

Facilitators' Attitude and Engagement in Advocacy towards Inclusion of Adults with Disabilities in Integrated Functional Adult Education Program in Gedeo Zone, Ethiopia

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was exploring the facilitators' attitude and engagement in advocacy towards inclusion of adults with disabilities in the integrated functional adult education program (IFAEP) in Gedeo Zone, Ethiopia. To this end, the explanatory sequential design which belongs to the mixed methods approach was employed. A total of 214 facilitators were selected using stratified random sampling to fill out the questionnaire with 98.6% (211) response rate. Three respondent facilitators were selected using purposive sampling technique for an interview based on their active participation in IFAEP. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS version 23 and presented through mean, SD, percentage, independent sample t-test, Mann-Whitney Test and Pearson correlation while the qualitative data were analyzed through narrative analysis. The quantitative results revealed that the majority of facilitators' had positive attitude and demonstrated the highest engagement in advocacy towards inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP. Among the demographic characteristics, a statistically significant mean score difference was observed in facilitators' educational qualification but not in other demographic characteristics. The Pearson's correlation coefficient ($r = .655^{**}$) indicated that facilitators' attitude and their engagement in advocacy were positively correlated. The qualitative results also revealed that facilitators' had positive attitude and demonstrated the highest engagement in advocacy. Changes in facilitators' attitude can bring about changes in their engagement in advocacy towards inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP. It is recommended that facilitators' educational qualification should be improved for the effective inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP.

Keywords: Adult with disabilities; Attitude; Engagement in advocacy; Facilitators; Inclusion

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1. Introduction

Education is one of the most important means that ensure quality of life. According to Hidalgo-Hidalgo (2014), the fiscal loyalty and the progress of any country sturdily depend on the educated adult workforce among its people. Hence, producing and training the skilled and creative workforce through active participation in the Integrated Functional Adult Education Program (IFAEP) is crucial for economic development and progress of an individual and the society at large (Boberiene, 2013).

The successful implementation of inclusive education anywhere in the world requires that the trainers must have adequate training, sufficient support, and positive attitudes (Frankel, Gold, and Ajodhia-Andrews, 2010). According to DeBoer, Pijil Sip, and Minnaert (2011), the flourishing achievement in inclusive education settings would depend on the facilitators' enthusiasm to accept the inclusion practices. Berry (2010) also claims that the negative attitude towards inclusion of individuals with disabilities that widens away from the facilitators in the local education and training settings is most reflective of the negative attitude conveyed by facilitators who have general education training in the USA. An inclusive education delivery system in different countries also requires a continuum of support from the government to be successful when many of the facilitators with general education and training continue to have negative attitudes toward inclusion of people with disabilities (McCray and McHatton, 2011). On the other hand, different research findings in the area of inclusive education disclosed the fact that the facilitators' attitudes towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities must be premeditated to spot dearth within the education system which may create negative insight.

The engagement in advocacy by the global community to address the needs of people with disabilities is increasing from time to time due to the growing demand for fundamental policy changes toward the focus on the importance of developing inclusive education for all members of the society (Mariyam, 2016). Tufail and Lyon (2007) believe that the salient point of advocacy is to speak up for oneself or many others. Stone (1999) also emphasizes that advocacy empowers people with learning disabilities as they should be considered as people with power, rights, and values.

Different research outputs recognize that facilitators' attitudes and engagement in advocacy are influenced by different demographic characteristics like gender, training in special needs and inclusive education, experience in training people with disabilities, educational qualification individuals trained. With regards to the effect of gender, most of the studies did not indicate significant difference between male and female facilitators (Chhabra, Srivastava, and Srivastava, 2010). However, some of the studies have shown that female facilitators feel more positively towards inclusion than male facilitators (Alghazo and Naggat Gaad, 2004; Alquraini, 2012). Only two studies, both conducted with high school teachers, found that male teachers felt more positively toward inclusion than female teachers (Bhatnagar and Das, 2014; Ernst and Rogers, 2009).

Experiences in inclusive settings are potentially influential in changing facilitators' and other stakeholder's attitude who work with groups of individuals with disabilities in general education and training settings (Block, Taliaferro, Harris, and Krause, 2010; Kurniawati, Minnaert, Mangunsong, and Ahmeda, 2012). Fundamental knowledge and skills which can be achieved through advancing educational qualification of facilitators in such pedagogic skills as instructional accommodation and activity differentiation which are helpful for training adults with disabilities (Nguyet and Ha, 2010).

Other most frequently studied variables that can affect the facilitators' attitude towards inclusion of adults with disabilities are training of trainers in special needs education and their experience of training adults with disabilities and their level of prior contact with adults with disabilities. Experience in working with people with disabilities is associated with more positive attitude towards inclusion (Boyle, Topping, and Jindal-Snape, 2013; Wilkerson, 2012). Kapinga (2014) stresses the importance of training by stating that, the success of inclusive education rests on quality facilitators' preparation gearing towards inclusive education. The level of adults with disabilities that facilitators trained can also influence their attitude (Meadows, 2012).

In Ethiopia, inclusive education is being practiced with the supposition that facilitators are eager to train adults with disabilities in regular education and training settings and have willingness to address the needs of such trainees with devotion and enthusiasm. However, earlier studies conducted in various educational and environmental settings revealed the manifestations of negative attitudes and misconceptions among facilitators. In Ethiopia, various studies were conducted focusing on the attitudes of trainers towards the inclusion of people with disabilities in regular schools (Beyene and Tizazu, 2010). Some of these are the inclusion of people with visual impairment in learning English subject (Shifere, 2013), challenges and opportunities to implement inclusive education (Mitiku, Alemu, and Mengsitu, 2014), psychosocial and educational challenges and opportunities of people with visual impairment (Hadgu, 2015).

The above studies, however, were far from addressing the facilitators' attitudes and engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in integrated functional adult education programs. On the other hand, the Education Sector Development Program Five (ESDP-V) which planned to be implemented in 2015/16 -2019/20 in Ethiopia, prioritizes equal opportunities and participation of education and training for all, with special attention given to the disadvantaged groups and the delivery of quality education that meets the diverse learning needs of all children, youth and adults (MoE, 2016).

The joint work issued by the World Health Organization and the World Bank (2011) on disability reveals that there are an estimated 15 million children, youth, and adults with disabilities in Ethiopia; and 17.6 percent of the general population is out of any education and training opportunities. A vast majority of people with disabilities in Ethiopia live in rural areas where access to basic services is limited including those in the Gedeo Zone. In Ethiopia, 95 percent of all persons with disabilities are estimated to live in poverty (Sida, 2014). Many of them also depend on family support and begging for their livelihoods. A study in the Oromia region, for instance, found that 55 percent of the surveyed persons with disabilities depend on family, neighbors, and friends for their living, while the rest generate meager income through self-employment, begging, and providing housemaid services (CARDOS, 2007). Hence, these all challenges can be alleviated through the successful inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP and which in turn requires the facilitators' positive attitude and their highest engagement in advocacy.

The government of Ethiopia has passed other recent laws that require the inclusion of people with disabilities in decision-making policies and employment (Lewis, 2014). The government is also trying to put in place systems and policies to promote the rights of persons with disabilities. Despite the efforts made by the government to enact and adopt laws and policies; enforcing and putting them into practice is still a challenge. Hence, what is needed is a strong and vibrant voice for persons with disabilities, not just advocacy groups. Ensuring a disability-inclusive perspective in all aspects of policy and labor legislation, effective implementation and enforcement of existing disability laws and policies, providing equal employment and training opportunities are among the factors that contribute to the reduction of poverty and the social and economic inclusion of people with disabilities in Ethiopia (ILO and Irish Aid, 2013). Therefore, the effective inclusion practices towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in the Gedeo Zone require the facilitators' positive attitude and engagement in advocacy in integrated functional adult education program (IFAEP).

Ethiopia has also followed international trends in promoting inclusive education (Tirussew, 2006) with reports over the past few years stating that the country has seen some special classes being opened at regular schools; yet the challenge is characterized by a shortage of instructional material, unresponsive school environments and lack of back-up support for children with disabilities in inclusive settings. These trends were not so much applied in IFAEP. In the Gedeo Zone there were about forty-eight adults with different physical, intellectual, and sensory problems in 2020 who were training together with their colleagues without disabilities in the same IFAEP training centers. On the other hand, most of the facilitators in Gedeo Zone IFAEP training centers were grade ten completers who do not have pedagogical and andragogical skills and knowledge to address the specific training

needs of adults with disabilities. Therefore, the current researchers believe that there is a need for qualified facilitators who can address the specific training needs of adults with disabilities in IFAEP in the Gedeo Zone.

The report by UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS, 2017) indicated that, out of an estimated total population of 104,960,000 (Male 52,410,000) and (Female 52,550,000), the adult literacy rate was 34.7%, (Male, 49.9%), and (Female (50.1%). In addition, the report by the SNNPR Education Bureau (2016), revealed that there were about 862,152 first year IFAEP trainees and 633,639 second-year IFAEP trainee adults who were being trained by 17,679 facilitators and of which 1000 facilitators were in the Gedeo Zone.

However, the report by Gedeo Zone Education Department (2019) revealed that the total numbers of facilitators in the study area were only 457. The majority or 48.6 percent of the facilitators in the Zone were grade 10 completers who did not have basic pedagogical knowledge and skills (Gedeo Zone Education Department, 2019). Regarding this, the evaluation results of the MoE/dvV international interventions in the IFAEP by Lind and Rausch (2010) in Ethiopia provided useful recommendations in which the technical team will strive to consider the training of facilitators.

Hence, the adult literacy facilitators require special training to train adults with disabilities that make him or her different from other adults without disabilities. Although the data in Table 1 below reveal that the number of adults participating in IFAEP in the Gedeo zone is increasing from time to time, the participation rate of adults with disabilities is negligible. That means, adults with disabilities constituted below 1% of the total participating adults in the programs.

Table 1. Adults with or without disabilities in integrated functional adult education program (IFAEP) from the year 2017-2019

Year	Level-I						Level-II					
	AWODs			AWDs			AWODs			AWDs		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
2009	7038	11309	18347	10	11	21	5205	10167	15372	-	-	-
2010	6186	12634	18820	19	10	29	4031	9055	13069	9	10	19
2011	4471	10573	15044	21	14	35	3323	7608	10931	18	8	26

Source: Gedeo Zone Education Department (2019)

In addition to the limited involvement of adults with disabilities in IFAEP training centers in the Gedeo Zone of Ethiopia, there is still a shortage of research findings that depict the facilitators' attitude and engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP. Hence, the current study aimed at examining the facilitators' attitude and engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in the IFAEP.

Research questions

This study intended to seek answers to the following research questions:

- What is the current status of facilitators' attitude towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP?
- To what extent facilitators engage in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP?
- Is there a significant difference between facilitators in their attitude and engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP?
- What is the relationship between facilitators' attitude and their engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP?

2. Research Methods

2.1. Sources of Data

The primary data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. While the questionnaires were Likert Scale type, the interview was a semi-structured interview. The Likert Scale type questionnaires were used to collect data from facilitators'. The interview was used to collect data from school principals, cluster supervisors, facilitators, adults with disabilities, and IFAEP experts from Districts education offices, Town Administration education unities, and Zonal education department.

2.2. Population, Sample, and Sampling Techniques

The population, sample, and sampling techniques used in the study are depicted in Table 2 below. The sample for the quantitative study was selected by using Yemane's (1967) survey sample size formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2} \quad \text{Where} \quad N=\text{Total population} \quad n=\text{sample size} \quad e=\text{error}$$

Based on the above formula, 214 facilitators were selected from the total of 457 facilitators by using stratified random sampling technique for a survey and four IFAEP experts from the District, Town Administration and Zonal level, three principals, three cluster supervisors, three facilitators from those who participated in a survey and three adults with disabilities were selected by using purposive sampling technique for interview.

Table 2. Facilitators sample and sampling techniques

Description	n	%	Sample	%	Sampling technique	
Districts and town administrations	Districts	8	100	4	50	Simple random sampling
	Town administrations	4	100	2	50	
Gender	Male	369	80.7	173	46.9	Stratified random sampling
	Female	88	19.3	41	46.7	
Educational qualification	Grade 10 completes	227	49.7	106	23.2	Stratified random sampling
	Summer in-service diploma trainees	122	26.7	57	12.5	
	Diploma holders and above	108	23.6	51	11.2	
	Total	457	100	214	46.8	

Source: Gedeo Zone education department and survey, 2020

2.3. Data Gathering Tools

As data collection instruments, a questionnaire and an interview guide were used. A Likert scale type questionnaire ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" with 11 items for facilitators' attitude and 11 items for facilitators' engagement in advocacy was constructed. Content validity of the items was checked by the subject experts in the Department of Special Needs and Inclusive Education at Haramaya University. Inter-rater reliability coefficients were computed for both categories of questions by conducting a pilot study. For the section on the attitudes of teachers in the use of accommodations in the classroom, Cronbach alpha was calculated at .872 in Meadows (2012) while the Cronbach alpha for facilitators' attitudes and engagement in advocacy was calculated at .846 and .865 respectively. Therefore, the instrument is reliable and valid. Finally, all the 22 (twenty-two) items that fulfilled the reliability and validity criteria were administered to 214 randomly selected facilitators' in the four districts and two Town Administrations in the Gedeo Zone IFAEP training centers.

In addition to the 22 (twenty-two) items, five demographic items namely gender, training in special needs and inclusive education, level of adults trained, educational qualification and experience in

training adults with disabilities were included in the questionnaire. Finally, an interview guide was developed and interviews were conducted with three facilitators. Thus, each interview session lasted for one hour per interviewee; three hours in total. The interview was conducted in Amharic language, and later transcribed into English language.

2.4. Method of Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using a statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 23 windows through descriptive statistics such as mean; mean percentage, standard deviation as well as inferential statistics of an independent-sample t-test and Pearson correlation. The inferential statistics such as an independent-sample t-test and Mann-Whitney U Test was used to measure the observed mean scores difference between facilitators' to measure whether they are statistically significant or not in the different demographic characteristics. A Pearson correlation was used to see the relationship between two dependent variables such as facilitators' attitudes and their engagement in advocacy. The demographic variables that tested were gender, training in special needs and inclusive education, the level of adults trained, the educational qualifications and the experience in training adults with disabilities in IFAEP. The findings of quantified data were presented in tables. Finally, the qualitative data were analyzed through word-by-word narrative analysis.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

3.1.1. Descriptive analysis

Table 3. Facilitators' demographic characteristics

Categories	Distributed	Returned	%
Gender			
Male	173	171	79.91
Female	41	40	18.69T
Training in SNIE			
Have training	104	102	47.66
Did not have training	110	109	50.94
Total	214	211	98.6
Level of adults trained			
Level I or Level II	66	66	30.84
Both levels	148	145	67.76
Total	214	211	98.6
Educational qualification			
Grade 10	108	107	50.00
Summer in service diploma trainee and above	106	104	48.6
Total	214	211	98.6
Experience in training AWDs			
Have experience	177	174	81.3
No experience at all	37	37	17.3
Total	214	211	99.61

Source: Primary data gathered through questionnaire, 2020

As depicted in Table 3, 171 facilitators (79.91%) male, 40 facilitators (18.69%) female and 211 facilitators (98.6%) filled the questionnaire and returned. Similarly, 102 facilitators (47.66%) have training in special needs and inclusive education and 109 facilitators (50.94%) did not have training in special needs and inclusive education. 66 facilitators (30.84%) trained adults in level-I or level-II, and 145 facilitators (67.76%) trained adults in both levels. 104 facilitators (48.6%) were grade 10 completers and 108 facilitators (50%) were in the summer in-service diploma training and above. 174 facilitators' (81.31%) have experience in training adults with disabilities and 37 facilitators' (17.3%)

have no experience in training adults with disabilities. Generally, the demographic characteristics in Table 3 above show that there are variations in numbers of male and female facilitators', facilitators in their experience of training adults with disabilities, and the level of adults they trained in IFAEP. On the other hand, it is observed that there is a balanced number of facilitators' in the training in terms of their qualification, meaning, whether or not they had prior training in special needs and inclusive education and the required qualifications as facilitators.

3.1.2. Facilitators' attitude towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of facilitators' attitude and engagement in advocacy

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Attitude	211	31.00	55.00	52.4	5

Source: Questionnaire data, 2020

From Table 4, it is observed that the facilitators' attitude ($M=52.4$, $SD=5$) was revealed that facilitators' had a positive attitude towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP as their observed mean is greater than the expected mean (33).

3.1.3. Facilitators' engagement extent in advocacy

Table 5. Descriptive statistics of facilitators' engagement extent in advocacy

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Engagement in advocacy	211	33.00	55.00	52.5	4.4

Source: Questionnaire Data, 2020

Table 5 showed that the facilitators' engagement extent in advocacy ($M=52.5$, $SD=4.4$). Therefore, the results revealed that facilitators demonstrated the highest engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP as their observed mean was greater than the expected mean (33). In addition to this, the frequency and percentage of mean responses of the facilitators were tested in each research variable as inferred in Table 6.

Table 6. Frequency and percentage of facilitators' response

Items	Frequency and percentage in each scales									
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Facilitators' attitude	3	1.4	2	.9	1	.5	31	14.7	174	82.5
Facilitators' engagement in advocacy	2	.9	2	.9	1	.5	34	16.2	172	81.5

Source: Questionnaire Data, 2020

Table 6 depicts the current status of facilitators' attitude and their engagement extent in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP in the Gedeo Zone. Thus, the responses for facilitators attitude infer that 174 respondents (82.5%) had strongly agreed; 31 respondents (14.7%) had agreed; 2 respondents (0.9%) had disagreed; 3 respondents (1.4%) had strongly disagreed and 1 respondent (0.5%) was unsure the issue. On the other hand, the responses for facilitators engagement in advocacy reveals that 172 respondents (81.5%) had strongly agreed; 34 respondents (16.2%) had agreed; 2 respondents (0.9%) had disagreed; 2 respondents (0.9%) had strongly disagreed and 1 respondent (0.5%) was unsure the issue. Therefore, the results generally, showed that the majority of

facilitators' had a positive attitude and demonstrated the highest engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP in Gedeo Zone

Besides, the data from interview also confirmed that most facilitators had positive attitude and demonstrated the highest engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP. For instance, one of the facilitators' stated that attitude is a practical outlook that can lead facilitators to effectively train adults with disabilities in IFAEP and he further stated that:

I have positive attitude in training adults with disabilities together with their colleagues without disabilities in my IFAEP training center and I am also engaged in advocacy services, but still there is a lack of attention by other stakeholders in addressing the logistic issues (Fa2 interviewee, 2020).

Similarly, other facilitator (Fa3 interviewee) also informed that lack of the same level of knowledge and understanding by all trainee adults with disabilities, lack of knowledge by facilitators' about various disability types, rigidity in curriculum, and the budget deficit for addressing the training needs of adults with disabilities are some of the challenging factors that are affecting the facilitators' attitudes and their engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in my current IFAEP training centers.

In addition, another facilitator (Fa1 interviewee) further explained that lack of awareness on disability policies and legislations by adults with disabilities, lack of research findings that help to identify adults with hidden disabilities in the study area.

According to this respondent, inadequate support services by the stakeholders such as school principals, cluster supervisors, experts and special education teachers to address the training needs of adults with disabilities in IFAEP. In addition, lack of appropriate facilities and materials in the training centers, inadequate training programs for facilitators' and ineffective awareness in inclusive policies and legislations are some of the factors that affect the facilitators' attitude and their engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP.

In all, the quantitative and qualitative results revealed that the facilitators' had positive attitude and demonstrated the highest engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP. Besides, the results also uncovered that there were different challenging factors that affect the facilitators' attitude and engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities.

3.1.4. Difference between facilitators' in their attitude and engagement in advocacy

Table 7. Comparison of facilitators' attitude by demographic variables: Mann-Whitney test result

Variables	Category	N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Sig.
Gender	Male	171	104.28	17831.5	3125.5	17831.5	-1.012	.312
	Female	40	113.36	4534.5				
Level of adults trained	I or II	66	105.22	6944.5	4733.5	6944.5	-.150	.881
	both	145	106.36	15421.5				
Training experience with AWDs	With experience	61	110.54	6743.0	4298.0	15623.0	-.823	-.775
	Without experience	150	104.15	15623.0				

P-value is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Questionnaire data, 2020

1. Gender

The descriptive statistics result gained through Mann-Whitney U test showed that the male facilitators' attitude (mean rank = 104.28) scored slightly different than their female counterparts (mean rank = 113.36). Mann-Whitney U value was found to be statistically not significant (U

=3125.5; $Z = -1.012$), $p > 0.01$, and the difference in attitude of both gender group was small ($r = -.07$).

2. Adults level of training

The descriptive statistics in Table 7 indicated the facilitators' attitude towards inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP regarding the level of adults they trained in level I or level II (mean rank = 105.22) scored slightly different than those trained adults of both levels (mean rank = 106.36). Mann-Whitney Value was not statistically significant ($U = 4733.5$; $Z = -150$), $p > 0.01$, and the difference among facilitators' in their attitude by training different levels was small ($r = -.001$).

3. Experience in training adults with disabilities

As the data was skewed the researchers used Mann-Whitney U statistical test. The descriptive statistics in Table 7 depicted the facilitators' attitude towards inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP in terms of training experience of adults with disabilities. Those who have experience in training adults with disabilities (mean rank = 110.54) scored slightly different than those who did not have experience in training adults with disabilities (mean rank = 104.15). Mann-Whitney Value was not statistically significant ($U = 4298.0$; $Z = -.823$), $p > 0.01$, and the difference between the facilitators' attitude by training levels was small ($r = -.002$).

Table 8. Comparison of facilitators attitude by demographic variables: Independent sample T-Test result

Variables	Category	N	Mean difference	SD	Mean value	Test	t-value	df	sig
Training in SNIE	With training	102	52.69	4.92	.56	33	.854	209	.394
	Without training	109	52.1	5.03					
Educational qualification	Grade 10	107	50.7	6.24	-3.43	33	-5.39	209	.000
	Summer in service diploma and above	104	54.1	2.1					

P-value is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Questionnaire Data, 2020

1. Training in special needs and inclusive education

The results depicted in Table 8 shows that facilitators who have training in special needs and inclusive education ($M=52.69$, $SD=4.92$) and those who did not have training in special needs and inclusive education ($M=52.1$, $SD= 5.03$) on their attitude towards inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP. Thus, it reveals that the observed mean is greater than the expected mean (33), though both groups of facilitators' has a slight difference in their mean scores. This shows that both groups of facilitators had a positive attitude. Accordingly, an independent sample t-test was used to examine whether this difference is statistically significant or not and a result revealed that there was no statistically significant mean scores difference between facilitators' as ($t(209) = .854$, $p>0.05$).

2. Educational qualification

As shown in Table 8 both groups of facilitators' had positive attitudes towards inclusion of adults with disabilities as their observed mean scores in all cases were greater than the expected mean (33). Though, facilitators' who are in the summer in-service diploma training and above ($M = 54.1$, $SD= 6.24$) were greater than that of grade 10 certificate holders ($M = 50.7$, $SD= 2.1$). This difference was proved as statistically significant as the significance level of their difference ($t(209) = -5.39$, $p<0.05$).

In other terms, the facilitators with the highest level of educational qualifications had a more positive attitude than those with the lowest level of educational qualifications.

Table 9. Comparison of facilitators' engagement in advocacy by demographic variables: Mann-Whitney test result

Variables	Category	N	Mean rank	Sum of ranks	Mann-Whitney U	Wilcoxon W	Z	Sig.
Gender	Male	171	106.37	18189.5	3356.5	4176.5	-.226	.821
	Female	40	104.41	4176.5				
Level of adults trained	I or II	66	105.17	6941.0	4730.0	6941.0	-.165	.869
	Both	145	106.38	15425.0				
Training experience with AWDs	With experience	61	110.13	6718.0	4323.0	15648.0	-.775	.438
	Without experience	150	104.32	15648.0				

P-value is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Questionnaire Data, 2020

1. Gender

The descriptive statistics showed that the male facilitators' engagement in advocacy towards inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP (mean rank = 106.37) scored slightly different than their female counterparts (mean rank = 104.41). The Mann-Whitney Value was not statistically significant ($U = 3356.5$; $Z = -.226$), $p > 0.01$, and the difference between male and female facilitators' engagement in advocacy was small ($r = -.002$).

2. Adults level of training

The descriptive statistics in Table 9 indicated the facilitators' engagement in advocacy towards inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP regarding the level of adults they trained in level I or level II (mean rank = 105.17) scored slightly different than those who trained adults in both levels (mean rank = 106.38). The Mann-Whitney value was not statistically significant ($U = 4733.5$; $Z = -.165$), $p > 0.01$, and the difference among facilitators' in their attitude by training different levels was small ($r = -.0012$).

3. Experience in training adults with disabilities

The descriptive statistics in Table 9 depicted the facilitators' engagement in advocacy towards inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP in terms of their experience in training adults with disabilities. Those who have experience in training adults with disabilities (mean rank = 110.13) scored slightly different than those who did not have experience in training adults with disabilities (mean rank = 104.32). The Mann-Whitney value was not statistically significant ($U = 4323.0$; $Z = -.775$), $p > 0.01$, and the difference among facilitators' in their engagement in advocacy by training different levels of adults was small ($r = -.014$).

Table 10. Comparison of facilitators' attitude by demographic variables: independent sample T-Test result

Variables	Category	N	Mean difference	SD	Mean value	Test	t-value	df	sig
Training in SNIE	With training	102	52.7	4.6	0.3	33	.49	209	.620
	Without training	109	52.4	4.3					
Educational qualification	Grade 10	107	51.3	4.7	-2.45	33	-4.24	209	.000
	Summer in service diploma and above	104	53.8	3.8					

P-value is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Source: Questionnaire Data, 2020

1. Training in special needs and inclusive education

The result in Table 10 inferred that facilitators' who have training in special needs and inclusive education (SNIE) ($M= 52.4$, $SD= 4.6$) and those who did not have training in (SNIE) ($M= 52.7$, $SD= 4.3$) demonstrated engagement in advocacy as their observed mean score is greater than the expected mean (33). An independent sample t-test result also indicated that there were no statistically significant mean scores between facilitators' who have training or did not have training in SNIE in their engagement in advocacy as ($t(209) = .49$, $p>0.05$).

2. Educational qualifications

In Table 10, it is observed that both categories of facilitators those who are in summer in-service diploma training and above ($M=53.8$, $SD= 4.7$) and grade 10 certificate holders ($M=51.3$, $SD= 3.8$) demonstrated engagement in advocacy as their observed mean is greater than the expected mean (33) even if there is a difference between facilitators with different educational qualifications in their mean scores. The difference was statistically significant with an independent sample t-test result ($t(209) = -4.24$, $p<0.05$). In other words, the facilitators with the highest educational qualifications demonstrated more engagement in advocacy than grade 10 certificate holders.

3.1.5. The relationship between facilitators' attitude and engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP

Table 11. Inter-correlation between facilitators' attitudes and engagement in advocacy (N=211)

Variables		Attitude	Engagement in advocacy
Attitude	Pearson correlation	1	.655**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
Engagement in advocacy	Pearson correlation		1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 11 inferred the inter-correlation between the two dependent variables of the study. The Pearson's correlation result ($r(211) = .655^{**}$) revealed that the facilitators' attitude and their engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities were statistically significant and positively correlated with each other. In addition, the interview results also confirmed these findings. For example, one of the interviewed facilitators' stated that "facilitators' attitudes and their engagement in advocacy are strongly related because, if I have a positive attitude, I will also engage in advocacy services for the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP and vice-versa" (Fa2 interviewee, 2020).

Similar responses were forwarded by other respondents in this study. Thus, the results revealed that facilitators' attitude and their engagement in advocacy have positive relationships. This means when facilitators have positive attitude towards inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP they would be engaged to advocate their cases.

3.2. Discussions

This study has explored the current status of facilitators' attitude and extent of engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in an integrated functional adult education program (IFAEP) in Gedeo zone, Ethiopia. The finding showed that facilitators had positive attitude and demonstrated the highest engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP. These findings were in line with previous findings including Barco (2007) that assumes the facilitators' attitude plays a vital role in the success of any education program, especially in the practice of inclusion while Kern (2006) affirms that facilitators' who are engaged in supporting and have faith in the philosophy of inclusion can provide adults with disabilities with confidence and create a comfortable learning environment. For instance, facilitators' attitude and beliefs in inclusive education practices has an impact on the access to education and training of adults with disabilities.

In this study, different demographic characteristics were identified to determine the attitudes facilitators hold and the factors that influence these attitudes. In this case, demographic characteristics such as gender, training in SNIE, level of adults' training, educational qualification, and experience of training AWDs were taken as indicators of facilitators' attitudes. Accordingly, the following findings were obtained as an insight into the question under discussion.

Regarding the results obtained, both male and female facilitators appeared with a positive attitude and demonstrated the highest engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP. Thus, the findings showed that there was no statistically significant mean scores difference both gender categories in their engagement in advocacy towards inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP.

Accordingly, this study did not verify the difference between facilitators. Similarly, Bishaw and Jayaprada (2012) also revealed that there was no significant difference between male and female trainers in their attitude in training individuals with visual impairment in inclusive education and training settings.

According to the findings, facilitators who have training in SNIE and those who did not have training in SNIE did not show differences in their attitude and engagement in advocacy. This result varied from some recent studies (Bishaw and Jayaprada, 2012; Engelbrecht, Savolainen, Nel, and Malinen, 2013; Hernandez, Hueck, and Charley, 2016; Pasha, 2012) which showed significant mean scores difference between facilitators with or without training in SNIE in their attitudes and engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of peoples with disabilities in education and training settings.

The findings indicated that facilitators who trained adults in level I or II had no difference in their attitude and engagement in advocacy than those who trained both levels towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP. This is different from the research findings of (Meadows, 2012) which affirmed that trainers who trained people in different levels of training hold different attitude and engagement in service provision in inclusive settings.

The results revealed that there was a difference between facilitators in their attitude and engagement in advocacy. This result is in agreement with the findings of pervious scholars such as (Sucuoğlu, Bakkaloğlu, Karasu, Demir, and Akalın, 2013; Ali, Mustapha, and Jelas, 2006) by which the facilitators' attitude showed significant difference in terms of their educational qualifications and Meadows (2012) trainers have a significant difference in service provision for individuals with disabilities.

The findings revealed that facilitators with experience in training adults with disabilities had no difference in their attitude and engagement in advocacy than those without experience in training

adults with disabilities in IFAEP. This implies that facilitators with or without experience in training adults with disabilities do not differ in their attitudes and engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP. This is different from the research findings of (Lambe and Bones, 2006; Bishaw and Jayaprada, 2012 and Sharma, Forlin, Loreman, and Earle, 2006) which affirmed that trainers who have experience in training adults with disabilities show more favorable attitudes toward inclusion and service provision in inclusive settings. For example, Sharma *et al.* (2006) stated that facilitators who have prior experience in training adults with disabilities hold more positive attitudes toward inclusion than those who have no prior experience in training adults with disabilities.

Overall, the variations in the results of the current study when compared with the prior research findings of the national and international level were related to awareness creation program on disabilities policies and legislations that were provided for facilitators by a Zonal education department under the program of short term continuous professional development training programs.

The relationship between facilitators' attitude and engagement in advocacy towards inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP

This study revealed that both variables such as facilitators' attitude and their engagement in advocacy have a positive relationship and one can bring changes on the other. This is in line with the prior finding by Meadows (2012) that assumes the implementation of inclusive education needs the positive attitude by trainers to provide individual accommodation in the general education and training system. On the other hand, Hadadian and Chiang (2007) recognized that providing any basic services in inclusive educational settings needs the positive attitude by facilitators. Therefore, facilitators' positive attitude can influence their engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP.

4. Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusions

The current study examined the facilitators' attitude and their engagement in advocacy towards inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP by computing mean, mean percentage and SD and making comparisons. Accordingly, the study found that facilitators' had positive attitude towards inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP. The study also showed that facilitators' have demonstrated the highest engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP. The results revealed that both facilitators attitude and their engagement in advocacy showed a significant difference in terms of their educational qualifications.

Nevertheless, significant difference was not observed in other demographic characteristics such as gender, training in SNIE, level of adults trained, and experience in training adults with disabilities. It is also revealed that the facilitators' attitude and their engagement in advocacy had positive relationship. The qualitative results, however, showed that even if the facilitators' had positive attitude and demonstrated the highest engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP, still there is a limitation among stakeholders to implement inclusive education successfully in IFAEP.

4.2. Recommendations

Facilitators should receive ongoing professional development training to bring about positive attitude and demonstrate an engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP because they had difference in their education qualifications. Continuous professional development programs that given by experienced trainers should focus on addressing each activity that lead facilitators' do have positive attitude and demonstrate engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP.

Principals, cluster supervisors, district, town administration and zonal IFAEP experts need to enlighten the facilitators to put in place legislations related to the right to education for adults with disabilities. Facilitators need to be committed in implementing the laws that support inclusion of adults with disabilities and should demonstrate positive attitude and engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP. Strict guidelines should be drafted by the educational leaders at district, town administration and zonal level to ensure whether or not the facilitators hold positive attitude and engage in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP.

Facilitators' attitude and their engagement in advocacy towards the inclusion of adults with disabilities in IFAEP are core issues in the educational process that all facilitators must embrace. Generally, the facilitator positive attitude and their highest engagement in advocacy need to be fostered so that adults with disabilities can be effectively included in IFAEP in Gedeo zone.

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5. References

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