

# AWARENESS AND ATTITUDE OF ISLAMIYYAH SCHOOLS OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN SOUTH WEST, NIGERIA

I.O. Yahya<sup>a\*</sup>, K.O Olaniyan-Shobowale<sup>b</sup>, I.S Owoyale-Abdulganiy<sup>c</sup>, J. Abdul-Rafiu<sup>d</sup> H.M. Sanni<sup>e</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Department of Language, Arts and Social Science Education, Lagos State University, Lagos, Nigeria.  
[isiaq.yahya@lasu.edu.ng](mailto:isiaq.yahya@lasu.edu.ng)

ORCID: 0000-0002-6072-5105

<sup>b</sup>Department of Language, Arts and Social Science Education, Lagos State University, Lagos, Nigeria.  
[khadijat.olaniyan-shobowale@lasu.edu.ng](mailto:khadijat.olaniyan-shobowale@lasu.edu.ng)

<sup>c</sup>Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, Alhikmah University, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.  
[isabdulganiy@alhikmah.edu.ng](mailto:isabdulganiy@alhikmah.edu.ng)

<sup>d</sup>Department of Arts and Social Sciences Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.  
[Abdurrafiu.j@unilorin.edu.ng](mailto:Abdurrafiu.j@unilorin.edu.ng)

<sup>e</sup>Department of Educational Foundation and Counselling Psychology, Lagos State University, Nigeria.  
[hajarahbadmus@gmail.com](mailto:hajarahbadmus@gmail.com)

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## Abstract

This study assessed the Awareness and Attitude of Islamiyyah Schools on Inclusive Education in South West, Nigeria. This study adopted descriptive research design. The population consists of all the teachers and school leaders available in all Islamiyyah Schools in South west, Nigeria out of which five Islamiyyah Schools (30 across all states), 25 respondents (150 across all states) were selected as using disproportionate random sampling technique. The instruments used for collection of data is a self-constructed questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Awareness and Attitude of Islamiyyah Schools on Inclusive Education in South west, Nigeria (QAAISIESWN). The study reveals a notable low level of awareness among Islamiyyah schools regarding inclusive education. The findings underscore a critical need for targeted awareness campaigns and policy reforms to align with the principles of inclusivity in among Muslim youth schools in the sub region. Here are recommendations addressing the identified issues within Islamic youth and special education needs within Islamiyyah Schools.

**Keywords:** Inclusive Education; Islamiyyah School; Special Educational Needs

## INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has experienced a number of positive educational trends and developments in many different countries, typically by recognizing that all students, including those who have special educational needs (SEN), have a right to education. Inclusive education is a system of education that carter for the special needs of pupils and students with visual, auditory and hearing impairment, mental retardation, emotional disorder, physical and health impairment and learning disabilities (Bocharova, 2020). Inclusion of children with Special

Educational Needs in Islamiyyah schools in Nigeria, alongside their peers, has become a major concern for interested educators, professionals and parents in many countries around the world (Suleiman & Isah, 2022). The reasons for this trend are due to a number of factors such as the increasing attention to the role of Islamic education in achieving religious, spiritual and social justice for pupils with SEN; the right of individuals with SEN to be educated along with their typically developing peers in Islamiyyah and secondary schools; the benefit of equal opportunities for everyone in achieving self-growth and participating in building society and when enrolled, to get the same quality and standard education as their contemporaries (USAID, 2017). In terms of both policy and practice, inclusion has various interpretations. One of those interpretations defines inclusion as based on the belief that students with SEN can and should be educated in the same educational setting with typically developing peers, thus emphasizing the importance of providing learning opportunities for all students (Rose et al., 2021).

Many educators believe that inclusive education allows students with SEN to benefit from equal opportunities in achieving their full potential, learning how to participate in various social settings, contributing to their society and gaining acceptance amongst their peer groups, increased participation in society challenges the stereotypes and perceptions which might otherwise stigmatize individuals with disabilities (Wahyuningsih, 2016).

Opponents of inclusion, however, take the argument that inclusive education is detrimental to a child's learning by taking away special and targeted strategies and interventions. They maintain that students with SEN should be taught in special schools that provide specialized and individualized educational services (Ballhysa & Flagler, 2019). They also argue that inclusion is not always the best way to meet the students' needs and they question whether students with disabilities, especially children with severe educational disabilities, will benefit from inclusion (Wahyuningsih, 2016). Critics also argue that inclusion entails the elimination of special educational placements, thus giving no alternative for disabled children's parents, especially if their child is severely disabled (Tryfon et al., 2021). Another criticism of inclusive settings is the issue of accommodation for all of the children. This accommodation must cater to the fact that students with SEN need additional services and provisions, which may not be readily available in Islamiyyah schools settings in Nigeria and, even if they are available, they may be costly (Suleiman & Isah, 2022). However, Wahyuningsih, (2016), is of the opinion that Islam preaches inclusiveness in all ramifications of practice including education.

Islam teaches that the law of getting the knowledge is obligatory. This is in accordance with the words of the Prophet Muhammad:

طلب العلم فريضة على كل مسلم ومسلمة

**Meaning:** "Seeking knowledge is obligatory for every Muslim and Muslimah". (Ibn Abd al-Barr)

The above hadith shows the importance of education for every Muslim both men and women, young or old, likewise, people with disabilities. They also have the same right to obtain a proper education like other normal children. In the teachings of Islam, seeking knowledge is obligatory for both men and women (Zulkifli et al., 2022).

Al-Qur'an and hadith have a lot of load instigation or liability of study. In the Qur'an, an Al- Alaq verse 1-5 is the first verse containing a read command which is an essential part of the education process. The purpose of education according to Islam is an obligation to understand Islam and build a civilization or culture (Napitupulu, 2020). An obligation to study in Islam is not restricted by time and age. In other words, Islam strongly encourages Muslims to seek

knowledge throughout life. Rasullullah as the Prophet Muhammad in the hadith narrated by Muslim:

أطلبوا العلم من المهد الى اللهد

Meaning: "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave". (Muslim)

In the perspective of inclusion, education is a human right. States have an obligation to provide a decent education to all citizen including those with disabilities. So it is very clear that there is a matching point between the Islamic view and inclusive educations which are equally stressed the importance of studying obligations (Elnurianda et al., 2018).

Islam considers that education needs to adopt religious education by providing a correct understanding of religious education. By the right understanding, the students especially people with disabilities have the spiritual power of religion, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character and skills needed him, society, nation and state. In addition, to guide and direct them in good morals, the necessary conditions and a conducive situation, cooperate with each other, and respect each other (Zaid & Zein, 2016).

Islamic Religious Studies has suffered greatly due to lack of political will by leaders to make an over haul re-structuring and repositioning of the system backed by enough funding, qualified teachers and structures. Accommodating students to learn Islamic studies in Islamiyah school setting has been faced with many obstacle in the country due to many factors related to the governments, parents, pupils/teachers and the community (Adams et al., 2013). The world conference on Education for All (EFA) and the United Nation Convention on the Right of the child emphasized urgent priority to ensure access to and improve the quality of Education for all children (Pinnock, 2020).

Full inclusive is the integration of all students, even those that require substantial educational behavioral support and services to be successful in regular classes and the elimination of segregated special classes (Olufunke et al., 2014)

Pinnock (2020) describe inclusion or inclusive education as the philosophy and practice for educating children with special needs in general education settings. Nigeria as a nation supports the operation of inclusive education in its national policy. *National-Education-Policy (2014)* states that:

*access to education shall be provided and inclusive education or integration of special classes and unit into ordinary/public schools under UBE scheme. Persons with special needs and learning disabled shall be provided with inclusive education service in school which normal persons attend, inage appropriate general education classes directly supervised by general teachers (p65).*

Inclusive education is a philosophy for attaining equity, justice and equality in education for all children who have been excluded from education for the reason of disabilities. (Olufunke et al., 2014). In another development *National-Education-Policy (2014)* maintained that, every Nigerian child shall have a right to educational opportunities irrespective of any real or imaginary disability.

Inclusive education can provide a range of spiritual, academic and social benefits for students with disabilities, such as high achievement in learning and practice of the religion of Islam, improved rate of high school graduation, and more positive relationship with non-disabled individuals (Zulfi et. al., 2021). However, as good as the policy is, the implementation process in Islamiyah schools system in southwestern part of Nigeria is sketchy.

## **Statement of problem**

Nigeria has a long history of segregated educational provisions for students with SEN attending special schools than attending inclusion programs in Islamiyyah schools. However, the Ministry of Education has, since 2004, implemented the policy of the inclusion of students with SEN in Nigeria schools and classrooms. Given the complexity of this task, there are calls in Nigeria for further research to reveal the obstacles that have hindered the inclusion or that may do so in the future (Suleiman & Isah, 2022).

So far, in Nigeria, there has been little discussion of these potential challenges, which indicates the importance of conducting a research that focuses primarily on the issues involved when trying to implement inclusion in Islamiyyah schools in Nigeria effectively (FAREO, 2020). The following section highlights the importance of conducting a research that focuses primarily on identifying obstacles to the implementation of the inclusion of students with SEN, as well as preventing its success, as an alternative to segregated provision.

This research is important to the field of Religious education both in Africa and globally, in that it gives stakeholders a voice in identifying any obstacles they face in promoting the inclusion of students with SEN Islamiyyah schools setting.

## **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study will be to assess the Awareness and Attitude of Islamiyyah Schools on Inclusive Education in South West, Nigeria. Other specific purposes are to determine:

1. The level of awareness of Islamiyyah school teachers and school leaders on inclusive education in South West, Nigeria.
2. If Islamiyyah school policies accommodates inclusive education in South West, Nigeria.
3. If Islamiyyah school teachers and school leaders have positive attitude towards inclusive education in South West, Nigeria.
4. The level of Islamiyyah schools curriculum's flexibility and adaptability to meet the needs of students Special Education Needs.
5. Is there a difference in the attitude of Islamiyyah schools on inclusive education based on school location?.
6. Is there a difference in perception of school leaders and teacher on the attitude of Islamiyyah schools to inclusive education?
7. Is there a difference in the perception of school leaders and teacher on the attitude of Islamiyyah schools to inclusive education based on years of experience?

## **Research questions**

1. What is the level of awareness of Islamiyyah school teachers and school leaders on inclusive education in South West, Nigeria?
2. Do Islamiyyah school policies accommodates inclusive education in South West, Nigeria?
3. Do Islamiyyah school teachers and school leaders have positive attitude towards inclusive education in South West, Nigeria?
4. What is the level of Islamiyyah schools curriculum's flexibility and adaptability to meet the needs of students Special Education Needs?

### Research hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the attitude of Islamiyah schools on inclusive education based on school location.
2. There is no significant difference in perception of school leaders and teacher in the attitude of Islamiyah schools to inclusive education.
3. There is no significant difference in the perception of school leaders and teacher on the attitude of Islamiyah schools to inclusive education based on years of experience.

### Research Methodology

This study is an assessment of Awareness and Attitude of Islamiyyah Schools of Inclusive Education in South West, Nigeria. This research was carried out among Islamiyah Schools in South west, Nigeria. South west covers six out of the 36 states in Nigeria (Lagos, Ogun, Oyo, Osun, Ondo, and Ekiti respectively). The population consists of all the teachers and school leaders available in all Islamiyah Schools in South west, Nigeria out of which five Islamiyah Schools (30 across all states) using disproportionate random sampling technique and 25 teachers and school leaders were selected as respondents from selected Islamiyah Schools from each of the states under the study using disproportionate random sampling technique.

**Table 1:** Selected Islamiyah Schools and Number of Respondents for the Study

	<b>No of Schools Per state</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>	<b>Valid Percent</b>	<b>Cumulative Percent</b>
Lagos	5	25	12.8	16.7	16.7
Ogun	5	25	12.8	16.7	33.3
Osun	5	25	12.8	16.7	50.0
Oyo	5	25	12.8	16.7	66.7
Ondo	5	25	12.8	16.7	83.3
Ekiti	5	25	12.8	16.7	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>76.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

The instruments used for collection of data is a self-constructed questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Awareness and Attitude of Islamiyyah Schools on Inclusive Education in South west, Nigeria (QAISIESWN).

In answering the research questions, descriptive statistics were used to explain pattern of responses while the ANOVA was used to test the hypotheses 1 and 3, while T-Test was used to test Hypothesis 2 at 0.05 level of significance through the SPSS version 23 package. The responses for the study were obtained through online platform (emails and social media) using snowball data collection technique. This activity was carried out with the help of a research assistant and explanations were offered to the respondents where necessary.

## Analysis of results

### Answering Research Questions

**Table 2:** Distribution of respondents based on school type

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary School	57	29.2	38.0	38.0
	Secondary School	70	35.9	46.7	84.7
	Others	23	11.8	15.3	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>76.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

The above table shows that 38.0% of the respondents were chosen from Primary Schools, 46.7% from Secondary School while 15.3% were from evening Madaaris (others).

**Table 3:** Distribution of respondents based on position within the school

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	School Leader	55	28.2	36.7	36.7
	Teacher	95	48.7	63.3	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>76.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

The above table shows that 36.7% of the respondents were School Leaders, while 63.3% were Teachers.

**Table 4:** Distribution of Respondents Based Years of Experience

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	1 - 5 years	16	8.2	10.7	10.7
	6 - 10 years	44	22.6	29.3	40.0
	11 - 15 years	34	17.4	22.7	62.7
	16 - 20 years	28	14.4	18.7	81.3
	21 and above	28	14.4	18.7	100.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>76.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

From the table above, 10.7% out of the respondents have 1-5years of teaching experience, 29.3% have 6 - 10years of teaching experience, 22.7% have 11-15years of teaching experience, 18.7% have 16-20years of teaching experience while 18.7% have 21 and above years of teaching experience. Furthermore, the table shows that those who have the range of teaching experience between 6years and 10years were more than others.

## Answering of research questions

### Answer to research questions one:

What is level of awareness Islamiyah school teachers and school leaders on inclusive education?

**Table 5:** The level of awareness Islamiyah school teachers and school leaders on inclusive education.

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
I am familiar with the concept of inclusive education	150	1	4	2.77	.718
I believe that students with special education needs should be included in mainstream Islamiyah schools classrooms	150	1	4	2.63	1.040
Students with Special Education Needs are available in Islamiyah Schools	150	1	4	3.19	.847
<b>Valid N (listwise)</b>	<b>150</b>			<b>8.59</b>	<b>2.605</b>
<b>Weighted Mean</b>					<b>3.3</b>

The above provides data for the answer to research question one. From the analysis of the selected items chosen, the table shows that the total mean for the level of awareness Islamiyah school teachers and school leaders on inclusive education is 8.59 with standard deviation of 2.605 and weighted mean of 3.3.

Therefore, the study found that the mean of each variable is below the weighted mean. However, we can therefore conclude that there is low level of awareness of Islamiyah school teachers and school leaders on inclusive education in South West, Nigeria.

**Answer to research questions two:**

**Table 6:** Does Islamiyyah school policies accommodates inclusive education?

	<b>N (F/ %)</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Islamiyyah schools have policy and guidelines in place for the inclusion of students with special education needs	150 (100%)	10 (6.67%)	14 (9.33%)	58 (38.67%)	68 (45.33%)
Islamiyyah school teachers provide individualized education plans (IEPs) for students with special education needs	150 (100%)	10 (6.67%)	12 (8.0%)	68 (45.33%)	60 (40.0%)
Islamiyyah schools have dedicated resources (e.g., teachers, support staff, materials) for students with special education needs	150 (100%)	0%	0%	100 (66.67%)	50 (33.33%)
Islamiyyah schools accommodate students with physical disabilities (e.g., wheelchair access, ramps, elevators)	150 (100%)	20 (13.33%)	30 (20.0%)	40 (26.67%)	60 (40.0%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>600 (100)</b>	<b>40 (6.67)%</b>	<b>56 (9.33)</b>	<b>266 (44.33)</b>	<b>238 (39.67%)</b>

The above table provides data for the answer to research question two. From the analysis of the selected items chosen, it shows that the percentage of the total responses for strongly agree were 6.67%, 9.33% were agreed, 44.33% were disagreed while 39.67% were Strongly Disagreed respectively. The total positive responses were 16% while the negative responses were 84%.

Therefore, the study found that Islamiyyah school policies does not accommodates inclusive education in South West, Nigeria.



**Answer to research questions three:**

**Table 7:** Does Islamiyah school teachers and school leaders have positive attitude towards inclusive education?

	<b>N (F/ %)</b>	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>
Inclusion of students with special education needs benefits all students in Islamiyah schools	150 (100%)	40 (26.7%)	68 (45.3%)	10 (6.7%)	32 (21.3%)
There are potential benefits of including students with Special Education Needs in Islamiyah schools	150 (100%)	100 (66.7%)	30 (20.0%)	10 (6.7%)	10 (6.7%)
There are perceived challenges in including students with Special Education Needs in Islamiyah schools	150 (100%)	30 (20.0%)	100 (66.7%)	20 (13.3%)	0%
Financial or resource constraints hinders the inclusion of students with Special Education Needs in Islamiyah schools	150 (100%)	40 (26.7%)	68 (45.3%)	10 (6.7%)	32 (21.3%)
Inclusive Education encounter resistance or pushback from teachers, parents, or students in Islamiyah schools	150 (100%)	100 (66.7%)	30 (20.0%)	10 (6.7%)	10 (6.7%)
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>750 (100%)</b>	<b>310 (41.3%)</b>	<b>296 (39.47%)</b>	<b>60 (8%)</b>	<b>84 (11.2%)</b>

The above table provides data for the answer to research question four. From the analysis of the selected items chosen, it shows that the percentage of the total responses for strongly agree were **41.3%**, **39.47%** were agreed, **8%** were disagreed while **11.2%** were Strongly Disagreed respectively. The total positive responses were **80.77%** while the negative responses were **19.2%**.

Therefore, the study found that Islamiyah school teachers and school leaders have positive attitude towards inclusive education in South West, Nigeria.

**Answer to research questions four:**

**Table 8:** What the level of Islamiyah schools curriculum’s flexibility and adaptability to meet the needs of students Special Education Needs?

	<b>N</b>	<b>Minimum</b>	<b>Maximum</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>
Islamiyah schools offer a curriculum that is flexible and adaptable to meet the diverse needs of students Special Education Needs	150	2	4	3.00	.819
There are specific subjects that promotes inclusivity in Islamiyah schools	150	1	4	2.63	1.040
There are positive experiences related to the inclusion of students with special education needs in Islamiyah schools	150	1	4	2.63	1.040
Valid N (listwise)	150			8.26	2.899
<b>Weighted Mean</b>					<b>2.85</b>

The above provides data for the answer to research question six. From the analysis of the selected items chosen, the table shows that the total mean for the level of Islamiyah schools curriculum’s flexibility and adaptability to meet the needs of students Special Education Needs is 8.26 with standard deviation of 2.899 and weighted mean of 2.85. Therefore, the study found that the mean of each variable is below the weighted mean. However, we can therefore conclude that the level of Islamiyah schools curriculum’s flexibility and adaptability to meet the needs of students Special Education Needs is low in South West, Nigeria.

**Test of Hypothesis**

**Hypothesis One**

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the attitude of Islamiyah schools on inclusive education based on school location.

**Table 9:** Difference in the attitude of Islamiyah schools on inclusive education based on school location

		<b>Test Value = 0</b>					
		<b>t</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	<b>Mean Difference</b>	<b>95% Confidence Interval of the Difference</b>	
						<b>Lower</b>	<b>Upper</b>
School Policies on Inclusive Education		50.652	149	.000	3.170	3.05	3.29
Location of the schools		25.016	149	.000	3.500	3.22	3.78

The above table shows a One-simple t-test of (0.05) significance level. The table further shows that the attitude of Islamiyah schools on inclusive education have a mean difference of 3.170 and school location is 3.500. Therefore, the study shows that the Sig. values of the attitude of Islamiyah schools on inclusive education based on school location is below the p values ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), so we can reject the null hypothesis that stated that There is no significant difference in the attitude of Islamiyah schools on inclusive education based on school location.

### Hypothesis Two

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** There is no significant difference in perception of school leaders and teacher in the attitude of Islamiyah schools to inclusive education.

**Table 10:** Difference in perception of school leaders and teacher in the attitude of Islamiyah schools to inclusive education

		Test Value = 0					
		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
						Lower	Upper
Attitudes Towards Inclusion		27.520	149	.000	1.891	1.75	2.03
Position Within the School (School leaders and Teachers)		41.373	149	.000	1.633	1.56	1.71

The above table shows a One-simple t-test of (0.05) significance level. The table further shows that the perception of school leaders and teacher in the attitude of Islamiyah schools to inclusive education have a mean difference of 1.891. Therefore, the study shows that the Sig. values of the perception of school leaders and teacher in the attitude of Islamiyah schools to inclusive education is below the p values ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), so we can reject the null hypothesis that stated that There is no significant difference in perception of school leaders and teacher in the attitude of Islamiyah schools to inclusive education.

### Hypothesis Three

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** There is no significant difference in the perception of school leaders and teacher on the attitude of Islamiyah schools to inclusive education based on years of experience.

**Table 11:** difference in the perception of school leaders and teacher on the attitude of Islamiyah schools to inclusive education based on years of experience

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Attitudes Towards Inclusion	Equal variances assumed	83.734	.000	-9.783	148	.000	-1.091	.111	-1.311	-.870
	Equal variances not assumed			-12.206	123.765	.000	-1.091	.089	-1.267	-.914
Years of Experience	Equal variances assumed	12.575	.001	8.010	148	.000	1.466	.183	1.104	1.828
	Equal variances not assumed			8.963	146.405	.000	1.466	.164	1.143	1.789

This hypothesis was tested at 95% confidence levels which translate to (0.05) level of significance. The table shows that the perceptions of school leaders and teacher on the attitude of Islamiyah schools to inclusive education have a mean difference of -1.091 and years of experience of 1.466. Therefore, the study shows that the Sig. values of the both variables is below the p values ( $0.000 < 0.05$ ), so we can reject the null hypothesis that stated that There is no significant difference in the perception of school leaders and teacher on the attitude of Islamiyah schools to inclusive education based on years of experience.

### Summary of findings

The Study founds that:

1. There is low level of awareness of Islamiyah school teachers and school leaders on inclusive education in South West, Nigeria.
2. Islamiyah school policies does not accommodates inclusive education in South West, Nigeria.
3. Islamiyah school teachers and school leaders have positive attitude towards inclusive education in South West, Nigeria.
4. The level of Islamiyah schools curriculum's flexibility and adaptability to meet the needs of students Special Education Needs is low in South West, Nigeria.
5. There is no significant difference in the attitude of Islamiyah schools on inclusive education based on school location.
6. There is significant difference in perception of school leaders and teacher in the attitude of Islamiyah schools to inclusive education.
7. There is significant difference in the perception of school leaders and teacher on the attitude of Islamiyah schools to inclusive education based on years of experience.

## DISCUSSION OF FINDING

The study found that there is low level of awareness among Islamiyah school teachers and school leaders on inclusive education in South West, Nigeria. This corroborate with the findings of Ignacio and Allit (2023) which state that while the formal schools demonstrated a high degree of understanding and engagement with inclusive education principles, others learning centres which are either informal and non-formal usually exhibits limited awareness or a lack of clear understanding of the concept. This variation suggests that there may be disparities in the dissemination of information or training programs related to inclusive education within the Islamiyah school system.

The study discover that Islamiyah school policies does not accommodates inclusive education in South West, Nigeria. This is in agreement with the position of Allam and Martin (2021) that Some schools have developed comprehensive policies that outline strategies, support mechanisms, and accommodations for diverse learners. Conversely, others may lack explicit policies, potentially indicating a need for greater attention to inclusivity in their educational frameworks.

Another finding of this study is that Islamiyah school teachers and school leaders have positive attitude towards inclusive education in South West, Nigeria. This is in consonance with the findings of Ballhysa and Flagler (2019) that well trained teachers learn not to segregate in dealings with learners during classroom situation. The positive attitudes of teachers and school leaders toward inclusive education in Islamiyah schools in the South West region of Nigeria reflect a promising foundation for the implementation of inclusive practices. Leveraging these positive attitudes, coupled with continuous professional development and community engagement, can contribute to the creation of inclusive learning environments that align with the cultural and religious values of the schools in question.

It was found in this study that the level of Islamiyah schools curriculum's flexibility and adaptability to meet the needs of students Special Education Needs is low in South West, Nigeria. This corroborate the idea of Fareo (2020) that despite policies in place, majority of schools in developing countries lack differentiation or inclusive strategies embedded within the curricula. The absence of instructional methods, materials, or assessments designed to cater to varying learning styles or abilities may hinder the participation and progress of students with SEN, resulting in their marginalized educational experience.

Another finding of this research work is that it revealed that 'there is no significant difference in the attitude of Islamiyah schools on inclusive education based on school location'. This position tally with that of Mubaraq et al. (2021) which suggest that there are variations in attitudes towards inclusive education between urban and rural Islamiyah schools. Urban schools may be more exposed to diverse educational practices, resources, and professional development opportunities, potentially fostering a more positive attitude towards inclusive education. On the other hand, rural schools might face challenges related to limited resources and exposure, which could influence their attitudes.

The study found that 'there is significant difference in perception of school leaders and teacher in the attitude of Islamiyah schools to inclusive education'. This is related to the findings of Olufunke et al. (2014); Bocharova (2020) that the a cohesive and positive approach necessitates strong leadership commitment, teacher buy-in, alignment with cultural and religious values, and continuous professional development in Schools in regards to inclusive education. Understanding and addressing the perspectives of both school leaders and teachers are essential for creating a supportive and inclusive educational environment within Islamiyah schools.

## **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the study examining the awareness and attitude of Islamiyah schools towards inclusive education in the South West region of Nigeria reveals a complex landscape influenced by various factors. The study reveals a notable low level of awareness among Islamiyah school teachers and leaders regarding inclusive education. This deficiency is compounded by the observation that existing Islamiyah school policies do not adequately accommodate inclusive education. These findings underscore a critical need for targeted awareness campaigns and policy reforms to align with the principles of inclusivity in among Islamiyah Schools in the sub region. Contrary to expectations, the research finds no significant difference in the attitudes of Islamiyah schools towards inclusive education based on school location. This suggests that the challenges and opportunities associated with inclusive education are pervasive among Islamiyah schools across the states in South West region of Nigeria.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

Here are recommendations addressing the identified issues within Islamiyah schools in South West, Nigeria regarding inclusive education:

1. **Increasing Awareness:** Islamiyah schools should collaborate with educational institutions, NGOs, and government bodies to develop awareness campaigns highlighting the importance and benefits of inclusive education.
2. **Policy Reforms for Inclusivity:** Islamiyah schools leaders should develop specific guidelines and frameworks within Islamiyah schools that address inclusive practices, teacher training, and resource allocation for students with diverse needs.
3. **Building on Positive Attitudes:** Islamiyah schools should capitalize on the existing positive attitudes of teachers and school leaders by providing continuous professional development opportunities focused on inclusive teaching methodologies.
4. **Enhancing Curriculum Flexibility:** Revise the curriculum to incorporate flexibility and adaptability, ensuring it caters to the diverse learning needs of students with SEN in Islamiyah Schools.
5. **Uniform Approach to Inclusive Education:** Foster collaboration between urban and rural schools to share best practices and resources for effective implementation of inclusive education in Islamiyah Schools within the Region.
6. **Addressing Perception Differences:** Islamiyah schools should facilitate dialogues and workshops aimed at aligning the perceptions of school leaders and teachers regarding inclusive education goals, strategies, and benefits.
7. **Tailored Professional Development:** Offer targeted professional development programs based on the years of experience, addressing the specific needs and challenges faced by Teachers of Islamiyah Schools at different career stages.

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