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EVALUATION OF EDUCATION OF SPECIAL TARGET GROUP CURRICULUM IMPLEMENTATION IN COLLEGES OF EDUCATION IN SOUTH SOUTH, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

The study evaluated education of special target group curriculum implementation in Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria. The study adopted survey research design. Two research questions with two corresponding hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study consisted of all the three hundred level NCE students in the ten Colleges of Education in the South South Zone with a population of three thousand three hundred and seventy-six (3,376) and all the eighteen (18) lecturers teaching Education of Special Targets Group (EDU 211) in the ten Colleges of Education for the 2024/2025 academic session. The sample technique for the study was a simple random sampling technique for students while purposive sampling was done for the lecturers. Therefore, 300 students were selected and used for the study while all the eighteen lecturers were also used as the sample population for the study. Hence, the sample size for the study was 318 respondents. The instrument used for the study was a structured questionnaire titled; Implementation of Education of the special target group curriculum questionnaire (IESTGCQ). The instrument was validated by three experts. Cronbach alpha reliability test was done to ascertain the reliability of the instrument. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation as well as independent t-test. The result shows that lecturers and students both agree that lecturers made use of the

minimum standard in implementing education of the special target group curriculum. The study further revealed that both lecturers and students agreed that the course provide students with adequate knowledge and skill about education of Special Target Group. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that the education of Special Target Group be taught by lecturers who are experts in adult and non-formal education.

KEYWORDS: Special target group, curriculum, curriculum implementation.

INTRODUCTION

There is no gainsaying that education is the instrument for individual and national development in any country. This was aptly expressed in the Nigeria's philosophy of education as documented in the National Policy on Education of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013). Eduok, Bassey and Uso (2025), states that the teacher is one of the major factors in the curriculum implementation process. This therefore, means that teachers are the drivers of the levels of the education system including Colleges of Education where teachers are trained. Education which is a fundamental human right as enshrined in section 42 of the International Human Rights Law is meant for the generality of the population irrespective of the individual's age, gender, religion or culture, among others (Essienette and Essienette, 2022). However, for effective education system to be realized, teachers as the main stakeholders must be adequately prepared to carry out their job in line with the above stated fact. Odey and Effiong (2012) stated emphatically that the importance of teachers and teacher education cannot be overemphasized because one of the goals of teacher education is to provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for their assignment and make them adaptable to changing situations. Teachers therefore are largely responsible for the transaction and implementation of education policies, curriculum as well as assessment of learning outcome.

Teacher education is the process of educating or preparing persons whose profession is teaching in order to play their roles as teachers towards contributing to national development. To Odey and Effiong (2012) it includes training or education occurring before commencement of service (pre-service) and education or training during service (in-service or on the-job) and that teacher education constitutes a conspicuous element in the totality of organized education, formal and non-formal. This means that it is the professional training given to teachers towards acquiring certain attitudes, skills and knowledge considered desirable so as to make them efficient and effective in their work in accordance with the

needs of the society at any point in time. To Andiema (2020), professionally trained teachers with adequate knowledge and teaching skills are one of the pre-conditions for a successful curriculum implementation. This therefore require effective teacher preparation to cause attitudinal changes and skillful application of instructional approaches which calls for the need to equip teachers (both in-service and pre-service) with the necessary competences for handling learners with diverse learning needs and circumstances.

Nigeria operates an education system that meet the educational needs of normal children with little attention for children with special needs and people categorized as special target groups. Special target groups require special education which is a specially designed programme targeted at supporting individuals who live in primitive settlements characterized by farming, hunting and other outdated economic activities that are too far away from learned communities without good access road network that still exist and live in their world of primitive magic to acquire formal education and skills so that they discover and utilize effectively their talents and skills for self-improvement and survival (Eduok and Eduok, 2024). It is as a result of the importance of educating this group of people that the course education of special target groups was introduced into the National Commission for Colleges of Education curriculum for Colleges of Education. Curriculum, according to Eduok and Essienette (2024) are the planned and unplanned experiences leaners receive in their formal or semi-formal education to give learners all-round educational development in order to enable them make meaningful contribution to the development of the society. Hence, education of special target groups' curriculum specifies what to teach pre-service teachers in the Colleges of Education in Nigeria.

Special target groups are broadly understood as those whose educational needs are not sufficiently addressed by regular or mainstream literacy provisions. Okai, Padung and Ahmed (2016) posited that certain children and youths in our society face certain unique circumstances that prevent them or make their attempt to realize their potentials more difficult. These groups of children and youths suffer from societal indifference and or neglect. These children may have some learning problems due to environmental, cultural, economic deprivation religious beliefs, etc. These groups of children are not legally included in the group referred to as handicaps, and so they are not covered by any legislation. They however, should recognized as needing inclusion in the population of exceptional children that is those in need of special services to realize their potentials. These children and their

families are referred to by a number of different terms such as educationally, culturally and socially disadvantaged. Bassey (2017) classified this special target education into the following groups: adult education; women and girl-child education as well as migrant and nomadic education. These set of people can receive these forms of education through: non-formal education system as well as open and distance school system.

Statement of the Problem

It has been observed that the education of special target groups is still being hindered by lack of professionals who render special education services to people under this category. Although Nigeria has made significant effort in providing education to this group of people through the introduction of the Universal Basic Education in the year 1999 (Essienette and Essienette). This Universal Basic Education aims at providing functional education for adults and youths who have never had the advantage of formal education or who left school too early. The target groups include migrant folks, Almajiri pupils, illiterate and semi-illiterate adults, youths and adolescents, persons who left the formal school system early and are now willing to come back and continue schooling; and other categories of disadvantaged groups; who are unable to have access to conventional educational programmes to cater for their particular needs and circumstances. However, Michael and Angie (2013) argued that the Universal Basic Education programme has not been successful in providing education to the special target groups because the Government has not exercised the required commitment and seriousness in its implementation. They see the commitment of Government as weak as the Government has not properly played her part as stated in the National Policy on Education such as training of teachers, provision of adequate materials and facilities and the supervision and enforcement of implementation. It is against this background that the researcher intends to investigate factors influencing quality implementation of special target group curriculum. The problem of this study therefore is the evaluation of quality implementation of special target curriculum in Colleges of Education in South South Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to evaluate education of special target group curriculum implementation in Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Examine the extent to which lecturers' use of minimum standard influence the implementation of education of special target group curriculum in Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria; and
- ii. Determine the extent to which the curriculum content has influenced students' knowledge and skills about education of special target group curriculum in College of Education in South South, Nigeria;

Research Questions

The following questions guided the study

- i. To what extent do lecturers' use of minimum standard influence the implementation education of special target group curriculum in Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria?
- ii. To what extent does the curriculum content influence students' knowledge and skills about education of special target group curriculum in Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested:

H_01 There is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on how lecturers' use of minimum standard influence the implementation of education of special target group curriculum in Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria.

H_02 There is no significant difference in the main responses of lecturers and students on the extent to which the curriculum content influence students' knowledge and skills about education of special target group curriculum in Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

Survey research design was used for the study. Survey research design allows the researcher to carry out a survey of a given population for the purpose of exploring, describing or explaining certain attributes that are unique to them (Ibanga, 2020). The population of the study consisted of all lecturers teaching education for special target group in Colleges of Education in South South State Nigeria. The States include; Akwa Ibom State, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta, Edo and Rivers State. The region has 10 Colleges of Education. The study also consisted of all the 300 level students who studied education for the special target group in their 200 level. Purposive sampling technique was used in selecting six (6) Colleges of

Education in the region. Eighteen (18) lecturers from the six Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria were selected. Furthermore, a simple random sampling technique was used in selecting fifty (50) students in each College of Education to make it a total of three hundred (300) students in 300 level from the sampled colleges. The sampled students studied education for the special target group in the second semester of 2024/2025 session. Hence, the sample size for the study was 300 students and 18 lecturers making it a total of 318 respondents. The instruments used for the study was a questionnaire titled “Implementation of Education of the Special Target Group Curriculum Questionnaire (IESTCQ). The researchers developed the instruments. Hence, the questionnaires were divided into section A and B for the two categories of the respondents. Section A elicited information on the respondents Bio data and personal information. While section B had the questions designed using the four point Likert Scale of Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree (D) Strongly Disagree (SD). The instrument for data collection was validated by three experts in measurement and Evaluation in College of Education, Afaha Nist, Akwa Ibom State. The instrument for data collection was subjected to test-retest method in two Colleges of Education in the South South region that were not part of the sample institution. However, a reliable coefficient of 7-21 was obtained using Cronback alpha reliability test. This therefore showed that the instrument was reliable. The instrument was administered by the researchers with the help of two research assistants. The research questions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The average mean was 2.50. Hence, any means score below 2.50 is disagreed while means score of 2.50 and above is agreed. The hypotheses were analyzed using independent t-test analysis.

RESULTS

Research Question I

To what extent do lecturers' use of minimum standard influence the implementation of education of special target group curriculum in College of Education in South South, Nigeria?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation responses on how lecturers' use of minimum standard influence the implementation of education of special target group curriculum.

s/n	Statement	Lecturers			Students		
		\bar{x}	SD	Dec	\bar{x}	SD	Dec
1.	Introduction to education for special target group is taught with	2.91	1.09	Agree	2.64	1.01	Agree

	the guidance of the course outline in the minimum standard.						
2.	The curriculum content of EDU 221 in the minimum standard is comprehensive.	3.5	1.96	Agree	3.44	1.17	Agree
3.	Every lecturer has the curriculum content in the minimum standard.	3.04	1.15	Agree	3.01	1.12	Agree
4.	The curriculum content of the course EDU 221 are properly taught by the lecturers.	3.14	1.24	Agree	2.97	1.09	Agree
5.	The curriculum is modified to suit students' level of understanding and ability to learn.	2.58	0.96	Agree	2.11	1.08	Agree
Grand Mean		3.04		Agree	2.95		Agree

Table 1 above shows that lecturers agreed with items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 with mean scores of 2.91, 3.51, 3.04, 3.14 and 2.58 respectively. Also, the students agreed with items 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 with mean scores of 2.64, 3.44, 3.01, 2.97 and 2.71 respectively. However, lecturers and students had a grand mean of 3.04 and 2.94 respectively. This therefore shows that the lecturers effectively utilized the minimum standard in the implementation of education of special target group in Colleges of Education in South South Nigeria.

Research Question II

To what extent does the curriculum content influence students' knowledge and skills about education of special target group curriculum in Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation responses on how the curriculum content influence students' knowledge and skills about education of special target group curriculum in Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria.

s/n	Statement	Lecturers			Students		
		\bar{x}	SD	Dec	\bar{x}	SD	Dec
6.	Students have acquired positive attitude and values contained in the curriculum.	3.26	1.21	Agree	3.11	1.26	Agree
7.	Students can collaborate with parents and the guidance counsellor to develop educational programme for these special target group.	3.91	1.41	Agree	2.94	0.91	Agree
8.	Students can apply the different skills and methods used to teach the different categories of these special target group.	3.14	1.26	Agree	2.96	.01	Agree

9.	Students can identify the various types of people categorized as special target group.	3.58	1.32	Agree	3.71	1.43	Agree
	Grand Mean	3.47		Agree	3.05		Agree

Table 2 above shows that lecturers agreed with items 6, 7, 8 and 9 with mean scores of 3.26, 3.91, 3.14 and 3.58 respectively. Also the students agreed with items 6, 7, 8 and 9 with mean scores of 3.11, 2.94, 2.96 and 3.71 respectively. However, lecturers and students had a grand mean of 3.47 and 3.05 respectively. This therefore shows that the curriculum content provided the students with adequate knowledge and skills about education of special target group curriculum in Colleges of Education in South South Nigeria.

Hypotheses

H_0 There is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on how lecturers' use of minimum standard influence the implementation of education of special target group curriculum in Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria.

Table 3: Independent t-test table on the difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on how lecturers' use of minimum standard influence the implementation of education of special target group curriculum in Colleges of Education in South South Nigeria.

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	t-cal	t-crit	Df	Decision
Lecturers	18	15.18	6.40				
Students	300	14.77	5.47	1.67	1.96	316	Accepted

Significant at 0.05, df = 316

Table 3 above shows that the t-calculated value of 1.69 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on lecturers' use of minimum standard in the implementation of special target group curriculum in Colleges of Education. Since the t-calculated value is less than the t-critical value, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, the analysis shows that lecturers and students agreed that lecturers effectively utilized the minimum standard in the implementation of education of special target group curriculum in Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria.

H_0 There is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on the extent to which the curriculum content influence students' knowledge and skills about

education of special target group curriculum in Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria.

Table 4: Independent t-test table on the difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on the extent to which the curriculum content influence students' knowledge and skills about education of special target group curriculum in Colleges of Education in South South Nigeria.

Variables	N	\bar{x}	SD	t-cal	t-crit	Df	Decision
Lecturers	18	13.90	5.2				
Students	300	12.72	4.61	1.52	1.96	316	Accepted

Significant at 0.05, df = 316

Table 4 above shows that the t-calculated value of 1.52 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This shows that there is no significant different in the mean responses of lecturers and students on the extent to which the curriculum content influence students' knowledge and skills about education of special target group curriculum in Colleges. Since the t-calculated value is less than the t-critical value, the null hypothesis is accepted. Therefore, the analysis shows that lecturers and students agreed that the curriculum content provided the students with adequate knowledge and skills about education of special target group curriculum in Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings in Research Question I reveals that both lecturers and students agreed that lecturers made use of the curriculum content contained in the minimum standard for education of special target group. This is in agreement with the research conducted by Onwubolu, Edozie and Chukwusa (2023) who submitted that lecturers teaching Introduction to Special Education Curriculum effectively used the minimum standard in implementing the curriculum.

Findings in Research Question II reveals that both lecturers and students agreed that the curriculum content provided the students with adequate knowledge and skills about education of special target group. This is in consonance with Onwubolu, Edozie and Chukwusa (2023) who also agreed that knowledge and skill about education for special target group.

Findings in Hypothesis I reveals that there is no significance difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on the extent to which lecturers utilized the minimum standard in

implementing education of special target group curriculum. This is also alluded to by Onwubolu, Edozie and Chukwusa (2023) who submitted that lecturers and students agreed that the lecturers utilized the minimum standard in implementing the education for special group in Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria.

Finally, Hypothesis II reveals that there is no significant difference in the mean responses of lecturers and students on the extent to which the curriculum content provided the students with adequate knowledge and skills about education of special target group. This is in agreement between the lecturers and students that the course provided the students with adequate knowledge and skills about education of special target group in Colleges of Education in South South, Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that lecturers utilized the course content in the minimum standard in teaching the course education for special target group. More so, it was also observed that the course provided students with adequate knowledge and skills about education of special target groups.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Colleges of Education without the Department of Adult and Non-Formal Education should as a matter of urgency establish one.
- ii. Few Colleges without experts in the field of Adult and Non-Formal Education who would teach the course education of special target group (Edu 221) should employ specialist in the field of Adult and Non-Formal Education to teach the course.
- iii. The course education of special target group should be taught by lecturers who are experts in Adult and Non-Formal Education.

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