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Evaluation Strategies in Assessing Learning Outcomes of Students with Disabilities in Rivers State

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Abstract
The study investigated evaluation strategies in assessing learning outcomes of students withDisabilities in Rivers State. Three null hypotheses were formulated to guide the conduct of the study. The study adopted descriptive survey research design. The sample of the study consisted of 15 special and general education teachers drawn through simple random sampling technique. T-test was used in testing the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The results of the study revealed that the use of formative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities in Rivers State does not significantly differ. That the use of summative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessinglearning outcomes of students with disabilities in Rivers State does not significantly differ. That similarly, the use of ipsative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessinglearning outcomes of students with disabilities in Rivers State does not significantly differ. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that special and general education teachers should be provided with in-service training to better equip them with more knowledge onrecent trends and practices in evaluation strategies.

Keywords: Evaluation, Strategies, Disabilities, Assessment, Learning.

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I. Introduction

One billion people, or 15% of the world's population, experience some form of disability, and disability prevalence is higher for developing countries (World Bank, 2014). Persons with disabilities are more likely to experience adverse socioeconomic outcomes such as less education, poorer health outcomes, lower levels of employment, and higher poverty rates as revealed by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2012). Persons with disabilities (PWD's) irrespective of their race, ethnicity, gender,socioeconomic background, and religious affiliation are expected to receive access to quality and timely education. This education can be provided for either in a regular or in an inclusive classroom setting.

Special Education is the design and delivery of teaching and learning strategies for individuals with disabilities who may or may not be enrolled in regular schools Criston (2013). Students who need special education may include students who have hearing impairment, students who have visual impairment, students with physical disabilities, students with intellectual disability, students with learning disabilities, students with behaviour disorders, students with speech or language disorders students who are gifted, autistic child, and students with multiple disabilities.

In a classroom environment, special needs learners' general performance are often been evaluated by both general and special education teachers. Evaluation and assessment plays a foundational role in special education. Students with disabilities are complex learners who have unique needs that exist alongside their strengths. Effective general and special education teachers have to fully understand those strengths and needs. Thus, these teachers ought to be knowledgeable regarding evaluation and assessment of students'strengths and limitations.

Evaluation is observed as the process of making judgments about an assessment information (Airasian, 2005). Similarly Miller (2005) revealed that assessment is an integrated process of gaining information about students' learning and making valued judgments about their progress. Information about students' progress can be obtained from a variety of sources, including projects, portfolios, performances, observations, and tests. The

information about students' learning is often assigned specific numbers or grades and this involves measurement. The primary focus of this study is on determining the evaluation and assessment strategies used by general and special education teachers in relation to students with special needs learning.

This study was on Education Production Theory and Value-Added Model (VAM**).**

The Education Production Theoryis an application of the economic concept of a production function to the field of education. It relates various inputs affecting a students' learning such as; schools, teachers, families, peers, neighborhoods, etc. to measured outputs including subsequent labour market success, college attendance, graduation rates, and most frequently, test scores. The original study that eventually prompted interest in the idea of education production theory was by a sociologist, James S. Coleman in 1966. The baseline of the theory is that even though the teacher is an important factor in the determination of students' academic performance, so many other factors greatly affects the academic performance of the students. Implying there is no single factor that determines the student's academic performance but a combination of factors including teacher's evaluation strategies.

The value added model measures how a certain teacher contributes to the progress of their students. Value added model takes the test scores of students from previous years, as well as information about their background, and predicts what their test scores will be in the following year. Data is then collected on whether students exceeded those expectations or not. The teacher's value-added estimate is calculated by finding the average of differences between the actual and predicted scores of the students.

Studies related to this study were carried out by other researchers. Onila and Haward (2012) investigated effects of classroom evaluation strategies on student achievement and attitudes. The main goal of the investigation was to determine the effects of teacher evaluation and the combination of teacher evaluation and student self-evaluation on student performance and attitudes. Participants in the study were 189 Latvian high school students and their six teachers. The six teachers were assigned to one of three treatment conditions: (a) no evaluation, (b) teacher evaluation, and (c) self-evaluation plus teacher evaluation. All groups completed a 12-lesson instructional programme on how to conduct experiments and produce research reports. Students in the teacher-evaluation group received teacher evaluation on their initial research reports. Students in the self-plus-teacher evaluation group self-evaluated their reports and received teacher evaluation on them. The no-evaluation group received no formal evaluation instructions.The study revealed that students in the teacher-evaluation and the self-plus-teacher evaluation groups received significantly higher ratings on their final projects than those in the no-evaluation group. However, the no-evaluation group had more favourable attitudes toward the programme than the other two groups, while the self-plus-teacher evaluation group was significantly more confident of their ability to independently conduct future research experiments.

Hussain (2018) examined the effects of classroom assessment practices on students' achievement goals. The study included 1,636 ninth grade students and 83 science teachers from Muscat public schools in Oman. Results from hierarchical linear modelling techniques showed that class contextual features and teachers' teaching experiences and assessment practices interacted significantly with students' characteristics in influencing students' achievement goals.

Vlachol (2017) examined the classroom assessment practices of five science teachers, alongside the teachers' own perspectives of them, within the rather poorly investigated Greek educationalsystem. In Greece, student assessment at the level of middle education is based only on teacherled assessment and not on external exams, as the international assessment paradigms prescribe.The aim of the study is to investigate the different purposes of classroom assessment and theprinciples of classroom assessment practices used to enhance student learning and report onstudent assessment in science. The findings of the study reveal that, although classroom assessment practices served bothformative and summative purposes, participants focused more on the summative uses, withouteffectively using the assessment evidence to complete the learning loop, and thus meet theformative assessment requirements. Teachers appeared to use some formative assessmentprinciples which are valuable in promoting student learning, but their approaches were moreteacher-directed, while students appeared not to have any role in the assessment process. Result underline the fact that summative assessment has a leading role in classroom practices, even incases where teachers are responsible for keeping a balance between formative and summativeassessments.

William (2010) carried out a study to investigate teachers developing assessment for learning:

Impact on student achievement. He noted that while it is generally acknowledged that increased use of formative assessment (or assessment for learning) leads to higher quality learning, it is often claimed that the pressure in schools to improve the results achieved by students in externally-set tests and examinations precludes its use. The study reports on the achievement of secondary school students who worked in classrooms where teachers made time to develop formative assessment strategies. A total of 24 teachers (2 science and 2 mathematics teachers, in each of six schools in two LEAs) were supported over a six-month period in exploring and planning their approach to formative assessment, and then, beginning in September 1999, the teachers put

these plans into action with selected classes. In order to compute effect sizes, a measure of prior attainment and at least one comparison group was established for each class (typically either an equivalent class taught in the previous year by the same teacher, or a parallel class taught by another teacher). The mean effect size in favour of the intervention was observed to be 0.32.

Statement of the Problem

Bias in the evaluation and assessment strategies adopted by general and special education teachers among special learners irrespective of their disabilities may mar or make this special needs learners. Students with disabilities present a wide range of both strengths and needs, in a variety of areas which includes academic, social, and emotional, which must be understood by general and special teachers in order to develop appropriate evaluation and assessment strategies specially designed to meet the needs of this learners. Their varied needs are most often the result of problems beckoning for attention, and these underlying needs can interfere with their ability to achieve successful outcomes in their educational pursuit. If the measures used by special and general teachers in the evaluation process does not consider the needs of the special needs learner, the process may demotivate the child, cause increased anxiety, breed frustration, lead to tendencies in school dropout etc. It hence becomes imperative to determine the evaluation strategies used by general and special teachers in assessing the learning outcomes of students with disabilities in Rivers State.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the use of formative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities Rivers State.
2. There is no significant difference in the use of summative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities Rivers State.
3. There is no significant difference in the use of ipsative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities
Rivers State.

Scope of the Study

The study is delimited to special schools within Rivers State. The special schools involved in the study includes The Child special school, Aba road Port Harcourt, and Special School for the Handicapped, Creek road Port Harcourt.

II. Methodology

This study adopted descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research is adopted because the researcher did not manipulate the evaluation strategies of special and general education teachers. Descriptive survey entails the collection and use of data systematically from a given population to describe certain characteristics features of the population. The design is considered appropriate for this study because the researcher collected data from the sample with view to describing the entire population.The population of this study was made up of 35 special and general education teachers. The study had special education teachers and general education teachers from 2 selected special education schools in Rivers State.

The sample size used for the study was 15 respondents from 2 special schools in Rivers State. The simple random sampling technique was used to select the target figure of 15 special and general education teachers from the 2 special education school in Rivers State.

The Instrument for data collection wasa structured questionnaire consisting of 15 items. The questionnaire is grouped into sections A and B. Section A contains information on teachers' background information while section B is the 15 itemed questions constructed on a 4 point modified likert rating scale of strongly agreed (SA), agreed (A) disagreed (D) strongly disagreed (SD)

Data were collected from the teachers who taught at the child special school, and special school for the handicap. The questionnaire was distributed to all the 15 participants who were selected for the study and the questionnaire were completely filled-in and returned. The null hypotheses was statistically tested using independent t -test at 0.05 level of significance.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the use of formative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities Rivers State.

Table 1: t-test analysis showing use of formative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities in Rivers State.

Formative assessment	N	X	SD	Df	Standard error	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	Remark
GET	8	23.01	4.0					
SET	7	20.44	8	198	1.84	1.214	1.960	**Not Sig.**

The data in table 1 indicates that the calculated t-value is 1.214 while the critical t-value is (1.960) at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. The result of this hypothesis shows that the differences in the use of formative assessment by special and general education teacher's in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities does not significantly differ.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the use of summative assessment by special and generaleducation teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities in Rivers State.

Table 2: t-test analysis showing use of ipsative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities in Rivers State.

Summative assessment	N	X	SD	Df	Standard error	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	Remark
GET	8	44.03	7					
SET	7	29.01	6.0	198	1.80	1.005	1.960	**Not Sig.**

The data in table 2 indicates that the calculated t-value is 1.005 while the critical t-value is (1.960) at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. The result of this hypothesis shows that the differences in the use of summative assessment by special and general education teacher's in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities does not significantly differ.

Hypothesis Three: There is n-o significant difference in the use of ipsative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities Rivers State.

Table 3: t-test analysis showing use of summative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities Rivers State.

Ipsative assessment	N	X	SD	Df	Standard error	Cal. t-value	Crit. t-value	Remark
GET	8	19.45	4.0					
SET	7	23.09	8.3	198	1.82	1.601	1.960	**Not Sig.**

The data in table 3 indicates that the calculated t-value is 1.601 while the critical t-value is (1.960) at 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is therefore accepted. The result of this hypothesis shows that the differences in the use of ipsative assessment by special and general education teachers' in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities does not significantly differ.

III. Discussion

The result of research hypothesis one (Table 1) reveals that the use of formative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities does not significantly differ. When t-test was applied, the calculated t-value was 1.214 while the critical t-value was (1.960) at 0.05

level of probability. This indicates that special education and general education teachers are well trained in the rudiments of education. The results collaborates with Samba (2011) who narrated that the curriculum of the teaching profession in Nigeria was tailored towards equipping the would-be teacher with the necessary knowledge of monitoring the teaching and learning progress.

The result of research hypothesis two (Table 2) reveals that the use of summative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities does not significantly differ. When t-test was applied, the calculated t-value was 1.214 while the critical t-value was (1.960) at 0.05 level of probability. This indicates that knowledge of investigating the final progress of learning is commonly shared by both special and general education teachers. In the view of Edem (2017), he added that special focus in a summative evaluation process should be done purely based on students' needs.

The result of research hypothesis three (Table 3) reveals that the use of ipsative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities does not significantly differ. When t-test was applied, the calculated t-value was 1.601 while the critical t-value was (1.960) at 0.05 level of probability. This result agrees with Nally, (2006) who observed that the comparing of previous result of students with recent results is an expected area of competence by all teachers.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers concludes that: the use of formative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities in Rivers State does not significantly differ. That the use of summative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities in Rivers State does not significantly differ. That the use of ipsative assessment by special and general education teachers in assessing learning outcomes of students with disabilities in Rivers State does not significantly differ.

V. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Special and general education teachers should be provided with in-service training to better equip them with the knowledge of recent trends in evaluation strategies.
2. It is further recommended that the teacher training curriculum should be enriched to givemore attention to ensuring that student's teachers are well coached on the need for adopting various evaluation strategies owing to its huge importance in the life of student and the school in general.
3. Teachers at all level should be well motivated to enhance their interest in the teaching and learningprocess.

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