

**ASSESSMENT OF REGULAR TEACHERS KNOWLEDGE OF CURRICULUM  
ADAPTATION FOR PUPILS WITH MILD INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY IN  
CALABAR EDUCATION ZONE CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

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**ABSTRACT:** *The study assessed regular teachers' knowledge of curriculum adaptation for pupils with mild intellectual disability in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State, Nigeria. Four research questions were raised to guide the study. Literature were reviewed according to the sub-variables of the study. The population of the study was 5604 primary school teachers in 286 primary schools within the Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting 560 teachers (males 253 and females 307) representing 10% of the entire population from 29 public primary schools. The instrument named: Regular Teachers' Knowledge of Curriculum Adaptation Rating Scale Questionnaire (RTKCARSP) was developed by the researchers and was used for data collection. The data collected was analysed using descriptive statistics which include simple percentages, and mean. The result revealed that regular teachers' have fair knowledge about pupils with mild intellectual disability, adapting curriculum content, adapting learning environment and adapting instructional materials for pupils with intellectual disability was also fair. It was recommended among others that awareness programmes on inclusive education should be regular by curriculum planners in collaboration with Ministry of Education to equip regular teachers with skills on how to implement a successful inclusive education programme.*

**KEY WORDS:** regular teachers', curriculum, adaptation, intellectual disability.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background to the study**

In the world education of all categories of children with intellectual disability has come a long way. In Nigeria, the need to provide formal education for all categories of individuals with intellectual disability was considered on segregation base which led to the establishment of limited special schools. The necessity to partially educate them therefore with typical ones was also considered and some schools were used as integrated schools to accommodate few individuals with this disability (Kyaufa 2011). In spite of this, individuals with intellectual disability are finding it difficult to access functional education not because there are no schools in their neighbourhood but because there are no school with needed facilities to accommodate them educationally, most importantly in the areas of personnel competence and other teaching materials such as curriculum and instructional materials. The researcher's worry is that with the new trend in education which is inclusive education; pupils with mild intellectual disability will be enrolled into the public primary schools to be taught by the regular teachers with the general curriculum because there are no already-made curriculum for them. Pupils with mild intellectual disability seem to be facing challenges in inclusive setting due to teaching methods used by the regular teachers. Regular teachers are those who are not trained in special education let alone education of intellectual disability. The pupils with mild intellectual disability find it difficult to be carried along with the normal pupils. Most of the time special needs

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pupils are disposed to curriculum for pupils who are not special need. There seem to be no adoption of curriculum for them.

Intellectual disability is a life condition which is defined as a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adoptive behaviour as expressed in conceptual social and practical adaptive skills. Disability originated before age 18 (American Association of Mental Retardation; AAMR, 2002). This association (now American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disability (AAIDD) lately defined intellectual disability as a disability characterized by significant limitations both in intellectual functioning and in adaptive behaviour which covers social and practical skills. The definition further stressed that the limitation must be in three areas such as the conceptual skills, social skills and practical skills. According to AAIDD, conceptual skills have to do with language and literacy, money, time, number concept as well as self-directions. Social skills include interpersonal skills, social responsibility, self-esteem, problem solving, and ability to follow rules, obey laws and avoid being victimized. While the practical skills areas has to do with activities of daily living (personal care) occupational skills, health care, transportation, schedules routine, safety use of money, time and use of the telephone. Individuals with intellectual disability always have challenges in all adaptive skills area mentioned above and these are skills that are ordinarily acquired informally by typically developing children, but are expected to be learnt in school by those with intellectual disability (Friend, 2008). Other areas of challenges evidence among children with intellectual disability are; lack or short memory span, very slow learning rate, short attention span, hyperactivity, poor motor-coordination, slow speech development and retention problem among others. As a result of the nature of intellectual disability and its impacts in their ability to learn effectively, regular education teachers using regular education curriculum may not be able to provide quality education for them in the inclusive classroom.

It is expected of regular teachers in any inclusive classroom to be duly equipped with necessary skills to adapt the regular education programmes generally to meet the educational needs of pupils with mild intellectual disability. Lack of readymade curriculum for the education of all categories of pupils with intellectual disability has always posed challenges to their education generally, but regular teachers seem to be challenged by the knowledge of adaptation of curriculum for pupils with mild intellectual disability.

One of the major skills expected of inclusive education teacher is ability to adapt regular education curriculum for the teaching of children with special needs. The principle of curriculum adaptation, if well used will make it possible for pupils with intellectual disability to access functional and quality education in the regular classroom. Ozoji, Unachukwu and Kolo (2016) the concept of inclusion has emphasized total removal of all barriers and effective creation of access to quality education for all school age children irrespective of diversity. To achieve this, teachers as pivots of education must be well equipped with necessary knowledge and skills to accommodate all learners in the inclusive classroom. It has been observe that there are limited schools that provide education for children with intellectual disability in Calabar Education Zone in Cross River State. With the practice of full inclusive education which is the new trend, children with mild intellectual disability will soon enroll in regular schools. For this category of learners, to be well catered for in inclusive classes, regular teachers must be duly equipped with necessary skills. It is against this development that the researchers developed interest in assessing the knowledge level of regular educational teachers on curriculum adaptation for children with mild intellectual disability in Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria.

**Problems of the study**

Education of individuals with intellectual disability had suffered great neglect. Access to better education for all pupils with intellectual disability in Nigeria has been a difficult task, as the curriculum has not been adopted to suit individual needs of pupils with mild intellectual disability educationally. The regular teachers seem to be challenged with lack of knowledge of curriculum adaptation for pupils with mild intellectual disability. This development seems to have brought far-reaching effect on the pupils with mild intellectual disability. There is obvious fear that their educability is in doubt. This calls for concern.

With the new trend in educational provision for all categories of learners, teachers are expected to have learners with different characteristics in the same classrooms setting. This new trends “inclusive education” emphasized educational placement with zero tolerance to segregation. Therefore, all inclusive classroom teachers are expected to attend to the educational needs of learners with diverse characteristics, learning needs and learning styles in the same classroom and at the same time. The essence of this is that, teachers in the general education system will need to adopt the regular education curriculum to the needs, mental age, abilities and learning styles of children with mild intellectual disability in the regular classroom, hence the need to prepare them for effective labour market and independent living. Unfortunately, the regular education training received by the regular teachers did not initially cover curriculum adaptation for inclusion of special learners.

There is this fear that if curriculum adaptation for pupils with mild intellectual disability is not addressed, the aims and objectives of special education for them will be frustrated. It is against this view that the researchers wishes to assess the regular teacher’s knowledge of curriculum adaptation for pupils with mild intellectual disability in inclusive setting in Calabar Education Zone, Cross River State. Taken together therefore, the study is intended to assess the regular knowledge of curriculum adaptation for inclusion of children with mild intellectual disability. Specifically, the essence of this study was to determine the regular teacher knowledge of; (i) pupils with mild intellectual disability (ii) curriculum contents adaptation for pupils with mild intellectual disability (iii) learning environment adaptation for pupils with mild intellectual disability and (iv) instructional materials adaptation for pupils with mild intellectual disability.

**Research questions**

1. To what extent is the general knowledge of regular teachers’ on pupils with mild intellectual disability?
2. What is the extent of regular teachers’ knowledge of curriculum content adaptation for pupils with mild intellectual disability?
3. What is the extent of regular teachers’ knowledge on learning environment adaptation for pupils with mild intellectual disability?
4. What is the extent of regular teachers’ knowledge of instructional materials adaptation for pupils with mild intellectual disability?

**RELATED LITERATURE**

Mild intellectual disability refers to an individual with slow intellectual development who has the potential to learn within the regular classroom given appropriate modification and accommodation. According to Manley (2018) an individual with mild intellectual disability is one who demonstrate significantly sub average adoptive behavior in school and home and it appropriate community environment. This individual is often two to four years behind in cognitive development which could

include mathematics, language, short attention span, memory difficulties and delay in speech development. Socially, they may exhibit behaviour problem, be immature, lack understanding of verbal clue and have difficulty in following rules. As opine by Kalu (2014) the curriculum for pupils with mild intellectual disability should emphasize functional education which need base but inclusive education, they learn the same curriculum with the non-disable pupils.

The implementation of educational inclusion for pupils with mild intellectual disability in regular schools is a complicated process, and in order for this process to be successful, parents, regular teachers, special education teachers, students and key community members have to be involved in its planning and implementation. Further, promoting a culture of inclusion at all school level is required for implementing inclusion, developing inclusive practices at classroom level, removing barriers to inclusion, educating teachers to promote inclusive schooling and identifying factors to make inclusion works. Abbott, (2006). However, most regular teachers have limited or no knowledge of the concept of mild intellectual disability. Hence, they reject children brought into their classes for inclusion.

Curriculum content is very important aspect of curriculum development and adaptation. Content is what is taught. Content is what the student is expecting to learn, that is, to know, understand or be able to do. It includes facts, concept, and skills that students will acquire within their learning environment. Sometimes teacher are able to select the content to suit the students needs. Sometimes it is the authority of the school that has prescribed the content of the curriculum; sometimes it is a combination of teachers and authority. Because of curriculum demands and time constraints, it is often a challenge for the teachers to select content which is based on; being meaningful, students' needs and interests, the environment, and more than just learning facts. Lee (2006) opined that for many teachers, content is simply what is prescribed by the Ministry of Education. In curriculum differentiation, teachers are encouraged to modify the content to some extent to help students reach the outcomes. Oluwale (2017) investigated the influence of teachers' curriculum content adaptation and effectiveness of inclusive education for children with intellectual disability in public secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria. The research design of the study was a descriptive survey which employed an ex-post facto design. The population for the study comprised of 11499 teachers in public secondary schools in the state, the sample for the study was 1,150 teachers, drawn by stratified random sampling technique. Academic performance records of 50 students per teacher, which is 48.950 students' scores were also used. To elicit information for the study, two questionnaire tagged Teachers' Curriculum Content adaptation and Effectiveness Questionnaire 1 and II (TCCAQI & TCCAQII) were designed and a rating scale, tagged Student Academic Performance Rating Scale (SAPRS) was designed to enable the researchers evaluate the academic performance of students. Four hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), t-test, Pearson product moment correlation and simple regression analysis. The result showed that effective curriculum content adaptation produce effective implementation of inclusive education.

As it is now all over the world, teachers teach a large number of students at one time, how full their classroom are is a common place issue when talking to teachers. Besides this, teacher often lack time and appropriate teaching materials to be creative or to prepare detailed and interesting lessons. They are often overburdened with many other duties. Teachers only have time to teach each lesson one way. In such a difficult context, one can argue that it is a daily challenge for teachers to accomplish the curriculum topic that they are supposed to, and on time. In other words, it is had to be innovative when working in a difficult teaching-learning environment. It is therefore, understandable that teachers, sometimes just hope that the group of students in their classroom has learned what they

have taught. However, at the same time, teachers are also aware that their hope is not at all fulfilled by their efforts and struggle to teach every students. Academic failure is a world reality, and the need for new ways of dealing with increasing numbers of students failing in school or drop-out from school is a fact that no one can overlook, particularly teachers themselves. Koga and Hall (2014) asserted that learning environment is the way the classroom works and feels. The differentiated classroom should include areas in which students can work quietly as well as collaborate with others, materials that reflect diverse cultures, and routine that allow students to get help when the teacher isn't available.

Greef (2002) carried out a study on the role of environmental adaptation on the implementation of inclusive education for children with intellectual disability in Ghana. The research design used was ex-post-facto design. The population for the study was 181 high school pupils enrolled in four different state schools in two provinces of Turkey, comprising of 140 females and 40 males. Sample of the study were four schools out of six schools that participated in the small scaled cross-school project. An instrument tagged the Teacher Questionnaire (TQ) was used to gather data on the study. The instrument was adopted from existing literacy survey by Zamorski and Haydn (2002) in order to fulfil the stated goals of this study, the items were analyzed using factor analytic methods. The internal consistency reliability of the scale, assessed by Cronbach, Alpha, was found to be 0.85. The findings obtained in this study reveal that there is a significant influence of teachers environmental adaptation on the implementation of inclusive education for children with intellectual disability.

Instructional materials refer to all the resources a teacher used to help him/her explain or evaluate the topic, content or subject to the learner so that the learner is able to fully comprehend the topic, content or subject. It refers to teaching facilities which facilitate teaching and learning. Whether they are called instructional media, curriculum resources, teaching aids and the like instructional resources represent messages carriers which teachers use for attaining instructional objectives in teaching and learning situation. Ashby (2010) investigated the role of teachers instructional material adaptation in the implementation of inclusive education for children with mild intellectual disability in elementary schools in Texas using 78 special teachers as sample for the study. Survey design was adopted for the study, analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze data from the study. The result showed that teachers' instructional material adoptative significantly influence the implementation of inclusive education for children with mild intellectual disability.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Participants:**

The study adopted a survey research design with the study area as Calabar Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study drew a sample of 5604 primary school teachers (SUBEB 2018) teaching in 286 primary schools within the study area. Using stratified random approach. A total of 560 subjects were sampled randomly from 29 public primary schools in Calabar Education Zone which representing 10% of the entire population. The sample comprised of 253 males and 307 females.

### **Measures:**

The questionnaire that was used for the study was developed by the researchers rating scale called Regular Teachers' Knowledge on Curriculum Adaptation Rating Scale Questionnaire (RTKCARSQ). The questionnaire was in two parts. The first part with three items soliciting for personal information about year(s) of teaching experience, sex and academic qualification. While

part B consist of 25 items as variable 1 has ten, 2, 3, and 4 has five questions for each variables of the research. The data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics which include frequency count, simple percentage and mean score.

## RESULTS

The results of the data analysis based on the objective of the study are contained in table, 1, 2, 3 and 4.

Table 1

### Regular teachers' knowledge of pupils with mild intellectual disability

S/N	Item description	DK	KBL	KSM	Mean
1	Pupils that lag behind in all school subjects in the class	132 (23.6%)	186 (33.2%)	242 (43.2%)	2.20
2.	Pupils that cannot remember what is being taught easily	122 (21.8%)	218 (38.9%)	220 (39.3%)	2.18
3.	Pupils that perform poorly in test	85 (15.2%)	195 (34.8%)	280 (50.0%)	2.35
4.	Pupils that can learn more with concrete objects	137 (24.5%)	194 (34.6%)	229 (40.9%)	2.16
5	Pupils that are restless in class	183 (32.7%)	199 (35.5%)	178 (31.8%)	1.99
6.	Pupils that cannot understand instruction in class	181 (32.3%)	169 (30.2%)	210 (37.5%)	2.05
7.	Pupils with poor speech development	137 (24.5%)	188 (33.6%)	235 (42.0%)	2.18
8	Pupils that have short attention span	116 (20.7%)	165 (29.5%)	279 (49.8%)	2.29
9.	Pupils that are promoted on trial	174 (31.1%)	151 (27.0%)	235 (42.0%)	2.11
10.	Pupils that don't answer question in class	117 (20.9%)	190 (33.9%)	253 (45.2%)	2.24

Note: i.percentages are in parenthesis.

To carry out the analysis, respondents were grouped into three (I don't know, I know but little and I know so much) based on their responses to the items in the instrument as presented in table 1.

ii. The characteristics of child with disability = key:

1. I don't know - DK (%)
2. I know but little - KBL (%)
3. I know so much - KSM (%)

The results as presented in Table 1 showed that regular teachers have good knowledge about pupils with mild intellectual disability. This is shown in the mean range for the ten items that measures their knowledge about pupils with mild intellectual disability as nine out of ten items each had mean score that is higher than the reference mean of two. The result further revealed that out of the 560 teachers, 132 of them representing 23.6% stated that they don't know pupils that lag behind in all school subjects in the class while 186 of them representing 33.2% stated that they know but a little about the pupils and 242 of them representing 43.2% stated that they know so much about such pupils. The result also revealed that 122 of the respondents representing 21.8% stated that they don't know pupils that cannot remember what is being taught easily while 218 of them representing 38.9% stated that they know but little about such pupils and 220 of them representing 39.3% stated that they know so much about such pupils.

Furthermore, the result revealed that 85 of the respondent representing 15.2% stated that they don't know pupils that perform poorly in test while 195 of them representing 34.8% stated that they know about little about such pupils and 280 of them representing 50.0% stated that they know so much about such pupils. Also, the result revealed that 137 of the respondents representing 24.5% stated that they don't know pupils that can learn more with concrete objects while 194 of them representing 34.6% stated that they know but little about such pupils and 229 of them representing 40.9% stated that they know so much about such pupils. The above same explanation cut across the ten items description or regular teachers knowledge of pupils with mild intellectual disability.

Table 2

## Regular teachers' curriculum content adaptation

S/N	Item description	DK	KBL	KSM	Mean
11	The educational needs of pupils with mild intellectual disability	191 (34.1%)	160 (28.6%)	209 (37.3%)	2.03
12	The social needs of pupils with mild intellectual disability	186 (33.2%)	221 (39.6%)	152 (27.1%)	1.94
13	How to schedule a quantitatively different lesson content for the pupils with mild intellectual disability	81 (14.5%)	207 (37.0%)	272 (48.6%)	2.34
14	How to modify the lesson content to meet the needs of the pupils with mild intellectual disability	153 (27.3%)	249 (44.5%)	158 (28.2%)	2.01
15	How to individualize the lesson content	102 (18.2%)	224 (40.0%)	234 (41.8%)	2.24

Note: percentages are in parenthesis.

To carry out the analysis, respondents were grouped into three (I don't know, I know but little and I know so much) based on their responses to the items in the instrument as presented in table 2. The results as presented in Table 2 showed that regular teachers' had fair knowledge about curriculum content adaptation. This is shown in the mean range for the five items that measures their curriculum content adoption as four out of the five items each had mean score that is higher than the reference mean of two.

Table 3

## Regular teachers' learning environment adaptation

S/N	Item description	DK	KBL	KSM	Mean
16	How to organize the class for ability grouping of cooperating learning.	95 (17.0%)	221 (39.5%)	244 (43.7%)	2.27
17	How to engage the pupils with individualize learning without neglect to other pupils in the class	170 (30.4%)	163 (29.1%)	227 (40.5%)	2.10
18	How to intrinsically motivate pupils with mild intellectual disability.	166 (29.6%)	177 (31.6%)	217 (38.8%)	2.09
19	How to engage the pupils parents in providing an enhancing home school learning environment	124 (22.1%)	303 (54.1%)	133 (23.8%)	2.01
20	How to ask the questions that will motivate self-expression of pupils with mild intellectual disability.	78 (13.9%)	242 (43.9%)	240 (42.9%)	2.29

Note: Percentages are in parenthesis.

To carry out the analysis, respondents were grouped into three (I don't know, I know but little and I know so much) based on their responses to the items in the instrument as presented in table 3.

The result shows that regular teachers' had good knowledge about learning environment adaptation. This is shown in the mean range for the five items that measures their learning environment adaptation all the five items each had mean score that is higher than the reference mean of two.

Table 4  
Regular teachers' instructional materials adaptation

S/N	Item description	DK	KBL	KSM	Mean
21	Use instructional technologies in your classroom	132 (23.6%)	254 (45.4%)	174 (31.1%)	2.08
22	How to adopt word chart in teaching individual with mild intellectual disability	138 (24.6%)	275 (49.1%)	147 (26.3%)	2.02
23	How to locally source for relevant adopted material for pupils with intellectual disability	196 (35.0%)	185 (33.0%)	179 (32.0%)	1.97
24	How to adopt materials relevance to the interest of pupils with intellectual disability	208 (37.1%)	181 (32.3%)	171 (30.5%)	1.93
25	How to adopt material relevant to individual with intellectual disability	150 (26.8%)	157 (28.0%)	253 (45.2%)	2.18

Note: percentages are in parenthesis.

To carry out the analysis, respondents were grouped into three (I don't know, I know but little and I know so much) based on their responses to the items in the instrument as presented in table 4.

The result shows that regular teachers' had good but fair knowledge about instructional materials adaptation. This is shown in the mean range for the five items that measures their instructional materials adaptation as three out of the five items each had mean score that is slightly higher than the reference mean of two.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The major objective of this study was to assessed regular teachers' knowledge of pupils with mild intellectual disability, upon the result presented in table 1, the result revealed that regular teachers have fair knowledge about pupils with mild intellectual disability. This is shown in the mean range for the ten items that measures their knowledge about pupils intellectual disability as nine out of the ten items each had mean score slightly higher than the reference mean of two. The findings of this study agreed with the findings of Manley (2018) who found out that in many local schools setting, regular teachers are not always familiar with the term "mild intellectual disability" and this results in total rejection of the children in this category.

The result as presented in table two revealed that regular teachers' had fair knowledge about curriculum content adaptation. This is shown in the mean range for the five items that measures their curriculum content adaptation as four out of the five items each had mean score slightly higher than the reference mean of two. The result of this finding is in agreement with that of Oluwale (2017) who found out that effective curriculum content adaptation produce effective implementation of inclusive education.



The result as presented in table 3 revealed that the regular teachers' had fair knowledge about learning environment adaptation. This is shown in the mean range for the five items that measures their learning environment adaptation as all the five items each had mean score slightly higher than the reference mean of two. This findings is not in agreement with that of Switlick (2007) who found that though teachers' knowledge of learning environment adaptation is low they need to do adaptation to the classroom environment for inclusive education to be effective for children with intellectual disability. According to the author, within the context of any classroom, there are a number of factors that directly affect both teaching and learning, such as values, beliefs and the way in which teachers and students interact with each other.

Also the result presented in table 4, revealed that regular teachers' had fair knowledge about instructional materials adaptation. This is shown in the mean range for the five items that measures their instructional materials adaptation as three out of the five items each had mean score that is slightly higher than the reference mean of two. The result of this finding is in line with that of Ashby (2010) which observed that teachers' instructional materials adaptation significantly influence the implementation of inclusive education for children with mild intellectual disability. The author further explained that teachers as well as the learners play a major role in the changes of instructional strategies in order to achieve the same intended instructional outcome suggested in the overall or general curriculum.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the result of the analysis, it was concluded that every-body including pupils with intellectual disabilities benefit from inclusion and the long-term effects of typical students who are included with special needs students at a very young age have a heightened sensitivity to the challenges that others face, increased empathy and compassion, and improved leadership skills which benefits all of society. However, the disadvantage with inclusion is that most inclusion approaches used in Nigeria and Cross River State in particular neglects the knowledge that most pupils with mild intellectual disability require individualized instruction adaptation or highly controlled setting.

The teachers should possess as well as acquire knowledge and skills to help pupils with mild intellectual disability develop cognitively, socially, emotionally and physically. Pupils with mild intellectual disability should learn the same content with other learners but with minor modifications or adaptations. On the other hand, pupils with mild intellectual disability should be taught functional academics which focus on activities like reading, writing and basic mathematics.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings in this study, the following recommendations were made:

- (i) In-service training and awareness programme on inclusive education should be held regularly by curriculum planners in collaboration with Ministry of Education so as to equip regular teachers and parents with skills on how to implement a successful inclusive programme. Every teacher should be given basic knowledge to handle children with intellectual disability.
- (ii) Educational administrators should ensure that each school have a guidance counsellor and a specialist teacher who would work in collaboration with regular class teachers to constantly monitor and evaluate inclusive programme.
- (iii) The government should give adequate financial assistance to all schools, so as to provide suitable learning resources and assertive devices for successful inclusion to take place.

- (iv) The teacher-pupil ratio should be reduced in a class where a child with mild intellectual disability is present in order to allow the teacher enough time to cater for individual differences.
- (v) Regular teachers should keep communication with other professionals such as medical doctors, psychologists, speech therapists, exceptional therapists, educational therapists and parents because intellectual disability can co-exist with other problems which cannot be addressed by the regular teachers.

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