

ATTITUDES OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS IN  
THE UNITED STATES TOWARD  
HANDICAPPED PERSONS

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## CHAPTER I

### BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The study of attitudes toward the handicapped is not a new phenomenon. Hewett and Forness (1977) stated that the attitudes toward and the treatment of handicapped individuals have been part of history for the past three thousand years. Fleming (1980) stated that the search for roots and beginnings is really the quest for continuation. He believed that human beings cannot know where they are going unless they know where they have been; they cannot understand the present until they know the past; and the past is never really discarded, only expanded, and eventually transcended. History, Fleming (1980, p. 1), continued "holds up the mirror to humanity, reflecting the present and future as well as the past."

It is important to look briefly at the history of attitudes toward the handicapped. Hewett and Forness (1977) recorded four historical periods that have been particularly relevant to the plight of the handicapped over the centuries. The first period is the threat to survival due to harsh treatment by the physical and social environments.

The second period is superstition; the third period is science; and the fourth is service, the direct opposite to threat to survival. Service (Hewett and Forness, 1977), encompasses care, human treatment and social acceptance afforded to handicapped persons. Each of the four periods corresponds with different treatments and levels of social

acceptance afforded the handicapped.

The period of survival is manifested by a harsh physical environment, infanticide, eugenics, harsh treatment, and exile. This happened mainly during the primitive and ancient period. According to Scheerenberger (1983, p. 12), "Aristotle in his Politics wrote, as to the exposure and rearing of children, let there be a law that no deformed child shall live." Children, slaves, and the poor were particularly susceptible to ill treatment at various times in ancient Greece. The Greek and Roman attitudes promoted the practice of ruthless eugenics (no contact between the handicapped and superior citizens). Every child was vulnerable to his father's right of infanticide and to the judgment of a state council. Infants who appeared defective were thrown from a cliff on Mount Taygetus and left to die on the jagged rocks below. The survival of the fittest doctrine, according to Hewett and Forness (1977) continued through early life, with Spartan infants experiencing much discomfort and exposure. During this period, some scholars, philosophers and physicians of Greece and Rome tried to alter attitudes away from superstition and demonology.

According to Zilboorg and Henry (1941), one such person was Hippocrates, the medical man studying and caring for the physically ill. With his medical background, Hippocrates challenged the belief that epilepsy, the sacred disease as it was called in those days, was divinely caused. Hippocrates told the people that epilepsy appeared to him to be no more divine or sacred than other disease and, if one cut open the head of a epileptic person, one could find the brain humid, full of sweat. In this way it might be seen that it was not a god which injured the body but a disease.

According to Hewett and Forness (1977), Plato, who was Hippocrates' contemporary, ordered that if anyone was insane let him not be seen openly in the city, but let the relatives of such a person watch over him in the best manner and, if they were negligent, let them pay a fine. The children of better parents were carried to the creche and reared in the care of nurses living apart in a certain quarter of the city. Those of inferior parents were hidden away and kept secret.

It could be fairly stated that the attitudes toward the handicapped in ancient Rome and Greece consisted of infanticide and exposure to death. The father had power over his children's lives, death and slavery. Children were abandoned and the professional beggars collected them, maimed them and used them to beg for alms from charitable passers-by.

During the Middle Ages (AD 400-1500), the handicapped received more humanitarian care. This was possible because of the rise of deep religious conviction throughout the world. Hewett and Forness, (1977) stated that during this period, the pendulum swung toward survival and service (exploitation, humane treatment, and social acceptance). Gearheart and Weishan (1976) wrote that the Middle Ages and the rise and further development of Christianity brought about varied effects, depending on the type of handicap, the geographic location, and the specific era.

Although the idea of love and concern gained some headway, the handicapped were variously viewed as fools, non-humans, or perhaps witches, with witches being an obvious throwback to demonology. Scheer- enberger (1983) stated that during the periods of the Middle Ages and Renaissance, some mentally retarded persons were procured for amusement

or other home purposes. They were often exalted as heavenly infants or infants of the god who enjoyed the special favour of the almighty and their jabberings were regarded as heavenly communication.

The houses in which the mentally defective were born were considered divinely blessed (Hewett and Forness, 1977). In Europe such individuals were often accorded special privileges and allowed to roam unmolested. The Middle Ages showed a great difference in the perception of the handicapped from the ancient Greece or Romans. In ancient Greece and Rome, the handicapped were killed and those who escaped were kept secluded from the public. In the Middle Ages, the rise of Christianity permitted the handicapped to roam about, beg for alms, serve as court jesters and be used in other forms of exploitative purposes. Again, in the Middle Ages, prayers and religious ceremonies were seen as the logical curative approach to handicaps.

By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the pendulum, initially moving in the climate of religious persecution, gradually fell more under the control of enlightened individuals whose increase in number resulted in the beginnings of more long term hope and understanding for handicapped individuals.

By the eighteenth century, the pendulum made much wider swing toward the position of acceptance of exceptional individuals (Hewett and Forness, 1977). Witch burning finally ceased and the world of demons was gradually overshadowed by a concern for human rights. The causes of mental illness were just beginning to be explored.

In 1760, Abbe de I'Epee opened the first public school for handicapped children who were deaf and blind, the National Institute for Deaf Mutes in Paris (Hewett and Forness, 1977). This was the school

where Itard met and worked with Victor, the wild boy of Aveyron in 1801 (Kauffman, 1981).

Although most of the originations of special education came from the European physicians who challenged the wisdom of the established authorities; it was not until Jean Marc Gaspard Itard's (1774-1834) work that the story of mental retardation began to be told (Faber, 1968). In 1801, Jean Itard, a French physician, began the training of an uncultured child, Victor, the wild boy of Aveyron. Efforts to educate the deaf and the blind had been made before the beginning of the nineteenth century, but Itard's work with Victor marked the widespread attempts to teach children with a variety of handicaps.

Itard's student, Edouard Seguin, emigrated to the United States in 1848. Before that, Seguin had become famous as an educator of the retarded, even though most thinkers of the day were convinced that such children could not be taught anything significance.

According to Hallahan and Kauffman (1978), among the young Americans concerned with the education of the handicapped was the influential and dynamic Samuel Gridley Howe, an 1824 graduate of Harvard Medical School. Besides being a physician and an educator, Howe was a political and social reformer, a champion of humanitarian causes and emancipation. He was instrumental in the founding of the Perkins School for the Blind in Watertown, Massachusetts, and was also a teacher of the deaf and blind.

The work of Alexander Graham Bell with the handicapped deserves mentioning. Bell was actively involved in training of the deaf. He organized special education and petitioned the National Education Association (NEA), to deal with the educational needs of the handicapped

(Garwood, 1983). Bell suggested that the NEA create a Department for the Education and Classes Requiring Special Methods of Instruction. The NEA responded in 1877 and named a new division in the Department of Education for the Deaf, Blind, and the Feebleminded. This department today is known as the Department of Special Education.

With the organization of special education forces within the NEA, public schools began to hold classes for handicapped children. According to Chambers and Hartman (1983), different states in the Union started to provide special education for the handicapped.

#### Professional and Parent Organizations

The outlooks for the retarded and physically handicapped were not very bright, especially with intelligence testing resulting in the segregation of the handicapped from the non-handicapped students. Goddard's category of moron (Hewett and Forness, 1977, p. 51) covered thousands of mildly retarded individuals among the general population who, prior to establishment of the intelligence test movement, were largely unrecognized. This was a serious problem for the parents who felt their children should be provided appropriate public educational services.

Parents were no longer ashamed of their handicapped children, and they began to organize pressure groups, such as the United Cerebral Palsy Association, to demand access to educational resources that did not segregate their children from the regular students (Garwood, 1983). Haring (1982), wrote:

As early as the 1930s, parents of handicapped children began to form local organizations. By the 1940s, national organizations were being created. Parents of cerebral palsied children were the first to organize. . . . In the 1950s,

parents of mentally retarded began to organize, demanding public education for their children (p. 18).

Kauffman (1981) recognized the importance of parent groups when he wrote:

One of the strong influences on special education during the last three decades, beginning 1950 with the National Association for Retarded Children (now the National Association for Retarded Citizens), has been parent groups. The Association for children with Learning Disabilities was founded in 1963, largely as a group of concerned parents, not professional special educators (p. 8).

These parents' groups had been very active in seeking educational facilities for the handicapped. Baumister and Butterfield (1970) stated that, according to the most recent survey (1968) conducted by the American Association on Mental Deficiency, there were 167 public facilities for the mentally retarded in 50 states and the District of Columbia. Haring (1982, p, 10) stated that the twentieth century has seen a rapid increase in interest in educating the exceptional, paralleled by rising numbers of special education professionals: "In 1948, only 77 colleges and universities provided training programs in educating the exceptional. By 1954, the number has grown more than 122.

Today, there are many parents and professional organizations serving the handicapped. According to the Citizen Advocacy Resources (1983), these organizations provide forums for sharing information, ideas, problems and solutions.

#### Legislation for the Handicapped

Haring (1982) stated that nowhere can the effect of parental activism be seen more clearly than in the court cases and legislation which have recently made dramatic changes in treatment of the handicapped. Parents have forced the courts to re-examine the basic rights

of exceptional children for full educational opportunity. According to Kauffman (1981, p. 9), "The Kennedy and Johnson years were momentous ones for legislation and bureaucratization." Scheerenberger (1983) stated that President Kennedy, due perhaps to his experience as the brother of a mentally retarded sister, improved the quality of life for both mentally retarded and mentally ill persons.

According to Kauffman and Hallahan, (1981) public support for special education in the form of legislation and appropriation had been achieved and sustained only by the most arduous and persevering efforts of individuals who are advocates of exceptional children. Haring (1982) stated that court rulings in favor of handicapped citizens have prompted the legislators and advocates of the handicapped to press for new laws that spell out the responsibilities of public schools.

Some of those court rulings are the 1954 Brown V. Topeka Board of Education (Kansas) which established the right of all children an equal opportunity to an education; 1973 PL 93-112, Section 504 Rehabilitation Act, which declared that handicapped people cannot be excluded from any program or activity receiving federal funds on the basis of the handicapped; 1975 PL 94-142, Education for All Handicapped Children Act, which mandated free, appropriate public education for all handicapped children regardless of degree of severity of handicap, and protected rights of handicapped children and parents in educational decision making (Orlansky and Heward, 1980). Commenting on Section 504 and Public Law 94-142, Kauffman and Hallahan, (1981) wrote:

PL 94-142 and section 504 require that each public agency ensure that to the maximum extent appropriate, handicapped children . . . are educated with children who are not handicapped . . . . Handicapped children must now be educated at public expense and at no cost to the parent (p. 13).



Emphasising the impact of PL 94-142, The Federal Register (1977) stated that the regulations include the provisions which are designed (1) to assure that all handicapped children have available to them a free public education; (2) to ensure that the rights of the handicapped children and their parents are protected; (3) to assist states and localities to provide the education of handicapped children, and (4) to assess and assure the effectiveness of efforts to educate such children.

Commenting on PL 94-142, Ogletree (1981), stated that this law reflects the importance of several basic beliefs concerning the education of handicapped children, namely that the instruction be individualized to meet the unique needs of the handicapped children.

In summary, the effects of parental activism have led to many court rulings and pieces of legislation that have made dramatic changes in the treatment of the handicapped persons. Parents have forced the courts to re-examine the basic rights of exceptional children for full educational opportunity.

PL 93-112, Section 504, and PL 94-142 (Haring, 1978), were the major legal milestones in the history of special education. Section 504 prohibits any discrimination against the handicapped person by any individuals or organizations that receive federal funds; it also mandates the removal of any architectural barriers by employers and schools so that the exceptional person within that organization may not suffer undue hardship. PL 94-142 (Federal Register, 1977) ensures the rights of the handicapped persons in receiving free appropriate education at no cost to their families.

Finally, it can be observed that the history of special education in the pre-modern (the Greek and Roman) and modern times was marked by a

total fluctuation of disservice and service to the handicapped. The handicapped were rejected, punished, exiled and assigned the status of sub-humans. In modern days, with the efforts of dedicated individuals, the handicapped persons have been integrated into the society and given their proper place with non-handicapped persons. These achievements have been greatly enhanced because of parental activism, court cases and legislation. Green (1979) summarizes it this way,

"The time is past when handicapped students were housed, taught, and over-protected, far from the main current of regular school operation. Special education isn't so different now. It's pattern is being woven into the main design of American education rather than forming the somber fringe areas of the past." (p. 15)

In Nigeria the history of special education is different from what happened in the United States. Ukwuije (1981) stated that the educational provisions for the handicapped concentrated in helping the blind and the deaf. The schools or centers that performed these functions were private or owned by missionaries. The author of the Third National Development Plan (1975/80, p. 249) confirms, "until now, the education of this category of people has been left to private initiative with token grants from the government, with the result that facilities have been inadequately provided." According to Ukwuije (1981, p. 6), "the first special Education Centre at Oji River was opened by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) for the blind and leprosy patients; it became a full-fledged elementary school in 1964."

Caulerick (1982) recorded that the formal special educational intervention was the establishment of Sudan Interior Mission school for the blind in Kano (Northern Nigeria) in 1944. Provisions were later made for the care and protection of the severely physically handicapped and mentally retarded. In 1947, the Spastic Clinic, Royal Orthopaedic

Hospital was opened in Igbodi, Lagos (Caulerick, 1982). This day clinic became necessary when it was felt that it was impossible to take hospitalization or long term general management and special treatment of spastic children in a busy hospital. This clinic provided basic education to those children with reasonable intelligence and, where possible, arranged for continued education in normal primary and secondary schools, thus preparing them for the society.

The Federal government of Nigeria fully came into the scene of special education when the Universal Primary Education (UPE) program was launched in 1976. As a preparatory step for the formal take-off of the UPE scheme, the Federal Ministry of Education, in the Third National Development Plan (1975/80) made provisions for the training of special education personnel in institutions abroad (this writer was one of the beneficiaries.) Many professional organizations were formed to promote the awareness on the problems facing the handicapped individuals. Two such organizations were the National Association for the Handicapped and the Association of Teachers of the Handicapped (Caulerick, 1982).

The National Policy on Education in Nigeria emphasizes the joint responsibilities of the government, the people of Nigeria and the handicapped. Reichel (1975), in a historical review of concept of various civilizations concerning the handicapped, supported the view that, as societies become more progressive, people develop greater acceptance of those who were previously stigmatized. Lippman (1972) stated that there is a relationship between public attitudes (especially attitudes of public officials) and the availability of desirable resources. The Nigerian students who are currently studying in the United States are the Nigerian's future public officials. Therefore,

their attitudes toward the handicapped becomes important to study.

#### Statement of the Problem

A short review of the history of special education reveals that the Nigerian government has trained special education personnel, opened Universal Primary education and encouraged the education of all handicapped children. The federal government of Nigeria had declared the joint responsibilities of the government, the people of Nigeria and the handicapped. All these events attempt to bring handicapped people into the mainstream of the society. Therefore, the problem posed in this study is to investigate the attitudes of Nigerian students who are currently studying in the United States toward handicapped persons to see if these students will support the educational needs of handicapped people in Nigeria.

#### Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of this study is to determine if the Nigerian student's attitudes toward the handicapped are positive or negative by identify those demographic variables, such as sex, religion, age, academic major, years of study in the United States, and the region of origin in Nigeria which may be associated with the Nigerian students' attitudes toward handicapped persons.

#### Significance of the Study

Information gained from this study will be of importance in planning programs in special education for the benefit of handicapped and the general public in Nigeria. The findings will help in the education of the Nigerian public regarding the need to integrate

handicapped people more effectively into the mainstream of society.

#### Research Questions

Six research questions were generated for this study.

1. Do male and female Nigerian students in the United States have differences in attitudes toward handicapped persons?

2. Does religious affiliation make any difference in attitudes of Nigerian students toward handicapped persons?

3. Does age make any difference in the attitudes of Nigerian students toward handicapped persons?

4. Does academic major make any difference in the Nigerian students' attitudes toward handicapped persons?

5. Does the number of years spent by the Nigerian students in the United States make any difference in attitudes toward handicapped persons?

6. Does the region of origin of Nigerian students studying in the United States make any difference in their attitudes toward handicapped persons?

#### Limitations and Assumptions of the Study

This study is limited to selected public research universities which enrolled up to 50 or more Nigerian students at the time which this study was conducted.

This study assumes that:

1. The attitudes of Nigerians in the United States will be influenced by the way the American society provides facilities and programs for handicapped people.

2. The attitudes of Nigerians in the United States will be influenced by the way handicapped persons in the United States regard themselves. Specifically, handicapped individuals can be seen pursuing a wide variety of educational and social activities in America. One Vietnam Veteran on a wheelchair put it this way, "Sure I have a disability, but I am not handicapped until I try to get into a building that has a flight of steps and revolving doors as its only entrance" (Blackhurst and Berdine, 1981, p. 9).

3. The use of questionnaire data assumes honesty in the response.

4. The responses reflect the attitudes of Nigerians in the three geographical regions in the United States.

5. The subjects have had actual contact with handicapped persons in the United States and in Nigeria.

6. The subjects will perceive handicapped persons as being physically handicapped.

#### Definition of Terms

Nigerians in the United States: These are the Nigerian students whose names appear in the international student listings in institutions of higher learning in the United States selected for this study.

Handicapped person: In this study, it will be defined in the same manner as in the study by Ukwuije (1981). She used the following definitions:

- (a) Blind person - a person with no useful sight.
- (b) Deaf person - a person with no useful hearing.
- (c) Mentally retarded person - a person who possesses significantly subaverage intellectual functioning.

- (d) Emotionally disturbed person - a person with unacceptable social behavior.
- (e) Physically handicapped person - a person who uses a wheel chair, is an amputee or who has abnormally distorted movements (Ukwuije, 1981, p. 99).

Region of Origin will be used to refer to the Northern, Western and the Eastern parts of Nigeria (see map of Nigeria in Appendix G).

Research Universities: These are 50 leading universities which have received federal financial support of academic science in at least the three academic years, 1968-69, 1969-70, and 1970-71, provided they awarded at least 50 Ph.D.'s (plus M.D.'s if a medical school was on the same campus) in 1969-70. (The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, 1973).

Attitude: This refers to the pattern of responses on the ATDP questionnaire by the subjects with a score of 70 regarded as a positive acceptance of the handicapped person.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

#### Introduction

This chapter deals with a general study of attitudes toward handicapped persons and also reviews studies based on each of the demographic variables (sex, age, major, religion, region of origin) selected for this study.

#### Attitudes Toward Handicapped Persons

Beginning from the ancient Rome and Greece, the attitudes toward handicapped persons had been less favourable than attitudes toward the non-handicapped. Review of early findings revealed that attitudes held by various population groups toward handicapped continued to be highly inconsistent and contradictory. Rice (1976) stated that literature on attitudes revealed that attitudes are based on accumulation of personal experiences.

Jordan and Friesen (1976) found that the handicapped are more accepted in industrialized countries as compared with less developed countries. These authors state that efforts toward social programs for the handicapped, coupled with increasing emphasis on the legal rights of handicapped persons, lend support to the notion that industrialized societies are becoming more and more accepting of those previously rejected because of their handicapping conditions.

Kuhn (1971) studied whether regular classroom teachers in a school with facilities for blind children would verbally express more positive



attitudes toward blindness as measured by a questionnaire than would teachers without this exposure to blind children. Kuhn (1971) used the Attitude to Blindness scale to gather data. The questions were answered on a scale of strongly agree (one point) to strongly disagree (four points). Kuhn (1971) found that the two groups of teachers did not differ significantly. The result suggested that merely placing a blind child in a regular classroom and allowing a regular elementary school teacher to work with that child does not mean, conclusively, that the teacher will have a more positive attitude toward blindness than one who has never taught a blind child.

Eads, Parish, Reece, and Piscitello (1977) investigated whether future teachers have negative attitudes toward groups of handicapped children based on labels attached to these children. They found that special education majors were more positive in their pre- and post-course evaluations than the non-special education majors.

Panda and Bartel (1972) analyzed and compared the perception of exceptionalities by teachers as a function of their training and experience in teaching handicapped children. The subject group was comprised of 40 teachers; 20 of them had no teaching experience with handicapped children and received no specialized training to teach such children. Another 20 had experience in teaching handicapped children with training and course work in special education. Panda and Bartel (1972) found that teachers with specific experience did not perceive handicapped children in a more favourable way than the teachers with no such training.

Stephens and Braum (1980) used questionnaire to gather information from 1,034 regular classroom teachers of children in Kindergarten

through grade eight on their willingness to accept mentally handicapped students into their classrooms. They found that primary and middle grade teachers were more willing to integrate the handicapped students than were teachers of grades 7 and 8.

Olshansky and Sternfeld (1962) studied pediatricians' attitudes toward the handicapped. The physicians are often the first professionals to become aware that a child is handicapped. Since they are also the professionals that help the parents adjust to the birth, as well as make plans for home care or institutionalization, their attitudes become significant to study. These researchers studied whether or not pediatricians trained before the public concern about mental retardation would reflect modern attitudes toward institutionalization. The subjects were 30 established pediatricians. They found that few of the pediatricians had any well-developed perspective to guide their inter-action with the parents of retarded children.

Kingsley (1967) studied the attitudes of prospective teachers toward exceptional children. The students were asked to rank the exceptional children they would most and least like to teach. They indicated the least preferred to be severely retarded. They felt that the severely retarded needed to be institutionalized as opposed to being provided educational services. Bergan and Smith (1966) found that prospective teachers' attitudes toward mental retardation favored children of higher socio-economic status more than the children of lower socio-economic status.

The parental attitudes toward the handicapped has been an area of interest to many researchers. Sundstrom (1968) found a significantly positive correlation between the mothers' attitudes and learning

achievement of their handicapped children. Worchel and Worchel (1961) found that parents were rejecting in attitude toward their retarded children. Barber (1963) found that attitudes of parents of retarded children were not related to the sex of the retarded child. Takeguchi (1967) studied the attitudes of parents toward the handicapped as a function of socio-economic status. He found that parents of educable and trainable children had similar conceptions of "mental retardation," "educably mentally retarded" and my "own child," regardless of social class. He also found that the concept of "trainable mentally retarded" was influenced by socio-economic level. Low socioeconomic level parents rated "trainable mentally retarded" significantly lower than the parents of higher socio-economic level.

Murray and Payne (1974) stated that the school building principal, by virtue of the leadership role must be considered a key person in instituting a change. If the principal supports the integration of the handicapped child, then he or she can help ensure the success of integrative program. Based on this rationale, these authors studied the principals' attitudes toward integration of the handicapped. Among 50 urban and suburban elementary school principals who were randomly selected for the study, the researchers found that both principals generally accepted visually handicapped, hard of hearing, physically handicapped, learning disabled in approximately the same rank order.

#### Role of Culture on Attitudes

##### Toward Handicapped Persons

The influence of culture on attitudes toward handicapped persons had been considered by many researchers. Caulcrick (1982, p. 76)

reviewed Onwuegbu's 1977 study of "The Nigerian Culture, its perception and treatment of the handicapped." He found that different cultures in Nigeria had different perceptions of the handicapped persons. Some of the perceptions included a curse from God, breaking laws and family sins, adultery, misfortune, and evil spirit.

Daramola (1976) attributed some of these cultural beliefs to religious base. For example, in the Northern states, as a result of the influence of Islam, most handicapped are accepted not only as God's decree, but also as an opportunity for begging for alms, which Islam enjoins. In the Southern states, physical handicaps are not positively valued, although handicapped members are not rejected. Ukwuije (1981) also found that the Nigerian culture did not show strong positive or negative attitudes toward handicapped persons.

Jacques, Burleigh, and Lee, (1973) studied the attitudes of the Chinese toward disabled persons, and compared the attitudinal reactions of the Chinese samples with samples from Denmark, Greece, and the United States. In this cross-cultural comparison of attitudes, these researchers found that the Americans had the most positive attitudes, followed by the subjects from Denmark, China, and Greece in that order. Jacques et al (1973) stated that the response of the Chinese subjects to the ATDP indicated that more than the American and Danish subjects, and less than the Greek subjects, the Chinese subjects considered persons with disabilities to be different in many ways from the non-handicapped. Compared with subjects in the United States and Denmark, the Chinese subjects indicated that they would permit less close relationship with the disabled person (as measured by the Social Distance Scale), and they would generally favor more remote residences

for persons with various disabilities.

Sato and Lazar (1981) compared the attitudes of two (American=17 and Japanese=17) cultural groups toward the handicapped. The subjects ranged in ages from 16 to 34 years. They reported that the American students scored much higher (mean score = 80.47) than the Japanese students' (mean score = 67.71) on Attitudes Toward Handicapped Scale. Sato and Lazar (1981) concluded that although the American group of students were more accepting and understanding toward the handicapped, the Japanese culture might have a greater awareness of handicapped individuals and individual differences.

Sieka, Linkowski, and Jacques, (1970) investigated the relationships of attitudes toward handicapped persons and certain demographic variables across and within three (Denmark, Greece, and the United States) cultures. They found consistent cultural differences in attitudes toward the disabled persons. The most positive attitudes were found in the United States followed by Denmark and Greece, respectively. Sieka et al (1970) explained the observed differences in terms of certain familial and social organizational factors. Patterns of family structure vary within these cultures, ranging from the extended pattern of the Greek family to the nuclear family type in the United States and Denmark. In Greece, generally, the family provides for the care of its own members, whereas in Denmark and the United States, care from facilities is common and more acceptable. These findings confirm other studies (Sato and Lazar, 1981; Jacques et al, 1973) which reported that the American subjects had more positive attitudes toward the handicapped than the Greek subjects.

## Role of Religion on Attitudes

### Toward Handicapped Persons

Religion is another variable influencing the non-handicapped person's attitudes toward the handicapped.

Zuk, Miller, Bartram, and King, (1961) used questionnaires to gather data on the religious practices, attitudes, feelings and beliefs of the mothers of retarded children about retarded children. The subjects were 125 mothers who had had contact with the Mental Retardation Clinic at St. Christopher's, a non-denominational hospital for children at Philadelphia. They found a low but positive correlation between these two variables. The mothers who rated themselves more involved in religious practice tended to express attitudes that were more accepting of the retarded children. They further related this to the notion of guilt. Catholicism believes that parents should not blame themselves, thus, there is less associated guilt with the birth of a handicapped child. This promotes parental positive attitudes toward the handicapped.

Hoffman (1965) supported Zuk et al (1961). He found that Catholic families tended to be more accepting of their handicapped children than families of other denominations. He related his finding to the Catholic belief that suffering, though painful, is a part of life. Ukwuije (1981) found the same belief among the Nigerian Catholics.

Adams (1966) found that protestant siblings of retarded children showed poorer home interpersonal relationships than did the protestant siblings of the non-handicapped. Therefore, religious belief showed up as a significant variable operating in much the same manner as it influenced the parents' attitudes.

Other variables influencing the non-handicapped person's attitudes toward the handicapped are sex and age.

### Role of Age and Sex on Attitudes

#### Toward Handicapped Persons

Coet and Tindall (1974) studied attitudes toward the handicapped as a function of both age and sex. Seventy-two subjects were divided into two age groups and were asked to rank-order three groups of people they felt were more handicapped. Although age and sex differences were not significant, the researchers observed that the male subjects emphasized mental retardation and mental illness while the female subjects stressed physical injury which included disfigurement and amputation. The younger subjects weighted mental problems higher than the older subjects, while the later were more concerned with blindness and physical injury than the former.

Thornton and Coet (1975) followed up on the Coet and Tindall (1974) Study. They examined the attitudes toward different handicapping conditions as a function of age and sex. The subjects were 67 males and 74 females ranging from 12 to 82 years. They found that, for many handicapping conditions, there were wide differences between the males and females. The middle aged group (26 to 45 years) placed emphasis on physical incapacitation, blindness and heart disease, while the oldest group was concerned about mental problems. Thornton and Coet (1975) concluded that, with the male as the bread winner, it seemed quite natural he would be more concerned about mental retardation and mental problems which emphasized social and intellectual competency. The women were concerned about physical injury as the society is cosmetically

oriented.

Cook, Kunce, and Gestinger, (1976) investigated the differences in counselor's perceptions of handicapped and non-handicapped persons, taking into consideration the sex of the counselors and their judged effectiveness. Eighty personnel assistants (35 males and 45 females) at a large Midwestern University served as subjects. They completed a Semantic Differential test consisting of ten word pairs (e.g. relaxed - tense, good - bad) for each of the six photographs of a handicapped male. The researcher found that the ratings that less effective males gave to the pictures were substantially less favourable than those given by the females. In contrast, the less effective female counselors gave less favourable ratings than the less effective males. Based on his review of a number of studies on attitudes toward the handicapped, McDaniel (1969) concluded that there was no universal stereotype of the physically handicapped and the degree of acceptance toward the handicapped varied with sex, age and maturity.

Foley (1978) examined whether differences in attitudes toward the handicapped existed among the teachers on the basis of the correlates of age, sex, teaching level, amount of experience with the handicapped, and amount of training in the areas related to handicapped students. He found that there were no significant differences in the general attitudes of teachers toward the handicapped due to age, sex, teaching level, experience or training.

Elsberry (1974) found no significant differences in attitudes of men and women toward persons with various physical disabilities.

Leclair and Rockwell (1980) hypothesized that a counselor-in-training who scored high on a Body Cathexis scale will express a



positive attitude toward counseling a disabled person. The subjects were counselor education students (31 females, 19 males) at a state university in the Midwest. They found a sex difference in the result of the study. The female trainees more frequently exhibited significant relationships with respect to specific disability groups than the males. Also, the attitudes expressed by the females toward their role of personnel adjustment counselor were significantly higher overall than the males' attitudes.

Rapier, Adelson, Carey, and Croke (1972) studied changes in attitudes of 512 elementary school boys and girls toward orthopedically handicapped children as a result of an integrated school experience. They found that after the integration the children had developed a more positive attitude toward the orthopedically handicapped.

Before the integration, boys and girls differed in attitudes, but the difference disappeared as a result of integration. The girls perceived the handicapped children as being happier and wanting less attention and help but as being less friendly and interesting. The analysis of the responses to all the items did not indicate that either sex viewed the handicapped in a positive way before integration. The responses of both sexes were evenly divided between the positive and negative attitudes.

#### Role of Academic Major on Attitudes Toward Handicapped Persons

According to Merlin and Kauppi (1972), college majors provide a convenient population for the study of occupational group differences in attitudes. Students in various curricula differ in the kind and amount

of contact with handicapped persons that occur during their education.

Harth (1971) compared the attitudes of special education students to regular education students toward mental retardation. He found that, overall, special education students had more favourable attitudes toward mental retardation than did the general education students.

Petrangelo (1977) used the Attitude Toward Disabled Person Scale (ATDP) and studied attitudes of 176 non-handicapped undergraduate students toward the handicapped college students at the University of Northern Colorado. In this study, ATDP tests the respondent's opinion of handicapped persons in general. It is not categorical and items reflect an aggregate of environments, conditions, and behaviors (see Appendix C). The subjects were divided into four groups. Three of the groups were selected on the basis of their major emphasis area, while the fourth group served as the comparison group because of its unique one-to-one ratio of disabled to non-disabled students. The fourth group included a variety of majors, while the first, second and third groups majored in business, rehabilitation and special education, respectively. Petrangelo (1977) found that business majors scored lower than all other groups. Rehabilitation and mixed groups scored highest (indicating positive attitudes) and special education majors did not score significantly different in the group comparison.

#### Summary of the Literature Review

In recent years, many studies have investigated the attitudes of non-handicapped persons toward the handicapped. The findings have been inconsistent and contradictory. As the review of literature revealed, some people hold negative attitudes while many hold positive attitudes

toward handicapped persons.

Studies have shown that many Nigerians have neither positive or negative attitudes toward the handicapped. The present study investigates the attitudes of Nigerian students in the United States toward handicapped person. Lippman (1972) stated that there is a relationship between the attitudes of the public officials and the availability of the desired resources for the handicapped. The Nigerian Students in the United States are tomorrow's leaders of Nigeria, therefore their attitudes toward handicapped persons are significant to study.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

#### Introduction

This chapter describes the methods and procedures used in conducting this study. These were determined by the purpose of the study which was to investigate the attitudes of Nigerian students in the United States toward handicapped persons.

#### Selection of Research Universities

Four research universities were selected for this study. These universities were among those determined by the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education (1973) as meeting the criteria for a research university.

On October 27 and November 17, 1983, telephone calls were made to the International Students' office in each of the research universities. It was found that many research universities did not have up to 50 Nigerian students while some had more. The final selection of the research universities that participated in the study was determined by such university enrolling more than 50 Nigerians. The following research universities met that criterion:

TABLE I  
RESEARCH UNIVERSITIES SELECTED FOR THE STUDY

Research University	Number of Nigerian students
Ohio State University Columbus, Ohio	120
Oklahoma State University Stillwater, Oklahoma	91
University of Wisconsin Madison, Wisconsin	69
University of Minnesota St Paul, Minneapolis Minnesota	100
Total	380

#### Selection of Subjects

On January 23, 1984, telephone calls were made to the Advisors of International Students in each of the four research universities asking for permission to include their schools in the study. All the advisors were reluctant to release the students' names because of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (Borg and Gall, 1979), which stresses confidentiality in record keeping. However, the international students' advisors suggested contacting the Presidents of the Nigerian Students' Organizations who had the names of all the Nigerian students. Only the Oklahoma State University (OSU) advisor requested an authorization from the Registrar's office before the names could be released to the writer.

On January 24, Dr. Wilkinson (the writer's thesis advisor) sent a

letter (Appendix A) to the registrar of OSU requesting the release of the names of Nigerian students enrolled during the Fall Semester of 1983.

On January 26, a letter (Appendix B) introducing the writer and the purpose of the research was mailed to the Presidents of the Nigerian Students' Organization at the University of Minnesota, Ohio State University and University of Wisconsin. Each President was requested to release the names of the Nigerian students to the writer and the confidentiality of the students was guaranteed. Only the President of the Nigerian Students' Organization at the University of Wisconsin, Madison released the names. The Presidents of the Nigerian student's Organization in Ohio State University and the University of Minnesota could not release the names but requested that the questionnaires be mailed to them for dissemination on the campuses.

#### Instrumentation

##### The Attitudes Toward Disabled

##### Persons Scale, Form A

This questionnaire (see Appendix C) was originally developed by Yuker, Block, and Young in 1970. A modified version of the instrument had been used in many studies. For example, Sato and Lazar (1981) at University of California substituted the word handicapped for disabled and used this modified instrument to study the attitudes in Japan and the United States toward the handicapped.

For the purpose of this study, the modified version of the instrument was used. Blackhurst and Berdine (1981) and Haring (1978) have stated that although the two terms disabled and handicapped have

different meanings in the field of special education, some people treat the two terms as synonyms. Before using the questionnaire with the Nigerian population, 12 Nigerian students were asked to give the meaning of the two terms. The most frequent response was that these terms disabled and handicapped were the same in meaning. This confirmed Blackhurst and Berdine's (1981) statement that many people treat the terms as synonymous. The literature supports the assumption that substituting handicapped for disabled does not affect the technical properties (validity and reliability) of this instrument.

Another method of testing the validity of the instrument was to administer it to 12 Nigerian students to see if the instrument communicated what it intended to communicate. Generally, the respondents did not have any problems.

The reliability of the ATDP has been reported by several studies, according to the original authors of the instrument, Yuker et al (1970). The three major types of reliability used in testing the instrument were, (1) stability, (2) equivalence, and (3) stability - equivalence.

Stability measures of reliability involve retesting an individual with the same form of test following a period of time. This is generally known as test-retest reliability. The estimate for test-retest reliability for ATDP (Yuker et al., 1970) is + .78. While test-retest reliability indicates the influence of time of administration upon the scale, equivalence reliability indicates the influence of the particular sample of items chosen.

Data concerning the split-half reliability for ATDP ranged from + .73 to + .89. The final approach to the measurement of reliability of ATDP according to the authors is "stability-equivalence reliability"

(Yuker et al. 1970). This involves the administration of one form of the scale on one occasion and a different form on some subsequent occasion. This is sometimes known as the delayed parallel forms approach. The available data on the stability-equivalence reliability for the ATDP ranged from + .41 to + .83 with a median range of + .74. The time interval ranged from two weeks to five months. Based upon the above data, the ATDP demonstrated reasonably good reliability.

Validity is concerned with what the test measures. The authors believe that evidence for the validity of the ATDP is based largely upon construct validity. The authors state that several studies related ATDP scores to measure a self-concept of non-disabled individuals. In 1962, the Human Resources Study correlated the ATDP with some Semantic Differential Rating scores. The sample consisted of 81 college students. A correlation of + .21 was obtained ( $p < .05$ ), and it was concluded that persons with favorable attitudes towards disabled persons were more likely to have a positive self-concept (Yuker et al. 1970, p. 64).

#### Demographic Information Questionnaire

The Demographic Information Questionnaire (Appendix D) was developed by the writer. It consisted of six questions relating to the variables of sex, age, religion, geographical origin in Nigeria, years of study in the United States and the major area of the respondents study. To determine whether problems existed in the wordings of the questions asked, several Nigerian students from OSU were given the demographic information sheet to complete and return to the writer before its final administration to the subjects on this study. The



result of this pilot study indicated that there was no problem with the demographic information questionnaire.

#### Data Collection Procedures

The responding sample for this study consisted of 265 Nigerian students who were currently enrolled in each of the research universities at the time of this study. These research universities were Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma (OSU); University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin, (UW); Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio; and University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota. The total population from which the subjects were drawn was 380 students.

On February 8, 1984, 120 questionnaires were mailed to Ohio State University, 100 questionnaires to University of Minnesota and 69 questionnaires to University of Wisconsin. The President of the Nigerian Students' Organization in each of the three research universities agreed to disseminate the questionnaires to the subjects. At Oklahoma State University, the researcher disseminated the questionnaires directly to the subjects. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter (Appendix E) which explained the objective of the study.

On March 15, 1984, the same questionnaire, a demographic information sheet and a new cover letter (Appendix F) were mailed to all the subjects who had not responded. A stamped self-addressed envelope was included in the second questionnaire package to each of the subjects.

Out of 120 questionnaires mailed to Ohio State University, the overall useable return rate was 83 (69.16%). Out of 69 questionnaires mailed to University of Wisconsin, Madison, the total useable return rate was 46 (66.67%). In the University of Minnesota, St. Paul -

Minneapolis, 59 (59%) out of 100 questionnaires were used for this study. Finally, Oklahoma State University (OSU) returned 77 (84.61%) of 91 questionnaires. The total number of subjects finally used for the study was 265 out of 380 (70%).

TABLE II  
DISTRIBUTION OF THE SUBJECTS BY INSTITUTION

Research University	Number of Questionnaires Sent	Number of Questionnaires Returned	Percentage of the total Response
Ohio State University Columbus, Ohio	120	83	69.16
Oklahoma State University Stillwater, Oklahoma	91	77	84.61
University of Wisconsin Madison, Wisconsin	69	46	66.67
University of Minnesota, St. Paul Minneapolis, Minnesota	100	59	59
Total	380	265	70

#### Analysis of the Data

Each of the six variables (Sex, Age, Religion, Years of study in the United States, Major area of Study, Region of origin) was assigned a code number which enable the writer to key punch the data at the OSU

Computer Center using the SPSS instructions.

A t-test was appropriate in testing the subjects' attitudinal score by gender. This type of test was necessary because only two groups (males and females) were dealt with in testing this hypothesis. The other five hypotheses were tested using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The ANOVA is used when more than two group means are tested to determine if a significant difference exists between two or more groups. Huck, Cormier, and Bounds (1974) stated that:

A one-way analysis of variance ANOVA is an inferential statistical procedure which has the same general purpose as the t-test: to compare groups in terms of the mean scores. The difference between the two procedures lies in the number of groups that can be compared. Whereas the t-test is designed for comparing two groups, a one-way ANOVA can be used to compare two or more groups (p. 58).

A statistical significance level for this study was set at  $p < .05$ . This significance level was selected to reduce the probability of making Type II error. A type II error is failure to reject a null hypothesis when it is false (Jaccard, 1983).

#### Null Hypotheses

1. Male and female Nigerians studying in the United States will not differ significantly in their attitudes toward handicapped persons.
2. The Religious affiliations of Nigerians studying in the United States will not make a significant difference in attitudes toward handicapped persons.
3. Age of Nigerian Students in the United States will not make a significant difference in attitudes toward handicapped persons.
4. Academic major of Nigerian students in the United States will not make a significant difference in attitudes toward handicapped persons.

5. Number of years spent in the United States by Nigerian students will not make a significant difference in attitudes toward handicapped persons.

6. Region of origin in Nigeria as held by Nigerian students in the United States will not make a significant difference in attitudes toward handicapped persons.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of the Nigerian students in the United States toward handicapped persons. The attitudes of these Nigerian students were associated with selected demographic variables such as sex, age, religion, years of study in the United States, major area of study, and region of origin in Nigeria. A t test and  $\chi^2$  test were used in the data analysis with the significance level set at  $p < .05$ . The data for each hypothesis tested are shown in Summary Tables.

#### Results of the Analysis

The first null hypothesis which stated that male and female Nigerians studying in the United States will not differ significantly in their attitudes toward the handicapped persons failed to be rejected. *accepted*  
The data analysis indicated no statistical difference between the male and the female groups in the study ( $t = 0.20$ ,  $df = 263$ ,  $p = 0.83$ ; Table III).

TABLE III  
 SUMMARY TABLE SHOWING t-TEST: ATTITUDES  
 OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS TOWARD HANDI-  
 CAPPED PERSONS BASED ON GENDER

	N	X	SD	T-value	df	P
Group 1 (Males)	228	110.52	18.74	0.20	263	0.83
Group 2 (Females)	37	109.86	13.43			

N = 265  
 P > .05

The second null hypothesis which stated that religious affiliation of Nigerian students in the United States will not make a significant difference in attitudes toward handicapped persons was rejected. The data analysis showed a significant difference in the mean scores based on religious affiliation ( $F_{2,262} = 9.72, P=0.0001$ ; Table IV).

TABLE IV  
 SUMMARY TABLE FOR THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE:  
 ATTITUDES OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS TOWARD  
 HANDICAPPED PERSONS BASED  
 ON RELIGION

Group	N	X	SD
1 = Protestant	141	113.07	18.16
2 = Catholic	69	112.39	16.33
3 = Islam	55	101.18	17.19

TABLE IV (Continued)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Between Groups	2	5958.20	2979.10		
				9.72	0.0001
Within Groups	262	80298.75	306.48		
Total	264	86256.95			

P < .05

The third null hypothesis which stated that age of Nigerian students in the United States will not make a significant difference in attitudes toward handicapped persons failed to be rejected. There was no statistical difference as a result of age in Nigerian students' attitudes toward handicapped persons ( $F_{4, 260} = .54$ ,  $P = .70$ , Table V). Table V shows the mean and standard deviation scores.

TABLE V

SUMMARY TABLE FOR THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE:  
ATTITUDES OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS TOWARD  
HANDICAPPED PERSONS BASED ON AGE

Group	N	X	SD
1 = 17 to 24 yrs. old	63	110.30	15.77
2 = 25 yrs. old	39	107.07	20.56
3 = 26 to 28 yrs. old	60	111.48	16.94
4 = 29 to 32 yrs. old	48	109.85	23.18
5 = 33 to 52 yrs. old	55	112.30	14.80

TABLE V (Continued)

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Between Groups	4	716.21	179.05		
				.54	.70
Within Groups	260	85540.74	329.00		
Total	264				

P > .05

A t-test was used to test the result. It was found that age did not make a significant difference ( $t = 0.52$ ,  $df = 263$ ,  $p = 0.59$ ; Table VI).

TABLE VI

SUMMARY TABLE SHOWING t-TEST: ATTITUDES OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS TOWARD HANDICAPPED PERSONS BASED ON AGE

	N	X	SD	T-value	df	P
Group 1	162	109.96	17.42			
Group 2	103	111.16	19.11	0.52	263	0.59

N = 265  
 Group 1 = 17 to 28 years old  
 Group 2 = 29 to 52 years old

The fourth null hypothesis which stated that academic major of Nigerian students in the United States will not make a significant



difference in attitudes toward handicapped persons was rejected. The Scheffe's test was not sufficiently sensitive to indicate which group differed significantly from other ( $F_{4,259} = 2.41, P = .049$ , Table VII).

TABLE VII  
SUMMARY TABLE FOR THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE:  
ATTITUDES OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS  
TOWARD HANDICAPPED PERSONS  
BASED ON ACADEMIC MAJOR

Group	N	X	SD
1 = Business	53	108.49	22.30
2 = Science	113	113.22	16.12
3 = Education	48	107.72	15.23
4 = Arts	47	109.17	13.71
5 = Laws	3	131.66	24.44

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Between Groups	4	2828.46	707.11		
				2.41	.049
Within Groups	259	75755.49	292.49		
Total	263				

P < .05

The fifth null hypothesis which stated that number of years spent in the United States will not make a significant difference in attitudes held by Nigerian students in the United States was rejected. The

statistical analysis showed that the number of years spent in the United States influenced the Nigerian students' attitudes toward handicapped persons ( $F_{6, 258} = 5.092, P = 0.0001$ ; Table VIII).

TABLE VIII  
SUMMARY TABLE FOR THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE:  
ATTITUDES OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS TOWARD  
HANDICAPPED PERSONS BASED ON  
YEARS OF STUDY IN THE  
UNITED STATES

Group	N	X	SD
1 = less than 1 year	32	103.22	11.22
2 = 1 year	37	103.78	25.59
3 = 2 years	65	111.61	15.28
4 = 3 years	49	106.79	13.87
5 = 4 years	26	115.19	15.97
6 = 5 years	21	124.42	20.66
7 = Over 5 years	35	114.57	17.58

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Between Groups	6	9132.71	1552.11	5.092	0.0001
Within Groups	258	77124.24	298.93		
Total	264				

$p < .05$

The subjects were later divided into 2 groups. A t-test was used to test the result. It was found that years spent in the United States made a significant difference in the subjects' attitudes toward the handicapped ( $t = 2.64$ ,  $df = 263$ ,  $p = 0.009$ ; Table IX).

TABLE IX  
SUMMARY TABLE SHOWING t-TEST: ATTITUDES OF  
NIGERIAN STUDENTS TOWARD HANDICAPPED  
PERSONS BASED ON YEARS OF STUDY  
IN THE UNITED STATES

	N	X	SD	T-value	df	P
Group 1	134	107.55	18.29	2.64	263	0.009
Group 2	111	113.36	17.43			

N = 265

Group 1 = less than 1 year to 2 years

Group 2 = 3 years to over 5 years

The sixth null hypothesis which stated that region of origin in Nigeria as held by Nigerian students in the United States will not make a significant difference in the attitudes toward handicapped persons failed to be rejected. The data analysis showed no significant difference in the Nigerians' attitudes toward handicapped persons ( $F_{2,262} = 1.72$ ),  $P = 0.18$ ; Table X).

TABLE X  
 SUMMARY TABLE FOR THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE:  
 ATTITUDES OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS  
 TOWARD HANDICAPPED PERSONS  
 BASED ON REGION

Group	N	X	SD
1 = Western	90	108.73	18.90
2 = Northern	73	108.89	19.25
3 = Eastern	102	113.02	16.23

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	P
Within Groups	2	1121.32	560.66		
				1.72	0.18
Between Groups	262	85135.63	324.94		
Total	264				

P > .05

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary J

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of Nigerian students toward handicapped persons. Data for the study were obtained from the Nigerian students who were studying in the following research universities: (1) Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma; (2) University of Wisconsin, Madison, Wisconsin; (3) University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota; and, (4) Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Three hundred and eighty Nigerian students selected from the four research universities each received a questionnaire package which contained a stamped self-addressed envelope to be returned to the writer, a cover letter, a demographic information sheet and a modified version of the Attitudes Toward the Handicapped Persons Scale (ATDP), Form A (Appendix C).

The ATDP was originally developed by Yuker, et al (1970). This instrument is a 30 item Likert-type scale that has been used to study the attitudes of many different groups toward handicapped persons. A lower score indicates negative attitudes toward handicapped persons and a higher score indicates more positive attitudes. Sato and Lazar (1981) had suggested that 70 be used as a score indicating positive attitude.

Out of 380 subjects who received the questionnaire packages, 265 subjects (70%) returned useable questionnaires. Useable questionnaires were those questionnaires which were fully completed by the subjects and accepted by the writer. The analysis of the data was done by using t-test and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) procedures with the statistical significance level set at  $P < .05$ .

The six hypotheses researched in this study were:

H1, male and female Nigerians studying in the United States will not differ significantly in their attitudes toward handicapped persons. This hypothesis failed to be rejected. The finding showed that gender did not influence the Nigerian students' attitudes toward handicapped persons.

H2, religious affiliation of Nigerian students in the United States will not make a significant difference in attitudes toward handicapped persons. This hypothesis was rejected. The finding indicated that religion did make a significant difference in Nigerians' attitudes toward handicapped persons. Protestant ( $\bar{x} = 113.07$ ); Catholic ( $\bar{x}=112.34$ ) and Islam ( $\bar{x} = 101.18$ ), Table IV, p. 38 and 39.

H3, age of Nigerian students in the United States will not make a significant difference in attitudes toward handicapped persons. This hypothesis failed to be rejected. The finding indicated that age was not a factor in the Nigerians' perception of the handicapped person.

H4, academic major of Nigerian students in the United states will not make a significant difference in attitudes toward handicapped persons was rejected. This indicated that the major area of study was a factor in the Nigerian students' attitudes toward handicapped persons. Law ( $\bar{x}=131.66$ ), Science ( $\bar{x}=113.22$ ) were most positive while Arts

( $\bar{x}$ =109.17), Business ( $\bar{x}$ =108.49) and Education ( $\bar{x}$ =107.72) were least positive, Table VII, p. 41.

H5, number of years spent in the United States by Nigerian students will not make a significant difference in attitudes toward handicapped persons. This hypothesis was rejected. The number of years spent in the United States was a factor in the Nigerians' positive attitudes toward handicapped persons. Persons who were in the United States 4 years or more had more positive attitudes.

H6, region of origin in Nigeria held by Nigerian students in the United States will not make a significant difference in attitudes toward handicapped persons. This hypothesis failed to be rejected. This showed that the region of origin in Nigeria did not influence the attitudes of Nigerians toward handicapped persons.

#### Discussion

Overall, the Nigerian students in the United States selected for this study had strongly positive attitudes toward handicapped persons. A score indicating a positive attitude toward handicapped persons was 70 points. All the respondent groups scored above that point. However, when each of the hypotheses was tested, it was found that some variables were important factors influencing the attitudes of the Nigerian students toward handicapped persons.

Years of stay in the United States was an important variable that influenced the attitudes of the Nigerian students toward handicapped persons. The data showed that the Nigerian students who had studied in the United States for five years showed a highly positive attitude toward handicapped persons. The mean score for this group was

124.42. Those students who had lived in the United States for four years showed next highly positive attitudes toward the handicapped. The mean score for this group was 115.19. The students who had spent less than one year and one year in the United States, respectively, showed the least positive attitudes toward the handicapped. The mean score for less than one year group was 103.22 while the mean score for those who had spent one year in the United States was 103.78. Based on the criterion score of 70, the Nigerian students reflected positive attitudes overall.

Although the positive attitudes of the Nigerian students in the United States seemed to increase as the number of years they studied in the United States increased, it was observed that, for those living in the United States up to three years (mean score = 106.79), attitudes toward the handicapped began to decline in comparison with those who had lived in the United States for two years (mean score = 111.61). It is possible that since many Nigerian students in the United States complete their Bachelor's degrees in three years, the idea of starting over again in the graduate school may be a serious thought to a Nigerian student. Akpan-Iquot (1980) found that African students recorded finances as their most severe problems in the United States. Having to think about financial problems for another year throughout a graduate program may temporarily influence the way Nigerian students in the United States perceive the general environment around themselves.

A very high score was recorded by the group who spent their fifth year in the US. The fifth year for most Nigerians is when they are pursuing their doctoral programs or getting ready to return to Nigeria to work. At this point, they start to slow down and evaluate their



success in academic pursuit. This may give them a sense of accomplishment in their academic goals. These are the likely factors that stabilize the Nigerians' attitudes toward handicapped persons. Rice (1976) stated that literature dealing with attitudes indicated that attitudes are based on accumulation of personal experiences. Rice (1976) also stated that attitudinal literature indicated that a person tends to be consistent with his attitudes. The Nigerian students appeared to have stable attitudes (positive) during their period of study in the US. However, that stability may be constantly shaken by some factors, such as finances, school related problems, continuing education decisions, and missing home.

On the hypothesis which tested gender as a factor in the Nigerians' attitudes toward handicapped persons, data analysis indicated no significant difference (Table III). This finding confirmed Elsberry's (1974) study which found no significant difference in attitudes of male and female teachers toward handicapped persons. Ukwuije (1981) found no significant difference among Nigerians in their attitudes toward handicapped persons when they were grouped by gender.

The hypothesis which tested religion as a factor in the attitudes of Nigerian students toward the handicapped persons showed a significant difference. The Protestant students showed the highest positive score; the Catholic students scored next to the Protestants, the least positive scores were recorded by the Islamic students. This finding supports the Zuk et al. (1961) study on religion and attitudes, which found a low but positive correlation between these two variables. This finding is not surprising because the three religions teach the acceptance of handicapped persons. Ukwuije (1981) stated that the Catholics have the

notion that suffering, though painful, is a part of life; therefore, they have less associated guilt with the birth of handicapped children. The Moslems believe that all handicapping conditions are the work of God while the Protestants believe that any handicapping conditions are the atonement for the sins of the parents put upon the children.

The hypothesis which tested the attitudes by region of origin in Nigeria (North, West, East) showed no significant difference in the attitudes of Nigerians toward handicapped (Table VIII, p. 43 and 44). However, the mean scores indicated that the Eastern region had a slightly higher score than the Northern and the Western regions. It is surprising to find that the Eastern region had the most positive score because Daramola (1976) states that in the Eastern region of Nigeria, handicapped persons are not positively valued. It is possible that the Easterners in this study, after being exposed to the way handicapped persons are regarded in the United States, have changed their attitudes toward the handicapped or else the students sampled are not representative of the Eastern Nigerians in general.

The hypothesis which tested age as a factor which influenced the Nigerian students' attitude toward handicapped persons showed no significant difference (Table V, p. 39 and 40).

Merlin and Kauppi (1972) stated that college majors provide a convenient population for the study of occupational group differences. This statement generated the hypothesis which examined the Nigerian students' attitudes toward the handicapped based on major area of study. The ANOVA (TABLE VI) indicated a significant difference but a Scheffe's test was not sensitive to indicate which groups were

different. However, Law and Science Students' Mean Scores were higher than the remaining three groups (Business, Education and Arts). Petrangelo (1977) found business majors scoring lower than the rehabilitation and special education students. Although the Business students in the present study showed a positive attitude toward handicapped persons, their mean score was higher than the score shown by Education. It is disappointing to see that education majors expressed the least positive attitude toward handicapped persons. It is possible that greater awareness on the realities of handicapping conditions can influence education majors attitudes toward the handicapped.

#### Implications

The results of this study have implications for research and practice. Some of the more important implications are as follows:

The general attitudes of the Nigerian students in the United States toward the handicapped appear to be strongly positive. Some of the demographic variables that were tested indicated no significant difference in the Nigerian student's attitudes toward handicapped persons, except the number of years one studied in the United States. Some of the assumptions in this study were that the attitudes of the Nigerian students would be influenced by two major factors: first, the legislation, educational rights and the way the American society provides facilities for handicapped people to make life more comfortable for handicapped persons; and second, the way handicapped persons in the United States regard themselves. Handicapped persons in the United States do not sit back and expect others to do everything for them. They pursue a wide variety of educational and social activities. These

conditions are not the same in Nigeria.

It is surprising to this writer that all the Nigerian groups in this study showed positive attitudes toward handicapped persons. Most studies in Nigeria report the contrary. One cannot rule out the possibility that the key factors influencing attitudes toward handicapped persons as held by Nigerians in the United States may be the ways the United States government and its people regard and treat handicapped persons. The way handicapped persons in the United States regard themselves may be another major factor. Based on the findings of this study, it seems reasonable to conclude that, if the present Nigerians studying in the United States return home, they will probably support the cause of special education in Nigeria.

#### Recommendations ✓

##### Practical Areas

Based upon the findings of the present study, the following recommendations are made:

1. It is important that the government of Nigeria encourage programs designed to model positive attitudes toward the handicapped and the importance of integrating handicapped persons into the mainstream of society. This could be done by making job opportunities available to handicapped persons who are capable of working.

2. There need to be opportunities which will encourage non-handicapped persons and handicapped persons to come together and learn about the problems faced by handicapped persons.

3. It is important that Universities provide open courses on the causes of handicapping conditions in order to educate the people.

4. Courses on special education should be taught in elementary and secondary schools as well as teacher training colleges.

5. The American Universities should encourage students to take a few elective courses in special education to give students some knowledge of handicapping conditions.

6. In-service program needs to be made available to the teachers in both the elementary and secondary school levels to acquaint them with the issues and practices affecting the handicapped.

#### Research areas

Based upon the findings of the present study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Research needs to follow up the attitudes of Nigerians after they return to and spend time in Nigeria.

2. Comparative studies with other nationalities would expand the knowledge of different national attitudes toward handicapped persons.

3. This study was limited to 4 public research universities. Further research should focus on other universities and colleges.

4. The ATDP instrument needs to be revised to concentrate on a specific area of disability and not all the disabilities.

#### Conclusions ✓

In general, the results of this study suggest that the attitudes of Nigerian students in the United States toward handicapped persons are positive. Considering the fact that other researchers in Nigeria had found the Nigerians' attitudes toward handicapped persons to be neither positive or negative, the present findings are very encouraging to the

handicapped in Nigeria. While that is the case, one must also bear in mind that the differences in the past and present findings may originate from instruments used in gathering the data.

Finally, it is recommended that future studies be directed to validate or refute the findings of this study.

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48 Refers to 25

APPENDIX A

A LETTER TO THE REGISTRAR



# Oklahoma State University

APPLIED BEHAVIORAL STUDIES IN EDUCATION

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74074  
310 NORTH MURRAY HALL  
(405) 624-6036

January 24, 1984

Raymond Girod  
Registrar  
Whitehurst Hall  
CAMPUS

Dear Mr. Girod,

I am writing this letter to request a release of the names of Nigerian students enrolled at O.S.U. during the Fall Semester, 1983, by the International Student Office to Ekpedeme Thompson Ekpro. Mr. Ekpro is doing his doctoral dissertation on the attitudes of Nigerian students toward handicapped individuals. I am his thesis advisor and Dr. Patrick Forsythe (EAHED) is his committee chairman.

If you have any questions regarding this request, please contact me.

Sincerely,

*Barbara Wilkinson*  
Barbara Wilkinson, Ph.D.  
Associate Professor  
ABSED

APPENDIX B

A LETTER TO THE PRESIDENTS OF NIGERIAN  
STUDENTS' ORGANIZATIONS

January 26, 1984

Dear President:

I am a fellow Nigerian studying at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma. My doctoral dissertation titled "ATTITUDES OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES TOWARD HANDICAPPED PERSONS" has made it impossible for me to complete this program without your help.

This study will identify the beliefs that we, the future leaders of Nigeria, hold toward a handicapped person. Identifying these beliefs will help plan educational programs that will integrate handicapped persons into the mainstream of our society.

Your international student office has directed me to contact you, the president, so that you can send me the list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of all the Nigerian students who registered in your school in the Fall Semester of 1983. I cannot ask for the current semester registration list as this may not be compiled yet.

Let me assure you that all the names, addresses and telephone numbers will be treated as confidential. Please remember that I cannot complete this study without you.

Please send all replies to:

35-4 North University Place  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Ekpedeme Thom,son Ekpro

APPENDIX C

ATTITUDES TOWARD DISABLED PERSONS SCALE,  
FORM A, MODIFIED





10. Handicapped persons are usually more sensitive than other people.	+3 -	+2 -	+1 -	-3 -	-2 -	-2 -
11. Severely handicapped persons are usually untidy.	+3 -	+2 -	+1 -	-3 -	-2 -	-1 -
12. Most handicapped people feel that they are as good as other people.	+3 -	+2 -	+1 -	-3 -	-2 -	-1 -
13. The driving test given to a handicapped person should be more severe than the one given to the non-handicapped.	+3 -	+2 -	+1 -	-3 -	-2 -	-1 -
14. Handicapped people are usually sociable.	+3 -	+2 -	+1 -	-3 -	-2 -	-1 -
15. Handicapped persons usually are not as conscientious as physically normal persons.	+3 -	+2 -	+1 -	-3 -	-2 -	-1 -
16. Severely handicapped persons probably worry more about their health than those who have minor handicaps.	+3 -	+2 -	+1 -	-3 -	-2 -	-1 -
17. Most handicapped persons are not dissatisfied with themselves.	+3 -	+2 -	+1 -	-3 -	-2 -	-1 -
18. There are more misfits among handicapped persons than among non-handicapped persons.	+3 -	+2 -	+1 -	-3 -	-2 -	-1 -
19. Most handicapped persons do not get discouraged easily.	+3 -	+2 -	+1 -	-3 -	-2 -	-1 -
20. Most handicapped persons resent physically normal people.	+3 -	+2 -	+1 -	-3 -	-2 -	-1 -
21. Handicapped children should compete with physically normal children.	+3 -	+2 -	+1 -	-3 -	-2 -	-1 -
22. Most handicapped persons can take care of themselves.	+3 -	+2 -	+1 -	-3 -	-2 -	-1 -
23. It would be best if handicapped persons would live and work with non-handicapped persons.	+3 -	+2 -	+1 -	-3 -	-2 -	-1 -
24. Most severely handicapped people are must as ambitious as physically normal persons.	+3 -	+2 -	+1 -	-3 -	-2 -	-1 -

25. Handicapped people are just self-confident as other people.	+3	+2	+1	-3	-2	-1
	-	-	-	-	-	-
26. Most handicapped persons want more affection and praise than other people.	+3	+2	+1	-3	-2	-1
	-	-	-	-	-	-
27. Physically handicapped persons are often less intelligent than non-handicapped ones.	+3	+2	+1	-3	-2	-1
	-	-	-	-	-	-
28. Most handicapped persons are different from non-disabled people.	+3	+2	+1	-3	-2	-1
	-	-	-	-	-	-
29. Handicapped persons don't want any more sympathy than other people.	+3	+2	+1	-3	-2	-1
	-	-	-	-	-	-
30. The way handicapped people act is irritating.	+3	+2	+1	-3	-2	-1
	-	-	-	-	-	-

APPENDIX D

A DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET

## DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SHEET

Please answer ALL Questions. Place an X against any item that best describes you. Please state your age on Question #2. Do not write your name.

1. Sex:

(a) Male \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Female \_\_\_\_\_

2. Age \_\_\_\_\_

3. What is your religion?

(a) Protestant \_\_\_\_\_ (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) Catholic \_\_\_\_\_

(c) Islam \_\_\_\_\_ (d) other \_\_\_\_\_ (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. Which geographical region in Nigeria are you from?

(a) Western \_\_\_\_\_ (b) Northern \_\_\_\_\_

(c) Eastern \_\_\_\_\_

5. How long have you lived in the United States?

(a) less than one year \_\_\_\_\_ (b) one year \_\_\_\_\_ (c) two years \_\_\_\_\_

(d) three years \_\_\_\_\_ (e) four years \_\_\_\_\_ (f) five years \_\_\_\_\_

(g) over five years \_\_\_\_\_

6. What is your major area of study?

(a) Business-(specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (b) Science-(specify) \_\_\_\_\_

(c) Education-(specify) \_\_\_\_\_ (d) Arts-(specify) \_\_\_\_\_

(e) Law \_\_\_\_\_ (f) other \_\_\_\_\_ (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you very much!

P/S When this study is completed, the findings will be made available to the president of the Nigerian Student Association in your school.

APPENDIX E

A COVER LETTER TO THE RESPONDENT

35-4 North University Place  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074

February 8, 1984

Dear Friend:

Thank you very much for taking fifteen minutes from your class schedule to respond to the attached questionnaire.

I am requesting your completion of the questionnaire to help me complete the study titled "ATTITUDES OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES TOWARD HANDICAPPED PERSONS".

This study, which is in partial fulfillment of my doctoral study in Special Education at Oklahoma State University, will help plan educational programs that will integrate handicapped persons into the mainstream of Nigerian society.

I have enclosed a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your response. Your response will be treated as confidential.

Please let me hear from you before February 29, 1984.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Yours very sincerely,

Ekpedeme Thompson Ekpro

APPENDIX F  
A FOLLOW-UP LETTER



35-4 North University Place  
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074

March 15, 1984

Dear Friend:

One month ago, I mailed a questionnaire on the "ATTITUDES TOWARD HANDICAPPED PERSONS" to you and requested your completion to help determine your beliefs about handicapped persons. As I stated earlier, this study will help plan educational programs to integrate the handicapped into Nigerian society. Your name will not be used in reporting the results of this study.

Please do not ignore this questionnaire. May I hear from you before April 3, 1984?

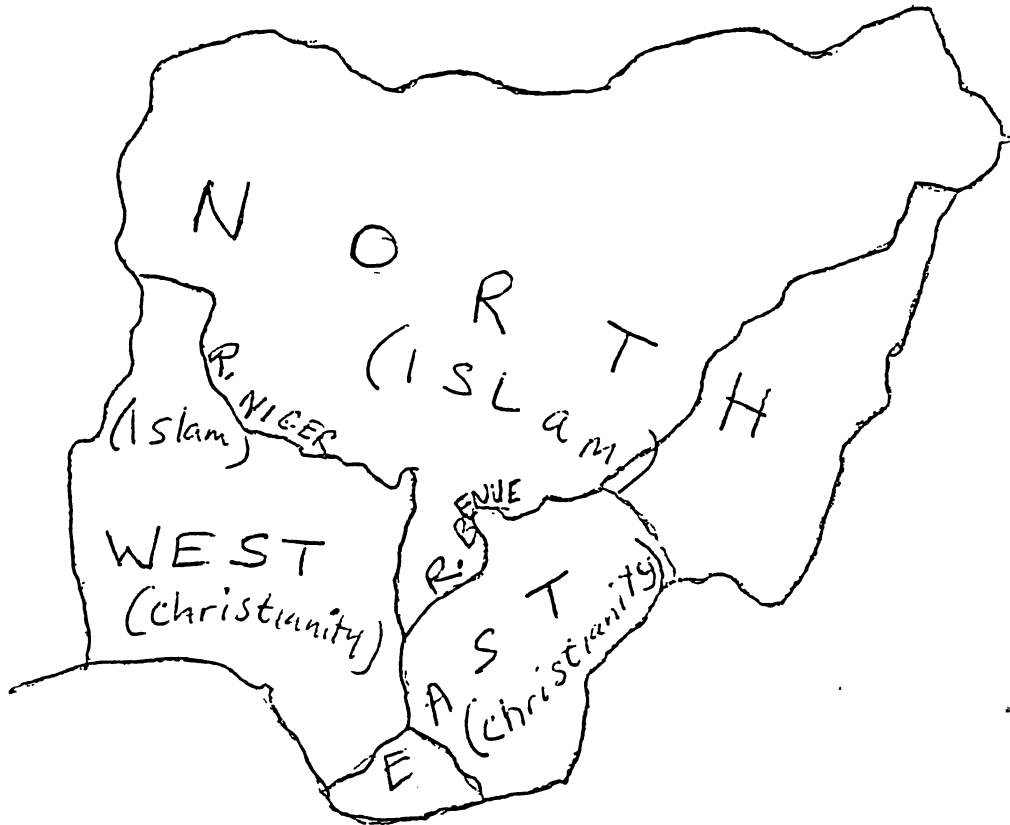
Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours very sincerely,

Ekpedeme Thompson Ekpro

APPENDIX G

A MAP OF NIGERIA SHOWING REGIONS



A Map of Nigeria Showing Regions

VITA 2

Ekpedeme Thompson Ekpro

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: ATTITUDES OF NIGERIAN STUDENTS IN THE UNITED STATES TOWARD  
HANDICAPPED PERSONS

Major Field: Educational Administration

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Ekpene Ukpa, in Etinan Local Government Area (LGA), Cross River State, Nigeria, July 21, 1950, the son of the late Chief Thompson Ekpro and Mrs. Arit T. Ekpro.

Education: Graduated from Primary School, Ekpene Ukpa, Etinan LGA, Nigeria, receiving the First School Leaving Certificate in 1968; attended Qua Iboe Mission Secondary School, Etinan, Nigeria, from 1969 to 1973, receiving West African School Certificate, June, 1973; attended Teacher Training College, Ibakachi, Nigeria, from 1974 to 1975, receiving Teachers' Grade Two Certificate, December, 1975; attended Northeastern University, Boston, Massachusetts, from January 1977 to September 1980, receiving Bachelor of Science Degree in Special Education; attended Bemidji State University, Minnesota, from September to December, 1980; transferred to Stephen Francis Austin State University, Nacogdoches, Texas, from May to December, 1981, receiving Master of Education Degree in Educational Administration; completed the requirements for the Doctor of Education Degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 1985.

Professional Experience: Taught at Primary School, Ikot Udobia, Etinan, Nigeria, 1974; Primary School, Ikot Ekpene Udo, 1975-1976; Bowditch School, Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts (Volunteer), 1977; Warren Center Summer Camp (Volunteer), Brookline, Massachusetts, 1978); Cooperative Education Assignment, 1978; Lincoln Park Community School, Somerville, Massachusetts, 1979; Northeastern University Reading Clinic, Boston, Massachusetts, 1979; Research Associate, Oklahoma State University, September 1984 to May, 1985.