

Innovations

A Historical Examination of the Evolution of Kwara State School For special Needs, Ilorin, Nigeria (1999-2020)

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Abstract: *Education of people with special needs was not initially recognised in Nigeria because the people with special needs were grossly discriminated against. However, the need to give them education that is suitable to their needs was necessary. Hence, the establishment of special education schools in Nigeria. Therefore, this study examined the historical evolution of Kwara State School of Special Needs Nigeria from 1999 to 2020. In this study, trends in the enrolment of students, graduation rate, staff employment rate, methods of educating students with special needs, roles of the government, non-governmental organizations and philanthropists in the education of students with special needs, and challenges faced by Kwara State School of Special Needs were all examined. The study adopted a historical research design of survey type. The total population of this study comprises the Principal, Vice-principals, Head Teacher and teachers in the Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin, Kwara State. The instruments that were used for this research were researcher-designed questionnaire and official documents. The descriptive percentage, mean and rank order were used to answer the research questions raised. Findings of this study revealed that students enrolment rate in Kwara State School of Special Needs from 1999 to 2020 increased steadily.*

Keywords: *Historical Examination, Evolution, School for Special Needs, Special Education.*

Introduction

Education is the base upon which everyone builds a prosperous life and successful career. This applies to everyone including those with unique needs. All societies across the world have individuals with unique needs. Even both inside and outside of educational institutions, there are individuals with unique needs that

require special educational needs and related services to reach their full potential. These individuals have different disabilities which according to Adebisi (2013), include; behavioural issues, learning disabilities, intellectual retardation, physical and health issues, aphasia, hearing loss, and vision impairment.

Educational provision for special needs people really lagged behind the education of their non-handicapped counterparts in every country of the world. It dawned on humanity rather slowly that people with physical, mental or emotional disabilities could have some residual potentialities that could be harnessed to enable them lead fairly independent if not completely independent lives (Heward, 2004). There is no gainsaying the fact that persons with special needs have travelled very turbulent roads from days of the ancient Greeks like Aristotle who believed that those who were born deaf for example, were of senseless and cannot reason. The Spartans who placed so much importance on physical abilities and agility, killed off children who were malformed or who deviated from those they considered normal. Many of such handicapped children were hidden by their parents for a long time until they could no longer do so and had to take them to the bush and abandoned to die a slow death (Olawuyi, 2018).

The trend in the development of special education in Nigeria actually had a lot of similarities with what happened in other parts of the world. It is pertinent to note that the early moves to educate the persons with special need were made by missionaries, individual and private organizations. As regard the government involvement, the Lagos Education Act of 1957 simply proclaimed that special education be established in Lagos when it becomes necessary, while the 1964 Education Law of Northern Nigeria only stated that special schools might be established for persons with special need if the Ministry of Education considered it necessary. Aside from the flimsy pronouncements by the governments, most of the early schools for the persons with special need were established by Christian Missionaries and later became grant-aided by the government. Such schools include the School for Blind Children, Gindiri; the Ibadan Mission School for the Deaf; the Nigeria Training Centre for the Blind, Ogbomoso and some others.

Olawuyi (2018) submitted that active government involvement in the provision of special education in Nigeria dates back to October, 1974 when the then Head of State declared as follows: Two other important aspect of education programme are adult education and special education for the physical handicapped. Adequate provisions have been made to ensure that people falling within these categories are well cared for. For this reason, a Federal Teachers' College for

Special Education now Federal College of Education Special, Oyo came into being in 1977

The educational provision for children with special or unique needs in Nigeria was dated back to 1936 when Oji Rivers Rehabilitation Centre was established by Dr. T. D. F. Money. The primary goal was to treat leprosy patients including those who were blind, deaf, or physically disabled but eventually, the necessity of providing them with an education became essential. In 1938, the Church Missionary Society established a special education centre in Oji Rivers with an initial intake of 123 pupils. Also, a special school for the blind was founded by the Roman Catholic Mission in 1960 in Oji Rivers. This was followed in 1961 by a school for the deaf, established by A. F. C. Savory. As far back as 1933, Kano Province had established a reformatory school in Kano to cater for juvenile offenders sentenced by the courts. It is noteworthy that during this period, there was a clear distinction between special schools for the handicapped and rehabilitation centres (Kurian, 2017).

It can be deduced from the foregoing that early missionary bodies in Nigeria took the lead in the provision of education to the people with exceptional needs. It was not until the seventies that various governments in Nigeria started establishing schools for the children with special needs (Adebisi, 2007). Some of the schools that were established by government are Kwara State School for the Handicapped, Ilorin, Ondo State School for the Blind, Ondo State School for the Deaf, School for the Handicapped Minna, Niger State and so on (Adeshina, 2001).

The Kwara State School for Handicapped was founded on March 1, 1974. This, according to a former principal of the school, Hajia Birinade Raji, was in response to the government's interest in providing education for the disabled. Historically, what was known as Kwara State School for the Handicapped, began with ten deaf pupils in March 1974, then as a state school for the deaf located at Oke-Aluko opposite Owoniboy's motors Taiwo Road, Ilorin. In September 1976, a blind section was added, with only four blind pupils and was then re-named, Kwara State School for the Deaf-and-Blind. The four blind pupils were taught by blind teachers - Mr. Adeshina and Mrs. Victoria Ojo. The Mentally Retarded section was later added in September, 1982 and that changed the name to Kwara State School for the Handicapped Ilorin. The school later was upgraded to run secondary education in 1980 by Adamu Atta, the then executive Governor of Kwara State. Again, the school was re-named as Kwara State School for Special Needs in compliance with the directives of the Federal Ministry of Education (Alade, 2005).

The school relocated to its present permanent site, opposite Kwara Television along Old Jebba Road, Ilorin in September 1979. Pupils with speech impairments, hearing impairments, intellectual disabilities, visual impairments, and combined disabilities (blindness and deafness) were admitted to the school. The school runs

normal national curricula for both primary and secondary education and it enjoys the reputation of being the first school running residential secondary for the deaf in Nigeria (Okeke, 2001). This is in addition to running full-fledged primary schools for the deaf, blind and mentally retarded children. Furthermore, the school runs rehabilitation programme for blind adults, who after receiving trainings could be gainfully and usefully employed in the society.

However, a large number of Nigerians have not benefited from special education programmes, primarily due to insufficient fund, negative perceptions, cultural beliefs, and teacher qualifications. It is also impossible to ignore the deeply embedded societal attitudes regarding individuals with disabilities and the supposed mistreatment of these individuals by administrators. According to Adebisi (2004), cultural values still have an impact on how special education policies are developed and carried out. Notwithstanding the Federal Government's 2014 National Policy on Education, which mandates that all Nigerian children receive a high-quality education, certain stakeholders continue to maintain unfavorable views of individuals with disabilities.

Statement of the Problem

Giving a historical account of different educational systems and institutions is quite germane. However, the attention of many researchers have always been on the conventional educational systems or institutions rather than special education programmes particularly education of people with special needs. Hence, the scanty studies on the education of people with special needs in different parts of Nigeria. This study, therefore looked into the historical development of Kwara State School for special needs in Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria

Some of the studies being carried out on education of people with special or unique needs in Nigeria include: Auwalu (2015) who conducted a research on educating special needs children in the regular school: the challenges and opportunities for Nigeria. The study found that unfavorable environmental conditions and policy implementation are major issues for special needs schooling. Adebisi, Jerry, Rasaki and Igwe (2014) worked on the barriers to special needs education in Nigeria and found out that special needs education in Nigeria lacks support of legislation, administrative barriers and political will. Neena (2018) carried out a research on problems and challenges of inclusive education for students with special needs. The researcher found that the challenges encountered by the people with disability when going to schools and public locations are the absence of wheelchairs, ramps in school buildings, shopping centers, parks and playgrounds, restrooms, and public transit. Mutugi (2018) in his work titled "Learning Challenges Faced by Special Needs Education Learners in Public Primary Schools in Mvita Division, Mombasa

County, Kenya". The study found that many special needs children in the community were disadvantaged since the majority of schools in Mvita Division lacked sufficient physical infrastructure. However, to the best of researchers' knowledge, none of the previous researchers have examined the historical evolution of Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin, Nigeria (1999-2020). Thus, this is a research gap which this study filled partially.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this research is to examine the historical evolution of Kwara State School for Special Needs Nigeria from 1999- 2020. Specifically, the study examine:

- i. Trends in the enrolment of students of Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999 to 2020.
- ii. Trends in the graduation rate of students of Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999 to 2019.
- iii. Trends in staff employment rate in Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999 to 2019.
- iv. Methods of Educating Students in Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999 to 2019.
- v. Roles of the government, non – governmental organizations and philanthropists towards the growth of Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999 to 2019.
- vi. Challenges faced by Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999 to 2019.

Research Questions

- i. What were the trends in the enrolment of students of Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999 to 2019?
- ii. What were the trends in the graduation rate of students of Kwara State for Special Needs from 1999 to 2019?
- iii. What were the trends in the rate of employment of staff in Kwara State School for Special Needs 1999 to 2019?
- iv. What were the methods of educating students in Kwara State for Special Needs Ilorin from 1999 to 2019?
- v. What were the roles of the government, non-governmental organizations and philanthropists towards the growth of Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999 from 2019?
- vi. What were the challenges faced by Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999 from 2019?

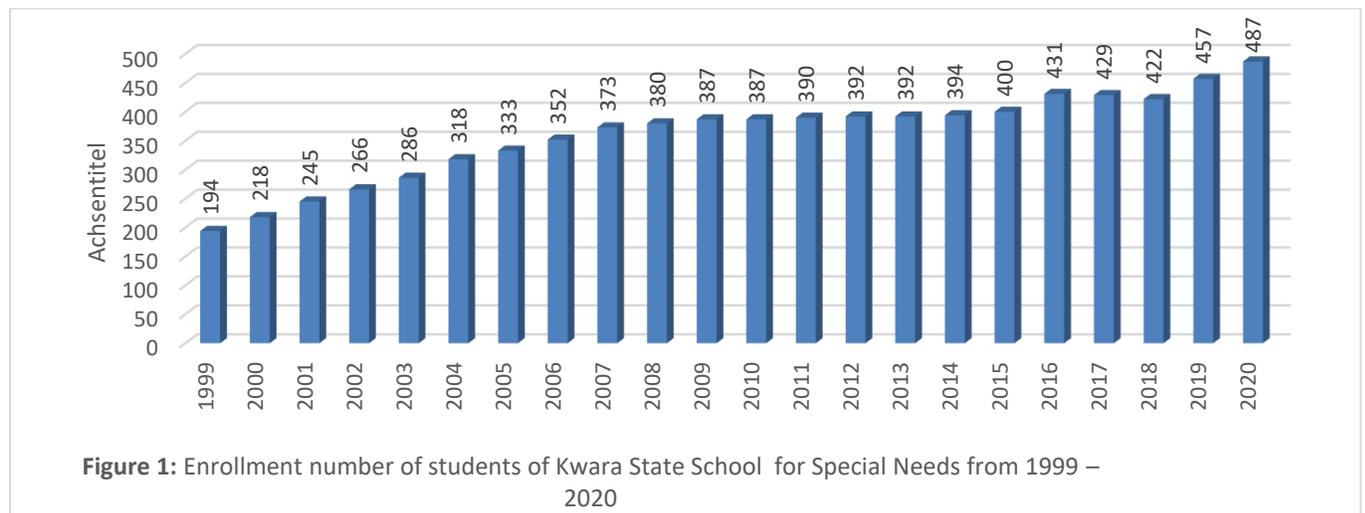
Methodology

The study used a historical research design of survey-style to examine and clarify historical occurrences pertaining to Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin, Nigeria. The total population of this study comprises the Principal, Vice-principals, Head-teachers and teachers in the Kwara State School for Special Needs Ilorin, Kwara State. While the target population were one (1) principal, three (3) Vice-Principals, three (3) Head-teachers, and sixty-one (61) teachers from the three units of the school. These units are: visual impaired; hearing impaired and Intellectual challenged units. Purposive sampling technique was used to choose the Principal, Vice-principals and Head-teachers while random sampling technique was used to select the teachers in Kwara State School for Special Needs Ilorin, Kwara State. A researcher-designed questionnaire with the reliability co-efficient of 0.67 and pro forma were employed for data collection in this study. The descriptive statistics of the percentage, mean, frequency counts and bar chart were used to analyze the data that were gathered.

Findings

Question One: What were the trends in the enrollment of students of Kwara State School of Special Needs from 1999 – 2020?

The enrolment rate of Kwara State School of Special Needs from 1999 – 2020 were collected, collated and subjected to descriptive statistics of bar-chart. The statistics is presented in Figure 1.



As revealed in Figure 1, there were upward trends in the enrolment rate of students of Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999 - 2020. The figure shows that 194 students were enrolled in the school in the year 1999 and rose to 218, 245, 266, 487 in the year 2000, 2001, 2002, 2020 respectively.

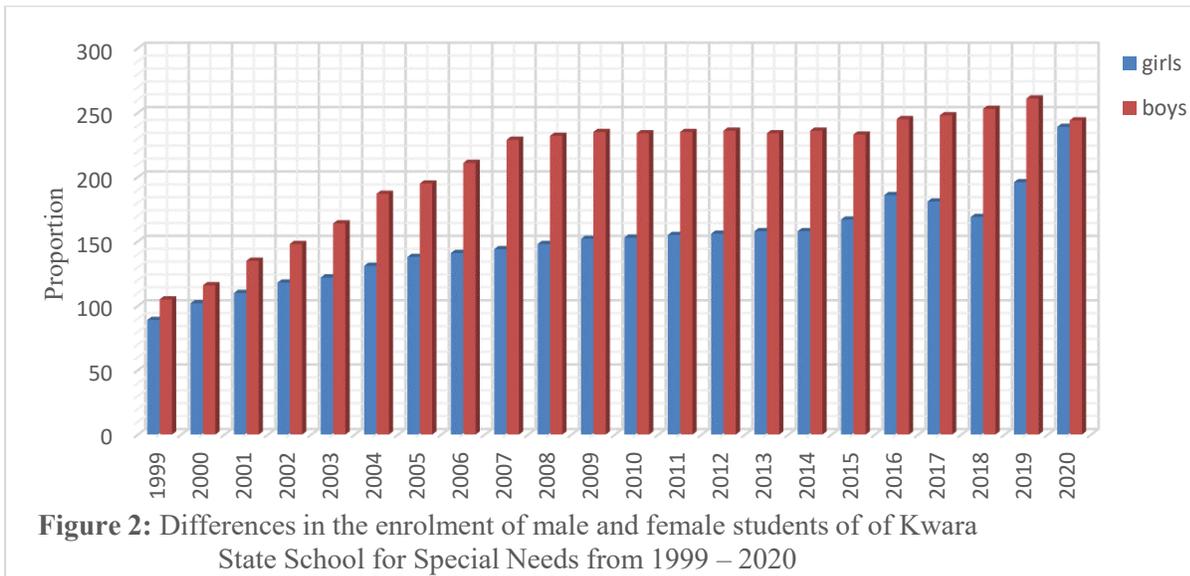


Figure 2 presents the differences in the enrolments of male and female students of Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999 – 2020. It could be observed from Figure 2 that the numbers of males are greater than their female counterparts and the number of males enrolled keep increasing steadily from 1999 to 2010. However, it remained stagnant from 2010 to 2015 and began to rise from 2016 but slightly decrease in 2020. In the same vein, there has been an increase in the number of females students enrolled from 1999 to 2020 despite being lower than that of males.

Question Two:What were the trends in the graduation rate of students of Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999 – 2020

The trends of students’ graduation of students of Kwara State for Special Needs, Ilorin from 1999 – 2020 is presented in figure 3

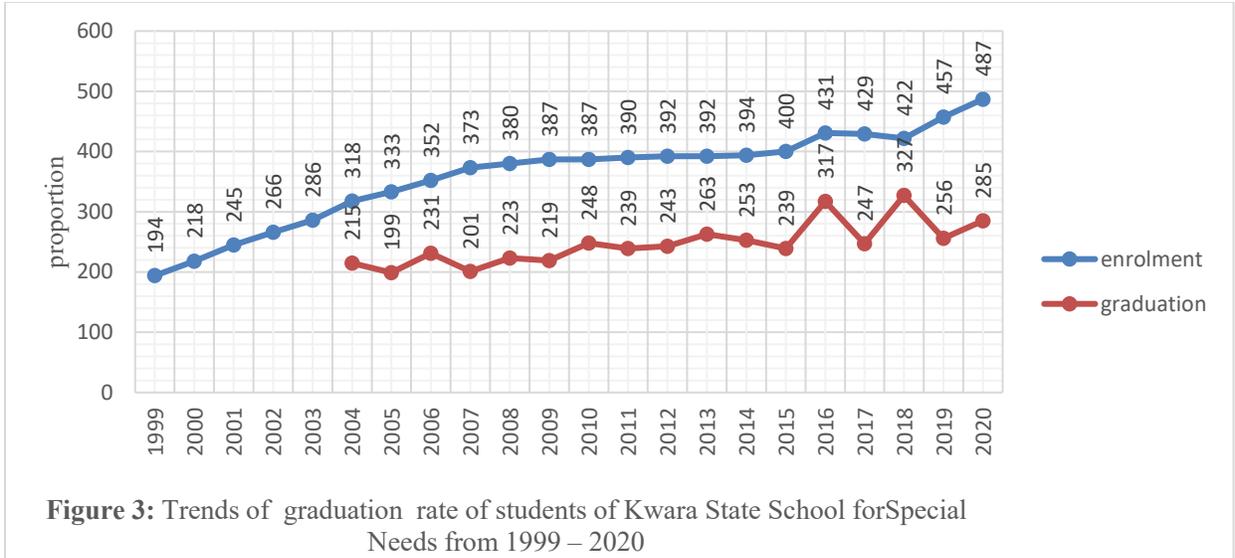
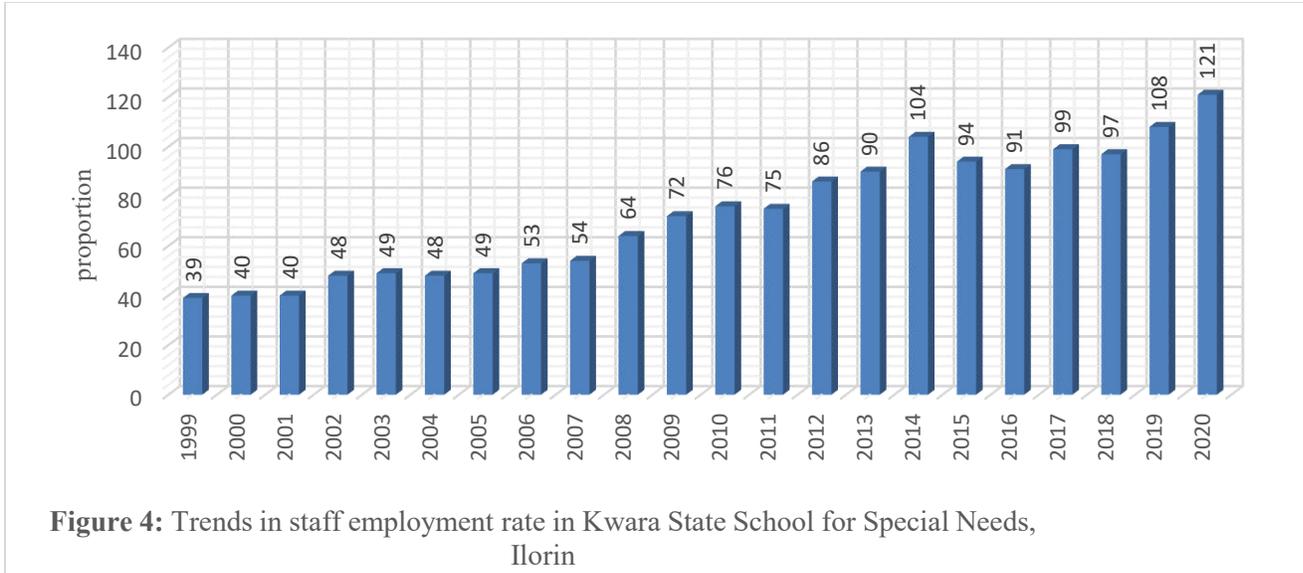


Figure 3 revealed the graduation rate of students of Kwara State School of Special Needs. It could be seen that out of 218 students who enrolled in the year 2000, 199 students were observed to have graduated in the year 2005 which is their graduation year. Thus, fewer students were observed to graduate every academic year when taken into cognizance the actual number of enrollment. In 2015, 400 students enrolled and by their graduation year in 2020, 285 students graduated. This simply shows a sharp drop in the graduation rate in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin in year 2020.

Question Three: What were the trends in the rate of employment of staff in Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999-2000?

The trends of staff employment rate in Kwara State School for Special Needs is presented in Figure 4



As revealed in Figure 4, the number of staff employed in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin, Nigeria from the years 1999 to 2020 steadily increased. The Figure shows that there were 39 staff in the school in the year 1999 and this rose to 76 in 2010 and 121 in 2020.

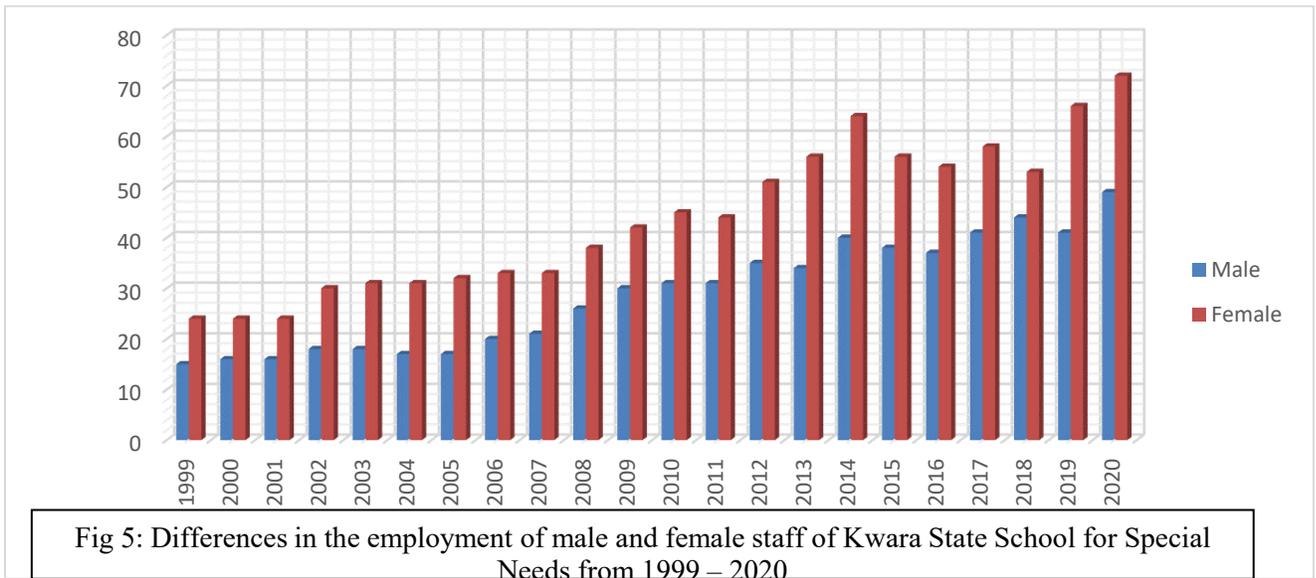


Figure 5 presents the differences in the employment of male and female staff of Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999-2020. It could be observed from Figure 5 that the numbers of female staff are greater than their male counterparts. The number of female staff employed increases with slight fluctuations from 1999 to 2020. In the same vein, there has been an increment in the number of males staff employed from 1999 to 2020 despite being lower than their female counterpart.

Question Four:What were the methods of educating students in Kwara State School for Special Needs Ilorin from 1999-2019?

The questionnaire items were structured in a four-response-type, items whose mean scores were closed to 4.0, 3.0, 2.0 and 1.0 were remarked always, sometimes, rarely and never respectively

Table 1:Methods of Educating Students in Kwara State for Special Needs, Ilorin

S/ N	Teaching Methods	Mean	Rank	Remark
1.	Demonstrative method	3.73	1 st	Always
2.	Play-way method	3.68	2 nd	Always
3.	Discussion method	3.63	3 rd	Always
4.	Use of Braille	3.37	4 th	Sometime s
5.	Socratic method	3.34	5 th	Sometime s
6.	Story telling	3.02	6 th	Sometime s
7.	Team-teaching method	3.02	7 th	Rarely
8.	Field trip method	1.94	8 th	Rarely

As shown in Table 1, items ranked 1st to 3rd were methods that were always used in teaching students with special needs; items ranked 4th and 5th were sometimes adopted while items ranked 7th and 8th were rarely used for teaching students with special needs. Thus, demonstration, play-way and discussion methods were always used while braille and story-telling were sometimes used for students n Kwara State School Special Needs, Ilorin. However, team-teaching and field trip methods were rarely used for teaching students in Kwara State School for Special Needs Ilorin.

Question Five: What were the roles of the government, non-governmental organizations and philanthropists towards the growth of Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999 - 2019?

A cut-off score of 2.50 was used as the baseline for determining participants' responses since the questionnaire items were structured in a four-response-type.

Therefore, items found with mean scores equal or above 2.50 were affirmed as the roles of government, non-governmental organizations and philanthropists towards the growth of Kwara State School for Special Needs while items with mean scores below 2.50 were remarked otherwise.

Table 2: Roles of the government, non-governmental organizations and philanthropists towards the growth of Kwara State School for Special Needs

SN	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remark
1.	Adequate fund	2.78	1.28	Affirmed
2.	Feeding	2.74	1.38	Affirmed
3.	Accommodation	2.59	1.41	Affirmed
4.	Provision of staff	2.74	1.73	Affirmed
5.	Payment of teaching and non – teaching staff salaries	3.23	2.03	Affirmed
6.	Payment of examination fees such as NECO	2.97	1.54	Affirmed
7.	Provision of social Amenities such as electricity, water system etc.	2.83	1.44	Affirmed
8.	Payment of school fees	2.66	2.13	Affirmed
9.	Provision of educational materials	2.71	2.08	Affirmed
10	Building and renovation of mosque, hall, classroom, dormitory, classrooms, hostels etc.	2.59	1.28	Affirmed
11	Provision of some health care facilities	2.67	1.38	Affirmed

As revealed in Table 2, the mean scores of all the items are above 2.50. Hence, provision of adequate fund, feeding, accommodations, provision of staff, payment of teaching and non – teaching staff salaries and examination fees, provision of social amenities such as electricity, water system etc., payment of school fees, provision of educational materials, Building and renovation of mosque, hall, classroom, dormitory, classrooms, hostels etc., provision of some health care facilities were roles being played by the government, non-governmental organizations and philanthropists towards the growth of Kwara State School for Special Needs.

Question Six: What were the challenges faced by Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999-2020?

A cut-off score of 2.50 was used as the baseline to determine respondents’ responses because the questionnaire items were structured in a four-response-type. Therefore, items found with mean scores equal or above 2.50 were affirmed as the challenges faced by Kwara State School for Special Needs while items with mean scores below 2.50 were remarked otherwise.

Table 3:Challenges faced by Kwara State School of Special Needs

SN	Items	Mean	S.D.	Remark
1.	There is paucity of quality teachers to handle different areas of disabilities.	2.72	1.28	Affirmed
2.	There is unavailability of modern learning aids in Kwara State School for Special Needs.	2.69	2.13	Affirmed
3.	Teachersof Kwara State School for Special Needs are not well and promptly paid.	2.07	1.27	Disaffirme d
4.	There is inadequate in-service training and support for teachersin Kwara State School for Special Needs.	3.21	1.52	Affirmed
5.	Policy issues	2.77	2.19	Affirmed

As revealed in Table 3, the mean scores of most of the items are above 2.50. Thus, paucity ofquality teachers to handle different areas of disabilities, unavailability of modern learning aids, policy issues and inadequate in-service

training and support for teachers were challenges faced by Kwara State School of Special Needs.

Discussion of the Findings

Findings of the study revealed that there were upward trends in enrolment of Kwara State School for Special Needs from 1999-2020. This finding substantiates Adebisi (2004) who submitted that the number of special needs schools have been established and thus gives more access to the education of students of special needs as there are corresponding rise in enrolment figures because of growth in student's population.

Also, another findings of this study revealed that there was a drop in the graduation rate. Fewer students were observed to graduate every academic year especially when taken into cognizance their actual enrolment. In the same vein, there has been an increment in the number of male students employed from 1999 to 2020 despite being lower than that of female students. This corroborates Cheryl Lederle of the Library of congress (2011) who submitted that the rate of graduation amidst students with special learning problems is not encouraging.

Further, a findings showed that the number of staff employed in the Kwara State School for Special Needs schools from the years 1999 to 2020 steadily increased. This finding substantiates Okuoyibo (2006) who submitted teachers' deployment in schools for special needs increased over the year.

More so, another findings of this study revealed that demonstration, play-way and discussion methods were always used while braille and storytelling were sometimes used for students in the Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin. However, team-teaching and field trip methods were rarely used. This results in line with the study of Quandarymat (2013) who discovered that teachers avoid modern teaching methods in teaching students with special needs. Furthermore, it was found that the provision of adequate fund, payment of external examination fee, provision of social amenities such as electricity, water system among others were the roles being played by government, non-governmental organizations and philanthropists towards the growth of Kwara State School of Special Needs

Lastly, findings of this study revealed that there were paucity of quality teachers to handle different areas of disabilities, unavailability of modern learning aids, poor supervision and inadequate in-service training and support for teachers were challenges faced by Kwara State School for Special Needs between 1999 and 2020. This is consistent with the findings of Adebisi et al. (2014) who discovered that unavailability of facilities, poverty and policy issues some of the barriers to special needs education in Nigeria.

Conclusion

This research provides a comprehensive historical examination of the Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin. The findings indicated that the school has undergone significant transformations and developments over time. This evolution is characterized by changes in curriculum, teaching methods, infrastructure, policies, and the inclusion of more diverse special needs students. It can be inferred that the evolution of the school was influenced by various government initiatives and policies aimed at improving special needs education in Kwara State. These policies include inclusive education policies, funding allocations, and reforms in the education system. This research suggests that the evolution of the Kwara State School for Special Needs has positively impacted the students. The improved facilities, specialized teaching methods, and inclusive policies have likely contributed to enhanced learning opportunities and better outcomes for the special needs students.

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