



Review of inclusive Human Kinetics and Health Education programmes for sustainable National Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

This study, employing a qualitative phenomenological research design, investigates the role of inclusive health and physical education in fostering sustainable development in Nigeria. The research examines how inclusive practices, particularly for individuals with disabilities, impact public health, education, and socio-economic development. It explores the challenges and opportunities associated with implementing these practices, considering Nigeria's cultural diversity, resource limitations, and infrastructural constraints. The study reviews key policies, such as the National Policy on Disability (2012) and the Disability Discrimination (Prohibition) Act (2018), highlighting the barriers to their effective implementation, including limited awareness and bureaucratic challenges. The findings underscore the importance of inclusivity in enhancing workforce diversity, promoting social equity, and reducing stigmatization. The study concludes that integrating inclusive health and physical education is crucial for achieving national development goals. It recommends stronger stakeholder collaboration, increased community engagement, and focused efforts to address implementation challenges, thereby contributing to a healthier and more resilient Nigerian society.

Keywords: Inclusive, Human Kinetics, Health Education, and Sustainable Development

Introduction

Nigeria's health landscape is marked by significant disparities, with widespread prevalence of communicable and non-communicable diseases, maternal and child health issues, and inadequate access to healthcare services, particularly in rural areas. Additionally, the country grapples with rising rates of sedentary lifestyles, obesity, and physical inactivity, fueled by urbanization, technological advancements, and changing socio-cultural norms (WHO, 2020). Encouraging people with disabilities to participate fully in health and physical education is essential and consistent with sustainable development ideals in Nigeria, as it is in many other countries. This review explores the urgent need to improve inclusivity and accessibility in health and physical education for people with disabilities. It acknowledges the intricate problems that this underprivileged group faces and looks for workable solutions that would enhance their standard of living and advance Nigeria's more general developmental objectives.

One of the most notable problems in Nigeria is the obvious differences in schooling that people with disabilities experience. These disparities are exacerbated by the lack of inclusive educational policies and practices, which also restrict the growth and well-being of the affected populations. As fundamental elements of human development, health and physical education are especially important for this group of people because they have a direct impact on mental and physical health and enable people with disabilities to live more independent and satisfying lives. Nigeria signed the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as part of its international commitments to advance the inclusion and rights of people with disabilities. Nevertheless, there is still more work to be done before these international pledges can be translated into real, noticeable gains for Nigerians with disabilities. The accomplishment of these pledges is hampered by implementation gaps, resource limitations, and a lack of knowledge. (Oyeyemi & Oyeyemi, 2020).

Nigerian educational institutions' poor physical infrastructure is a major obstacle to inclusiveness. In the context of health education, inclusivity extends beyond physical accessibility to encompass cultural sensitivity, gender equity, and social inclusion (UNESCO, 2019). The resources and adjustments needed to accommodate people with disabilities are sometimes lacking in schools and other educational institutions. This includes the unavailability of assistive technologies, qualified staff, and specially designed instructional materials. The full participation of people with disabilities in health and physical education is severely hampered by these restrictions. Another major barrier to inclusivity is societal attitudes, which frequently support



stigmatization and discrimination against people with disabilities. Prejudices and unfavorable assumptions about people with disabilities prevent people from participating and worsen social isolation. In addition to harming the confidence and self-worth of disabled people, these beliefs also prevent them from accessing equitable opportunities. (Ajayi, 2021).

Although Nigeria has enacted laws and policies to protect the rights and welfare of people with disabilities, these laws and policies are not always effectively implemented or enforced. Due to this discrepancy, people with disabilities are placed in a vulnerable position and have few options for addressing prejudice or being denied access to healthcare and education. By integrating human kinetics and health education within this framework, Nigeria can work towards building a healthier, more resilient society that empowers individuals to lead active, fulfilling lives while contributing to broader development goals (UNDP, 2020). People with disabilities are underutilized and inequity is sustained when they are excluded from these fundamental aspects of human development. The foundation of sustainable development is the idea that every person, regardless of ability, should have equal access to opportunities for economic contribution, full participation in society, and healthy living. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2012).

Conceptualization of the problem

Nigeria faces significant challenges in achieving sustainable national development, including high levels of poverty, unemployment, and public health crises. Human Kinetics and Health Education are vital in addressing these challenges by promoting physical health, well-being, and social inclusion. However, the existing Human Kinetics and Health Education (HKHE) programmes are often not inclusive, failing to cater to the needs of marginalized groups such as people with disabilities, women, and rural populations. This exclusion limits the reach and impact of HKHE programmes, thereby hindering their potential to contribute to sustainable development goals. For HKHE programmes to effectively contribute to sustainable national development, they must be inclusive and equitable. An inclusive approach ensures that all individuals, regardless of their background, can benefit from health education and physical activities. This inclusivity not only to promote individual well-being but also fosters social cohesion, reduces inequalities, and enhances overall national productivity.

Theoretical Perspectives to the Problem

Inclusive Education Theory posits that all students, regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, or linguistic differences, should be educated in general education classrooms within their local schools. This theory stems from the broader concept of social inclusion, which advocates for the integration of marginalized groups into mainstream society. Inclusive Education Theory challenges traditional models of education that segregate students with special needs or disabilities into separate classrooms or schools. Instead, it promotes the idea that all students can benefit from learning together, as it fosters an environment of diversity, acceptance, and mutual respect. According to this theory, inclusion is not merely about placing students with special needs in regular classrooms but about creating a supportive and flexible learning environment that meets the diverse needs of all students (Ainscow, 2020).

The implementation of Inclusive Education Theory requires significant changes in teaching practices, curriculum design, and school policies. Teachers play a critical role in this process, as they must adapt their instructional methods to accommodate different learning styles and abilities. This might involve using differentiated instruction, collaborative learning, and assistive technologies to ensure that all students can access the curriculum effectively. Furthermore, schools must provide adequate resources and support, such as specialized training for teachers, classroom aides, and accessible learning materials, to create an inclusive environment. Research has shown that inclusive education not only benefits students with special needs but also enhances the academic and social outcomes of all students by promoting empathy, cooperation, and a broader understanding of diversity (Florian & Pratt, 2013).

However, the successful implementation of Inclusive Education Theory faces numerous challenges, particularly in contexts with limited resources or rigid educational systems. In many developing countries, including Nigeria, the lack of funding, infrastructure, and trained personnel can hinder the adoption of inclusive practices. Moreover, cultural attitudes and societal norms can also impact the effectiveness of inclusive education. For instance, stigmatization and discrimination against individuals with disabilities may persist in communities, affecting both the willingness of schools to implement inclusive policies and the acceptance of such students by their peers.

Prevalence of people living with disabilities in Nigeria

Nigeria has one of the highest rates of disability in Africa, with around 25 million people living with some form of disability. These disabilities are diverse and can result from various factors, including congenital conditions, accidents, communicable and non-communicable diseases, and injuries during conflicts. Poverty is a significant association with disability, and gender can also play a role. According to the NDHS 2018 report, approximately 3.6% of women and 3.0% of men aged 15-49 in Nigeria reported some form of difficulty in functioning due to physical, sensory, mental, or intellectual impairments (Nigeria National Bureau of Statistics, 2018). Stigmatization and discrimination against individuals with



disabilities further marginalize them, limiting their access to essential services. Understanding these issues is crucial for developing effective policies and programs. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2012). In a joint publication by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank, the report estimates that approximately 15% of the world's population lives with some form of disability, with higher rates in low and middle-income countries. While specific national data for Nigeria is not provided, the report highlights the global magnitude of the issue (WHO & World Bank, 2011).

The Nigeria National Policy on Disability recognizes the prevalence of disabilities in the country and outlines strategies for promoting the rights and inclusion of persons with disabilities. The policy underscores the need for accurate data collection to inform planning and decision-making processes (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs and Social Development, 2012). Various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in Nigeria conduct studies and surveys to assess the prevalence and impact of disabilities. These reports often focus on specific disability types or population groups and contribute to the understanding of the disability landscape in Nigeria (The Albino Foundation, Joint National Association of Persons with Disabilities).

Necessity of Inclusive Human Kinetics and Health Education Programs for Individuals Living with Disabilities in Nigeria

Accessible health and physical education are crucial for individuals with disabilities, as they offer numerous physical, mental, and social benefits. These programs help develop strength, flexibility, and endurance, preventing obesity and related health issues. Physical activity also reduces stress and anxiety, boosts self-esteem, and reduces depression symptoms (Ajayi, Abayomi & Ojo, 2013). Social inclusion is fostered through interaction and socialization, promoting teamwork and cooperation. Adapted skills can enhance independence, allowing individuals with disabilities to perform everyday tasks more effectively. Accessible physical education empowers individuals with disabilities to advocate for their needs and rights, challenging stereotypes and misconceptions. Physical fitness and skills also improve daily life quality, and they create equal opportunities for active and fulfilling lives (Ogunleye & Ojo, 2019). More so, it has long-term health benefits such as preventing secondary health conditions, such as cardiovascular problems and musculoskeletal-related issues. These programs contribute to improved health, self-confidence, social inclusion, and overall quality of life.

People with disabilities are at higher risk of developing secondary health conditions such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease due to factors like sedentary lifestyles and barriers to healthcare access. Accessible health and physical education programs can provide opportunities for preventive care, health screenings, and education on managing health risks, thus reducing the incidence of secondary conditions (Ojo & Ajala, 2021). Participation in physical education and sports can foster a sense of empowerment, confidence, and social inclusion among individuals with disabilities. By providing opportunities for interaction, teamwork, and skill development, inclusive physical education environments help combat social isolation, promote positive self-image, and build supportive peer networks (Goodwin & Staples, 2018).

Addressing the Gaps in Access to Quality Inclusive Education for Individuals with Disabilities

Disparities in access to quality education in Nigeria are rooted in factors such as lack of awareness, financial barriers, lack of inclusive policies, limited access to early intervention, underrepresentation in mainstream schools, transportation barriers, and language and communication challenges. Urban schools have more resources and infrastructure, while rural ones often lack the necessary support. Financial burdens, lack of inclusive policies, and limited access to early intervention programs further exacerbate these disparities.

Negative attitudes and misconceptions about disability among educators, administrators, and peers can create hostile or unwelcoming environments for students with disabilities. Discriminatory practices, stigma, and low expectations may limit opportunities for inclusion and academic achievement (United Nations, 2020). Furthermore, many students with disabilities require specialized support services such as assistive technology, sign language interpreters, braille materials, and personalized learning plans. However, these services are often lacking or inadequate in educational settings, hindering students' ability to fully participate and succeed in their academic pursuits (Adigun, 2021).

Families of children with disabilities often face additional financial burdens associated with their education, including costs for specialized equipment, therapies, and transportation. Limited financial resources may force families to prioritize basic needs over educational expenses, exacerbating disparities in access to quality education (United Nations, 2020). Addressing these issues requires policy changes, increased awareness, teacher training, and investment in infrastructure. Inclusive education practices focusing on individual needs are crucial for creating a more equitable educational system (Oyeyemi, & Oyeyemi, 2020).

Addressing Instructional Resource Inequities in Human Kinetics and Health Education Programmes between Urban and Rural Nigeria



Disparities in access to quality education in Nigeria are rooted in factors such as lack of awareness, financial barriers, lack of inclusive policies, limited access to early intervention, underrepresentation in mainstream schools, transportation barriers, and language and communication challenges. Urban schools have more resources and infrastructure, while rural ones often lack the necessary support. Financial burdens, lack of inclusive policies, and limited access to early intervention programs further exacerbate these disparities. Urban areas generally have better-developed infrastructure, including schools equipped with ramps, accessible restrooms, and assistive devices. In contrast, rural schools often lack these facilities, making it difficult for students with disabilities to access educational facilities.

Also, urban schools tend to have better access to technology resources such as computers, tablets, and assistive devices. These resources play a crucial role in facilitating inclusive education and supporting students with disabilities in their learning process (Ezenwaji & Chukwuekezie, 2018). In rural areas, limited access to technology further exacerbates the educational disparities for students with disabilities. Transportation infrastructure is often better developed in urban areas, providing easier access to schools for students with disabilities who may require specialized transportation services. In rural areas, limited transportation options can pose significant barriers to school attendance for students with disabilities, particularly those living in remote areas.

Understanding the Distinct Challenges of Individuals Living with Disabilities in Nigeria

Nigeria faces numerous challenges for individuals with disabilities, including lack of access to formal education, inadequate infrastructure, a shortage of trained educators, and a lack of specialized resources and assistive technologies. Societal stigmatization and discrimination also hinder participation in educational and social activities. Financial hardships, lack of accessible transportation, and communication disabilities also impede access to quality education (Waziri, 2019). Parents and guardians are often unaware of available educational opportunities, leading to underrepresentation in mainstream schools and missed opportunities for support. Gender also plays a role, with girls with disabilities often facing double discrimination. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach, including policy changes, increased awareness, teacher training, investment in infrastructure, and a shift in societal attitudes. Equitable and accessible education is essential for social justice and empowering individuals with disabilities to lead fulfilling lives. (Nwosu, & Eze, 2019).

Nigeria's Commitment to Disability Rights and Inclusive Development

Nigeria has made significant international commitments to promote and protect the rights of individuals with disabilities, in line with international conventions and agreements. These include ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) in 2010, participating in the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities, signing the African Union Protocol on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2018, and upholding the principles of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). Nigeria's commitments to these rights reflect its dedication to addressing the rights and well-being of individuals with disabilities, reducing discrimination, and improving living conditions. These commitments serve as a foundation for developing and implementing policies and programs aimed at ensuring the rights of persons with disabilities are respected and upheld. (Oyeyemi, & Oyeyemi, 2020; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2012).

Challenges in translating global commitments into practical improvements at the local level

The implementation of global disability rights commitments in Nigeria is a complex and multifaceted task. Key challenges include lack of awareness and sensitization, resource constraints, inadequate infrastructure and accessibility, shortage of trained personnel, inconsistent policy implementation, attitudinal barriers, communication challenges, geographic disparities, gender-based discrimination, limited data and monitoring, complex bureaucracy, and inadequate legal remedies. These obstacles hinder the effective implementation of disability-related initiatives, affecting access to public spaces, schools, and healthcare facilities. The lack of trained personnel, inconsistent policy implementation, and persistent cultural beliefs contribute to discrimination and exclusion. Communication challenges, such as limited access to sign language interpreters and Braille materials, further complicate the situation. The bureaucratic structure in Nigeria also complicates the coordination and implementation of inclusive policies. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-pronged approach, including increased awareness, resource allocation, changes in attitudes, and consistent policy implementation. (Nwosu, & Eze, 2019).

Enhancing Resources for Human Kinetics and Health Education in Nigeria

In Nigeria, inadequate infrastructure and resources in educational institutions pose significant challenges to providing quality education and inclusive learning environments, particularly for individuals with disabilities. These challenges include a lack of accessibility features, inadequate classroom space, unsafe buildings, specialized facilities, and limited therapy rooms. Assistive technology and teaching materials are scarce, with limited access to Braille books and large-print materials. Schools may also lack computers and adaptive software for students with disabilities. Training and personnel shortages, including special education teachers and support staff, further hinder individualized support. Accessible transportation is also a significant issue, with many students without mobility facilities. Insufficient funding and policy implementation also hinder progress.



Addressing these challenges requires increased investment in infrastructure, assistive technology, specialized resources, teacher training, and consistent policy implementation. A broader societal shift in attitudes towards accessibility and inclusion is also needed. (Ajayi, 2021; Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2012).

Role of Assistive Technologies and Trained Professionals in Enhancing Human Kinetics and Health Education in Nigeria

Assistive technologies and trained personnel are crucial in providing quality education and support for individuals with disabilities. These technologies enhance accessibility, personalize learning experiences, promote independence, ensure equal access to information, and improve communication. Trained personnel, such as special education teachers, speech therapists, and occupational therapists, provide specialized instruction and support, develop individualized education plans, and play a critical role in early intervention programs. They also assess progress, provide behavioral support, and maintain inclusive classrooms. These elements empower students to access educational content, participate actively, and achieve their full potential, contributing to reducing barriers and disparities faced by individuals with disabilities in traditional educational settings. In summary, assistive technologies and trained personnel are essential for creating an inclusive and equitable learning environment for individuals with disabilities, empowering them to access educational content, participate actively, and achieve their full potential. (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2012).

Changing Perceptions and Empowering Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria

Negative stereotypes and prejudices surrounding disabilities are deeply ingrained in societies worldwide, including Nigeria. These stereotypes can lead to discrimination, exclusion, and limited opportunities for individuals with disabilities. Common stereotypes include dependency, pity, superhumanity, inferiority, stigmatization, sexualization, fears, and limited representation. Dependency stereotypes assume individuals with disabilities are inherently dependent on others, limiting their autonomy and development. Pity and victimhood stereotypes view them as objects of pity, fostering a sense of powerlessness and inhibiting genuine social inclusion. Superhuman or inspirational stereotypes portray individuals with disabilities as superhuman or inspirational, causing burden and burden. Inferiority stereotypes suggest individuals with disabilities are inferior or incapable, leading to low expectations, limited access to education and employment opportunities, and discrimination. Stigmatization of specific disabilities discourages individuals from seeking help, and limited representation in media and public spaces perpetuates stereotypes (Nwosu, & Eze, 2019).

Dual Burden Faced by Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria

Negative attitudes and stereotypes about disabilities can significantly hinder the participation and inclusion of individuals with disabilities in various aspects of life, including education, employment, and social interactions. These attitudes can lead to lowered expectations, exclusion, isolation, limited educational and employment opportunities, underutilization of skills and talents, psychological impact, limited access to services, lack of empowerment and advocacy, and mental health issues. Individuals with disabilities may internalize these stereotypes, leading to feelings of self-doubt, lowered self-esteem, and reluctance to participate in activities that challenge these stereotypes. Physical and attitudinal barriers may discourage participation, leading to withdrawal from social and community life. Lack of empowerment and advocacy can perpetuate the cycle of exclusion and discouragement. To address these discouraging attitudes, it is crucial to raise awareness, promote education, and foster a culture of inclusivity and acceptance. Encouraging positive role models and representations of individuals with disabilities in media and society can also challenge stereotypes and promote active participation and inclusion.

Critical Analysis of Nigeria's Legal and Policy Frameworks for Disability Rights

Nigeria has implemented several policies and laws to protect the rights of individuals with disabilities, aligning with international standards like the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). These include the National Policy on Disability (2012), Disability Discrimination (Prohibition) Act (2018), Education (National Minimum Standards and Establishment of Institutions) Act (2018), Universal Basic Education (UBE) Act (2004), National Agency for the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons (NAPTIP) Act (2003), Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) Guidelines on Accessibility (2017), and National Health Act (2014). However, challenges remain in effective implementation and enforcement. Ensuring equal opportunities, non-discrimination, and accessibility for individuals with disabilities requires continued advocacy, awareness, and involvement of civil society organizations. (Okonkwo, & Okafor, 2018; Ibrahim, & Ahmed, 2017).

Overcoming the Barriers to Effective Disability Policy Implementation in Nigeria

The implementation of policies protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities in Nigeria faces several challenges. These include inadequate awareness and sensitivity among stakeholders, limited resources and funding, bureaucratic complexity, lack of data and monitoring, inadequate accessibility, attitudinal barriers, lack of capacity building, inadequate



legal remedies, fragmented implementation across states, and limited stakeholder collaboration. These gaps hinder effective enforcement and practical realization of policies, leading to exclusion and exclusion (Ibrahim, & Ahmed, 2017).

In Nigeria, the bureaucratic structure is complex and fragmented, making it difficult to coordinate and implement policies effectively. Accurate data on disability status and needs is often lacking, hindering evidence-based decision-making and monitoring policy outcomes (Okonkwo, & Okafor, 2018). Access to legal remedies is inadequate or cumbersome, and disparities in implementation across states result in unequal access to services and rights.

Impact of Inclusive Health and Physical Education on Nigeria's National Development

Inclusivity in health and physical education is crucial for sustainable development, as it promotes social inclusion, improves health and well-being, enhances human capital, reduces inequality, and promotes community resilience. It also drives infrastructure changes and leads to innovative solutions, resulting in long-term economic benefits.

Inclusion in education, employment, and society at large offers numerous potential economic, social, and health benefits. Economic benefits include increased workforce diversity, enhanced productivity, access to untapped talent, reduced turnover rates, and market expansion. Social benefits include the promotion of equity, enhanced social cohesion, reduced stigmatization and discrimination, empowerment, improved mental health, increased physical activity, enhanced social support, reduced health disparities, positive psychological impact, and prevention of secondary health issues related to disabilities.

Inclusive practices encourage interaction, cooperation, and mutual support among individuals of different backgrounds and abilities, leading to a more accepting and empathetic society. They also help reduce stigmatization and discrimination, leading to greater self-confidence and self-determination. Health benefits include increased physical activity, improved social support, reduced health disparities, positive psychological impact, and prevention of secondary health issues related to disabilities.

Conclusion

Inclusive health and physical education for individuals with disabilities in Nigeria are not only a matter of social justice and human rights but also a path to sustainable development. The existing policies and laws in Nigeria provide a strong foundation for promoting inclusivity, but there are significant gaps and challenges in their implementation. These barriers include a lack of awareness, inadequate resources, bureaucratic complexities, and attitudinal barriers. Overcoming these challenges is essential to reveal the full potential of individuals with disabilities, improve their health and well-being, and contribute to economic and social growth. Inclusivity has a profound impact on workforce diversity, productivity and social cohesion. It reduces stigmatization and discrimination, empowers individuals, and enhances mental and physical health.

Recommendations

To achieve a more equitable, prosperous, and sustainable Nigeria, the following Recommendations were proposed:

1. Organize campaigns and programmes to raise awareness about the importance of inclusivity in health and physical education.
2. Provide sufficient funding and resources to support inclusive health and physical education initiatives.
3. Simplify and streamline processes to facilitate easy access to inclusive health and physical education programmes.
4. Establish robust data collection and monitoring systems to track progress and identify areas for improvement.
5. Provide training and capacity-building programmes for educators, healthcare professionals, and other stakeholders.

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