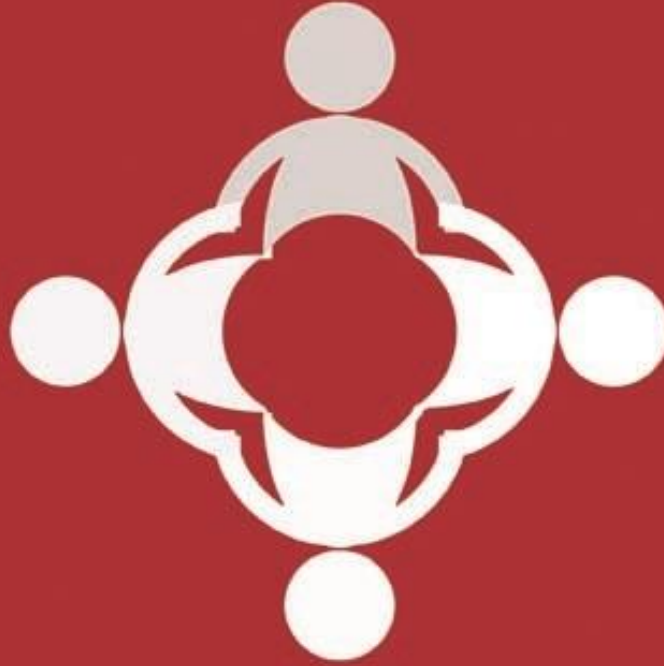# TIJSEG Turkish International Journal of Special Education and Guidance & Counselling

Turkish International Journal of Special Education and Guidance & Counseling

Volume 13 Issue 1

Turkish International Journal of Special Education and Guidance & Counselling

Prof.Dr. M. Engin DENİZ

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Message from the Editor

I am very pleased to publish first issue in 2024. As an editor of Turkish International Journal of Special Education and Guidance & Counselling (TIJSEG) this issue is the success of the reviewers, editorial board and the researchers. In this respect, I would like to thank to all reviewers, researchers and the editorial board. The articles should be original, unpublished, and not in consideration for publication elsewhere at the time of submission to Turkish International Journal of Special Education and Guidance & Counselling (TIJSEG), For any suggestions and comments on TIJSEG, please do not hesitate to send mail. The countries of the authors contributed to this issue (in alphabetical order): Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Thailand, and Türkiye.

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Research Articles

AI COUNSELLING TECHNIQUE: ENHANCING STRESS MANAGEMENT AMONG ENGINEERING STUDENTS WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITY

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Abstract

Engineering studies can negatively impact the academic performance and mental health of those with physical disabilities. The impact of Artificial intelligence (AI) counselling technique on stress management of engineering students with physical disability was explored. There's a dearth of research relating to AI counselling technique and students with physical disabilities. The pretest posttest control group quasi-experimental research design was adopted. Six hypotheses guided the study. Participants were 98 physically challenged engineering students selected across ten institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. Experimental groups and the Control group were all pretested using self-designed Perceived Stress Level Scale (PSLS). The experimental group was treated with AI-enhanced counselling for 5 weeks while the control group was exposed to conventional counselling. Then subjected to PSLS. Percentage, mean, standard deviation and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) were used. Findings were a significant main effect of AI counseling technique on stress management (F-ratio $_{(1, 97)}$ = 7.235), a significant main effect of level of study on stress management (F-ratio $_{(2, 98)}$ = 4.409). A significant interaction effect of level of student and AI counseling technique on the stress management (F-ratio $_{(2, 96)}$=5.352) no significant interaction effect of gender, level of study and AI counseling technique was found (F-ratio $_{(3, 95)}$ =1.274). Incorporating AI counseling technique for managing stress was recommended.

Keywords: AI counseling, stress management, engineering students, physical disability.

INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced world, stress is a pervasive issue affecting people from all walks of life. Srivastava, Saxena, & Baijal, (2024) opined that young job seekers have a fair share of the stress syndrome as they often face considerable stress and insecurity in the course of their progression from training to employment. As Gyasi and Yeboah (2020) put it, stress has become part and parcel of African campuses. Persons with physical disabilities every so often face distinct stressors, such as ease of access, mobility, and discrimination-related challenges (Gyasi & Yeboah, 2020). For students with physical disabilities, the stress may be higher and can negatively impact their academic performance, well-being, and mental health. Suffice to say that they face many challenges in academics, social life which ultimately becomes evident in their self-image. With the increasing use of technology, AI-based counseling techniques have emerged as an auspicious tool for learning and gathering information.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has been beneficial for learning, gathering information, and research purposes (Dwivedi, Hughes, Ismagilova, Aarts, Coombs, Crick & Williams, 2021), nonetheless, there is a knowledge gap on its impact regarding counseling of engineering students with physical disability. Despite the fact that counseling programme and service may possibly be obtainable for students in higher institution of learning, the provision may not meet the unique requirement of physically challenged students. As these students face a number of challenges and obstacles beyond ordinary accessibility related to curriculum, instruction and assessment (Clavijo-Castillo & Bautista-Cerro, 2020). As a result, challenges related to adjustments and regulation, which affect their identity development force them to develop self-advocacy skills.

AI counseling tools offer potential benefits, such as constant availability, accessibility, and anonymity, which could be on the whole valuable for students with disabilities. The use of AI among students may differ across gender though (Pasquarella & Daley, 2021; Tabassum & Nayak, 2021). Male students may exhibit courage bearing academic stress while female students may share their burdens during counseling (Naznin & Nayak, 2021). Their educational level and socio-economic status also determine how they respond to AI counseling. Students who have spent considerable number of years on their studies may have developed personal coping strategies, thus limiting the benefit they derive from AI counseling. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the impact of an AI counseling technique on stress management among engineering students with physical disabilities with gender and level of study as moderating variables.

Literature Review
Artificial Intelligence Counseling
Looking into the prospective advantages of AI-driven technology, it is an irrefutable fact that AI is being used far and wide in educational sector as well as organizations. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a rapidly growing field that has been incorporated into various fields and activities (Dwived, et al., 2021). It executes multifaceted tasks demanding human-like intelligence, such as language processing, recognizing patterns, and making decisions. For instance, currently, AI is used for medical diagnosis and ascertaining management options of diseases and treatment (Davies, Eynon & Salveson, 2020), thus, helping doctors make informed decisions (Frye, 2020), analyze data and make predictions on market trends, (Gordijn, & Have, 2023), to improve fraud detection and prevent financial crimes (Hao, 2019; Odeyemi, Awonuga, Mhlongo, Ndubuisi, Olatoye & Daraojimba, 2024), furthermore to analyze data and personalize marketing efforts (Elsen-Rooney, 2023) and finally, for educational purposes such as personalize learning experiences for students (Davies et al., 2020). AI counselling involves the use of ChatGPT to search for supports required for stress, and anxiety.

The GPT acronym is derived from ChatGPT language model called Generative Pre-Trained Transformer invented by Open AI. The AI can produce response text that is virtually indistinguishable from known human language (Frye, 2022). It is safe to describe ChatGPT as a highly developed Chabot that can handle a diversity of text-based demands, as well as simple question-answering and more difficult ones bordering on writing intricate piece and enabling people to maneuver tough situations (Liu, Zheng, Du, Ding, Qian, Yang & Tang, 2021). In summary, Artificial intelligence (AI) therapy is for all intents and purposes is a multipart and comprehensive use of data to support persons on the path of mental wellness (Arger, 2023).

Students with Disability in Higher Institutions
Physical disabilities include any physical or medical condition that significantly impacts daily life. These include, but are not limited to, conditions such as visual or hearing impairments, mobility constraints, and seizure disorders (Tahir, Thambapillay, Yusoff, & Rahman, 2020). In this study, physical disabilities are defined as those that first and foremost primarily impact the body. People with physical disabilities face a variety of challenges and obstacles in performing everyday activities, isolation, independence, educational

and career achievement (Aamlid & Brownfield, 2019; Gaskin, Imms, Dagley, Msall, & Reddihough, 2021; Kotera, Chircop, & Hutchinson, 2021; Salt & Jahoda, 2020). Nagar, Quirk, & Anderson (2023) explored the experiences college students using mental health applications undergo in order to advance self-care skills. Students of higher institutions of learning impacted by physical disability are limited in multiple ways. They are mandated to put into consideration physical accessibility over other dynamics like academics and finances when choosing a school, and often times, express significant loneliness (Kotera et al., 2021).

Stress

Many students in the course of attending classes, doing assignments and making presentations experience one form of stress or the other. As a consequence, Obi (2020) opines that stress is a wide-reaching involvement in the lives of a lot of persons. In the same vein, Odita (2023) theorized that stress is inescapable in school environment. Even among employers and employees, stress has become a familiar occurrence. Making an allowance for stress, allows for positive acceptance that leads to greater productivity and enhanced performance, while, deleterious stress leads to various complications. Agreeing with Gibbons (2021), school pressures and stress may impede academic performance nonetheless.

Stress management technique is a set of strategies and programmes aimed to support individuals in handling stress by way of isolating stressors and decreasing their impact (Brown, 2021). It's a "wide-ranging range of procedures and psychotherapies concentrated at regulating stress, ordinarily to improve daily routine. (Odita, 2023). Stress management involves components/mechanisms that must be used appropriately to subsist excellently at school.

Statement of the Problem

Engineering studies are known for being challenging and demanding for all students. Engineering students with physical disabilities experience high levels of stress. This is capable of creating negative impact on their academic achievement, performance, well-being, and mental health. Obtainable stress management resources may possibly not be amply tailored to make available support to individual challenges encountered by this population. Artificial intelligence (AI) has been used for learning, gathering information, and research purposes but its impact on counseling of engineering students with physical disability is not yet known. While counseling programme and service may be within reach for students in higher institution of learning, the service may not meet the unique need of physically challenged students.

These students face several challenges and obstacles beyond mere accessibility related to the curriculum, instruction style, and assessment. Consequently, they encounter challenges related to adjustments and regulation, which affect their identity development, forcing them to develop self-advocacy skills, sometimes resigning to fate and defeat. Decreased self- esteem, self- confidence and self-concept. Regardless of the growing interest in utilization of AI, there is limited research on their effectiveness in supporting individuals with physical disabilities. There is a need therefore, to explore the potential impact of AI counseling techniques to support stress management among engineering students with physical disability.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study:
1. There is no significant main effect of treatment on stress management of engineering students with physical disability.
2. There is no significant main effect of gender on stress management of engineering students with physical disability.
3. There is no significant main effect of level of study on stress management of engineering students with physical disability.

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4. There is no significant interaction effect of gender and treatment on stress management of engineering students with physical disability.
5. There is no significant interaction effect of level of study and treatment on stress management of engineering students with physical disability.
6. There is no significant interaction effect of gender, level of study and treatment on stress management of engineering students with physical disability.

METHOD

The pretest posttest control group quasi-experimental research design was adopted for the study. Six hypotheses guided the study. Random sampling technique was used to select 98 physically challenged engineering students across ten institutions of higher learning in Nigeria. There were two groups: Experimental groups and the Control group which were all pretested using Perceived Stress Level Scale (PSLS) designed by the researcher. The scale was used to assess the stress level before being exposed to the treatment. The experimental group was later treated with AI counseling technique which is ChatGPT oriented for 5 weeks while the control group were exposed to conventional counselling. The two groups were subjected to PSLS to ascertain their stress level again. Data collected were analyzed using percentage, mean, standard deviation and analysis of covariance (ANCOVA).

RESULTS

Demographic characteristics of the participants included in the study according to gender and education level are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Socio-demographic data.

Variable	N	%	Mean	SD
Gender				
Male	42	42.9		
Female	56	57.1	1.57	.497
Total	98	100.0		
Study level				
100-200	56	57.1		
300-500	42	42.9	1.43	.497
Total	98	100.0		

Table 1 shows the demographic characteristics of the participants across gender and level of study. It shows that female engineering students represents 57.1% of the participants while 42.9% represented male engineering students with mean and standard deviation of 1.57 and .497 respectively. The table also shows that engineering students from 100-200 level of study accounted for 57.1% of the participants while those in 300-500 level of study accounted for 42.9% with mean and standard deviation of 1.43 and .497 respectively. The table therefore reveal an even spread of the participants across gender and level of study.

Table 2 is ANCOVA showing the main effect and interaction effect of the moderating variable and AI counseling on the management of stress among the participants at $p<.003 <.005$. The table shows that at df of 1, 97, and F-ratio=7.235 which shows that there is significant main effect of treatment on stress management of the participants. The partial eta is.033 and this implies that stress management of the participants is determined by 33% of the treatment. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is rejected.

Table 2. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) showing main effect of gender; study level and ai-counseling; interaction effect of AI-counseling and gender; interaction effect of AI-counseling and study level; and interaction effect of gender, study level and AI-counseling.

Dependent Variable: Stress management

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	902.906ᵃ	11	100.322	1.216	.302	.086
Intercept	95986.008	1	95986.008	905.122	.000	.910
Pretest	4.433	1	4.433	1.231	.347	.001
gender	32.013	2	26.006	.100	.703	.002
Study level	43.368	2	21.684	4.409	.004	.035
Treatment	24.923	1	24.923	7.235	.003	.033
Gender * Treatment	157.929	1	157.929	1.489	.226	.016
Study level * Treatment	567.579	1	567.579	5.352	.003	.056
Gender * Study level * Treatment	135.106	1	135.106	1.274	.262	.014
Error	9544.288	87	110.980			
Total	125853.000	98				
Corrected Total	106495.647	97				

The Table 2 also shows that at df of 2, 96, and F-ratio = .100 which shows there is no significant main effect of gender on stress management of the participants at p< .753 > .005. The partial eta is .001 and this implies that stress management of the participants is predicted by 1% of gender. Therefore, there is no significant main effect of gender on stress management of the participants. Hypothesis 2 is therefore accepted.

The table also shows that at df of 2, 96, and F-ratio = 4.409 which shows there is significant main effect of study level on stress management of the participants at p< .004 < .005. The partial eta is .035 and this implies that stress management of the participants is predicted by 35% of study level. Therefore, there is significant main effect of study level on stress management of the participants. Hypothesis 3 is therefore rejected.

The Table 2 also shows that at df of 2, 96, and F-ratio =1.489 which shows there is no significant interaction effect of gender and treatment on stress management of the participants at p<.226>.005. The partial eta is .016 and this implies that stress management of the participants is predicted by 16% of gender and treatment. Therefore, there is no significant interaction effect of gender and treatment on stress management of the participants. Hypothesis 4 is therefore accepted.

The table also shows that at df of 2, 96, and F-ratio=5.352 which shows there is significant interaction effect of study level and treatment on stress management of the participants at p<.003< .005. The partial eta is .056 and this implies that stress management of the participants is predicted by 56% study level and treatment. Therefore, there is significant interaction effect of study level and treatment on stress management of the participants. Hypothesis 5 is therefore rejected.

The table also shows that at df of 2, 96, and F-ratio=1.274 which shows there is no significant interaction effect of gender, study level and treatment on stress management of the participants at p<.262 >.005. The partial eta is .014 and this implies that stress management of the participants is predicted by 14% study level and treatment. Therefore, there is significant interaction effect of gender, study level and treatment on stress management of the participants. Hypothesis 6 is therefore rejected.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, and SUGGESTIONS

It was found that AI counseling has significant main effect on stress management of physically challenged engineering students. This finding is similar to Khawaja and Bélisle-Pipon (2023) who investigated if AI could have a positive effect in increasing access to mental health care and found that an AI as a psychotherapy tool could help with diagnoses via comprehensive data access and analyzing behavioral patterns, and that chatbot could mimic practitioner questions and subsequently make recommendations based on a user's input. Silva (2022) also reported that the use of AI could significantly positively enhance psychotherapy and reduce clinical mental health symptoms and AI counseling therapy was met with high satisfaction, engagement and retention rates. Bouhouita-Guermech, Gogognon and Bélisle-Pipon (2023) explored the challenges posed by AI just as Brisson, Bélisle-Pipon and Ravitsky (2023), examined the influence that AI wielded over health of adolescents.

These earlier studies are in tandem with the submissions that AI counseling enhances the mental health and boost stress coping mechanism of persons with special needs. Khare, Khare and Chandra (2021) also had before then submitted that AI-powered counseling interventions positively impacted the mental health and stress management of engineering students. The study involved physically challenged students, and the results showed that AI-powered counseling was effective in reducing stress levels and improving overall mental health. It was found that gender it was also found that there is no significant main effect of gender on stress management of physically challenged engineering students but the main effect of study level is significant. This findings agrees with Singh, Singh, Sharma and Prasad (2021) who also found that gender did not significantly impact stress levels of engineering students, but study level did have a significant effect.

The researchers found that the interaction effect of study level and AI counseling on stress management of physically challenged engineering students was significant. These findings align with Silva (2022) in suggesting that AI counseling, as an alternative approach, can be effective for students at specific points in their academic journey. Srivastava, Saxena, & Baijal (2024) in their study, addressed the persistent concern bothering on mental health and total well-being of youth, in search of carreer search. Their findings support the submission that they often face considerable stress and insecurity in the course of their progression from training to employment.

No significant interactive effect of gender and AI counseling was found. This finding correspond with Singh, Singh, Sharma and Prasad (2021) who reported no significant interaction effect of gender and AI counseling, noting that works for male and female individuals.

The interaction effect of gender, study level and AI counseling was not significant. The study of Singh, Singh, Sharma and Prasad (2021) supports this finding.

Conclusions
Arising from the findings of the study, it is save to conclude that AI counseling is effective in managing stress of physically challenged engineering students across gender. It however needs to be tailored towards the needs of different level of study of the students for optional results. Based on the results of the analysis, the following conclusions were drawn:

The use of AI counseling is an effective tool to manage stress among physically challenged engineering students. Therefore, educational institutions should consider incorporating AI counseling services to support the mental health of their male and female students.

Study level has a significant impact on stress management among physically challenged engineering students. Therefore, educational institutions should consider providing different levels of support for students at different stages of their academic journey.

There is a significant interaction effect between study level and AI counseling on stress management. Educational institutions should consider providing targeted support for students at different stages of their academic journey to maximize the benefits of AI counseling services.

Each of AI counseling and study level has impact on stress management for physically challenged engineering students. Study level and AI counseling will have more potent impact on stress management of the physically challenged engineering students. No significant main effect of gender and AI counseling on stress management for physically challenged engineering students was found. No significant interaction effect of gender, study and AI counseling on stress management for physically challenged engineering students was found.

Recommendations
Based on the results of the analysis, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Incorporating AI counseling techniques can be an effective way to manage stress among engineering students. Therefore, educational institutions should consider implementing AI counseling services to support student mental health as it is effective and accessible to students.

2. Since the level of study was found to have a significant main effect on stress management, educational institutions should provide stress management resources and support to physically challenged engineering students at all levels of study.

3. There is no significant main effect of gender on stress management. However, it is important to take into account the unique needs of male and female students when designing stress management programme for physically challenged engineering students.

4. The significant interaction effect of the level of student and AI counseling technique on stress management for physically challenged engineering students indicates that certain AI counseling techniques is more effective for students at different levels of study. Therefore, educational institutions need to consider tailoring their AI counseling services to meet the specific needs of physically challenged engineering students at each level of study.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest
The authors declare that the work is written with due consideration of ethical standards. The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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PEER BULLYING IN THE PRE-SCHOOL PERIOD STUDIES IN TURKEY[1]

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Abstract

This research aims to examine the studies on peer bullying in the preschool period completed between 2000 and 2020 in Turkey. The sample of the research consists of 32 studies, including 18 theses and 14 articles. According to the findings, it was determined that master's theses were more than doctoral theses. In the distribution by years, it is seen that the most theses were prepared in 2017 and 2019, and the most articles were prepared in 2019 and 2020. While the quantitative research approach is preferred the most in theses and articles; qualitative approach was not found in doctoral theses, and the mixed approach was not found in master's theses and articles. Descriptive and correlational survey model were used the most in theses, correlational survey model was used most in articles. The most common sample group in theses and articles is "preschool children". In theses and articles, three measurement tools are used the most frequently; and the data collection tool is the most frequently used scale. The cross-sectional method was used in all theses and most of the articles. It has been determined that the most preferred topic in theses and articles is demographic variables.

Keywords: Preschool period, peer bullying, bullied children, victim children, peer relations.

INTRODUCTION

Preschool education institutions are responsible for providing children the opportunity of experiencing positive social relationships. Staff working in these institutions, especially teachers, the institution's physical conditions and applied educational program all have a critical role in children's peer relationships. Teachers should find the correct strategies concerning unwanted preschool period behaviours. They should apply the strategy set through classroom management by taking individual differences into consideration. Eventually, unwanted behaviours will decrease or not even occur (Şahin and Arslan, 2014). One negative behaviour that can be observed in preschool education institutions is peer bullying. Bullying is defined by Olweus (1978) as offensive and purposeful actions displayed repeatedly by a group or person on a victim who has a difficulty in defending himself or herself. When the criteria based on the definitions of bullying made by researchers are taken into consideration, it is evident that these are; deliberate intention (intention to harm), repeating and power imbalance (Taner Derman, 2022). When children who bully are examined, it is observed that they like being popular, looking powerful and attach importance to social standing and communication. Some bully children were stated to prefer loneliness and little number of friends (Gülay, 2008). It is observed that children who are exposed to bullying are more introvert in social settings, have difficulty in interpreting the behaviours they encounter, are more passive in social settings and are easily affected by negative actions. One of the important roles in the peer bullying process is the bully-victim role. The bully and victim roles can change during the process (Wolke & Lereya, 2015). Various studies show that children who

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[1] This article was produced from the first author's master's thesis.

are both bully and victimized undergo more psychological problems than children who are only a bully or only a victim (Korkut, 2019). When compared with children who have never experienced peer bullying, bully-victim children feel abandoned and lonely more, display negative peer relationships in the classroom and have lower academic achievement (Pekel-Uludağlı and Uçanok, 2005). It is observed that when bullying behaviours are perpetual and interventions are insufficient, they can cause serious outcomes and negative results of preschool period bullying behaviours can continue during future years of life (Ergül Topçu, 2018). It is considered that preschool teachers have a big role in the child becoming aware of the role he or she is undergoing and assisting them to the solution (Yoon & Barton, 2008).

Today, the importance attached to peer bullying studies is more common. In order to support studies on peer bullying, it is important to examine the results of studies in the literature. When the related literature is considered, Korkmaz, Erkin and Atbaşı (2021) underline that the preschool period is the least examined educational stage with respect to peer bullying. This research aims at drawing attention to the subject by examining studies conducted between 2000-2020 on peer bullying during the preschool period. Thus, it is considered that it can guide future studies on the subject. A twenty-year time interval starting from the recent past was preferred in order to examine current studies. Examining master's and doctoral theses and articles on peer bullying during preschool period within the stated twenty years through various aspects is thought to contribute to developing a framework about the subject. With this respect, it is considered that researchers' attentions can be drawn on peer bullying during preschool period and offer guidance to future studies on the subject.

The purpose of this study is to conduct content analyses of master's and doctoral theses and articles on peer bullying during preschool period completed between years 2000 - 2020 in Turkey.

1.   How is the distribution according to types and years of the master's and doctoral theses and articles completed between years 2000 - 2020 in Turkey on peer bullying during preschool period?

2.   How is the distribution according to the universities where the master's and doctoral theses and articles were carried out completed between years 2000 - 2020 in Turkey on peer bullying during the preschool period?

3.   How is the distribution according to the cities of the master's and doctoral theses and articles completed between years 2000 - 2020 in Turkey on peer bullying during preschool period?

4.   How is the distribution according to the language of the master's and doctoral theses and articles completed between years 2000 - 2020 in Turkey on peer bullying during preschool period?

5.   How is the distribution according to the keywords of the master's and doctoral theses and articles completed between years 2000 - 2020 in Turkey on peer bullying during preschool period?

6.   How is the distribution according to the research approach of the master's and doctoral theses and articles completed between years 2000 - 2020 in Turkey on peer bullying during preschool period?

7.   How is the distribution according to the research design of the master's and doctoral theses and articles completed between years 2000 - 2020 in Turkey on peer bullying during preschool period?

8.   How is the distribution according to the sample group variables (who the sample group consists of, number range of the sample group, selection method of the sample group) of the master's and doctoral theses and articles completed between years 2000 - 2020 in Turkey on peer bullying during preschool period?

9.   How is the distribution according to the data collection tool variables (number and type of the data collection tools, data collection time frames) of the master's and doctoral theses and articles completed between years 2000 - 2020 in Turkey on peer bullying during preschool period?

10. How is the distribution according to the subjects of the master's and doctoral theses and articles completed between years 2000 - 2020 in Turkey on peer bullying during preschool period?

METHOD

Research Model

In this study, where theses and articles conducted between years 2000 - 2020 in Turkey on peer bullying during preschool period, the descriptive screening design, which is among the qualitative research method designs, was used. The descriptive screening design refers to defining how a past or present state is without making changes in the data (Karasar, 2020).

Sample

The research population consists of theses on preschool period peer bullying available at the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) National Thesis Centre and articles available at the Index of Turkish Education, Acarindeks, TR Dizin and GOOGLE Scholar indexes. The research sample consists of theses on peer bullying conducted between the years 2000-2020 in the field of preschool education available at the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) National Thesis Centre and articles conducted between the years 2000-2020 in the field of preschool education available at the Index of Turkish Education, Acarindeks, TR Dizin and GOOGLE Scholar.

The purposeful sampling method was preferred while selecting the research sample. The purposeful sampling method refers to identifying the sample based on the aim of the research without considering any probabilities (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2016).

Data Collection Process

In the data collection process, a search was carried out on keywords "peer bullying, bullying, peer violence, preschool peer bullying, peer bullying victimization" at the Council of Higher Education (CoHE) National Thesis Centre and Index of Turkish Education, Acarindeks, TR Dizin and GOOGLE Scholar. The keywords were determined after resorting to the opinions of three field experts with a doctoral degree for studies on preschool period peer bullying. The time range was identified as 2000-2020 while conducting the screening. Theses and articles found appropriate for the subject were recorded by the researcher. When the same study was found more than once, it was included in the sample group based on the keyword it was initially identified with. When the articles of the theses in the sample group were found, it was not included in the article group but only included in the thesis group. Peer bullying theses which don't include preschool period children, parents with preschool aged children, preschool teachers and teacher candidates were not included in the study. In addition, studies carried out on preschool period along with primary, secondary and high school students; preschool teachers along with teachers from other branches, preschool teacher candidates and undergraduate students from other fields; and preschool period children's parents along with families with elder aged children were not included in the study. Data were collected between 30th of June - 15th of December 2022.

Five keywords were identified in the research. In the Council of National Education (CoHE) National Thesis Centre, there were 179 theses observed with the keyword "peer bullying", 345 theses with the keyword "bullying", 4 with the keyword "peer violence", 1 with the keyword "peer bullying in preschool" and 13 with the keyword "peer bullying victimization". The theses were screened according to the research and theses dwelling on preschool period peer bullying were identified. The screening and control processes were carried out by a supervisor and the result was confirmed. At the end of the screening, 18 theses were included in the research.

In the GOOGLE Scholar article screening, there were 14 articles observed with the keyword "peer bullying", 35 theses with the keyword "bullying", 59 with the term "peer violence", 9 with the keyword "peer bullying in preschool" and 14 with the keyword "peer bullying victimization". The articles were screened according to the research and articles dwelling on peer bullying were identified. The screening and control processes were carried out by a thesis supervisor and the result was confirmed. 5 articles were included in the study after the screening.

In the Index of Turkish Education article screening, there were 7 articles observed with the keyword

"peer bullying", 68 theses with the keyword "bullying", 2 with the keyword "peer violence", however, there were no articles with the keywords "peer bullying in preschool" and "peer bullying victimization". The articles were screened according to the research and articles dwelling on peer bullying were identified. The screening and control processes were carried out by a thesis supervisor and the result was confirmed. 1 article was included in the study after the screening.

In the TR Dizin article screening, there were 72 articles observed with the keyword "peer bullying", 256 theses with the keyword "bullying", 11 with the keyword "peer violence", 6 with the keyword "peer bullying in preschool" and 8 with the keyword "peer bullying victimization". The articles were screened according to the research and articles dwelling on peer bullying were identified. The screening and control processes were carried out by a thesis supervisor and the result was confirmed. 3 articles were included in the study after the screening. In the Acarindeks article screening, there were 244 articles observed with the keyword "peer bullying", 74 theses with the keyword "bullying", 477 with the keyword "peer violence", 3937 with the keyword "peer bullying in preschool" and 707 with the keyword "peer bullying victimization". All the articles were screened according to the research and articles dwelling on peer bullying were identified. The screening and control processes were carried out by a thesis supervisor and the result was confirmed. 5 articles were included in the study after the screening.

Data Collection Tool
In the research, theses and articles on preschool period peer bullying carried out in Turkey between 2000-2020 were examined based on various criteria (type, year, university, province, language written in, keywords, research approach, research design, sample group, sample group number range, sample selection, number of data collection tools, type of data collection tool, data collection time frames and subjects). Thus, the descriptive content analysis examination was carried out in the research.

In the research, the Content Analysis Form was conducted by the researcher on the theses and articles on peer bullying. Theses and articles were stated on Microsoft Excel program with respect to the study criteria (type, year, university, province, language written in, keywords, research approach, research design, sample group, sample group number range, sample selection, number of data collection tools, type of data collection tool, data collection time frames and subjects).

Data Analysis
Analysis of the data that were collected according to the study purposes was conducted through a descriptive analysis. A Content Analysis Form was developed through Microsoft Excel to analyse the research data. Theses and articles and the themes were analysed based on their titles; findings are presented together with frequency and percentage values.

RESULTS

Table 1. Distribution according to the types and years of the theses.

Year	Master's thesis		Doctoral dissertation	
	n	%	n	%
2000	0	0.0	0	0.0
2001	0	0.0	0	0.0
2002	0	0.0	0	0.0
2003	0	0.0	0	0.0
2004	0	0.0	0	0.0
2005	0	0.0	0	0.0
2006	0	0.0	0	0.0
2007	0	0.0	0	0.0
2008	0	0.0	0	0.0
2009	0	0.0	0	0.0
2010	0	0.0	0	0.0
2011	1	6.3	0	0.0
2012	0	0.0	0	0.0
2013	0	0.0	1	50.0
2014	0	0.0	0	0.0

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Turkish International Journal of Special Education and Guidance & Counseling   2024, volume 13, issue 1

Table 1 (Continued). Distribution according to the types and years of the theses.

Year	Master's thesis		Doctoral dissertation	
	n	%	n	%
2015	1	6.3	0	0.0
2016	1	6.3	0	0.0
2017	4	25.0	0	0.0
2018	2	12.5	0	0.0
2019	4	25.0	0	0.0
2020	3	18.8	1	50.0
Total	16	100.0	2	100.0

According to Table 1, 16 master's theses were carried out between 2000-2020 on peer bullying during the preschool period. Within the stated twenty years, two doctoral theses, 1 in 2013 and 1 in 2020, were conducted.

Table 2. Distribution according to the universities the theses were prepared.

University	Master's thesis		Doctoral dissertation	
	n	%	n	%
Ankara University	1	6.3	0	0.0
Atatürk University	1	6.3	0	0.0
Ege University	1	6.3	0	0.0
Gazi University	4	25.0	1	50.0
Gaziantep University	1	6.3	0	0.0
İstanbul Medipol University	1	6.3	0	0.0
Hacettepe University	0	0.0	1	50.0
Karabük University	1	6.3	0	0.0
Kastamonu University	1	6.3	0	0.0
Mehmet Akif Ersoy University	2	12.5	0	0.0
Trakya University	1	6.3	0	0.0
Toros University	1	6.3	0	0.0
Uludağ University	1	6.3	0	0.0
Total	16	100.0	2	100.0

It is evident on Table 2 that the number of theses conducted in Ankara University is 1, Atatürk University is 1, Ege University is 1, Gazi University are 4, Gaziantep University is 1, İstanbul Medipol University is 1, Karabük University is 1, Kastamonu University is 1, Mehmet Akif Ersoy University are 2, Trakya University is 1, Toros University is 1 and Uludağ University is 1. The same table indicates that 1 doctoral thesis was carried out in Gazi University and 1 in Hacettepe University.

Table 3. Distribution according to the provinces the theses were conducted.

Province	Master's thesis		Doctoral dissertation	
	n	%	n	%
Ağrı	1	5.6	0	0.0
Ankara	5	27.8	1	50.0
Antalya	1	5.6	0	0.0
Burdur	1	5.6	0	0.0
Bursa	1	5.6	0	0.0
Edirne	1	5.6	0	0.0
Gaziantep	1	5.6	0	0.0
Isparta	1	5.6	0	0.0
İstanbul	1	5.6	1	50.0
İzmir	1	5.6	0	0.0
Karabük	1	5.6	0	0.0
Kastamonu	1	5.6	0	0.0
Manisa	1	5.6	0	0.0
Mersin	1	5.6	0	0.0
Total	18	100.0	2	100.0

According to Table 3, the number of master's theses conducted on the subject was 1 in Ağrı 5 in Ankara,

1 in Antalya, 1 in Burdur, 1 in Bursa, 1 in Edirne, 1 in Gaziantep, 1 in Isparta, 1 in Istanbul, 1 in İzmir, 1 in Karabük, 1 in Kastamonu, 1 in Manisa and 1 in Mersin. It was observed that 1 doctoral thesis was carried out in Ankara and 1 in Istanbul.

Table 4. Percentage and frequency distribution according to the language the theses were written in.

Language of the theses	Master's thesis		Doctoral dissertation	
	n	%	n	%
Turkish	16	100.0	2	100.0
Total	16	100.0	2	100.0

Table 4 indicates that all the master's and doctoral theses were written in Turkish.

Table 5. Distribution according to the keywords used in the screening of the theses.

Keywords	Master's thesis		Doctoral dissertation	
	n	%	n	%
Peer Violence	3	18.8	1	50.0
Peer Bullying	4	25.0	0	0.0
Peer Bullying Victimization	1	6.3	0	0.0
Preschool Peer Bullying	1	6.3	0	0.0
Bullying	7	43.8	1	50.0
Total	16	100.0	2	100.0

Table 5 displays that among the master's theses, 3 were screened for the keyword "peer violence", 4 for the keyword "peer bullying", 1 for the keyword "peer bullying victimization", 1 for the keyword "preschool peer bullying" and 7 for the keyword "bullying". 1 doctoral thesis was screened for the term "peer violence" and 1 for the keyword "bullying".

Table 6. Distribution according to the research approach of the theses.

Research Approaches	Master's thesis		Doctoral dissertation	
	n	%	n	%
Quantitative	9	56.3	1	50.0
Qualitative	4	25.0	0	0.0
Mixed	3	18.8	1	50.0
Total	16	100.0	2	100.0

According to Table 6, among the master's theses, 9 were conducted through the quantitative, 4 through the qualitative and 3 through the mixed approach. 1 doctoral thesis was conducted through the quantitative and 1 was through the mixed research approach.

Table 7. Distribution according to the research design of the theses.

Research Design	Master's thesis						Doctoral dissertation					
	Quantitative		Qualitative		Mixed		Quantitative		Qualitative		Mixed	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Explanatory Design	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Descriptive Model	4	40.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Descriptive Screening Model	1	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Experimental Design	1	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0

Table 7 (Continued). Distribution according to the research design of the theses.

Research Design	Master's thesis						Doctoral dissertation					
	Quantitative		Qualitative		Mixed		Quantitative		Qualitative		Mixed	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Document Analysis	0	0.0	1	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Case Study	0	0.0	1	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Interview	0	0.0	2	40.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Correlational Screening Model	3	30.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Exploratory Sequential	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
Phenomenology	0	0.0	1	20.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Screening Model	1	10.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Convergent Parallel	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	50.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	10	100.0	5	100.0	2	100.0	1	100.0	0	100.0	1	100.0

Table 7 indicates that among the master's theses, 1 was conducted through the explanatory design, 4 through the descriptive model, 1 through the descriptive screening model, 1 through the experimental design, 1 through document analysis, 1 through case study, 2 through the ınterview, 3 through the correlational screening, 1 through the phenomenology, 1 through the screening model, 1 through the convergent parallel design. 1 doctoral thesis was carried out through the correlational screening model and the other through the exploratory sequential design.

Table 8. Distribution according to the sample groups of the theses.

Sample Group	Master's thesis		Doctoral dissertation	
	n	%	n	%
Preschool Period Children	7	43.8	1	50.0
Preschool Teachers	3	18.8	0	0.0
Preschool Period Children's Parents	1	6.3	0	0.0
Children With Special Needs and Children with Normal Development Attending Preschool Education	1	6.3	0	0.0
Children in Need of Protection and Children Living with their Family	1	6.3	0	0.0
Illustrated Children's Books	1	6.3	0	0.0
Preschool Period Children and Teachers	1	6.3	1	50.0
Preschool Teachers, Institution Principals and Parents	1	6.3	0	0.0
Total	16	100.0	2	100.0

According to the sample groups indicated in Table 8, there are preschool period children in seven master's theses, preschool teachers in 3 theses, preschool period children and their parents in 1 thesis, children with special needs and children with normal development and attending preschool education in 1 thesis, children in need of protection and children living with their family in 1 thesis, illustrated children's books in 1 thesis, preschool teachers, institution principals and parents in 1 thesis. In addition, there are preschool period children in the sample group of 1 doctoral thesis and preschool period children and teachers in 1 thesis.

Table 9. Distribution according to the number range of the sample group.

Sample Group Number Range	Master's thesis		Doctoral dissertation	
	n	%	n	%
0 - 50	4	25.0	0	0.0
51 - 100	2	12.5	2	100.0
101 - 150	4	25.0	0	0.0
151 - 200	1	6.3	0	0.0
201 - 250	1	6.3	0	0.0
251 - 300	1	6.3	0	0.0
301 - 350	0	0.0	0	0.0
Over 351	3	18.8	0	0.0
Total	16	100.0	2	100.0

According to Table 9, the sample group number range of 4 master's theses is 0-50, 2 master's theses are 51-100, 4 master's theses are 101-150, 1 master's thesis is 151-200, 1 master's thesis is 201-250, 1 master's these is 251-300 and 3 master's theses is over 351. It was observed that the sample group number ranges of the doctoral theses are 51-100

Table 10. Distribution according to the sample selection of the theses.

Sample Selection Method	Master's thesis		Doctoral dissertation	
	n	%	n	%
Purposeful Sampling	4	23.5	1	50.0
Simple Random Sampling	3	17.6	0	0.0
Convenience Sampling	2	11.8	1	50.0
Cluster Sampling	1	5.9	0	0.0
Criterion Sampling	1	5.9	0	0.0
Non-Random Sampling	1	5.9	0	0.0
Convenience Sampling	3	17.6	0	0.0
Unstated	2	11.8	0	0.0
Total	17	100.0	2	100.0

Table 10 displays that 4 master's theses were conducted through the purposeful sampling, 3 through the simple random sampling, 2 through the convenience sampling, 1 through the cluster sampling, 1 through the criterion sampling, 1 through the non-random sampling, 3 through the convenience sampling methods and the sampling method of 2 theses were unstated. 1 doctoral theses was conducted through the purposeful sampling and 1 was conducted through the convenience sampling method.

Table 11. Distribution according to the number of data collection tools of the theses.

Number of Data Collection Tools	Master's thesis						Doctoral dissertation					
	Quantitative		Qualitative		Mixed		Quantitative		Qualitative		Mixed	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
1	0	0.0	3	75.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
2	2	22.2	1	25.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
3	4	44.4	0	0.0	2	66.7	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
4	2	22.2	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
5	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
6	1	11.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
8	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
9	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	9	100.0	4	100.0	3	100.0	1	100.0	0	0.0	1	100.0

According to Table 11, in 3 master's theses there is 1 data collection tool, 2 data collection tools in 3 theses, 3 data collection tools in 6 theses, 4 data collection tools in 2 theses, 6 data collection tools in 1 thesis and 9 tools in 1 thesis. In addition, it is evident that there are 3 data collection tools in two doctoral theses.

Table 12. Distribution according to the data collection instrument type of the theses.

Data Collection Instruments	Master's thesis						Doctoral dissertation					
	Quantitative		Qualitative		Mixed		Quantitative		Qualitative		Mixed	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Anecdotal Record	0	0.0	1	8.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Survey	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	16.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Simple Attendance Chart	0	0.0	1	8.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Information Form	9	28.1	1	8.3	1	16.7	1	33.3	0	0.0	1	33.3
Form	4	12.4	1	8.3	2	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	33.3
Interview Form	0	0.0	4	33.3	1	16.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	33.3
Observation	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Control List	0	0.0	1	8.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Case Sampling	0	0.0	1	8.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Scale	19	59.4	0	0.0	1	16.7	1	33.3	0	0.0	0	0.0
Time Record	0	0.0	1	8.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Time Sampling	0	0.0	1	8.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Total	32	100.0	12	100.0	6	100.0	3	100.0	0	0.0	3	100.0

According to Table 12, anecdotal record was used in 1 master's thesis, survey in 1 thesis, simple attendance chart in 1 thesis, information form in 11 theses, form in 7 theses, interview form in 5 theses, control list in 1 thesis, case sampling in 1 thesis, scale in 20 theses, time record in 1 thesis and time sampling in 1 thesis. It is also evident that information forms were used in all doctoral theses, form was used in 1 thesis, interview form in 1 thesis, observation in 1 thesis and scales in 1 thesis.

Table 13. Distribution according to the data collection time frames of the theses.

Data Collection Time Frames	Master's thesis						Doctoral dissertation					
	Quantitative		Qualitative		Mixed		Quantitative		Qualitative		Mixed	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Longitudinal	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Cross Sectional	9	100.0	4	100.0	3	100.0	1	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0
Total	9	100.0	4	100.0	3	100.0	1	0.0	0	0.0	1	100.0

Table 13 indicates that all the master's and doctoral theses were conducted through the cross sectional time frame method.

Table 14. Distribution according to the subjects of the theses.

Variables examined in theses on peer bullying during preschool period	Master's thesis		Doctoral dissertation	
	n	%	n	%
Peer relationships	0	0.0	1	20.0
Children's bullying perceptions, coping with bullying strategies	2	8.0	0	0.0
Children's bully, bully-victim and victim roles and bullying types/behaviours they display/encounter	1	4.0	0	0.0
Demographic variables	8	32.0	1	20.0
Emotional Intelligence	1	4.0	0	0.0
Temperament and empathy	1	4.0	0	0.0
Bullying behaviours during the game	0	0.0	1	20.0
Teacher opinions, perceptions and attitudes towards peer bullying	2	8.0	1	20.0
Scale development	1	4.0	0	0.0
Self-regulation	2	8.0	0	0.0
Program development	1	4.0	1	20.0
Examination of illustrated children's books based on bullying	1	4.0	0	0.0
Peer bullying in children under risk	3	12.0	0	0.0
Cyber bullying, cyber victimization	1	4.0	0	0.0
Social skills	1	4.0	0	0.0
Total	25	100.0	5	100.0

Table 14 displays that the subject of 2 master's theses is children's bullying perceptions, coping with bullying strategies, 1 master's thesis is children's bully, bully-victim and victim roles and bullying types/behaviours they display/encounter, 8 master's theses is demographic variables (age, gender, sibling variables, birth order, parents' ages, parents' educational background, body mass index, parents' professions, family type, preschool education experience, socio-economic state, parents' marital status, family structure, teachers' professional experience), 1 master's thesis is emotional intelligence, 1 thesis is temperament and empathy, 2 theses is teacher opinions, perceptions and attitudes towards peer bullying, 1 thesis is scale development, 2 theses is self-regulation, 1 thesis is program development, 1 thesis is examination of illustrated children's books based on bullying, 3 theses is children under risk (children with and without special needs, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, children in need of protection), 1 thesis is cyber bullying, cyber victimization and 1 thesis is social skills. The subject of 1 doctoral thesis is peer relationships, 1 thesis is demographic variables, 1 thesis is bullying behaviours during the game, 1 thesis is teacher opinions, perceptions and attitudes towards peer bullying and 1 thesis is program development.

Table 15. Distribution according to the years of the articles.

Year	n	%
2000	0	0.0
2001	0	0.0
2002	0	0.0
2003	0	0.0
2004	0	0.0
2005	0	0.0
2006	0	0.0
2007	0	0.0
2008	0	0.0
2009	1	7.1
2010	0	0.0
2011	1	7.1
2012	1	7.1
2013	0	0,0
2014	2	14.3
2015	0	0.0
2016	1	7.1
2017	0	0.0
2018	2	14.3
2019	3	21.4
2020	3	21.4
Total	14	100.0

According to Table 15, 14 articles were carried out between 2000-2020 on peer bullying during the preschool period. The distribution by the years the articles shows that 1 article was completed in 2009, 1 in 2011, 1 in 2012, 2 in 2014, 1 in 2016, 2 in 2018, 3 in 2019 and 3 in 2020.

Table 16. Distribution according to the provinces of the articles.

Journal	n	%
Ankara	2	14.3
Balıkesir	1	7.1
Bursa	1	7.1
Bingöl	1	7.1
Denizli	3	21.4
Diyarbakır	1	7.1
İzmir	1	7.1
Trabzon	1	7.1
Yozgat	1	7.1
Unstated	2	14.3
Total	14	100.0

According to Table 16, 2 articles were completed in Ankara, 1 in Balıkesir, 1 in Bursa, 1 in Bingöl, 3 in Denizli, 1 in Diyarbakır, 1 in İzmir, 1 in Trabzon and 1 article in Yozgat. The province of the first article was unstated.

Table 17. Distribution according to the language of the articles.

Language	n	%
Turkish	13	92.9
English	1	7.1
Total	14	100.0

Table 17 indicates that 13 articles were written in Turkish and 1 in English.

Table 18. Distribution according to the keywords used in the screening of the articles.

Keywords	n	%
Peer Violence	5	35.7
Peer Bullying	2	14.3
Peer Bullying Victimization	4	28.6
Preschool Peer Bullying	1	7.1
Bullying	2	14.3
Total	14	100.0

Table 18 displays that among the articles, 5 were screened for the keyword "peer violence", 2 for the keyword "peer bullying", 4 for the keyword "peer bullying victimization", 1 for the keyword "preschool peer bullying" and 2 for the keyword "bullying".

Table 19. Distribution according to the research approach of the articles.

Research Approaches	n	%
Quantitative	10	71.4
Qualitative	4	28.6
Mixed	0	0.0
Total	14	100.0

According to Table 19, 10 articles were conducted through the quantitative and 4 through the qualitative research approach. No articles were observed to be conducted through the mixed approach.

Table 20. Distribution according to the research design of the articles.

Research Design	Quantitative		Qualitative	
	n	%	n	%
Descriptive Screening Model	1	10.0	0	0.0
Case Study	0	0.0	2	50.0
Correlational Screening Model	9	90.0	0	0.0
Special Case Study	0	0.0	1	25.0
Basic Qualitative Research	0	0.0	1	25.0
Total	10	100.0	4	100.0

It is evident on Table 20 that 1 article was completed through the descriptive screening model, 2 through the case study, 9 through the correlational screening model, 1 through the special case study and 1 through the basic qualitative research design.

Table 21. Distribution according to the sample group of the articles.

Sample Group	n	%
Preschool Period Children	8	57.1
Preschool Teachers	3	21.4
Preschool Period Children and Teachers	1	7.1
Preschool Period Children and Mothers	2	14.3
Total	14	100.0

Table 21 displays that the sample group of eight articles consist of preschool period children, 3 consist of preschool teachers, 1 consists of preschool period children and teachers and 2 consist of preschool period children and their mothers.

Table 22. Distribution according to the sample group number range of the articles.

Sample Group Number Range	n	%
0 - 50	3	21.4
51 - 100	3	21.4
101 - 150	0	0.0
151 - 200	3	21.4
201 - 250	3	21.4
251 - 300	1	7.1
301 - 350	0	0.0
Over 351	1	7.1
Total	14	100.0

According to Table 22, the sample group number range of 3 articles is 0-50, 3 articles is 51-100, 3 articles is 151-200, 3 articles is 201-250, 1 article is 251-300 and 1 article is over 351.

Table 23. Distribution according to the sample selection of the articles.

Sample Selection Method	n	%
Purposeful Sampling	2	14.3
Simple Random Sampling	6	42.9
Convenience Sampling	2	14.3
Unstated	4	28.6
Total	14	100.0

According to Table 23, 2 articles were carried out through the purposeful sampling, 6 through the simple random sampling, 2 through the convenience sampling methods and 4 articles' methods were unstated.

Table 24. Distribution according to the number of data collection tools of the articles.

Number of Data Collection Tools	Quantitative		Qualitative	
	n	%	n	%
1	1	10.0	1	25.0
2	1	10.0	3	75.0
3	5	50.0	0	0.0
4	3	30.0	0	0.0
Total	10	100.0	4	100.0

It is evident on Table 24 that 2 articles were conducted with 1 data collection tool, 4 articles with 2 tools, 5 articles with 3 tools and 3 articles with 4 data collection tools.

Table 25. Distribution according to the data collection tools type of the articles.

Data Collection Tools	Quantitative		Qualitative	
	n	%	n	%
Information Form	5	16.7	2	28.6
Form	8	26.7	0	0.0
Interview Form	1	3.3	4	57.1
Observation Form	0	0.0	1	14.3
Sociometric Technique	2	6.7	0	0.0
Scale	14	46.7	0	0.0
Total	30	100.0	7	100.0

Table 25 displays that information form was used in 7 articles, form was used in 8, interview form was used in 5, observation form was used in 1, sociometric technique was used in 2 articles and no scales were used in 14 articles.

Table 26. Distribution according to the data collection time frames of the articles.

Data Collection Time Frames	Quantitative		Qualitative	
	n	%	n	%
Longitudinal	1	10.0	0	0.0
Cross Sectional	9	90.0	4	100.0
Total	10	100.0	4	100.0

According to Table 26, longitudinal data collection time frame was used in 1 article and cross sectional was used in 13 articles.

Table 27. Distribution according to the subjects of the articles.

Variables examined in articles on peer bullying during preschool period	n	%
Teacher interventions in peer interactions and peer problems	1	4.8
Peer relationships variables	3	14.3
Longitudinal examination of the extent of encountering peer violence victimization and displaying peer violence	1	4.8
Parental attitudes	2	9.5
Emotional intelligences of mothers	1	4.8
Demographic variables	7	33.3
Temperament	1	4.8
School adaptation	1	4.8
Teacher opinions, perceptions and attitudes towards peer bullying	3	14.3
Whether or not witnessing violence or encountering domestic violence	1	4.8
Total	21	100.0

Table 27 shows that the subject of 1 article is peer interactions and teacher interventions on peer problems, 3 articles is peer relationship variables (being liked by peers and aggressiveness, positive social behaviour, displaying unsocial behaviours to peers, being frightened-anxious by peers, being excluded by peers, being hyperactive), 1 article is being victimized by peer bullying and longitudinal examination of displaying peer violence, 2 articles is parental attitudes, 1 article is emotional intelligence of mothers, 7 articles is demographic variables (gender, age, mother's age, parents' educational background, parents' professions, family type, parental attitudes, socio-economic status, preschool education experience, educational experience, birth order, parents' marital status), 1 article is temperament, 1 article is school adaptation, 3 articles is teacher opinions, perceptions and attitudes towards peer bullying, whether or not witnessing violence and 1 article is whether or not encountering domestic violence.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, and SUGGESTIONS

When the theses in the research are considered, it is evident that the number of master's theses (f=16) is higher than the number of doctoral theses (f=2). The reason why the number of master's theses is higher is considered to be related to the low number of students in doctoral programs, the fact that the number of master's programs is higher than doctoral programs and because doctoral education is longer. In a corresponding study Korkmaz et al. (2021) state that the concept of peer bullying determined within their research was 89% included in master's and 11% included in doctoral theses. Similarly, in a study conducted by Gülay Ogelman and Güngör (2022), in which 63 theses completed between 2000-2021 on peer relationships during preschool period were examined, it was determined that master's theses were higher in number than doctoral theses. According to the results of the study conducted by Gülay Ogelman and Güngör (2015) on the examination of studies on environmental education during the preschool period in Turkey, it was underlined that the number of studies and articles, especially doctoral, should be increased.

Research results indicate that no master's and doctoral theses on peer bullying during the preschool period were carried out in years 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2012 and 2014. When distribution by the years of the theses are considered, it is evident that most theses were completed in years 2017 (f=4) and 2019 (f=4). Research results indicate that no articles on peer

bullying during the preschool period were carried out in years 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2013, 2015 and 2017. According to the year distribution of the articles, most articles were completed in years 2019 (f=3) and 2020 (f=3). It was also observed that master's theses and articles on peer bullying during preschool period were regularly prepared between years 2015-2020. The increase in recent years in the number of studies on peer bullying among young children is thought to be due to the increase in peer bullying. With this respect, Doğan (2022) conducted a review study and put forward preventive programs by underlining the fact that peer bullying has increased recently in Turkey. Ergül Topçu (2018) states that there is an increase in peer bullying rates in Turkey. Similarly, Kılınç (2023) systematically analysed studies on peer bullying in Turkey and examined the number of articles published in journals with reviewers by years, and observed that there is an increase recently in the number of studies on the subject.

When distribution according to the universities where the study theses were conducted in, it was observed that most master's theses were carried out in Gazi University (f=4). Gülay Ogelman and Güngör (2022) also emphasize that most master's theses were conducted in Gazi University. One doctoral thesis examined in the study was completed in Gazi and other was completed in Hacettepe University. When distribution by the provinces of the theses is considered, most master's theses were conducted in Ankara (f=6). One of the doctoral theses was completed in Ankara, the other in İstanbul. When distribution according to the provinces of the articles is considered, it is evident that most studies on the subject were conducted in Denizli (f=3). Based on the findings, it can be assumed that most theses on peer bullying during the preschool period were carried out in metropolitan cities. According to the findings, all master's and doctoral theses were written in Turkish (f=18). This can be related to the fact that the majority of the master's and doctoral programs in Turkey are carried out in Turkish. According to the Findings, most articles examined were completed in Turkish (f=13). Also, it was observed that one article was written in English. Similarly, Toksöz Barlas (2022) examined theses on environmental education in the field of preschool education in Turkey and stated that the majority of the theses were prepared in Turkish. At this point, it can be underlined that findings of the two studies are similar.

It is emphasized that the keyword stated most commonly in master's theses was "bullying" (f=7). The keywords "peer violence" and "bullying" were used most commonly in each one of the doctoral theses. As for the articles, the most commonly used keyword was observed to be "peer violence" (f=5). Based on these findings, it is assumed that the variety of keywords will increase as the number of articles and theses on the subject increases.

According to the study findings, the majority of the master's theses examined were conducted through the quantitative design and the least preferred was the mixed design. One of the doctoral theses was conducted through the quantitative and other through the mixed design. Thus, it is evident that the qualitative approach was not preferred in doctoral theses on the subject. When theses are examined in general, it is obvious that the quantitative method is preferred more. Korkmaz et al. (2021) states that the quantitative and qualitative designs are the most preferred designs among theses on peer bullying. The majority of the examined articles were observed to be conducted through the quantitative research approach (f=10). While there were articles conducted through the qualitative research approach (f=4), it is evident that no articles conducted through the mixed research approach were observed. Kılıç (2023) states that quantitative methods are preferred in general. With this respect, it is assumed that the literature can be enriched by conducting further studies through more methods. Mixed methods should be preferred more commonly along with qualitative researches. Researchers carrying out quantitative researches generally have the aim of; discriminating between emotions and reality, proving the relationships between variables, making generalizations, making predictions and explaining causal relationships (Büyüköztürk, 2007). Researchers carrying out qualitative researches generally have the aim of; understanding events and states with viewpoints of the participants, making very limited generalizations, leaving the assessment of applicability to the readers, having different personal opinions on the same state and building on the fact that reality is structured in social settings (Karasar, 2020). Researchers carrying out mixed researches have the aim of; using both qualitative and quantitative research methods at the same time (Karagöz, 2019). The mixed research approach is said to help

explaining various features of the case by developing more holistic and more informed educational policies. It is assumed that the mixed research approach is less preferred due to the fact that conducting qualitative and quantitative approaches at the same time can be more difficult, more expensive and more time consuming for a single researcher (Baki and Gökçek, 2012).

With respect to the theses and articles examined in the research, it was observed that there is a difference between research models and classifications. Statements given in the studies were taken into consideration when classifying the findings. Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) state that models of scientific research methods can be defined in three titles as descriptive, correlational and interventional. It was observed that these three models were used together in research models preferred in the field of education. Thus, the descriptive model is the most common screening model in the field of education. Thus, it is evident that while descriptive, screening and descriptive screening models are the same, they are identified differently in various researches (Büyüköztürk et al., 2008). When master's theses on peer bullying during the preschool period are considered, it is evident that the descriptive model is the most frequently used (f=4) research model. The second most frequently preferred research model after the descriptive model in master's theses is the correlational screening model (f=3). The explanatory design, descriptive screening model, experimental design, document analysis, ınterview, exploratory sequential, phenomenology, screening model, convergent parallel are among the other preferred research models. With respect to the doctoral theses, 1 thesis was conducted through the correlational screening model and 1 thesis was conducted through the exploratory sequential model. It was observed that the correlational screening model (f=9) was the research model most commonly used in the articles examined in the research. The descriptive screening model, case study, special case study, basic qualitative research design are among the other preferred research models. According to Gülay Ogelman's (2014) study on 23 master's theses on social skills in the preschool period and which were completed between 2000-2013, the majority of the theses were conducted through the screening model.

When the theses examined in the study are considered, it is evident that preschool period children is the sample group most commonly preferred in master's theses and secondly is preschool period teachers. One of the doctoral thesis consists of preschool period children and the other consists of preschool period children and their teachers. Preschool period children was the most frequently preferred sample group in the articles of the study. Gülay Ogelman and Güngör (2022) also emphasize that sample groups consist mostly of preschool period children. The reason why preschool period children is the most preferred sample group can be due to the fact that it is considered as an easier accessible group than various sample groups. It is also thought to be the most convenient group to be evaluated in order to put forward peer bullying during the preschool period. Then follows the sample groups of preschool teachers, preschool period children and their mothers, preschool period children and teachers. It was observed that there is a variety in the sample groups of the master's theses. Sample selection of the doctoral theses shows less variety. According to the distribution by sample group number range of the theses, 0-50 and 101-150 sample group number ranges are observed most commonly in master's theses. All of the doctoral theses have a sample group number range of 51-100. According to the distribution by sample group number range of the articles, 0-50, 51-100, 151-200 and 201-250 sample group number ranges were observed 3 times each making them the most frequent number ranges. Thus, it was identified that articles are larger in variety with respect to sample group number ranges and have sample groups larger in number than theses. The fact that articles can be written by more than one author can be said to provide advantage for reaching sample groups large in number.

With respect to the theses and articles examined in the research, it was observed that there is a difference between sampling methods and classifications. In the data analysis stage, studies were included in the study according to the sampling method that was stated. While the literature emphasizes that there can be differentiations in the classification of sampling methods, it is also a frequent measure to conduct probable and improbable methods when determining the sample (Anderson, 1990; Cohen and Manion, 2007; Çıngı, 1994). "Random", which is adopted by Fraenkel and Wallen (2006) and refers to population elements having the equal chance of being equally selected in the sample group, was approached as a measure. It was discussed under two dimensions. While random sampling methods are stratified

sampling method and simple random sampling method; non-random sampling methods consist of three titles as purposeful sampling method, systematically sampling method and convenience sampling method. It is evident in the research that the purposeful sampling method (f=4) was most frequently used in master's theses. The simple random sampling (f=3) and convenience sampling (f=3) methods follow the purposeful sampling method. The purposeful sampling method was preferred in one of the doctoral theses and the convenience sampling method in the other thesis. Balcı (2016) states that in the purposeful sampling method the researcher makes his or her preference and includes elements in the sample that are most appropriate with the aim of the research. This can be one of the reasons why the purposeful sampling method is most commonly used in theses. The most preferred sample selection method in articles was the simple random sampling method. There are 4 articles with unstated sample selection. There are 2 articles conducted with the purposeful sample selection method and 2 articles with the convenience sampling method. The study conducted by Gülay Ogelman and Güngör (2022) underlines a similar result stating that the simple random sampling method is used most frequently.

When distribution according to the number of data collection tools of the master's theses is examined, there were maximum 3 data collection tools (f=6) used together. Both doctoral theses have 3 data collection tools. When distribution according to the number of data collection tools of the articles is examined, there were maximum 3 data collection tools (f=5) used together. Preferring more than 1 method in researches can enhance the reliability and validity of studies. Scale (f=20) was observed as the most frequently preferred data collection tool in theses. Scale (f=14) was also observed as the most frequently preferred data collection tool in the articles. The reason why the scale method was used most commonly by researchers is because it is a rapid, easy and an accessible method. Gülay Ogelman and Güngör's (2022) study also has a similar result stating that scale is one of the most frequently used data collection tools. It is evident that interview form (f=4) was used most frequently in qualitative studies. Karasar (2020) underlines that maintaining subjectivity, accessing detailed information, enabling the participants to present more answers to research questions, being applicable in various conditions and having a rich scope of application are among the advantageous features of interview forms. The interview technique is considered to be preferred due to the fact that it enables easy access to data. It was observed that scales (f=20) were most frequently used in quantitative researches and forms (f=3) were most frequently used in mixed researches in the theses. It is evident that scales (f=14) were most frequently used in quantitative researches and interview forms (f=4) were used most frequently in qualitative researches in the articles.

It was examined that the data collection time frame of all the master's and doctoral theses was the cross sectional method. The majority of the articles was carried out through the cross sectional (f=13) method and one article was carried out through the longitudinal method. The study conducted by Gülay Ogelman and Güngör (2022) underlines a similar result stating that the cross sectional method is the most frequent data collection time frame preferred in the master's and doctoral theses. The reason why the cross sectional data collection time frame is preferred can be due to the fact that data in these researches are collected in a shorter period of time with and with lower cost. According to Gülay Ogelman's (2014) study on theses, it is stated that it is necessary to conduct social skills theses on 3-4 age group through the experimental and longitudinal methods. According to the study conducted by Başaran and Aksoy (2020) on 58 research articles on school readiness in the preschool period between 2014-2018, it is suggested that longitudinal and experimental studies should be increased and educational plans that aim at whole development rather than only one developmental area should be carried out. It is considered that researches conducted with the longitudinal data collection time frame could be less preferred due to the fact that they are more time consuming.

With respect to the distribution by the subject of the research theses, "demographic variables" (age, gender, sibling variables, birth order, parents' ages, parents' educational background, body mass index, parents' professions, family type, preschool education experience, socio-economic state, parents' marital status, family structure, teachers' professional experience) was the most frequent subject of the examined theses in the research. Yörük's (2016) study on 215 children shows that male students display bullying more than female students and this can be an example thesis study on the subject of

demographic variables. In the same study; whether or not children resorted to bullying based on their parents' educational background was examined and it was observed that bullying behaviours decreased as the educational status increased. Ergül Topçu (2018) emphasizes that preschool period peer bullying should be examined in a holistic manner and that a number of domestic reasons could be effective in peer bullying. The subjects "peer bullying in children under risk" (f=3) and "teacher opinions, perceptions and attitudes towards peer bullying" (f=2) are second and third in the list with respect to the distribution according to the subjects of the theses in the study. One of the theses included in the study with the subject of peer bullying in children under risk was carried out by Yüce (2015) on 60 children with special needs and 60 children with normal development; the study underlines that whether or not the children have special needs has not effect on displaying peer aggression or peer violence. One of the theses studies included in the study with the subject of teacher opinions, perceptions and attitudes towards peer bullying was conducted by Pasin (2017) through interviews with 14 preschool teachers; the majority of the teachers defined peer bullying as exerting physical or psychological pressure. Teachers defined bullying as strong children considering the imbalance of power and displaying intentional bullying behaviours on the child they label as weak so as to make he or she do what they want. Some teachers handled bullying behaviours as a characteristic of the child's age and a way of self-expression. The most common subjects of the doctoral theses are peer relationships, demographic variables, bullying behaviours during the game, teacher opinions, perceptions and attitudes towards peer bullying and program development. Metin Aslan (2013) carried out a study on 55 children attending preschool education and observed that it differs according to demographic variables. With this respect, when physical bullying behaviours are considered by gender, male children display them more frequently. The same study underlines that bullying behaviours have a significant relationship with game behaviours and peer relationships have a significant relationship with bullying behaviours. Koyutürk Koçer (2020) conducted a study on 50 children attending preschool education and 8 teachers and emphasizes that the majority of the teachers observe violence behaviours during free play activities. In the same study an educational program was also conducted on various children. As a result of the education program, a decrease was observed in bullying behaviours of the children. According to the findings, "demographic variables" (age, gender, sibling variables, birth order, parents' ages, parents' educational background, body mass index, parents' professions, family type, preschool education experience, socio-economic state, parents' marital status, family structure, teachers' professional experience) (f=7) was the most frequent subject of the articles examined in the research. One example of the articles included in the study with respect to the demographic variables subject was conducted by Seçer et al (2014) on 200 children attending preschool education institutions; it was observed that peer violence affects school adaptation differently in female children and male children. It is assumed that while it causes problems about school participation in female children; it leads to problems about both school participation and school performance in male children. The subjects "peer relationships variables" (f=3) and "teacher opinions, perceptions and attitudes towards peer bullying" (f=3) are second and third in the list with respect to the distribution according to the subjects of the articles in the study. An example article included in the research on peer relationships variables was conducted by Salı (2014) on 243 5-6 years old children; it was observed that negative peer relationships increase as peer violence increases and assistance oriented social behaviours increase as peer violence decreases. An example article included in the research on teacher opinions, perceptions and attitudes towards peer bullying was conducted by Yalçıntaş Sezgin (2018) through interviews with 21 preschool teachers; it is emphasized that children who are psychically developed, active, have no siblings and raised under permissive parental attitudes display bullying behaviours.

When the conclusions are examined in general; it is evident that master's theses, doctoral theses and articles were not conducted several years on peer bullying during the preschool period. In addition, it can be stated that theses and articles on the subject are being carried out regularly in recent years. Master's and doctoral theses on peer bullying during the preschool period were conducted in a total of 13 public and foundation universities. It was examined that the theses were completed in 14 provinces, mostly metropolitans, and all of them in Turkish. It was observed that the articles were conducted in 9 provinces and mostly in Turkish. 5 keywords were preferred in the examined theses and articles. While

3 (quantitative, qualitative, mixed) research approaches were preferred in master's theses, doctoral theses were conducted through the qualitative research approach and articles were conducted through the mixed research approach. With respect to research designs, 5 master's theses preferred the quantitative research approach and 4 master's theses preferred the qualitative research approach and 2 master's theses preferred the mixed approach.. With respect to research designs, 1 doctoral thesis preferred the quantitative research approach and 1 doctoral thesis preferred the mixed research approach. With respect to research designs, 2 articles preferred the quantitative research approach and 3 articles preferred the qualitative research approach. It was underlined that there were 8 sample group types in the master's theses, 2 types in the doctoral theses and 4 types in the articles. It was also observed that the sample group number participating in the research was less than 151 and that 7 sample selection methods were used in master's theses, 2 were used in doctoral theses and 3 were used in the articles. The sample selection method was unstated in various theses and articles. It was observed that maximum 3 data collection tools were used at once in the theses and articles. With respect to the number of data collection tools, it was examined that maximum 9 tools were used in master's theses, 3 tools in doctoral theses and 4 tools in the articles. With respect to the variety of data collection tools, it was examined that maximum 10 tools were used in master's theses, 5 tools in doctoral theses and 6 tools in the articles. All the master's and doctoral theses and the majority of the articles were carried out with the cross sectional method.

Examined studies show that the subject of peer bullying has been studied more in recent years. In addition, the recent increase in studies dwelling upon peer bullying during the preschool period is assumed to be due to increase in peer bullying in schools. Korkmaz et al. (2021) state that the subject peer bullying has gained focus since 2010 and link the increase in peer bullying studies to the increase in peer bullying instances and the expansion of their results.

Suggestions

Researches on peer bullying are carried out mostly in specific universities, it can be suggested that the subject of peer bullying can be expanded in the postgraduate departments of universities throughout Turkey. Carrying out researches on the subject of peer bullying in more number of cities is suggested so as to analyse peer bullying studies throughout the country. Doctoral theses on peer bullying can be increased. According to the research, the sample selection method and how the sample is determined was unstated in several theses and articles. Thus, it is suggested to give more detailed and explicit information about titles such as methodology and sample group selection method in the methodology section of theses and articles. It is suggested to increase the number of studies with mixed and qualitative approaches so as to carry out in depth and extensive peer bullying studies. Researches were mostly carried out on preschool children and preschool teachers. In addition, expanding the quantity of studies with various and different sample groups such as parents of preschool period aged children, preschool teacher candidates and preschool education institution principals can be suggested. It is suggested to conduct longitudinal studies on peer bullying during the preschool period. It can be suggested to increase the number of studies on various developmental areas and titles along with demographic variables of peer bullying during the preschool period.

While many teachers are informed about peer bullying, various teachers believe that bullying should be well defined, thus it can be suggested to offer in service training activities about peer bullying to teachers. It can be suggested to develop rules about the precautions required to cope with peer bullying which are needed to be applied in the classroom and school and also to include preschool period children to the process. Teachers should inform parents about peer bullying, parents should participate in the intervening process by collaborating with the school. Children should frequently be reminded that regardless of the bullying type, such negative behaviours are unacceptable in the school setting and precaution programs about effectively coping with such problems should be provided. Group games should be regularly offered by preschool teachers at the beginning of the semester so as to develop positive peer relationships and enhance social skills through group activities. Being a role model to children by displaying positive behaviours inside the classroom and interfering instantly to bullying behaviours is suggested.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest

This study was produced from the first author's master's thesis. Ethical procedures in conducting the study were adhered to by the researchers and they declare that no conflict of interest exists.

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WORK-VALUE CLARIFICATION AND COGNITIVE INFORMATION PROCESSING THERAPIES IN THE MANAGEMENT OF CAREER DECISION-MAKING DIFFICULTY OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OSUN STATE, NIGERIA

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Suggested Citation:
Ilori, O. A., & Ogundokun, M. O. (2024). Work-value clarification and cognitive information processing therapies in the management of career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria. *Turkish International Journal of Special Education and Guidance & Counselling (TIJSEG), 13*(1), 30-45.

Abstract

Career decision-making difficulty is the inability of secondary school students to make correct career decision. Studies have shown that the problem of career decision-making of secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria is on the increase, which could lead to wrong choice of school subjects and career frustration. Previous studies on career decision-making difficulty have focused largely on emotional intelligence, academic motivation and occupational preferences with little attention paid to interventions such as Work-value Clarification and Cognitive Information Processing Therapy. This study, therefore, was carried out to determine the effects of Work-value Clarification and Cognitive Information Processing Therapies in the management of Career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria. The moderating effects of Career self-efficacy and gender were also examined. The study was anchored to Miller-Tiedeman's Life Career Theory, while the pretest-posttest control group quasi-experimental design with a 3x2x2 factorial matrix was adopted. The multistage procedure was used. Simple random sampling technique was used to select three local government areas (Ayedaade, Isokan and Ede) in Osun State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one senior secondary school from each of the selected local government area. The participants who scored high on Germeijs and Boecks' indecisiveness scale as against the threshold of 50 were selected. The schools were randomly assigned to Work-value clarification Therapy (40), Cognitive Information Processing Therapy (40) and Control (40) groups. The instruments used were career decision-making difficulty (α=.78) and career self-efficacy (α=.87) scales. The treatments lasted eight weeks. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, Analysis of covariance and Scheffe post-hoc test at .05 level of significance. Participants' age were 15.36 ± 3.51 years, and 54.2% were females. There was a significant main effect of treatments in the career decision-making difficulty of the senior secondary school ($F_{(2;119)}$=9.26, partial η^2=.15). The participants in the Cognitive Information Processing Therapy ($\overline{x}$ =134.97) improved on their career decision-making difficulty better than those in the Work-value clarification Therapy ($\overline{x}$=135.25) and the control ($\overline{x}$=152.55) groups. Work-value clarification and Cognitive information processing therapies were effective in the management of career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria, regardless of gender. Counselling and educational psychologists should utilise these interventions to manage career decision-making difficulty.

Keywords: Work-value clarification, cognitive information processing therapies, career decision-making difficulty, secondary school students.

INTRODUCTION

Career is a job which one decides to pursue throughout his lifetime and it is a path or course of the occupation. It is also the arrangement of the important place engaged by a person all over his life and the entire work being done by an individual in his life span. According to Kuzgun (2000), career involves all an individual's roles before beginning a career, throughout the course of a career, and after retiring from a career. Picking a career includes the initiation of an exact profession or successful action, while career development includes every one of the exercises that happen throughout a career (Baruch, Szucs, & Gunz, 2015).

Making career-decision is a very difficult task for secondary school students because it determines their future. Briska and Dislere (2018) confirmed that secondary school students are unable to decide important career-decisions for themselves because of dearth of knowledge of their satisfactions, skills and desires, the existence of several alternatives, and worth in addition to the effect of one's socioeconomic situation for decision making. He added that several secondary school students do not understand what career to choose.

Similarly, Ottu and Idowu (2014) acknowledged that in Nigeria and other parts of the world, many adolescents encounter great difficulty in making career decision. They added that wrong career decisions have often led to unproductive or unacceptable careers. This has been compounded by inadequate counselling and poor gradual observational documentation of children's aspirations through play and more objective undertakings (Ottu & Idowu, 2014). These have in turn led to the wrong career decision as observed often times among Nigerian secondary school students. This problem is deeply pervasive among youths even with the claim by many schools that Counselling psychologists are in place to give guidance to secondary school students.

Slaten and Baskin (2014) stated that career decisions directly influenced job performance, life satisfaction, and income of an individual. Career are selected in order to meet the students' needs which must be guided by information and awareness about career and occupation before making the decision for this selection (Mabula, 2012). Many students find themselves not fulfilled even after their secondary school education because of wrong decisions made when taking decisions on career. Studies showed that the majority of secondary school students offer wrong subjects because of friends, parental influence, prestige, etc. (Fizer 2013).

According to Ottu and Idowu (2014) making a career decision in Nigeria appear to have been greatly influenced by conformity and familiarity as most teenagers often desire to pick careers that run in their family of origin or career that is being respected by the society. Though, prestige tends to show the upper hand as it has been discovered that even children of persons with less appreciated vocations still reject their parent's occupations. Making a career decision has been seen as a difficult task for secondary school students. According to Ellis (2006) difficulty in making a career decision has been ascribed to dearth of association as well as problem of handling the process of choice making, pressures from external forces, choosing from a diversity of choices and personal inconsistency.

Some of the difficulties experiences by secondary school students during the time of choosing a career are the absence of information about self, deficiency of information about what they want. Kshetrimayum (2018) revealed that the choice of a career can be affected by the school, the type of derived learning competencies. The future of the students can be modified by the school environment and the teachers in the course of recognizing their talents, interests and ambitions. Media and global trends also Influence the career choice of students. Kshetrimayum (2018) suggested that pressure of media on today's youth cannot be under

predictable. The emergence of television, internet and mobile smart phones as the most significant development and the world have shrunk through these facilities being accessible to students.

Students experience the problem of matching their career preferences with their skills in educational achievement when they try to make career selections (Julius, Jacob, Daniel, Samson, Joseph, Betty, & Hassan 2016). Student that chooses inaccurate career decision as a result of difficulties experienced during the time of making a career decision will have a decline in his/her mode of study. Students that make good or right career decision will also have his/her mental ability boost up and committed to his/her study because he/she will have an interest in all the assignments. While a student with the wrong career decision may not have an interest in his class work also in all the assignments and their level of commitment may not be high.

In addition, the importance of education may be defeated, if a student makes wrong career decision as a result of difficulties experienced during the time of taking career decision. The importance of education is to acquire appropriate knowledge, but a student who made the wrong career decision may only read to pass the examination and obtain the certificate. The essence of education may not be achieved because such student may not understand or master the subject. Mashige and Oduntan (2011) reported lifelong consequences of wrong career selection as underachieving and the origin of inefficiency for themselves, their household and also for the society as a whole. The difficulties experience by the secondary school students should be addressed before taking a career decision so that they will be able to choose the career preferences that match their abilities, aptitude, and personality characteristics in order to increase their performance.

Consequences of career decision problem have been an issue for the individual and the society. Students who do not have the focus of what he/she want to do will find it difficult to choose the right career that matches their academic performance in schools. Therefore, it is imperative to find a way of assisting the students to understand themselves and to have all information needed to know about the available career. The period for selecting a career is at senior secondary school and at this stage student should be able to know what he/she want to become in the future and start planning towards achieving it. This period had been a critical period in the life of students because choosing a career among diverse alternative has been described as a difficult task.

The students especially Senior Secondary School 1 (SSS I) students are expected to choose subjects which they will like to pursue till university levels like Art, Sciences and Commercial. This has been a critical period for the students because of diverse alternatives and a lot of other factors that hinder them from making the most appropriate career choice. According to Migunde, Othuonans and Mbagaya (2015) students are progressively looking for career counselling in order to express career ideas.

Also, there is a need to look for ways of removing or preventing some of the difficulties experienced earlier and in the phase of making career decision. Therefore, the researchers made use of the Work-value Clarification (WvC) and Cognitive Information Processing (CIP) therapies in the management of career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students in Osun State. Work-value clarification aimed to assist persons overcome work-value mix-up and become more confident, focused, and creative, as well as to have an enhanced understanding of the work. Researchers (Beck, Harsh, & Sullivan, 2008) described work-value clarification as a means of encouraging students to apply the processes of valuing in their own lives and apply these valuing processes to previously formed beliefs, behaviour designs, and those still developing.

Beck, Harsh, and Sullivan (2008) defined value clarification as a treatment method that can assist to enhance an individual understanding of any values to have an impact on the standard of living, resolutions, and

actions. This method can offer an opening for one to think of individual decent problems and permit values to be scrutinized and spell out. It may be effective for personality improvement, improved pleasure, and dealings with others. It offers an opportunity for assessment, explanation. Work-value clarification plans to ease emotional pain and encourage optimistic actions through corroboration. Work-value clarification assists in the identification and clarification of values that influence individual decisions and behaviour that individuals are also encouraged to develop on their strengths and inner resources. An individual who has discovered his/her private values in treatment is frequently capable to recognize what will allow him/her to successfully perform in life and be capable to produce more self-focused selections.

Another intervention that could be of help to students in making a good career decision is cognitive information processing therapy. Cognitive information processing therapy hypothesised that vital career decision-making difficulty can only come about when dysfunctional cognitions are also tackled (Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1999). Cognitive information processing therapy intends to help people in making suitable career selections in the course of teaching and decision-making skills (Lauren, 2014). This therapy is designed from the cognitive theory of therapy and tries to combine both career requirements with likely emotional obstacles. The cognitive information processing therapy approach states that abnormal career opinions can distract career decision-making difficulty (Sampson, et al., 1999). Actions have been established to evaluate these non-adaptive/maladaptive occupation feelings and these actions have been exposed to be connected with hopeful career intervention results (Sampson, Peterson, Lenz, Reardon, & Saunders, 1999).

Ebenehi, Rashid, and Bakar (2016) found out that the most statistically significant predictor of career adaptability skills among students in Nigeria was career self-efficacy. Also, Di Fabio and Kenny (2011) affirmed that career self-efficacy and gender are favourable variables of decision-making processing in a career. For that understanding, career self-efficacy is thought to be a necessary part of the effective decision-making process in career.

Therefore, the researchers used career self-efficacy and gender as moderating variables. According to Akpochafo (2011), human achievement and personal happiness are enhancing in many ways by a high sense of self-efficacy. She added that persons that maintain strong commitment when experiencing challenging goals are those with high self-efficacy. Contrarily, people who do not believe in themselves will run away from challenging task which they see as being intimidating and have little ambitions and feeble responsibility to achieve the career of their choice. In the prospect of this, it is probable to think that people with an excessive feeling of career self-efficacy may be more devoted to their profession than those with low experience of career self-efficacy.

The second moderating variable for this work is gender. Gender has been described as the positions, impression, and actions that certain society links to a person's natural sex. Bravo-Baumann (2000) defined gender as a way in which a culture or society defining privileges, tasks, and the identities of males and females in relation to one another.

Hypotheses
The following null hypothesis were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

    i.   There is no significant main effect of treatments on the career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students;

    ii.   There is no significant main effect of gender on the career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students;

    iii.   There is no significant main effect of career self-efficacy on the career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students;

    iv.   There is no significant interaction effect of treatments and gender on career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students;

    v.   There is no significant interaction effect of treatments and career self-efficacy on career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students;

    vi.   There is no significant interaction effect of gender and career self-efficacy on career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students; and

    vii.   There is no significant interaction effect of treatments, gender and career self-efficacy on career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students.

METHOD

Design

This study adopted a pretest-posttest control group quasi-experimental design with a 3×2×2 factorial matrix. This involved two experimental groups (WvC and CIP) and the control group. Gender and Career self-efficacy were used as the moderating variables. Both variables were measured at two levels. Gender varies at male and female while career self-efficacy varies at two levels, namely: high and low. Treatments were given to the two experimental groups while the control group had no treatment.

Participants

The participants in this study were Senior Secondary School students selected from two secondary schools from three Local Governments Areas in Osun State, Nigeria. A total of 120 students participated in the study which was carried out in three Local governments (Ayedaade, Isokan and Ede South Local Governments Areas) out of thirty local governments in Osun State.

A simple random sampling technique was used to select three local government areas (Ayedaade, Isokan and Ede South Local Governments) in Osun State. Simple random sampling technique was used to select one senior secondary school from each of the selected local government areas. The participants who scored high on Germeijs and Boecks' indecisiveness scale as a screening tool against the threshold of 50 were selected. The schools were randomly assigned to Work-value clarification Therapy (40), Cognitive information processing (40) and Control (40) groups.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Participants who scored 50% and above on the screening instrument were regarded as those that were suffering from career decision-making difficulty. Simple random sampling was used to select 40 senior secondary school students by using ballot system. The schools were randomly assigned to into the two experimental groups and control group based on the recommendation of the screening scale. (45%) participants were males, while (54.2%) of participants were females their age ranged between 13 and 15 years.

Instrumentation

Three instruments were used for the collection of data in the study. They are:

1. Indecisiveness Scale by Germeijs and Boeck (2002). This was used as the screening instrument to identify the participants suffering from career decision-making difficulty that were included in the study.
2. Career Decision Making Difficulty Scale (CDMDS) by Gati, Krausz and Osipow (1996)
3. Career Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES) by Adeyemo (2000)

Indecisiveness Scale (IS)

Indecisiveness Scale developed by Germeijs and Boeck (2002) was adopted as a screening instrument to determine those that were suffering from career decision making difficulty. *The scale was a 22-item questionnaire with a 7- point Likert scale ranging from "Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree". Typical items of the scale are: "I find it easy to make decisions" "It is hard for me to come to a decision".* The instrument has a reliability of .92 as reported by the author. The instrument has been found to be useful and suitable for Nigerian sample. Participants respond by indicating their extent of agreement with each of the twenty-two statements. The instrument yielded .76 Cronbach alpha coefficients when tested for reliability.

Career Decision Making Difficulties Scale (CDMDS)

This study was based on the students' reaction to the adopted Career Decision Difficulties Scale (CDDS) developed by Gati, Krausz and Osipow (1996) which comprises 34 statements of attitudes to and beliefs about Career Decision Making. The participants were asked to specify their level of conformity with these statements on a 9-point scale, ranging from 1 - "Does not describe me", to 9 - "Describes me well". Typical items of the scale are: *"I expect that through the career I choose I will fulfil all my aspirations" "I find it difficult to make a career decision because I still do not know which occupations interest me".* The reliability coefficient of the scale as reported by the author was .85 and the one established by the researchers was .81. The scale was used to measure the dependent variable at the pretest and the posttest point of the treatments.

Career Self-efficacy (CSES) Scale

The career self-efficacy Scale by Adeyemo (2000) was used to determine the amount of confidence or belief students have to attain success in their proposed careers. The career self-efficacy scale comprises 5 subscales; self-appraisal, collecting information about occupation, selection of goals, making prospective tactics, and solving the problem. The total items for the test are thirty-eight (38), but for this study, it had been adapted to 33 items. The career self-efficacy scale adapted is a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (If you are Not Sure) to 5 (If you are Very Much Sure). Examples of the items are "*I know the requirements for my proposed course of study and the subjects I'm offering now are relevant to my proposed career*" Total career self-efficacy scale scores were calculated by summing the ratings for the 33 items with a maximum score of 165. The author reported a reliability coefficient of .89 for the instrument. The scale was also pilot-tested and its test-retest reliability established for this study was .87 Cronbach's alpha. The scale was used to measure the level of career self-efficacy of the SSSs and to divide them based on the two-level of career self-efficacy that is low and high.

Procedure

The researchers were granted permission to carry out the study in the selected schools, the participants were also orientated on the study and they were encouraged to cooperate with the researchers in order to make the training efficient and effective. They were also made to understand the benefit of the training to their academic and personal lives.

The treatments lasted for eight weeks for the two experimental groups (Work-value Clarification and Cognitive Information Processing therapies), each week, and the training section lasted for 40 minutes in each of the experimental group. While the control group was not given any treatment. Participants in the three groups (Work-value Clarification, Cognitive Information Processing, and Control) were exposed to a pre and post-test using the instruments in the study. The control group was not

Summary of the Treatment Package

The summary of the treatment package is given as follows:

Experimental Group 1
Work-value Clarification (WVC)

Session One: General orientation and administration of pretest instrument.
At this session, the therapists welcomed all participants and initiated rapport among them through self-introduction by each member. The therapists briefed the participants on the purpose of the session. The therapists administered pre-test instruments using 25 items Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (CDSES-SF) to obtain the pre score.

Session Two: Explanation on what career is all about.

At this session, the participants were taught the meaning of career, evaluated by asking them to explain what career is and the reasons for taking a career decision.

Session Three: Discussion of what career decision-making difficulty is?

At this session, the therapists explained the meaning of career decision-making difficulty as anything that hinders the participants from making the most appropriate career decision. Some of the reasons that make decision-making difficult when choosing a career were discussed.

Session Four: Explaining the consequences of making wrong career decision.

At this session, the therapists discussed with the participants some of the consequences of making a wrong career decision:

Session Five: Discussion of the meaning of work-value clarification.

At this session, the therapists explained the meaning of work-value clarification to the participants and evaluated by asking the participants to explain what they understand by work-value clarification.

Session Six: Teaching the participants, the phases of work-value clarification.

Session Seven: Discussing the types of Work-value.

Session Eight: Summary of all activities in the previous session and administration of instrument for post-treatment measures.

Experimental Group Two
Cognitive Information Processing (CIP)

Session One: General orientation and administration of pretest instrument.

At this session, the therapists welcomed all participants and initiated rapport among them through self-introduction by each member. The therapists briefed the participants on the purpose of the session. The therapists administered pre-test instruments using 25 items Career Decision Self-Efficacy Scale-Short Form (CDSES-SF) to obtain the pre score.

Session Two: Explanation of what a career is.

At this session, the participants were taught the meaning of career, evaluated by asking them to explain what career is and the reasons for taking a career decision.

Session Three: Discussing what career decision-making difficulty is.

At this session, the therapists explained the meaning of career decision-making difficulty as anything that hinders the participants from making the most appropriate career decision. Some of the reasons that make decision-making difficult when choosing a career were discussed.

Session Four: Explaining the consequences of making wrong career decision.

At this session, the therapists discussed with the participants some of the consequences of making a wrong career decision:

Session Five: Discussion of what cognitive information processing therapy is.

At this session, the therapists explained the meaning of cognitive information processing therapy to the participants and evaluated by asking the participants to explain what they understand by cognitive information processing therapy.

Session Six: Explaining the aims of cognitive information processing

Session Seven: Narrating the fundamental ways of cognitive information processing model.

Session Eight: Summary of all activities in the previous session and administration of instrument for post-treatment measures.

Method of Data Analysis
Data were analysed using Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) and Bonferroni Post hoc, Analysis of covariance was used to analysed the data generated from the participants response to the instruments in order to determine the effect of the treatments, on the experimental groups. The ANCOVA was also used to establish the relationship between the participants pre-treatments and post-treatment scores. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance to determine the effects of treatment on Career Decision-Making Difficulty of the participants.

RESULTS

The results of co-variance analysis regarding the pretest scores of secondary school students are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of 3x2x2 Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) Post-Test CDMD of the secondary school students.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	13059.947[a]	12	1088.329	2.494	.006	.219
Intercept	88066.456	1	88066.456	201.847	.000	.654
Pre	1892.279	1	1892.279	4.337	.040	.039
Trtgrp	8079.557	2	4039.778	9.259	.000	.148
Gender	44.889	1	44.889	.103	.749	.001
CSE	75.278	1	75.278	.173	.679	.002
Trtgrp * Gender	1325.979	2	662.989	1.520	.223	.028
Trtgrp * CSE	128.369	2	64.185	.147	.863	.003
Gender * CSE	122.508	1	122.508	.281	.597	.003
Trtgrp * Gender * CSE	576.665	2	288.332	.661	.519	.012
Error	46684.378	107	436.303			
Total	2442927.000	120				
Corrected Total	59744.325	119				

R Squared = .219 (Adjusted R Squared = .131)

In order to determine the group(s) causing significant difference, a control group based on Bonferroni Post-hoc analysis was performed. The Bonferroni Post-hoc analysis result is given in Table 2.

Table 2. The significant difference among various treatment groups and the control group based on Bonferroni Post-hoc analysis.

Treatment Group	N	Subset for alpha = .05	
		1	2
Cognitive Information Processing	40	134.9750	
Work-Value Clarification	40	135.2500	
Control	40		152.5500
Significant		.953	1.000

The results from table 1 showed that there is significant main effect of treatments on the career decision making difficulty of the secondary school students ($F_{(2, 107)}$=9.259, p<.05, η^2=.148). This means that there is a significant difference in the mean scores of the career decision making difficulty of the secondary school students exposed to work-value clarification when compared with the control group. Hence, the hypothesis one is significant. It was therefore concluded that there is significant main effect of work-value clarification in reduction of career decision making difficulty of the secondary school students. This implies that work-value clarification is effective in reducing career decision making difficulty of the secondary school students.

To further provide information on the reduction of career decision making difficulty of the secondary school students among the three groups (Cognitive Information Processing, Work-value Clarification and Control), it is important to determine the course of the variation and establish the significance of the mean scores of the participants in each of the treatment and the control groups as presented in Table 2.

Following observation were made in table 2:

i. There was no statistically significant difference between the post-hoc tests mean scores in reducing career decision-making difficulty of the secondary school students in the Cognitive Information Processing therapy and Work-value Clarification groups. However, the participants in the Cognitive Information Processing (Mean=134.975) benefited better than those in the Work-value Clarification (Mean=135.250). This is most probable because Cognitive Information Processing is a counselling method that embraces an attitude closer to the exercise of psychotherapy that affirms the inherent price of the man or woman and also responds appropriately and correctly to the character at the affective, behavioural, cognitive and physiological degrees of functioning. It is more impacting on the participants than Work-value Clarification as shown in the result of the tests.

ii. There was a significant difference in the post-hoc mean test scores in reducing career decision making difficulty of the secondary school students exposed to Cognitive Information Processing and Control Group. The participants in Cognitive Information Processing (Mean = 134.975) reduced the career decision-making difficulty significantly better than those in the Control Group (Mean = 152.550). The Control Group was not subjected to any of the psychological sessions as

to give a change of orientation to the participants concerning their attitude to career decision making difficulty.

iii. There was a significant difference in the post-hoc test mean scores in reducing the career decision-making difficulty of the secondary school students exposed to work-value clarification and control group. The participants in Work-value Clarification (Mean = 135.250) reduced the career decision-making difficulty of the secondary school students significantly better than those in the Control Group (Mean = 152.550). Instead of exposing the participants to the instruments provided in order to bring about a behaviour that will reduce career decision-making difficulty, the students were only given a lecture on a non-psychological session. The adolescents were only lectured on "Moral behavior".

iv. These observations from the results of the tests imply that there are significant differences among the mean scores of participants in Cognitive Information Processing, Work-value Clarification and those in the Control Group. The Cognitive Information Processing and Work-value Clarification are more effective than the Control Group, and that the Cognitive Information Processing had the greater potency on career decision-making difficulty among the participants than Work-value Clarification.

The results from Table 1 showed that there is no significant main effect of gender on career decision making difficulty of the secondary school students $F_{(1, 119)} = 0.103$, $p > 0.05$, $\eta^2 = 0.001$). This means there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the gender on career decision-making difficulty of the secondary school students in male and female when compared with each other. Hence, hypothesis two was not significant.

The results from Table 1 also showed that there is no significant main effect of Career Self-Efficacy on career decision-making difficulty of the secondary school students ($F_{(1, 107)} = .173$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .002$). This means that there is no significant difference in the mean scores of the Career Self-Efficacy on career decision-making difficulty of the secondary school students in high and low Career Self-Efficacy when compared with each other. Hence, hypothesis three was not significant.

The results from Table 1 also revealed that there is no significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on career decision making difficulty of the secondary school students ($F_{(2, 107)} = 1.520$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .028$). This means there is no significant interaction effect between treatment and gender on career decision making difficulty of the secondary school students. Hence, hypothesis four was not significant.

The results from Table 1 showed that there is no significant interaction effect of treatment and Career Self-Efficacy on career decision making difficulty of the secondary school students ($F_{(2, 107)} = .15$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .003$). This means there is no significant interaction effect between treatment and career self-efficacy on career decision making difficulty of the secondary school students. Hence, hypothesis five was not significant.

The results from Table 1 showed that there is no significant interaction effect of gender and career self-efficacy on career decision-making difficulty of the secondary school students ($F_{(1, 107)} = .281$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .003$). This means there is no significant interaction effect between genders and career self-efficacy on career decision-making difficulty of the secondary school students. Hence, hypothesis six was not significant.

The results from Table 1 showed that there is no significant interaction effect of treatment, gender and career self-efficacy on career decision-making difficulty of the secondary school students ($F_{(2, 107)} = .661$, $p > .05$, $\eta^2 = .012$). This means there is no significant interaction effect between treatments, gender and career

self-efficacy on career decision-making difficulty of the secondary school students. Hence, hypothesis seven was not significant.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, and SUGGESTIONS

The results of the study revealed the effects of both therapies (Work-value Clarification and Cognitive Information Processing) in the management of career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students. Work-value clarification training and cognitive information processing therapy were found to be effective in the management of career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students. This finding corroborates Cook and Maree (2016) who affirmed that the treatments (Work-value Clarification and Cognitive Information Processing) helped the participants from both groups to accumulate information about themselves, make career choices, simplify their values, work ethic improvement, obtain information about career, interests' clarification and optimistic aspects of their lives is identified. The finding of this study is also in harmony with Eremie and Ibifari (2018) who revealed that interventions like career guidance and counselling, identification of career goals, giving the necessary knowledge about the career in future, making career decisions, assistance in the assessment of self, and career planning by individual, assisted students to make a better career choice. Therefore, many Counselling Psychologists in Nigeria use it more than any other interventions.

The study also revealed no substantial effect of gender on the career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students. This implies that no substantial dissimilarity in the mean score of males and females on career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students. This indicates that gender difference has no significant impact on the career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students. This finding was supported by Mtemeri (2017) who reported no significant influence of gender on career choices. The finding is also in accordance with Kazi and Akhlaq (2017) who revealed that gender was not significant on career decision. They reported that the participants do not perceive gender as hindrance to their career choice. Chung, (2002); Fouad and Smith, (1997) stated that there is no substantial dissimilarity between male and female in career decision making self-efficacy. Also, Yang (2008) discovered that there were no substantial differences among male and female regarding academic achievement and that both genders put in the same efforts to achieve in their academic pursuits. Saleem, Aly and Gul (2017) affirmed that there was no substantial dissimilarity in male and females in the modern era where the sense of competition is high and both male and females have career orientation and plans. The explanation could be on the grounds that the two treatments (work-value clarification training and cognitive information processing therapy) engaged have to do with training and information about career paying little respect to their gender.

The study also revealed that there was no critical principal impact of career self-efficacy on the career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students. This basically implies that there was no huge distinction in the career decision-making difficulty of school adolescents on the degree of their career self-efficacy. This supports the findings of Bounds (2013) who uncovered that there is an irrelevant relationship between career decision self-efficacy and scholastic accomplishment.

Abesha (2012) also asserted that self-efficacy was not altogether related to instructive achievement. Likewise, Crisan and Sebastian (2015) guaranteed that a few examinations have demonstrated unpleasant connection between self-efficacy and career decisions making. Creed; Patton and Prideaux (2006) presented that adjustment in career self-efficacy of High school students doesn't have any critical association with their career decision-making difficulty. Likewise (Betz & Luzzo, 1996; Betz, Klein & Taylor, 1996) revealed negative relationships between self-efficacy and career decision-making difficulty. This might be because of set up reality that the degree of career self-efficacy doesn't have any impact on the career

decision-making difficulty of students. Students consider difficulties to be typical things that one has to go through, yet the degree of introduction, information and direction will decide how one will survive and support accomplishment.

Arif, Iqbal, and Khalil (2019) also discovered that self-efficacy experiences do not influence career decision-making among students in south-south, Nigeria. Studies revealed career self-efficacy as negatively related to career decision-making difficulty (Amir & Gati, 2006; Creed, Patton, & Bartrum, 2004). The feasible explanation behind the outcome of this study might be on the grounds that the two meditations or therapy include instructions on the most proficient method to understand self, knowing one value, and regardless of the degree of self-efficacy, the students were encouraged on how to understand their own value and the essential information given. This may likely build their effort in completing things.

The results also demonstrated that no significant interaction effect of treatments (work-value clarification and cognitive information processing) and gender in the career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students. The outcome is in harmony with Joshua, Terungwa and Saanyol (2018) who affirmed that gender does not have a significant difference in career decision. In addition, it shows that there were other factors that affect career decision among students. Also, Lam (2016) discovered that the intervention did not reveal significant changes in career decision-making difficulty (career decision-making difficulty) related to lack of incentive for both male and female students. This meant that gender does not have influence on career decision among secondary school students. This finding may be because of the fact that the ability of male and female to manage situation in most cases did not differ significantly. This indifference in the abilities to manage a situation did not have an influence on the reactions of male and female students to the rigidity of the intervention they were exposed to during the course of the intervention. The results also showed no substantial interaction effect of gender and career self-efficacy on the career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students. This simply means that gender and career self-efficacy did not moderate the effect of the treatments (Work-value Clarification and Cognitive Information Processing) on the career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students.

The finding of this study opposed Agbaje and Agbaje (2014) study who found that career self-efficacy and gender are the moderating factors that have an influence on the causal link between the intervention programmes and the criterion measures. Also, Fouad and Byars-Winston (2009) found that the increase in career self-efficacy leads to significant decreases in career decision-making difficulties. They proposed that major decreases in career decision-making difficulty can be ascribed to the inclusion of career assessments to clarify interests and enhancing students to research various careers and majors. This could be that work-value clarification and cognitive information has to do with identification of value and given information that might enhance the confidence and boost the achievement regardless of their career self-efficacy.

The results obtained showed that no significant interaction effect of treatments, gender and career self-efficacy on career decision making-difficulty of secondary school students. Consequently, the null hypothesis was accepted. This result is in consonance with the findings of Brown, George-Curran and Smith (2003) who affirmed that gender was not a mediator of the relationship between factors of emotional intelligence, career commitment, occupational investigation and career decision-making self-efficacy. Also, George-Curran and Smith (2003) and Salami (2001) studies discovered no significant relationship between gender and career behaviors. The probable reasons for this are that students irrespective of their gender, schools, class, location and level of career self-efficacy were exposed to related school experiences and same educational school policy, but have different level of career self-efficacy.

Conclusion

This study was set up to examine the effectiveness of work-value clarification therapy and cognitive information processing therapy in the management of career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students in Osun State, Nigeria. Gender and career self-efficacy were the moderating variables. In view of this, the selected participants undergone therapeutic interventions for eight (8) weeks, respectively; the data collected were carefully analysed using appropriate statistical tools which revealed the result of the study. Sequel to the findings of the study, the following conclusions are made: work-value clarification training and cognitive information processing therapy were effective in the management of career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students. This means that appropriate usage of the principles essential to these psychological interventions ought to generate the related outcome. Nevertheless, cognitive information processing therapy was more efficient than work-value clarification in the management of career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students.

This study also discovered an insignificant interaction effect of gender and career self-efficacy in the management of career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students. The present study further revealed an insignificant interaction effect of treatments, career self-efficacy, and gender on the career decision-making difficulty of secondary school students. The findings show that in the aspect of work-value clarification training and cognitive information processing therapy on career decision making the difficulty of secondary school students in this study, the interventions are not gender-biased and therefore could be applied to students of both genders to improve their knowledge as regards deciding on career and difficulty in career decision-making. In addition, the finding also revealed that career self-efficacy did not have a significant influence in the management of career decision-making difficulty when using the work-value clarification and cognitive information processing therapies.

Implication for Counselling

- ➤ The fact that work-value clarification and cognitive information therapies were effective in the management of career decision-making difficulty of the students, the principles embedded in the interventions should be incorporated into the orientation training package for the students before chosen point in their educational activities such as, at the end of the Primary school certificate examination, Junior secondary Examination and Senior secondary Examination. These will better equip the pupils to effectively manage challenges experience before, during and after career decision;

- ➤ The counselling centre with the aims of helping students to overcome difficulty experience in making career decision should maximise the rudiments of psychological interventions used in this study to assist students in reducing or managing career decision-making difficulty;

- ➤ The effectiveness of the interventions has also developed career management skills, rather than only helping people to solve immediate career problem and to make immediate decisions.

- ➤ Counselling and educational psychologist should be given the proper place in public secondary schools. Their attention should also be extended to parents rather than being limited to students. They should be saddled with the responsibility of using counselling principles and skills to manage the difficulty of career decision-making.

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FACTORS THAT PROMOTE ACADEMIC SUCCESS OF SPECIAL NEEDS CHILDREN AT THE BASIC SCHOOL LEVEL IN THE UPPER EAST REGION OF GHANA

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Abstract

This study explores the determinants of academic success among Special Needs Children in Basic Schools in the Upper East Region of Ghana. Rieser's Social Model of Disability is the theoretical framework upon which the study is built. Utilizing Simple Random Sampling and Purposive Sampling, the research focused on parental involvement, teaching methods, and the attitudes of special needs pupils. Questionnaire, interviews, and observation were employed for data collection, and the findings are presented through Tables and graphs. The study highlights significant parental involvement, including financial support, and active monitoring of children's progress. Teachers exhibit openness, employ tailored instructional methods, and create inclusive environments. Special needs pupils actively participate, displaying motivation and a positive attitude towards learning. The study recommends collaborative efforts between school authorities and the District Assembly for funding hearing and visual aids. School management is advised to partner with NGOs for resources supporting Special Needs Education. Parents are also encouraged to increase school visit frequently to foster a motivating and positive learning environment. Further research should look at the training and support provided to teachers who work with special needs children.

Keywords: Special needs children, academic success, basic school.

INTRODUCTION

It is important to emphasize that the primary goal of educating special needs children is to achieve academic success. Education not only fulfills a fundamental human right but also enables individuals with special needs to assume roles that contribute to societal and national development. A lot of factors come to play in special needs children achieving academic success and this include the support of parents, adopted teaching methods, pupils' behavior or attitude, and others. The academic performance of special needs children has always been questionable as concerns have been raised about the qualification, delivery method of teaching, as well as the absence of some equipment needed for

effective facilitation, this therefore calls for an inquiry to explore the factors that contribute to the academic achievements of children with special needs in basic schools.

The Ghana Education Service's Special Education Division (SpED) classifies a diverse spectrum of special needs among children, totaling twenty distinct categories. These encompass individuals with various conditions; this encompasses a range of conditions such as hearing impairment, visual impairment, intellectual disability, physical disability, deaf-blindness, multiple disabilities, speech and communication disorders, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, gifted and talented individuals, specific learning disabilities, autism, emotional and behavioral disorders, as well as children impacted by natural disasters and social conflicts. Moreover, the classification encompasses nomadic youngsters, including shepherd boys, children of fisher-folk, and domestic child laborers, as well as those facing severe social and economic hardships, exploitation for financial gain, orphanhood, separation from biological parents, HIV/AIDS, street life, and other health impairments like asthma (Ministry of Education, 2013).

The Upper East Region of Ghana is home to four specialized schools catering to diverse special needs: Gbeogo School for the Deaf in Tongo, St. John's Special School in Navrongo, St. John's Special School in Bolgatanga, and Balobia Special School in Navrongo. This study focuses on four specific categories of special needs children present in these schools: individuals with hearing impairment, visual impairment, speech and communication disorders, and autism. The researcher embarked on visits to these specialized schools across the region to identify and categorize the different types of special needs children, laying the groundwork for further research endeavors.

To secure the academic achievement of primary-level special needs children, it is essential to address various factors such as teaching methodologies, accessibility to necessary equipment, and additional supportive elements. This study illuminates the primary factors that enable the academic advancement of children with special needs in the Upper East Region of Ghana.

Background

Education is universally acknowledged as a fundamental human right applicable to all children irrespective of their gender, ethnicity, nationality, disability, and other distinguishing factors (United Nations, 2015). These principles are enshrined in significant international agreements and documents. The International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights upholds the entitlement to mandatory primary education at no cost for everyone, alongside the phased introduction of complimentary secondary education. The attainment of universal primary education stands as a pivotal objective within the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), collectively endorsed by nations in 2000 (World Health Organization, 2018).

The Ghanaian education system has gone through several Reforms over the years to make its basic level of education one of the best globally (Adu-Gyamfi et al., 2016). This is done to get children of school going age fully prepared for other higher levels of education. The Ghana Education Service (2008) encapsulates section 2 (1) of the Education Act of 1961, which stipulates that every child who has reached the age suitable for school attendance as determined by the Minister must participate in a prescribed course of instruction at a school approved by the Minister. The Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (FCUBE) policy commenced during the tenure of President Jerry John Rawlings to bolster school enrollment rates among children upon reaching school age (Cover Ghana, 2022).

The evolution of Special Needs education for children with special needs in Ghana mirrors developments observed in other developing nations, particularly those in Sub-Saharan Africa (Ametepee and Dimitris, 2015). While many believe that Special Education in Ghana originated post the 1994 World Conference on Special Needs Education in Salamanca, Spain, its roots stretch much further back. The progression of Special Education in Ghana can be delineated into three primary stages.

The first stage encompasses Early Special Education Efforts predating Ghana's independence (1936–1956). Avoke (2008) highlights the establishment of the initial special school for children with special

needs in Begoro and Akropong-Akwapim by missionaries, initially catering to blind and deaf pupils. These early schools primarily focused on literacy courses and vocational training, such as basket weaving using local materials.

The second stage marks the establishment of a Public Special Education System during and post-independence (1957-1993). Following partial internal governance in 1951, the Nkrumah-led government assumed responsibility for special education and the broader education system from 1957 onward.

However, the desired outcomes for special education were not fully realized until the passage of the 1961 Education Act (Ametepee and Dimitris, 2015). The third stage marks a shift towards inclusion, spanning from the mid-1990s to the present. Despite the government's considerable focus on the education of special needs children during the second stage, criticisms arose over the isolation of these children from their communities, a practice also prevalent in several other countries during the 1990s (Kenny, 2020). The introduction of inclusive education at the World Conference on Special Needs Education aimed to address this issue and enhance the quality of education for special needs children. Ghana adopted inclusive education to provide equitable educational opportunities for all. At the conference, attended by 92 governments, including the Ghanaian government, and international organizations reaffirmed the importance of education for each person, as articulated in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Additionally, member states pledged to uphold the resolutions set forth at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All (EFA) (UNESCO, 1994).

Research Objectives
The objectives of the study are;
1. To examine the extent to which parents' involvement promote the academic success of special needs children in basic schools.
2. To identify how teaching and learning methods promote the academic success of special needs children in basic schools.
3. To discuss the extent to which the attitudes of special needs pupils promote their academic success in basic schools.

Research Questions
The questions of the study are;

1. How does parents' involvement promote the academic success of special needs children in basic schools?

2. How does teaching and learning methods promote the academic success of special needs children in basic schools?

3. How does the attitude of special needs pupils promote their academic success in basic schools?

Theoretical Framework
The theoretical foundation of the study is built upon Rieser's (2002) social model of disability, which conceptualizes disability as arising from the interplay between individuals with impairments and a surrounding environment marked by various physical, attitudinal, communication, and social barriers. This perspective contends that societal environments must adapt to facilitate the inclusion of individuals with impairments in communal activities. In contrast, the medical model of disability sees disability purely as a health concern requiring medical intervention (PWDA, 2022), contrasting sharply with this perspective.

This theoretical framework is particularly relevant to the study's focus, as it facilitates the identification of challenges faced by special needs students or those with disabilities, including environmental, attitudinal, institutional, and financial hurdles. According to Rieser (2002), environmental challenges arise from the physical surroundings and infrastructural limitations that impede the mobility of individuals with disabilities, including a subset of special needs children. People in wheelchair for

instance need some special infrastructural facilities to aid their movement in school to help improve their academic performance. School environment can be made easily accessible for disabled pupils by making the environment more wheelchairs friendly. It can also be made easily assessable for visually impaired pupils by improving lighting in the classroom, creating spacious classrooms, and encouraging multi-sensory learning (Godfrey, 2019). It is very essential to note that a school's natural surroundings and infrastructural facilities need to be easily accessible to all pupils regardless of the challenge they face in their day-to-day activities.

The attitudinal challenges as described by Rieser (2002) focuses on the negative attitudes, traits, or behaviors directed towards special needs children by others. Stereotyping, stigmatization, and discrimination are challenges people with disability face every day as they get excluded from numerous activities (Epic, 2021). Some negative attitude towards learners with disabilities includes not being accepted to study with other learners, eat, or play with them. And all these are social activities that help children to learn about the world around them, improve their communication skills, which improve their academic performance in the long run (Save the Children, 2021). According to Johnson (2011), play stands out as a fundamental requirement for children, playing a crucial role in assisting them in navigating their emotions and dealing with life events.

The social model of disability highlights institutional challenges as another significant issue. According to Rieser (2002), these challenges encompass legislative frameworks and associated regulations and policies. For instance, the 1961 Education Act of Ghana supports inclusive education, recognizing education as a fundamental human right irrespective of race, religion, or other factors (Ametepee, 2015). However, the mere existence of such legislation does not guarantee its full implementation, potentially impacting learners with special needs in educational settings.

Failure to fully implement curricula tailored to students with physical disabilities, inadequate infrastructural facilities, insufficient qualified teachers to cater to special needs children, and a lack of teaching and learning materials are among the challenges identified. Addressing these factors is crucial for enhancing the academic performance of special needs children. Hanlon (2020) underscores the contemporary educational challenge of a shortage of qualified teachers.

Having financial problems means being unable to settle debts over a short or long period of time (Gingras, 2021). The model makes it clear that financial challenges or inadequate funding to run schools has always been a challenge. Special needs children are always in need of some sort of special treatment which requires more funding to help make life easy for pupils. Making schools wheelchair friendly for disabled pupils will require additional funding, so as making the various classrooms friendly for visually impaired pupils.

METHOD

The research adopted the mixed method approach where data was gathered through semi-structured questionnaires, interviews, and observations. The choice of this approach was influenced by the objectives of the research.

Data Collection and Analysis
Data collection for this study encompassed both primary and secondary sources, supplemented by interviews. Primary data was gathered from all special needs schools in the Upper East Region of Ghana, employing questionnaires as the main tool. These questionnaires comprised a mix of open-ended and close-ended questions, carefully designed to extract relevant information related to the research objectives. In addition to primary data, secondary data was collected from various sources including books, journals, internet resources, and pamphlets pertinent to the study topic. Both qualitative and quantitative approaches were utilized to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the academic success of special needs children at the basic school level in the region.

Interviews were conducted with teachers and parents of special needs children, recorded using mobile phones for later analysis. The selection of data gathering techniques was influenced by the overarching

goals of the research initiative, seeking to evaluate the diverse factors that contribute to academic achievement among children with special needs.

The research questionnaire, administered to the selected sample size, addressed key areas such as the background of the respondents, parental involvement in promoting academic success, the efficacy of teaching and learning methods, and the role of attitudes in fostering academic achievement among special needs children.

During visits to the selected schools, observations were made by the researcher to further enrich the data collection process. In some instances, a checklist was employed to gather additional information, or clarifications deemed necessary.

Upon obtaining approval from the participating schools, hard copies of the questionnaire were distributed to all participants. To accommodate school regulations prohibiting the use of electronic devices by pupils, the researcher collaborated with school authorities to ensure the questionnaire reached the intended recipients effectively. The researcher analyzed the data by using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) which is a data analysis software.

Sampling Techniques
The study utilized both Simple Random Sampling (SRS) and Purposive Sampling (PS) methods to select samples from the study area. Equal representation of both genders within the strata was guaranteed to uphold fairness and equilibrium in the sampling procedure. This approach facilitated the gathering of diverse perspectives from all respondents regarding the "Factors that promote academic success of special needs children at the basic school level in the Upper East Region of Ghana."

Sample Frame
A sample frame was constructed to guide participant selection, drawing upon the research questions and theoretical framework of the study. This process was particularly pertinent for identifying participants from groups not readily identifiable through official statistics. To facilitate the research, an institutional map was developed, providing a comprehensive overview of the four special needs schools in the Upper East Region. Interviews were then conducted with students from these institutions to gather relevant data for the study.

Table 1. Institutional map.

Respondents	
1.	Gbeogo School for the deaf at Tongo
2.	St John's Special School in Navrongo
3.	St. Johns Special School in Bolgatanga
4.	Balobia Special School in Navrongo

Table 2. Demographic characteristics of respondents.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Category of Respondents	Pupils	50	50.0
	Teachers	20	20.0
	Parents	30	30.0
	Total	100	100.0
Name of School	Gbeogo School for the Deaf - Tongo	25	25.0
	St. John's Special School - Bolgatanga	25	25.0
	St. John's Special School - Navrongo	25	25.0
	Balobia Special School - Navrongo	25	25.0
Sex of Respondents	Male	56	56.0
	Female	44	44.0

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Table 2 (Continued). Demographic characteristics of respondents.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Marital status of teachers and parents	Married	45	90.0
	Single	2	4.0
	Widow/Widower	3	6.0
Child disability status	Physically Challenged	5	10.0
	Intellectual disability	22	44.0
	Multiple disability (Intellectual and physically challenged)	11	22.0
	Deaf	12	24.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

Out of a total of 100 people interviewed for the study, 50% were pupils, 30% were parents and 20% were teachers. Many pupils were interviewed in the study, followed by parents and teachers the least. A total of 25% of respondents were interviewed at Gbeogo School for the Deaf - Tongo, an additional 25% were interviewed at St. John - Bolgatanga, another 25% from St. John's - Navrongo and a further 25% from Balobia Special School - Navrongo. This implies that each school has a quarter or 25% of respondents from that school.

Regarding the gender of the respondents interviewed in the study, 56% of the respondents were male and 44% were female. This shows that more men were interviewed in the study than women. Regarding the marital status of the respondents, 90% of teachers and parents are married, 6% of them are widows or widowers, and 4% of them are single and unmarried. Most of the adults interviewed were married parents and teachers.

Regarding the type of disability of the surveyed pupils, there are 44% intellectual disability, 24% hearing impairment (deaf), 22% variety disability in the form of intellectual disability and physical disability and 10% physical disability. Many pupils have intellectual disabilities, followed by pupils with hearing impairments, multiple disabilities, and physical disabilities.

Table 3. Category of respondents and name of school.

		Name of School				
		Gbeogo School for the Deaf – Tongo	St. John's Special School - Bolgatanga	St. John's Special School - Navrongo	Balobia Special School - Navrongo	Total
Category of Respondents	Pupils	12	13	13	12	50
	Teachers	5	5	5	5	20
	Parents	8	7	7	8	30
Total		25	25	25	25	100

Source: Field Survey, 2023

In summary, out of 50 pupils interviewed, 12 were from Gbeogo School for the Deaf - Tongo, 13 were from St. John - Bolgatanga, 13 other children from St. John - Navrongo and 12 pupils from the Balobia - Navrongo Special School. Out of 20 teachers, 5 are from each school. Regarding parents, 8 parents from Gbeogo Deaf School - Tongo, 7 parents from St. John - Bolgatanga, 7 others from St. John - Navrongo and 8 people from Balobia Special School - Navrongo.

Table 4. Category of respondents and educational level of teachers and parents.

| | | Educational level of teachers and parents | | | | | |
		Degree	Masters	Basic	Secondary	Tertiary	Total
Category of Respondents	Teachers	18	2	0	0	0	20
	Parents	0	0	11	16	3	30
Total		18	2	11	16	3	50

Source: Field Survey, 2023

RESULTS

Analysis of Research Findings

Findings for Objective 1: The Extent to Which Parents' Involvement Promotes the Academic Success of Special Needs Children in Primary Schools.

When questioned about parental involvement in children's education, all respondents (100%) affirmed that parents play a role in their children's educational journey. Further probing revealed the extent of parental involvement in various aspects of their wards' education. A significant majority (95%) stated that parents contribute to their wards' education by covering school fees. Additionally, 73% of respondents noted parental involvement through regular visits to the school. A smaller percentage (6%) indicated that parents purchase school materials for their children, while 4% mentioned providing groceries. A minimal proportion (2%) mentioned activities such as assisting with homework, ensuring children are prepared for school, and motivating them to learn.

Table 5. Parents involvement in pupils' education.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Are parents involved in pupils' education	Yes	100	100.0
	Check/Assist Pupils Exercises	2	2
	Buy Learning materials	6	6
	Provide Provisions for children	4	4
How parents are involved in pupils' education	Preparing and sending them school	2	2
	Words of encouragement/ motivation	2	2
	Pay school fees	95	95
	Pay visit to the school	73	73

Source: Field Survey, 2023

The interviews conducted and observations brought to light that indeed, these are the extent to which parents involvement promote the academic success of special needs children. Some students confirmed that they only focus on their education in pursuit of academic excellence because they do not worry about financial commitments because of their parents. Teachers also confirmed that these commitments from parents create a sense of responsibility in special needs children as they believe the only way they can pay their parents back is through academic excellence.

On the question of whether parents can provide support to their pupils to reduce their disability and improve their learning, 73% of respondents answered yes, while 27% gave a negative response. In a follow-up, respondents were asked why parents could not provide their wards with supportive means to help them study, 90% said it was due to financial constraints or the challenges parents are facing, that is why they cannot deliver support, 59% of them said it was due to insufficient resources that prevented parents from providing support for their children and 1% said it was because parents were negligent and unable to support their children.
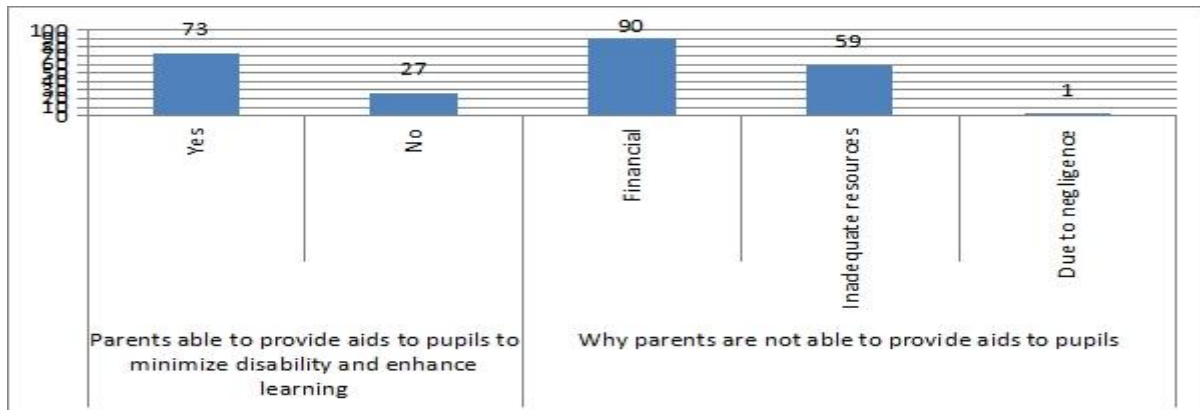
Figure 1. Parents provide support to pupils (Source: Field Survey, 2023)

Clearly, majority of the parents are involved in the academic success of their wards, and the few not fully involved cited financial constraints and inadequate resources as the problem. Parents stated during the interviewing sessions that they sometimes borrow even when they don't have just to make life easy for their children with special needs.

Findings for Objective 2: How Teaching and Learning Methods Promote the Academic Success of Special Needs Children.
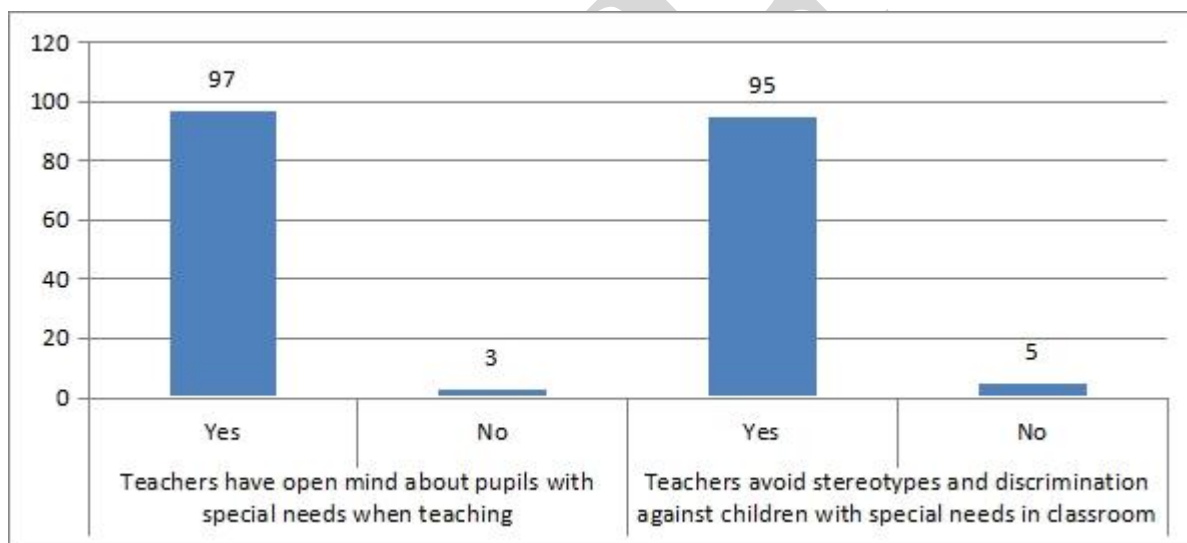
Figure 2. Teachers have open minds and avoid stereotypes and discrimination against children with special needs (Source: Field Survey, 2023).

A total of 97% of respondents answered yes, teachers are open to pupils with special needs when teaching, while 3% answered no, teachers are not open to pupils with special needs when teaching. On the question of whether teachers avoid prejudice and discrimination against children with special needs in the classroom, 95% answered yes and 5% answered no, teachers do not avoid stereotype and discrimination against children with special needs in the classroom. Observations made by the researcher and interviews conducted on the sampled population revealed similar results.

The study brought to light that teachers having an open mind to an extent of not discriminating against children with special needs is a teaching method that promote the academic success of special needs children.
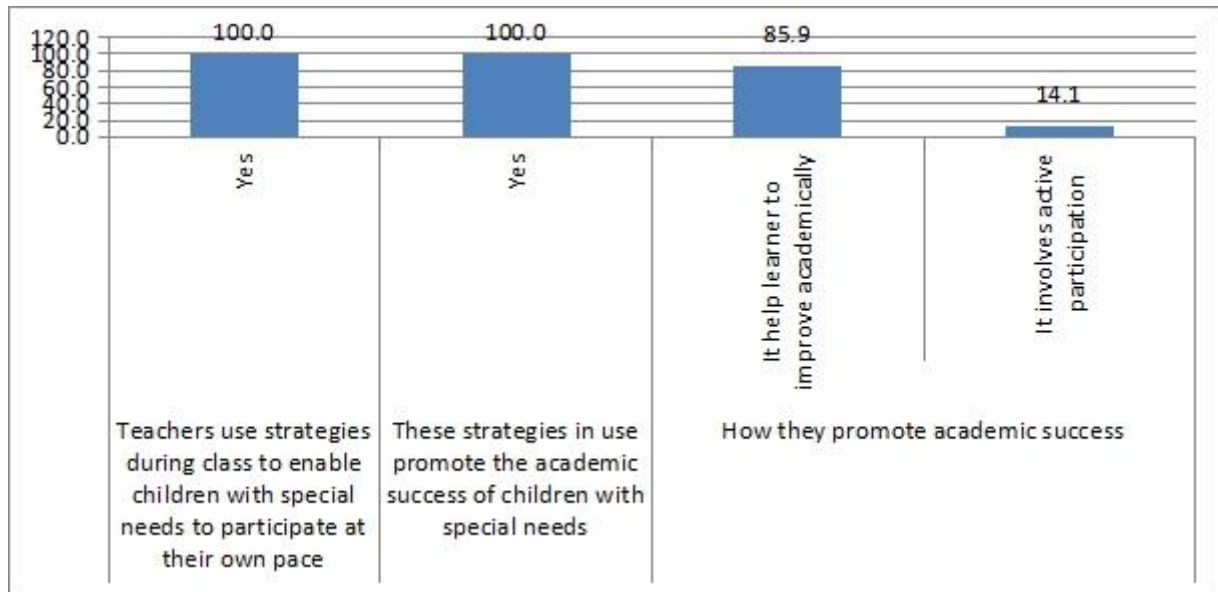
Figure 3. Teachers use strategies to aid pupils to promote academic success (Source: Field Survey, 2023).

In the questionnaire administered, all respondents said yes, teachers use strategies in lessons to allow children with special needs to participate at their own pace. All respondents again answered yes when asked if these strategies used help with the academic success of children with special needs. In the next question, respondents were asked about how these strategies support student academic success, 61% said it helps pupils improve their learning and 10% said these strategies encourage active student participation. In an interview session, the teacher respondents confirmed they use a student-centered approach to involve students fully.

Findings for Objective 3: The Extent to Which the Attitudes of Special Needs Pupils Promote their Academic Success.

Table 6. Behaviors of children with special needs.

		Frequency	Valid Percent
Children with special needs participate actively in class	Yes	69	98.6
	No	1	1.4
Children with special needs are aware of their disability status	Yes	100	100.0
children with special needs tried not to limit their abilities to learn because of their disability status	Yes	37	37.0
	No	63	63.0
Disability status affect the ability of pupils with special needs to learn	Yes	37	37.0
	No	63	63.0
Children with special needs become isolated when other children try to play with them	Yes	24	24.0
	No	76	76.0
Children with special needs are motivated and interested in learning on their own	Yes	87	87.0
	No	13	13.0
Behaviors of pupils with special needs indicates their willingness to learn in the classroom	Yes	99	99.0
	No	1	1.0
Children with special needs apply what they learn in their daily lives	Yes	100	100.0

Source: Field Survey, 2023

This session analyzes the extent to which the attitude of special needs children promotes their academic success. A total of 98.6% of respondents when answering the question of whether children with special needs actively participate in class or not answered yes, while 1.4% answered no, they are not actively participating. All (100%) respondents agree that children with special needs are aware of their disability. In a follow-up, respondents were asked whether children with special needs tried not to limit their learning capacity due to their disability, 63% of respondents answered no, while 37% answered yes. A total of 63% of respondents answered no, the disability does not affect the learning ability of pupils with special needs, while 37% answered yes their disability affects the ability of pupils with special needs. For children with special needs who isolate themselves when other children try to play with them, 76% of respondents said no, children with special needs do not isolate themselves when other children try to play with them, while 24% answered yes, they try isolating themselves when other children try to play with them. A total of 87% of the respondents answered yes, Children with special needs are motivated and interested in independent-study, while 13% answered no, and children with special needs are not motivated and interested in independent-study. A total of 99% of the respondents said yes, the behavior of pupils with special needs indicates that they are ready to learn in class, while 1% said no; the behavior of pupils with special needs does not indicate that they are ready to learn in class. All (100%) respondents answered yes when the question Children with special needs apply what they learn to everyday life.

In a nutshell, the attitude and behavior of special needs pupil promote their academic success. Per the data gathered from the table above, the behavior of special need pupils that promote their academic success include active participation in class irrespective of being aware of their disability status. Not limiting their ability to learn because of their disability status, not becoming isolated in playing with others, capability of learning on their own, and willingness to learn at any appropriate time.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, and RECOMMENDATIONS

Investigation revealed that parental involvement influences the academic achievements of special needs children in basic education. Despite facing challenges in involvement, a noteworthy percentage of parents are actively engaged, both financially and in providing crucial support such as regular school visits, academic progress monitoring, and providing learning materials. This finding is consistent with research by Logsdon (2022), who argued that parents play a very important role in an Individualized Education Program (IEP) because they provide essential information about strengths and weaknesses, key background information, and other details of their children. Goldsmith, (2011), Hanushek (2016) and Lucas (2016) also found that parental education level or parental income level plays an important role in the success of student learning, and this is consistent with the finding of the study.

An investigation into how teaching and learning methods promote the academic success of special needs children brought to light that teachers adopt a method of being open-minded and avoiding discrimination against children with special needs. This finding contradicts research by Rieser (2002), who found that behavioral challenges focus on negative attitudes, traits, or behaviors directed by others toward children with special needs. It also contradicts the work of Epic (2021) that prejudice, stigma, and discrimination are challenges that people with disabilities face daily when excluded from many activities. During the follow-up question, 85.9% of respondents said strategies have helped learners improve academic achievement and 14.1% said these strategies involved active child participation. This is in line with Positive Action (2021) that suggested some strategies for teaching pupils with special needs are as follows; discuss and set learning expectations, discuss, and set behavioral expectations, provide a schedule and be very clear about the materials needed for the lesson. This finding further supports the conclusion of Resilient Educator (2020), who proposed six strategies for teaching special education classes and they include; form small groups, create class centers, combine the "basics" with more specialized instruction, alternate lessons, try themed instruction, and offer different levels of books and materials together

Regarding the extent to which the attitude of special need pupils promotes the academic success, the study revealed that the result contradicts research by Nidirect (2022), who found that a child has special educational needs when there is a learning problem or disability that prevents the child from learning

like his or her peers. This finding is further contradicted by research by Gutman and Vorhaus (2012), who found that pupils with special needs sometimes exhibit certain behaviors that threaten their academic success, but they are not always at fault because they are forced to do so throughout the school. Pupils with average disabilities expressed concerns about physical barriers in the school setting. This result confirms the work of Johnson (2011) who found that play is one of the most important needs of children because it helps children manage emotions and cope with things that happen in life. This finding contradicts Save the Children (2021) which reported that some negative attitudes towards learners with disabilities include not being accepted to study with other learners, eat or play with them. And all these social activities help children explore the world around them; improve their communication skills, which in turn improve learning outcomes in the long run.

Recommendations

Drawing upon the primary findings and conclusions, the study formulated the subsequent recommendations:

- To further enhance the academic success of special needs children, it is recommended that schools establish formal channels of communication and collaboration between parents and teachers. This can include the implementation of regular meetings, workshops, and interactive sessions where parents can be informed about specific ways to support their children's education.

- To enhance the positive impact of teaching and learning methods on the academic success of special needs children, it is recommended that educational institutions invest in continuous professional development programs for teachers. These programs should focus on inclusive teaching strategies, resource optimization, and adapting instructional methods to cater to diverse learning needs.

- To further foster the positive impact of special needs pupils' attitudes on their academic success; it is recommended that schools implement initiatives to promote peer support and inclusive activities. Creating inclusive environments where students without special needs actively engage and collaborate with their peers with special needs can enhance social integration and further boost the positive attitudes of all students.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the work is written with due consideration of ethical standards. The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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LECTURERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY UTILISATION IN TEACHING STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN OYO STATE, NIGERIA

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Suggested Citation:
Lazarus, K. U. (2024). Lecturers' attitude towards information and communication technology utilisation in teaching students with special needs in Oyo State, Nigeria. *Turkish International Journal of Special Education and Guidance & Counselling (TIJSEG), 13*(1), 58-68.

Abstract

Information and Communication Technology has been widely used to facilitate career, business, economic and social activities as well as to augment classroom lessons among learners with or without unique educational challenges. Given the paucity of literature on the use of information and communication technology for providing instruction to tertiary education learners who have special educational needs in the South-West Nigerian educational setting, this study set out to investigate lecturers' attitudes toward using information and communication technology applications for providing instruction in two higher institutions of learning in the South-West Nigeria. The descriptive research design was adopted which involved the purposive selection of the University of Ibadan and the Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Oyo State. Participants comprised 80 lecturers who were randomly selected from both institutions. The data collected were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics at p<.05. To compare group differences, the Cohen's d was also computed. Findings showed that lecturers have positive attitude toward utilising information and communication technology applications for providing instruction to students who have special educational needs. It was found that the demographic factors: gender, institutional affiliation and educational roles are not potent predictors of lecturers' attitude toward the usage of information and communication technology for providing instruction to learners who experience special educational needs. The study concluded that suitable information and communication technology applications useful for teaching students with special needs should be provided to lecturers in Nigerian universities and colleges of education.

Keywords: Attitude towards ICT utilisation, information and communication technology, institutional affiliation, general and special educators, special education.

INTRODUCTION

The experiences of students who have special educational needs receiving instruction in tertiary institutions of learning have attracted the attention of a number of studies (Lazarus, 2018). Year after year, the total figure of persons who have special educational needs enrolled in higher institutions of learning rises (Seale, Georgeson, Mamas, & Swain, 2015). This increase in student enrollments may have been impacted by the reports and legislation aimed at fostering inclusive education practices at the higher institutions of learning globally. In agreement with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UN, 2006) declaration of equal access to education for everyone, the Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 2017) launched the policy document titled "National Policy on Inclusive Education in Nigeria" where it articulated the guiding principles for inclusion.

The FME has thus mandated three stakeholders namely, the National Universities Commission, National Teacher Institute and National Council for Colleges of Education, to include inclusive education principles and techniques throughout their teacher education curricula and ensure effective implementation. To implement inclusive education in tertiary education institutions, the Nigerian government pledged to engage in regular capacity building of all stakeholders (teachers and policy makers) as well as procure educational materials including ICT, assistive technologies, learning aides and mobility aides for all schools and learning centres. This resolve depicts that the Nigerian government

supports the enrollment of students who experience special educational needs into its tertiary education institutions and have also gazetted the guidelines for provision of instruction to these students.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is an important instructional apparatus utilized by lecturers in teaching all students for improved academic and social performances. Lazarus (2018) reported that digital technologies makes it easier for higher education students who have special educational needs to attain independence and participate effectively in individualized and small group learning activities leading to improved functionality in everyday life. Thus, ICTs are inevitable instructional tools especially among different classifications of students who experience special educational needs. This is because students in this group are faced with diverse barriers that hinder them from learning easily in comparison to their peers without special educational needs. Perera-Rodríguez and Moriña (2019) maintained that access to appropriate technology enables learners with special educational needs to believe they are adept and prepared to attend university. In contrast, if they do not receive support in ICT usage, learners with special educational needs will lose confidence in themselves and their learning capacities.

Using 105 pre-university instructors from Romania, Blandul and Bradea (2016) found that the instructors had good awareness of the significance of ICT and a favourable attitude towards employing ICT tools in special education. Instructors' however, expressed that additional training in how to use modern technology for instruction among learners who have special educational needs will improve their input. Alkahtani (2013) conducted a study involving teachers who taught students enrolled in different levels of education. Although the finding indicated that participants' understanding and skills of using assistive technology was low, there was an average score of 4.09 out of 5.0 with 0.75 as standard deviation on question items regarding whether participants would require more training in their usage of devices described as assistive technologies. Hence, there was a strong agreement to the statement on further training in assistive technology usage which informed the recommendation made.

According to a survey by Olafare, Adeyanju and Fakorede (2018), colleges of education lecturers in Southwestern part of Nigeria had a positive attitude towards ICT and were moderately adept in its use. It can be inferred that lecturers' that possess attitude that is positive and have expertise in usage of ICT will perhaps include ICT into their academic tasks. Various research have also documented positive dispositions regarding using ICT for instruction among different categories of learners in various settings such as lecturers from three tertiary education institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria (Onasanya, Shehu, Oduwaiye, & Shehu, 2010); special education teachers who examined using assistive technology to remediate reading difficulties (Demirok, Gunduz, Yergazina, Maydangalieva, & Ryazanova, 2019); college of education lecturers in south-west, Nigeria (Olasedidun & Ganiyu, 2020); female pre-service special education graduate students who taught in a special education department in Saudi Arabia (Alanazy & Alrusaiyes, 2021); college of education lecturers in Ondo State, Nigeria (Ekunola, Onojah, Talatu, & Bankole, 2022).

A few studies have showed unsupportive or negative attitude towards employing ICT for instruction among learners who demonstrate exceptional educational needs by lecturers in tertiary education institutions. For instance, Strnadova, Hajkova and Kvetonova (2015) found that lecturers who were unsupportive of students' learning demonstrated this negative attitude by refusing to provide learners who have exceptional educational needs with supporting PowerPoint slides and handouts. In some cases, those students who have special challenges were not allowed to audio-record the lectures. In 2015, van Jaarsveldt and Ndeya-Ndereya found that some there is negative lecturers' disposition toward the usage of technology for learners who have special educational needs. By so doing, the idea of creating an inclusive learning environment on the campus remained unattainable, discouraging students with special educational needs from learning effectively.

In 2015 Alkhasawneh and Alanazy carried out a study in a Saudi Arabian university. The finding did not reveal remarkable statistical differences between lecturers based on their gender (men and women) and how they utilize ICT applications. Kpolovie and Awusaku (2016), and Mudasiru (2016) cited in

Ekunola, Onojah, Talatu, & Bankole, 2022) found that gender is not a significant predictor of attitude of lecturers towards ICT adoption in teaching and research. It was also discovered by Danko, Decman, Kerzic and Zorko (2020) that there is a link between gender and ICT use, with female lecturers being more likely to utilize specific ICT tools and their educational applications, while male teachers scored better in some ICT related attitudes. These reports show that the effect of gender on the attitude of lecturers towards how they use technology is still inconclusive. Based on this, more investigations are still necessary to fully understand these variables.

Tertiary education institutions could be university, polytechnic or college-based. Each of them award different degrees and certificates to diverse group of learners based on the training received. The study by Onasanya, Shehu, Oduwaiye, and Shehu (2010) demonstrated that instructors teaching in the university learned greater skills in the area of ICT than their other colleagues in polytechnics and educational colleges. It was also found the university lecturers and those in the polytechnic demonstrated greater skill in how they apply ICT in their classrooms than their colleagues at colleges of education (Egomo, Enyi, & Tah, 2012). In addition, Kpolovie and Awusaku (2016) found that there were largely more ICT facilities in federal institution (University of Port Harcourt) than at the Rivers State University of Science and Technology (a state university). Onwuagboke and Singh (2016) found a favourable disposition towards ICT adoption for instruction among sampled lecturers though it was also reported that the adoption of ICT for instruction was low. No statistical significant differences were obtained in the study based on participants' gender and institutional affiliation. The utilisation of ICT in the curriculum was also found to be favourably connected with faculty attitude.

As societies implement inclusion, all educators (general and special) are expected to wear many hats to help them design and deliver instruction and conduct regular assessments in their classrooms. Johnson (2016) explained that the roles of general educators have changed dramatically as the teachers welcome the opportunity to teach in inclusive education settings. According to Johnson, partnership in planning lessons, instructional delivery and assessment could include designing and implementing accommodations, including assistive technology as well as incorporating modern technology in a way that profits every learner. Collaboration involves professional connections and relationships as individuals labour to achieve a mutual objective (Friend & Cook, 2017). Successful inclusive education thus, entails that all professionals who work in the school including the general educator, must incessantly endeavour to cultivate cooperative abilities (Johnson, 2016). Previous studies on the impact of lecturers' educational roles (general or special) on their attitudes towards ICT use appears to be scanty especially in the study's target area, prompting this investigation.

Therefore, the present study investigated lecturers' attitude towards ICT usage for learners who have special educational needs with a consideration to two tertiary education institutions in Oyo State, both owned by the Federal Government of Nigeria. The institutions are the University of Ibadan (the Nigerian Premier University) and the Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo (the single institution of learning with the biggest enrollment of persons who experience special educational needs in Nigeria). Both institutions are noteworthy in the field of education and especially, special education in Nigeria because they operate the inclusive education system, and also admit and award degrees in special education. Three demographic characteristics of the participants were considered as follows: gender (male versus female), institutional affiliation (University of Ibadan versus Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, and educational role (general education lecturer versus special education lecturer).

Research questions
The researcher put forward these questions for the research:
  (i) What is the attitude of lecturers towards the use of ICT in teaching students with special educational needs?
  (ii) Are there differences in the attitudes of lecturers in the use of ICT in teaching students with special educational needs based on their gender (male versus female); institutional affiliation (University of Ibadan versus Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo and educational role (special education lecturer versus general education lecturer)?

METHOD

Design
The descriptive research design was adopted. The researcher collected information regarding lecturers' attitude towards the use of ICT in teaching students with special educational needs. Also, there was a special consideration to the collection of information on differences in lecturers' attitudes towards the use of ICT in teaching students with special educational needs with respect to lecturers' gender, institutional affiliation and educational role. None of the variables was manipulated because all the variables studied already exist in the participants.

Sample and sampling procedure
The population of this study comprised lecturers in two tertiary educational institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria. Selection was done through using the technique: simple random sampling method. Eighty (80) lecturers comprising general education and special education lecturers from the University of Ibadan and Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria were selected. Participating lecturers from the University of Ibadan were 50 (62.5%) of whom 32(64.0%) were male and 18(36.0%) were female. The participants from Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo were 30(37.5%) and included 17(56.7%) male and 13 (43.3%) female. Among the participants in the University of Ibadan, 18(36.0%) were general education lecturers, while 32 (64.0%) were special education lecturers. In Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, 26(86.7%) were general educators and 4(13.3%) were special educators. Table 1 presents this data.

Table 1. Demographic Information of Lecturers.

Characteristics	University of Ibadan, Ibadan	Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo
Gender		
Male	32(64.0%)	17(56.7%)
Female	18(36.0%)	13(43.3%)
Educational Role		
Special Education Lecturer	18(36.0%)	26(86.7%)
General Education Lecturer	32(64.0%)	4(13.3%)

Note: N of University of Ibadan = 50 (62.5%). N of Federal College of Education (Special) = 30 (37.5)

Research procedure
The researcher shared the google form webpage for the survey with lecturers in the University of Ibadan and those in the Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Oyo State, Nigeria through email and WhatsApp platforms. The researcher sent two remainders to all those who received the link to the survey. Participation was made voluntary as only lecturers who consented in writing participated in the study. Participants were assured that their responses would be kept confidential.

Instrument
The instrument used for this study was adapted from the questionnaire used by Sanchez, Marcos, Gonzalez and GuanLin (2012) to survey the attitudes of on-the-job teachers toward the usage of the ICT for instruction. Based on the purpose of the present study, few modifications in terms of language (mechanics) were made in the questionnaire. For instance, the word "students" was replaced with the terminology "students with special educational needs". Originally question 3 states "Students learn more easily when using ICT". In the adapted survey, question 3 reads "Students with special educational needs learn more easily when using ICT. Aside these mechanical issues, no other changes were made to the basic content of the questionnaire. The adapted questionnaire includes a demographic section used to elicit information on lecturers' gender (male and female), institution affiliation and educational role (general educator or special educator). There were 25 questions in the section on attitudes towards the usage of ICT for instruction among students who have special educational needs. The modified Likert 4-point scale was employed. Only three (5, 6, 7) of the scale's 25 items were negatively articulated and reverse scoring was used to add the scores for individual items. Sanchez, Marcos, Gonzalez, and GuanLin (2012) obtained a Cronbach's alpha reliability index of .89 after reversing the negative values.

Similarly, the trial testing conducted by the present researcher using 30 lecturers who were not part of the study participants yielded a Cronbach's alpha of .87.

Data Analysis

The descriptive statistics computed were frequency counts, mean and standard deviation, while inferential statistics of t-test was computed. The data was numerically coded and imported into the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25 software. An independent t-test was computed to see if there were any statistically important variations in lecturers' attitudes between those in the University of Ibadan and those in Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo as well as among general education lecturers and special education lecturers. The impact size measure Cohen's d was also used to compare group differences.

RESULTS

Research question 1: What is the attitude of lecturers towards the use of ICT in teaching students with special educational needs?

Table 2 shows the attitude of lecturers' from the University of Ibadan and Federal College of Education (FCE) Special, Oyo toward the utilisation of ICT for providing instruction among persons who have special educational needs. The result revealed a grand mean score of 3.13 and a criterion mean of 2.50. Low mean scores were recorded in only the negatively worded (5, 6, 7) items. This result indicates that most of the lecturers in both tertiary institutions (University of Ibadan and Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo) have positive attitudes towards the usage of ICT for instruction among learners who have special educational needs. This implies that lecturers consider that ICT are useful tools that can be employed in the class when working with learners who have special educational needs. This result is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Lecturers' attitudes toward the use of ICT in teaching persons with special educational needs.

S/N	ITEMS	SD	D	A	SA	$\bar{x}$	S.D
1	The use of informational technology in teaching persons with special educational needs is unstoppable.	12 15.0%	2 2.5%	24 30.0%	42 52.5%	3.20	1.060
2	The integration of computing resources in the classroom with persons with special educational needs encourages the improvement of the teaching learning process.	8 10.0%	1 1.3%	29 36.3%	42 52.5%	3.31	0.922
3	When ICT devices are employed, students with special educational needs learn better.	5 6.3%	5 6.3%	44 55.0%	26 32.5%	3.14	0.791
4	The utilisation of ICT facilities improves the reading ability of learners with special educational needs.	2 2.5%	3 3.8%	47 58.8%	28 35.0%	3.26	0.651
5	As a lecturer of learners with special educational needs, I still find it challenging to employ modern technologies.	17 21.3%	43 53.8%	17 21.3%	3 3.8%	2.08	0.759
6	I'm intimidated by the prospect of using ICT in the classroom.	21 26.3%	35 43.8%	19 23.8%	5 6.3%	2.10	0.866
7	Students with special needs are frequently better equipped than I am when it comes to using computer tools.	24 30.0%	51 63.7%	4 5.0%	1 1.3%	1.78	0.595
8	In my classroom, projectors, Interactive Digital Whiteboards, and computers are truly essential.	5 6.3%	2 2.5%	33 41.3%	40 50.0%	3.35	0.813
9	I am ready to be trained on the use of any digital device in order to use it in my classroom.	5 6.3%	-	32 40.0%	43 53.8%	3.41	0.791
10	I would frequently utilise the internet in my classroom.	1 1.3%	10 12.5%	48 60.0%	21 26.3%	3.11	0.656

Table 2 (Continued). Lecturers' attitudes toward the use of ICT in teaching persons with special educational needs.

S/N	ITEMS	SD	D	A	SA	$\overline{x}$	S.D
11	I am prepared to collaborate in ICT instructional programmes in schools.	3 3.8%	-	39 48.8%	38 47.5%	3.40	0.686
12	If other schools' educational programmes focus on the usage of the internet, I would be willing to collaborate in them.	1 1.3%	-	48 60.0%	31 38.8%	3.36	0.557
13	I find that using the internet assists me in designing my syllabus.	2 2.5%	1 1.3%	42 52.5%	35 43.8%	3.38	0.644
14	I frequently use the internet to find out instructional materials I would use for my classes.	2 2.5%	1 1.3%	42 52.5%	35 43.8%	3.38	0.644
15	The usage of computing resources improves the teaching methodology for students with special educational needs.	3 3.8%	2 2.5%	39 48.8%	36 45.0%	3.35	0.713
16	New technologies enable me to access more resources so as to assess performance of students with special educational needs.	2 2.5%	-	43 53.8%	35 43.8%	3.39	0.626
17	ICT offers me access to novel sources of information for my teaching subject.	3 3.8%	-	38 47.5%	39 48.8%	3.41	0.688
18	In my classroom, ICT makes it easy to pay attention to diversity.	2 2.5%	1 1.3%	50 62.5%	27 33.8%	3.28	0.616
19	ICT helps me in the treatment of students with special educational needs.	6 7.5%	4 5.0%	47 58.8%	23 28.7%	3.09	0.799
20	Digital resources facilitate improvement in academic performance of students with special educational needs.	3 3.8%	3 3.8%	44 55.0%	30 37.5%	3.26	0.707
21	Students with special educational needs are more motivated when using ICT tools in the classroom.	2 2.5%	2 2.5%	52 65.0%	24 30.0%	3.23	0.616
22	Unmotivated students with special educational needs with traditional methodology improve their learning by using computers in the classroom.	5 6.3%	4 5.0%	52 65.0%	19 23.8%	3.06	0.735
23	As a lecturer, I find that using ICT boosts my motivation when I teach students with special educational needs.	2 2.5%	1 1.3%	44 55.0%	33 41.3%	3.35	0.638
24	The use of ICT boosts my satisfaction as a lecturer of learners with special educational needs.	5 6.3%	-	46 57.5%	29 36.3%	3.24	0.750
25	Despite the constraints, I believe I have a positive attitude towards the use of computing resources in the teaching-learning process.	3 3.8%	-	34 42.5%	43 53.8%	3.46	0.693

Criterion mean = 2.50   **Weighted Mean = 3.13**

The items with the highest ratings include items 25 ($\overline{x}$ = 3.46) Despite the constraints, I believe I have a positive attitude towards the use of computing resources in the teaching-learning process); 9 ($\overline{x}$ = 3.41) (I am ready to be trained on the use of any computing resource in order to use it in my classroom); 17 ($\overline{x}$ = 3.41) (ICT offers me access to novel sources of information for my teaching subject); 11 ($\overline{x}$ = 3.40) (I am prepared to collaborate in ICT instructional programmes in schools); 13($\overline{x}$ = 3.38) (I find that using the internet assists me in designing my syllabus.); 14($\overline{x}$ = 3.38) (I frequently use the internet to find out teaching resources for my classes.) and 12($\overline{x}$ = 3.36) (If other schools' educational programmes focus on the usage of the internet, I would be willing to collaborate in them). Overall, the item with the highest rating is item 25, a question that categorically indicated that participants have a favourable disposition towards ICT usage in providing instruction. This result confirms that participants have a favourable disposition towards ICT usage for providing instruction to learners with special

educational needs in tertiary educational institutions. Participants' positive responses equally demonstrate their willingness to participate in training on how to use ICT to teach, to collaborate in school educational programmes, to use the internet for developing their lessons and to collaborate in other school programmes that focus on internet operation.

Research question 2: Are there differences in the attitudes of lecturers in the use of ICT in teaching students with special educational needs based on their gender (male versus female); institutional affiliation (University of Ibadan versus Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo and educational role (special education lecturer versus general education lecturer)?

Table 3. Independent samples t-test showing summary of lecturers' attitudes toward ICT utilisation for providing instruction among students with special educational needs based on their gender, institutional affiliation and educational role.

Variable	Demographic characteristics	N	Mean	Std.Dev.	T	P (Two-tailed)	Cohen's d
Teachers' attitude	Male	49	77.6122	9.9829	-.842	.403	.19
	Female	31	79.5484	10.0891			
Teachers' attitude	University of Ibadan	50	79.3400	9.7574	1.130	.262	.26
	FCE (Special), Oyo	30	76.7333	10.3655			
Teachers' attitude	Special education lecturer	44	79.2500	7.6739	.876	.384	.19
	General education lecturer	36	77.2778	12.3047			

With Cohen's d (Effect size), .20 points to a small effect, d=.50 specifies a medium effect, and .80 shows a large effect

Table 3 indicated that male lecturers (n=49) do not demonstrate significant difference in their attitude towards the utilisation of ICT for instruction among those learners who experience special educational needs compared to their female counterparts (Crit-t=1.96, Cal.t=-.842, p(.403)>.05 level of significance). The effect size of .19 was observed. Attitude of lecturers from the University of Ibadan do not vary from that of lecturers from the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo with respect to using ICT to teach learners who have special educational needs (Crit-t=1.96, Cal.t=1.130, p(.262)>.05 level of significance). The effect size of .26 was observed. Special education lecturers do not vary from general education lecturers in their attitudes regarding teaching learners who experience special educational needs with ICT tools (Crit-t=1.96, Cal.t =.876, p(.384)>.05 level of significance). The effect size of .19 was observed. Although the Cohen's d (effect sizes) of .19, .26 and .19 observed for gender, institutional affiliation and educational role differences respectively were not strong, the effect size of 0.26 based on participants' institutional affiliation is the highest among them. However, it does not reveal a remarkable variation between the attitudes of participants in the University of Ibadan and their counterparts in the Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo.

DISCUSSION and IMPLICATIONS

Research question 1: Positive attitude toward the utilisation of ICT in teaching students who experience special educational needs among lecturers from two tertiary education institutions in Oyo State, Nigeria obtained in the present study has confirmed the results got from some previous studies on educators' attitudes toward ICT usage in tertiary education classrooms. The present findings are consistent with those of Blandul and Bradea (2016), Olafare, Adeyanju and Fakorede (2018) and Demirok et al. (2019). All these studies reported favourable attitude towards utilising ICT in special education settings. The present finding regarding item 9 in the attitude questionnaire shows that lecturers strongly agree to the statement that "I am ready to be trained on the use of any computing resource in order to use it in my classroom". This finding aligns with that of Alkahtani (2013) who reported a strong agreement to the question on teachers' need for more training on the use of assistive technology devices. The finding is also in congruence with the submission of Blandul and Bradea (2016) and Alanazy and Alrusaiyes (2021) that general and special education teachers respectively, require further trainings and more practice of ICTs for classroom instruction.

Participants also reported strong agreement to item 17 that is "ICT offers me access to novel sources of information for my teaching subject"; item 11 "I am prepared to collaborate in ICT instructional programmes in schools"; item 13 "I find that using the internet assists me in designing my syllabus."; item 14 "I frequently use the internet to find out teaching resources for my classes." and item 12 "If other schools' educational programmes focus on the usage of the internet, I would be willing to collaborate in them". All these findings are in agreement with the submissions of Lazarus (2018) that since ICT enable students who experience special educational needs to effectively study, connect, acquire and use functional abilities, its applications should be made available and accessible to the students for use in their classrooms. These findings are also in consonance with Perera-Rodríguez & Moriña (2019) submission regarding access to appropriate ICT for educationally challenged learners.

Positive attitude toward ICT usage for persons with exceptional educational needs is remarkable. It suggests the need to make ICT tools available and accessible to the students. The present findings also corroborate the views that in an inclusive classroom, educators who collaborate with one another and with other professionals and use digital technology well will serve their students better than those who do not (Johnson, 2016). However, the present study contradicts the findings of Strnadova, Hajkova and Kvetonova (2015) and van Jaarsveldt and Ndeya-Ndereya (2015) who revealed negative attitude towards the utilisation of ICT for those learners with special educational requirements among lecturers teaching in educational institutions at the post-secondary school level. All in all, the present researcher put forward the idea that lecturers' positive attitude toward ICT use for learners with special educational requirements in tertiary education institutions supports earlier positions by Lazarus (2018) that ICTs are essential tools for the improvement of academic achievement and functioning in society among learners with special educational requirements.

Research question 2: No differences in participants' attitudes towards utilising ICT for providing instruction to students who experience special educational needs in tertiary education institutions based on participants' gender, educational affiliations and educational roles were observed in this study.
It was established that gender does not have statistical remarkable effect on ICT attitude of lecturers as no differences were observed between males and females in their attitudes towards employing ICT for teaching purposes among learners with special educational requirements. In other words, male as well as female lecturers, have positive attitude towards employing ICT for instruction among learners who have exceptional educational needs in the tertiary institutions of learning sampled. This finding is in line with those of Alkhasawneh and Alanazy (2015), Kpolovie and Awusaku (2016), Onwuagboke and Singh (2016) and Olafare, Adeyanju and Fakorede (2018) who reported no statistical gender varaition in the attitudes of lecturers (men and women) with reference to the usage of ICT for instructional purposes. The present finding however, does not corroborate the finding of Danko, Decman, Kerzic and Zorko (2020) that reported that gender differences exist in relation to attitude towards ICT usage among university lecturers in favour of males. In the present study, females do not lag behind their male counterparts in terms of their attitude towards the utilisation of ICT in teaching learners who have exceptional educational needs.

Tertiary education institutional affiliations (university or college of education), was found to show no important variations in lecturers' attitudes towards the adoption of ICT in teaching learners who have special educational needs. Also, the present findings is consistent with the study of Onwuagboke and Singh (2016) that revealed no significant influence of type of tertiary institution (college of education, polytechnic and university) on lecturers' attitude towards using ICT tools in teaching. However, this present finding is not in tandem with that of Onasanya, Shehu, Oduwaiye, and Shehu (2010) which reported that lecturers in the university learned more skills with relation to ICT than their colleagues in polytechnics and colleges of education; and Kpolovie and Awusaku (2016) that found that the federal institution (University of Port Harcourt) has much greater ICT facilities than the state university (Rivers State University of Science and Technology). Both the acquisition of ICT skills and accessibility to ICT facilities by lecturers also has some linkage with the attitude of lecturers. So, reports from Onasanya, Shehu, Oduwaiye, and Shehu (2010) and Kpolovie and Awusaku (2016) are reasonable and should not

be waved away. However, it is noteworthy to submit that regardless of the type of tertiary education institution lecturers teach in, they now have some grasp of the value of ICT in the 21st century classroom. As a result, lecturers from the University of Ibadan and those from the Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, equally demonstrate positive attitudes towards ICT application for instructional purposes among learners who experience special educational needs.

Educational role of lecturers (special education versus general education role) was discovered to show no substantial variation in the attitude towards ICT usage for the purpose of instruction among learners who experience exceptional educational needs. This finding demonstrates that both categories of lecturers that is, special or general have come to realize that the success of inclusive education practices for learners who have exceptional educational needs in tertiary institutions of learning hinges on the collaborative efforts made by all educators in the school setting. The lecturers understand fully that both special and general educators must assume new roles and responsibilities for the successful execution of inclusive education principles as suggested by (Johnson, 2016). Lecturers in this study recognize that to serve students with special educational needs effectively as inclusion teachers, partnership between the inclusion teacher and many professionals is required. Besides the present finding is in tandem with those of Demirok et al. (2019) that revealed positive attitude among special education teachers who used assistive technology to remediate reading difficulties.

The implication of the findings is that understanding the attitudes of lecturers can help both the universities and colleges of education develop policies and initiatives for the promotion of the inclusion and accommodation of diverse students. The positive attitude towards utilizing ICT for instructional purposes among learners who have special educational needs in tertiary institutions of learning found in this study is a healthy development. It shows that general and special educators in tertiary education institutions are prepared to adopt ICT in teaching learners with exceptional educational needs. This may be due to their experience during the COVID-19 lockdown. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the significance of ICT for providing instruction was emphasized, as many countries relied on ICT to carry on the education of their citizens, while protecting them from contracting the virus. This positive attitude also shows that provision of the required infrastructure and facilities will be readily accepted by the lecturers because they understand the importance of ICT on learning. The lecturers understand that with the use of ICT, learning barriers are removed making it possible to teach and learn notwithstanding the location and the special educational needs of an individual.

The absence of difference in attitude by gender, institutional affiliation and educational role is significant to the educational system in Nigeria. The implication is that despite the educational, physical and social barriers to learning experienced by learners who have special educational requirements in tertiary education institutions, all lecturers are favourably disposed to use ICT for teaching these learners and that there are no inhibiting factors on the part of the lecturers.

Conclusion

This study has shown that lecturers in the University of Ibadan and those in Federal College of Education (Special) Oyo, Oyo State Nigeria have positive attitude towards the usage of ICT for providing instruction to students who have exceptional educational needs in tertiary education institutions. Also, the study further confirms that gender, institutional affiliation and educational role do not contribute significantly to the differences in attitude of lecturers towards the usage of ICT for instruction among learners with special educational needs in tertiary institutions of learning. Hence, students who experience exceptional educational needs in tertiary education settings do not need to exercise concerns regarding whether their lecturers have embraced the use of appropriate ICT devices in teaching them or not. The lecturers themselves have demonstrated that if these ICT tools are available, they would use them to ensure quality service delivery to students with special educational needs.

To gain a more in-depth understanding of the views of various stakeholders such as students with or without special needs, parents, siblings, sign language interpreters, laboratory assistants/technologists,

involved in providing educational services to learners with special needs, a qualitative research design or mixed methods research design might be used.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

1. The management of tertiary institutions of learning should provide appropriate ICT tools for teaching learners with exceptional educational needs.

2. Lecturers should be exposed to further training in the use of the ICT applications. This will boost their confidence and competence and enable regular and intentional usage of the ICT tools by lecturers.

3. There is also the need to expose those who have special educational needs to regular orientation regarding the benefits of ICT tools to them. This is in order to get their commitment to use the ICT devices and eradicate any form of apathy to ICT usage on the part of the students.

4. Workshops that focus on collaborative activities in inclusive education settings should be organised for the lecturers.

5. Internet services should be provided to both students and staff of the institutions on a regular basis. This emphasizes the critical necessity for a reliable power source on campus in order to drive the internet.

Ethics and Conflict of Interests

To conduct this work, the researcher paid close attention to ethical procedures and declares that no conflict of interest exists.

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CHILD ABUSE AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS PREDICTING AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR AMONG IN-SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

This study examines child abuse, class of study and gender as predictors of aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The study adopted across-sectional survey design while a simple random sampling technique was used to select five secondary schools in the study area. Validated questionnaires were used to gather data from 195 in-school adolescents. Data collected were analyzed using multiple regression, t-test of independent samples and one-way analysis of variance. Three hypotheses were tested and accepted at a $p < .05$ level of significance. The result revealed that dimensions of child abuse jointly predicted aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents. Also, the result indicated that class of study significantly influences aggressive behavior. However, gender marginally influences aggressive behavior among study participants. The study concluded that child abuse and class of study are significant contributors to aggressive behavior. It is recommended that parents, teachers and other stakeholders should help to reduce incidence and prevalence of child abuse in order to reduce aggressive behavior.

Keywords: Aggressive behavior, child abuse, class of study, gender, in-school adolescents.

INTRODUCTION

Aggression is an evolutionarily conserved behavior that controls social hierarchies and protects valuable resources like mates, food, and territory. In most cases, aggression is a normal and necessary component of social behavior (Meghan & Scott, 2019). However, some forms of aggression are considered pathological behaviors that threaten lives with negative consequences on the victims. Maremmani et al. (2020) define aggression as an overt, often harmful, social interaction aim to inflict damage or other unpleasantness upon another individual. Aggressive behavior is typically observed during adolescence. Aggression has been found to be one of the milestones in adolescents' developmental stages (United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2022). Aggressiveness is multifaceted in nature and noticeable among in-school adolescents**.** Studies from school and community-based national surveys have found that 1 in every 10 in-school adolescents have suffered one form of aggressive behavior or the others (Rub, 2018).

Aggressive behavior as a phenomenon among in-school adolescents tend to be on the increase globally. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimated that aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents below the age of 19 years accounted for 227 deaths daily globally (Abdumalik et al., 2016). The data on aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents in Nigeria has also been reported to be on the increase (Sydney-Agbor, 2016). Aggression as an excessive conduct disorder behavior is fast becoming a defining characteristic among learners in institutions of learning (Nnodum, Agbaenyi, & Ugwuegbulam, 2014). Two types of aggressive behavior are common among in-school adolescents: Reactive aggression which is a hostile and impulsive behavior in response to frustration or a perceived threat while proactive aggression involves commission of aversive acts that are often unprovoked and directed toward possessing objects or controlling others (Dodge & Cole, 1987).

Some factors have been investigated as predictors of aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents. One factor considered in this study is child abuse. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines child abuse as "all forms of physical and/or emotional ill-treatment, sexual abuse, neglect or negligent treatment or commercial or other exploitation, resulting in actual or potential harm to the child's health, survival, development or dignity in the context of a relationship of responsibility, trust or power" (WHO, 2016). The five components of child abuse/maltreatment have been explained by Bernstein et al. (1994). The first is emotional abuse, this has to do with verbal assaults on a child's sense of worth or well-being or any humiliating or degrading behavior directed toward a child by an adult or older person. The second is sexual abuse that is any sexual contact or conduct between a child younger than 18 years of age and an adult or older person. Third is physical abuse which has to do with bodily assaults on a child by an adult or older person that posed a risk of resulting in injury. Fourth is physical neglect which consists of the failure of caretakers to provide for a child's basic physical needs, including food, shelter, clothing, safety, and health care. It also includes poor parental supervision if it places children's safety in jeopardy. Finally, emotional neglect has to do with the failure of caretakers to meet children's basic emotional and psychological needs, including love, belonging, nurturance and support.

Studies have investigated the dimensions of child abuse predicting aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents. For example, Allen (2017) found that physical abuse in childhood predicted overall aggression in adulthood. In their own study Carli et al. (2014) found physical neglect to significantly influence aggressive behavior in adulthood. Mbilinyi et al. (2012) found relationship between sexual abuse and psychological aggression among their study participants. Also, emotional abuse was found to increase aggressive behavior among youths who live in poverty and communities with higher rates of violence (Silva et al. 2014; Zurbriggen et al. 2010). An earlier study by Sansone et al. (2012) has reported physical neglect, emotional abuse, physical abuse, and sexual abuse as different types of childhood abuse which eventually predicted aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents.

The second factor considered in this study to influence aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents is gender. Whether the individual is a male or female has influence in their aggressive behavior. Some studies have been conducted on in-school adolescents on aggressive behavior (Bucur et al., 2020; Sidhu, Kaur, Sangha, Bansal, 2019). In one study, boys were found to have higher levels of physical as well as verbal aggression than girls (Sandeep Panchal, 2021). Earlier, Ami et al. (2017) found boys to have higher levels of aggression than girls. Also, boys high in aggression used more abusive and foul language and were involved in destructive activities compared to girls who rarely used abusive language or physical fight (Wani et al., 2017). Further study by Elmasry et al. (2016) found male in-school adolescents to be significantly more physically and verbally aggressive compared to their female counterparts. Other extant studies have equally confirmed that gender differences existed on aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents (Archer & Coyne, 2005; Brendgen et al., 2005; Card et al., 2008; Giles & Heyman, 2005; Ostrov & Keating, 2004).

Finally, the class of study was considered in this study to influence aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents. This is the number of years or the class the in-school adolescent has spent in the school or the class they are presently. This was operationalized as Senior Secondary (SSS) 1-3 in this study. Studies have demonstrated that class of study has a significant influence on aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents. For example, Choudhary et al. (2022) found significant differences in the prevalence of aggressive behavior among children from classes 9th to 12th in physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger and hostility. Also, Verma et al. (2021) determined the prevalence of aggression and the class of study among school-going adolescents. The study found a statistically significant correlation between aggression and class of study. The in-school adolescents in senior classes were more aggressive compared to those in junior classes.

Taking into consideration, the increasing acts of aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents are not given proper investigation. Also, few studies that examined child abuse and aggressive behavior tend to give varying results across populations and different samples which left gaps in knowledge that need to be investigated.

Purpose of the Study
Therefore, the main purpose of this study was to investigate the influence child abuse, gender and class of study on aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents in Ibadan North-East Local Government Area in Oyo State, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study were

1. to test whether child abuse dimensions will jointly and independently predict aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents in Ibadan North-East LGA in Oyo State, Nigeria.
2. to investigate whether gender and class of study will significantly influence aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents in the study population.

The study would provide a better insight into the influence of child abuse dimensions on aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents in the study area. Also, the school authority and teachers would be furnished with relevant information about the nature, environments, dimensions and consequences of aggression among in-school adolescents. Finally, results from this study would provide the basis for the formulation of policies for anti-violence and aggression campaign in the schools by the relevant authority.

Theoretical constructs
The following theoretical constructs were used to anchor this study.

Frustration-Aggression Theory: This theory (also known as frustration-aggression-displacement theory) was first proposed by Dollard et al. (1939). The theory says that frustration causes aggression, but when the source of the frustration cannot be challenged, the aggression gets displaced onto an innocent target. For example, if a child is abused and humiliated at home and cannot respond to this for fear of more abuse, threat, or intimidation, the child may go to school and take his/her anger and frustration out on his colleagues in school (most especially junior or weaker classmates). However, the theory has undergone revisions over the years (Berkowitz, 1989). Berkowitz (1989) has reformulated the theory to mean that frustration would 'generate aggressive inclinations only to the extent that they produce negative affects' (p.71). This implies that it is 'negative affect that is the proximal cause of aggressive responses, and that frustration are just one of many potential sources of negative affect' (Breuer & Elson, 2017, p.6).

Social Learning Theory: This theory believes that aggression is learned by observing, imitating and reinforcement (Taylor et al., 2006). In the first place, a child observes other people who are being aggressive or controlling their aggression and learns by imitation, to display aggression or control it. It does not matter whether a child sees the behavior in real life situations or in televisions. Also, Oostendorp (2003) confirmed that children who prefer violent video games are most likely to be above average in aggression. Parenting

style characterized by aggression, threats and hostility tends to train children in the use of aggressive behavior by modelling such action. Children learn to be aggressive by being exposed to an aggressive model of parenting. The child's environment in these families is characterized by many examples of aggressive behavior, manifesting itself in physical and verbal abuse between members of the family.

Hypotheses
Three hypotheses were tested:

H1: Child abuse dimensions-emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, and emotional neglect-would jointly and independently predict aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents in Ibadan North Local Government Area (LGA).

H2: Male in-school adolescents would significantly report higher on aggressive behavior than female in-school adolescents in Ibadan North LGA.

H3: Class of study (SSS1, SSS2, & SSS3) would significantly influence aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents in Ibadan North LGA.

METHOD
Research Design
The study adopted cross-sectional survey research design while data were collected using validated questionnaires. The independent variables were child abuse, class of study and gender while the dependent variable was aggressive behavior. The study was carried out in Ibadan North-East Local Government Area (LGA), Oyo State, Nigeria. The population of the study was in-school adolescents from five Senior Secondary School (SSS) 1-3 from public secondary schools selected from Ibadan North East LGA.

The Participants
A total of 195 in-school adolescents participated in the study. Descriptive statistics revealed that 89 (46%) were males, while 106 (54%) were females with ages ranging between 13 and 20 years (M=16.69, SD=1.34). The analysis further showed that 117 (60%) were from SSS 1, 47 (24%) were from SSS 2, and 31(16%) were from SSS 3. In terms of whom the participants live with, 12 (6%) live with their father, 52(27%) reside with their mother, 109(56%) reside with both parents, while 22 (11%) live with either caregivers or relatives (not their parents).

Sampling Techniques
The study adopted a simple random sampling technique to select five out of 34 government senior secondary schools in Ibadan North-East LGA while a convenience sampling technique was used for 200 participants (40 participants from each school) for questionnaire administration.

Research Instruments
Two research instruments were used in data collection.

Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire This was used to measure aggressive behavior. The scale developed by Buss and Perry (1992). It is a 29-item questionnaire rated on a 5-point Likert's format ranging from 1 = completely false for me to 5=completely true for me. It measures physical, verbal, anger, and hostility aggression. Sample items include: "I get into fights a little more than the average person" and "If I have to resort to violence to protect my rights, I will". The original authors reported Cronbach's alpha of .85. Fariz et al. (2016) reported Cronbach's alpha for the subscales as physical aggression (.81), verbal aggression (.82), anger/emotional aggression (.73), and hostile aggression (.87). This study found Cronbach's alpha of .69 for the composite aggressive behavior scale. Higher scores indicate higher aggressive behavior.

Childhood Trauma Questionnaire Short Form (CTQ-SF) This was used to assess child abuse. The scale developed by Bernstein et al. (1994). The scale identified and measured the prevalence of retrospective childhood trauma. It is a 28-item scale presented on a 5-point Likert's format ranges from 'never true' (score 1) to 'very often true' (score 5). The CTQ-SF 28 has six subscales: Emotional abuse (EN), physical abuse (PA), sexual abuse (SA), emotional neglect (EN) and physical neglect (PN). Sample of items: "People in my family called me things" and "Parents too drunk/high to take care of the family". The original authors reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.72 and Wang et al. (2022) reported the following Cronbach's alpha for each subscale: Emotional Abuse (.68), Physical Abuse (.77), Sexual Abuse (.76), Emotional Neglect (.82) and Physical Neglect (.48). In the current study, Cronbach's alpha calculated was 0.74 for the composite scale and for the subscales, these were: emotional abuse (.61) emotional neglect (.54)), physical abuse (.72), sexual abuse (.78), and minimizing or denial (.51).

Procedure for Data Collection
The researchers presented a letter of introduction from the Department of Psychology, University of Ibadan, Nigeria to the school principals of the selected secondary schools in the study area. After permission was granted by the school principals, a teacher was assigned to gather the in-school adolescents in each school for the administration of the questionnaires. The researchers addressed the participants and were told that participation in the study was voluntary. They were equally told that they can stop filling in the questionnaire at any point in time. They were assured that their responses would be treated confidentially. The questionnaires took less than 20 minutes to complete. All questionnaires were collected on the spot. The researchers administered 200 questionnaires (40 in each school). During the screening of the questionnaires, five questionnaires were found to have missing data and were removed thus left with 195 that were used for the final analysis.

Data Analysis
Data collected were analyzed using SPSS version 26. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze data. Hypotheses 1 was tested using multiple regression analysis, hypothesis 2 was tested using t-test of independent sample means while hypothesis three was tested one way Analysis of Variance. All hypotheses were accepted at $p<.05$ level of significance.

RESULTS

The first analysis was the zero-order correlation which was used to establish the relationship among dimensions of child abuse namely emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, and minimizing/denial and aggressive behavior and the result is presented in Table1.

Table1. Zero-order correlation analysis among child abuse dimensions and aggressive behavior.

SN	Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	M	SD
1	Emotional Abuse	-	.66	.56.	.29	-.34	.39*	.16*	9.76	3.89
2	Physical Abuse		-	.56*	.28*	.32*	.36*	.25*	9.56	4.09
3	Sexual Abuse			-	.20*	-.30*	.31*	.15*	9.25	4.53
4	Physical Neglect				-	.10	-.12	.00	13.04	2.63
5	Emotional Neglect					-	-.60*	-.14*	18.30	3.53
6	Minimizing/Denial						-	.19*	78.85	13.91
7	Aggressive behavior							-	16.69	1.34

* Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed).

The results in Table 1 indicated that emotional abuse (r =.16, p<.05), physical abuse (r =.25, p<.05], sexual abuse (r =.15, p<.05) and minimizing/denial (r =.19, p <.05) all had significant positive relationships with aggressive behavior while emotional neglect had a significant negative correlation with aggressive behavior (r=-.14, p<.05). However, physical neglect had no significant relationship with aggressive behavior (r=.00, p>.05).

Hypotheses testing

H1: Child abuse dimensions of emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, and minimizing or denial would jointly and independently predict aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents. This was analysed using multiple regression analysis and the result is presented in Table 2

Table 2. Multiple Regression Analysis showing Joint and Independent Predictors of Aggressive Behavior among In-school Adolescents

Predictors	β	t	p	R	RR²	F	p
Emotional Abuse	-.05	-.44	>.05	.27	.08	2.37	.05
Physical Abuse	.25	2.52	<.05				
Sexual Abuse	.00	.02	> .05				
Physical Neglect	-.05	-.61	> .05				
Emotional Neglect	-.01	-.07	> .05				
Minimizing/Denial	.10	1.08	> .05				

Dependent Variable: Aggressive Behavior

Table 2 show multiple regressions of the dimensions of child abuse on aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents in Ibadan metropolis. The results revealed that child abuse dimensions jointly predicted aggressive behavior among study participants (R^2 = .27, $F_{(6, 189)}$ = 2.37, p<.05). This suggests that physical neglect, emotional abuse, emotional neglect, physical abuse sexual abuse, and minimizing or denial contributed 8% variance observed on aggressive behavior other variables not included in this study accounted for aggressive behavior. Also, the result indicated that physical abuse independently predicted aggressive physical behavior (β=.25, p<.05). However, other dimensions of child abuse did not independently predict aggressive behavior among study participants. Therefore, the hypothesis was partially confirmed.

H2: Male in-school adolescents would report higher on aggressive behavior than their female counterparts. This was tested using t-test of independent samples and the result is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. T-test of independent samples showing mean differences between male and female on aggressive behavior.

Dependent Variable	Gender	N	Mean	Std.Dev.	df	t	p
	Male	89	79.17	13.45			
Aggressive behavior					193	.30	>.05
	Female	106	78.58	14.34			

Table 3 shows t-test independent of sample mean of gender difference on aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents. The result indicated no significant difference between male and female in-school

adolescents on aggressive behavior. However, a close observation of the mean showed that male in-school adolescents scored higher in aggressive behavior (*Mean*= 79.17, *SD* = 13.45) compared to female in-school adolescents (*Mean* = 78.53, *SD* =14.34). Therefore, the hypothesis is partially supported.

H3: Class of study would significantly influence aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents SSS 2 in-school adolescents would manifest aggressive behavior more than SSS 2 and SSS 3 in-school adolescents. This was analyzed using One-Way Analysis of Variance as presented in Table 4.

Table 4. One-way analysis of variance showing differences among SSS 1, SSS2 and SSS3 in-school adolescents on aggressive behavior.

	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	1627.92	2	813.96	4.35	<.05
Within Groups	35897.46	192	186.97		
Total Dependent Variable: A	37525.39	194			

Dependent variable: Aggressive behavior

The results in Table 4 showed that there is a significant difference among SSS1, SSS2 and SSS 3 students on aggressive behavior [$F_{(2, 192)}$ =4.35, *p*<.05]

The Post Hoc analysis was used to describe the multiple comparisons among SSS 1, SSS 2 and SSS3 in-school adolescents on aggressive behavior and it is presented in Table 4a

Table 4a. Post Hoc multiple comparisons showing differences among SSS 1, SSS2 and SSS3 in-school adolescents on aggressive behavior

Class	M	SD	MD	P
SSS 1	76.49	12.09	-5.85*	<.05
SSS 2	82.34	16.86	-5.96*	<.05
SSS 3	82.45	13.98	-.11	>.05

Dependent Variable: Aggressive Behavior
*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level. MD =Mean Difference

The results in Table 4a indicated SSS 2 participants (M=82.34, SD=16.86) manifested higher aggressive behavior than SSS1 participants (M=76.49, SD=12.09) while there was no significant differences between SSS2 and SSS3 participants on aggressive behavior. This supported hypothesis three.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION and RECOMMENDATIONS

This study investigated predictive ability of child abuse, class of study and gender on aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents in Ibadan North-East LGA. Three hypotheses were generated, tested and accepted at a p<.05 level of significance.

The results of the hypothesis that the dimensions of child abuse (emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, and minimizing or denial) would jointly predict aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents was supported. However, only physical abuse was found to independently predict aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents in the study population. The finding is in agreement with Allen's (2017) and Auslander et al. 's (2017) studies who found physical abuse to predict aggressive behavior among their study participants. Extant study had also found childhood physical abuse to be a significant predictor of aggressive behavior (Berzesnki & Yates, 2010).

The second hypothesis that there would be significant gender difference in aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents was not supported. However, when the mean of the two genders were examined, male in-school adolescents tend to score higher on aggressive behavior than their female counterparts, thereby partially confirming the hypothesis. Previous studies have supported this finding where males were found

to be more prone to aggressive behavior than their female counterparts (Park et al., 2017; Obradovic-Tomasevic et al., 2019).

The result of the third hypothesis that class of study (SSS = Senior Secondary School) would significantly predict aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents was supported. There was a significant difference among the class of study (SSS1, SSS2 and SSS 3 students) on aggressive behavior. In-school adolescents in SSS2 were more aggressive than those in SSS1 and SSS3. The finding supported the result by Verma et al. (2021) who found class of study to have a significant influence on aggressive behavior among their study participants. The in-school adolescents who were in senior classes were more aggressive than those in junior classes. This finding also supported the result by Choudhary et al. (2022) who found significant differences in the prevalence of aggression among children from classes 9th to 12th. That physical aggression, verbal aggression and open hostility were progressively displaced by in-school adolescents among their study participants.

The study examined child abuse, class of study and gender on aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents. The study has empirically confirmed that dimensions of child abuse- emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, physical neglect, emotional neglect, and minimizing or denial jointly predicted aggressive behavior among in-school adolescents in the study population. Also, class of study and gender influenced aggressive behavior among study participants.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proffered.

1. Parents, guardians, caregivers and other stakeholders should be educated on the danger of child abuse and the effects such abuse would have in the psychological well-being of such child in the future.
2. School counselors should be empowered to identify and help in-school adolescents that have been abused in one way or the others. Sensitization programmes such as seminars, conferences, training should be conducted on a regular basis to inform and educate in-school adolescents on the do's and don'ts so as to avoid being abused by anyone that could lead to aggressive behavior.

Limitations and suggestions for further studies
The study has some shortcomings, which need to be addressed in further studies.
First, data were collected using self-reported questionnaires, which are subjected to response bias. Further studies should include focus group interviews and key informant interviews to triangulate data collected from self-report.

Second, five schools were selected with a sample size of 200 in-school adolescents thus hindering generalization of the study findings. Further studies would benefit from including more secondary schools and increasing the sample size.

Finally, one independent variable: child abuse was investigated in this study. Further studies should include parenting styles, learned helplessness and self-esteem on aggressive behavior.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest
As the authors of this work, we collected data in accordance with ethical rules governing research and acted in good faith to all our participants. We ensure that participation was voluntary. Also, we declare that there is no conflict of interest among the authors.

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THE ROLE OF AFRICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN PREVENTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATION: A CASE STUDY IN ESWATINI

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Abstract

This paper has addressed the growing wave of unrest in Eswatini and analysed the role of African regional organizations in the prevention of human rights violation. This qualitative research has studied and answered three fold questions; what are the role played, challenges faced and suggestions towards African regional organizations in the prevention of human rights violation in Eswatini. The findings from documented analysis revealed that African regional organizations; African Union and Southern African Development Community respectively mainly focus on resolving conflict at present rather than human rights violation. The regional organizations face numerous challenges such as political interference, mistrust from civilians, and African governments undermining regional human rights bodies by failing to comply with their decisions, ignoring their urgent appeals, and neglecting to report. This paper has suggested that it is very important for African regional organizations to incorporate both human rights and conflict resolution bodies to work alongside in preventing human rights violation and promoting peace without separating the two bodies otherwise a wide gap shall continue to persist.

Keywords: African regional organizations, au, Eswatini, human rights violation and SADC.

INTRODUCTION

Eswatini formerly known as the kingdom of Swaziland, is a small landlocked country of approximately 1.2 million people (World Bank, 2021). It is arguably the smallest African country located in the southern hemisphere situated between South Africa and Mozambique (World Bank, 2021). The Kingdom is ethnically homogenous as the majority (97%) speak siSwati or Swati language and being identified as Swazi people (Stiftung, 2020). Eswatini remains an absolute monarchy in Africa ruled by King Mswati III, who has been the reigning monarchy by birth right since 1986, when he acceded to the throne after the death of his father, Sobhuza II at the age of eighteen (Kadri, 2020). King Mswati III together with his mother, Queen Mother Ntombi, rule as monarchs and have veto powers over the three branches of government namely the legislature, the executive and the judiciary (Stiftung,2020). The contemporary history of Swaziland started just over fifty-three years ago with full independence from British rule in 1968. The ruling king changed the country's name from kingdom of Swaziland to kingdom of Eswatini to mark 50 years of independence in 2018 (Kadri, 2020).

Problem Statement

For decades, Eswatini has been experiencing the growing wave of unrest that has caused threat to peace and violation of human rights in the country. These protests are mainly the source of demand for democracy. Caroline Dumay stated that the very last absolute monarchy on the African continent has been facing a growing wave of unrest since June 2021. What initially started as peaceful demonstrations was met with repression, violence and death. King Mswati III is being blamed for not listening to his subjects' demand for a modern political system and more democracy (Dumay, 2021). In the other study, Burke (2021) stated that the recent protests that was mainly carried out by the youth in Eswatini as the median age is twenty-one. The growth of the protest started when a law student was murdered in May in circumstances that suggested police involvement. But unrest intensified dramatically in June when authorities said they would refuse any further "petitions" to the king, closing one of the few ways in

which complaints and grievances could be expressed in the kingdom (Burke, 2021). In addition to that, other factors led to the rise of unrest as, Marima (2021) reported that the pro-democracy protesters in Eswatini have sporadically taken to the streets to express their displeasure with the rule of King Mswati III and to call for political reforms as there are no legally recognized political parties in the country due to a ban by a 1973 decree. With an effect at least forty people died and over 150 protesters been hospitalized with injuries resulting from live ammunition or beatings by security forces (Marima, 2021). On one hand, observers say there are echoes in Eswatini of protests and violence elsewhere in Africa which have pitted educated and connected urban youth against long-standing rulers and elites. For example in Uganda, Bobi Wine a popular singer turned politician has challenged the rule of veteran President Yoweri Museveni who has been in leadership for over thirty years and provoked harsh repression. On the other hand, in Nigeria a youthful population with new aspirations of prosperity, security and freedom have taken to the streets to protest and been met with violence (Burke, 2021).

One of the 26-year-old student leader contacted by the Guardian in Eswatini, who requested anonymity for fear of arrest said, "We are fighting for democracy, freedom, jobs and for food. Yes, there were some people who tried to exploit the protests for their own agenda but they were not our people. We are fighting a liberation struggle, not stealing." The poor state of the economy is another key factor driving the unrest. While so many Eswatini citizens are impoverished, the monarch is seen to live lavishly. The unemployment rate in Eswatini is at more than 40%. Though the king lives in ostentatious luxury, with a fleet of luxury cars, private jets, numerous palaces and fifteen wives, almost 60% of his subjects live in poverty, according to the World Bank 2021. Referring to Menzi Ndhlovu, an analyst with Signal Risks, a South Africa-based threat advisory firm said there had been successive waves of protest in Eswatini, including widespread unrest in 2011 dubbed the "Swazi spring". However, this time a tipping point may have been reached. Ndhlovu told the Guardian the offer of a national dialogue is an attempt by government and monarchy to calm and appease the masses. I don't think there is any intent to carry out serious reform. We could well see a second wave of protests (Ndhlovu, 2021). On the other hand, Chris Vandome an expert at London's Chatham House, said the recent protests differed from early episodes of unrest in which unions and other formal organisations had played a significant role. This time it is more organic and less structured. That makes it much harder to control but also harder for the protesters to have a cohesive position on what they want. A national dialogue is a first step but does that mean you respect the legitimacy of the people you are dialoguing with? (Vandome, 2021). Therefore, after stating the problem this paper seeks to examine the threefold research obejctives: roles, challenges and suggestions respectively.

Research Objectives
This research has study the following threefold objectives: **first**, to examine the role played by African regional organizations in the prevention of human rights violation in Eswatini. **Second**, to explore the challenges faced by African regional organizations in ensuring prevention of human rights violation in Eswatini. **Third**, to provide suggestions towards the challenges faced by African regional organizations in preventing human rights violation in Eswatini.

Research Questions
This study has examine the following threefold questions: **One**, what are the role played by African regional organizations in the prevention of human rights violation in Eswatini? **Two**, what are the challenges faced by African regional organizations in ensuring prevention of human rights violation in Eswatini? **Three**, what are the suggestions towards the challenges faced by African regional organizations in preventing human rights violation in Eswatini?

Significance of the Study
This study is significant to peace and human rights field as it has incorporated the two themes to examine the problem. For the peace perspective, this study has involved on conflict prevention as the method to attain peace in Eswatini after the eruption of unrest. The emerging of human rights violation has been detailed in this study and international bodies such as UDHR and African Regional Organizations such

as SADC and AU have been used to condemn the ongoing HRV practices that affects the civilians. Therefore, the incorporation of the two attributes; peace and human rights in paving the way to justice has played a significant role in exploring this study.

Scope/ Limitation and Delimitation of the Study
This research is only limited to study the following things. First, the role of African regional organization. Second, conflict prevention as a peacebuilding method. Third, the focus of this study is on human rights. Fourth, this study is only limited on one case study which is Eswatini. For delimitation, this study has not covered the following things. First, any other country expect Eswatini. Second, any other regional organization and third, any other peace building method such as conflict management, resolution, and transformation.

Literature Review
In this section the researcher has reviewed the literature based on human rights violation that occurred during mid-2021 unrest in Eswatini. In the first account, Dlamini (2021) article claimed that the Human Rights Commission preliminary report stated forty-six people were killed, and 245 were injured during the June 2021 political unrest. Nevertheless the report was been vigorously criticised by political parties and civil society because it downplayed the number of civilians killed. On the other literature, Wandile Dludlu, the People's United Democratic Movement secretary general, told the Swaziland News that they had verified figures suggesting that Mswati's forces killed more than seventy people during the political unrest. Speaking to the Mail & Guardian, Sabelo Masuku the commissioner of the Human Rights Commission clarified that the findings were merely a preliminary verification to establish facts on what happened and was not necessarily a full report. We did a preliminary verification to establish if indeed people were shot or not and the findings suggest that people were shot. We wanted to have verified data on the ground after so many different claims on who was arrested, injured, and died.

Furthermore, Emmanuel Ndlangamandla, the Executive Director of the Coordinating Assembly of Non-Governmental Organisations, said they were lobbying for an international investigation into the shooting and killing of civilians in Eswatini. Meanwhile, Thuli Madonsela a South African former public protector and now the Law Trust chair in Social Justice at Stellenbosch University said what was happening in Swaziland was a gross violation of human rights. Speaking to the Mail &Guardian a few days before the United Eswatini Diaspora dialogues, Madonsela said there has to be some kind of truth and reconciliation commission in Eswatini because police and the army that behaved like this are likely to repeat this. So there has to be a reset in terms of the mind-set of the people who behaved the way they did. She added that although some of the protestors looted, the response from the security forces was grossly excessive, adding that some of the people killed were not even involved in what was happening (Dlamini, 2021).

In addition to that, the Human Rights Commission's report also stated that women and children were casualties. Sakhile Dlamini, the communications officer of the Swaziland Action Group (SAG) against abuse said they condemned any form of abuse, especially by the security forces. The violence unleashed by forces during the ongoing political unrest on civilians is wrong and unjust (Dlamini, 2021). In August, the Mail &Guardian reported how Sergeant Cebile Shongwe resigned from the Eswatini police service, saying she was tired of serving a government that oppresses and kills innocent civilians. The resignation of the policewoman, who was based at Malkerns police station comes amid calls among civil society organisations and political parties that the International Criminal Court must charge Mswati for crimes against humanity (Dlamini, 2021).

The UN expressed deep concern at the reaction of authorities in Eswatini, to recent protests and sporadic looting, calling for an independent investigation into allegations of disproportionate and unnecessary use of force, harassment and intimidation by security forces. The allegations include the use of live ammunition by police, a UN spokesperson said adding that the organisation was worried by the potential for further unrest (Burke, 2021). Meanwhile U.S. and other countries have called for dialogue. "We urge the government to exercise restraint and also maintain the utmost respect for human rights," a State

Department spokesperson Jalina Porter said adding, an inclusive and peaceful dialogue is essential to progress moving forward (Marima, 2021).

On one hand, Dewa Mavhinga a Southern Africa Director at Human Rights Watch claims that Eswatini government should ensure that security forces act within the law and avoid arbitrary use of force when these protests occur that threatens peace and leads to violation of human rights. He also said they should put in place a range of measures to safeguard citizens against violence and to prosecute all unlawful use of force. As Mavhinga said the latest wave of protests in E-swatini is a wake-up call for the king and his government to head the legitimate calls for reform (Mavhinga, 2021). The king called the protests "satanic" as he tries to quell dissenting voices, pro-democracy sentiment is growing and analysts say more turmoil appears inevitable (Marima, 2021).

On the other hand, in the article Eswatini king calls for dialogue as protests escalates by Africa news (2021) King Mswati III announced a process of national dialogue that will be initiated after the annual ritual ceremonies of Incwala celebrating royalty which begin in November and traditionally last about a month, during Incwala, the king isolates himself and does not participate in any government activities. But opposition political parties and civil society organizations called the call for dialogue "a ploy to mislead" the mediators. We have long lost hope in such forums and, as a result, we will not participate in the meeting. We will not let the king who has blood on his hands decide how and when the dialogue will be held. There can be no calm or peaceful dialogue while the security forces continue to kill and harm people (Africa news, 2021).

Conceptual Framework
In this section, the researcher has explained the concepts used for this research so as to give a clear meaning to the audience.

African Regional Organizations (AROs)
African Regional organizations are a key driver of democratic transformation and fostering cooperation between countries. For this case study, the focus of the studied AROs are African Union and Southern African Development Community. To begin with, the African Union (AU) is a continental body consisting of the 54 member states, including Eswatini. AU was officially launched in 2002 as a successor to the Organisation of African Unity (OAU, 1963-1999).

The vision of the African Union is that of: An integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens and representing a dynamic force in global arena. The work of the AU is implemented through several principal decision making organs such as The Assembly of Heads of State and Government, the Executive Council, the Permanent Representatives Committee (PRC), Specialised Technical Committees (STCs), the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the African Union Commission (AUC).

The AU structure promotes participation of African citizens and civil society through the Pan-African Parliament and the Economic, Social & Cultural Council (ECOSOCC). Organs that handle judicial and legal matters as well as human rights issues include: - African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR), African Court on Human and People's Rights (AfCHPR), AU Commission on International Law (AUCIL) and the African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) has been in existence since 1980, when it was formed as a loose alliance of nine majority-ruled States in Southern Africa known as the Southern African Development Coordination Conference (SADCC), with the main aim of coordinating development projects in order to lessen economic dependence on the then apartheid South Africa. The founding Member States were: Angola, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Swaziland (Eswatini), United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe. SADCC was formed in Lusaka, Zambia on April 1, 1980, following the adoption of the Lusaka Declaration - Southern Africa: Towards Economic Liberation. The transformation of the organization from a Coordinating Conference into a

Development Community (SADC) took place on August 17, 1992 in Windhoek, Namibia when the Declaration and Treaty was signed at the Summit of Heads of State and Government thereby giving the organization a legal character. At present, SADC has sixteen member states including Eswatini and the headquarters are located in Gaborone, Botswana.

The SADC Vision is to build a region in which there will be a high degree of harmonisation and rationalisation, to enable the pooling of resources to achieve collective self-reliance in order to improve the living standards of the people of the region. The vision of SADC is one of a "Common Future", a future within a regional community that will ensure economic well-being, improvement of the standards of living and quality of life, freedom and social justice and peace and security for the people of Southern Africa.

The Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission Statement is to promote sustainable and equitable economic growth and socio-economic development through efficient, productive systems, deeper co-operation and integration, good governance, and durable peace and security; so that the region emerges as a competitive and effective player in international relations and the world economy. In order to fulfil this mission member states are guided by the following principles, as stated in Article 4 of the SADC Treaty; sovereign equality of all member states, solidarity, peace and security, human rights, democracy and the rule of law, equity, balance and mutual benefit; and peaceful settlement of disputes.

The main objectives of Southern African Development Community (SADC) are to achieve economic development, peace and security, and growth, alleviate poverty, enhance the standard and quality of life of the peoples of Southern Africa, and support the socially disadvantaged through regional integration. These objectives are to be achieved through increased regional integration, built on democratic principles, and equitable and sustainable development.

Human Rights Violation (HRV)
To begin with, the researcher will explain the concept of human rights then proceed to human rights violation. As defined by UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OCHCR) human rights are rights we have simply because we exist as human beings- they are not granted by any state. These universal rights such as right to life are inherent to us all, regardless of nationality, sex, nation, or ethnic origin, colour, religion, language, or any other status. All states have ratified at least one of the nine core human rights treaties, as well as one of the nine optional protocols. 80% of states have ratified four or more. This means that states have obligations and duties under international law to respect, protect and fulfil human rights.

- The obligation to **respect** means that states must refrain from interfering with or curtailing the enjoyment of human rights.

- The obligation to **protect** requires states to protect individuals and groups against human rights abuses.

- The obligation to **fulfil** means that states must take positive action to facilitate the enjoyment of basic human rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 (General Assembly Resolution 217A) as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations including Eswatini. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected. The UDHR is widely recognized as having inspired, and paved the way for, the adoption of more than seventy human rights treaties, applied today on a permanent basis at global and regional levels all containing references to it in their preambles.

Human rights violation is a global crisis. HRV can be referred as an act that harms the well-being of an individual weather directly or indirectly. In this case study several human rights violation is reflected on the literature review section.

Conflict Prevention

According to Sida (2017), Conflict prevention is about making societies' resilient to violent conflict by strengthening the local capacities for peace (systems, resources, structures, attitudes, skills). International conflict prevention initiatives are often distinguished from other peacebuilding concepts and approaches mainly by when it comes into play in the conflict cycle, and to some extent by the specific tools and approaches applied. Early prevention initiatives seek to improve the relationship of parties before the outbreak of violent conflict, while late prevention pertains to resolving or preventing the recurrence of violent conflict. The methods, approaches and mechanisms for engagement are often categorised as direct prevention and structural prevention, although the methods often overlap and so do the phases of the conflict cycle. Direct prevention refers to shorter-term initiatives that are put into place in a critical moment with the aim to have a direct de-escalating effect on tensions or violence. Such initiatives include for example dialogue, mediation and other confidence building measures, preventive international deployment and the establishment of peace zones. Structural prevention refers to longer-term development cooperation initiatives in a variety of sectors that aim to address root causes of tension and violence (Sida, 2017).

Kingdom of Eswatini

The kingdom of Eswatini is the chosen case study for this research. The country is situated in Southern Africa. It is bordered by Mozambique to its northeast and South Africa to its north, west, south, and southeast. The kingdom of Eswatini is one of the world's last remaining absolute monarchy. The kingdom is an absolute monarchy ruled by King Mswati III since 1986. For this study, the researcher has shown that Eswatini supreme law adheres to human rights even though there is presence of unrest that triggers to conflict and HRV. According to Eswatini's constitution, the preamble states that "We the People of the Kingdom of Swaziland do hereby undertake in humble submission to Almighty God to start afresh under a new framework of constitutional dispensation; Whereas as a Nation it has always been our desire to achieve full freedom and independence under a constitution created by ourselves for ourselves in complete liberty; …… Whereas it is necessary to protect and promote the fundamental rights and freedoms of ALL in our Kingdom in terms of a constitution which binds the Legislature, the Executive, the Judiciary and the other Organs and Agencies of the Government; ……. Whereas as a Nation we desire to march forward progressively under our own constitution guaranteeing peace, order and good government, and the happiness and welfare of ALL our people; ….. Now, THEREFORE, WE, iNgwenyama–in-Council, acting together with and on the Approval of the Swazi Nation meeting as the Swazi National Council assembled at Ludzidzini this 4th day of October, 2004, hereby Accept the following Constitution as the Supreme Law of the Land.

METHOD

Research methodology is essential to any research study. According to Loru (2020), research methodology is a systematic theoretical analysis of the methods applied to any field of the study. This is a qualitative type of research. It involves collecting data from either text (written) or speech (oral) and analyse the findings through the use of words. The study has used case study design. This is because the researcher has only studied one country which is Eswatini. This study has used secondary source of data. The secondary data is referred to as second hand data. Data that has been reported or documented. Therefore, this study has used document analysis. In reference to secondary source of data used for this study are published articles, news and reports. For the findings, the reviewed documents are from mid-2021 onwards when the latest protest occurred in Eswatini. Data has been analysed manually based on research question themes: roles, challenges and suggestions respectively.

FINDINGS

This study has used document analysis such as reports, published articles and news to answer the following threefold research questions that guide this whole study.

Role played by African Regional Organizations in the Prevention of Human Rights Violation in Eswatini

First, Sherinda said the response of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) on July 2021 towards Eswatini unrest has been met with criticism on its statement by the civil society organisations stating that it took a long time and it was out of touch. The SADC chairperson who is currently the South African President Cyril Ramaphosa commenced a fact-finding mission through the SADC Organ Troika on Politics, Defence and Security by stating that the organ will urgently dispatch a team of Ministers to Eswatini with a view to further encourage the kingdom to find a lasting solution but this didn't result to any fruitful situation. The delegation included Jeffrey Radebe a former South African government minister and Candith Mashego-Dlamini a South Africa's deputy minister of international relations and cooperation, as well as representatives from Botswana and Namibia. The envoys were accompanied by SADC Executive Secretary Elias Magosi and other senior SADC officials (Sherinda, 2021).

Second, Ramdeen said at the regional level Southern African Development Community (SADC) undertook an intervention by deploying a SADC Troika ministerial fact finding mission to the country on July 2021. The deployment was criticized due to the failure by the SADC team to meet civil society organisations and political parties. A follow up technical fact-finding mission was deployed thereafter to consult extensively with stakeholders from 15 to 22 July 2021. The mission met with members of the government and civil society, to gather perspectives on the conditions that led to days of deadly protests. SADC urged all individuals, groups, and organisations that have grievances to desist from acts of violence and to do so through established platforms. It also called on the security forces to exercise restraint in their response to restore order. The Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), H.E Moussa Faki Mahamat also appealed to Eswatini's national stakeholders to engage in constructive dialogue towards an amicable resolution to the instability of the country and has committed the AU's support to the government and people of Eswatini (Ramdeen, 2021).

Third, Mavhinga said regional solidarity is needed to press Eswatini to guide in a culture of political plurality, accountability, and respect for the human rights of all Eswatini people. (Mavhinga, 2021). Gavin stated that it has been the organization's practice to ignore violations of human and political rights in member states, even when repression creates a drag on regional development (Gavin, 2021). SADC's own Protocol on Politics, Defence, and Security Cooperation weds the organization to the promotion of democracy and the protection of universal human rights. But in practice, SADC's member states include strong democracies, authoritarian states, and even Eswatini's absolute monarchy. It's clear that a more capable and dynamic organization is needed. That in turn may require ending the era of polite silences and averted gazes when member states violate the rights of their own people (Gavin, 2021).

Fourth, Amnesty International said Southern African Development Community (SADC) reported that leaders must urgently take concrete measures to fix the human rights crisis in the region when they meet at their annual summit while crackdowns on peaceful dissent in countries including Zimbabwe, Madagascar and Eswatini have intensified in recent months. A number of countries in the SADC region are experiencing alarming human rights violations and abuses threatening peace and stability just as the case study of Eswatini. In addition, Deprose Muchena Amnesty International's Director for East and Southern Africa also claimed that it's time for SADC lawmakers to step up their interventions, strengthen laws and implement policies that ensure respect for people's rights across the region. Parliaments are the custodians of human rights. As people across the region face threats to their rights, SADC Parliaments must lead in developing regional principles and guidelines for the protection and promotion of human rights (Muchena, 2020).

Fifth, Renata Summa and Monica Herz chapter of regional organization, human rights and conflict resolution argued that human rights norms, rules and bodies have been increasingly adopted and developed by regional organizations since the end of World War II. In the European Union the European Convention for the Protection of human rights and Fundamental Freedoms (ECHR) was the first instrument to give effect to human rights in 1950. Whereas in Africa , the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) was set as the principal body for promoting and protecting human rights on the continent in 1986. But still with present of these regional organization organs when it comes to an attempt of resolving conflict human rights discourse is almost absent as seen from the response of SADC in Eswatini's unrest. Therefore the nexus of prevention of human rights violation in African region remains poorly institutionalized and developed despite the present human rights organs (Renata Summa & Monica Herz, 2017).

Challenges faced by African Regional Organizations in ensuring Prevention of Human Rights Violation in Eswatini

First, the African Union (AU) and the Peace and Security Council (PSC) is mandated to incorporate human rights discourse in its initiatives to conflict prevention and resolution. But in practice the PSC has failed in many of its intervention initiatives as it is observed in Eswatini mainly because of political interference will by African Union member states. Although the PSC has led to interventions in other countries such as Darfur, Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea and Kenya following massive disrespect of human rights and the outbreak of humanitarian crisis. But such missions have fallen short in addressing the causes of conflict and in promoting human rights standards marking to its challenge.

Second, Amnesty International has documented for two consecutive years (2019-2020) that African governments are grossly undermining regional human rights bodies by failing to comply with their decisions, ignoring their urgent appeals, neglecting to report to them on national human rights situations. This challenge is repeatedly seen on this case study of Eswatini where the government is blamed for not being accountable for the human rights violation, shutting down internet access, but also denial to freedom of speech and reporting regarding the ongoing unrest. As a result, African regional organizations fail to establish mechanisms of accountability to punish those who commit human rights violations and thus itself further contribute to an environment of impunity.

Third, in the second edition of the state of African regional human rights bodies and mechanisms 2019-2020, released on the African human rights day. Amnesty International said the mechanisms established to safeguard human rights across the continent are facing enormous challenges, and at least one is facing an existential threat. The report raised alarm that future of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights is in jeopardy following decisions by three governments; Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Tanzania to withdraw the right of individuals and NGOs to directly file cases before the court. Rwanda withdrew this right in 2016 bringing to four the number of countries that are now restricting access to this vital pathway to justice. To elucidate, there is limited direct access by individuals and NGOs to the Court due to a limited number of States that have accepted the Court's jurisdiction and allowed individuals and NGOs direct access to the Court which makes it a challenge in preventing human rights violation in Eswatini.

Fourth, in most cases the African regional organizations respond to crisis when it's at the peak which makes it difficult and challenging for suitable solutions. As the result, regional organizations decide to extent the process to post-conflict era where people are calm. The disadvantage of waiting to respond on the post- conflict is that African regional organizations tend to ignore and undermine the human rights violations that occurred during the conflict setting as in this case study of Eswatini. Even after the protests was over the regional organizations have not responded to the human rights violations that occurred during the unrest.

Fifth, is mistrust from the civilians and civil society organizations, according to Ginindza, King Mswati III called for calm and an end to all violence, as no dialogue can take place when tempers are so high. But opposition political parties and civil society organizations called the call for dialogue a ploy to

mislead the mediators (SADC). They stated that we have long lost hope in such forums and, as a result, we will not participate in the meeting. We will not let the king who has blood on his hands decide how and when the dialogue will be held, they said, There can be no calm or peaceful dialogue while the security forces continue to kill and harm our people. This wasn't the only challenge to the proposed national dialogue by the king but also to SADC members who came to Eswatini for fact-finding mission and to encourage the kingdom to find a lasting solution.

Suggestions towards the Challenges faced by African Regional Organizations in Preventing Human Rights Violation in Eswatini

First, it should be noted that African regional organizations have the organs for promoting human rights and preventing human rights violation such as African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) and African Court on Human and People's Rights (AfCHPR). But these bodies don't fully act on the human rights violation that occur in African member states whenever there is unrest like Eswatini because what the regional organizations like AU and SADC focus on in the moment of unrest is how to resolve the conflict and ignore the human rights violation. There is therefore a gap of implementation that is being noticed, to suggest the African regional organizations need to incorporate both human rights and conflict resolution bodies to work alongside in preventing human rights violation and promoting peace without separating the two bodies. This is very important, otherwise the gap shall continue to persist.

Second, the issue of withdraw of some member states like Tanzania, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire and Rwanda in African Court on Human and People's Rights (AfCHPR) does hinder the implementation of African regional organizations in preventing human rights violation in these African member states. But with other member states they are faced with limited direct access by individuals and NGOs to the court due to a limited number of states that have accepted the court's jurisdiction and allowed individuals and NGOs direct access to the court. Thus, there is a need for more states to ratify the court's protocol and to allow individuals and NGOs direct access to the court. This will help to consolidate the African regional organization organs judicial system such as African Court on Human and People's Rights (AfCHPR) for the prevention of human rights violation in Eswatini and other African countries.

Third, due to reviewed document analysis there is a challenge on lack of awareness about the African human rights commission such as African Union human rights treaties and institutions including the African Commission and Court by aggrieved individuals and groups and limited knowledge about the system by domestic lawyers limits potential applications to the Commission and the court. Therefore, states like Eswatini through state and non-state actors including educational institutions should through human rights education raise awareness about the use of African Commission and Court to the public. This will help individuals and the society to claim their rights from the violation done to the victims. But also through this means it will make African regional organizations effective towards preventing human rights violation in states like Eswatini.

Fourth, African regional organizations need to build trust with the member states by being accountable and implement on the stated mission and goals of the organization. It is due to mistrust that Eswatini opposition political parties and civil society organizations called the call for dialogue a ploy to mislead the mediators (SADC). In addition the African regional organizations has failed in many of its intervention initiatives as it is observed in Eswatini mainly because of political interference by African Union member states. Therefore, for successful implementation of African regional organizations in preventing human rights violation there is a need to separate politics from their stated mission, functions and goals.

Lastly, there is the challenge of non-implementation of the court's decisions, including refusals to implement, failure to inform the court of what measures have been taken, and the slow pace or reluctance to comply limits the court's effectiveness. In 2013, for example, the court adopted an interim report noting that Libya has failed to comply with a judgment of the court. It called on the African Union Assembly of Heads of State to take such other measures as it deems appropriate to ensure that Libya

fully complies with the court order. However, the Assembly did not take any action. This shows that non-compliance and non-enforcement applies to both the commission's recommendations as well as the court's orders. Therefore there is a need for the African Union organs to impose sanctions consistently on non-complying states in order to strengthen the credibility of the African Court's orders and judgments.

CONCLUSION

From the study, the researcher concludes that Eswatini's growing unrest on demand for democracy isn't the new problem to have occurred in Eswatini. It has long been occurring as the different from the previous to the current protests, is that the earlier protests were organised with less violence meanwhile the later were less organised and more violent. The King is blamed for the latest pro-democracy protest and from the document analysis there is absence of Responsibility to Protect (R2P) doctrine to both the government of Eswatini and the African regional organizations. There was presence of human rights violation in Eswatini but from the findings no efforts was done by the African regional organizations to address the violations as much focus was on resolving the problem at hand, which was the ongoing unrest by suggesting dialogue. This is the failure for African regional organizations to have less focus and sometimes ignore human rights violation despite the fact that AU has special organs in concern for human rights such as African Commission on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) and African Court on Human and People's Rights (AfCHPR). For example the Peace and Security Council (PSC) has failed in many of its intervention initiatives to incorporate the human rights discourse mainly in the Horn of Africa because of lack of resources, and political will by AU member states. Although the PSC has led to interventions in Darfur, Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea and Kenya following massive disrespect of human rights and the outbreak of humanitarian crisis. But such missions have fallen short in addressing, promoting and protecting human rights standards. In addition to that, SADC sent representatives in Eswatini to oversee the matter and find solution to the problem but the civil society organizations criticized their fact finding mission and said it took a long time and it was out of touch. Moreover in SADC fact finding mission human rights violation was not prioritized as the main focus was to resolve the problem at hand. Dewa Mavhinga a Southern Africa Director at Human Rights Watch said to contribute to lasting peace and stability, and respond to the real needs of ordinary people, SADC leadership should vigorously implement regional and international human rights standards. One important step would be to restore the SADC Tribunal's mandate to consider human rights cases brought by individuals. Renata Summa and Monica Herz chapter of regional organization, human rights and conflict resolution stated that European Union has been seen to have best human rights norms, bodies and mechanisms but when in attempts to resolve conflicts human rights discourse is almost absent. Therefore the relationship between human rights and conflict resolution remains poorly institutionalized and developed. This is the same thing that happens in the Africa and in my own opinion, it is high time that African regional organizations incorporate and enforce the two concepts of human rights and conflict resolution hand in hand towards enhancing sustainable peace in conflicting states. Ignoring one concept and emphasizing on the other won't result to sustainable peace. Among the four concepts John. P. Lederach (1996) identifies in reconciliation which can take place in the national, community or interpersonal level are justice, peace, truth and mercy. If the government of Eswatini and the regional organizations only focus on one component of peace and ignore the other components, this will not create sustainable peace as it may result to mistrust of both bodies. African Union along with other African regional organizations have in place best organs to deal with human rights and conflict resolution. To overcome the gap between human rights and conflict resolution there is a need to enforce and make human rights intrinsic to conflict resolution mechanism.

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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER: A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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Abstract

The aim of reviewing inclusive education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder is to ensure that all students have access to high-quality education, support their holistic development, promote inclusivity and equity, and foster collaboration among stakeholders to create a more supportive and inclusive learning environment for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Autism Spectrum Disorder as a neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by persistent challenges in social communication and interaction, as well as restricted and repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities. The challenges faced by Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, including difficulties in social interaction, communication, sensory sensitivities, academic support and adaptation, behavioral and emotional regulation, peer acceptance, teachers' knowledge and training, collaboration and executive functioning. It emphasizes the importance of understanding and addressing these challenges to create an inclusive learning environment. However, various strategies to overcome the challenges faced by Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. These strategies include providing individualized support, such as visual support, structured routines, social skills training, and assistive technology. It emphasizes the significance of collaboration among teachers, support staff, specialists, and families to implement these strategies effectively. Furthermore, the benefits of Inclusive Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder state that inclusive education promotes social inclusion, academic achievement, and the development of essential life skills. It emphasizes that inclusive classrooms provide opportunities for peer interactions, positive role modeling, and the development of self-advocacy skills.

Keywords: Autism spectrum disorder, inclusion, inclusive education.

INTRODUCTION

Before proceeding to the background section, we embrace this mindset: Each child has gifts and strengths to bring to a classroom. Children with autism are strong and capable, not weak or with inherent deficit. They all belong, and it is my job to help each one of them become successful.

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a complex neurodevelopmental disorder characterized by deficits in social communication and the presence of restricted interests and repetitive behaviors (Hodges, 2020). It typically manifests before the age of 3 and is diagnosed through evaluation of a child's developmental progress (Rice, 2009). The disorder is multi-factorial, with genetic and non-genetic risk factors playing a role (Park, 2016). Autism Spectrum Disorder is a complex neurodevelopmental condition characterized by deficits in social communication and the presence of restricted and repetitive behaviors (Haisley, 2015; Alnasser, 2023; Oberman, 2020; Lerner, 2018). It is a behaviorally defined disorder, with a wide range of severity and presentation (Haisley, 2015). The diagnosis is based on the observation and assessment of behavior, and

while there is no cure, early detection and intervention can improve outcomes (Alnasser, 2023). The condition is often comorbid with other internalizing and externalizing conditions, and assessment and intervention practices have improved over time (Lerner, 2018).

Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder are individuals who exhibit difficulties in social interaction, communication, and behavior, as well as sensory sensitivities. According to the American Psychiatric Association in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5), autism spectrum disorder is characterized by persistent deficits in social communication and social interaction across multiple contexts, along with restricted, repetitive patterns of behavior, interests, or activities (American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Autism Spectrum Disorder is a lifelong disorder that can also be recognized in adult psychiatric patients (Keller, 2015). The difficulties can significantly impact an individual's ability to function in various settings, and they are also associated with an increased risk of psychiatric problems (Pasco, 2011; Cotterill, 2019).

According to UNESCO (2019), inclusive education is a key component of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by ensuring that all learners have access to quality education and lifelong learning opportunities. However, despite the significant progress made in promoting inclusive education globally, there are still challenges and barriers that students with special needs face in accessing and participating fully in mainstream educational settings. Impact the effectiveness of inclusive education, including inadequate teacher training, lack of support services, negative attitudes towards students with special needs, and limited resources (Slee, 2011). These challenges can hinder the successful implementation of inclusive education practices and create barriers for students with special needs to fully participate and succeed in the classroom.

For Students with Autism, inclusive education involves creating a supportive and inclusive environment that meets their unique needs and allows them to thrive academically and socially. Inclusive education for students with Autism involves implementing strategies and accommodations to address these challenges and enable them to access the curriculum and engage with their peers. Kofidou (2020) highlights the need for teacher training to improve knowledge and attitudes towards Autism, while Roberts (2016) emphasizes the importance of knowledge and understanding of school staff. Both studies underscore the need for more support and resources in schools. Embse (2011) and Zager (2010) provide specific strategies for facilitating inclusion, such as functional behavior assessments, tiered service delivery, behavioral approaches, and social skills training. These findings collectively underscore the importance of teacher training, support, and evidence-based strategies in promoting inclusive education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

The reason that researcher initiate to study this title is, initially we can say all public school in developing country, especially Ethiopia, are segregated and didn't fulfill the criteria to become inclusive education in the school. even though, they don't have an ideas to include students with autism due to different factors like lack of awareness, the people have still negative attitude regarding to students with disability(specially students with Autism), lack of curriculum and instruction strategies to teach students with autism and non-disability with cooperate in a school, lack of skilled human power in the field of special needs and inclusive education, even special needs educators have no well-organized knowledge, absence of materials to teach, the government have no willing to create inclusive education that include all students with in school, community and society, lack of training concerning inclusive education, etc. Due to those factors students with autism couldn't learn together with typical students in the school. To fill this knowledge gap, the researcher needs to review various literatures and take this title to examine the various components involved in designing and managing an inclusive learning environment. It could be selected to address the problem of exclusion or limited access to education for diverse student populations and to provide educators and stakeholders with insights and strategies to overcome barriers and promote inclusive practices in education. The researcher devoted to aware the community about the type, prevalence, characteristics of students with

autism, challenges, strategies to overcome the challenges and the benefits of inclusive education for students with autism.

Prevalence of Autism Spectrum Disorder

The prevalence of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder can vary across different regions and countries. Globally, the prevalence of ASD has been increasing in recent years. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), an estimated 1 in 160 children worldwide has autism spectrum disorder (WHO, 2021). Willott (2011) found a high prevalence of 3.74% in males and 1.47% in females in a South Korean community, while Abadi (2020) reported a global median prevalence of 62 per 10,000 people. Srinivasa (2004) noted a range of two to six per 1,000 children in prevalence studies across different regions. In Africa, there is limited data available on the prevalence of autism spectrum disorder. However, According to Tadesse, & Abebe (2019) reported a prevalence rate of 1.1% for ASD among school-aged children in Ethiopia. Furthermore, this number might not be representative of the entire African continent, as there is a lack of comprehensive research and data on ASD prevalence in Africa.

Types of Autism Spectrum Disorder

According to American Psychiatric Association (2013), Autism spectrum Disorder is classified into five categories. These are:

➤ **Autistic Disorder (classic autism):** This is the most well-known and severe form of ASD. Individuals with autistic disorder typically have significant challenges with social interaction, communication, and repetitive behaviors. They may also have intellectual disabilities or language delays.

➤ **Asperger Syndrome:** Individuals with Asperger syndrome often have milder symptoms compared to classic autism. They may have difficulties with social interaction and communication, as well as restricted interests and repetitive behaviors. However, they typically have average to above-average intelligence and may excel in specific areas of interest.

➤ **Pervasive Developmental Disorder** - Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS): This category is used for individuals who have some but not all of the symptoms of autism or who have milder symptoms that do not fit the criteria for other ASD diagnoses. It is often considered a "subthreshold" diagnosis.

➤ **Childhood Disintegrative Disorder**: This is a rare condition where children develop typically for the first few years of life but then experience a significant loss of previously acquired skills, such as language, social skills, and motor abilities. This regression typically occurs between the ages of 2 and 10 years old.

➤ **Rett Syndrome:** is a genetic disorder that primarily affects girls. It is characterized by a period of normal development followed by a loss of motor and communication skills, as well as the development of repetitive hand movements. Individuals with Rett syndrome often have intellectual disabilities and require significant support.

Characteristics of Students with Autism

Students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) present unique challenges and opportunities in the educational setting. Understanding the characteristics of students with autism is crucial for educators, parents, and professionals working with individuals on the spectrum. This section aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the key characteristics of students with autism, including their social communication skills, sensory sensitivities, repetitive behaviors, and strengths.

➜ **Difficulty with social interaction**: Students with autism may struggle with understanding and responding to social cues, making it challenging for them to interact with peers and form friendships (Buie et al., 2010). Individuals with autism often struggle with understanding social cues, making eye contact, and engaging in reciprocal conversations (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

+ **Repetitive behaviors and limited interests**: Individuals with autism often engage in repetitive behaviors, such as hand flapping or rocking, and may have a narrow range of interests, focusing intensely on one particular topic (Buie et al., 2010).

+ **Sensory sensitivities:** Many students with autism have heightened sensitivity to sensory stimuli, such as noises, lights, or textures, which can cause discomfort or overwhelm them in certain environments (Buie et al., 2010).

+ **Difficulty with communication:** Students with autism may struggle with verbal and nonverbal communication, leading to challenges in expressing themselves or understanding the communication of others (Buie et al., 2010).

+ **Strong visual learning skills:** Many individuals with autism have a strong preference for visual learning, often benefitting from visual aids, schedules, and supports to help them navigate their surroundings and understand expectations (Buie et al., 2010).

+ **Repetitive behaviors and interests:** Students with autism may engage in repetitive movements, have intense interests in specific topics, and exhibit rigid adherence to routines (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021).

+ **Communication challenges:** Many students with autism have difficulties with expressive and receptive language, including delayed speech development, a limited vocabulary, and difficulty understanding non-verbal communication (National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, 2020).

+ **Sensory sensitivities:** Individuals with autism may be hypersensitive or hyposensitive to sensory stimuli, such as sounds, lights, textures, and tastes, which can impact their ability to focus and participate in classroom activities (Autism Speaks, n.d.).

+ **Difficulty with transitions:** Students with autism may struggle with changes in routine, transitions between activities, and unexpected disruptions, leading to anxiety and behavioral challenges (Autism Society, n.d.).

Research questions
Based on various literatures the reviewer answers two review questions. Those are:
1. What are the challenges of Students with Autism in inclusive education system?
2. What specific strategies can be implemented in inclusive education settings to ensure optimal support and inclusion for students with Autism?
3. What are the benefits/purposes of inclusive education for students with autism?

MATERIAL and METHOD

Search strategy method
This systematic review was conducted with the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analysis (PRISMA) guidelines.

So, to answer the above two questions the reviewer reviews various studies.

For the first research question, Challenges of Students with Autism in Inclusive Education setting
Students with autism face various challenges in an inclusive education setting, where they are integrated into mainstream classrooms alongside their typically developing peers (Becerra-Murillo, 2022). These challenges can significantly impact their academic, social, and emotional well-being. Some of the key challenges include:

o **Social Interactions:** Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder may struggle with social communication and interaction skills, making it difficult for them to form and maintain relationships with peers. They may have difficulty understanding social cues, initiating conversations, and interpreting non-verbal communication (such as facial expressions and body language). Bauminger and Kasari (2000) found that Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder had lower levels of social engagement and fewer reciprocated social interactions compared to their neurotypical peers.

o **Sensory Sensitivities:** Many Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder experience sensory sensitivities, where they may be hypersensitive or hyposensitive to sensory stimuli such as sounds, lights, textures, or smells. These sensitivities can affect their ability to concentrate, engage in classroom activities, and tolerate sensory-rich environments. A study by Kern et al. (2007) reported that sensory sensitivities in Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder were associated with increased anxiety and decreased adaptive behaviors.

o **Executive Functioning Difficulties:** Executive functioning refers to a set of cognitive processes responsible for planning, organizing, self-regulation, and problem-solving. Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder often struggle with executive functioning skills, which can impact their ability to follow instructions, manage their time, transition between activities, and complete tasks independently. Research by Kenworthy et al. (2009) found that Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder demonstrated deficits in executive functioning, particularly in tasks requiring cognitive flexibility and working memory.

o **Communication and Language Challenges:** Communication difficulties are a hallmark feature of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Some students may have limited verbal communication skills and rely on alternative communication methods such as augmentative and alternative communication systems. Others may have advanced language skills but struggle with pragmatic language (social use of language) and understanding figurative language. A study by Tager-Flusberg et al. (2005) highlighted the variability in language profiles among Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, with some showing strengths in vocabulary and grammar but difficulties in pragmatic language skills.

o **Behavioral and Emotional Regulation:** Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder may experience difficulties with behavioral and emotional regulation. They may exhibit challenging behaviors such as meltdowns, aggression, or self-stimulatory behaviors in response to changes in routine, sensory overload, or difficulty expressing their needs. These behaviors can disrupt their own learning as well as the learning of their peers. Research by Mazurek and Kanne (2010) emphasized the importance of implementing behavioral interventions and teaching self-regulation strategies to help Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder manage their behaviors effectively.

o **Academic Support and Adaptations:** Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder may require additional academic support and adaptations to access the curriculum and meet their learning goals. They may benefit from visual supports, modified assignments, individualized learning materials, and explicit instruction to enhance their understanding and engagement. Research by Hume et al. (2018) highlighted the importance of using evidence-based instructional practices, such as Applied Behavior Analysis and structured teaching, to promote academic progress for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in inclusive classrooms.

o **Peer Acceptance and Social Integration:** Achieving social acceptance and integration among peers can be challenging for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in inclusive settings. They may encounter difficulties in initiating and maintaining friendships, understanding social norms, and participating in group activities. Research by Locke et al. (2010) emphasized the significance

of fostering peer acceptance, promoting social connections, and implementing peer-mediated interventions to enhance social inclusion and relationships for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

o **Teacher Knowledge and Training:** Educators play a vital role in supporting Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in inclusive education settings. However, many teachers may lack sufficient knowledge, training, and resources to effectively address the unique needs of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Ashburner et al. (2016) highlighted the importance of providing professional development opportunities, specialized training, and ongoing support for teachers to enhance their understanding of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and implement evidence-based practices.

o **Collaboration and Communication:** Effective collaboration and communication among teachers, support staff, specialists, and families are essential for supporting students with ASD in inclusive education settings. However, challenges can arise due to limited time, coordination, and shared understanding. Research by Carter et al. (2014) emphasized the need for collaborative teaming, regular communication, and individualized planning to ensure consistent support, continuity, and coordinated interventions for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

For the second research question, Strategies to be implemented to overcome the challenges of students with autism in inclusive education setting

To effectively support students with autism in inclusive education settings, it is essential to implement evidence-based practices and individualized interventions. Providing visual supports, creating structured routines, and offering sensory accommodations are strategies that have been found to be beneficial for students with autism in inclusive classrooms (National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, 2011). Collaborating with parents, educators, and support staff to develop personalized plans that address the unique needs of each student is also crucial for promoting success in inclusive education (National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders, 2011).

Implement peer-mediated interventions to promote social interactions and friendships. This can involve structured activities, social skill training, and fostering positive peer relationships. Create a sensory-friendly environment by providing sensory breaks, using visual schedules, and offering sensory accommodations such as noise-cancelling headphones or fidget tools. Use visual supports, such as visual schedules and task organizers, to provide visual cues and support organizational skills. Break tasks into smaller, manageable steps and provide explicit instructions.

Implement augmentative and alternative communication systems, such as picture communication boards or speech-generating devices, to support expressive and receptive communication skills. Provide individualized supports, including visual aids, personalized learning materials, and differentiated instruction, to address the unique learning styles and needs of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

However, strategies such as differentiation, scaffolding, visual cues, and collaboration can help to address these challenges (Nthibeli, 2022). Teacher collaboration and training are also crucial in ensuring the full inclusion of Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in the classroom (Nthibeli, 2022). Successful inclusion requires a well-thought-out plan, trained educators, and empirically supported interventions (Martins, 2014). Additionally, the experiences of students with disabilities in inclusive education settings should be further explored to better understand their needs and challenges (Nandan, 2022).

Elements that are crucial for effective inclusive education for students with autism, including individualized supports, systematic instruction, structured learning environments, specialized curriculum content, a functional approach to problem behavior, and family involvement (Iovannone, 2003). However,

implementing these elements in inclusive school settings can be challenging, particularly in terms of reducing challenging behavior, teaching communication skills, and improving social relationships (Koegel, 2012). Teachers also face challenges in understanding and managing behavior, dealing with socio-structural barriers, and creating an inclusive environment. To address these challenges, it is important to provide teachers with the necessary resources, training, and support (Lindsay, 2013). Additionally, effective instruction and classroom management skills are essential for creating an inclusive environment (Mastropieri, 1999).

To address these issues, it is important to challenge stereotypes, promote peer understanding, and develop social skills (Humphrey, 2008). Inclusive education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder should be based on an understanding of their specific needs and should involve the use of assistive strategies and aids (Barua, 2019). Creating social opportunities for these students is also crucial, and can be achieved through evidence-based strategies that facilitate social interaction (Hart, 2011).

Boutot (2007) explains that "inclusive classrooms are one place where friendships between children with and without disabilities have the opportunity to develop and grow. However, just placing children with disabilities with typical peers does not necessarily ensure that friendships will occur" (p. 156). To ensure meaningful social relationships in your classroom, try these strategies:

- **Least intrusive support necessary** – Support is often necessary for the child to be successful but train paraprofessionals or additional adult assistants to step in only when necessary and encourage them to help other students as well. This promotes independency and normalcy for a Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

- **"Just Like Me"** – Consider having a class meeting to discuss Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder with the typical peers in the class. The class meeting should minimize those things that the Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder cannot do, or that make him or her different from the others, and instead emphasize things the student is good at, likes to do, and has interests in, as well as any hobbies, sports, and so on that may be similar to those of other students in the class. Maich and Belcher (2012) identified 10 practical planning steps for examining and implementing the use of picture books to nurture peer friendships and inclusive community in the contemporary classroom.
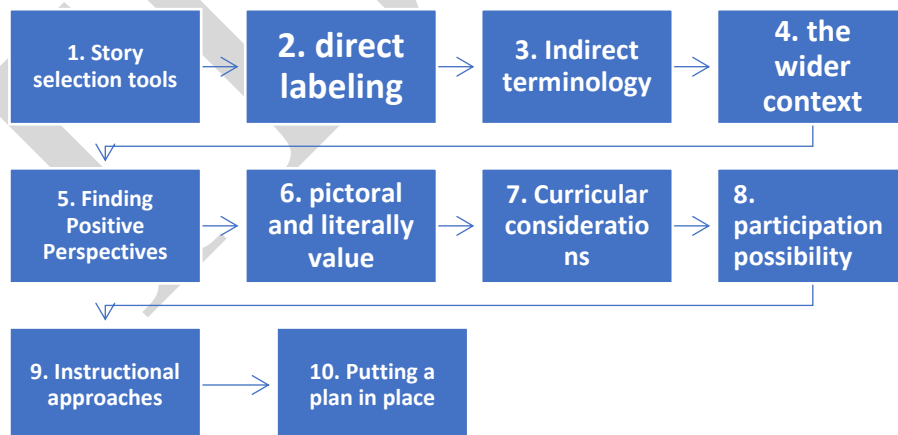
Figure1. Diagram for practical implementation of inclusion of students with autism.

- **Social Narratives** – Paula Kluth (2010) explains how "many teachers, families, and students with autism have found social narratives to be useful tools in learning about relationships and personal

interactions, coping with difficulties, getting information about novel situations, and knowing how to respond or act in various circumstances (p. 108).

- **Social scripts** – Provide students with specific language to use in certain situations that help students initiate a conversation, respond to common questions, how to ask an adult for help, or even how to play in the dramatic play area

- **Social stories** – Gives a Student with Autism Spectrum Disorder information about a situation and guidance on how to response to the situation.

- **Role play** – Rehearse steps for skills needed (greeting people, sharing an idea in class when working in a group, job interview skills, etc.)

- **The Hidden Curriculum** – The hidden curriculum is based on the work of autism researcher Brenda Smith Myles. It is the social information that is not directly taught but is assumed that everybody knows (Myles, Trautman, & Schelvan, 2004). Explicitly teach students the "hidden curriculum" by providing Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder information about common social situations, social norms, and unwritten rules.

For the third research question, Benefits of Inclusive Education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Inclusive education offers numerous benefits for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, including improved social skills, academic progress, and increased opportunities for social integration. By fostering a supportive and inclusive environment, Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder can thrive and reach their full potential within the educational setting.

Therefore, it is crucial to examine the current state of inclusive education and identify the specific challenges faced by students with special needs in order to develop effective strategies and interventions to support their learning and inclusion in mainstream classrooms. Shattuck et al. (2012) emphasized the importance of individualized supports, including visual supports, structured routines, and specialized instructional strategies, for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder to succeed in inclusive classrooms.

Dawson & Scott (2013) explain that inclusion has been shown to "lead to academic gains, including better performance on standardized assessments, IEP goals, classroom grades, behaviors, and motivation for learning for students with disabilities" (p. 193). Inclusive education involves teachers and schools making a commitment to build and maintain a sense of belonging for all students. Successful inclusive environments do not happen by coincidence. They are created through careful planning and preparation by educators with an inclusive mindset. Implementing inclusive practices and strategies can be challenging and complex; however, "feeling efficacious in teaching students with disabilities is a key aspect of enabling teachers to promote inclusion" (Dawson & Scott, p. 181). To ensure success for students with autism in general education classrooms, teachers must plan collaboratively, create structured classrooms, and teach lessons in meaningful and engaging ways. This guide provides useful suggestions and resources for helping students with autism thrive emotionally, socially, and academically in your classrooms.

Inclusive education has been shown to have numerous benefits for students with autism. Inclusive settings provide opportunities for social interaction, peer modeling, and academic growth for students with autism (Kasari, Rotheram-Fuller, Locke, & Gulsrud, 2012). Inclusive classrooms also promote a sense of belonging and acceptance, which can positively impact the self-esteem and overall well-being of students with autism (Kasari et al., 2012).

Conclusion

Autism Spectrum Disorder is a complex neurodevelopmental condition that presents challenges in social communication, behavior, and sensory sensitivities. While the disorder is lifelong and can impact various aspects of an individual's life, inclusive education plays a crucial role in providing support and opportunities for students with Autism to thrive academically and socially. By addressing the unique needs of these students through tailored strategies, accommodations, and teacher training, inclusive education can enhance their educational experiences and outcomes. Despite the existing challenges and barriers, ongoing efforts to promote inclusive education for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder are essential in ensuring their full participation and success in mainstream educational settings. Inclusive education is a valuable approach that can benefit students with autism spectrum disorder by promoting social skills, communication, self-esteem, and academic achievement. However, it requires careful planning, implementation, and support to ensure that Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder receive the necessary accommodations and resources to succeed. With appropriate strategies and interventions, inclusive education can provide a positive and inclusive learning environment for all students. the use of social narratives, social scripts, role play, and the hidden curriculum can provide valuable support for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder in navigating social interactions and understanding unwritten social rules. Inclusive education offers significant benefits for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, including improved social skills, academic progress, and increased opportunities for integration. To ensure success in inclusive classrooms, it is essential for educators to implement individualized supports, structured routines, and specialized instructional strategies tailored to the unique needs of students with autism. By fostering a sense of belonging and acceptance, inclusive education can enhance the emotional, social, and academic well-being of students with autism, ultimately enabling them to thrive in mainstream educational settings.

Ethics and Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that the work is written with due consideration of ethical standards. In this systematic review, ethics approval, and consent are not applicable. The authors don't have financial disclosure. The authors are from Ethiopia. As we know that, at this time in Ethiopia, the people get crise. Most governmental and private offices are closed and is difficulty to work and get something. As a third world country, there is a lack of accessible work to do. In this case we have a deficit in finance. There was no conflict of interest in this article.

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