

TEACHERS' UTILISATION OF TECHNOLOGY-SUPPORTED INSTRUCTION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN FCT ABUJA

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ABSTRACT

This study examined teachers' utilisation of assistive technology-supported instruction for primary school pupils with special needs in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. Specifically, the study investigated the extent of teachers' utilisation of assistive technology-supported instruction, the factors influencing its utilisation, and strategies for enhancing its implementation in inclusive primary schools. A descriptive survey research design was adopted. The population comprised primary school teachers in inclusive schools across the six Area Councils of the FCT, Abuja. Using stratified random sampling, 384 teachers were selected based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analysed using mean and standard deviation. The findings revealed that primary school teachers utilise assistive technology-supported instruction to a high extent (overall mean = 3.04). The study further established that teachers' utilisation is significantly influenced by positive attitudes toward inclusive education, competence in assistive technology, availability of assistive technology resources, administrative support, technical support services, and reliable electricity and internet connectivity (overall mean = 3.00). In addition, respondents identified adequate funding, continuous technical support, collaborative professional practice, regular in-service training, supportive school policies, monitoring and supervision, and improved provision of assistive technology devices as effective strategies for strengthening teachers' utilisation of assistive technology-supported instruction (overall mean = 3.30). The study concluded that although teachers demonstrate substantial utilisation of assistive technology-supported instruction, sustained institutional support, professional development, and investment in assistive technology infrastructure are essential for improving inclusive instructional practices and educational outcomes for pupils with special needs. It was therefore recommended that educational authorities strengthen teacher capacity-building programmes, provide adequate assistive technology resources, and promote collaborative implementation frameworks to enhance inclusive education in

INTRODUCTION

The integration of assistive technology (AT) into classroom instruction has emerged as a critical strategy for advancing inclusive education and enhancing the learning outcomes of pupils with special needs. Across the world, educational systems increasingly acknowledge assistive technology-supported instruction as an effective approach for improving accessibility, participation, communication, and academic performance among learners with diverse disabilities. Nteh et al (2025) believes that technology plays a crucial role in modern education by incorporating digital tools such as interactive simulations, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence enhances learning experiences. By reducing barriers to learning, assistive technology enables pupils with special needs to actively engage in classroom activities and achieve meaningful educational outcomes.

In Nigeria, the implementation of inclusive education is supported by national policies that promote equitable access to quality education for all learners, including those with disabilities. However, despite these policy commitments, the integration and utilization of assistive technology in primary school classrooms remain inadequate. Many teachers face challenges such as limited access to technological resources, inadequate infrastructure, insufficient professional competence, poor funding, and weak institutional support. These constraints continue to hinder the effective adoption of assistive technology-supported instruction, thereby limiting opportunities for pupils with special needs to fully participate in the teaching and learning process.

Inclusive education has become a global educational priority because it seeks to ensure equal access to quality education for all learners regardless of disability, gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status. This commitment is reinforced by international frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which advocates equitable and inclusive quality education for all, and the guidelines of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) on inclusive education (UNESCO, 2020). These global frameworks encourage the adoption of innovative instructional practices, including assistive technology-supported instruction, to eliminate barriers to learning and promote the full participation of learners with disabilities in educational settings.

Assistive technology encompasses a wide range of devices, equipment, software applications, and technological systems designed to enhance the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities and facilitate their effective participation in educational activities. Empirical evidence indicates that the effective integration of assistive technology into classroom instruction contributes significantly to improved academic achievement, enhanced communication skills, increased classroom engagement, greater learner independence, and better social interaction among pupils with disabilities (Alnahdi, 2020; Chukwuemeka & Samaila, 2020).

Globally, advances in educational technology have transformed instructional practices by enabling teachers to personalize learning experiences and accommodate diverse learner needs. Digital learning platforms, screen readers, speech-to-text software, augmentative and

alternative communication devices, interactive whiteboards, text-to-speech applications, hearing assistive devices, and adaptive computer systems have significantly improved educational accessibility in many developed and developing countries. Research consistently demonstrates that assistive technology-supported instruction enhances academic performance, learner motivation, communication skills, social participation, self-confidence, and overall educational outcomes among pupils with disabilities.

The successful implementation of assistive technology-supported instruction depends largely on teachers, who play a pivotal role in selecting, adapting, and integrating appropriate technological tools into classroom teaching (Ainscow, 2020; Mishra & Koehler, 2006). Teachers' knowledge, attitudes, technological competence, pedagogical skills, and willingness to adopt innovative instructional practices determine the effectiveness of assistive technology in promoting inclusive learning environments (UNESCO, 2021). Consequently, continuous professional development and institutional support remain critical components of successful technology integration in special needs education (UNESCO, 2021; European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022).

Teachers play a pivotal role in the successful implementation of assistive technology-supported instruction because they are responsible for selecting, adapting, and integrating appropriate technological tools into the teaching and learning process. Existing literature suggests that teachers' professional competence, technological pedagogical knowledge, attitudes towards inclusive education, and access to continuous professional development are key determinants of the effective utilization of assistive technology in schools (Abba & Rashid, 2020; Adigun, 2021). Consequently, strengthening teachers' capacity to utilize assistive technology is essential for achieving effective inclusive education and improving learning outcomes for pupils with special needs.

In Nigeria, the Federal Government has demonstrated commitment to inclusive education through various educational policies, including the National Policy on Education and the National Policy on Inclusive Education. These policy frameworks advocate equal educational opportunities for learners with disabilities and encourage the integration of information and communication technologies into teaching and learning processes. Despite these policy initiatives, the practical utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction within many Nigerian primary schools remains inadequate. Many teachers continue to rely on conventional instructional methods due to limited access to assistive devices, inadequate training, poor technological infrastructure, inconsistent electricity supply, insufficient funding, and limited technical support services.

The situation is further compounded by disparities between urban and rural schools, where access to digital technologies and specialized instructional resources varies considerably. Although some government agencies, development partners, and non-governmental organizations have introduced assistive technologies into selected schools, widespread

adoption remains relatively low. Consequently, many pupils with special needs continue to experience barriers to participation, limited access to instructional content, and reduced opportunities for achieving their full academic potential.

Recent global educational trends emphasize that the effective utilization of assistive technology requires more than the mere availability of devices. It involves teachers' pedagogical competence, positive attitudes toward inclusive education, supportive school leadership, continuous professional development, technical assistance, and enabling educational policies (UNESCO, 2021; European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022). Effective integration of assistive technology also depends on teachers' technological pedagogical knowledge, institutional support, and access to appropriate training opportunities (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023). Understanding the extent to which teachers utilise assistive technology-supported instruction and the factors influencing its implementation is therefore essential for improving inclusive educational practices in the Federal Capital Territory, Abuja, Nigeria.

This paper examines teachers' utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction for primary school pupils with special needs in FCT Abuja, by synthesizing contemporary evidence from international and national literature. Specifically, the paper explores the concept and categories of assistive technology, teachers' utilization patterns, determinants of technology integration, benefits for learners with special needs, challenges confronting implementation, and evidence-based strategies for enhancing effective utilization within Nigerian primary schools.

The following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do primary school teachers utilize assistive technology-supported instruction in teaching pupils with special needs?
2. What factors influence primary school teachers' utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction for pupils with special needs?
3. What strategies can enhance teachers' utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction in inclusive primary school classrooms?

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. This design is appropriate because it seeks to obtain information from primary school teachers regarding the extent of their utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction, the factors influencing its utilisation, and strategies for improving its implementation. The descriptive survey design enabled the researcher to collect quantitative data from a relatively large population and

describe existing conditions without manipulating any variables. The target population consisted of teachers of primary school pupils enrolled in primary schools in FCT, Abuja, who have inclusive education. Using stratified random sampling, 384 primary school teachers were selected from the six Area Councils based on Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table of sample specification.

RESULTS

Research Question One: To what extent do primary school teachers utilize assistive technology-supported instruction in teaching pupils with special needs, in FCT Abuja?

Table 1: The extent primary school teachers utilize assistive technology-supported instruction in teaching pupils with special needs in FCT Abuja

N=384				
SN	Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
1	I use assistive technology devices during classroom instruction for pupils with special needs.	3.07	.751	High Extent
2	I integrate educational software designed for learners with special needs into my lessons.	3.04	.832	High Extent
3	I use multimedia resources (audio, video, animations) to support pupils with special needs.	3.05	.844	High Extent
4	I employ digital communication tools to facilitate learning among pupils with special needs.	2.96	.878	High Extent
5	I adapt instructional materials using assistive technologies to meet individual learning needs.	3.08	.788	High Extent
6	I use assistive technology to assess the learning progress of pupils with special needs.	3.05	.838	High Extent
7	I regularly encourage pupils with special needs to use assistive technologies during classroom activities.	3.02	.858	High Extent
Sectional Mean		3.04	0.827	

Table 1 presents the extent to which primary school teachers utilize assistive technology-supported instruction in teaching pupils with special needs. The findings indicate that teachers generally make high use of assistive technologies in their instructional practices, as reflected by the sectional mean of 3.04 with a standard deviation of 0.827, which falls within the High Extent decision benchmark.

Specifically, the item "I adapt instructional materials using assistive technologies to meet individual learning needs" recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 0.788$), indicating that teachers highly utilize assistive technologies to modify instructional materials according to learners' diverse educational needs. This was closely followed by the item "I use assistive technology devices during classroom instruction for pupils with special

needs" ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 0.751$), suggesting that teachers frequently employ assistive technology devices during classroom instruction.

Similarly, teachers reported a high extent of using multimedia resources such as audio, video, and animations to support pupils with special needs ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.844$), as well as using assistive technology to assess pupils' learning progress ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.838$). The integration of educational software designed for learners with special needs into classroom lessons also received a high rating ($M = 3.04$, $SD = 0.832$). Furthermore, respondents indicated that they regularly encourage pupils with special needs to use assistive technologies during classroom activities ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 0.858$).

The item with the lowest mean score was "I employ digital communication tools to facilitate learning among pupils with special needs" ($M = 2.96$, $SD = 0.878$). Although it ranked lowest among the items, its mean still falls within the High Extent category, indicating that teachers also make considerable use of digital communication tools to support instruction.

The findings demonstrate that primary school teachers utilize assistive technology-supported instruction to a high extent in teaching pupils with special needs. This suggests that teachers recognize the value of assistive technologies in enhancing instructional delivery, supporting individualised learning, facilitating assessment, and promoting active participation among pupils with special educational needs.

Research Question Two: What factors influence primary school teachers' utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction for pupils with special needs, in FCT Abuja?

Table 2: The factors influence primary school teachers' utilization of assistive technology - supported instruction for pupils with special needs in FCT Abuja

N=384				
SN	Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
8	Availability of assistive technology devices influences my use of assistive technology -supported instruction.	2.99	.817	High Extent
9	My knowledge and skills in assistive technology influence my classroom utilization of assistive technology.	3.03	.814	High Extent
10	Regular professional development programmes encourage my use of assistive technology-supported instruction.	2.94	.858	High Extent
11	Administrative support from the school influences my utilization of assistive technology.	2.98	.856	High Extent
12	Reliable electricity and internet connectivity influence my use of assistive technology-supported instruction.	3.01	.830	High Extent
13	Availability of technical support personnel influences my utilization of assistive technology.	3.00	.830	High Extent
14	Positive attitudes toward inclusive education encourage my use of assistive technology-supported instruction.	3.05	.841	High Extent
Sectional Mean		3.00	0.835	

Table 2 presents the factors influencing primary school teachers' utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction for pupils with special needs. The results reveal that all the identified factors influence teachers' utilization of assistive technology to a high extent, as indicated by the sectional mean of 3.00 and a standard deviation of 0.835.

Among the factors, "Positive attitudes toward inclusive education encourage my use of assistive technology-supported instruction" recorded the highest mean score ($M = 3.05$, $SD = 0.841$), indicating that teachers' favourable perceptions of inclusive education play the most significant role in promoting the use of assistive technologies in the classroom. Similarly, teachers agreed that their knowledge and skills in assistive technology influence their classroom utilization ($M = 3.03$, $SD = 0.814$), while reliable electricity and internet connectivity also contribute to their effective use of assistive technology-supported instruction ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 0.830$).

Furthermore, respondents indicated that the availability of technical support personnel positively influences their utilization of assistive technology ($M = 3.00$, $SD = 0.830$). The availability of assistive technology devices was also identified as an important factor ($M = 2.99$, $SD = 0.817$), followed closely by administrative support from the school ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 0.856$). The factor with the lowest mean score was "Regular professional development programmes encourage my use of assistive technology-supported instruction" ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 0.858$). Despite having the lowest mean, it was still rated as influencing utilization to a high extent, suggesting that respondents consider professional development important, although it is perceived as slightly less influential than the other factors.

The findings indicate that multiple institutional, technological, and personal factors collectively influence primary school teachers' utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction to a high extent. Teachers' positive attitudes toward inclusive education, competence in assistive technology, and access to reliable infrastructure emerged as the most influential factors, while professional development, administrative support, and the availability of technological resources also play important roles in facilitating the effective implementation of assistive technology in inclusive primary school classrooms.

Research Question Three: What strategies can enhance teachers' utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction in inclusive primary school classrooms in FCT Abuja?

Table 3: The strategies can enhance teachers' utilization of assistive technology -supported instruction in inclusive primary school classrooms in FCT Abuja

N=384				
SN	Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
15	Regular in -service training on assistive technology will improve teachers' utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction.	3.27	.788	High Extent
16	Provision of adequate assistive technology devices will enhance classroom utilization.	3.25	.778	High Extent
17	Continuous technical support will encourage teachers to use assistive technology more effectively.	3.31	.766	High Extent
18	Adequate funding for assistive technology resources will improve instructional practices for pupils with special needs.	3.33	.714	High Extent
19	School management should develop policies that promote the use of assistive technology in inclusive classrooms.	3.29	.747	High Extent
20	Collaboration among teachers, special educators, and ICT personnel will improve teachers' utilization of assistive technology - supported instruction.	3.33	.714	High Extent
21	Regular monitoring and supervision of assistive technology integration will promote effective utilization in inclusive primary school classrooms.	3.29	.735	High Extent
Sectional Mean		3.30	0.749	

Table 3 presents respondents' views on the strategies that can enhance teachers' utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction in inclusive primary school classrooms in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The findings indicate that all the proposed strategies were rated as effective to a high extent, as evidenced by the sectional mean of 3.30 and a standard deviation of 0.749.

Among the strategies, adequate funding for assistive technology resources to improve instructional practices for pupils with special needs and collaboration among teachers,

special educators, and ICT personnel to improve teachers' utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction recorded the highest mean scores ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 0.714$, respectively). This suggests that respondents consider adequate financial support and interdisciplinary collaboration as the most effective strategies for promoting the integration of assistive technology in inclusive classrooms.

Similarly, continuous technical support for teachers was highly rated ($M = 3.31$, $SD = 0.766$), indicating that ongoing technical assistance is essential for helping teachers use assistive technologies effectively. School management's development of policies that promote the use of assistive technology ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.747$) and regular monitoring and supervision of assistive technology integration ($M = 3.29$, $SD = 0.735$) were also perceived as important strategies for sustaining effective utilization.

Furthermore, respondents agreed that regular in-service training on assistive technology would improve teachers' utilization ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.788$), while the provision of adequate assistive technology devices to schools ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 0.778$) was also considered an effective strategy. Although this item recorded the lowest mean score among the strategies, it was still rated as being effective to a high extent, indicating strong agreement on its importance.

The findings demonstrate that respondents strongly believe that enhancing teachers' utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction requires a combination of adequate funding, collaborative professional support, continuous technical assistance, supportive school policies, regular monitoring, professional development, and the provision of assistive technology devices. The uniformly high ratings across all items suggest a broad consensus that these strategies are essential for strengthening inclusive education practices and improving learning outcomes for pupils with special needs in primary schools in the FCT, Abuja.

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The study further revealed that teachers' utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction is influenced to a high extent by several institutional, technological, and personal factors. Positive attitudes toward inclusive education emerged as the strongest influencing factor, followed by teachers' knowledge and skills in assistive technology, reliable electricity and internet connectivity, technical support, availability of assistive technology devices, administrative support, and professional development programmes.

This finding agrees with the reviewed literature, which emphasizes that the successful implementation of assistive technology depends not merely on the availability of devices but also on teachers' technological competence, pedagogical knowledge, positive attitudes, institutional support, and enabling educational policies (UNESCO, 2021; European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education, 2022). The Organisation for Economic Co-

operation and Development (2023) similarly maintains that effective technology integration requires teachers' technological pedagogical knowledge, continuous training opportunities, and supportive school environments.

The finding also corroborates the work of Abba and Rashid (2020) and Adigun (2021), who reported that teachers' competence, professional knowledge, and favourable attitudes toward inclusive education are critical determinants of successful assistive technology implementation. Similarly, the challenges identified in the literature—including inadequate infrastructure, poor funding, inconsistent electricity supply, insufficient training, and limited technical support—highlight the importance of addressing these factors to improve teachers' utilization of assistive technologies in Nigerian primary schools.

Strategies for Enhancing Teachers' Utilization of Assistive Technology-Supported Instruction

The study established that respondents strongly agreed that several strategies could enhance teachers' utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction, with adequate funding and collaboration among teachers, special educators, and ICT personnel emerging as the most highly rated strategies. Other important strategies included continuous technical support, supportive school policies, regular monitoring and supervision, regular in-service training, and the provision of adequate assistive technology devices.

These findings are in agreement with the literature reviewed, which consistently emphasizes that sustainable integration of assistive technology requires continuous professional development, institutional support, adequate funding, effective leadership, technical assistance, and collaborative practices among education stakeholders. UNESCO (2021) and the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2022) argue that successful inclusive education depends on comprehensive support systems that combine teacher training, supportive policies, and continuous technical assistance. Likewise, Abba and Rashid (2020) stressed that strengthening teachers' competencies through regular professional development is essential for effective implementation of inclusive education, while Adigun (2021) emphasized the importance of building teachers' confidence and preparedness to integrate assistive technologies into classroom practice.

Furthermore, the finding reinforces the literature's position that adequate financial investment and collaborative professional networks are indispensable for overcoming barriers such as inadequate instructional resources, poor infrastructure, and insufficient technical expertise. By providing sustained funding, effective policy implementation, continuous monitoring, and multidisciplinary collaboration, educational authorities can significantly improve teachers' capacity to utilize assistive technology-supported instruction, thereby enhancing inclusive educational practices and learning outcomes for pupils with special needs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that primary school teachers in inclusive schools in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, utilize assistive technology-supported instruction to a high extent in teaching pupils with special needs. Teachers employ various assistive technologies to adapt instructional materials, facilitate classroom instruction, assess learners' progress, and promote active participation among pupils with special educational needs. This demonstrates a growing recognition of the importance of assistive technology in improving inclusive instructional practices.

The study further concludes that teachers' utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction is significantly influenced by several interrelated factors, including positive attitudes toward inclusive education, teachers' knowledge and competence in assistive technology, reliable electricity and internet connectivity, availability of technical support personnel, administrative support, and the availability of assistive technology resources. These factors collectively determine the effectiveness of technology integration in inclusive primary school classrooms.

Finally, the study concludes that improving teachers' utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction requires a comprehensive approach involving adequate funding, continuous professional development, provision of assistive technology devices, technical support services, effective school policies, regular monitoring, and collaboration among teachers, special educators, and ICT professionals. Strengthening these areas will enhance inclusive instructional practices and improve educational outcomes for pupils with special needs in primary schools within the FCT, Abuja.

Based on the findings and the objectives of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Educational authorities should provide regular capacity-building programmes such as workshops, seminars, and in-service training on assistive technology-supported instruction to enhance teachers' knowledge, skills, and confidence in integrating assistive technologies into inclusive classroom teaching.
2. Government and school administrators should improve the availability of assistive technology resources by providing adequate assistive technology devices, reliable electricity supply, internet connectivity, and technical support personnel to facilitate effective classroom utilization.
3. Schools should encourage collaborative professional practice by fostering partnerships among classroom teachers, special educators, ICT personnel, parents, and other relevant stakeholders to promote the effective implementation and sustainable utilization of assistive technology-supported instruction for pupils with special needs.

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