EDUCATIONAL SERVICES DELIVERY FOR DISABLED STUDENTS IN AN INCLUSIVE SETTING: THE NNAMDI AZIKIWE UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE

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Abstract

The study centered on inclusive education with special focus on the educational services delivered by lecturers to the disabled students in an inclusive setting in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. Three research questions guided the study. The entire population of 310 lecturers in the Faculty of Education was used for the study. This number excluded those on sabbatical leave, leave of absence and sick leave among others. The sample for the study was 105 lecturers. The instrument for data collection was a self-developed 15-item questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Educational Services Delivery for the Disabled in an Inclusive Setting (QESDDIS)". The instrument was validated by experts Cronbach alpha coefficient was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and the overall reliability coefficient was 0.79, which was considered high for the study. The data collected were analysed using frequencies and percentages. The acceptable level of percentage was 50% and above for items indicating positive that is high extent (HE). On the other hand, items which scored below 50% were regarded as negative that is, low extent (LE) of the services rendered to the disabled students. The findings regarding the lecturers' responses on the academic services delivery to their disabled students revealed low extent. Again, the lecturers' social services delivery to their disabled students indicated low extent. Also, the lecturers' information services delivery to their disabled students showed low extent. It was recommended among other that, the University authority should open up special education resources shopping-centre for easy accessibility to digital and assistive technologies that would enhance learning for the disabled in an inclusive setting.

Key words: Education, Inclusive, disabled students, educational services delivery.

Introduction

Education is the bedrock, the basic, the fundamental and the quintessence of personal upliftment and national development. Basically, education liberates a person from

illiteracy, ignorance and socio-economic dependency. It makes one a vibrant and productive member of the society. In fact, a creative consumer rather than parasitic consumer. The nature of curricular and co-curricular activities which one was exposed to while in the school makes the person a contributory member of the society. For the nation, education lays foundation for all forms of national development namely: economic, social, political, industrial and technological development. It is in this view that the Federal Government of Nigeria in the National policy on Education (FRN, 2014 P.2) stated that, "Education in Nigeria is an instrument par excellence for effecting national development". In this view, Nwana, Ofoegbu and Egbe (2017) pointed out that development in the 21st Century could be meaningfully achieved by integrating the computer and other Information Communication Technology (ICT) resources in the school curriculum. Again, Nwana and Ofomata (2021) pointed out that there is need for availability and utilization of ICT resources for effective curriculum delivery and for onward national development.

Realizing that education is the instrument for achieving national goals and objectives, the Nigerian government decided to carry everybody along using education as a tool. This is to make every member of the society productive in order to contribute to the society in which he lives. It is in this sense that emphasis was shifted from having special education schools to having inclusive education schools. Already, there are up to forty-six (46) Special Education centres or schools in various parts of the country. For instance one is in Enugu city and the other in Oji-River, all in Enugu State of Nigeria. In Anambra State, one is in Isulo and the other in Nteje. Researches had it that, special-needs students educated in regular classes do better academically and socially than their counterparts in non-inclusive classes (Baker, Gersten & Scancon, 2002). This increased the need for inclusive education.

Inclusive education as defined by Milter (2000) and cited in Ademokoya (2008) is the education for ensuring that all learners regardless of their physical or sensory defects have access to the whole range of educational and social opportunities offered by the school. Westwood (1999) pointed out that inclusive education is the shifting of all learners with disabilities from segregated settings or special schools into regular classes where they can learn side by side with their non-disabled persons or learners. Therefore, inclusive education is the education which integrates both the disabled and non-disabled in one class namely: regular / full-time, weekend/part-time or sandwich classes. It is the education which offers equal opportunities for learning to both abled and disabled persons in this age of technology revolution. It is the education that does not disenfranchise the disabled or bench him or deny him of the chances of learning and participating in class activities with the abled learners.

The federal government of Nigeria (FRN, 2014 P.36) explained inclusive education under Special Education as the formal special educational training given to children and adults with special needs. It classified the disabled as people who are:

    (a)   Visually impaired (blind and the partially sighted);
    (b)   Hearing impaired (deaf and the partially hearing);
    (c)   Physically and health impaired (deformed limbs, asthmatic);

(d)   Mentally retarded (educable, trainable , bed ridden);

(e)   Emotionally disturbed (hyperactive, hypoactive / the socially maladjusted /behaviour disorder);

(f)   Speech impaired (stammarers, stutterers);

(g)   Learning disabled (have psychological/neurological educational phobia or challenges);

(h)   Multiple handicapped.

Further, FRN (2014 P.36) captured the objectives of inclusive education as:

(i)   To give concrete meaning to the idea of equalizing educational opportunities for all children, their physical, sensory, mental, psychological or emotional disabilities notwithstanding;

(j)   To provide adequate education for all people with special needs in order that they may fully contribute their own quota to the development of the nation.

Similarly, the document on p.37 (s.96 c,i) stated that all necessary facilities that would ensure easy access to inclusive education shall be provided. In line with this, it outlined the learning materials for inclusive education as follows: Perkins Brailler, white mobility can/brailed textbooks, abacus, Braille, talking watch, audiometers, speech trainers, hearing aids and ear mould machines. Others are toy for the mentally retarded, calipers, prostheses crutches, wheel chairs and artificial limbs for the physical handicapped.

The use of learning materials for the disabled learner vary. For instance electronic audio materials such as radio, radio-cassette, microphone, megaphone, tape recorder, etc and non-electronic materials eg. Human voice, iron gong, bell, talking drum, flute and xylophone (Nwana, 2009) can be used by the visually impaired for learning. Again, materials such as television namely: Instructional television (Itv), Educational television (Etv), Closed Circuit Television (Cctv) and Open circuit television (Octv); and videophone systems (Nwana, 2008; & 2009) can be used by the deaf/dumb. This is because they are materials that promote visual literacy for that category of learners in an inclusive setting.

From the foregoing, the nature of inclusive education demands a lot of educational services delivery for the disabled. It requires having a Special Education Department, written policy or regulation on the assistance to be offered to them to enable them to graduate. Again, it requires academic services delivery e.g. planned integration in the class so as to make him active learners Similarly, there is need for social services delivery for them e.g. ensuring that the authority puts up special level ground (ramps) for them. Also, there is need for information services delivery for them.

The various categories of disabled learners, handicapped, incapacitated and learners with functional limitations are seen in our classes; and we are aware of inclusive education as a laudable government educational policy. At one time or the other we have presented papers in conferences, seminars and workshops on inclusive education. Still, when it comes to planned integration of disabled learners in our classes, we find it difficult to integrate them and to give them social and information services that will enhance their education and

upliftment. It is against this background that the present study seeks to ascertain the educational services for the disabled in an inclusive setting using Lecturers in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Nigeria.

Purpose
The study generally determines the educational services delivered to the disabled students by their lecturers in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
Specifically, it ascertains the extent of:
1.   Academic services delivered to the disabled students by their lecturers in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
2.   The Social services delivered to the disabled students by their lecturers in Faculty of education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.
3.   The information services delivered to the disabled students by their lecturers in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Research Questions
1.   To what extent do lecturers in faculty of education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka deliver academic services to their disabled students?
2.   To what extent do lecturers in faculty of education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka deliver social services to their disabled students?
3.   To what extent do lecturers in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka deliver information services to their disabled students?

Method
The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The survey research design is one in which a group of people or items are being studied by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representatives of the entire population (Nworgu, 2015). It is therefore considered appropriate in this study. The study was carried out in Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka, Anambra State, Nigeria. The population comprised of the 310 lecturers in the Faculty of Education in the aforementioned university. This number excluded those on sabbatical leave, leave of absence, and sick leave among others. Simple random sampling technique was used to sample 105 lecturers that constituted the sample for the study. The instrument for data collection was a self-developed 15-item questionnaire titled "Questionnaire on Educational Services Delivery for the Disabled in an Inclusive Setting (QESDDIS)". It has sections A, B and C which sought information on the three research questions.

The instrument was subjected to validation by experts. The reliability of the instrument was ascertained using Cronbach Alpha. An overall reliability co-efficient of 0.79 was obtained, an indication that the instrument was reliable for data collection. In distributing copies of the questionnaire, the technique of on-the-spot distribution and collection was adopted in order to avoid mortality of the instrument and to ensure 100% return rate. The data collected were analysed using frequency counts and percentages. The acceptable level of percentage was 50% and above for items indicating positive that is, high extent (HE) for

educational services rendered to the disabled students. On the other hand, any item which scored below 50% was regarded as negative that is, low extent (LE) of the educational services rendered to the disabled students.

Findings

Research Question 1

To what extent do lecturers in faculty of education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka deliver academic services to their disabled students?

Table 1: Frequencies and Percentages of the Lecturers' Responses on the Academic Services Delivery to their Disabled Students.

N = 105

S/N	Academic services delivery to disabled students	Freq Yes	%	Freq No	%	Decision
1.	Assisting the deaf/dumb with sign language devices for his learning.	8	7.6	97	92.4	LE
2.	Planned integration in the class, giving him equal opportunity for participation in class activities.	99	94.3	6	5.7	HE
3.	Helping him to get learning material from special education department to support his learning.	2	1.9	103	98.1	LE
4.	Allowing the person assisting the blind to read questions for him and giving the blind time to type out the answers.	101	96.2	4	3.8	HE
5.	Follow-up of his result computation from the department to exams and records to make sure that he collects his statement of result.	10	9.5	95	90.5	LE
	Cluster %		**41.9**		**58.1**	**LE**

From table I, the academic services delivery for the disabled students was indicated by the respondents in two out of five items. These are items 2 and 4 which scored above 50%. Other items 1, 3 and 5 scored below 50% which is the acceptance level. The cluster percentage for the academic services rendered to the disabled students is 41.9% while that of academic services not rendered to them is 58.1%. This indicates low extent (LE).

Research Question 2:
To what extent do lecturers in faculty of education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka deliver social services to their disabled students?

Table 2: Frequencies and percentages of the Lecturers' Responses on the Social Services Delivery to their Disabled Students.

N = 105

S/N	Social Services Delivery to Disabled Students	Freq Yes	%	Freq No	%	Decision
6.	Ensuring that the authority puts up special level ground, ramps for the physically challenged	82	78.1	23	21.9	HE
7.	Getting friend-help for the wheel chair-bound.	14	13.3	91	86.7	LE
8.	Getting friend-help for the blind.	26	24.8	79	75.2	LE
9.	Assisting the physically-leg disabled with clutches that are strong and firm on ground.	3	2.9	102	97.1	LE
10.	Helping him with your car or campus shuttle as you see him going for lectures.	19	18.1	86	81.9	LE
	Cluster %		**27.4**		**72.6**	**LE**

From table 2, the respondents affirmed that only one out of five items slated is the service rendered to the disabled; and that is item 6 which scored above 50%. The other items, 7, 8, 9 and 10 scored below 50% which is the acceptance level. The cluster percentage for the Social Services delivery for the disabled students is 27.4% while that of the Social Services not rendered to them is 72.6%. This reveals low extent (LE).

Research Question 3:
To what extent do lecturers in faculty of education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka deliver Information Services to their disabled students?

Table 3: Frequencies and Percentages of the Lecturers' Responses on the information Services Delivery to their Disabled Students.

N = 105

S/N	Information Services delivery to disabled students	Freq Yes	%	Freq No	%	Decision
11.	Giving the disabled students information on seminars, symposium, workshops, conferences and public lectures for his upliftment.	88	83.8	17	16.2	HE
12.	Informing him of educational counseling services that will enable him cope with his academic career.	74	70.5	31	29.5	HE
13.	Informing him of where and when of educational exhibitions.	13	12.4	92	87.6	LE
14.	Informing him of recreational facilities for his relaxation and leisure.	15	14.3	90	85.7	LE
15.	Giving him information on Job opportunities.	3	2.9	102	97.1	LE
	Cluster %		**36.8**		**63.2**	**LE**

From table 3, the respondents indicated that they render information services to the disabled students in two out of five items. These are items 11 and 12 which scored above 50%. The other items, 13, 14 and 15 scored below 50% which is the acceptance level. The cluster percentage for the Information Services rendered to the disabled students is 36.8% while that of Information Services not rendered to them is 63.2%. This shows low extent (LE).

Discussion

The findings of the study as shown in table I revealed that the respondents affirmed that the academic services which they render to the disabled students are few. They are: item 2 (94.3%) which boardered on planned integration in class activities and item 4 (96.2%) which hinged on giving the blind equal treatment in examinations. The other academic services delivery as indicated in items: 1 (92.4%), 3 (98.1 %) and 5 (90.5%) are not being rendered to the disabled students. These indicated low extent (LE) of the services. These items focused on: assisting the deaf with sign language devices, getting materials support

for the disabled from special Education Department and follow-up of their result computation to enable them collect their statement of result. It was also found that there is no Special Education Department at Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka; and that special Education (EDU 335) is done as a course under the Department of Educational Foundations.

The findings on low extent of academic services to the disabled students is inconsistent with that of McMaster, Fuchs and Fuchs (2007) which reported that high extent of services led to improvement in reading achievement when students with disabilities were included in the same class and were given equal opportunity for participation with their normal peers. Again, Carter, Cushing, Clark and Kennedy (2005) reported that, students with disabilities who were integrated in the same class with those without disabilities tend to have good interaction with their peers in curriculum activities; and have increase in social interaction.

Research question 2, table 2 which addressed social services delivery for the disabled students revealed that, only item 6 (78.1%) was affirmed by the respondents as a social service delivered to the disabled students. The item hinged on putting up special level ground (ramps) for them. The other items: 7 (13.3%), 8 (24.8%), 9 (2.9%) and 10 (18.1%) scored below 50% which is the acceptable level. They are: getting friends-help for the wheel-chair bound and the blind, providing clutches for the physically-leg challenged and helping him with personal car or campus shuttle as he moves from one lecture hall to another. The cluster percentage for the social services rendered is 27.4% while that of the services not rendered is 72.6%. This shows low extent of the services.

This finding on low extent (LE) of the services deviates from that of Prater (2003) who found that good teacher's attitudes and services to the disabled students in an inclusive setting promote the success of those students in general education.

Research question 3, table 3 showed that the respondents affirmed that only two of the five items slated for information services delivery are being rendered to the disabled students. They are items: 11 (83.8%) and 12 (70.5%). They focused on giving the students information on seminars and conferences; and on Educational counseling services. The other items: 13 (12.4%), 14 (14.3%) and 15 (2.9%) scored below 50% which is the acceptance level. The items are: information on Educational exhibitions, information on recreational facilities and information on job opportunities. The cluster percentage for the information services is 36. 8% while that of information services not rendered to them is 63.2%. This showed low extent (LE) of the services.

This finding is not in tandem with that of Fisher and Frey (2001) who reported that teaching the disabled students core curriculum in an inclusive setting and giving them information relating to Education, gives room for their success in life.

Conclusion
Inclusive Education is the Education geared towards including and integrating the disabled students in the same classroom with the students without disabilities. This is to enable them have equal opportunity of learning and interaction with the other students. The levels of disabilities identified are the visually impaired, deaf, dumb, deaf and dumb, physically challenged (wheel chair- bound, clutches-bound) and sensory impaired. The findings showed that both the academic services delivery, the social services delivery and the information services delivery for the disabled students are to a low extent as indicated by the (lecturers) respondents. It was also found that Special Education Department does not exist in Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka but that they do Special Education (EDU 335) as a course under the Department of Educational Foundations.

Recommendations
The following recommendations were made based on the findings:
1. The University authority should open up special education resources-shopping-centre to enable lecturers and other spirited individuals procure digital and assistive technologies such as brailing machine, sign language device and digital recorder e.g. Mp3 among others for disabled students in order to enhance their learning in an inclusive setting.
2. The University authority should organize periodic orientation on social services delivery for the disabled students. This will go a long way to revolutionalising the minds (affective domain) of the lecturers in rendering social services to the disabled students in an inclusive setting.
3. The University authority should carry out period orientation for all lecturers on information services delivery for the disabled students in an inclusive setting.
4. The University authority should in no distant time establish the Department of Special Education in the Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka. This will now take the Special Education course (EDU 335) done by the Department of Educational Foundations to Special Education Department which is the appropriate Department that should house it.
5. The University authority should provide written policy or regulation on the assistance to be offered to the disabled students to enable them graduate and become productive members of the society.

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