

## PSYCHOLOGICAL ADJUSTMENT OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KATSINA STATE, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

This study investigated psychological adjustment of Children with Special Needs in selected primary schools in Katsina State in line with integration policy. Sample of 292 pupils were purposively selected from Six (6) primary schools within Bakori Local Education Authority. For the purpose of data collection, Questionnaire and Interview Focus Group Discussion were used. The items of questionnaire contains forty questions. Descriptive statistics using mean, standard deviation and percentage were used. The result showed that, the challenged children adjust psychologically in line with integration policy due to parental support, teacher support, availability of resource materials and peer group influence. Based on these findings, it is recommended that teachers and parents should be encouraged always to create conducive atmosphere for challenged children. And also resource materials can serve to improve psychological adjustment of normal and challenged children. It concluded that lack of parental, teacher support and non-availability of resource materials as well as career guidance would not result in a meaningful psychological adjustment in line with integration policy.

**Keywords:** Psychology, Adjustment, Children, Special Needs,

### Introduction

Today in Nigeria special educators, psychologist, parents of students with disabilities, policy makers and other stakeholders continue to debate the benefit and challenges of education. Ballard (2003) emphasized that, children with special needs are consequences of an impairment that may occur physically, cognitive, mental, sensory and emotional development or some combination of these. A disability may be present from birth or during a person's life .Disability is an umbrella form covering impairment, activity limitation and participation restriction. Impairment is a problem in body function or structure, an activity limitation is a difficulty encountered by an individual in executing a task or action while a participation restriction is a problems experience by an individual in involvement in life situation. Disability can be seen as total or partial loss of bodily function or parts of the body. The disabilities characteristics are as follows; Learning Disability(LD), Physical, Disability (PD), Psychiatric Disability (PD), Deaf/Hard Hearing (DHH), Blindness or Low Vision (BLV), Brain Injury (BI), Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Speech/Language Disability (LD), Intellectual Disabilities (ID), i) Learning Disability (LD)

Aniscow, (2005) .opined that Integration involves a particular emphasis on the learners who may be vulnerable or at a risk of exclusion or under achievement Integration policy looks at both the right of students and how education systems can be transformed to respond to diverse group of learners, it emphasis the needs for opportunities for equal participation for any students with disabilities, special needs in the education system, preferably in a mainstream environments. Types of integration including regular or partial Integration and full Integration.

## **Factors Responsible for Adjustment of Children with Special Needs**

### **The Availability of Resource Materials**

Resources are facilities which help the challenged children to adjust psychologically. In all work of life and every field of endeavour, it is important that equipment and resource materials to be made available for human being to perform according to standard. Amenities include electricity, water, pencil, books and instructional learning materials. For example if a challenged child come into the class without books or pencil or no water at school, he will not perform adequately.

### **Parental Support**

Adjustment of the children with special needs can be improved when parents are involved in learning of their children. Abubakar (2009), opined that, decades of research shows that when parents are involved students may have high grade, test score, better school attendance and better self-esteem. Parents should try to encourage their children with special needs to adjust psychologically.

### **Teachers Support**

Teacher is somebody who is imparting knowledge, skills, norms, value into the younger generation. The teachers and the students are two important factors in every educational system. Alley (2000) indicated that, the teacher is one of the most important factors in adjusting children with special needs. Barton (2003), gave a wide array of teacher's support include guidance, sincere, reinforcement. Based on the above background the importance of teachers in the psychological adjustment of children with special needs cannot be over emphasis.

### **Statement of the Problem**

According to National Policy on Education and State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) every school should help all their children to develop their potentials as full as possible in both academic and non academic pursuits. Despite this, still great challenges lie ahead if the goal of education is to be achieved, as pressing educational problems or concerns which include both poor performance and adjustment like awareness, flexibility in behaviour, interaction, and engagement in self-management. The causes of such problems are due to poor parental support, teacher's involvement, inadequate instructional materials, poor interaction with peers, poor using incentives while teaching and learning and poor guidance. It is in the light of this, the researcher is interested in the topic and calls for comprehensive effort to try to give those challenged children a new lease of life. A possible way of doing this is through research works to disseminate information. Thus, the study is an attempt to closely investigate the psychological adjustment and to see if integration policy could be used to help children with special needs.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The study was designed to achieve the following objectives;

1. To find out if children with special needs adjust psychologically in line with integration policy due to teacher involvement in primary schools in Katsina State.
2. To find out if children with special needs adjust psychologically in line with integration policy due to parental support in primary schools in Katsina State
3. To find out if children with special needs adjust psychologically in line with integration policy due to peer group influence in primary schools in Katsina State.
4. To find out if children with special needs adjust psychologically in line with integration policy due to availability of resource materials in primary schools in Katsina

State.

5. To find out if children with special needs adjust psychologically in line with integration policy due to career guidance in primary schools in Katsina State.
6. To find out if children with special needs adjust psychologically in line with integration policy due to use of incentive in primary schools in Katsina State.

### **Research Questions**

The study sought to answer the following questions;

1. Do children with special needs adjust psychologically in line with integration policy due to teacher involvement in primary schools in Katsina State?
2. Do children with special needs adjust psychologically in line with integration policy due to parental support in primary schools in Katsina State?
3. Do children with special needs adjust psychologically in line with integration policy due to peer group influence in primary schools in Katsina State?
4. Do children with special needs adjust psychologically in line with integration policy due to availability of resource materials in primary schools in Katsina State?
5. Do children with special needs adjust psychologically in line with integration policy due to career guidance in primary schools in Katsina State?
6. Do children with special needs adjust psychologically in line with integration policy due to use of incentive in primary schools in Katsina State?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted quasi experimental research design involving two groups; the experimental group was children with special needs while the control sample was children with no developmental disability which were recruited as comparison group. In order to identify the psychological adjustment of children with special needs in line with integration policy, pre-test and post-test procedure were used which enable the group mean score of the two (2) groups to be compared after the treatment. The population of 1225 pupils in the final year in six schools, 292 whose age ranges between 9-14 years old were randomly selected for the sampling. The Male children were 166 while the Female children with special needs were 126. Those discovered above the age limit of 14 years were not used in the analysis of data. The sample consisted of primary VI students from six selected primary schools across Bakori Local Government Area, simple random sampling technique, Hat Draw Method (HDM) was used in selection of the six schools within zone in the Local Government Area by inscribing the name of schools on pieces of paper roll in and mixed well in a container, six schools were selected randomly. The total of students in the six schools was 1225 out of this 1225 the sample was 292 preferably by using Kreycie and Morgan (1971) table of determining sample size.

**Table 1: Show Schools in sampling area**

S/N	Schools	Population	Sample Size
1	Pilot Primary Schools, Bakori	302	72
2	Ramalan Model Primary School	215	51
3	Guga Model Primary School, Guga	244	58
4	Lamido Primary School, Lamido	204	49
5	Tsiga Model Primary School, Tsiga	110	26
6	Kakumi Primary School, Kakumi	150	36
<b>Total</b>		<b>1225</b>	<b>292</b>

Source: SUBEB, Katsina State, Bakori L.G.E.A

Three (3) instruments used for data collection for this study includes: Adapted Abiyola (2000) Questionnaire on Equal learning opportunity under Integrated System, Children Psychological Adjustment Measurement Scale (CPAMS) was designed by the researcher and English Language Academic Performance Test (ELAPT) (Adapted from Common Entrance Examination).

The scale of the questionnaire 1 and 2 are strongly agree (SA), Agree (A) Disagree (DA), strongly disagree (SDA), strongly agree (SA) attracted a score of 4 down too strong disagree having score 1. while The ELAPT comprises 20 items five marks is awarded for each question correctly answered. This showed that  $5 \times 20 = 100$  which means that the test was marked 100%. Procedure for scoring high scores 80 - 100% it indicates excellent academic performance test items, medium scores 60 - 79% it indicates good academic performance, low scores below 60% needs improvement it indicates poor performance.

In this study, the researcher used descriptive statistics using mean, median, standard deviation to answer the research questions one to six.

Proceeding to the presentation of result of percentage of male and female professionals, challenged children categories and Pre-test and Post-test mean, standard deviation of all the treatment conditions are computed. Also the result of interview is listed as percentage to indicate the proportion of respondents taking the view of disagreement and agreement on psychological adjustment of challenged children inline with integration education.

## Results

**Table 2: Distribution and Percentage of Normal children and Children with Special Needs in line with Integration Policy due to teachers' involvement**

Variable	Number	Percentage
Normal children (NC)	145	49.65
Children with Special Needs (CSN)	147	50.35

Table 2 shows that Normal children sample constituted 49.65% while children with special needs constituted 50.35%.

**Table 3 Distribution and Percentage of Different Types of Children with Special Needs in Sample Schools in line with Integration Policy.**

Categories	Number	Percentage (%)
Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)	11	7.58
Physical Disabilities (PD)	10	6.89
Intellectual Disabilities (ID)	15	10.34
Psychiatric Disabilities (PD)	9	6.20
Hearing Impairment (HI)	25	17.24
Visual Impairment (VI)	30	20.65
Brain Injuries (BI)	20	13.79
Autism Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	15	10.34
Speech Disabilities (SD)	10	6.89
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above shows that children with special needs with SD, SLD, PD, PSD, sample constituted 40.7% while children with special needs with ADHD, BI, VI, HI, ID was 50.8%. This has shown that the students with ADHD, BI, VI, HI, and ID are higher in the sample schools than counterpart.

**Table 4 Pre-test Scores of Normal children and Children with Special Needs in line with Integration Policy.**

Variable	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation (Sd)
Normal Children (NC)	149	48.50	11.89
Children with Special Needs (CSN)	143	49.01	12.02

The result of analysis of the pre-test scores of Normal children and Children with special needs indicated that the two groups are found to be similar academically and psychologically before the treatment as shown in table 4.

**Table 5 Post test Score of Normal children and Children with Special Needs in line with Integration due to parental support?**

Schools	NC Number	NC Mean	NC Post-test SD	CSN Number	CSN Mean	CSN Post-test SD
School 1	51	67.64	14.89	49	50.39	9.90
School 2	72	60.36	10.16	58	42.21	10.90
School 3	26	48.08	12.58	36	43.92	11.54

Table 5 shows that Normal children performed better than any other group on the post test (X=67.64) Children with special needs on the other hand achieved the lowest (X=42.21)

**Table 6: Pre-test Performance of Children with Special Needs Boys and Girls in line with Integration Policy.**

Gender	N	Mean	SD
Children with Special Needs Boys (CB)	72	52.92	11.58
Children with Special Needs Girls (CG)	73	52.80	11.54

The table 6 shows that the result of the pre-test scores of Children with Special Needs boys and girls. The result shows that the two groups are find to be equivalent psychologically before the treatment.

**Table 7: Post-test Performance of Children with Special Needs Boys and Girls in line with Integration Policy**

GENDER	N	MEAN	SD
Children with Special Needs Boys (CB)	72	56.21	15.23
Children with Special Needs Girls (CG)	77	43.92	11.54

Description of children with special needs boys and girls shows that challenged boys are better than girls after the treatment as shown in table 7. The challenged boys have higher mean score in post-test  $X = 56.21$  than girls with  $X = 43.92$ .

### Summary of the Findings

The following are the findings of the study;

Integrating students with and without disability resulted in better psychological adjustment. The result of this study strongly suggests that integration policy is a good method that enabled students to adjust psychologically in both academic and non academic situation.

The result of the analysis of data indicated that Normal children in line with integration policy are more psychologically adjusted than any other group on the post-test ( $X=67.64$ ) while children with special needs have low adjustment level and achieve the lowest scores ( $X=42.21$ ).

The analysis of post-test scores of boys and girls with special needs indicated that boys are more psychologically adjusted than girls in line with integrated system of education (Boys  $M=56.21$ ,  $SD=15.23$  Girls  $M=43.92$ ,  $SD=11.54$ ).

The following are the summary of findings of the study based on research questions:

### Discussion of the Findings

The study of psychological adjustment of children with special needs in line with integration policy. Based on findings of the present study, result of the findings is summarized below; the result of the analysis of pre-test scores indicated that normal and children with special needs were similar before treatment. In the study, the analysis of post-test scores showed that; method of integration is more effective strategy of psychological adjustment of challenged children. This research also reported that integration system of education enhance acquisition by students leading meaningful psychological adjustment on behavior, higher performance, interaction, satisfaction and even communication. In spite the fact that normal children have higher mean scores, this result was in agreement with studies

conducted by Barton (2003) on inclusion, exclusion of students with and without disabilities. The findings of the study showed that open communication play very vital role of adjusting the challenged children psychologically. The result also is in line with findings of Aniscow (2005) on integration compares inclusion and segregation of pre-school students. The findings of the study showed an improvement in self-esteem, self-determination and improved motivation. However, the findings of this also were in line with findings of Margetts (2002) on adjustment of sibling of children with autism, the finding showed that challenged children are more positive in behavior and school achievement. The result also was in line with findings of Gubson (1981) on children and adolescents adjustments to parental support. The findings of the studies showed that there was significant relationship between parental support and psychological adjustment of challenged children. The findings of the study also were in line with findings of Avramidis (2005) on teacher's attitude toward integrated schools. The findings of the study showed that there was higher correlation between teachers and the challenged children in the school studied and teachers adjusted challenged boy and girls psychologically

From the table 7 and 8 the result obtained shows that the challenged boys are more psychologically adjusted than challenged girls in primary school in Katsina State in line with integration policy because Boys ( $M = 56.21$ ,  $SD = 15.23$ ), Girls ( $M = 43.92$ ,  $SD = 11.54$ ). The present findings are in contrary with the findings of Abiola and Alley (2000) on attitude of students towards peers with disabilities at inclusive schools in western Nigeria. The findings showed that the attitude of students in schools were generally positive ( $M = 22.55$ ,  $SD = 3.79$ ). Female students have higher total scores ( $F = 24.76$ ,  $SD = 2.79$ ) than their male counterparts ( $M = 19.84$ ,  $SD = 3.05$ ). Having friends/ relatives with disabilities was associated with more positive attitude among female students.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were made in the study, it is necessary that teachers and parents in primary schools be made aware of the effectiveness of integration policy in national development so as to improve psychological adjustment of children with special needs, schools are encouraged to adopt the Schools Based Management Committee in order to support the children with special needs.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the present study, following are the recommendations;

1. Teachers and parents in primary schools should be made aware of the effectiveness of integration policy so as to improve psychological adjustment of children with special needs.
2. The Universal Basic Education Board Katsina state should assists in providing instructional materials for children both normal and abnormal to benefit.
3. Teachers should be encouraged to create conducive atmosphere so that both the normal and abnormal can improve individual differences.
4. Classroom activities should be encouraged so that both the normal and abnormal to interact better in classrooms.
5. Designated children with special needs coordinators should be encouraged so as to guide the children with special needs.
6. School should build up long term collaboration with organizations e.g. SBMC and PTA in

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order to provide support service for the challenged children.

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