

# A Case Study of a Therapeutic Inclusive Secondary School (TISS) in Enugu, Nigeria

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**Abstract:** This paper is a case study on the Therapeutic Inclusive Secondary School (TISS) in Enugu State, Nigeria-West Africa. The aim of the study is to investigate all issues affecting the learning conditions in the TISS. This study is guided by nine research questions that are to be answered with descriptive statistics; simple percentages as well as mean and standard deviation. The study employed the case study research design with a study population comprising 40 respondents. A purposive sampling technique was used to collect data with the Therapeutic Inclusive Education Questionnaire (TIEQ), which is a structured questionnaire, interviews, and observations to elicit information from the respondents. A test of internal consistency, using Cronbach's Alpha method, yielded a reliability index of 0.88. The results of the findings, among others, reveal that the respondents had a positive attitude to a greater extent towards inclusive education. It was also found that the friendly nature of the learning environment towards students with special needs enhances student learning. The researcher recommends, along with other related suggestions that parents and the community should be encouraged to be involved by the promotion of more awareness programs.

**Keywords:** *Therapeutic; inclusive education; special needs; learning conditions.*

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## 1. Background of the study

Nigeria, as a member of the United Nations (UN), agreed to recognize the rights of persons with disabilities by being a signatory to the declarations passed by the United Nations Human Rights Council including the ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. Other UN declarations that were accepted include the following: the International Year of the Disabled Persons of 1981, which promoted the emphasis of the rights of people with disabilities and the Standard Rules on Equalizations of Opportunities of 1993. These rules mandated that states make a strong moral and political commitment to take action on equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. The aim of the rule was to improve the quality of life of persons with disabilities through full participation, (United Nations, 2002). Inclusive education occurs when learners with and without disabilities participate and learn together in the same classroom.

Inclusive education is a new model in education which advocates that all learners, irrespective of any disadvantage, should be educated in the same classroom. All necessary aids to enhance learning are to be provided in the classroom. Lipsky and Gartner (1999) describe inclusive education as learners with disabilities having full membership in age-appropriate classes with appropriate supplementary aids and support services in their neighbourhood schools. Obi and Ashi (2016), observe that the Nigerian situation is an up hill task in the realization of the country's responsibility towards the special needs population. The present absence of a law for the right of persons with disabilities in Nigeria forms a major part of the challenging issues of inclusion. To Akinbola (2010), Nigeria still has a great deal of segregation in its educational framework as special schools and 'homes for the disabled', such as Cheschire Home ..., Schools for the blind and deaf are common features in the country.

The Therapeutic Nursery and Primary school in Enugu Nigeria did not start out with an inclusive setting but metamorphosed from a nursery school for children with special needs (Therapeutic Day Care Centre and Boarding School) to an integrative school and eventually, to an inclusive school. It was a gradual and natural process. Out of necessity, children of the founder and some of her teachers' children without special needs enrolled at the school. From the neighbourhood, parents started enrolling their children and wards with and without special needs. Reverse integration, which is a

process of including typically developing children in a special education classroom (Perles, 2012), began to take root.

According to Ebigbo (2001), his wife, Mrs Hildegard Maria Ebigbo, an educationist, took a two-year 'dream' course in therapeutic pedagogy (heilpaedagogik: the German translation) in an institution in Wuerzburg, Germany before their return as newlyweds to Nigeria in 1977. When she could not find adequate employment to fulfil her dream of catering to the needs of children with special needs, she decided to set up her own. With approval from the ministry of Education, her dream school was established in 1979 as the Therapeutic Day Care Centre. To explain therapeutic pedagogy from which the institution got its name, Ebigbo (2001) states that therapeutic pedagogy has its origin within medicine but today it is based in education and remains interdisciplinary in its orientation, outreach and work. In terms of its medical orientation, therapeutic pedagogy seeks possibilities to help a child with a disability in an outpatient manner while pedagogically, therapeutic pedagogy tries to meet the child on his or her own ground, on a subject-by-subject basis and perceives the child in totality and on that basis, offers stimulation or measures which correspond to his or her developmental needs.

The Therapeutic Inclusive Secondary School (TISS) was established out of the need to provide inclusive post-primary education for graduates from the Therapeutic Inclusive Primary School (TIPS) and other children with special needs who struggle without adequate provisions in regular schools. Parents of children with special needs whose wards passed out of TIPS and who could not find adequate secondary school placements for them, pester the school management to establish secondary education to enable their wards to have access to higher education.

TISS seems to have brought hope for equal participation to students with and without special needs. This case study investigates issues that affect the learning conditions of the school and how they help in the inclusion of students with special needs. It aims to investigate strategies that are in use at TISS for effective implementation of inclusive education. Inclusive strategies refer to any number of approaches that address the needs of students with a variety of backgrounds, learning styles, and abilities. These approaches may include: attitude towards inclusion; friendly learning environment; flexible and accessible curriculum; instructional strategies; professional development and collaboration among professionals; administrative support; and parental and community support. This study is therefore important because other studies carried out on implementation of inclusive education in Nigeria

known to the author tend to focus on certain states of the Federation rather than on an individual school.

## **2. Literature review**

### ***2.1. Attitude towards inclusion***

Change of attitudes towards students with special needs plays a big role in promoting inclusive education. Programs within the community to promote positive attitudes towards students with disabilities are essential for inclusion to be accepted. Ozoji (2003) observes that proper management of attitudes may mean happiness for students with special needs in an inclusive school environment. Ajavon (2006) asserts that the fact that many Nigerians show negative attitudes towards students with hearing impairment cannot be overemphasized. This attitude is often a consequence of ignorance and a lack of understanding of the special needs of such individuals.

### ***2.2. Flexible and accessible curriculum***

A flexible and accessible curriculum supports the inclusion of students with special needs to promote the common good. A flexible curriculum supports all learners, creates opportunities for students to share learning beyond the classroom, boosts confidence, increases participation in learning, and reduces barriers to learning. Barriers to learning may unintentionally be caused by teaching methods, learning materials, assessment processes, and even the physical environment, itself. General educators and special educators need to work together in terms of the adaptation and modification of the curriculum to suit the needs of students with diverse abilities. Torrenno (2011) states that teachers should be flexible with how students learn and demonstrate knowledge and understanding. If students cannot write and can accomplish the same or a similar learning objective through a different method, written work should be deemphasized.

### ***2.3. Friendly Learning Environment***

A friendly and supportive learning environment is one where everyone has the opportunity to work according to their abilities; each learner is given the opportunity to be heard as well as to get the help and support that is needed to promote learning. In order to satisfy the different needs of students most effectively, teachers need to create a learning environment that enables all students to fulfil their educational goals and to participate in educational events (UNESCO, 2005). A learning environment can seriously influence learners' performance and achievements as a whole.

A friendly learning environment is designed to help in overcoming failures and difficulties that students face in an educational institution as well as reduce the risk of falling behind or being excluded from learning and extracurricular activities.

#### ***2.4. Instructional strategies***

Literature provides a great deal of information regarding instructional strategies that encourage learners with special needs to acquire functional skills. A new approach to instructional strategies to support learners with special needs in accessing the general curriculum in a general education setting, is a combination of typical instructional strategies with special education strategies. Instructional strategies that support learners with special needs in an inclusive setting include cooperative learning (CL), inquiry learning (IL), peer tutoring (PT), and universal design for learning (UDL). Inclusive teaching and learning refers to modes of teaching and learning that are designed to actively engage, include, and challenge all students (The Teacher Center, 2016).

#### ***2.5. Professional Development and Continuous Education***

Professionals who provide services for students with disabilities can improve the quality of general education programs. Many professionals play a significant role in achieving this improvement: namely, special education teachers, general education teachers, physical therapists, speech-language pathologists, occupational therapists, and school psychologists. Therefore, it is essential that professionals gain adequate skills to provide appropriate and effective services for learners with special needs in general education settings. Professional development programs, sometimes known as continuous education, is the route that is taken in order to address issues or practices that challenge teachers or to provide information and applications about new approaches in instruction (DeMonte, 2013). Ewa (2013) states that appropriate preparation of educational personnel, especially teachers, stand out as a key factor in promoting progress towards inclusive education of the students with special needs. Knowledge and staff preparation are important to the success of any inclusion practices.

#### ***2.6. Collaboration among professionals***

Along with the need for more inclusive learning strategies, professional development, and continuous learning, there is another equally important factor that requires consideration, which is provided outside of, but alongside the work done in the classroom. Apart from teachers, many

other professionals provide services and play several other roles in inclusive settings including special education teachers, general education teachers, and related services providers (e.g., physical therapists, and speech/language therapists) among others. Therefore, collaboration among professionals is essential for effective inclusive practice. Within schools, teacher collaboration can foster communities of practice through a series of professional relationships that enhance the educational experience and learning outcomes of students with special needs (Mulholland & O'Connor, 2016). The collaborative team approach has emerged as a model to address the curricular needs of all children in the same classroom (Tanner, Linscott & Galis, 1996). A collaborative approach between teachers and parents is based on its efficiency in terms of decision making and its potential to produce high quality student outcomes.

### ***2.7. Administrative Support***

Inclusive education as a model requires support from other staff in schools, especially school administrators (School proprietor/Head teachers). Administrators are key players in creating a successful and effective inclusive environment for learners with special needs through collaboration with other professionals in schools. Research shows that one of the most important administrative tasks is to demonstrate an understanding of special education teachers' role (Otto & Arnold, 2005).

### ***2.8. Parental and Community Involvement***

Parental and community involvement are essential for successful inclusive education. Involvement includes participation, connection, and contribution. Involving parents and the community is an important principle of quality, both in and out of the classroom. It is even more relevant in the case of inclusive education, which is much broader than formal education and should not only take place within the four walls of a classroom (UNICEF, 2014).

## **3. Statement of the problem**

Although several countries around the world including the US, Canada, and UK have advanced in inclusive education practices, Nigeria is still lagging behind. Ajuwon (2012) opines that much of the debate regarding inclusive education in Nigeria has remained theoretical and speculative. TISS, in the mist of the speculations and theories, seems to have been practicing inclusive education for the past seven years. One wonders who the actors are and what collective organization role they have adopted for

the inclusive school since its inception. By carrying out a case study of the school, the researcher is poised to investigate all the issues that affect the learning conditions in the school.

#### 4. Aims and objectives of the study

The general aim of the study is a case study of the Therapeutic Inclusive Secondary School in Enugu, Nigeria. The study is designed to achieve the following specific objectives. To:

- find out the attitude of stakeholders of the school towards inclusion
- evaluate how friendly the learning environment is towards students with special needs
- ascertain the flexibility of the curriculum towards the needs of students with special needs
- evaluate the **academic** performance of students with special needs as compared to students without special needs

#### **the diverse needs of the students**

ascertain the availability of different types of special educators and paraprofessionals employed at the Therapeutic Inclusive Secondary School in Enugu, Nigeria

- evaluate the professional development approaches utilized at the school
- ascertain the availability of administrative support for inclusion to succeed
- **find out involvement of parents and the community in making the inclusive school work?**

#### 5. Research questions

- What are the attitudes of stakeholders of the Therapeutic Inclusive Secondary School, at Enugu, towards inclusion?
- How friendly is the learning environment towards students with special needs?
- Is the curriculum flexible towards the needs of students with special needs?
- Is there any difference in the academic performances of students with and without special needs?
- What are the instructional strategies used in the school to meet the diverse needs of the students?

- What type of special educators/paraprofessionals are employed at the Therapeutic Inclusive Secondary School in Enugu, Nigeria?
- What are the professional development approaches utilized at the Therapeutic Inclusive Secondary School in Enugu, Nigeria?
- What administrative support is available to the running of the inclusive program?
- How involved are parents and the community in making the inclusive school work?

## **6. Research methodology**

### ***6.1. Research design***

The case study method was employed in this study in order to have complete in-depth knowledge about all issues that affect the learning conditions of students with special needs in TISS, Enugu.

### ***6.2. Permission to conduct the study***

To enable the researcher conduct the study, she sought and obtained permission from the Directress Mrs. H.M. Ebigbo, and her management team. Consent forms were filled by both the parents of the students and all other participants involved in the study.

### ***6.3. Area of the study***

The study was conducted on the school premises of the Therapeutic Inclusive Secondary School (TISS) in Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria. This seems to be the only school that practices inclusion in the state.

### ***6.4. Population of the study***

The population of the study comprised 40 respondents: three management staff, seven support teachers, 10 teachers, 10 parents, and 10 students from the school. The categories of respondents mentioned in the populations were used because they formed the major stakeholders of the school; they were in a better position to provide valid data for the study.

### ***6.5. Sample and sampling techniques***

The purposive sampling technique was employed in this study because the researcher currently works at the school and therefore, knows who should be included in the sample. The whole population was used in the study because the population was small and very easy to manage.



**6.6. Instruments for data collection**

The instruments that were used included the Therapeutic Inclusive Education Questionnaire (TIEQ), which was developed by the researcher, interviews and observation. These particular methods were used to elicit information from respondents. Questionnaires were used because some of the respondents are more likely to write than speak. In contrast, the interviews were used because some of the respondents may prefer to speak rather than put their thoughts on paper. The researcher used observation because she is one of the major stakeholders of the school. The instruments comprised 45 items in a four-point Likert scale response format (4 – strongly agree, 3 – agree, 2 – disagree and 1 – strongly disagree). The questionnaire, interviews and observation follow the same format. The instruments were designed to investigate issues that affect the learning conditions of students with special needs in the school being studied.

**6.7. Validation and reliability of the instruments**

The face validity of the instrument was established by three research experts in special education, psychology, measurement and evaluation from the Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria Nsukka. A trial test was conducted using 20 respondents from the Anambra State Special Education Centre. A test of internal consistency was done by using the Crombach Alpha Method and yielded an alpha value of 0.88. This measured the reliability of the instrument.

**6.8. Method of data analyses**

The method of data analysis employed in this study is descriptive statistics with the use of simple percentages, means, and standard deviation to answer the research questions.

**7. Results**

*Research Question 1:* What are the attitudes of stakeholders of the TISS Enugu towards inclusion?

**Table 1.** Attitude of stakeholders of TISS Enugu towards inclusion

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean ±SD
Inclusive education is good for every student.	15 (55.56)	12 (44.44)	0	0	27 (100)	3.54±0.51
The best school for students with special	7 (25.93)	10 (37.04)	3 (11.11)	7(25.93)	27 (100)	3.54±0.51

needs is a special school (i.e., school for the deaf; school for the blind, etc.). Inclusive education does not adequately cater to students with special needs.	1 (3.70)	2 (7.41)	8 (29.62)	16(59.26)	27 (100)	1.57±1.17
Students without special needs are disadvantaged in inclusive schools.	0	2 (7.41)	13 (48.15)	12 (44.44)	27 (100)	1.64±0.62
Students with special needs should be separated from students without special needs in an inclusive environment.	0	1 (3.70)	11 (40.74)	15(55.55)	27 (100)	1.46±0.58
I am not adequately informed about inclusive education.	0	2 (7.41)	16 (59.26)	9(33.33)	27 (100)	1.71±0.60

**Source:** Field data, 2018. **Note:** Percentages are in parenthesis (%)

Table 1 reveals the attitude of 27 respondents towards inclusive education: 27(100%) of the respondents agreed that inclusive education is good for every student; 17(62.96%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that the best school for students with special needs is special school (i.e., school for the deaf; school for the blind etc.) while 10(37.04%) disagreed; 26(96.29%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that students with special needs should be separated from students without special needs in an inclusive environment; and, 25(92.59%) of the respondents were in disagreement with the statement that inclusive schools are not adequately informed about inclusive education. The overall result shows that respondents have a positive attitude to a high extent towards inclusive education.

*Research Question 2:* How friendly is the learning environment towards students with special needs?

**Table 2.** Friendly learning environment of TISS Enugu

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean ±SD
There are spacious classrooms.	11(61.11)	5(27.78)	2(11.11)	0	18(100)	3.17±0.62
Instructional materials are adequately provided.	7(38.89)	11(61.11)	0	0	18(100)	3.61±0.50

The classrooms are well ventilated.	7(38.89)	10(55.56)	0	1(5.56)	18(100)	3.44±0.78
Assistive devices are adequately provided to assist students with special needs.	5(27.78)	7(38.89)	3(16.67)	3(16.67)	18(100)	2.89±0.13
The use of assistive devices devalue the personality of students with special needs.	0	1(5.56)	8(44.44)	9(50.00)	18(100)	1.61±0.78
There are special needs' friendly recreational facilities	14(77.78)	4(22.22)	0	0	18(100)	3.22±0.43
There is a poor relationship between students with special needs and teachers in the school	0	0	5(27.78)	13(72.22)	18(100)	1.28±0.46
The school provides support to teachers to help students with special needs who need additional help.	9(50)	9(50)	0	0	18(100)	3.50±0.51
The school environment poses dangers to students with special needs.	0	0	6(33.33)	12(66.67)	18(100)	1.33±0.49

**Source:** Field data, 2018. **Note:** Percentages are in parenthesis (%)

Table 2 reveals the responses of 18 respondent on friendly nature of the learning environment towards students with special needs: 18 respondents were given this instrument. 18(100%) of the respondents agreed with the statements that instructional materials are adequately provided, that there is a good relationship between students with special needs and teachers in the school, that teachers are given support to help students with special needs who need additional help and that the school environment poses no dangers to students with special needs; 17(94.44%) of the respondents agreed that the classrooms are well ventilated and the use of assistive devices do not devalue the personality of students with special needs but enhances their learning; 16(88.89%) and 12(66.67%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that classrooms are spacious and that assistive devices are adequately provided to assist students with special needs. Overall, the results

show that to a high extent, the learning environment is friendly towards students with special needs.

*Research Question 3:* Is the curriculum flexible towards the needs of students with special needs?

**Table 3.** Flexibility and accessibility of curriculum towards the needs of students with special needs

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean $\pm$ SD
The curriculum is modified to suit the needs of students with special needs.	6(60)	3(30)	1(10)	0	10(100)	3.50 $\pm$ 0.71
Teachers are trained to be able to adapt curriculum to suit individual needs.	5(50)	4(40)	1(10)	0	10(100)	3.40 $\pm$ 0.70
Teachers find it difficult to adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of students in my classroom.	0	1(10)	8(80)	1(10)	10(100)	2.00 $\pm$ 0.47
As a teacher, I am adequately skilled in adapting the curriculum to teach the students in my class.	3(30)	6(60)	1(10)	0	10(100)	3.20 $\pm$ 0.63
Teachers work together to modify curriculum.	3(30)	6(60)	1(10)	0	10(100)	3.20 $\pm$ 0.63

**Source:** Field data, 2018. **Note:** Percentages are in parenthesis (%)

Table 3, involving 10 respondents reveals that the teachers are skilfully trained to work with professionals to adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of students in their classes with 9 (90%) of the respondents responding in a positive manner.

*Research Question 4:* Is there any difference in the **academic** performance between students with and without special needs?

**Table 4. Comparism of academic** performance of students with and without special needs in their first Senior Secondary Certificate Examination (SSCE) (2016/17 Academic Session)

Subjects	Distinction		Credit		Pass		Fail		Total	
	W	WO	W	WO	W	WO	W	WO	W	WO
English Language	0	2	10	13	0	5	0	0	10	20

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Mathematics	6	7	2	8	2	4	0	1	10	20
Civics Education	0	5	8	9	2	6	0	0	10	20
Agricultural Science	1	6	0	9	9	4	0	1	10	20
Biology	0	5	0	10	9	4	1	1	10	20
Chemistry	0	7	0	9	8	4	2	0	10	20
Physics	0	8	2	7	8	5	0	0	10	20
Animal Husbandry	0	6	2	8	8	4	0	2	10	20
Economics	0	8	4	6	6	5	0	1	10	20

**Source:** School records

Key: W=With special needs [10], WO= With-Out special needs [20]

Table 4 reveals the scores of 30 students that sat for the SSCE, 10 of the students were with special needs while 20 students were without special needs. Majority of the students with special needs were hearing impaired with a few mildly intellectually impaired. Drawn from the analysis presented above, the difference between the performances of students with and without special needs were not significant.

*Research Question 5:* What are the instructional strategies used in the school to meet the diverse needs of students?

**Table 5.** Instructional strategies used in the school to meet the diverse needs of students

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean $\pm$ SD
Peer tutoring is employed in teaching in the school.	3(30)	5(50)	2(20)	0	10(100)	3.10 $\pm$ 0.74
Special needs' friendly instructional materials are used in teaching.	5(50)	4(40)	1(10)	0	10(100)	3.40 $\pm$ 0.70
Students with special needs are grouped among themselves in learning activities.	7(70)	3(30)	0	0	10(100)	3.70 $\pm$ 0.48
Students with and without special needs are grouped together in learning activities.	2(20)	5(50)	3(30)	0	10(100)	2.90 $\pm$ 0.74
Assignments are given according to individual learning speed.	3(30)	5(50)	2(20)	0	10(100)	3.10 $\pm$ 0.74
Students with exceptional learning needs have support	6(60)	3(30)	1(10)	0	10(100)	3.50 $\pm$ 0.71

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teachers attached individually.						
Total communication is used for the benefit of students with hearing impairments.	6(60)	3(30)	1(10)	0	10(100)	3.50±0.71

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**Source:** Field data, 2018. **Note:** Percentages are in parenthesis (%)

Table 5 shows responses of 10 respondents on instructional strategies used in the school to meet the diverse needs of the students: 10(100%) of the respondents agreed with the statement that students with special needs are grouped among themselves in learning activities; 9(90%) agreed with the statements that special needs friendly instructional materials are used in teaching, that students with exceptional learning needs have support teachers who are attached individually and total communication is used for the benefit of students with hearing impairments; 7(70%) and 8(80%) of the respondents agreed with the statements that students with and without special needs are grouped together in learning activities and that peer tutoring is employed in teaching in the school, respectively. This implies that students with special needs are grouped among themselves in learning activities and that the least used instructional strategy is that of students with and without special needs being grouped together in learning activities.

*Research Question 6:* Ascertain the availability of different types of special educators and paraprofessionals employed in TISS Enugu, Nigeria.

**Table 6.** Availability of different types of special educators and para-professionals employed in TISS Enugu, Nigeria

Special educator	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Ph.D.	1	7.14
Masters	1	7.14
NCE	3	21.43
Diploma	1	7.14
<b>PARAPROFESSIONALS</b>		
School Nurse	1	7.14
Guidance Counsellor	1	7.14
Visiting psychologist	1	7.14
Sign language interpreters	5	35.71
Total	14	100

Table 6 reveals the availability of different types of special educators and paraprofessionals, employed in the school. A total of 6(42.86%) of the educators were special educators while 5(35.71%) were sign language interpreters trained on the job in the school and 1(7.14%) of the other paraprofessionals included the school nurse, guidance counsellor and visiting psychologist, respectively.

*Research question 7: What professional development approaches utilized at TISS Enugu, Nigeria?*

**Table 7.** Availability of professional development approaches utilized at TISS Enugu, Nigeria

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean $\pm$ SD
Teachers are continuously trained in managing inclusive classrooms.	5(50)	2(20)	2(20)	1(10)	10(100)	3.05 $\pm$ 0.76
Teachers are supported with in-service training to improve their skills in teaching.	3(30)	5(50)	1(10)	1(10)	10(100)	3.05 $\pm$ 0.51

Table 7 reveals the responses of 10 respondents on professional development training available at TISS Enugu, Nigeria for teachers: (7)70% of the respondents agreed and (3)30% disagreed with the statement that teachers are continuously trained in managing an inclusive classroom; while (8)80% of the respondents agreed and (2)20% disagreed with the statement that teachers are supported with in-service training to improve their skills in teaching. This implies that the majority of the teachers undergo professional development training and continuous education.

*Research question 8: What administrative support is available in the school for inclusive program?*

**Table 8.** Available administrative support in the school for inclusive program.

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean $\pm$ SD
The school administration provides opportunities for	6(60)	4(40)	0	0	10(100)	3.60 $\pm$ 0.52

teachers and professionals to collaborate.						
Teaching and learning materials are adequately provided	4(40)	6(60)	0	0	10(100)	3.40±0.32
Professional development and continuous education is sufficiently provided	2(20)	7(70)	1(10)	0	10(100)	3.10±0.57
Learning environment is unfriendly	0	0	1(10)	9(90)	10 (100)	1.10±0.32

**Source:** Field data, 2018. **Note:** Percentages are in parenthesis (%)

Table 8 reveals the responses of 10 respondents on available administrative support for the running of the inclusive program: (10)100% of the respondents agreed with the statements to a great extent that administrative support is available for the running of the inclusive program.

*Research Question 9:* How involved are parents and the community in making the inclusive school work?

**Table 9.** Parental and community involvement

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Total	Mean ± SD
Parents and the community are involved in the education of their children.	3(42.86)	1(14.29)	1(14.29)	2(28.57)	7 (100)	2.43±1.13
Parents serve as resource persons to the school from time to time.	2(28.57)	3(42.86)	0	2(28.57)	7(100)	2.86±1.35
Parents have an association to serve as advocates for students with special needs.	5(71.43)	2(28.57)	0	0	7(100)	1.10±0.49
Financial and material support is given to the school by the parents.	3(42.86)	4(57.14)	0	0	7(100)	
The community does not give any support to the school.	2(28.57)	1(14.29)	2(28.57)	2(28.57)	7(100)	

**Source:** Field data, 2018. **Note:** Percentages are in parenthesis (%)



Table 9 shows the responses of 7 respondents on the involvement of parents and community in making the inclusive school work. The data result reveals that 4(57.14%) of the respondents agreed and 3(42.86%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the parents and the community are involved in the education of their children. All 7(100%) of the respondents agreed with the statements that parents have an association and serve as advocates for students with special needs and that financial and material support is given to the school by the parents. 3(42.86%) of the respondents agreed and 4(57.14%) of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the community does not give any support to the school.

## 8. Discussion

The study reveals that the aim of TISS is to provide the opportunity for students with special needs to study alongside their peers without special needs in an environment that is free of barriers and discrimination in order to achieve their maximum potential in life. This could be seen not only from the result of the study but also from the vision and mission statement of the school:

*Vision:* All children and young persons, no matter how disadvantaged, should realize their full, God-given potential.

*Mission:* To pursue an inclusive, non-discriminatory, child-centred, individualized, and remedial pedagogy; so that children, having realized their potential, can on that basis, as much as possible, become full members of society.

The study reveals that the attitude of administrators, teachers, parents, community members and learners without special needs are positive towards inclusion. This positive attitude leads to the feeling of acceptance by students with special needs and results in a positive self-concept and additional effort to participate in healthy competition with students without special needs. This buttresses the fact that the change of attitudes towards students with special needs plays a big role in promoting inclusive education and reinforces Ozoji's statement (2003) that the proper management of attitudes may mean happiness for the students with special needs in an inclusive school environment and validates Mushoriwa's (2001) study that showed that students who experienced negative attitudes went back to their special schools.

The study found that the learning environment is conducive and friendly; students with special needs have a rapport with both teachers and fellow students without special needs – they make friends indiscriminately.

Their classrooms are well-ventilated and appropriately lit. There are ramps and special needs friendly learning materials and a playground which enables students with special needs to participate freely and fully in learning and play activities. This is in line with the position of UNESCO, (2005) which states that in order to satisfy the different needs of students most effectively, teachers need to create the learning environment that enables all students to fulfil their educational goals and to participate in educational events.

The study found that, in response to the question on curriculum adaption, 90% of the teachers as opposed to 10%, responded positively that they are able to adapt their curriculum to suit the needs of their students. The result of the observation conducted by the researcher confirmed their claim. Teachers work together with professionals in curriculum adaptation. This finding falls in line with Torrenno's (2011) statement that teachers should be flexible in how students learn and demonstrate knowledge and understanding. The finding that 10% of the teachers find it difficult to interpret the curriculum is significant and needs to be given appropriate consideration

The study reveals in the statistics on the demographic characteristics of teachers and the response of the management staff to the question on the category of teachers in the school that there are six teachers including three management staff that hold certificates ranging from the Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) to a Ph.D. in special needs education. Some other team members are trained, on the job, to manage students with special needs and as sign language interpreters for effective and successful inclusion; this falls in line with the view of Ewa (2013) who opines that appropriate preparation of educational personnel, especially teachers, stands out as a key factor in promoting progress towards inclusive education of students with special needs.

The findings of the study shows that there is collaboration between general education teachers, paraprofessionals, and special education teachers to enable them to cater to the individual needs of diverse students in the school. This study tries to bring out TISS as a model inclusive school to be used for advocacy tool for inclusive education in Nigeria.

## **9. Recommendations**

- Encourage parents and the community to be involved through promoting more awareness programs in the community.
- Provide more assistive devices to ease learning for students with special needs.

- Increase professional development programs and continuous learning to adequately equip both teachers and parents on the knowledge of inclusive education.
- Enugu state as well as the nation should see TISS as a model for implementing inclusive education in schools, since it has proved that inclusion is not an elusive concept.

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