

An Analysis of Teachers' Perceptions and Practices in Promoting Inclusive and Accessible Library Spaces in Primary Schools in Iwo Local Government Area, Osun State

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Abstract:

Background of study: School libraries are essential for fostering literacy, academic achievement, and social-emotional development by offering equitable access to diverse learning resources. However, in many primary schools, particularly in Iwo Local Government Area, Osun State, Nigeria, these spaces often lack inclusive features. Inadequate infrastructure, limited assistive technologies, and insufficient teacher training hinder the ability of school libraries to meet the needs of all learners, especially those with disabilities.

Aims and scope of paper: This study explores primary school teachers' perceptions and practices related to promoting inclusive and accessible library environments. It aims to identify current strategies, challenges, and areas needing improvement in making library spaces supportive of students with diverse learning needs.

Methods: A descriptive survey design was employed. A total of 150 teachers were selected through stratified random sampling across various schools. Data were gathered using structured questionnaires, validated for reliability (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.75), and analyzed using descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation.

Result: The findings show that while teachers acknowledge the value of inclusive library spaces, practical implementation remains limited. Some teachers modify materials and create welcoming environments, but gaps persist in training, resource availability, physical accessibility, and collaboration with special education personnel.

Conclusion: To improve inclusivity in school libraries, there is a pressing need for targeted training, improved funding, adaptive technologies, and inter-professional collaboration. These efforts will help create equitable learning environments, ensuring that all students, regardless of ability, have access to supportive and inclusive educational resources.

Keywords: Accessibility, Inclusivity, Library Spaces, Primary Education, Teachers' Perceptions.

1. INTRODUCTION

The establishment of inclusive and accessible library spaces is essential for achieving equitable learning outcomes in primary education. Libraries are not merely repositories of books but pivotal environments where diverse learners can access resources tailored to their unique needs. However, ensuring inclusivity in such spaces remains a challenge, particularly in areas where infrastructural and resource limitations exist.

This study critically explores the perceptions and practices of teachers in promoting inclusivity and accessibility within library spaces in primary schools in Iwo Local Government Area, Osun State.

Libraries play a pivotal role in primary education by serving as a hub for knowledge acquisition and intellectual development. They provide access to diverse resources, such as books, educational games, and audiovisual materials, which help to nurture curiosity and a love for learning among young students. Libraries create a stimulating environment that fosters cognitive development by exposing children to a variety of informational and recreational materials. This access not only supports classroom learning but also enables children to explore topics beyond the curriculum. Libraries contribute to equitable education by providing access to resources that may not be available at home. This is particularly significant in developing countries where disparities in access to learning materials exist (Frandsen & Sørensen, 2020).

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Libraries help bridge the gap between privileged and underprivileged students, ensuring that every child has an opportunity to learn and grow. By offering free and inclusive services, libraries promote social equity in education (Adeyeye, 2025). Libraries also serve as a platform for developing foundational skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and independent learning. These skills are essential for academic success and lifelong learning. Found that children who regularly use libraries are more likely to exhibit higher academic performance and better decision-making abilities. The interactive programs hosted by libraries, such as storytelling sessions and reading clubs, further enhance these critical skills (Nasiruddin, 2017).

Libraries act as a catalyst for promoting cultural awareness and diversity in primary education. By exposing children to literature from various cultures and traditions, libraries help foster respect and appreciation for different perspectives. School libraries have a role to play in promoting multicultural literature to all students, especially as inclusion of more diverse and contemporary texts has lagged in the high school English curriculum. The role of school librarians in promoting multicultural fiction takes on new urgency with student demographic trends and teacher perceptions (Lafferty, 2017).

Children who participated in library reading initiatives demonstrated significant improvements in literacy skills compared to their peers. Libraries also offer opportunities for children to practice reading in a supportive environment, helping them develop confidence and proficiency in literacy (Esan, 2022). Beyond literacy, libraries foster a love for learning by encouraging exploration and discovery. Interactive learning activities, such as group discussions and educational games hosted by libraries, make learning enjoyable and engaging. These activities promote active participation, enabling children to retain information better and develop a positive attitude toward learning. Libraries thus act as a bridge between formal education and personal exploration. Libraries also play a vital role in promoting digital literacy, which is increasingly essential in today's technology-driven world. Many modern libraries are equipped with digital resources such as e-books, educational software, and online databases (OECD, 2019).

Access to these resources helps children develop digital skills, such as navigating information systems and critical evaluation of online content, which are crucial for success in the 21st century (Ileri & Ocholla, 2025). Libraries support collaboration and community engagement, creating a shared space for children, parents, and educators to interact and learn. Programs

such as parent-child reading sessions and teacher workshops offered by libraries strengthen the home-school connection. Reading is one of the most important skills for learning because it constitutes the basis for any meaningful activity in the context of the school. It is in the school that special efforts should be made to help pupils overcome difficulties associated with reading (Ibrahim & Okpala, 2024).

Creativity is the ability to create something new or a combination of pre-existing elements, students who remain enthusiastic and remain concentrated and can do tasks from teachers very well with high creativity can get results and achieve in learning, in addition to creativity students are expected to concentrate on capturing learning because if students can concentrate well what the teacher explains is easier for students to understand (Hasnani et al., 2024). Teaching methods are ways used by teachers in the learning process so that the learning process can run well and students get good results (Agustina et al., 2024). Thus, a teacher educator is any person who equips prospective teachers with the knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school and wider society (Ihisota et al., 2025). Despite the increasing awareness on importance of early childhood care and education, the societal attitudes towards the profession as a career remains a significant factor that is influencing the career choices of pre-service teachers (Orisadare et al., 2025). Therefore, it is expected of any experts teaching or caring at this level of education to exhibit proficiency or ability in carrying out their duties as expected of them with or without any supervision (Oyewumi et al., 2025).

Inclusivity in library spaces for primary schools emphasizes creating environments where all children, regardless of their abilities, backgrounds, or learning styles, feel welcomed and supported. Inclusive library spaces provide equal opportunities for children to access information and engage in learning activities. Inclusive libraries promote equity by accommodating diverse needs, such as students with disabilities or those from underrepresented communities. This is achieved by designing spaces that support collaborative learning, social interaction, and cultural representation. For example, incorporating diverse books and multilingual resources ensures representation for all students. Inclusive libraries also cater to students with special needs by integrating adaptive technologies and resources. These might include Braille books,

audiobooks, and screen readers for visually impaired students or sensory-friendly areas for neurodivergent learners (Wagwu et al., 2024). Library design should address physical, cognitive, and emotional accessibility. Such libraries not only enhance learning outcomes but also foster a sense of belonging among primary school children, encouraging lifelong learning habits (Njoku et al., 2024).

Teacher-librarians play a crucial role in promoting inclusivity by curating diverse collections and creating programs that celebrate cultural diversity and inclusiveness. For instance, programs such as storytelling sessions featuring local traditions or multicultural books help children appreciate diversity from an early age. Stated that inclusive library spaces are more than just physical infrastructure; they embody attitudes and practices that promote respect and equity among students, helping them develop social and emotional skills. Finally, inclusivity in primary school libraries contributes to the overall school culture by promoting empathy and respect for differences (Nabila, 2022). Schools with inclusive library policies experienced improved student engagement and reduced bullying incidents. By fostering inclusive environments, libraries become safe spaces where children learn not only academic skills but also values such as tolerance and cooperation (Nnatu et al., 2024).

Accessibility in library spaces for primary schools involves ensuring that all students, including those with disabilities, can independently and effectively use library facilities and resources. Accessibility encompasses physical design, technological tools, and resource availability. Libraries should be designed with ramps, wide doorways, adjustable furniture, and accessible shelves to cater to students with physical disabilities. These elements create an environment where all children can explore resources without barriers, fostering confidence and autonomy. Accessible library spaces also include digital resources and assistive technologies that support diverse learning needs. For example, screen magnifiers, voice-to-text software, and closed-captioning services enable students with visual or hearing impairments to access information effectively (Prince, 2024). A school library must provide reading materials such as books, journals, and digital resources. They give students a variety of learning opportunities and support the development of a love of reading. Students' reading skills and general academic progress are directly associated with the availability of a wide variety of reading resources. Thus, determining whether these resources are offered in Akwa Ibom State's

elementary schools is essential to comprehending the state of education today (Adetoro, 2014).

Library policies and practices must also prioritize accessibility by providing materials in multiple formats. This includes print, digital, audio, and tactile resources, allowing children with different learning preferences to access content comfortably. Suggest that training librarians to understand and implement universal design principles is essential for maintaining accessibility in primary school libraries. Inclusive cataloging systems and signage in Braille or pictorial formats further enhance accessibility for all students. Moreover, accessibility in primary school libraries extends beyond infrastructure to include programming and outreach efforts. Libraries can host workshops, reading clubs, and interactive sessions tailored to diverse needs. For instance, programs that teach students how to use assistive tools or include parents in literacy development initiatives help create a supportive ecosystem (Raju et al., 2016).

Furthermore, inclusive education encourages teachers or educators to understand and treat each child peculiarly irrespective of the challenge they have. It goes beyond that to also include the challenged children to be in the same school system with the non-challenged children. children's library should include resources and services for babies, toddlers, children and young adults. To ensure inclusive education these classes of children irrespective of their abilities and disabilities should be catered for in the libraries by librarians. The librarians can promote inclusive education through the provision of a conductive learning environment, acquisition and provision of information resources and services to enhance learning and research. Hence to have an inclusive education there should be an inclusive library environment, resources and services to accommodate both normal and physically challenged Nigerian children (Shesha & Singh, 2024).

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

This study utilized a descriptive survey research design to examine teachers' perceptions and practices in promoting inclusive and accessible library spaces in primary schools in Iwo Local Government Area, Osun State. The population for this study consisted of primary school teachers in Iwo Local Government Area, and a sample of 150 teachers was selected to represent this population. A representative sample was achieved through stratified random sampling, ensuring diversity in the sample by including teachers from various primary schools and backgrounds. This approach provided a comprehensive view of teachers' perceptions and practices across the local government area. Data

were collected using structured surveys, which were carefully designed to capture teachers' views on inclusivity and accessibility in library spaces. To ensure validity and reliability, the survey instrument was reviewed by experts in primary and early childhood education practices. A pilot study was conducted with 30 teachers to refine the instrument and assess its clarity and effectiveness. The reliability of the survey was measured using Cronbach's Alpha, yielding a reliability coefficient of 0.75, indicating a high level of consistency. Data analysis was performed by calculating the mean and standard deviation of responses, based on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree" (1) to "Strongly Agree" (4). The decision point was set at 2.5, with mean scores above 2.5 indicating agreement with an item and scores below 2.5 indicating disagreement. This method of data analysis provided a clear and balanced assessment of teachers' perceptions and practices regarding inclusive and accessible library spaces in primary schools in Iwo Local Government Area.

The study employed a structured survey instrument designed to capture primary school teachers' perceptions and practices regarding the promotion of inclusive and accessible library spaces in Iwo Local Government Area, Osun State. The treatment procedure involved several key steps:

1. Instrument Development and Validation

- The survey questionnaire was developed based on a comprehensive review of literature related to inclusive education, accessibility standards, and library management in primary schools.
- To establish **content validity**, the initial draft of the survey instrument was reviewed by a panel of five experts specializing in primary education, early childhood education, and inclusive practices. Their feedback was incorporated to enhance clarity, relevance, and comprehensiveness of the items.
- A **pilot study** was conducted with 30 primary school teachers drawn from schools outside the study sample frame but within the same educational district. The pilot aimed to assess the clarity, reliability, and face validity of the instrument. Responses from the pilot were analyzed to identify ambiguous or unclear items, which were then revised accordingly.

2. Reliability Assessment

- The internal consistency of the survey instrument was assessed using **Cronbach's Alpha**, resulting in a coefficient of 0.75, indicating acceptable reliability and consistency across survey items.

3. Sampling and Data Collection Controls

- A **stratified random sampling** technique was used to select 150 teachers from different primary schools across Iwo Local Government Area, ensuring representation from diverse schools, geographic locations (urban and rural), and teacher demographics (gender, years of experience).
- To control for **confounding variables** such as teacher characteristics (e.g., experience level, qualification), school location (urban vs. rural), and variations in learning conditions (availability of library resources, school infrastructure), the sample was stratified accordingly. Data on these variables were collected alongside the main survey responses to enable subgroup analyses and control during data interpretation.
- Additionally, respondents were instructed to consider their most recent experience within their current teaching environment to minimize recall bias and ensure the relevancy of responses.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

- Responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically calculating means and standard deviations for each survey item on a 4-point Likert scale.
- The decision point was set at 2.5, with scores above this threshold indicating agreement with statements about inclusive and accessible library practices.
- Further analysis involved cross-tabulations and comparative assessments to explore the influence of confounding variables (e.g., teacher experience, school location) on perceptions and practices.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Result

The findings show that while teachers acknowledge the value of inclusive library spaces, practical implementation remains limited. Some teachers modify

materials and create welcoming environments, but gaps persist in training, resource availability, physical

accessibility, and collaboration with special education personnel.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics table on perceptions of teachers regarding the importance of inclusive and accessible library spaces

S/N	Items	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation	Decision
1.	Inclusive and accessible library spaces are essential for fostering a positive learning environment.	3.25	0.58	Agree
2.	A well-organized library contributes significantly to the academic success of students in primary schools.	3.40	0.54	Agree
3.	Teachers are well-equipped with the knowledge to create inclusive library spaces in their schools.	2.90	0.68	Agree
4.	Having accessible library spaces helps students with special educational needs (SEN) to succeed academically.	3.15	0.61	Agree
5.	Teachers believe that inclusive library spaces can enhance students' social and emotional development.	3.10	0.67	Agree
6.	Teachers do not have adequate training on the importance of inclusivity in library spaces.	2.40	0.75	Disagree
7.	The school administration supports the creation of inclusive and accessible library spaces.	2.85	0.62	Agree
8.	Inclusive and accessible libraries are critical in encouraging independent learning among students.	3.30	0.55	Agree
9.	Teachers rarely involve students in maintaining inclusive and accessible library spaces.	2.60	0.72	Agree
10.	The availability of resources in the library has little impact on students' proficiency in various subjects.	2.10	0.80	Disagree

The table 1 presents the descriptive statistics on teachers' perceptions regarding the importance of inclusive and accessible library spaces in primary schools. The findings reveal that teachers generally agree on the importance of inclusive and accessible library spaces, with mean scores ranging from 2.10 to 3.40. Teachers strongly agree (mean = 3.40) that a well-organized library contributes significantly to students' academic success. Additionally, they agree that inclusive libraries foster a positive learning environment (mean = 3.25),

help students with special educational needs succeed (mean = 3.15), and enhance social and emotional development (mean = 3.10). However, teachers indicate a gap in training, as they disagree that they are adequately equipped with the knowledge to create inclusive spaces (mean = 2.90). Teachers also disagree that the availability of resources in the library has little impact on students' proficiency (mean = 2.10), underscoring the importance of resources in educational outcomes.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics table on implement inclusive library practices and create accessible spaces for students with diverse learning needs

S/N	Items	Mean (X)	Standard Deviation	Decision
1.	Teachers frequently implement inclusive practices in the library to accommodate students with diverse learning needs.	3.05	0.60	Agree
2.	Teachers often organize the library space to ensure that students with different learning styles can easily access materials.	3.20	0.55	Agree
3.	Teachers actively involve students with special needs in library activities and provide necessary accommodations.	3.10	0.65	Agree
4.	The library space is not always adapted to cater to the learning needs of students with disabilities.	2.40	0.78	Disagree

5.	Teachers regularly assess and modify library materials to meet the diverse needs of students.	3.00	0.72	Agree
6.	There is a lack of resources and training for teachers to implement inclusive library practices.	2.50	0.85	Disagree
7.	Teachers create a welcoming environment in the library that promotes inclusivity for all students.	3.25	0.58	Agree
8.	Teachers rarely collaborate with special education staff to improve accessibility in the library.	2.65	0.74	Agree
9.	Library furniture and layouts do not accommodate students with physical disabilities.	2.30	0.76	Disagree
10.	Teachers are encouraged to implement inclusive library practices by the school administration.	3.15	0.62	Agree

The table 2 presents the descriptive statistics on teachers' implementation of inclusive library practices and their efforts to create accessible spaces for students with diverse learning needs. The results indicate that teachers generally agree on their active involvement in fostering inclusive practices in the library, with mean scores ranging from 2.30 to 3.25. Teachers report frequently implementing inclusive practices (mean = 3.05) and organizing the library space to accommodate different learning styles (mean = 3.20), while also involving students with special needs in library activities (mean = 3.10). They also agree that they regularly assess and modify library materials to meet students' diverse needs (mean = 3.00) and create a welcoming environment for all students (mean = 3.25). However, there are some areas of concern, such as the lack of adaptation of the library space for students with disabilities (mean = 2.40), the lack of resources and training to implement inclusive practices (mean = 2.50), and insufficient collaboration with special education staff to improve accessibility (mean = 2.65). Teachers also report that library furniture and layouts do not always accommodate students with physical disabilities (mean = 2.30).

The findings of the research question one strongly belief in the importance of inclusive and accessible library spaces for fostering a positive learning environment and enhancing academic success. Ultimately, the study underscores the need for both better training and resource availability to fully realize the benefits of inclusive libraries in primary schools (Raju et al., 2016). Teachers who received proper training and collaborated with special education staff were better equipped to implement inclusive practices. Importance of adapting library spaces to meet the needs of students with disabilities, noting that the physical layout of libraries plays a critical role in accessibility. These findings

suggest that while teachers are making significant strides in implementing inclusive practices, more support in terms of resources, training, and collaboration is needed to enhance the accessibility of library spaces for all students (Nne Horsfall & Chima Opara, 2023).

3.2 Discussion

The results of this study confirm that teachers in Iwo Local Government Area recognize the importance of inclusive and accessible library spaces in fostering academic success, social-emotional development, and independent learning. This aligns with Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory, which emphasizes the centrality of socially mediated learning environments that are inclusive and culturally responsive. Teachers' agreement on the role of well-organized libraries and the inclusion of students with special educational needs (SEN) reflects awareness of the library as a catalyst for equity and inclusion in learning.

From a constructivist perspective, teachers' practices in modifying materials and creating welcoming environments demonstrate an understanding of how differentiated resources and physical accessibility promote active engagement and knowledge construction. The library, in this sense, functions not merely as a support space but as an instructional extension that enables students of varying abilities to learn meaningfully.

However, the data also highlight serious implementation gaps. Despite broad agreement on the importance of inclusivity, persistent deficiencies in training, infrastructure, and collaboration limit the effectiveness of inclusive practices. These findings suggest that teachers' inclusive efforts are constrained not by attitude, but by systemic barriers—a conclusion supported by the ecological systems theory

(Bronfenbrenner), which underscores the interplay between individual capability and institutional context.

3.2.1 Implication

Practically, the study underscores the need for:

- Targeted teacher professional development in inclusive education and adaptive instructional strategies.
- Increased funding to improve physical and technological infrastructure.
- Stronger inter-professional collaboration, especially with special education professionals and librarians trained in Universal Design for Learning (UDL).

While several teachers demonstrate initiative in creating inclusive environments, their efforts appear inconsistent and unsupported by policy or institutional planning. Inclusive library development thus requires not only individual commitment but systemic reforms to sustain and scale inclusive practices.

3.2.2 Research Contribution

This study contributes to the limited literature on inclusive education in Nigeria by focusing on the school library setting. It provides empirical evidence of current practices, challenges, and perceptions among teachers in a localized context. The study further validates theoretical models such as Vygotsky's and Bronfenbrenner's in understanding inclusive practices and serves as a basis for educational stakeholders to develop evidence-based interventions.

3.2.3 Limitation

Critical Discussion of Limitations and Possible Biases

Despite its contributions, this study is subject to several limitations that may affect the interpretation and generalizability of the findings:

1. **Geographic Limitation:** The study was conducted in a single local government area (Iwo LGA), which may not reflect the diversity of educational contexts across Osun State or Nigeria at large. Different socio-economic and infrastructural realities in other regions may produce different results.
2. **Sample Size and Representation:** Although stratified sampling was used, the sample of 150 teachers may not sufficiently capture variations in teacher experience, training exposure, or school resources. Generalizing beyond the study population should be done cautiously.
3. **Cross-sectional Design:** The descriptive, cross-sectional nature of the study captures perceptions and practices at a single point in time. It does not

account for changes over time or track the long-term effectiveness of inclusive practices.

4. **Self-report Bias:** Data were obtained via structured questionnaires, which are susceptible to social desirability bias—teachers may report favorable practices even when they are not fully implemented. Observational or qualitative methods would provide more nuanced insights.
5. **Instrument Limitations:** While the instrument achieved acceptable reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.75$), the exclusive use of Likert-scale items may limit the depth of understanding, particularly in areas where teacher actions are shaped by nuanced constraints.

3.2.4 Suggestion

Future studies should consider:

- Employing longitudinal designs to observe how inclusive library practices evolve over time and assess their sustained impact on learning outcomes.
- Conducting comparative research across rural and urban settings or different geopolitical zones to examine context-specific barriers and enablers.
- Utilizing mixed methods, incorporating interviews, focus groups, or classroom observations to explore teacher practices and student experiences in greater depth.
- Investigating mediating variables such as teacher attitudes, school leadership, resource availability, and community involvement to better understand what facilitates or inhibits inclusion in school libraries.

Such studies will provide a more holistic understanding and support the development of evidence-based policies and interventions to promote equitable, inclusive learning environments for all children.

4. CONCLUSION

This study highlights the vital role of teachers in promoting inclusive and accessible library spaces in primary schools in Iwo Local Government Area, Osun State. While teachers acknowledge the importance of inclusivity, gaps in training, resources, and infrastructure hinder full implementation. Efforts to create welcoming environments and adapt materials are evident, yet challenges remain, particularly in supporting students with disabilities and collaborating with special education staff. However, the study is limited by its focus on a single locality, a modest sample size, and a cross-sectional design that does not capture long-term effects. Future research should consider longitudinal approaches, cross-context comparisons (e.g., rural vs. urban settings), and the exploration of mediating factors such as teacher

attitudes, leadership support, and assistive technology availability to enhance inclusive library practices.

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6. AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT


All authors contributed substantially to the development of this manuscript, including the conceptualization of the study, data collection and analysis, interpretation of findings, and drafting and revising the article. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript for submission and publication.


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