



RESEARCH ARTICLE

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PERCEIVED CHALLENGES MILITATING AGAINST EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE SCHOOL PRACTICES FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN AKWA IBOM AND CROSS RIVER STATE – NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated the problems hindering effective implementation of inclusive school practices for person with special needs in public primary schools in Akwa Ibom and Cross River State of Nigeria. Two research questions and three research hypotheses guided the study. The study adopted descriptive survey design and accidental sampling techniques was used to elicit responses from 40 head teachers and 160 classroom teachers in the two states. An instrument tagged problem hindering effective implementation of inclusive school practices questionnaire (PHE11DQ) was used to obtain data for the study, this was face validated by three research experts to ensure face and content validity. The reliability coefficient of 0.75 was deduced as a measure of internal consistency through the use Cronbach alpha statistical technique. Data collected were analyzed using chi-square statistical tool and Items covered included, parents' teacher relationship, class size, legislation, teacher's experiences, funding, in service training, teaching materials and teacher ratio. Items with means score of 3.00 and above were seen as the major problem face by effective implementation of inclusive school practices in the study area. The discussion bothered majorly on funding, legislation, and in-services training as problems hindering effective implementation of inclusive school practices in the two states. The null hypotheses were all accepted and conclusion was drawn thereafter that, for inclusive education to function effectively government should demonstrate commitment in teacher in-service training, legislation and funding of education. It was recommended that government should set aside funds for inclusive school practices, adequate laws should be made and enforced and teachers should be trained on how to provide inclusive services to deserving students/ pupil with special educational needs in their classroom/ schools in the two states under study.

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INTRODUCTION

The main aim of education is to ensure that all citizens who are of school age have access to knowledge, acquire skills and basic information needed to prepare them for life. The knowledge acquired should prepared the individual to be useful to himself, contribute to community development and the society at large. This objective of education is open to all citizens irrespective of their genetic composition, social, physical, sensory, mental, psychological or emotional status Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004). Government over the years, had achieved access to education through general education and special education system.

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A situation where the former takes care of all learners without exceptionality and the later through a customized education based on their peculiar needs or exceptionality. However, by 1994 a new trend in the provision of education for individual with special educational needs was conceived and its framework presented to the global communities in Salamanca, Spain as inclusive education for children, youth and adult with special educational needs (Salamanca, 1994). Ozoji, Unachkwu and Kolo (2016) highlighted the benefit of inclusive education to include; access to education in the most suitable and less discriminatory seeming environment, ensuring the provision of appropriate, commensurate and functional education within professionally recognized best practices for all persons, reaching out to all vulnerable and risk group, and provision of positive social cohesion between the more endowed and the less endowed.

This development according to the Salami (2013) “was not the norms in our schools but a departure from what it used to be.” Special classes were managed for students with special needs, special education teachers were trained to cater for the needs of persons with special needs and school facilities were organized based on the specific need of the learners. Inclusive education is the most current trend in special needs education; this means the acceptance of all children without exception nor discrimination into the neighborhood school (Oboni2006). So, inclusive education is a means of providing quality education to all persons with or without special needs. Inclusive education according to Ozoji et al (2016) is operated on the basis of principle of promoting equitability in learning, equalization of learning in daily life experiences, ensuring commensurate learning opportunity for all learners, prioritization of meeting functional learning for all, irrespective of their abilities, social background and inclusiveness of special educational service delivery. Inclusive education alters the customized education provision as postulated in Nigeria National Policy of Education. Furthermore, this experts of special needs education pointed out that, if ‘education for all’ must be achieved, efforts toward inclusion must be desired by all nation, such that all will understand the importance of this system.

From the foregoing, if inclusive education must achieved it set goal, then there is a need for adaptation, accommodation and modification of education systems. Also there is need to build teacher competencies hence teachers are the central feature in teaching and learning. They become more critical when we think of inclusion as the drivers of the system. In that wise Swart and Petipher (2007), consider educators to be the key force in determining the quality of inclusion and inclusive practices in our schools. Teachers on the job should be provided with training in order to update themselves with current knowledge and skills training in order to cope with the emerging challenges of inclusion. More so, special education as practice in Nigeria is not in any unitary controlled, like the UNESCO review (1988) noted, most countries including Nigeria, had policies of a kind, classifying children with special as mere extension of those referred to in a general education law. Ajiebewe (2013) add that, education law in Nigeria is nothing but a sweeping assumption of education for all irrespective of needs. This assertion confirms the fact that general education remains over dependent on general education policy. This situation is made worse because there are no places to lodge special education complaints, even where there are supposed to be existing administrator seems to pay “lip services” to special education complaint.

Funding is another most important agenda in educational administration. Inclusive education require a lot of structural modifications, for instance, conventional schools with ramp should be designed in such a way that every student is taken into consideration. Equipment should be purchased for students with special needs to help cope with their peers. Legislation guiding the implementation of the programmed must be strengthened to provide for smooth operation of inclusive system. There are cases of dilapidated structures, poorly equipped schools poorly motivated and unequipped teachers. The prescription of the practice of inclusive education is a herculean task, Nigeria Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC 2010), Kolo(2015), opines that the challenges for the practice of inclusive education in a developing educational system like Nigeria include, fixing the

broken school, system and structure acquisition of both regular and special equipment. Human capital development, acquisition and adaptation of E-learning platforms and facilities, Developing regular specialized capacities and developing standards which harmonize with inclusive policy guidelines through legislation. In this paper, focus is on teacher’s capacities, government funding and legislation as a catalyst for smooth operation of inclusive education in Nigeria.

Statement of problem: Every government has the desire to provide quality education for all its citizens, irrespective of their individual challenges, that is why each year workshop and conferences are organized to train and retrain teachers in their domain, teachers are also allowed to take up part time studies in order to enhance improved teaching in their schools, budget are made to cover educational expenses in the state to curb irregularities in funding of education, bills are sign into law to provide policy direction in all public schools and to ensure uniformity in the school system. But sadly enough, despite all the effort put in place by both the past and present governments, teachers are either not sufficient in the school system when compared to ratio of teachers to students, schools are not practicing inclusive education basically because of lack of basic knowledge and skill to managed special needs children included in their classroom, teachers experiences, class size, parent teacher relationship ratio due to inadequate funds to managed schools in the study area, school are not remodel to suit the demand of inclusive education and the state legislation seems not to be aware of the emerging practices of inclusive education through their obvious silent about the issue at stake in their chambers. From the foregoing, it appears there are serious disconnect between the government and its educational agencies, in terms of adequate teachers training, recruitment of teachers. Also, it appears that funds budgeted for education are not sufficient or are not properly utilized by educational administrator such that the system remain where it was or even worst by the year as school structure continue to face decay. State and national assembly representative seems not to be aware of the trends in education practices all over the world which is inclusive education.

Purpose of the problem: The purpose of the study was to investigate the problems hindering the effective implementation of inclusive education in the study area; more specify the study seek to identify.

- The problems hindering effective implementation of inclusive school practices primary in Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State.
- Access whether there is a significant different on teachers view of the problems in Akwa Ibom Sate and Cross River State.

Research question

- What are the problems hindering the implementation of inclusive education in Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State?
- Do teachers views on the problems significantly differs between the two states?

Research hypotheses

- Teacher’s view of funding as a problems hindering effective implementation of inclusive school practice

does not significantly differs in Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State.

- Teacher's view of legislation as a problem hindering effective implementation of inclusive school practices does not significantly differs in Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State.
- Teacher's view of in-service training as a problems hindering effective implementation of inclusive school practice does not significantly differs in Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State.

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted survey design with purpose of investigating the phenomena under study. Accidental sampling techniques were used to elicit comments from 40 head teachers and 160 classroom teachers in the two states. To identify the problem, the researcher constructed an instrument tagged problem hindering effective implementation of inclusive school practices questionnaire (PHE 11DQ) this was face and content validated by three research experts. The reliability coefficient of 0.75 was deduced as a measure of internal consistency through the use Cronbach alpha statistical technique.

Items covered include, parent's teacher relationship, class size, legislation, teacher's experiences, funding, in service training, teaching materials and teacher ratio. Items with means score of 3.00 and above where seen as the major problem face by effective implementation of inclusive school practices in the study area. Data obtained from questionnaire were analyzed using chi-square statistical tool.

RESULTS

Hypotheses one: Teacher's view of funding as a problems hindering effective implementation of inclusive school practice does not significantly differs in Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State.

The result of the analysis indicates that the calculated χ^2 of 44.05 was less than the tabulated χ^2 of 3.04 at 1 degree of freedom. With this the null hypotheses was retained.

Hypothesis Two: Teachers' view of legislation as a problem hindering effective implementation of inclusive school practices does not significantly differs in Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State

Table 2

The result of the analysis indicates that the calculated χ^2 of 1.34 was less than the tabulated χ^2 of 3.04 at 1 degree of freedom. With this the null hypotheses was accepted.

Hypothesis three: Teacher's view of in-service training as a problems hindering effective implementation of inclusive school practice does not significantly differs in Akwa Ibom State and Cross River State.

The result of the analysis indicate that the calculated χ^2 of .39 was less than the tabulated χ^2 of 3.04 at 1 degree of freedom. With this the null hypotheses was accepted.

Table 1.

STATE	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
AKS	O (E) 76 (77)	O (E) 60 (62)	O (E) 44 (45)	O (E) 20 (16)	200
CRS	78 (77)	64 (62)	46 (45)	12 (16)	200
O	E		O - E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
76	77		-1	1	.01
60	62		-2	4	.06
44	45		-1	1	.02
20	16		4	16	1
78	77		1	1	.01
64	62		2	4	.06
46	45		1	1	.02
12	16		-4	16	1
					$\chi^2 = 2.19$

Table 2.

STATE	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
AKS	O (E) 82 (73)	O (E) 74 (73)	O (E) 34 (31)	O (E) 10 (12)	200
CRS	86(84)	72 (73)	28(31)	14 (12)	200
O	E		O - E	(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
82	84		-2	4	.04
74	73		1	1	.01
34	31		3	9	.29
10	12		-2	4	.33
86	84		2	4	.04
72	73		-1	1	.01
28	31		-3	9	.29
14	12		-2	4	.33
					$\chi^2 = 1.34$

Table 3.

STATE	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL
	<i>O (E)</i>	<i>O (E)</i>	<i>O (E)</i>	<i>O (E)</i>	
AKS	69 (67)	57(56)	44 (45)	30 (32)	200
CRS	65(67)	55 (56)	46(45)	34 (32)	200
O	E	O – E		(O-E) ²	(O-E) ² /E
69	67	2		4	.05
57	56	1		1	.01
44	45	-1		1	.02
30	32	-2		4	.11
65	67	2		4	.05
55	56	-1		1	.01
46	45	-3		1	.02
34	32	-2		4	.12
					X ² = .39

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

In the first hypothesis teachers view of funding as a problem hindering implementation of inclusive does in school practices does not significantly differ Akwa Ibom and Cross River State, the calculated X² of 44.05 was less than the tabulated X² of 3.04 at 1 Degree of freedom with this the null hypotheses was retained. This reveals that funding has a major problems hindering effective implementation of inclusive school practices in both states. This agrees with research carried out, by Nigeria educational Research and Development Council (NERDC 2010), that funding is the most important agenda in education administration of the country, inclusive education require a lot structural modifications, for instance conventional schools without ramp should be designed in such a way that every learners are taken into consideration. Equipment should be purchased for students with special needs to cope with counterparts. While Kolo et al (2016) opines that the challenges for the practices of inclusive education in a developing educational system like Nigeria include, fixing the broken schools system and structure acquisition of both regular and special equipment. Human capital development and adaptation of E-learning platforms and facilities. The forgoing cannot be actualized if sufficient budget from the states are not releases to covered educational expenses; school in the study that area are already dilapidated, hence to need for funding, if inclusive education must strive.

The second hypotheses states that teachers view of legislation as a problem hindering effective implementation of inclusive school practices does not significantly differs in Akwa Ibom and Cross River State, again, the result of the analysis indicate that the calculated X² of 1.34 was less than the tabulated X² of 3.04 at 1 degree of freedom. With this null hypothesis is accepted. The funding reinforced by (Ajiobewe 2013) that special education environment in Nigeria is not unitarily controlled, that Nigeria had policies of a kind, classify children with special needs as mere extension of those referred to in a general education law. This nothing but a sweeping assumption of education for all, irrespective of their needs. The National policy on education (1981) seem culpable on this account. Rather than articulating unique provisions on a national scale, for special children in a separate law, special education policies have remained too dependent on general education policy (Ajibewe 2013.) this authors stressed that special education in Nigeria lack competent legislative backing such that, there are no offices in the states for special need children and their families to lodge companies and no regular.

The third hypotheses states, teachers view of in-service training as a problem hindering effective implementation of school practice does not significantly differs in Akwa Ibom and Cross River state. The result of the analysis reveal that the calcault4ed X² of .39 was less than the tabulated X² of 3.04 at 1 degree of freedom. With this the null hypothesis was retain. The ideas of swart and Petti Phur (2005) who considered educators or school to be the key force in determining the quality of inclusion. This implies that teacher training colleges and other institutions curriculum should be modify the meet the demand of inclusion. Teacher in the job should be pounded with in-service training in order to cope with emerging challenges of inclusion. Motivation should be the driving force to teacher's job engagement.

Conclusion

In conclusion, finding revealed that effective implementation of inclusive school practices is hinged on proper funding, legislation and teacher in-service training which at the moment is not given serious attention, thus resulting in setbacks to special education services in the study area.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding and conclusion of the study, the following recommendations were made;

- Government should endeavor to make provision in the national budget to cover adequate funding of educational sector most especially primary schools, because this level is the foundation of education in the country.
- Members of state houses of assembly should be encourages from their constituencies of the important of raising motions in their chambers in favour of inclusive education.
- Educational administrators should ensure that in-service training of teachers in prioritized and incentives should be provided for teachers to boost their morale for inclusive practices. Teachers without teacher's registration council of Nigeria (TRCN) certificate should not be employed in state universal Basic education board (SUBEB).

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