

Challenges Facing Special Needs Students in TVET Institutions in Southwest Nigeria

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Abstract

One of the goals of the Nigerian government is to provide high-quality, well-researched, and efficient skills development services that better suit the requirements of individuals and the economy. Thus, the country participates in special needs education, but the methods adopted do not align with current best practices around the world. Furthermore, there are currently no technology-driven special needs classrooms or laboratories in the nation, even in TVET institutions, which left special needs students in dire need of technical education. It is on the basis of the foregoing; this study examined the challenges facing Special Needs Students in TVET Institutions in Southwest Nigeria. Three objectives were stated to guide the study. The study was carried out in the Federal Polytechnics in Southwest, Nigeria. Survey research method was adopted while a structured questionnaire with a Likert rating scale was used as an instrument of data collection, three research questions were answered, and two null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. A total number of 200 students with special needs were purposively selected as respondents for the study. Findings revealed that inadequate financial support, the transferring process, high cost of educational materials and equipment, Personal/family issues and lack of specialists and para-professionals. The study recommends that the government and stakeholders in education should invest more in Special education and also make financial support and aids available for Special needs students.

Key words: Disability, Special Needs, Technical Schools, Teachers

Introduction

The 21st century brought about rapid technological changes and advancement barely in all sectors of economy and in all facet of live. This however posed challenges to education and employment sectors. The latest demands of labour market have caused many graduates with various certificates to be unemployed. The massive rate of unemployment and the changing face of the economic, social, political, and labour market worldwide have led to new education reforms/policies with emphasis on vocational technical education (VTE) geared towards helping the youths and adults to be self-dependent (Okolocha, 2012). Technical and vocational education (TVE) is used, as a comprehensive term referring to those aspects of the educational process involving in addition to general education, the study of technologies and related sciences and acquisition of practical skills, attitudes, understanding and

knowledge relating to occupations in various sectors of economic and social life (FGN 2014). According to this policy document on education, the goal of this aspect of education shall be; to provide trained manpower in applied science, technology and business particularly at craft, advanced craft and technical levels. To provide the technical knowledge and vocational skills that is necessary for agriculture, commercial and economic development.

Vocational education is that part of education planned to train skilled personnel at lower levels of qualification for one or group of occupations, trades or jobs. It embraces general education, practical training for the development of skills required by chosen occupations (Fakorede, 2013). Vocational education programmes focus on training for a specific vocational area for entry into defined workplace (Reko and Maxwell, 2016). It is also a skill-based programme designed for sub-professional level education and based on a specific vocation. Technical education is not designed for any particular vocation but, facilitates the acquisition of practical and applied skills as well as basic scientific knowledge (Reko and Maxwell, 2016). In other words, it provides general technical knowledge. Furthermore, it is that aspect of education designed for “upper secondary school and lower tertiary level” to groom middle level personnel as “engineers and technologists for higher management positions” (Fakorede, 2013, p. 120). It embraces general education, theoretical, scientific and technical studies and related skill training. Technical education is usually taken to refer to the mastery of a body of knowledge and skills, which can be applied in a practical way.

Evidences over the year have shown that physical disabilities due to iatrogenesis or inadequate immunization service and injury sustained during conflicts pervades on an increasing level. Of over 200 million population of Nigeria, the Nigerian National Assemblies put the population of People Living With physical disabilities in the country at twenty per cent (20%). For children with special needs, higher level of education does not just comprise of the acquisition of knowledge, language and communication but other societal and vocational skills that consist of the use of adaptation aids. These aids for adaptation are mostly customized to fit their physique and level/nature of disabilities, and special needs. There include but not limited to aids to enable them to move around such as motorized wheelchairs, braces, or crutches; seats fitted to help them both in movement and posture; communication aids, aids for turning pages of books, amongst others.

Statement of the Problem

TVET was elected as a core aspect of education and launch Nigeria into a dynamic and self-reliant economy. Unfortunately, this dream has remained frustratingly elusive as demonstrated by the high rate of unemployment, low technology development, and high rate of school drop-out, weak economy and limited wage opportunities. The problem of juvenile delinquency and crime can be reduced if the youths are given the necessary vocational training that will keep them busy. Thus, TVET delivery in Nigeria has been criticized of poor quality, very high cost, training not suited to actual social-economic conditions, neglect of the informal sector's needs, and indifference of labour market needs characterized by high unemployment rate among graduates, the critical factor in the actualization of Nigerian

economic reform policies is the mass production of people with requisite skills and competencies in TVET. Students with intellectual and developmental disabilities face stigma, prejudice and significant obstacles that restrict their human rights. Stigma has been conceptualized as a mark of social disgrace in which the targeted individual is discredited based on attributes such as ethnicity, mental health problems, disability or drug use.

Children with special needs face a lot of challenges in institution of learning. The policy of isolation, separation and inhuman treatments they face in secluded schools coupled with lack of acceptance by peers in inclusive school who are the closest on par have further exacerbated their problem. Twin to the challenges of facilities is the existence of many barriers for educating children with disabilities in regular classrooms due to scarcity of resources or even lack of it, negative attitudes of teachers, non-disabled peers and their parents. Also, most Nigerian higher institutions lack teachers who are grounded in special education pedagogy thus making them unfit to pass on knowledge and enhance learning effectively. Under such condition, efforts of the disabled to become the best educationally is often met with very strong challenges due to lack of resources necessary for effective teaching and learning and physical structures that hinders their full integration into the inclusive school policy. Therefore, this study examines the Challenges facing Special Needs Students in TVET Institutions in Southwest Nigeria.

Objective of the study

- i. To determine the needs of physically challenged students in the TVET institution
- ii. To examine the factors that contributes to the challenges faced by physically challenged students in TVET institution
- iii. To suggest ways by which such challenges can be resolved

Research Questions

- i. What are the challenges faced by Special need students in TVET institutions?
- ii. What are the factors that contribute to the challenges faced by Special need students in TVET institution?
- iii. What are the ways out of such challenges?

Hypotheses

H₁: There is no significant effect of parental education on challenges of special need students

H₂: Socio-economic status of parents does not have significant impact on the challenges of special need students

Literature Review

Historical Background of TVET in Nigeria

The indigenous African tradition and culture is solely based on skill acquisition and development, from farming to hunting traditional medicine to craft, apprenticeship was based on watch, observation and do as I do is the system of learning techniques and skills needed to be a master craftsman in one's field of vocation. The youths were taught their culture, social activities and survival skills for work. Although occupations varied according to the geographical area in Nigeria, Mkpia, (2014) noted that traditional education in most parts of Nigeria trained individuals to fit usually into their society by learning and practicing economic skills for self-sustenance; adapting to their role expectations and contributing to the development of their society. The traditional education offered by the community was comprehensive such that it provided training in physical, character, intellectual, social and vocational development.

At the turn of 20th century, government departments had staffing problems in the areas of government found the necessity for TVET; and realized that they need technically trained Nigerians to run/manipulate machineries for the imperial economically endeavor. The colonial government was forced to re-look outward. As a result, some government departments/agencies (e.g. Nigerian Railways Corporation, Government Survey School, Marine Department, Posts and Telegraphs Department, Department of Agriculture) initiated technical and vocational trainings. Also, its educational policy of assistance to its colonies was strengthened by sending some Nigerian students to England for training. This informed the subsequent British Foreign policy and educational reforms from 1861- 1950.

The Phelps-Stokes report of 1922 recommended that education be adapted to community needs i.e. agricultural education for urban areas. Following proposal of E.J. Hussey, the first director of education in Nigeria, Yaba Higher College was established in 1932 to train vocational assistants in medicine, engineering and agriculture. The Elliot commission set up in 1943 recommended in 1945 that the Yaba Higher College be turned to technical institute and of similar technical institutions be established in Kaduna and Enugu. Although the Ashby Commission set up in 1959 noted that education in Nigeria laid much emphasis on literary education, however its recommendations did not favour TVET as it brought about the closure of the three Colleges of Arts, Science and Technology at Zaria, Ibadan and Enugu. These colleges were taken over by Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Obafemi Awolowo University Ife (formerly University of Ife) and University of Nigeria Nsukka respectively.

Challenges of Children with Special Needs

i. Shortage of Specially Trained Teachers to Teach Special Needs Children

There are not enough fully special-education teachers to go around, so the government depends on alternative-route teacher certification programs that allow teachers to work toward full trained teachers while teaching with available credentials. But officials and teachers working at the grassroots level say the inadequate number of trained teachers is a major challenge to special needs schools. In Oyo state, there were 825 teachers who have

completed BEd in special education and were working in government and aided schools (Balogun, 2012). Almost all the special needs children gave testimony to this inadequacy.

ii. Lack of Support for Special Needs Children

At a time when many large schools are experiencing high levels of growth, special education teachers are being asked to do more with less incentive. Salaries are not being paid on time in many states and local government areas, and there is often very little in the way of technical assistance provided by school administrations. Some parents of special needs children are disinterested in the welfare of their children and fail to provide them with adequate care (Nolan et al, 2006). Alternatively, they may be overly protective. Both can be problematic for the child and for their teacher. Disinterested parents may have no involvement with their child's education or interaction with their teachers, whereas overprotective parents may have unrealistic expectations from the child and the child's teachers. Both attitudes can shape children in negative ways. Parental disinterest may make students with special needs less motivated and parents who are overprotective often diminish their child's confidence and make it harder for them to learn.

iii. Transition of Special Needs Children to a Regular Schools

Transition in special education programmes, in general, refers to the movement from one programme to another. The "official" term transition to a regular school simply means graduating from elementary level to higher institutional level. However, this is associated with a lot of challenges like the child's meeting with new teachers and/or administrators and new fellow students who have no idea of strengths and strategies that work well for a particular child. Transitions can be even more frightening to the parent when their child faces the transition out of primary school and into secondary and vice-versa to college, vocational, or other programs. Transition programs require that transition planning begin when a child is very young. This planning goes beyond far beyond the educational planning considerations with younger children and includes concerns about independent living, integrated employment, and community participation (Talk, 2012). It may help to begin by exploring the adult services that are available. The primary agencies include vocational rehabilitation, the Social Security administration, state-level agencies, and independent living centers.

iv. Lack of Adequate Guidance Services for Special Needs Children and their Parents

Physically challenged students with learning disabilities require specific counseling needs that often are not addressed in elementary and normal secondary schools. This article looks at what kinds of support students with this profile need, and how school counselors can provide it. School counselors work individually and with other educators to meet the developmental needs of all students, including those with special needs or disabilities. The results of qualitative research carried out among physically challenged students are summarized involving comparative case studies of university students who were learning disabled. These students encountered negative experiences during the elementary and

secondary school years due to this exceptionality that affected their social and emotional development. An in-depth analysis of their educational experiences enabled researchers to probe their perceptions, and a summary of these findings is presented in this write up. Implications for the role that school counselors can play in the identification of students with this profile are discussed, as is the need for the provision of counseling services for this population within the context of comprehensive developmental school counseling programmes.

The Counselling Association of Nigeria, should outline school counselors' role in serving these students, including responsibilities such as serving on multidisciplinary teams to identify the special needs student and collaborating with others to provide social skills training in classroom settings, in small groups, or with individual students. To effectively implement some of these practices, counsellors need to understand the counselling needs of students with specific disabilities. They also need to know how they can incorporate this knowledge into their defined roles in serving students within the context of a comprehensive developmental counselling program. Recent research indicates that elementary school counsellors are well suited to serve a pivotal role in both providing information related to how to identify students with disabilities and overseeing the various collaborative roles associated with working with students of special needs. School counsellors could be extremely helpful for some students, such as twice-exceptional students, who are particularly difficult to identify and who may not receive either the educational or the counselling program services they may need.

Methodology

The study adopted a survey research design while questionnaire was used for data collection. The choice was informed by the desire to allow an intensive study within the real-life context of special needs students.

Stratified and Purposive sampling was used. The population of the study was students with special needs in TVET Institutions in Ogun State, Nigeria with a sample of three (3) Polytechnics selected through stratified sampling from each of the Senatorial Districts of Ogun State. Two Hundred respondents were selected purposively for the study while a structured questionnaire with a 4-point Likert rating scale was used as an instrument of data collection. The questionnaire made up of two sections. Section "A" consisting of socio-demographic data – age, sex, course of study, types of disability, and so on and B consisting of questions bordering on the challenges faced by Special need students in TVET institutions, the factors that contribute to the challenges and ways out of such challenges. Data collected through the research instrument were presented and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 21 to determine the relationships between and among variables. Hypotheses were analyzed using Independent Sample T-test and multiple regression statistical methods.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	110	55.0
Female	90	45.0
Age (Years)	Frequency	Percent
15-17 years	42	21.0
18-20 years	97	48.5
21-23 years	54	27.0
Above 23 years	7	3.5
Year of Study	Frequency	Percent
First year	34	17.0
Second year	92	46.0
Third year	74	37.0
Total	200	100.0

Researchers' Field Survey, 2022

Table 1 showed that (55.0%) of the respondents were male while (45.0%) were female which indicated that there were more male students than female students in this study. Also, (48.5%) of the respondents were within the age category of 18-20 years, (27.0%) were within the age category of 21-23 years, (21.0%) were within the age category of 15-17 years while (3.5%) were above 23 years.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by nature of disabilities

Nature of disability	Frequency	Percent
Paralysis	18	9.0
Dumb	1	0.5
Loss of the legs	75	37.5
Hearing impairment	106	53.0
Total	200	100.0

Researchers' Field Survey, 2022

From table 3, it was revealed that the nature of disabilities that the physically challenged come to the school with were diverse. It ranged from Hearing impairment (53.0%), loss of legs (37.5%), paralysis (9.0%) and dumb (0.5%). Each of these challenges come with its own peculiar challenge particularly when it comes to schooling with it.

Research Question One:

What are the challenges faced by Special need students in TVET institutions?

Table 3: Challenges faced by Special needs students in TVET institutions

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation
The transferring process	79 (39.5%)	68 (34.0%)	20 (10.0%)	33 (16.5%)	1.59	0.54
Inadequate financial support	101 (50.5%)	46 (23.0%)	38 (19.0%)	15 (7.5%)	2.15	1.27
High cost of educational materials and equipment	158 (79.0%)	33 (16.5%)	9 (4.5%)	-	1.54	0.58
Personal/family issues,	104 (52.0%)	88 (44.0%)	8 (4.0%)	-	1.52	0.58
Lack of specialists and para-professionals	148 (74.0%)	51 (25.5%)	1 (0.5%)	-	1.78	0.96

Researchers' Field Survey, 2022

Table 3 showed that (39.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed, (34.0%) agreed, (10.0%) disagreed while (16.5%) strongly disagreed that the Transferring process was one of the challenges faced by Special need students in TVET institutions, (50.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed, (23.0%) agreed, (19.0%) disagreed while (7.5%) strongly disagreed that inadequate financial support was one of the challenges faced by Special need students in TVET institutions, (79.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed, (16.5%) agreed while (4.5%) disagreed that high cost of educational materials and equipment was one of the challenges faced by Special need students in TVET institutions, (52.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed, (44.0%) agreed while (4.0%) disagreed that Personal/family issues was one of the challenges faced by Special need students in TVET institutions. Furthermore, (74.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed, (25.5%) agreed while (0.5%) disagreed that lack of specialists and para-professionals was one of the challenges faced by Special need students in TVET institutions. It also showed that inadequate financial support had the highest mean score of 2.15, followed by Lack of specialists and para-professionals with a mean score of 1.78 and The transferring process with a mean score of 1.59.

Research Question Two

What is the consequence of the challenges on the academic performance of the students?

Table 4: Consequences of the challenges on the academic performance of the students

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation
The challenges lead to poor academic performance among the students	79 (39.5%)	100 (50.0%)	20 (10.0%)	1 (0.5%)	1.72	0.68
The challenges lead to low level of motivation among students	76 (38.0%)	104 (52.0%)	11 (5.5%)	9 (4.5%)	1.77	0.75

The challenges may bring about drop of students from school	155 (78.0%)	20 (10.0%)	18 (9.0%)	6 (3.0%)	1.46	0.70
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Researchers' Field Survey, 2022

Table 4 showed that (39.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed, (50.0%) agreed, (10.0%) disagreed while (0.5%) strongly disagreed that the challenges lead to poor academic performance among the students, (38.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed, (52.0%) agree, 11 (5.5%) disagree while 9 (4.5%) strongly disagreed that the challenges lead to low level of motivation among students. Also, 155 (78.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed, 20 (10.0%) agree, 18 (9.0%) disagree while 6 (3.0%) strongly disagreed that the challenges may bring about drop of students from school.

Research Question Three. What are the ways out of such challenges?

Table 5: The ways out of such challenges

Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Standard Deviation
Adequate provision of funding for Special Education	75 (37.5%)	94 (47.0%)	26 (13.0%)	5 (2.5%)	2.23	1.01
Provision of Infrastructural facilities for vocational institutions	174 (87.0%)	17 (8.5%)	2 (1.0%)	7 (3.5%)	1.25	0.79
Recruitment and training of more teachers for Special education	47 (23.5%)	97 (48.5%)	20 (10.0%)	36 (18.0%)	1.52	0.52

Researchers' Field Survey, 2022

Table 5 showed that (37.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed, (47.0%) agreed, (13.0%) disagree while (2.5%) strongly disagreed that adequate provision of funding for Special Education was one of the ways out of such challenges, (87.0%) of the respondents strongly agreed, (8.5%) agreed, (1.0%) disagreed while (11.7%) strongly disagreed that Provision of Infrastructural facilities for vocational institutions was one of the ways out of such challenges. Also, (23.5%) of the respondents strongly agreed, (48.5%) agreed, (10.0%) disagreed while (18.0%) strongly disagreed that recruitment and training of more teachers for Special education was one of the ways out of such challenges. The table further showed that adequate provision of funding for Special Education had the highest mean score of 2.23 followed by Recruitment and training of more teachers for Special education with a mean score of 1.52.

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of parental education on challenges of special need students

Table 6: T-Test Showing parental educational status and challenges of special need students

DV	Parental Education	N	X	SD	df	T	P
Challenges of Special need students	For mally educated	124	7.05	2.04	198	4.181	.000
	Not For mally educated	76	8.28	1.98			

Results from table 6 showed that there is a significant difference between educational status of parents with respect to the challenges of special need students ($t(198) = 4.181, p < .05$), such that students whose parents are not for mally educated have a higher mean score ($X = 8.28, SD = 1.98$) compared to students whose parents are for mally educated ($X = 7.05, SD = 2.04$). This implies that students whose parents are not for mally educated have higher mean score in challenges faced by special need students compared to students whose parents are for mally educated. Therefore, the hypothesis is confirmed.

Hypothesis Two

H₂: Socio-economic status of parents does not have significant impact on the challenges of special need students

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.353 ^a	.125	.112	1.97757

a. Predictors: (Constant), Income, Employment Status, Parental Education

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	109.442	3	36.481	9.328	.000 ^b
	Residual	766.513	196	3.911		
	Total	875.955	199			

a. Dependent Variable: Challenges

b. Predictors: (Constant), Income, Employment Status, Parental Education

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	9.001	.445		20.238	.000
Parental Education	.456	.098	.317	4.632	.000
Employment Status	.332	.154	.144	2.155	.032
Income	.196	.086	.157	2.287	.023

a. Dependent Variable: Challenges

The second hypothesis was tested using Multiple Regression Analysis. The result showed that parental socio-economic status (parental education, employment status and Income) significantly impact challenges of special need students [$R^2 = .125$; $F(3, 199) = 9.328$; $p < .05$]. This infers that parental socio-economic status (parental education, employment status and Income) jointly accounted for about 12.5% of the variance observable in challenges of special need students.

In addition, the result of the coefficients of multiple determination for the model shows that the independent contribution of parental socio-economic status (parental education, employment status and Income) were significant ($(\beta = .317$; $t = 4.632$; $p < .000$), $(\beta = .144$; $t = 2.155$; $p < .000$) and $(\beta = .157$; $t = 2.287$; $p < .000$). In terms of magnitude, parental education has the highest magnitude of ($\beta = .317$), followed by Income with ($\beta = .157$).

Conclusion and Recommendations

This study examined the Challenges Facing Special Needs Students in TVET Institutions in Southwest Nigeria. The study made use of a survey research design in which 200 students were selected using a Purposive stratified sampling to select the students from 4 Polytechnics in Ogun State. The findings showed that the nature of the disabilities of the respondents include hearing impairment, loss of legs, paralysis and dumb. The result of the first research question showed that the study showed that the challenges faced by special need students include Inadequate financial support which had the highest mean score of 2.15, followed by Lack of specialists and para-professionals with a mean score of 1.78 and the transferring process with a mean score of 1.59.

For the second research question, majority of the respondents agree that consequences of the challenges include poor academic performance, low level of motivation among the students and drop out of students from school. For the third research question, Adequate provision of funding for Special Education had the highest mean score of 2.23 followed by Recruitment and training of more teachers for Special education with a mean score of 1.52. The result of hypothesis one showed that students whose parents are not formally educated have higher mean score in challenges faced by special need students compared to students whose parents are formally educated which indicated that students' whose parents were not formally educated encountered more challenge with respect to needs of special students.

The result of hypothesis two showed that parental socio-economic status (parental education, employment status and Income) significantly impact challenges of special need students and accounted for about 12.5% of the variance observable in challenges of special need students.

In addition, the result of the coefficients of multiple determination for the model shows that the independent contribution of parental socio-economic status (parental education, employment status and Income) with parental education having the highest magnitude of ($\beta = .317$), followed by Income with ($\beta = .157$). This findings supports the study of Balogun, (2012) who reported that There are not enough fully special-education teachers to go around, so the government depends on alternative-route teacher certification programs. It also agrees with the study of Nolan et al, (2006) who reported that some parents of special needs children are disinterested in the welfare of their children and fail to provide them with adequate care

Recommendations

- i. Government should provide adequate financial support for special need institutions and technical schools.
- ii. Government should employ more professional special need teachers and create an avenue to train more teachers in the field

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