

ASSESSMENT OF EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES FOR MENTALLY RETARDED STUDENTS IN KWARA STATE SCHOOL FOR SPECIAL NEEDS, ILORIN

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Abstract

Educational resources could make or mar the attainment of the goals of education in any educational setting. It is on the basis of this that the paper x-rayed the availability, adequacy and accessibility of educational resources for teaching of learning mentally retarded students. The population for this study comprised the entire thirty-five teachers, one hundred and ten students, one principal, and three vice principal, four nurses and eight caregivers. Purposive sampling technique was adopted to select all the entire staff in the school. Checklist was used to gather data after which they were validated and its reliability ascertained. The validity was carried out by two experts in the field of education while reliability was ensured through the use of test re-test method and reliability coefficient of .78 was obtained. The data collected were analyzed using descriptive

statistics of percentage. It was discovered that educational resources for mentally retarded students in Kwara State school for special needs were available, accessible and adequate. It was therefore recommended that government should encourage private individuals and organization to contribute to the provision of educational resources for the school of special needs.

Keywords: accessible, adequacy, assessment, educational resources, mentally retarded,

Introduction

Learners with disabilities are meant to benefit in the provision of education. It is therefore necessary to ensure that enabling environment is provided so that they could benefit from the provision of education. Such education that is meant for these categories of students is what is referred to as special education.

Special Needs Education could be described as a type of formal education designed to accommodate not only learners with disabilities but also the abused or marginalized learners like nomadic and street children including the gifted and talented who are less challenged with the regular curriculum and classroom activities (Individual with Disabilities Education Act, 2017). According to Ugbo (2017), Special Needs Education is described as a form of education designed to cater for the special educational needs of learners who require individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of physical settings, special equipment, materials, special teaching procedures, and other interventions.

According to Eleri (2012), Nigeria was directly involved in special needs education in 1974 this led to the establishment of Federal Ministry of Education in 1974 which was asked to provide the much-needed leadership role. It also, made funds available not only for the training of all categories of special education teachers, but also for the setting up of special education units within the state ministries of education to provide educational programmes for children with special educational needs across Nigeria (Eleri, 2012).

Another milestone was the insertion and development of a section for special needs education, the first ever produced Nigeria National Policy on Education in 1977 and subsequently revised in 1981, 1998, 2004, 2007 and 2013. Section 7 of the National Policy on Education (Federal Republic Nigeria, 2013). Focuses on Special Needs Education. This policy document describes special education as a customized educational programme, designed to meet the unique needs of persons with special needs that the general education programme cannot cater for. The policy document further classifies special needs persons into Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment, Physical and Health Impairment, Intellectual Disability, Emotional and Behavioural Disorders, Speech and Language Impairment, Learning Disabilities, Multiple Disabilities, the Gifted and Talented and Albinos (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

Kwara State School for Special Needs Ilorin is a public special need school located along Old Jebba road, opposite Kwara Television Authority, in the Eastern part of Ilorin, Kwara State. The school was established in March 1974. It was formally named as Kwara State School for the Deaf (that is, Hearing Impaired). In 1976, the state introduced a department for the blind (Visually Impaired) in the school. As a result, the name of the school was changed to Kwara State School for the Deaf and Blind. In 1982, the state also introduced another Department for the Mentally Retarded (MR) also known as Intellectually Disabled (ID) students in the school. The name of the school subsequent changed to Kwara State School for the Handicapped, until 2008 when the state government changed the school's name to Kwara State School for Special Needs due to the derogatory nature of the previous name. Since then, the school has been raining and graduating these three categories of students namely: visually impaired, hearing impairment and mentally retarded.

This study is pertinent in order to take a look at the available resources in the training of mentally retarded students in the school for special need so as to determine the goal of attainment of the implementation of the policy guiding the education of special need students. This will guide the policy makers to re-strategise and put things in place to guarantee the full implementation of the policy.

It is therefore, necessary to look in to the educational recourses being procured for the school for teaching and learning of students with special needs education in Kwara State school for special needs Ilorin, by the stakeholders which include the school management, teachers and student's caregivers who were responsible for the implementation of special needs education policy in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin. The present study therefore focused on assessment of special educational resources for the teaching of mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin.

Special Needs Education and Special Education Needs

Special Needs Education has been by various scholars and in different perspectives as a form of education meant for learners with disabilities or handicapping conditions only. To National Teachers' Institute (NTI, 2018), special needs education is a complex and multi-layered system for meeting the special learning needs of learners. However, the definitions of special needs education as modifications, adaptations, adjustments, innovations and management of the curriculum, methods and materials in addition to the other resources and practices of regular schools to fit and meet the special learning needs of those who present different forms of disabilities and learning difficulties (Obani, 2006), is parochial. The definition of special education as a specially designed instruction, which meets the unique needs of exceptional children and similar others, have made the concept of special needs education very limited to learners with disabilities or handicapped learners. Also, the general notion of special education as being limited to persons with disabilities, have made it prone to labeling, prejudice and discrimination.

In order to correct the parochial view of special needs education as an educational programme meant for persons with disabilities alone, and to make it more encompassing as to include other categories of learners whose challenges are not disabilities but social conditions and outstanding cognitive abilities, Ugbo (2017) described special needs education as a broader term used in place of special education to accommodate not only learners with disabilities but also the abused or marginalized learners. Garuba (2006) agrees that Special Needs Education extends the categories

of children requiring special educational intervention to include non-traditional disability group like kid soldiers, street children, and those suffering from varying categories of abuse. National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) simply puts special needs education as a formal education given to Persons with Special Needs. It is tailored towards Individualized Educational Program (IEP). Therefore, special needs education is a form of education designed to cater for the special learning needs of learners who require individually planned and systematically monitored arrangement of physical settings, special equipment and materials, special teaching procedure and other interventions. It accommodates learners with disabilities, at risk children and gifted and talented children. It is rendered at school, home and hospital bound settings.

However, Special Needs Education is not the same with Special Education Needs. Special Needs Education refers to an education programme designed to cater for learners with disabilities, abused and marginalized learners while Special Education Needs refers to the needs in the learners that must be met before learning can take place (Ugbo, 2017).

Facilities required for the implementation of special needs education policy

National Policy on Special Needs Education (FRN, 2013) listed some special equipment and facilities that would ensure easy access and implementation of Special Needs Education programs and services as follows:

Visual Impairment:

1. Training in Orientation and Mobility (O/M), Braille Reading and Writing, use of computer with 'Job Access With Speech(JAWS)' and repairs of special equipment and so on; and
2. The facilities/equipment for the visually impaired learners include, Everest Braille Embosser, Duxbury Braille translator, ominipage/open book, quick tack, Job Access with Speech (JAWS) for windows, acoustic cabinet, scanner, laptop, low vision aid sand devices, binocular, camera etc.

Hearing Impairment:

1. Training in Sign Language interpretation, audiometric technique (pure tone and speech audiometric) and computer application devices; and
2. The facilities/equipment include: audiometer, tympanometry, otoscope, video otoscope, tuning fork, Otoacoustic Emission (OAE), Auditory Brainstem Response (ABR), Auditory Steady State Response (ASSR) etc. Total communication (include aural, oral, lip reading and Sign Language interpretation), hearing aids, cochlea implants speech synthesizer, Teletype (TTY), doorbell, alarm, auto scope, etc.

Mental Retardation (Intellectual Disability/Intellectual Developmental Disability):

1. Training in daily living skills, self-help skills, livelihood skills; and
2. Materials include toys, plastic drawing sheets, jigsaw, puzzle, radio set, television set, etc.

National Policy on Special Needs Education in Nigeria

A policy is a guide to action, and it relates to a broader framework that involves putting into operation a philosophy, principle, vision and decision that are translated into various programmes, projects, and activities (Khan & Khandaker, 2016). A policy entails the broad statement of future goals and actions and expresses the means of attaining them. It is a framework of governmental intervention and covers a variety of activities. Special Needs Education Policy is a purposeful course of action that an actor or a set of actors such as professional special educators and paraprofessionals like physiotherapists, pathologists, braillists, sign language interpreters, note-takers, and son on follow in delivering quality and equitable education to students with special learning needs (Anderson, 2010).

Special needs education has been in existence in Kwara State since 1974. According to Obiakor (2011), Kwara State Government was the first in Nigeria to establish a public school for children with special educational

needs in March, 1974. The name of the school was Kwara State School for the Deaf (that is, Hearing Impaired). In 1976, the state introduced a department for the blind (Visually Impaired) in the school. As a result, the name of the school was changed to Kwara State School for the Deaf and Blind. In 1982, the state also introduced another department for the Mentally Retarded (MR) students now known as Intellectually Disabled (ID) in the school. The name of the school was also changed to Kwara State School for the Handicapped until 2008 when changed its name to Kwara State School for Special Needs due to the derogatory nature of the previous name (Bolu-Steve, Olawuyi & Gbolade, 2017). Since then, the school has been training and graduating these three categories of students with special educational needs in the state. The school has graduated deaf and blind students who are professors, lecturers, medical doctors and so on in their respective field today. Example is Professor Eleweke, a former student of Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin; now a lecturer at Portland State University, Portland. The school comprise of three (3) units namely: the Visual Impairment, Hearing Impairment and Intellectual Disability Units. These units have different levels i.e. primary and secondary schools (Bolu-Steve, Olawuyi & Gbolade, 2017).

Field survey reported that the negative impact of inadequate special educational resources might have been making the graduated Senior Secondary School three students in Kwara State School for Special Needs not to be able to construct correct simple sentence after schooling for 13 to 15 years in the school. It was noticed that many students of the school dropped out and only few of those who were able to complete their secondary education struggled to be admitted into tertiary institutions due to mass failure in Senior School Certificate Examinations such as WAEC, and NECO, The drop out students and those who could not further their education due to failure live in poverty and constitute nuisance in the society. It was therefore, most beneficial to find a lasting solution to the problem of failure and thereby improve the lives of the disabled in the society in order to enable them contribute their quota to their society.

Many studies have been carried out in related areas and these include among others Adebisi and Onye (2013) who studied towards implementation and sustainability of special education service in Federal

Capital Territory Abuja. Bolu-Steve, Olawuyi and Gbolade (2017) investigated challenges encountered by students in the Kwara state school for special needs Ilorin. Ademefun (2016) investigated policy brief on inclusive and accessible basic education for children with disabilities in kwara state.

The purpose of this study was to assess educational resources for teaching mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin. Specifically, the study aimed at:

1. finding out the availability of educational resources for the teaching of mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin;
2. determining the accessibility of educational resources for the teaching of mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin; and
3. examining the adequacy of educational resources for the teaching of mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study:

1. are there available educational resources for teaching for the teaching of mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin?
2. how accessible are the educational resources for teaching for the teaching of mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin?
3. how adequate are the educational resources for the teaching mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for Special Needs, Ilorin?

Methodology

Descriptive survey designed is adopted for this study. The population for this study comprised the entire thirty-five teachers, one hundred and ten students, one principal, and three vice principal, four nurses and eight caregivers as at June 2023. Purposive sampling technique

was adopted to select all the entire staff in the school. This sample technique is considered to be appropriate because these are the experts directly dealing with the students. Checklist was used as instrument to collect data and it was titled “Assessment of Special Educational Resources For Mentally Retarded Students Checklist” The scaled of measurement were in the following order of Available (AV), Not available (NA), Adequate (AD), Not Adequate (NAD), Accessible (AC), Not Accessible (NAC). To ensure validity of the instrument, the drafted copies of the instruments were given to two lecturers in the Department of Educational Management and one lecturer in the department of Social Sciences education, University of Ilorin for face, content and construct validity. Reliability of the instrument was ensured through test re-test method. In this method, twenty copies of the checklist were administered to the principal, vice principal, teachers and students which were not part of the sample within an interval of two weeks. Descriptive statistics of percentage was used to answer the research questions. However, 161 questionnaires were administered but 159 were returned for analysis.

Results

Research Question One: Are there available educational resources for teaching mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for special needs?

In order to answer this research question, respondents’ responses to items on the questionnaire were collated. The output of the analysis revealed in Table 1

Table 1 Availability of Educational Resources for Mentally Retarded Students

S/N	Items	AVAILABILITY	
		Available	Not Available
1	House Mouse	144 (90.6%)	15 (9.4%)
2	Toys	145 (91.2%)	14 (8.8%)
3	Plastic Drawing Sheet	139 (87.4%)	20 (12.6%)
4	Jigsaw	8 (5%)	151 (95%)
5	Puzzle	19 (11.9%)	140 (88.1%)
6	Radio Set	23 (14.5%)	136 (85.5%)
7	Television Set	138 (86.8%)	21 (13.2%)
8	Flannel Board	145 (91.2%)	14 (8.8%)
	Total Average	761 (59.8%)	511 (40.2%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 1 shows the availability of educational resources for teaching for mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for special needs. It is evident from the table that, house mouse was available with 144 (90.6%) while 15 (9.4%) said it was not available. Also, toys were available with 145 (91.2%) while 14 (8.8%) said it was not available. Moreso, puzzle was available with 19 (11.9%) while 140 respondents with 88.1% said it was not available. Analysis of table shows that majority of the respondents 14.5% supported the view that radio set was available; 86.8% agreed that television set was available while 13.2% of the respondents were not available for teaching for mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for special needs. The table further shows that a large number of respondents 91.2% supported that flannel board was available for mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for special needs. In conclusion, majority of the respondents 59.8% supported the view that educational resources for teaching mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for special needs are available.

Research Question Two: How accessible are the educational resources for teaching mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for special needs?

In order to answer this research question, respondents’ responses to items on the questionnaire were collated. The output of the analysis revealed in Table 2

Table 2 Accessibility of Educational Resources for Mentally Retarded Students

S/N	Items	ACCESSIBILITY	
		Accessible	Not Accessible
1	House Mouse	144 (90.6%)	15 (9.4%)
2	Toys	133 (83.6%)	26 (16.4%)
3	Plastic Drawing Sheet	136 (85.5%)	23 (14.5%)
4	Jigsaw	22 (13.8%)	137 (86.2%)
5	Puzzle	17 (10.7%)	142 (89.3%)
6	Radio Set	26 (16.4%)	133 (83.6%)
7	Television Set	137 (86.2%)	22 (13.8%)
8	Flannel Board	136 (85.5%)	23 (14.5%)
Total Average		751 (59%)	521 (41%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 2 shows how accessible are the educational resources for effective teaching for mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for special needs. It is evident from the table that, house mouse was accessible with 144 (90.6%) while 15 respondents with 9.4% said it was not accessible. Also, toys were accessible with 133 (83.6%) while 26 respondents with 16.4% said it was not accessible. Moreso, puzzle was accessible with 17 (10.7%) while 142 respondents with 89.3% were not accessible. Analysis of table shows that minority of the respondents 16.4% supported the view that radio set was accessible; 137 (86.2%) agreed that television set was accessible while 22 (13.8%) of the respondents were not accessible for teaching mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for special needs. On the question on the accessibility of volleyball, a sizeable number of respondents 85.5% indicated positive support. In

conclusion, majority of the respondents 59% supported the view that educational resources for teaching mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for special needs are accessible.

Research Question Three: How adequate are the educational resources for teaching mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for special needs?

In order to answer this research question, respondents' responses to items on the questionnaire were collated. The output of the analysis revealed in Table 3

Table 3: Adequacy of Educational Resources for Mentally Retarded Students

S/N	Items	ADEQUACY	
		Adequate	Not Adequate
1	House Mouse	26 (16.4%)	133 (83.6%)
2	Toys	34 (21.4%)	125 (78.6%)
3	Plastic Drawing Sheet	36 (22.6%)	123 (77.4%)
4	Jigsaw	119 (74.8%)	112 (70.4%)
5	Puzzle	47 (29.6%)	112 (70.4%)
6	Radio Set	34 (21.4%)	125 (78.6%)
7	Television Set	33 (20.8%)	126 (79.2%)
8	Flannel Board	36 (22.6%)	123 (77.4%)
	Total Average	365 (28.7%)	907 (71.3%)

Source: Fieldwork, 2023

Table 3 shows how adequate are the educational resources for effective teaching for mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for special needs. It is evident from the table that, house mouse was adequate with 26 (16.5%) while 133 respondents with 83.6% said it was not adequate. Also, computer toys were adequate with 34 (21.4%) while 125 respondents with 78.6% was not adequate. Moreso, puzzle was adequate with 47 (29.6%) while 112 respondents with 70.4% were not adequate. Analysis of table shows that minority of the respondents 21.4% supported the view that radio set was adequate; 33 (20.8%) agreed that television set

was adequate while 126 (79.2%) said it was not adequate for teaching mentally impaired students in Kwara State School for special needs. The table further shows that a small number of respondents 22.6% supported that flannel board was adequate for teaching mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for special needs. In conclusion, majority of the respondents 71.3% supported the view that educational resources for teaching mentally retarded students in Kwara State School for special needs are adequate.

Discussion of Findings

It was observed that the resources for the teaching of special need students at Kwara State School for special needs were available, accessible and adequate. This could be as a result of the adequate attention given to the school by the present administration in Kwara State.

- Findings revealed that the resources needed for the teaching of special need students at the Kwara State School for special needs were available;
- It was also discovered that the available resources for the teaching of special need students at the Kwara State School for special needs were accessible; and
- Findings shows that the resources needed for the teaching of special need students at the Kwara State School for special needs were adequate. These findings corroborate the findings of Eleri (2012) which stated that educational resources for the implementation of the elements of special education curriculum are available, accessible and adequate in Kwara State School for Special needs, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Conclusion

Educational resources, resources for teaching are very significant in education generally, and in special needs education in particular. For effective teaching and learning to take place in special needs education, necessary educational resources/teaching and learning materials must be readily available, accessible and adequate as no significant learning can take place in abstraction. Based on the findings of this study, it could be

concluded that majority of the needed educational resources for effective teaching of mentally retarded students are available, accessible and adequate.

Recommendations

From the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. government should sustain the tempo of availability of the resources required in the teaching of special needs students in Kwara State School for special needs;
2. government should maintain and possibly improve on the accessibility of the resources needed in the teaching of special needs students in Kwara State School for special needs; and
3. government should improve on the adequacy of resources needed in the teaching of special need students in Kwara State School for special needs.

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