

# Utilization of Social Emotional Learning by Teachers on Children with Disabilities in Borno: Implication for Inclusive Education

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**Abstract-** This study examined the utilization of Social Emotional Learning by Teachers in schools in Borno State. The study's focus was on inclusive education. Social Emotional Learning is the acquisition of core competencies including one's ability to recognise ones' own emotions, set and achieve goals, recognise the emotions and perspectives of others, constructively, manage interpersonal situations including problem -solving and conflict resolution and maintain positive relationship with others. Inclusive education happens when children with and without disabilities are mainstreamed and taught together. The study focused on the Social Model of Disability. Many students receive special education and related services in a general education classroom where peers without disabilities also spend their days. This is called inclusion. Some services that a student might receive in a mainstream setting include and not limited to direct instruction, a helping teacher, team teaching, co-teaching, an interpreter, education aides, modifications or accommodations in lessons or instruction, or more teachers per student. Participants for this study included 718 teachers randomly sampled out of the 7,165 teachers who received training in Education Crisis Response (ECR) in Maiduguri on Social Emotional Learning. Of the 718 teachers, 481 (67%) were females while 237 (33%) were males. The instrument for data collection was a 48-itemed self-developed questionnaire known as SEL Utilization Questionnaire (SEL-UQ). The overall alpha was  $r = 0.927$  Cronbach alpha. Data revealed that teachers showed willingness to infuse SEL in their day to day class teaching. Although statistical difference was observed between male and female teachers in the extent to which they are comfortable to use SEL. Teachers reported that participatory teaching and feedback are important topics that need priority attention in schools. Most of the students with disabilities were those with visual impairment and physical/motor disability.

**Index Terms-** Social Emotional Learning, Disabilities and Inclusive Education

## I. INTRODUCTION

This study examined the utilization of Social Emotional Learning by Teachers on Children with Disabilities in Borno

state with a view to assessing the implications for Inclusive Education. In this paper, Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is defined as the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitude and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set achievable goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2018). For practical purposes and intent, SEL deals with five goals aimed at achieving the purpose of social and emotional learning. A great deal of students, and pupils have suffered setbacks in schools due to varying degrees of disabilities. As a result, learning becomes difficult to them with attendant consequences of avoiding school, and indulging in various kinds of social vices that are preventable.

Cigman (2010) in addressing social model of disability draws a distinction between medical versus social model of disability by asking a pertinent question, where is disability located? Is it within individuals or society? However, the Disability Discriminate Act 2005 as amended, defines disability as physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on a person's ability to perform normal day-day activities. The act further provides for the protection of children against discrimination in two ways viz; they are entitled not to be treated less favourably than a non-disabled student for a reason relating to their disability unless the school can show that this is justified. And also they are entitled to have reasonable adjustments made with respect to admission arrangements ad in the provision of education and associated services, to prevent them being placed at a substantial disadvantage, unless the refusal to make those adjustments is justified ([www.bedford.gov.uk](http://www.bedford.gov.uk)).

Inclusive education happens when children with and without disabilities are mainstreamed and taught together (Melnick Cook-Harvey, & Darling-Hammond, 2017). The advantage of doing this is to mitigate the consequences of disabilities in terms of social and emotional leading to learning disabilities. The benefits are numerous, Al Hout (2017) affirms that meaningful friendships, respect, better appreciation and understanding of individual differences, and prepared for adult life in a diverse society is created by inclusive classrooms.

It is well known fact that the purpose of education is to make sure that students of all abilities gain access to information,

knowledge and skills which will prepare them to live their lives fruitfully by contributing both to their communities and also to their work places. Thus the main purpose of education becomes increasingly challenging as more and more schools begin to accommodate students with different abilities and backgrounds in the same teaching-learning setup. But as one strives to meet the challenge of inclusive education through the "Education for All" the many concepts that are related to the area of inclusive education required to be studied, analyzed and understood to come to a clearer understanding of the concept of inclusive Education itself (Jimenez & Graf, 2008).

Anecdotal studies have shown that over the last few decades the field of education has witnessed use of many concepts and terms which have often caused much confusion and even controversy. Some of these terms continue to be used in the context of emerging educational philosophy especially in the context of Education for All philosophy. The terms and concepts such as Segregated Education, Regular Education, Special Education, Special Needs Education, Education of the Disabled, Mainstream Education, Integrated Education and Inclusive education have become more important due to their direct bearing on Education Policies for the new millennium. In order to properly understand the concept of Inclusive Education.

## II. SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Researchers are unanimous about social and emotional learning (SEL) and they have argued that it has positive impact on students in schools (Durlak et al, 2011; Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015; Jones et al, 2017). They suggested five (5) key competencies of SEL namely; self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. Working on a Scan project of Reach the Students, Teach the Teachers, Kimberly, Kitil, Hanson-Peterson (2017) reported that as a new area of education, teachers lack appropriate skills on how to impact SEL skills to their students. As such proffered a numbers of recommendations for the inclusion of SEL education in teacher preparatory curriculum. There is growing evidence of positive relationship among SEL, academic performance, and prosocial behaviours. For instance, Durlak, Weissberg, Dymminick, Taylor & Schellinger (2011) reported a study from Meta-analysis, 270, 034 kindergartens through high school students. It showed that SEL participants demonstrated significant improvement in social and emotional skills, attitudes, behaviours and academic performance. The teachers were found to be knowledgeable in the use of SEL programmes in these schools.

The five domains of SEL are explained by Weissberg & Domitrovich (2015) as follows:

1. Competencies in the self-awareness domain involves understanding one's emotions, personal goals and values. In this regard, one's strength and limitations are measured.
2. Self-management domain requires skills and attitudes that facilitate the ability to regulate emotions and behaviours. This includes the ability to delay gratification, manage stress, control impulses, persevere through challenges in order to achieve personal and educational goals.

3. Social awareness domain involves the ability to take the perspective of those with different backgrounds or cultures and to empathize and feel compassion. It also involves understanding social norms for behaviour and recognizing family, school and community resources and supports
4. Relationship skills provide children with the tools they need to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships, and to act in accordance with social norms. Competencies in this domain involves communicating clearly listening actively, cooperating, resisting inappropriate social pressure, negotiating conflict constructively, and seeking help when it is needed.
5. Responsible decision making domain requires the knowledge, skills and attitudes need to make constructive choices about personal behaviour and social interactions across diverse settings. Competencies in this domain requires the ability to consider ethical standards, safety concerns, accurate behavioural norms for risky behaviours, to make realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and to take the health and well-being of self and others into consideration.

## III. TEACHER EXPERIENCES

Accordingly, CASEL has suggested that over 83% of teachers in the US are in need of training in SEL (Schomen-Reichl & Zakrzewski, 2014). It is evident that SEL has not gained grounds in most developing countries and the need for its inclusion. There are many factors that might prevent teachers from caring out SEL programmes in schools. Researches have shown significant impact of teachers experiences in the use of SEL programmes in schools. In one of such studies, 935 teachers were surveyed. Confirmatory factor analysis was done that yielded positive, three reliable scales pertaining to teachers' comfort, commitment and school culture support for the use of SEL in schools (Brackett, Rivers, Elbertson & Peter, 2012). In a similar study, Ee and Quek (2013) found that teachers' perception for infusing SEL in the school curriculum is needful. To this end there seem to be readiness to implement SEL in schools in most countries in order to maximise quality Wanless & Domitrovich (2015) noted. One of the problems that teachers are likely to face in the implementation of the SEL in schools has to do with policy, and school curricula. However, research supports the importance of policies and intervention to infuse SEL in school curricula (Badiyyah, Garner & Owen (2013). This shows that the teachers pedagogy curricula should be all encompassing, besides the subject content of the curricula there is need to infuse the teaching of SEL to children and students in schools. For example, Youngblood (2015) reported four major findings showing that teachers perceived they had contextual support for implementation of SEL, although they encountered challenges in implementing the SEL, but importantly, they reported positive changes in their roles as teachers and above all there was increase awareness of the value of building student-teacher relationship. Tom (2012) reported a study involving 302 teachers in which teacher-student relationships, emotional

regulation, social awareness and interpersonal relationships were found to have positive correlation.

Research has shown that teachers' attitude towards implementing SEL, is dependent on their reaction to the idea of change which could determine if the programme was successful, and if it added to the education of the child as a whole (Holmes, 2017). This is possible because the teachers spend too much time in school with the students and ensure that students' needs are met. It is important, Reynolds (2016) has argued that knowledge and attitude of teachers towards SEL standards can influence the quality of social and emotional learning of students.

#### IV. SOCIAL MODEL OF DISABILITIES

Social model of disability is a way of viewing the world, developed by disabled persons and society (Cigman, 2010). This concept emerged as a result of the views held by people living with disabilities against the medical model of disability. Kretser (2018) argues; social model posits that rather than disability being located as something wrong inside an individual's body, people are actually disabled by the society. For instance, Disability Equality in Education (2005) observes that, we believe that, the problem is not in the child and their impairment, but in the social and attitudinal barriers in the education system. For instance, the education system makes it difficult for some children to function as they are capable of functioning. Where the built environment is not suitable for many students with disabilities especially those with wheelchairs in schools (Jackson, 2018). This is contrary to medical model of disability, which emphasizes what is 'wrong' with a person not what the person needs (<https://www.scope.org.uk> are provided with Social model defines impairment as the loss or limitation of physical, mental or sensory function on a long-term or permanent basis. Essentially, studies have revealed benefits of inclusive education among which are; families' vision of a typical life for their children can come true, they develop a positive understanding of themselves and others and development of friendships. Above all, the children learn important academic skills, and all children learn by being together ([www.pbs.org/parents/education](http://www.pbs.org/parents/education)).

#### V. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Inclusive education according to UNESCO (2015) is a process of strengthening the capacity of education system to reach out to all learners and can thus be understood as a key strategy to achieving Education for All. ESSPIN (2016) observed that inclusive education originally focused on education for children with disabilities. Contrary to this, it appears inclusive education strategies addresses wider exclusive issues such as gender, marginalized groups, etc. In Nigeria, it has remained a herculean task since according to NPE (2015) there was no functional legislation on Special Needs Education. It further explained that the laws that existed were mainly grants-in aid and policies which must be backed up by legislation. In Borno for instance, Children with disability are still battling with blatant educational exclusion. Report from UNESCO (2015) has argued

that children with disabilities account for one third of all out-school children, it provided an unending list including and not limited to, abused children, child labourers, refugees and displaced children, poverty stricken children, child domestic workers, HIV/AIDS orphans, children with disabilities etc. It is lamentable that Nigeria has the highest number of out of school children in the World (10 million) (UNESCO, 2012).

Research reports on inclusive education have indicated that inclusion provides children with disabilities with more challenging learning settings and the chance to watch, learn and interact with more competent peers (Ferguson, 2014). However, there are number of challenges the schools have to contain with. According to Omega (2016) inclusive education is confronted with challenges such as funding, misinformation, lack of qualified personnel, accessibility, educational modification and cooperation. While these remain the obstacles of inclusive education in Nigeria, the issue of legislation is cardinal and must be addressed immediately in order to join the world in ensuring the philosophy of EFA.

#### VI. METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' readiness to infuse the Social Emotional Learning skills in the classes. A quantitative approach was adapted to examine the preparedness of teachers to meet the social emotional needs of their pupils in schools as well as incorporating the inclusive education philosophy of the National Policy of Education.

#### VII. PARTICIPANTS

The participants in this study consisted of a sample of 718 trained teachers from various primary schools in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria. The teachers were drawn from the 7,165 teachers that received Education Crisis Respond (ECR) training. The age range of the teachers was 22-56 years with 237 (33%) as male respondents and 481 (67%) as female respondents. To ensure anonymity, participants were questionnaire did not carry identification in form of name of participant. They were asked their level of educational attainment, level of classes they handle and number of years they have been teaching.

#### VIII. INSTRUMENT

The instrument for data collection was a 44- item self-designed questionnaire. The instrument comprised of six sections; demographic information, familiarity with the SEL skills, inclusive education and preparedness. The instrument has five responses; Strongly agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The overall alpha was  $r = 0.921$  Cronbach's alpha. The reliability for the sub-scales (Social Awareness =  $r. 49$ ; self-management=  $r. 78$ ; social awareness=  $.42$ ; relationship management =  $.76$  and responsible decision making =  $.94$ ).

IX. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

**Table 1: Demographic information of respondents**

Table 1 is demographic information of respondents. It shows the ages of teachers who participated in the SEL training and the level at which they teach using the SEL.

Variable	Male		Female	
	N	%	N	%
22-30 years	80	34	70	15
31-40 years	130	56	289	60
41-56 years	27	11	122	25
Primary 4	7	3	0	0
Primary 5	25	11	3	.6
Primary 6	84	35	51	11
JSS1-3	93	39	248	52
SSS1-3	28	17	179	32

Question 1. How effective do you feel your SEL curriculum or SEL learning experience has been?

**Table 2 is a summary of chi-square analysis on how effective SEL training has been**

Variable:	VE	SE	NE	$\chi^2$	df	P <.05	Decision
Male	176 (75%)	61 (25%)	0 (0%)	3.176	1	0.075	*
Female	326 (68%)	155 (32%)	0 (0%)				

\* Significant.  $\chi^2$  Chi-square value significant at 0.05 degree of freedom.  
 VE= Very effective, SE= Somehow Effective, NE= Not effective

Table 2 is a summary of chi-square analysis requesting teachers to indicate how effective the SEL experience was. Statistical significant difference was observed between male and female teachers. The  $\chi^2$  of 3.176; df 1= P < 0.075 is statistically low. Therefore, the difference between male and female in their opinion of SEL effectiveness could be due to chance in the variability of sample size.

Question 2: How comfortable are you infusing SEL competence during your lessons?

**Table 2: Summary of t-test on application of SEL in Teachers' Classrooms**

Group Statistics		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t-value	Df	P < 0.05
Self-management	MALE	237	19.3755	1.50645	.09785	-11.148	716	.000
	FEMALE	481	20.6798	1.45823	.06649			
Self-management	MALE	237	36.5907	3.15644	.20503	-14.134	716	.000

	FEMALE	481	40.3243	3.40997	.15548			
Social awareness	MALE	237	23.2700	1.97304	.12816			
						-10.750	716	.000
Responsible decision	FEMALE	481	24.9002	1.87928	.08569			
	MALE	237	31.5148	3.09811	.20124			
						-17.679	716	.000
Making Relationship management	FEMALE	481	36.2744	3.52839	.16088			
	MALE	237	42.8354	4.42957	.28773			
						1.983	716	.000
SEL	FEMALE	481	42.0956	4.82865	.22017			
	MALE	237	153.5865	10.68015	.69375			
						-12.399	716	.000
	FEMALE	481	164.2744	11.02722	.50280			

Table 2 shows that teachers in Borno State have different ways of applying the SEL competence in their classrooms when teaching. There is negative statistical significant difference which indicates reversal in the directionality of the effect.

Question 3 Which of the following did you think should have been included in your training?

**Table 3: Distribution of topics that should have been included in SEL training**

Variables	Male		Female		Total			
	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Goal setting	8		3.4		139	28.9		
Leadership training	12		5.1		84	17.5		
Feedback	35		14.8		127	26.4		
Student's wellbeing	61		25.7		101	21.0		
Participatory teaching	59		24.9		29	6.0		
Religious activities	45		19.0		1	0.2		
Print rich class	17		7.2		0	0		
							147	20.5
							96	13.4
							162	22.6
							162	22.6
							88	12.3
							46	6.4
							17	2.4

Table 3: is a summary of chi-square analysis on topics teachers thought should have been included in SEL training. Table shows that teachers that goal setting, students wellbeing and participatory teaching are topics teachers felt should be included in their training programme.

Question 4: To what extent do you feel convenient to include students/pupils with disabilities in your class?

**Table 5. distribution of types of disability by level of classes**

0.Variable/class	Primary 3	Primary 4	Primary 5	Primary 6	JSS1-3	SSS1-3
Reading disability	0	0	1	0	1	1
Writing disability	0	3	7	2	4	8
Physical/motor disability	0	9	7	12	5	19
Visual impairment	0	3	27	13	6	4
Hearing impairment	1	6	4	2	3	3
Others	5	8	0	0	15	1
Total	6	29	46	29	34	36 = 180

Table 4. distribution of pupil/students that got remediation support for various special needs

Table 4 is a frequency of number of students with disabilities attending schools in schools investigated. There were 208 pupils/students with physical disabilities in schools. Teachers were satisfied mainstreaming the pupils along with other students/pupils with no physical disabilities.

#### X. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study was designed to examine the utilization of social emotional learning by teachers in primary and secondary schools

in Borno state with particular emphasis to inclusive education. The study examined 718 teachers who were among those trained in SEL. The researchers inquired from teachers how effective the SEL learning experience was. Statistical significant difference was observed between both sexes in which they agreed that the

SEL experience was worthwhile. Meaning that teachers gained experiences from the training received. This finding was similar to what Youngblood (2015) reported, that teachers perceived contextual support for implementation of SEL, although many challenges were encountered in its implementing at some instances. Relevance of SEL in schools was addressed previously by researchers (Jones, Greenberg, & Crowley, 2015; Jones et al, 2017). They consistently favoured the use of SEL in schools because SEL competencies help students get along with others, and make them enjoy learning outcomes.

Teachers reported how comfortable they are infusing SEL competence during their lessons. There has been copious literature supporting the infusion of SEL in schools 'curriculum ([www.greatergood.edu](http://www.greatergood.edu), & CASEL, 2018). However, societies that are yet to domesticate the Social Emotional learning in their educational system and curriculum have issues infusing it. For instance, the Nigerian National Policy on Education (2015) showed poor implementation of inclusive education which typically in all circumstances is responsible for the none implementation of SEL in schools despite the training received by teachers. Laudable education programmes find ways into our school system without concerted policy directions from the Education bodies (Ministries of Education). Badiyyah, Garner & Owen (2013) supports the importance of policies and interventions to infuse social emotional curricula in schools

Using the Social Model of Disability, boys and girls are almost similar in disability in the schools investigated. However, Visual impairments was high among the students followed by physical/motor disabilities. Most conditions that were categorized as Others were those that were neither visual, physical or motor, nor speech impairments but included such conditions as tardy, untidiness, Attention Deficit/Hyperactive Disorder, Autism, it is interesting to note that no cases of students or pupils with mental disorders was reported by the teachers in this study. Whether such case is available in the study area is a matter that requires investigation. But what that means in this study is that children with such conditions are not allowed to attend schools, let alone being mainstreamed with normal students. This is an issue that requires legislation (Degener, 2016). As Kretser (2018) noted social model of disability posits that rather than disability being located as something wrong inside an individual's body, people are actually disabled by the society. Charmaine (2012) in a research involving disabled persons, concluded that there was a positive attitude towards inclusive education, and suggests that inclusive education heightens the awareness of school community. What is not certain is the legal framework to support inclusive education in Nigeria especially with the abysmal handling of people with disabilities in schools. Important position in inclusive education is supported by Degener (2016) in the sense that the human rights model of disability improves the social model of disability.

## XI. CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers in this study demonstrated interest in infusing Social Emotional Learning Competences in class teaching. They showed high level commitment in implementing SEL skills acquired in their training. They suggested some topics which could have been included in their training to make it all

encompassing. Such skills like feedback, participatory teaching and goal setting. It was recommended among other things that Borno state government should make efforts to legislate the infusion of Social Emotional Learning in the school curriculum, since education is on the concurrent list of the constitution.

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