
EXPERIENCED BARRIERS BY PERSONS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS ON ACCESS TO HIGHER INSTITUTIONS

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ABSTRACT: *Higher education is a much desirable level of education for most youths in the society. The fact that a person is with special needs does not alienate such a person from being able to access higher education. Like all fundamental human rights persons with special needs must have access to higher education as stipulated in the United Nations Convention on Rights of persons with disabilities. This paper takes a closer look into the barriers that have being experienced and encountered by persons with special needs in accessing higher education. Three research questions were generated for the study. The research design for this study is descriptive survey. Two hundred and seventy three (273) students with special needs responded to the forty item questionnaire designed for the study. Descriptive and inferential statistics of ANOVA and Correlation (PPMC) were used to test the study at 0.05 level of significance. The analysis of data revealed that social and environmental factors affect the access to higher education by students with special needs. A number of other barriers that also contributed to lack of access to higher education by persons with special needs include academic, communication, instructional or institutional, individual and financial barriers. The government and other stakeholders have to intensify supports for persons with special needs to ensure easier access to higher education and to eradicate limitation to certain courses for persons with special needs. Disability policies should be enacted in tertiary institutions in Nigeria in order to eliminate barriers to access to higher education by persons with special needs.*

KEYWORDS: Special Needs, Higher Institutions

INTRODUCTION

Education is the stepping stone for every human to build a successful life and career and this applies to everyone including persons with special needs. Globally the disabled population continues to be the most disadvantaged and marginalized group within society with limited access to educational opportunities. According to UNESCO's Global Education for All Monitoring Report 2010(<http://www.unesco.org/new/en/education/themes/leading-the-international-agenda/efareoport/reports/2010-marginalization>) "disability is one of the least visible but most potent factors in educational marginalization." In a report by Salmi and Pye (2010) the U.N.'s International Day of Persons with disabilities provided them with an

opportunity to share preliminary findings from their on-going work on equity of access and success in tertiary education for people with disabilities. It did not take their team long to appreciate how little international research and reliable data exist on the situation of students with special needs in World Bank client countries. Gaining an accurate insight turned out to be a challenging undertaking; anecdotal evidence suggests wide disparities in educational access and success at all levels of education. It is useful to remind ourselves that tertiary education systems have traditionally catered for political, intellectual and professional elites. Admission systems were, and in most cases still are, contingent on specific qualifications or competencies awarded by the formal education system, often resulting in the exclusion of marginalized groups in general and, specifically, and people with disabilities.

The last 20 years, however, have witnessed, a slow but steady change in the pattern of access to tertiary education, often referred to as the "massification" of tertiary education systems. This phenomenon has been accompanied by a global policy shift, triggered by rising societal concerns for issues of equity and access to educational opportunities for those groups who have traditionally been under represented within tertiary education. The adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with disabilities (UNCRPD) in December 2006, has effectively directed attention towards the rights of people with special needs. As more and more countries are ratifying the Convention (Status Dec 10: 147), thereby legally subscribing to its premise, disability is attracting increasing consideration by both national legal systems and policy makers worldwide.

While the fact that equity concerns are being voiced more forcefully is a positive development, the implementation of both existing and emerging anti-discrimination legislation varies greatly from one country to another and from one tertiary education institution to the next. Arguably, at the level of World Bank client countries, people with disabilities still only appear at the margins of the policy debates, with persons from low socio-economic backgrounds, indigenous people, ethnic minorities, and people from rural or isolated areas taking precedence over issues affecting access and success for people with special needs.

While in some countries the policy debates turn around success in education and access to the labour market, the focus in a number of low and middle income countries is still shaped by concerns for access to educational opportunities. This situation is often reflected in institutional attempts to retrofit the physical environment. A case in point is Delhi University in India. Following an access audit of about 150 buildings, the university ordered the necessary changes be made to ensure that college buildings were disabled-friendly. In a number of countries, notably India and Brazil legislation is supportive of access for people with special needs; however, limited policy attention is directed towards students' retention and progression through tertiary education. As a result many students with special needs drop out in their first year indicating that the barriers are too high to overcome and that tertiary education institutions rarely manage to cater adequately to their specific educational needs.

It is in this context that Levin refers to the challenges of adopting equitable approaches to tertiary education, stating that issues of cost-effectiveness become very difficult because they get entangled with issues of fundamental human rights (Levin, 2003). Unless the international community shows a strong and sustained commitment to international data collection efforts coupled with targeted, evidence-based research that provide national and institutional policy makers with the necessary tools to advance equitable policy making, we suspect that students

with special needs will continue to face an uphill struggle in accessing and, perhaps more importantly, success at the level of tertiary education.

Transition from secondary school education to higher education for disabled students is usually fraught with some problems. During the transition, some efforts made in secondary school education to meet special needs of disabled students could become fruitless owing to some factors. These factors include, finding appropriate higher schools for disabled students which are not often easy since the required special education programmes and facilities are available in limited schools. Such specialized training programmes are usually designed to meet the nature and severity of student's disabilities. Since parents of disabled students, require much more money, time and efforts to meaningfully train their children than required by parents of able-bodied students, only few well-to-do and willing parents are usually determined to train their disabled children beyond secondary school education. Many parents usually become discouraged of training disabled children above primary or secondary education if they consider the fact that with best education provided, trained disabled persons may not achieve at par with their normal counterparts (Oyewumi and Olajide, 2009).

There are other problems especially in Nigeria which is a typical third world show case where stereotypes against disabled persons and government's lip service to the education of disabled still hold way. Following the problems of getting suitable schools for students with special needs is indeed that of determining appropriately which career education the students should pursue at the tertiary education level. In Nigeria, though education of disabled pupils and students is said to be free to some possible levels as stated in the (National Policy on Education, Revised in 1981). However, there is indeed the problem of determining to what level the purported free education should be implemented. Persons with special needs if properly rehabilitated and educated could contribute immensely to the national development. Oftentimes, Nigerian society has failed to appreciate or recognize the potentials of persons with special needs. Parents of children with disabilities are usually left alone to bear the burdens of training the children. The unfortunate fact is that many of the parents are poor and are unable to shoulder alone the training of their children. Little wonder then why many disabled person's dropout of schools and take to begging to sustain them.

A more appalling fact is that after some parents might have struggled to train their children with disabilities, there is usually little or no job prospect for them in the employment world. This problem alone has significantly accounted for the reason many parents are often reluctant to train their disabled children. It is usually in a nation's interest that it is advised to train or rehabilitate its disabled citizens. Definitely, efforts invested on persons with special needs, be it in cash and kind would in the long run pay off by eliminating the dependence of disabled persons on abled-bodied persons as well as reducing their being a drain on the nation's economy. Government and Non-Government Organizations (NGOS') should indeed be more forthcoming in providing necessary assistance effective and productive education and rehabilitation for disabled Nigerians.

What is Higher Education?

Higher education is an educational level that follows the completion of a secondary education such as a high school secondary school or gymnasium. Tertiary education is normally taken to include undergraduate and postgraduate education, as well as vocational education and training. Colleges, universities, and institutes of technology are the main institutions that provide tertiary education. Examples of institutions that provide post-secondary education are

vocational schools, community colleges, independent colleges (e.g. institutes of technology). They are sometimes known collectively as tertiary institutions. Completion of tertiary education generally results in the awarding of certificates, diplomas, or academic degrees. Higher vocational education and training takes place at the non-university tertiary level. Such education combines teaching of both practical skills and theoretical expertise. Higher education differs from other forms of post-secondary education such as that offered by institutions of vocational education which are more colloquially known as trade schools. Higher vocational education might be contrasted with education in a usually broader scientific field, which might concentrate on theory and abstract conceptual knowledge.

Higher Education for Students with special needs in Nigeria

Some Universities, Polytechnics and Colleges of Education have taken some steps towards enabling disabled students acquire knowledge and skills in higher education settings. The Universities of Ibadan, Jos and Calabar and Kwara State University for instance, provide learning programmes and facilities for students with special needs. They also train teachers for special needs children. Kaduna Polytechnic and the Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo, also offer higher education programmes opportunities to all categories of students with special needs. More tertiary institutions should be involved in providing academic and vocational programmes for students with special needs; such programmes should include the provision of systematic arrangements to meet the welfare needs of special students.

Factors to consider to enable Access to Higher Education by Learners with Disabilities

The current Nigerian education system in general as well as scarce resources available in schools usually poses some limitations to the education of students with special needs. According to Oyewumi and Olajide (2001) an ideal education system should ensure that there are necessary support services in both regular and special schools are provided for students with special needs in order to effectively meet their peculiar needs. Such services include the following:-

(i) Assessment and Re-assessment Services for Disabled Students

Student with disabilities needs should be assessed and re-assessed adequately well with future prospects in mind at least two years before they are due for leaving secondary schools. The same assessment should involve considering some vocations suitable for with disabilities in the future. This task should include considering the suitability of available opportunities for him to continue his education, vocational training or as well as to afford him employment opportunities at adulthood. It is therefore recommended that the process of re-assessment of special needs for students with special needs at this stage should always involve a career officer other relevant professionals in the education, health and social services disciplines. Where a young person with special needs is about leaving or has left the school is experiencing some difficulty in getting employed, more specialist assessments should be evolved. Assessment of a specific suitable vocation should be carried out locally so that the young students with special needs or apprentice and his parents could have access to useful device. The school, college or the establishment the young person is attending is likely to be the most suitable setting for understanding such assessment.

(ii) Career Guidance

Existing arrangements for providing career guidance for young persons with special needs have generally fallen short of expectations. Experiences have shown that even in schools where career guidance is provided for youths with disabilities rigid programmes are usually

administered to them with little or no considerations to the nature and severity of their disabilities. (Warnock Committee Report, 1978). Lack of proper counseling services in secondary schools for students also counts against students with disabilities choosing appropriate careers in life. It is observed too that even in few schools where counseling services are available, the services have not done much in ensuring that young with disabilities are made to offer vocations considered most appropriate for them with due respect to their potentials in spite of their disabilities. Career guidance for high skill needs should also be provided in schools for young persons with special education needs. Such would prepare disabled youths for competitive employment options especially now that competition is the “in house thing” in the employment world.

In secondary schools for youth with disabilities, there should be at least one career guidance teacher who combines counseling skills with a good understanding of peculiar problems of young persons with special education needs. The teacher should be encouraged to continue acquiring more knowledge and skills regularly by undertaking short or full time courses or programmes and other relevant training programmes. Moreover, the teacher should have close links with other career service professionals in his locality. He should ensure that relevant information on his clients/students is regularly directed with prompt attention.

It is important too that career teachers and or career officers should create time to meet parents of students with special needs. In such meetings all parties should discuss the prospects of the children furthering their education or training as well as being employed. By so doing, parents would be influenced positively. They would nurse realistic expectations on their children with disabilities. Such endeavor will definitely enhance disabled persons’ chance of making use of various opportunities open to them.

(iii) **Preparation of Students with special needs for Adult Life**

It is obvious to note that students with special education needs whether at the regular or special school should be made to acquire necessary basic education skills. It is important too ensure that they develop social competence as well as vocational interests, which will facilitate their been adequately aware of employment opportunities in their locality. They should also be encouraged to achieve personal satisfaction in their future life. For those with severe disabilities and those who may not be able to work, basic education and instructions in daily living skills such as shopping or using public transport should be emphasized in their training programmes. Moreover, attempts should be made to enable students who have had their entire education life in special schools overcome feelings of being special or segregated. They should endeavour to learn how to cope with demands of adult life, and to freely share things with able-bodied in their everyday activities.

(iv) **Preparation for Work**

For young persons with special needs, who are likely to be employed immediately after leaving the school, relevant elements of work preparation, designed for enabling them to acquire needful employment skills should prominently feature in their job preparation curriculum. Work preparation curriculum should include activities which place students with disabilities stimulated working conditions. Students with special needs should engage in work visits opportunities of seeing at close range a number of different job activities. These could also include having work experience by undergoing a planned period of supervised employment in industries, commercial or in-public establishments. It is important to note too that whatever forms such activities take, work preparation should be carefully planned and made to be an

integral part of the school curriculum and tailored to meet or suit the particular needs of individual students.

Barriers to Higher Education by Persons with special needs

Barriers to higher education can be seen as a person's estimation of the level of challenge of social, personal, environmental and economic obstacles to specified desired goals. It implies that the individuals judgment about the number and strength of barriers which can affect one socially, environmentally, physically or educationally. The primary distinguishing feature of a perceived barrier is that it is a judgment of the degree of difficulty of a set of diverse factors that can interfere with accomplishment of specified goals. It has been observed that different barriers make access to higher education a difficulty for persons with special needs. It often limits persons with special needs to primary or secondary education. These barriers stem out to be lack of specific information regarding to requirements and policies of the educational programme into the higher institution, meetings requirements for acceptance into the school of Education. Career, Social and emotional barriers in terms of rejection, isolation and withdrawal and with all these how they would be able to cope with their emotions (Edward, 2011).

Environmental and attitudinal barrier is one of the barriers experienced by persons with special needs to higher education. An environment that is not friendly to them and do not accept the way they are makes them isolate themselves. Environmental barriers also include the school environment. How many of our schools not to talk of higher institutions take this into cognizance when structures are erected. The environment has already created a barrier to persons with visual impairment and those with physical and health impairment. Also the attitude of people around them such as parents, families, communities and the government at large bring a kind of restriction and barrier to them to advance in their educational career (Punch, Hyde & Creed, 2004).

There is also academic barrier in terms of their intelligence quotient and what comes readily to mind is the intellectually and developmentally disabled. With the level of their intelligence how visible is their access to higher education in Nigeria and other parts of the world. This indicates that even among persons with special needs not all can gain maximally from higher education because with low intelligence how can a student pass Senior Secondary School certificate Examination and Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination. Without successful completion of these examinations there would always be a barricade to higher education for person with intellectual and developmental disabilities in particular and persons with special needs in general.

Teacher student relationship is also an environmental barrier. How many of our teachers/lecturers can teach or cope effectively with learners with disabilities taking note of the slow learners and the gifted and high achievers. The pace of the slow learners could be perceived as being too slow and that of the high achievers as been too fast. Without specialized training the teachers/lecturers may not be able to handle/manage these students effectively in the classroom hence the need for in-service training for teachers/lecturers if these persons with special needs are to be included in the regular classroom. The mode of instruction and the use of supportive staffs such as Audiologist, Speech Therapists, Sign language, Interpreters/teachers, Braillists, Readers/writers when not in place in higher institutions make access to higher education a difficulty and an impossible task for persons with special needs.

Career barrier also makes access to higher education a difficulty for persons with special needs. Most persons with special needs after leaving secondary school do not know the type of career or course to study. There is always the problem of choice and no wonder most of them are advised to read Special Education not taking note of their interest and their academic performance in UMTE or SSCE in Nigeria. They also tend to have difficulty in choosing what to study due to their deficiency. They do not know the kind of career to embark on and this affects them greatly. McWhirter (1997) define career barriers as events or conditions within the person or in his or her environment, which make career progression difficult. The social cognitive career theory proposes that personal and in particular environmental barriers can mediate the relationship between interests and career goals and behaviours and lead individual to compromise their goals (Edward, 2011).

Communication is the basis of our social and cognitive being, and without it we are cut off from the world. There are some important considerations to understand in students with special needs especially the hearing impaired having communication as a barrier. Individuals with deafness communicates differently, depending on the age at which they become deaf, the type of deafness, language skills, speech and lip-reading abilities, intelligence level, personality type and educational background. Individuals with deafness have diverse degree of hearing loss. Some might be able to hear certain sounds (whistles, sirens, loud shouts etc.), while others might not necessarily ensure a residents ability to decipher speech. When these communication barriers are not fully taken care of they could contribute to lack of access to higher education by persons with special needs.

Statement of the Problem

Access to higher education is a herculean task in Nigeria. Many students find it difficult to gain admission to institutions of higher learning. For a student to gain admission to higher education in Nigeria, such would have completed secondary school education, sat for the Unified Tertiary Matriculation Examination and would have scored up to the cutoff point. It should be noted that the same process goes for persons with special needs. Persons with special needs are not left out in this cycle. They must complete this process before they can have access to higher education. Despite the fact that students without disabilities experienced some challenges in gaining access to higher education, the persons with special needs have greater challenges and barriers that limit their access to higher education which are peculiar to them and not taken cognizance of by appropriate stake holders. In view of this, this paper examines the experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs in Nigeria

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs in Nigeria. The study also aim at knowing the effects of these experienced barriers on their higher education and the categories of persons with special needs that experienced the barriers to higher education most.

Research Questions.

- (1) What are the experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs?
- (2) What are the effects of these experienced barriers on persons with special needs?
- (3) Which categories of persons with special needs experienced the barriers more?

METHODOLOGY

The target population for this study was students of Federal College of Education (Special), Oyo. The students with special needs in the College were purposively selected for the study because this is the higher institution in Nigeria where there is the highest concentration of persons with special needs. They were purposively selected because they have experienced barriers to higher education before gaining admission.

All students with special needs in the College were given the questionnaires designed by the researchers to fill. The persons with special needs used in the study were the hearing impaired, the visually impaired and the physically and health impaired mainly those that are wheel chair bound and those with visible physical impairment who require the assistance of readers to write. Three hundred (300) questionnaires were distributed to them while two hundred and seventy three (273) were returned. The administration of the questionnaire took place in the resource room, lecture rooms and hostels to ensure that all the students with special needs were involved. The two researchers with the assistance of two braillists, two interpreters and two researcher assistance distributed the questionnaires to the students with special needs. The questionnaire for the visually impaired was brailled and interpreted by the braillists. The questionnaire for the hearing impaired was distributed to them and area of difficulties was explained to them with the assistance of the sign interpreters. Students with physical and health impairment who could not write were assisted by the research assistance to fill the questionnaires.

The research design for this study is descriptive survey. The descriptive research design was used because the researchers did not manipulate any variable but carefully collected the data for the study through the use of a questionnaire. The administration of the questionnaire lasted two weeks.

Instrumentation

A forty item questionnaire was used to elicit responses from the respondents. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher and titled Experienced Barriers to Higher Education by persons with special needs. The questionnaire has three sections. Section A & B was on demographic data while Section C is on the Experienced barriers to Higher Education by Persons with special needs. Information from literatures guided the thoughts of the researchers when designing the questionnaires and their experiences with persons with special needs over the years as experts in the field of Special Needs Education.

The validity of the instrument was established by five experts of Special Needs Education in the College and in the neighboring University. The reliability of the instrument was established by carrying out a pilot test on students with special needs in two neighboring Universities. The scores obtained were correlated using the Richard Kuderson Correlation Test and Correlation score of 0.79. was obtained which established the reliability of the study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS OF FINDINGS

The study has its central focus and aim on experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs. This section presents the results of analysis on data collected from the field reports. The various variables identified for the study were adequately accounted for in the analysis. The presentation is done in stages.

The first section presents the demographic variables of the respondents, while the second section examines the data concerning the three (3) research questions for this study, ten (10) questionnaires were administered for Physically and Health Impaired (PHI), eighty-three (83) for Visually Impaired (VI) and one hundred and eighty (180) for Hearing Impaired (HI), while total of two hundred and seventy three (273) were retrieved for analysis. Inferential descriptive statistics of ANOVA and Correlation (PPMC) were used to test the study at 0.05 level of significance.

Research Question 1

What are the experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs?

The liker rating scale scores were analyzed and used to interpret the outcome of the research questions. The likert scale was structured as SA = 5, A = 4, N = 3 D= 2 and SD = 1 giving the average as $15/5 = 3.0$. This reveals that mean score of any item less than 3.0 was “not significant”, that is, the response of such an item would not be considered to have influenced the access to higher education by person with special needs.

Table1. Social and Environmental Barriers as determinant of experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs.

N	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Remark
11.	The attitude of students and teachers towards me is unfriendly and bad.	78 28.6%	74 27.1%	15 5.5%	62 22.7%	44 16.1%	3.29	1.486	S
12	My families and the society perceive that I don't need higher education.	48 17.6%	48 17.6%	11 4.0%	97 35.5%	69 25.3%	2.67	1.464	S
13	I feel lonely and isolated in my family and in the society	47 17.2%	54 19.8%	39 14.3%	57 20.9%	76 27.8%	2.78	1.472	S
14	I mix freely with my disable counterparts because they understand me	107 39.2%	94 34.4%	25 9.2%	11 4.0%	36 13.2%	3.82	1.344	S
15	Furthering my education is unnecessary because I will not get a Job	42 15.4%	31 11.4%	29 10.6%	89 32.6%	82 30.0%	2.49	1.417	S
16	My parents prefers to send my siblings without disability to higher education	56 20.5%	35 12.8%	14 5.1%	74 27.1%	94 34.4%	2.58	1.558	S
17	I don't understand the kind of job to do in future because of the nature of my disability	40 14.7%	33 12.1%	40 14.7%	53 19.4%	107 39.2%	2.44	1.469	S
18	Getting a job will be difficult for me because of my disability	62 22.7%	67 24.5%	14 5.1%	51 18.7%	79 28.9%	2.93	1.582	S
Average mean scores							2.87		

The rating of the respondents on Social and Environmental Barriers as determinants of experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs reveals that social and environmental barrier determines to higher education of the persons with special needs. This is shown with the average mean score of 2.87. It implies that Social and Environmental Barriers affects students with special needs.

Table 2. Communication Barriers as determinant of experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs.

N	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Remark
19	My disability is a barrier to further education because I can't communicate	59 21.6%	13 4.8%	23 8.4%	88 32.2%	90 33.0%	2.50	1.520	S
20	Most of the teacher cannot communicate in sign language so I hardly understand them	48 17.6%	81 29.7%	37 13.6%	55 20.1%	52 19.0%	3.07	1.402	S
21	My social interaction is limited because I can't communicate	52 19.0%	67 24.5%	6 2.2%	91 33.3%	57 20.9%	2.88	1.472	S
22	I have poor language development so it will affect my higher education	22 8.1%	64 23.4%	37 13.6%	64 23.4%	86 31.5%	2.53	1.356	S
23	Lack of communication with people make me lack information on further education	44 16.1%	48 17.6%	25 9.2%	94 34.4%	62 22.7%	2.70	1.411	S
Average mean scores							2.73		

The rating of the respondents as shown above on communication barriers as determinant of experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs. Hence the finding reveals that communication barrier determines access to higher education of the persons with special needs. This is shown with the average mean score of 2.73. It implies that communication barrier has affected students with special needs in this study .

Table 3. Academic Barriers as determinant of experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs.

N	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Remark
24	There are no longer available courses in higher education for the disabled	63 23.1%	19 7.0%	45 16.5%	59 21.6%	87 31.9%	2.68	1.545	S
25	I can't make it to higher education because of my poor performance in secondary school	71 26.0%	53 19.4%	15 5.5%	65 23.8%	69 25.3%	2.97	1.579	
26	I lack awareness on the courses to choose in secondary school that can help in higher Institution	52 19.0%	55 20.1%	19 7.0%	72 26.4%	75 27.5%	2.77	1.510	S
27	Because of poor performance in school, my parent are not, concerned about my going to higher Institution	67 24.5%	31 11.4%	18 6.6%	100 36.6%	57 20.9%	2.82	1.508	
28	There are no appropriate teaching staffs and teaching materials in most higher Institution	54 19.8%	80 29.3%	22 8.1%	78 28.6%	39 14.3%	3.12	1.391	S
29	There are no supports from teachers in my academic work in my secondary school	41 15.0%	51 18.7%	25 9.2%	91 33.3%	65 23.8%	2.68	1.406	
Average mean scores							2.84		

The rating of the respondents as shown above on academic barriers as determinant of experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs, Hence the finding reveals that academic barrier determines access to higher education of persons with special needs. This is shown with the average mean score of 2.84. It implies that academic barrier has affected students with special needs in this study.

Table 4. Instructional/Institutional Barriers as determinant of experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs.

N	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Remark
30	I lack information on which institution to attend	73 26.7%	40 14.7%	54 19.8%	69 25.3%	37 13.6%	3.16	1.412	S
31	Most of the higher Institution in Nigeria do not consider the disabled during admission process	90 33.0%	82 30.0%	12 4.4%	38 13.9%	51 18.7%	3.45	1.521	S
32	Most teachers in higher Institution are not trained to teach the disabled	105 38.5%	69 25.3%	50 18.3%	29 10.6%	20 7.3%	3.77	1.267	S
33	No sufficient classroom materials to teach in most schools	84 30.8%	102 37.4%	12 4.4%	31 11.4%	44 16.1%	3.55	1.437	S
Average mean scores							3.48		

The rating of the respondents as shown above on Instructional/Institutional Barriers as determinant of experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs. Hence the finding reveals that Instructional/Institutional barriers determine access to higher education of persons with special needs. This is shown with the average mean score of 3.48. It implies

that Instructional/Institutional were not barrier has it improves higher education of persons with special needs in this study.

Table 5. Individual Barriers as determinant of experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs.

N	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Remark
34	Because I am a girl with disability I don't need to go to higher Institution	78 28.6%	58 21.2%	29 10.6%	37 13.6%	71 26.0%	3.13	1.589	S
35	Because I am a boy with disability I don't need to go to Higher Institution	55 20.1%	31 11.4%	35 12.8%	53 19.4%	99 36.3%	2.60	1.553	
36	I can't make it in Higher Institution because of my disability	21 7.7%	41 15.0%	41 15.0%	77 28.2%	93 34.1%	2.34	1.294	S
37	Because I am disabled I have no career so I will not further my education	71 26.0%	15 5.5%	7 2.6%	88 32.2%	92 33.7%	2.58	1.612	
Average mean scores							2.66		

The rating of the respondents as shown above on Individual Barriers as determinant of experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs reveals that individual barrier determines access to higher education of persons with special needs. This is shown with the average mean score of 2.66. It implies that individual barrier has affected students with special needs in this study.

Table 6. Financial Barriers as determinant of experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs

N	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	Mean	S.D	Remark
38	My parent will not be able to fund my higher education	64 22.4%	38 13.9%	16 5.9%	62 22.7%	93 34.1%	2.70	1.608	S
39	I can't get appropriate materials for my academic work due to funds	69 25.3%	51 18.7%	50 18.3%	33 12.1%	70 25.6%	3.06	1.533	
40	My family suffers financial hardship	73 26.7%	31 11.4%	34 12.5%	55 20.1%	80 29.3%	2.86	1.596	S
Average mean scores							2.87		

The rating of the respondents as shown above on Financial Barriers as determinant of experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs shows that financial barrier determines access to higher education of the persons with special needs. This is shown with the average mean score of 2.87. It implies that financial barriers have affected students with special needs in this study.

Research Question 2

What are the effects of these experienced barriers on persons with special needs?

Table 7 shows the correlation of experienced barriers

Variables	N	Mean	Std. deviation	R	P	Sig
Experienced Barriers Person with Disability	273	90.06	16.413	-		
Social/Environment	273	24.76	7.198	.858**	.000	S*
Community Barrier	273	13.67	4.494	-.625**	.000	S*
Academic Barrier	273	18.97	5.391	.838**	.000	S*
Instruction/Institution	273	10.07	3.412	.403**	.000	S*
Individual	273	13.36	4.745	.813**	.000	S*
Financial barrier	273	9.23	4.175	.790**	.000	S*

Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The result above shows the relationship between person with special needs and social and environmental barriers ($r = .858$, $P < .05$). Community Barrier ($r = -.625$, $P < .05$). Academic barrier ($r = .838$, $P < .05$). Instruction/Institution ($r = -.403$, $P < .05$). Individual ($r = .813$, $P < .05$), and Financial barrier ($r = .790$, $P < .05$). It implies that Individual and Financial barriers has

significant relationship with person with disability. This implies that an increase in financial and individual experience would result in an increase in the social interaction of students with special needs.

Research Question 3

Which categories of person with special needs experience the barriers most?

Table 8 shows the ANOVA of person with special needs barrier

Disability	N	Mean	Std Deviation	Sum of Square	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
PH	10	107.30	11.528	4927.415	2	2463.708	9.733	0.000
VI	83	85.51	13.439	68341.647	270	253.117		
HI	180	91.20	17.099	73269.062	272			
Total	273							

Above table presents the ANOVA analysis which shows the significant categories of person with special needs experience the barriers most. The result revealed that PH has high value means of 107.30 while HI has mean of 91.20 while SVI has 85.51 in that order. Therefore, it can be concluded that there is significant categories of person with special needs experience the barriers most at (F value = 9.733, $P < 0.05$). That is, there is significant categories of person with disabilities experience the barriers and Persons with physical and health impairment are the most affected.

DISCUSSION

The analysis of data revealed that social and environmental factors affect the access to higher education by students with special needs. The attitude of the other students and teachers are generally unfriendly and bad towards persons with special needs. Family and society oftentimes perceived that students with special needs do not need higher education and are limited to primary and secondary education. Feelings of isolation and loneliness prevent persons with special needs from having access to higher education because they are not readily accepted into the society. Persons with special needs often feel more comfortable with their disabled colleagues which could be a negative determinant for access to education by persons with special needs. Joblessness in the society as a whole prevents persons with special needs from accessing higher education because they believed that if their non disabled colleagues could not job after attaining higher education what is their own hope especially with their disabilities. Many parents believed that it is not a wise venture to invest on their children with disabilities because they believed that is tantamount to wasting of resources hence they prefer to send their children without disabilities to school.

Communication barriers are also determinants of experienced barriers to higher education by persons with special needs. This was revealed by the study. The lack of ability to communicate effectively has negative impact on the access to higher education by persons with special needs. This inability to communicate which is the basis for social and cognitive being leads to being cutoff in the society. This could be a major barrier to access to higher education.

The above findings is in line with the report of Salmi and Rye (2010) that admission systems were and were in most cases still are contingent on specific qualifications or competences

awarded by the formal education system often resulting in the exclusion of marginalized groups in general and specifically and people with disabilities.

The attitude of parents towards sponsoring their children with disabilities to higher institution has been negative as revealed in this study. This is in line with the findings of Oyewumi and Olajide 2009 that many parents usually become discouraged of training disabled children above primary or secondary education if they consider the fact that with best education provided, trained disabled may not achieve at par with their normal counterparts.

Pinch, Hyde and Greed (2004) also pointed out that the attitude of people around the persons with special needs such as parents, families, communities and the government at large bring a kind of restriction and barrier to advance in their educational career.

Academic barriers also determine the access to higher education by persons with special needs. The study revealed that many students with special needs could not make it to higher institutions due to their poor performance, lack of awareness of available courses, lack of parents' involvement due to their poor performance, inadequate and experienced teaching staffs. Lack of materials and support from teachers in their academic work in their secondary school are also contributory factors to academic barriers.

A number of other barriers that also contributed to lack of access to higher education by persons with special needs include instructional or institutional, individual and financial barriers. According to Mc Whirter 1997 most persons with special needs do not know the kind of career to embark on and this affects them greatly. Social and environmental barriers is the most potent factor affecting access to access to higher education by persons with special needs while the least factor is the instructional and institutional barriers.

Based on this study, it was revealed that the physically and health impaired are the set of persons with special needs that do not have access to higher education. This could be as a result of the available number of students with special needs in the college where the study took place. Most of the students are hearing and visually impaired with negligible number of physically and health impaired. Taking the fact that this is a citadel of learning in Nigeria where there are more students with special needs, and then it is quite revealing that persons with physical and health impairment hardly have access to higher education.

RECOMMENDATION

As long as humanity exists, persons and learners with disabilities would always be part of the society. Since they are an integral part of the society they have rights to living, employment, voting, health service, and education to mention but a few. In view of these, the following recommendations are being made to make access to higher education a reality for them.

1. The current curriculum and syllabus in secondary education should be remodeled to suit the peculiar needs of the students with special needs that is they should be put into consideration.
2. It is recommended for the government to become concerned with the quality of teachers for the education of persons with special needs.
3. A simplified system be adopted to ensure that persons with special needs can navigate the various programs and services within the employment support system and a full continuum of employment assistance services and programmes be provided to job seekers.

4. Government at all levels support the development of and access to education and training programs that enhance the opportunities of individuals with disabilities to become active participants in school activities and to pursue ongoing careers.
5. Colleges, universities, and training institutions ensure equal access to programs and services to students with special needs.
6. Employment agencies and government offices equip personnel who work with persons with special needs and job seekers with knowledge of the employment issues facing persons with special needs.
7. To ensure that there is appropriate means of information and awareness on the courses to render in school for persons with special needs; this could be a CD-ROM and video to present the information from the brochure using ASL, also available on the Internet.
8. A web site to accommodate persons with special needs in search of work. The web site will include information from the brochure, information about current employment programs and workshops, accommodation products, a list of disability-friendly employers, current job openings and other information.
9. Furthermore, to help eliminate negative attitudes towards persons with special needs, there should be a vigorous public education through the mass media on the abilities and potentials of persons with special needs. This education should also include creating awareness on the potentials and aptitudes of persons with special needs for national development, the government, educational authorities, teachers, parents and traditional authorities.
10. There should be removal of disparities in education, equality should be encouraged.
11. There should be mutual reinforcement of the pedagogies of special and general education.
12. Curriculum flexibility is of special significance for persons with special needs. Special needs for these persons will be met if child-centered education is practiced.
13. Bursary should be given to persons with special needs in higher education because the cost of maintenance of these students is quite expensive and the demand may not be easily met by their parents. The three tiers of government should intensify efforts in this area.

CONCLUSION

Access to higher education by persons with special needs is a big task because many persons with special needs after leaving secondary school are likely to encounter some problems such as finding it difficult to get or access appropriate tertiary institutions. Parents may not be able to fund higher education for these persons or schools could be burdensome or discouraging to students and their parents owing to uncertainty of employment prospects after graduation. This paper has highlighted some of the barriers to access to higher education by persons with special needs and has proffered some recommendations. If these recommendations are followed there is hope for easier access to higher education by persons with special needs despite the economic situation of the country.

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