

IMPACT OF SPECIAL EDUCATION ON LEARNING ADJUSTMENTS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS WITH DYSLEXIA IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ERA IN MONGUNO LGA, BORNO STATE

¹GAMBO MUSTAPHA ALIYU PH.D & ²IBRAHIM MUHAMMAD ADO

¹Department of Education, Borno State University, Maiduguri, Borno State

²Department of Educational Foundations, Federal University Gusau, Zamfara State

ABSTRACT

The study examined the impact of special education on the learning adjustment of primary school pupils with dyslexia in the covid-19 pandemic era in Monguno LGA, Borno State. The study adopted a descriptive research design. The study has three objectives and answers three research questions. The population consists of all the 2303 primary school pupils in Monguno LGA. A sample of 163 primary six (6) pupils identified with dyslexia and were taught using special education methods of instruction was used in the study. The sample was selected using the purposive sampling technique. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher-designed questionnaire which was validated by experts in the areas of educational psychology, guidance and counseling, and special education. The reliability of the instrument was obtained through item analysis and Cronbach alpha reliability and a coefficient of 0.86 was obtained. The data obtained were analyzed using mean scores and standard deviation. The findings revealed that the primary six (6) pupils of Monguno LGA exhibit several symptoms of dyslexia which includes difficulty in recognizing written words, sequencing syllables, rhyming, determining a simple sentence, spelling, and difficulty in separating, and segmenting sounds in a spoken word among others. The study found that dyslexia has effects on the learning of pupils such as inability to complete assignments that result in low grades, lack of confidence, inability to express self and constantly failing in-class work, negative self-image and feelings of depression, and poor academic performance. The study further revealed that special education methods of teaching have significant positive impacts on the learning adjustments of pupils. Based on the findings some recommendations were made, which are: Borno State Universal Basic Education Board should intensify their efforts to identify pupils with dyslexia in schools in Borno State and provide special education methods of teaching to them and also should provide the necessary support for special education teachers to enable them effectively teach pupils with dyslexia using special instructions so that they can achieve learning adjustments which can result in the pupils developing interest in school and improved academic performance.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Learning difficulties is a school-based disability that is characterized by difficulties in reading, writing, speaking, listening, spelling, reasoning, or doing math. According to The International Dyslexia Association (2017), Dyslexia is one of the learning disabilities that affect learners in schools. Dyslexia is a specific learning disability that is neurobiological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding abilities (International Dyslexia Association, 2017). These

difficulties typically result from a deficit in the phonological component of language that is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom instruction (Neeraja, 2013). Secondary consequences may include problems in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede the growth of vocabulary and background knowledge. "Dyslexia is the most common learning disability in children and persists throughout life. The severity of dyslexia can vary from mild to severe. As a result of dyslexia, children can become frustrated by the difficulty in learning to read. Children with dyslexia have difficulty in learning to read despite traditional instruction, at least average intelligence, and adequate motivation and opportunity to learn. Dyslexia is thought to be caused by impairment in the brain's ability to process phonemes (the smallest units of speech that make words different from each other). The causes of dyslexia vary with the type. In primary dyslexia, much research focuses on hereditary factors. Signs and symptoms of dyslexia may include; delayed early language development, problems in recognizing the differences between similar sounds or segmenting words, slow learning of new vocabulary words, difficulty copying from the board or a book, and difficulty with learning reading, writing, and spelling skills. A child may also not be able to remember content, even if it involves a favorite video or storybook. Auditory problems in dyslexia encompass a variety of functions include commonly, a child may have difficulty remembering or understanding what he hears, and recalling sequences of things or more than one command at a time can be difficult. Children struggling with this problem may know what they want to say but have trouble finding the actual words to express their thoughts.

Dyslexia can cause adjustment problems in learning. Such adjustment problems may include children may become withdrawn and appearing to be depressed. they may begin to act out, drawing attention away from their learning difficulty (Avlidou, 2015). These children may consequently lose their interest in the classroom and school-related activities and appear to be unmotivated or lazy.

Children with dyslexia faced lots of adjustment problems as a result of learning in a conventional way in an inclusive classroom and consequently become frustrated, these in addition to the resultant challenges accompanied by a covid-19 pandemic can greatly hinder learning and consequently academic achievement of learners in schools. Teaching learners with dyslexia through special education approaches can significantly contribute to learning adjustments in school where the learners can cope and adjust to the demand of academic performance in school.

Special education means specially designed instruction that meets the unusual needs of an exceptional child. Special materials, teaching techniques, or equipment and or facilities may be required (Neeraja, 2013). Special Education refers to a wide range of adaptations of everyday schooling including but not limited to alternative teaching methods, curricula, and learning goals; use of special equipment; small group or one-on-one teaching; personalized assistance for attention and memory; and provision of richer explanations of concepts while simplifying curricula (Kvande, Bjorklund, Lydersen, Belsky, & Wichstrom, 2018).

The prevalence of the Covid -19 pandemic across the globe poses lots of challenges to learning in school. In an effort to prove solutions to these challenges, several alternative means of helping the learners to acquire knowledge both in schools and at home were devised across the whole globe. In an effort to achieve the goal of educating the learners, Borno State

Government just like its counterparts adopted several approaches to meeting the needs of the learners. Some of the strategies include but are not limited to Radio Learning, learning at home, Reggio Emilia's child-centered approaches, teaching at the right level, and special education among others. Monguno LGA is one of the LGAs that adopted special education methods of teaching to help learners with dyslexia. This is to enable the learners to cope with the current challenges and to learn effectively in an inclusive classroom in conventional schools. In order to achieve these, teachers who were trained and knowledgeable in special education methodologies were employed to handle learners identified with dyslexia. Adopted special education methods of teaching can significantly make a positive impact on the academic needs of learners with dyslexia by facilitating effective learning, which will consequently improve learning adjustments and academic performance. According to Sehic (2021), with the proper method of teaching, it is possible to significantly minimize the effects to allow students with dyslexia to successfully learn as well as those without dyslexia during the pandemic period.

2.0 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The covid-19 pandemic has affected people from all over the globe. All social institutions including schools were closed down and learners remained at home for quite some time. All teaching and learning processes are hindered and learners learn at home and later in school. With the opening of schools and adherence to strict Covid-19 protocol, learners need to be engaged in effective learning. Before the coming of the pandemic, learners with dyslexia in Monguno LGA usually learned together with their peers in the conventional classrooms, where there was no special provision for them to learn and catch up. These led to problems of learning adjustments as the pupils with dyslexia cannot effectively cope with the learning challenges of conventional classrooms. With the outbreak of Covid-19, just like in any other schools in Borno State, Monguno LGA adopted several strategies of meeting up with the demand of teaching the pupils in schools. One of the strategies adopted was teaching pupils with dyslexia through special education in order to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic in addition to the disability faced by these pupils. Pupils with dyslexia need special education methodologies and approaches of learning in other to cope, adjust and learn effectively in school. It is against this problem that the researchers carried out a study on the impact of special education on the learning adjustment of learners with dyslexia in primary schools during a covid-19 pandemic era in Monguno LGA, Borno State in order to find out whether or not special education has a significant positive impact or not the learning adjustment s of pupils with dyslexia.

2.1 Objectives of the study

The objectives the are to determine the:

1. Identify the symptoms of dyslexia among the pupils of Monguno LGA primary schools?
2. Effect of dyslexia on the learning of primary school pupils of Monguno LGA?
3. Impact of special education on the adjustment of learning of pupils with dyslexia in the primary schools of Monguno LGA?

2.2 Research Questions

The study has the following research questions:

1. What are the symptoms of dyslexia among the pupils of Monguno LGA?
2. what are the effects of dyslexia on the learning of primary school pupils of Monguno LGA
3. Does special education has an impact on the learning adjustment of pupils with dyslexia in the primary schools of Monguno LGA

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The study examined the impact of special education on the learning adjustments of pupils with dyslexia in the primary schools of Monguno LGA, Borno State. The study adopted descriptive survey research. The population of the study consists of all the 2303 primary six (6) pupils of Monguno primary schools. A sample size of 163 Primary 6 pupils who were identified with dyslexia and were taught using special education methods during the covid-19 pandemic was used in the study. The sample comprised 67 male and 96 female pupils who were selected using the purposive sampling technique from the 10 primary schools in Monguno LGA. The instrument used for data collection was a researcher design by which was tagged 'Impact of Special Education on Learning Adjustment of Pupils with Dyslexia Questionnaire tagged as (ISELAPDQ)'. The instrument was validated by three experts in the areas of Educational Psychology, Guidance and Counselling, and Special Education. The reliability of the instruments was obtained through item analysis and Cronbach alpha reliability and a coefficient of 0.86 was obtained. The instrument was a 32 items questionnaire that was divided into three sections. Section A consists of 10 items that sought information on the symptoms of dyslexia among the learners. Section B consists of 10 obtained information on the effect of dyslexia on the learning of pupils and Section C consists of 12 items that sought information on the impact of special education on the learning adjustments of the pupils. The questionnaire was a 4-point scale with response modes of the instruments were always (5), most of the time (4), often (3) some of the time (2), and none of the time (1). The questionnaire was administered to the pupils with dyslexia and retrieved after completion. The data obtained were analyzed using descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. A mean of 2.5 and above was regarded as acceptable, while those below were rejected.

4.0 RESULTS

Research Question One: what are the symptoms of dyslexia among the pupils of Monguno LGA?

Table One: Mean and Standard Deviation of the symptoms of dyslexia among the pupils of Monguno LGA?

S/N	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	Difficulty in recognizing written words.	3.52	0.81	Accepted
	Difficulty sequencing syllables	3.12	0.73	Accepted
2	Difficulty in rhyming	3.26	0.42	Accepted

3	Difficulty in determining the meaning of a simple sentence	3.22	0.63	Accepted
4	Difficulty encoding words/spelling.	3.15	0.77	Accepted
5	Poor sequencing of letters or numbers.	3.32	0.81	Accepted
6	Delayed spoken language	3.19	0.89	Accepted
7	Difficulty separating the sounds in spoken words.	3.21	0.96	Accepted
8	Difficulty in expressing thoughts verbally.	3.24	0.98	Accepted
9	Confusion about right or left handedness.	3.10	0.71	Accepted
10	Difficulty with handwriting	3.15	0.88	Accepted

The results as presented in table one indicated that the mean responses on all the items are above the cut-off mark of 2.50. This indicated that class 6 pupils of primary schools in Monguno LGA have demonstrated the symptoms of dyslexia. The result showed that the pupils experience symptoms such as difficulty in recognizing written words, sequencing syllables, rhyming, determining simple sentences, spelling, and difficulty in separating and segmenting sounds in a spoken word. Others Delayed spoken language, Difficulty in expressing thoughts verbally, Confusion about right or left-handedness and difficulty in handwriting. This means that, for learners to be dyslexic, there are several indicators that prevail. These symptoms can be recognized through assessment to gather relevant through observation, interview, and formal and informal testing among other techniques.

Research Question Two: what are the effects of dyslexia on the learning of primary school pupils of Monguno LGA

Mean and Standard Deviation of the responses on the effect of dyslexia on the learning of primary school pupils of Monguno LGA

S/N	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	In ability to complete assignment that result in low grades	3.58	0.58	Accepted
2	lack of confidence	3.39	0.61	Accepted
3	In ability to retrieve information	3.24	0.79	Accepted
4	In ability to express self	3.50	0.66	Accepted
5	Constantly failing in class work	3.30	0.87	Accepted
6	Feeling of frustration	3.45	0.63	Accepted
7	Spend much time during class work	3.52	0.60	Accepted
8	Negative self-image	3.24	0.78	Accepted
9	Depression	2.96	0.97	Accepted
10	Tendency for self-isolation	1.47	0.87	Accepted

Table 2 showed the pupils responses to the effects of dyslexia on learning. The pupils agreed that all the items listed with the exception of item 10 (the tendency for self-isolation) are the effects of dyslexia on learning. This indicated that the effects of dyslexia include the inability to complete assignments that results in low grades, n ability to retrieve information, a lack of confidence, in the ability to express self, and constantly failing in-class work. Other effects include feelings of frustration, spending much time during class work, negative self-image, and feeling of depression. These effects can lead to poor academic performance, withdrawal from school, and low academic achievement in pupils.

Research Question Three: Does special education has an impact on the learning adjustment of pupils with dyslexia in the primary schools of Monguno LGA

Mean Scores and Standard Deviation of Responses on Impact of special education on the adjustment of learning of learners with dyslexia in the primary schools of Monguno LGA

S/ N	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1	I do concentrate in the class during lesson	3.25	0.85	Accepted
2	I now enjoy class activities	3.19	0.67	Accepted
3	I am now interested in school	3.45	0.88	Accepted
4	I do my school work	3.34	0.85	Accepted
5	I do my assignment independently	3.35	0.87	Accepted
6	I score high grades in my tests/assignment	3.50	0.89	Accepted
7	My academic performance has significantly improved	3.14	0.75	Accepted
8	I have positive relationship with my friends and teachers	3.50	0.88	Accepted
9	I can now remember what has been in the class	3.20	0.79	Accepted
10	I have positive thought towards learning	3.25	0.86	Accepted
11	I can be able to write my note	3.55	0.89	Accepted
12	I enjoy group activity	3.25	0.78	Accepted

Table three showed the responses on the impact of special education on the learning adjustment of primary school pupils with dyslexia in Monguno LGA, Borno State. The results showed that the respondents agreed on all items indicating learning adjustments of the pupils. The learners showed that as a result of being taught through special education methods of teaching they can now concentrate in the class during lessons, enjoy class activities, and are interested in school, their academic performance has significantly improved, and have positive thoughts toward learning among other adjustments. This implies that special education has significantly helped improve the learning adjustment of primary school pupils in Monguno LGA.

4.0 DISCUSSION

The study examined the impact of special education on the learning adjustment of primary school pupils with dyslexia in Monguno LGA, Borno State. The findings of the study showed that primary school pupils with dyslexia experience varieties of symptoms that affect their learning adjustments. Such symptoms include difficulty in recognizing written words, sequencing syllables, rhyming, determining simple sentences, spelling, and difficulty in separating and segmenting sounds in a spoken word. Others Delayed spoken language, Difficulty in expressing thoughts verbally, Confusion about right or left-handedness, and difficulty in handwriting. According to Perlstein (2011), there are several types of dyslexia that can affect the children's ability to spell as well as read. This finding is also in agreement with Sousa's (2001)'s finding which reported that learners with dyslexia usually show various symptoms that are all affiliated with a lack of reading skills. Those symptoms include, but are not limited to difficulty to recognize written words, rhyming or sequencing syllables, determining the meaning or main idea of a simple sentence, encoding words and spelling, poor sequencing of letters and or numbers, and delayed spoken language among others.

The study found that dyslexia affects the learning performance of primary school pupils in Monguno LGA. The effects of dyslexia on learning include the inability to complete the assignment that results in low grades, inability to retrieve information, lack of confidence, inability to express self, and constantly failing in-class work. Other effects include feelings of frustration, spending much time during class work, negative self-image, and feeling of depression. This finding corroborates Wilson, Armstrong, Furrie, and Walcot (2009) who found that students with dyslexia face social, emotional, and academic challenges. That implies that students with dyslexia have anxiety, depression, and other social, emotional, and mental health conditions on the order of two to five times greater than those of their peers. These would consequently affect their self-esteem and academic performance in school.

The study further found that special education methods of teaching have a significant impact on the learning adjustments of pupils with dyslexia. The result indicated that pupils concentrate in the class during lessons, enjoy class activities, and are interested in school, they can do their school/class work, score high grades on my tests/assignment and their academic performance has significantly improved and has positive thought towards learning among other adjustments. This finding confirmed the findings of the California Department of Education (2018) who reported that the most effective treatment for these students and for those who struggle with related reading and language problems is skilled teaching. The findings further supported IDA (2010) who pointed out that Effective classroom instruction informed by reliable research can prevent or reduce the severity of reading and language problems.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Dyslexia is a school-based learning difficulty that is characterized by various symptoms that include the inability to read and comprehend, difficulty in encoding and spelling, delay in spoken language, and difficulty in sequencing sounds of letters and numbers among other symptoms, this consequently results in frustration, depression, negative self-image, lack of confidence, low grades and poor academic performance in school. As a result of the effects, pupils with dyslexia face problems of learning adjustments which range from academic failure to lack of interest in school.

The study showed that the special education method of teaching is effective in teaching pupils with dyslexia. The methods help in learning adjustments of the pupils as they can engage in reading, writing, speaking, and self-expression effectively. They can also be able to get meaning out of written words and do their academic work independently and achieve improved academic performance in school. The study concluded that pupils with dyslexia who were taught through special education in other to meet up with the challenges of the covid-19 pandemic significant increase in learning adjustments which consequently resulted in the improvement in the performance of pupils with dyslexia in Monguno LGA, Borno State. Therefore, there is the need for the State government through the Borno State Universal Basic Education Board to engage in employing teachers who are trained and knowledgeable in special instructions to identify pupils with dyslexia in all the primary schools in Borno State and provide teach them through the use of special education methods so that they can be well adjusted in learning and have improved academic performance in school.

6.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Borno State Universal Basic Education Board should intensify their in identify pupils with dyslexia in schools in Borno State through the use of appropriate assessment and screening methods such as observation, interview, and formal and informal testing so that they can be provided with special education in schools as one of the strategies of overcoming learning challenges as a during the covid-19 pandemic and beyond.
2. Teachers should use a series of special education methods that will eradicate the effects of dyslexia on the learners so that the symptoms and indicators will be significantly minimized.
3. The Borno State Universal Basic Education Board and the SBMCs should provide the necessary support for special education teachers to enable them effectively teach pupils with dyslexia using special instructions so that they can be achieve learning adjustments which can results in the pupils developing interest in school and improved academic performance.

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