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STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY TEACHERS IN TEACHING PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS WITH DYSLEXIA IN OJI-RIVER LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION AUTHORITY

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the strategies adopted by teachers in teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority, Enugu State. Two research questions were raised and answered, two null hypotheses were formulated and tested for the study. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 235 teachers which made up of 117 public school teachers and 118 private primary school teachers in Oji- River Local Government Area, Enugu state. The sample size of the study comprised 112 public and private school teachers. Multi- stage sampling was used to select 57 public primary school teachers and 55 private primary school teachers. The instrument used for data collection was a 20-item structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled Strategies Adopted by Teachers in Teaching Primary School Pupils with Dyslexia (SATTPSPD)". The instrument was validated by three experts, two experts from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and one expert from Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation option), all from Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State. The test-retest method of reliability of the instrument was used and the data obtained were analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient which yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.79 and 80 with an overall reliability Co-efficient of 0.79 which was considered high enough for the study. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test statistic was used to test null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed that teachers adopted early identification, individualized instruction, structured literacy programs, assistive technologies, small group instruction and positive reinforcement strategies for tackling dyslexia in primary schools within Oji-River Local Government Area in Enugu State and that there was no significance difference in the mean

response scores of public and private school teachers on the effective strategies adopted by teachers for tackling dyslexia in primary schools among others. Based on the findings, it was recommended that teachers, and policymakers should work together to address the identified factors and provide the necessary support for pupils with dyslexia among others.

Keywords: Strategies, teachers, dyslexia, learning disability, Primary school pupils

Introduction

Dyslexia is a neurobiological condition that affects the ability to acquire and process language skills, particularly in the areas of reading, spelling, and writing. It is considered a specific learning disability that is unrelated to intelligence, motivation, or inadequate instruction. Dyslexia is characterized by difficulties with accurate and fluent word recognition, as well as challenges in spelling and decoding abilities. Individuals with dyslexia often have difficulty with phonological processing, which refers to the inability to recognize and manipulate the sounds of language. This can make it challenging for them to break down words into individual sounds, affecting their ability to sound out unfamiliar words when reading (Ajuonuma, Ochonma, and Asogwa, 2019). What Ajuonuma and his fellow scholars are saying is that dyslexia, as a specific learning disability, severely affects an individual's ability to read, write, and spell; and that since it has been defined as a neurological condition, it challenges a child's ability to give accurate and fluent word recognition. It often manifests in poor spelling abilities. Also, Ajuonuma et al opined dyslexia is not indicative of a lack of intelligence or motivation but signifies a difference in how the brain processes information. They further stated that dyslexia is a lifelong condition, and while it cannot be cured, individuals with dyslexia can learn to manage and work with their challenges effectively. The researcher defined dyslexia as a learning disabilities which affect a learner's ability to read, spell and comprehend text but can communicate through drawing.

It is important to note that dyslexia can manifest differently in each individual, and its impact can vary widely. In addition to struggling with phonological processing, individuals grappling with dyslexia may encounter difficulties in various facets of reading, including fluency, comprehension, and vocabulary. These challenges pose a substantial impact on academic performance and often lead to feelings of frustration and diminished self-esteem.

While the precise causes of dyslexia remain not fully understood, researchers have identified several factors that may contribute to the development of this disorder. One primary cause is believed to be genetic. Studies revealed that dyslexia tends to run in the families, indicating a genetic component to the disorder (Pennington and Lefly, 2011). Specific genes, such as the DYX1C1 gene, have been associated with dyslexia, emphasizing its genetic link (Taipale et al., 2013).Additionally, differences in brain structure and function have been identified as

contributors to dyslexia. Neuroimaging studies demonstrate that individuals with dyslexia exhibit variations in how their brains process language, particularly in areas related to reading and phonological processing (Shaywitz and Shaywitz., 2015). These differences may hinder the decoding and comprehension of written language.

Environmental factors also play a role in dyslexia development. Exposure to certain risk factors during pregnancy, like maternal smoking or alcohol consumption, has been linked to an increased risk of dyslexia in children (Theodoridous, Christodoulides, Zakopoulou and Syrrou, 2021). Early childhood experiences, such as limited exposure to language and literacy activities, may further contribute to dyslexia's development. Moreover, individuals with dyslexia may contend with issues related to working memory and processing speed. Working memory involves holding and manipulating information briefly, while processing speed pertains to the pace at which an individual can process and respond to information. Challenges in these areas can influence one's ability to follow instructions, complete tasks, and retain information (Snowling, 2013). It's crucial to recognize dyslexia as a spectrum disorder, with individuals exhibiting a diverse range of symptoms and manifestations. Some may face mild difficulties with reading and spelling, while others may grapple with severe challenges affecting various aspects of academic performance. According to Snowling, early identification and intervention are paramount to support individuals with dyslexia and pave the way for academic success.

Observation has shown that dyslexia significantly impacts a child's academic performance and overall well-being and this, totally underscores the pivotal role of teachers in supporting pupils with dyslexia. However, teachers face numerous challenges in effectively meeting the needs of these pupils. One primary challenge is the lack of awareness and understanding of dyslexia among teachers. Inadequate training on identification and support for dyslexic pupils may lead to difficulties in recognizing signs and providing appropriate interventions, potentially resulting in academic frustration and diminished self-esteem for affected pupils (Snowling and Hulme, 2012).

Limited resources and support within primary schools pose another challenge. The absence of specialized materials and tools, such as assistive technology or tailored reading programs, makes it challenging for teachers to provide essential accommodations and modifications for pupils with dyslexia. Additionally, differentiating instruction in a classroom setting proves challenging, as dyslexic pupils often require individualized support, potentially leading to academic gaps and social isolation (Snowling and Hulme, 2012).

Addressing the social and emotional needs of pupils with dyslexia is yet another hurdle. Teachers may struggle to provide the necessary emotional support and encouragement, while the stigma associated with dyslexia may lead to discrimination or bullying from peers. Misconceptions held by teachers for example, viewing dyslexia as a

sign of laziness or lack of intelligence, further compounds the challenges faced by dyslexic pupils (Riley, 2018).

Despite the formidable challenges associated with dyslexia, there exist effective interventions and strategies for tackling dyslexia in primary schools to thrive academically and beyond. Shaywitz (2018) opined that early intervention and a supportive school environment can significantly improve outcomes for pupils with dyslexia. Interventions may encompass specialized reading instruction, the integration of assistive technology, and accommodations within the classroom. Empowering teachers with the knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively tackle dyslexia in primary schools is crucial for promoting equal opportunities in academic success among all Pupils (Emenike and Ede 2020). Collaboration among teachers, parents, and professionals is vital for comprehensive dyslexia support in primary schools in the area. Onu, (2021) opined that working closely with parents to create individualized education plans and collaborating with special education teachers can also provide valuable insights and resources for supporting pupils with dyslexia, other professionals such as psychologists, speech therapists can create a supportive network for dyslexic pupils by sharing information; these stake holders can support dyslexic pupils and contribute to improved outcomes. Moreover, integrating assistive technology into classroom practices can significantly empower teachers to address dyslexia in primary schools (Onu, 2021). Tools like text-to-speech software, speech recognition programs, and audiobooks can offer dyslexic pupils alternative ways to access information and demonstrate their understanding in alignment with their strengths. Equipping teachers with training on how to effectively incorporate assistive technology into their teaching methodologies is paramount to supporting dyslexic pupils comprehensively. Based on the background, the study seeks to examine the strategies adopted by teachers in teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority, Enugu State.

Statement of the Problem

Observation has shown the increasing prevalence of dyslexia among primary school pupils in Oji- River Local Government Education Authority. Despite its high incidence, there is a noticeable lack of adequate knowledge and understanding of dyslexia among primary school teachers in the study area. This dearth of awareness of strategies for dyslexia in primary schools in the study area may lead to the misidentification of dyslexia, resulting in the application of inappropriate teaching methods and interventions for pupils grappling with this learning inhibition. Compounding the issue is the absence of comprehensive policies or strategies within the existing educational system in Enugu state to address dyslexia in its primary schools. This lack of a structured framework contributes to the inadequate support and resources available for primary school teachers in tackling dyslexia, placing pupils with dyslexia at a heightened risk of facing

substantial academic and emotional challenges and increasing the likelihood of school dropout.

Urgent intervention strategies are imperative to empower teachers in addressing the unique needs of these pupils. Hence, there exit a critical need to explore and develop effective strategies for addressing dyslexia in primary schools in Oji-River LGEA in Enugu state to gain a better understanding of dyslexia and provide appropriate support to pupils within primary schools in the area. Based on the foregoing, the problem of this study put in question form is: What are the strategies adopted by teachers in teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority, Enugu State.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the strategies adopted by teachers in teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority, Enugu State. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. Find out the strategies adopted by teachers for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji tackling dyslexia in primary schools in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority.
2. Determine the factors that hinders the adoption of these strategies for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study

1. What are the strategies adopted by teachers for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority?
2. What are the factors that hinder the adoption of these strategies for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority?

Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant difference in the mean response scores of public and private schools' teachers on the strategies adopted by teachers for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority.
3. There is no significant difference in the mean response scores of public and private schools' teachers on the factors that hinder the adoption of these strategies for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority.

Methods

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The population of the study comprised 235 primary school teachers which made up of 117 public primary school

teachers and 118 private primary school teachers in Oji- River Local Government Education Authority, Enugu state. The sample size of the study comprised 112 public and private primary school teachers. Multi-stage sampling was used to select 57 public primary school teachers and 55 private primary school teachers. The instrument used for data collection was a 20-item structured questionnaire developed by the researchers titled "Effective strategies for Addressing Dyslexia in Primary Schools (ESAD)". The instrument was validated by three experts, two experts from the Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education and one expert from the Department of Educational Foundations (Measurement and Evaluation), Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State. The test-retest method of reliability of the instrument was used and the data obtained were analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient which yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.79 and 0.80 with an overall reliability Co-efficient of 0.79 which was considered high enough for the study. The questionnaire was structured on a four -point scale as follows: 4 point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA, 4 points), Agree (A, 3 points), Disagree (D, 2 points), and Strongly Disagree (SD, 1 point).. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer all the research questions while t-test statistic was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Any item in the instrument with a mean rating of 2.50 and above was considered positive and agreed while any item with a mean rating of 2.49 and below was considered negative and disagree. The null hypothesis for any item was rejected if the t-calculated value is less -than the critical or Table value but accepted if the t-test calculated value is greater than the t-test critical or table value.

Results

Research Question One: What are the strategies adopted by teachers for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority?

Table 1: Mean Responses of Teachers on the strategies adopted by teachers for teaching primate school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority**.**

		Public Teachers		Private Teachers		
S/N	**Strategies adopted by teachers include**	$\bar{x}$	**SD**	$\bar{x}$	**SD**	**Decision**
1	Early Identification	2.55	.59	2.57	.60	Agreed
2.	Individualized Instruction	2.52	.59	2.58	.61	Agreed
3.	Multisensory Approaches	2.27	.51	2.32	.53	Disagree
4	Structured Literacy Programs	2.86	.69	2.95	.72	Agreed
5	Assistive Technologies	2.59	.61	2.53	.59	Agreed
6	Small Group Instruction	3.08	.75	2.73	.65	Agreed
7	Visual Aids and Manipulatives	2.32	.52	2.27	.51	Disagree
8	Positive Reinforcement	2.82	.68	2.71	.65	Agreed
9	Collaboration with Specialists	2.41	.55	2.44	.56	Disagree
10	Parental Involvement	2.21	.49	2.30	.52	Disagree
	Average Mean scores	2.56	.60	2.54	0.59	Agreed

Table 1 shows that the average mean scores of public and private school teachers are 2.56 and 2.54 respectively and the standard deviation score of 0.59 which revealed that the items are strategies for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority .

Research Question Two: What are the factors that hinders the adoption of these strategies for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority?

Table 2: Mean Responses of Teachers on the factors that hindered the adopted of these strategies in teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority.

S/N	Factors that hinder the adoption of the strategies by teachers include:	Public Teachers $\bar{x}$	SD	Private Teachers $\bar{x}$	SD	Decision
11	Lack of Awareness	2.87	.69	2.93	.71	Agreed
12.	Insufficient resources	3.05	.75	2.99	.73	Agreed
13.	Large Class Sizes	2.81	.68	2.76	.66	Disagree
14	Time Constraints	2.66	.63	2.63	.62	Agreed
15	Inadequate Support Systems	2.93	.71	2.87	.69	Agreed
16	Stigma and Misconceptions	2.73	.65	2.77	.66	Agreed
17	Resistance to Change	2.65	.63	2.75	.68	Agreed
18	Ineffective collaboration among teachers	2.77	.66	2.73	.65	Agreed
19	Inadequate Assessment Tools	2.94	.71	2.85	.69	Agreed
20	Insufficient Policy Support	2.63	.62	2.67	.63	Agreed
	Average Mean scores	2.80	.67	2.80	.67	Agreed

Table 2 shows that the average mean scores of public and private school teachers are 2.80 and 2.80 respectively and standard deviation score of .67 which reveals that teachers agreed that they are the factors that hinders the adoption of the strategies for teaching primary school pupils in Oji-River LGEA.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant difference in the mean response scores of public and private school teachers on the strategies adopted for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority.

Table 3: t-test analysis of the difference in the mean response scores of public and private school teachers on the strategies adopted by for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority

Response	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Sig	Decision
Public teachers	57	2.56	0.60	110	**0.18**	**1.98**	**0.86**	Accept HO
Private teachers	55	2.54	0.59					

Table 3 shows that a t- calculated value of 0.18 is less than t- critical value of 1.98 at P> 0.05, where Df = 110. Thus the null hypothesis which states that there is no significance difference in the mean response scores of public and private school teachers on the factors that hinders the adoption of these strategies for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in primary schools is therefore retained. This implies that there is no significance difference in the mean response scores of public and private school teachers on the strategies adopted by teachers for tackling dyslexia in primary schools.

Hypothesis Two: There is no significant difference in the mean response scores of public and private schools' teachers on the factors that hinder the adoption of these strategies for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority, Enugu state?

Table 4: t-test analysis of the difference in the mean response scores of public and private school teachers on the factors that hindered the adoption of the strategies for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority.

Response	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Sig	Decision
Public teachers	57	2.80	0.67	110	**0.00**	**1.98**	**0.86**	Accept HO
Private teachers	55	2.80	0.67					

Table 3 shows that a t- calculated value of 0.00 is less than t- critical value of 1.98 at P> 0.05, where Df = 110. Thus the null hypothesis which states that there is no significance difference in the mean response scores of public and private school teachers on the factors that hinders the adoption of the effective strategies for teaching primary school pupils in Oji-River LGEA is therefore retained. This implies that there is no significance difference in the mean response scores of public and private school teachers on the factors that hindered the adoption of effective strategies for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River LGEA

Discussion of Findings

Findings revealed that the teachers agreed that early identification, individualized instruction, structured literacy programs, assistive technologies, small group instruction and positive reinforcement are strategies for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority. The corresponding hypothesis affirmed that there is no

significance difference in the mean response scores of public and private school teachers on the strategies adopted by teachers for teaching pupils with dyslexia in primary schools. The finding is similar with the finding of Onu, (2021) who opined that working closely with parents to create individualized education plans and collaborating with special education teachers can also provide valuable insights and resources for supporting pupils with dyslexia, other professionals such as psychologists, speech therapists can create a supportive network for dyslexic pupils by sharing information; these stake holders can support dyslexic pupils and contribute to improved outcomes. Moreover, integrating assistive technology into classroom practices can significantly empower teachers to address dyslexia in primary schools (Onu, 2021). Also ,Shaywitz (2018) opined that early intervention and a supportive school environment can significantly improve outcomes for pupils with dyslexia. Interventions may encompass specialized reading instruction, the integration of assistive technology, and accommodations within the classroom.

Findings revealed that teachers agreed that lack of awareness, training, insufficient resources, time constraints, inadequate support systems, stigma and misconceptions, resistance to change, ineffective communication and collaboration among teachers, inadequate assessment tools, insufficient policy support are the factors that hindered the adopted of effective strategies by teachers for tackling dyslexia in primary schools in Oji-River LGEA. The corresponding hypothesis affirmed that there is no significance difference in the mean response scores of public and private school teachers on the factors that hindered the adopted strategies by teachers for tackling dyslexia in primary schools in Oji-River LGEA. The finding is in line with the finding of Willcutt (2017) who noted that environmental factors also play a role in dyslexia development. Exposure to certain risk factors during pregnancy, like maternal smoking or alcohol consumption, has been linked to an increased risk of dyslexia in children. Also, misconceptions held by teachers for example, viewing dyslexia as a sign of laziness or lack of intelligence, further compounds the challenges faced by dyslexic pupils (Riley, 2018).

Conclusion

The study examined the strategies adopted by teachers for teaching primary school pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority. Based on the findings the researcher concluded that teachers should adopt early identification, individualized instruction, structured literacy programs, assistive technologies, small group instruction and positive reinforcement strategies for tackling dyslexia in primary schools in Oji-River Local Government Education Authority and that there is no significance difference in the mean response scores of public and private school teachers on the effective strategies adopted by teachers for tackling dyslexia in primary schools.

Finally, the researchers concluded that lack of awareness and training,

insufficient resources, time constraints, inadequate support systems, stigma and misconceptions, resistance to change, ineffective communication and collaboration among teachers, inadequate assessment tools, insufficient policy support are the factors that hindered the adopted of effective strategies for teachings primary school pupils in Oji-River LGEA and that there is no significance difference in the mean response scores of public and private school teachers on the factors that hinders the adoption of the strategies for teaching primary school pupils in Oji-River LGEA.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made;

1. Teachers, and policymakers should work together to address the identified factors and provide the necessary support for pupils with dyslexia in Oji-River LGEA.
2. The government should make the adoption of effective strategies compulsory by teachers for tackling dyslexia in primary schools in Oji-River LGEA.
3. The school administrators should provide the solution to the identified factors that hindered the adopted of effective strategies by teachers for tackling dyslexia in primary schools in Oji-River LGEA.

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