*

1. INTRODUCTION

Disability is a measurable functional loss that hampers an individual's performance, and it can also be referred to as a medically diagnosable impairment problem. Ajobiwe (2000) defined disability as any restriction resulting from an impairment that prevents an individual from performing an activity in a manner that is required. Neinstein (2008) revealed that there are different types of disability, and this includes people with visual impairment, speech impairment, learning disabilities, multiple disabilities, mental retardation and hearing impairment, etc. Education is the primary tool for rehabilitating children with disability and this process is majorly used in imparting skills that are needed to live a meaningful life (Artale, 2003 & Uzoma, 2013).

Ajobiwe (2000) noted that historically, many believe that people with disability cannot be educated or trained, but through the assistance of caregivers, schooling is made easy. Obani (2003) noted that a negative attitude towards the education of persons with disability can be more disabling than the disability itself. Providing education and psychological support makes life more meaningful to this group of students. A caregiver is an individual who offers primary care for persons with disability. The primary caregivers may be trained professionals and personnel within the school system or other individuals who relate and assist these students directly (Barbara, Ann & Janny, 2010). Olalekan (2016) observed that parents of people with disability also experience burnout in the course of carrying out their duties. These challenges make the task of a caregiver extremely difficult. Akinpelu (2016) and Ozoji (2005) explained that students with disability need to be assisted because of their disabling condition. The government, in a bid to provide adequate support for persons with disability, introduced special education (Duruh, 2013 & Aldawid, 2010).

Irrespective of one's disability, the National Policy on Education clearly stated the need for equal educational opportunities for every member of the society (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004). For this purpose to be achieved, the Federal Government of Nigeria approved

the disability act. This act provided legal protection for Nigerians with disability. The bill ensures that people with disability are taken care of regardless of their level of disability. With this bill, persons with disability are entitled to opportunities, equal privileges, and rights. Also, the government is mandated to provide a free and appropriate education for these categories of people (Ewang 2019). The enforcement of this bill has encouraged integration and removal of stigmatization and physical barriers existing in different spheres of society, which is likely to result in negative attitudes (Onaolapo, 2007).

The perceptions of parents about their children with disability are essential because this influences the acceptance and integration of their ward into the family (Olalekan, 2016). The misconception of parents about children with disability is a barrier for opportunities of assisting these groups of children. This is because most of these children cannot take some major decisions without the consent of their parents (Abang, 2005). Parents play a significant role in providing opportunities for their wards with disability. Most parents of children with disabilities are plagued with constant recurrence of guilt, sadness, shock, shame and pain and most often deny their ward access to education (Chandramuki, Shastry, Vranda 2012). According to Peck, Staub, Gallucci & Schwartz (2004), the attitude of students with disability towards life can be influenced by the perception of their parents. The attitude of parents plays a significant role in the education of persons with disability.

Oladipo (2006) revealed that in Nigeria, most parents believe that sending persons with disability to school is a waste of time and resources. The number of people with disabilities has continued to increase daily (Kolo, 2001). Ozoji (2005) noted that despite the establishment of special needs schools, many parents prefer to keep their wards at home rather than enroll them in school. Abdulganiyu (2017) also reported that majority of parents are not interested in the academic performance of their wards with disability. According to Chandramuki, Shastry, & Vranda (2012), such negative attitudes often affect the physical and psychological well-being of children with disability.

In Nigeria, societal attitude towards people with disability is negative; this can be linked to different cultural and religious belief systems. In Nigeria, most parents do not want to identify with challenged children, and these children are taken to caregivers for daily upkeep. Seeking their opinions is paramount in this study. From the religious point of view, Omotosho (2010) explained that in some Nigerian cultures, people with disability are considered close to God, while some have a contrary opinion that they are demonic agents that must be destroyed. Society believes persons with disability cannot make a meaningful contribution to their respective communities, and they are seen as a curse and as signs of bad luck. As such, people often avoid associating with them (Onaolapo, 2007). Olawale (2000) observed that the attitude of parents towards the education of these categories of people is not encouraging, while some of them have developed a nonchalant attitude towards their ward as a result of cultural beliefs. This has led to gender inequality in Nigeria and Africa at large (Obadiya, 2011). Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2002) explained that religious and socio-cultural factors have contributed to the low participation of women in education. This tradition affects even female students with disability.

Through integration, parents have gladly embraced a positive attitude towards the education of their wards with disability. This has helped in reducing the level of stigmatization. From the view of social psychologists, attitudes have three main components, and they include cognitive, behavioral, and affective levels. The cognitive attitude explains the belief a person has about an object, the behavioral attitude discusses about the way people react towards an object while the affective attitude includes feelings about an object, (Salta & Tzougraki, 2004). Attitude can be conveyed towards any object where a comparison with another is involved. As such, attitude is a psychological tendency expressed in one's belief system. (Eagly & Chaiken, 2008).

Parents' attitude towards the education of their ward with disability is often determined by the school type (mainstream, inclusive, or special Needs schools).

Bennett and Gallagher's study (2013) revealed that most parents' attitude towards the inclusion system is positive; however, some do not see the need for such an arrangement because they are concerned about the quality of instruction their ward with disability receives. In the same vein, Okunyibo, Oyewumi, and Adedidran (2009) observed that the type of school a child with disability attends is determined by variables such as the nature of the disability and the parent's educational level. The result of Leyser and Kirk's (2004) study confirmed that while some parents encouraged inclusion and mainstreaming, others feared possible isolation and stigmatization of their ward with disability.

It is assumed that most attitudes spring from one's belief system. Albert Ellis propounded a theory called Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) in the year 1950. This theory is based on certain assumptions that a person's belief system influences his or her attitude. As such, man can act either rationally or irrationally. According to David and Avellino (2002), REBT believes that it is not events that directly influence the attitudinal behaviour of a person but one's beliefs about such an event. According to REBT theory,

A - The activating event which is the disability,

B - Belief of A,

C - The emotional consequences or how a person reacts about A,

D - Counsellors disputing the client's irrational thoughts,

E - Presumed consequences of the therapist intervention,

F - The new feelings the client has regarding the situation

REBT explains that it is not the A (Activating event which is the disability) that causes the negative attitudes of parents but their B (belief about disability). This often leads to C (emotional consequences). If parents of children with disability have a negative belief system towards their wards with disability, this

will naturally result in negative emotional consequences. That is why most people feel that educating their ward with disability is a waste of time and resources (Table 5). These are illogical sentences that parents of a person with disability repeat to themselves, which can negatively influence their attitudes. The primary aim of REBT is to reduce irrational thoughts in favour of rational beliefs. At the D, the counsellor or caregiver disputes or invalidates the irrational beliefs which the parents have about their children with disability. If the caregivers successfully dispute the irrational belief, the parents will develop new feelings and attitudes towards their children with disability.

2. PROBLEM STATEMENT

According to Olalekan (2016) there are over 3 million people with disability in Nigeria, and many of them are out of school. As a result of superstitious beliefs associated with this category of children, parents often discourage them from attending school to prevent discrimination. As a result of lack of cooperation from parents, caregivers face extremely challenging tasks in dealing with these students. Sandra (2018) worked on challenges of teaching pupil's visual impairment in inclusive classroom, Akinade (2019) carried out a study on problems of managing adolescents with special needs as expressed by teachers in Oyo State while Tatjana and Karmen (2016) looked at views of Geography teachers on working with students with special educational needs. To the best knowledge of the researchers', none has worked on parents' attitudes towards the education of persons with disability as perceived by caregivers in Ilorin Kwara State, Nigeria, hence the need for this study. The research question aimed at looking at the perception of caregivers on the attitudes of parents towards the education of persons with disabilities. The hypotheses checked if there is no significant difference in the perception of caregivers on the attitude of parents towards the education of person with disability based on gender, school type religion, and working experience.

3. METHODOLOGY

The descriptive casual comparative design was used in

this research, and the study involved all caregivers of persons with disability in Ilorin Metropolis. According to Research Advisor (2013) for a population of 400, the table suggested 196 respondents at 95% confidence level and a margin error of 5.0%. Thus, to cater for the attrition rate, the sample size was increased to 210. After the administration, the researchers were able to retrieve 200 questionnaires. The sampling method used was a two-stage procedure. At the first stage, all the schools that had students with disability were purposively sampled for this study. A proportionate sampling technique was used in selecting two hundred respondents across board. This gives an equal opportunity to the respondents of being selected according to the number of caregivers in each school. For example, fifty percent of the staff population in each of the schools were chosen, (Integrated schools - 15 respondents, Mainstream School - 22 caregivers, and Special School - 163 respondents).

Data were collected using a researcher-designed instrument tagged Attitude Towards Education of Persons with Disability Questionnaire (ATEPDQ). The instrument has two sections. Section A of the instrument elicited information on the respondent's demographic data while section B contained 15 items on parents' attitude towards the education of persons with disability. This was scored on four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree - 4 points, Agree -3 points, Disagree- 2 points and Strongly Disagree-1 point. The validity of the instrument was ascertained by giving copies of the questionnaires to experts for face and content vetting. Their suggestions were considered in the final draft. Reliability is the ability of a test to consistently measure what it was supposed to measure (Sanni, 2002). For the reliability of the instrument, the same test was administered and re-administered to 20 teachers in a secondary school setting who were not part of the respondents within an interval of four weeks. The two scores obtained were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Formula (PPMC) and a reliability index of 0.72 was obtained. This method is appropriate because it ensures that the information obtained in the two sittings are both representative and stable over time.

4. RESULTS

The demographic data of the respondents entail the distribution of respondents by the moderating variables of gender, school type, religion, and years of working experience.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Gender, Religion and Years of Working Experience

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Male	87	43.5
Female	113	56.5
Total	200	100
Religion		
African Traditional Religion	7	3.5
Christianity	85	42.5
Islam	108	54.0
Total	200	100.0
Years of Working Experience		
Below 5 years	23	11.5
6 – 10 years	64	32.0
11 years and above	113	56.5
Total	200	100.0

The above table indicates the distribution of respondents by gender, school type, religion, and years of working experience. It is observed that out of 200 respondents, 87(43.5%) are male while 113(56.5%) are female. This implies that female respondents participated more in the study. Also, 15(7.5%) were from integrated schools, 22(11.5%) were from mainstreamed schools while 163(61.5%) were from schools for special needs students. The result additional explains that 7(3.5%) are into African Traditional Religion, 85(42.5%) are of Christian religion while 108(54.0%) are practicing Islamic religion. 23(11.5%) had below 5 years of working experience, 64(32.0%) had 6-10 years of working experience while 113 (56.5%) had 11 and above years of working experience.

Research Question 1: What are the perceptions of caregivers on the attitudes of parents towards the education of persons with disabilities in Ilorin Kwara State?

Table 2: Percentages and Mean on the Perception of CareGivers on the Attitudes of Parents Towards the Education of Persons with Disabilities

Item No	As far as I am concerned many parents:	Mean	Rank
5	feel that educating persons with disability is a waste of resources	3.06	1 st
4	believe that their children with disability cannot display maturity which require skills needed for education	3.05	2 nd
9	believe that most of the things that are learnt in school are not relevant to persons with disability	2.83	3 rd
8	believe that their children with disability cannot comprehend academic activities	2.82	4 th
6	believe that persons with disability cannot perform well academically	2.79	5 th
13	Prefer to abandon their children with disability with the school caregivers	2.76	6 th
11	do not identify with their children with disability	2.62	7 th
12	are not interested in the academic performance of their children with disability	2.50	8 th
14	Feel that sending children with disability to school is a waste of time	2.46	9 th
3	are ashamed of bringing their wards with disability to school	2.44	10 th
7	believe that persons with disability can never be useful in life so they should not be in school	2.38	11 th
15	do not assist these students with school assignments	2.37	12 th
10	believe that persons with disability should learn a trade rather than going to school	2.36	13 th
1	feel that identifying with persons with disability is a disgrace	2.18	14 th
2	are not positive about the future career of their ward with disability so they prefer them to stay at home	2.15	15 th
Standard Reference Mean = 2.50;			

Table 2 shows that “as far as I am concerned parents feel that educating persons with disability is a waste of resources” has the highest mean of 3.06 and is ranked first while item 2 with the mean of 2.15 ranked the last. However, with a benchmark mean of 2.50, all items above the benchmark mean are considered as the major factor in the perception of care givers on the attitudes of parents towards the education of persons with disabilities in Ilorin Kwara State.

Hypotheses Testing

Four null hypotheses were generated and as well tested for this study. The hypotheses were tested using chi-square statistical method at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant difference in the perception of care givers on the attitudes of parents towards the education of persons with disabilities in Ilorin metropolis based on gender*

Table 3: Chi-square showing the perception of care givers on the attitudes of parents towards the education of persons with disabilities in Ilorin metropolis based on gender

Gender	Frequency			df	Cal. χ^2	p-value	Decision
	Disagree	Agree					
Male				1	0.002	0.96	Accepted
Observed	28	59	87				
Expected	27.8	59.2					
Female							
Observed	36	77	113				
Expected	36.2	76.8					
Total			200				

Table 3 shows that the calculated χ^2 value is 0.002 and p-value is 0.96. Since the calculated p-value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the perception of care givers on the attitudes of parents towards the education of persons with disabilities in Ilorin metropolis based on gender.

Hypothesis Two:

There is no significant difference in the perception of care givers on the attitudes of parents towards the education of persons with disabilities in Ilorin metropolis based on school type.

Table 4 shows that the calculated χ^2 value is 0.67 and p-value is 0.71. Since the calculated p-value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the perception of care givers on the attitudes of parents towards the education of persons with disabilities in

Ilorin metropolis based on school type.

Table 4: Chi-square showing the perception of care givers on the attitudes of parents towards the education of persons with disabilities in Ilorin metropolis based on school type

School Type	Frequency			df	Cal. χ^2	p-value	Decision
	Disagree	Agree					
Integrated							
Observed	6	9	15	2	0.67	0.71	Accepted
Expected	4.8	10.2					
Mainstream							
Observed	6	16	22				
Expected	7.0	15.0					
Special							
Observed	52	111	163				
Expected	52.2	110.8					
Total			200				

Hypothesis Three:

There is no significant difference in the perception of care givers on the attitudes of parents towards the education of persons with disabilities in Ilorin metropolis based on religion

Table 5: Chi-square showing the perception of care givers on the attitudes of parents towards the education of persons with disabilities in Ilorin metropolis based on religion

Religion	Frequency			df	Cal. χ^2	p-value	Decision
	Disagree	Agree					
ATR							
Observed	4	3	7	2	2.30	0.32	Accepted
Expected	2.2	4.8					
Christianity							
Observed	25	60	85				
Expected	27.2	57.8					
Islam							
Observed	35	73	108				
Expected	34.6	73.4					
Total			200				

Table 5 shows that the calculated χ^2 value is 2.30 and p-value is 0.32. Since the calculated p-value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the

perception of care givers on the attitudes of parents towards the education of persons with disabilities in Ilorin metropolis based on religion.

Hypothesis Four: *There is no significant difference in the perception of care givers on the attitudes of parents towards the education of persons with disabilities in Ilorin metropolis based on years of working experience.*

Table 6: Chi-square showing the perception of caregivers on the attitudes of parents towards the education of persons with disabilities in Ilorin metropolis based on years of working experience

YOWE	Frequency							
	Disagree	Agree		df	Cal. χ^2	p-value	Decision	
	Below 5 years							
	Observed	7	16	23	2	0.04	0.97	Accepted
	Expected	7.4	15.6					
	6 – 10 years							
	Observed	21	43	64				
	Expected	20.5	43.5					
	11 years and above							
	Observed	36	77	113				
Expected	36.2	76.8						
Total			200					

Table 6 shows that the calculated χ^2 value is 0.04 and p-value is 0.97. Since the calculated p-value is greater than the alpha level of 0.05, the hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference in the perception of care givers on the attitudes of parents towards the education of persons with disabilities in Ilorin metropolis based on years of working experience.

5. DISCUSSION

From the findings of this study care givers revealed that parents acknowledged that educating persons with disability is a waste of resources, which shows that their attitude towards the education of persons with disability is negative. This impression comes from what caregivers perceived from the response of parents concerning their wards. Adogo (2006) revealed that the attitude of parents towards the education of learners with disability is negative. According to Akinade

(2019), majority of parents of persons with disability are overwhelmed with mixed feelings of self-blame and helplessness, this often leads to the establishment of adverse attitudes towards their wards with disabilities. Society also believes that educating children with special needs might be a waste of time. With the passage of disability bill into law in Nigeria in 2019, there is the likelihood that the public take the education of persons with disability seriously.

Gender, religion and type of school of the respondents did not significantly influence the perceptions of the caregivers in Ilorin metropolis. All caregivers irrespective of gender are likely to experience the same attitude from parents of persons with disability. Caregivers believe that the misconception of parents about disability are barriers for opportunities of rendering assistance to these groups of children (Tajana & Krmen, 2016).

Most Nigerians are tied to different belief systems. Adewara (2012) noted that since the tenets in the three major religions in Nigeria are different, parents of persons with disability and their care givers are likely to hold different views about children with special needs. Despite the fact that respondents are of different religious settings, their perceptions were not different on parents' attitude towards the education of persons with disability. Kolo (2001) noted that educating children with disability is still a major challenge in Nigeria. In the same vein, Obani (2003) reported that negative attitudes and stereotypical behaviours of society towards people with disability is a major challenge.

Irrespective of school type, respondents have similar opinions concerning parents' attitude towards the education of children with special needs. The plausible reason might be due to the fact that care givers have similar experience and they are committed to giving care, as such they serve as a link between the parents and children with disability (Kindersley, 2013).

However, the perception of the respondents was significantly different based on their years of experience. Experiences are gained in a task through constant practice, and it is therefore implied that years

of experience are expected to influence the perception of the care givers. Lisa Pau Le Low, Wai Tong Chien, Lai Wah Lam, and Kayla Ka Yin Wong (2017) noted that caregiving is a great task that is challenging and extremely sensitive. This process requires enduring commitment which can be obtained through various years of experience.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study revealed that all the hypotheses on the perception of the caregivers on attitude of parents towards the education of persons with disability were accepted. It was therefore recommended that

1. The school caregiver should constantly enlighten the public and parents of persons with disability on the need to invest on the education of these children.
2. Care givers should encourage parents with challenged children to bring their wards to school irrespective of gender.
3. Despite the care givers' years of experience, parents should constantly give required support to them. This will help in enhancing the education of persons with disability.
4. Parents of the physically challenged students should give their children required attention by assisting them in their school assignments and participating in the school activities.

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