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INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND NEUROTICISM TRAIT AS CORRELATES OF OUT OF SCHOOL INTENTION AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN OWERRI EDUCATION ZONE II

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Abstract

The study investigated inclusive education and neuroticism trait as correlates of out-of-school intention among SSS 2 students in Owerri Education Zone II. The researchers raised two research questions and formulated two hypotheses to guide the study. The design of the study was correlational survey. The sample size was a hundred and twenty people selected through multistage purposive random sampling technique. Instruments for data collection were: students' Vulnerability Dictation Questionnaire (SVDQ); Inclusive Education Questionnaire (SIEQ) and out-of-school Intention Questionnaire (SOSIQ). The instruments were all adopted and their reliability coefficient were determined to be 0.78; 0.81 and 0.70 respectively. Through validation by specialists, from Imo State University, Faculty of Education, the instruments were confirmed usable for the present study. Data collected were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Corrlational Statistics. The hypotheses were tested by comparing the alpha level (0.05) to the probability value (.000). The finding of the study was that there was a significant relationship between inclusiveness education and out-of-school intention and that there was a significant relationship between neuroticism trait and out-of-school intention. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that special education teachers should be employed in secondary schools to handle students with special needs because inclusive education is not functional in secondary schools in Imo State.

Keywords: Inclusive, education, neuroticism, trait, school

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Introduction

The compulsory, free universal basic Education Act (2004) provides for compulsory, free universal basic education for all children of primary and junior secondary school age regardless of challenges and needs as adjudged incidents to them through birth or accident (State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) 2013). Implementation of the dictates of the National Policy on Education, is solely the responsibility of School Administrations and teachers at all levels of Education (Adamu, Muhammed, Zainab and Yahaya, 2018). Teachers are expected to be efficient and competent in curriculum implementation through self-styles strategies obtained through professional training. These strategies are focused toward classroom competences guaranteeing the possibility of every child been fully attended to in classroom activities. Responding to the need of every child promotes inclusive education where children with varying abilities, and educational challenges are groomed towards developing latent potentials, creating self-awareness in skill development, building self-efficacy toward competing favourably with others, devoid of self-pity and low self-esteem.

The classroom teacher is shouldered with the responsibility of moulding students "behaviour", thereby helping in their all-round development (cognition, affection, psychomotor). Through effective guide, children are made to become useful to themselves and the society at large. Through effective and efficient teaching, children are directed toward what has been planned for them (Ibrahim, 2021). Teachers are responsible for proper curriculum implementation, mastery of subject-matter, counselling skills and communication through good teacher-student relationship. Classroom teacher fully trained, is expected to judiciously utilize the appropriate teaching aids, follow strictly planned scheme of work and allow students to construct meaning of what was taught based on their conception of the subject matter. Teachers therefore based on their professional training should be welling to guide every child irrespective of their ability or disability. This sole responsibility may guarantee education for all.

Education for all means that every child has the right to education without segregation in respect of disability, deformity or learning challenges (Olumola, 2017). Diversity in classroom composition is fast gaining recognition and attention globally. Teachers are now expected to work with diverse students from different cultural orientation. According to Ibrahim (2021), universities in the United States now prepare teachers to cope with the challenges of learner diversity to complement requirements to graduates with cross-cultural competencies. It is evident that such provisions have proved rewarding, because student teachers who were exposed to such curricular experiences report increased abilities to navigate unfamiliar cultures and better understanding of

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students with special needs. With such professional training teachers participation in promoting inclusive education is expected.

Inclusive education is therefore where children with and without disabilities participate and learn together in the same classes (National Policy of Education Document (2014). According to UNICEF (2015) inclusive education is not about teaching the students that can cope with unresponsive educational system. Inclusive, education is the means by which teaching methods, curriculum, staff and pedagogy support and are adapted to the learning of all students, including those students whose cultural system have not been able to reach. UNICEF (2016) approached inclusive education under the principles of: universality and inalienability; indivisibility; interdependence and interrelatedness; equality and non-discrimination; participation and inclusion; empowerment; and accountability added to the rule of law. Inclusive education is referred to the commitment to educate each child to the maximum extent appropriate, in school and classroom he/she would attend. Bringing the ancillary services to the child which requires only that the child would benefit from being in the class. It means the commitment to take to the child with disability essential resources in a general classroom rather than isolating the child from others. Inclusive education provides a better and quality education for all children irrespective of ability. Inclusive education is instrumental in changing discriminatory attitude. In the 2030 Agenda guaranteeing sustainable development, the 4th goal refers to, "ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (Ibrahim, 2018).

A close observation in the philosophy of inclusive education and what is presently obtainable in schools in Owerri Education Zone II suggest a complete deviation from the vision. Most teachers are completely ignorant of what inclusive education mean. Many teachers are also without adequate training to facilitate inclusive education prospects. Sitting arrangements in classes, doesn't support students who are crippled, or deaf. Facilities in the school environment doesn't carter for the physically challenged. Hearing aids are not available in schools thus, the deaf is not relevant in the system when classroom are designed even in buildings with 1st, 2nd and 3rd floors, there are no special route for the blind or crippled exclusively. There are no teaching aids to help the shortsighted or longsighted in classrooms. These shortcomings and pitfalls are encumbrances to the dreams of education for all, fostering inclusive education. The social contract of governance completely alienated the physically challenged children in public secondary schools. It will not be difficult to foresee the outcome, rather than such students dropping out of school because of frustration orchestrated by their disability and inability of the Government to provide facilities that may help them function like normal students. Many blind children of school age are rather beggers than in-school students. It is not that their ability cannot carry them along but who will care for them in

school, take them around the school environment, to the toilet or library even science laboratories if need be. They are expected to climb stair cases alone with walking sticks. Many physically challenged children prefer staying away from school than pass through the ordeal (Ajuwon, 2012). Many of the physically challenges children can't be accommodated in public secondary schools hence, many preferring staying away from school.

The Dakar Education forum stated clearly, that inclusive education is vital if the Education for all (EFA) goal is to be achieved (UNESCO, 2000). Some countries are working to help their schools become inclusive, however traditionally in public secondary schools in Owerri Education Zone II, the physically challenged(disable children) and those with other special education needs have experienced exclusion, discrimination and segregation from main stream education with their peers.Some physically challenged children are placed in separate classes, others are placed in special schools such as the, school of the blind at `OfekataOrodo' in Mbaitoli Local Government Area of Imo State. It is therefore coherent to say that many challenged school age students have been denied access to Education thus increasing the population of out-of-school students in Imo State. The challenges, neglect, despondency and frustration among the physically challenged has rendered some susceptible to Neuroticism which is a trend attributed to mental health challenges, vulnerable to Drug Addiction, prostitution,violent crimes and more. (Igbokwe and Akpan, 2020)

Studies from Agulanna and Nwoga (2016) suggest that an increase in negative events in children is associated with Neuroticism. Another study by Lualike, Roberts, Trautwein and Nagy in (Onyeka, 2021) revealed that Neuroticism predicted the experience of more negative life events. Finding from previous research also revealed that personality is predominantly evoked in adolescent stage. Adolescent is a critical period, which suggest that thy can easily be influenced by events in the environment. Neuroticism may be cultivated through negative events that children are subjected to in the home when overburdened, allowed to hawk during school hours, subjected to hard labour or denied school provisions. Children may become Neurotic out of frustration, anxiety, depression and isolation.Children may develop aggressive tendenciesfrom adverse involvement of children in adult ventures, family business, odd jobs and over-use at home. Frustration orchestrated by hard labour, child abuse, child trafficking, early pregnancy, early marriage and early economic ventures to augment family income may expose children to adverse conditions susceptible to neuroticism on the long run (Chuka-Okonkwo, 2019).

According to Otolehi, Okwara-Kalu and Agulanna (2021) aggression could breed underachievement and subsequent dropping out-of-school. Children who are exposed to hardship, abuse, over-use and menial ventures may decide to stay away from school (Garba, 2021). Others already in school could consequent upon adverse influences decide

to drop-out, increasing the number of out-of-school students in Imo State. Assumptions and assertions from other studies on challenges of inclusive education and neuroticism as correlates of out-of-school incidence has created gaps in the body of literature. Many studies are yet to link challenges of inclusive education to development of neuroticism among children. When children are faced with frustration, functioning optimally in their environment becomes a problem. However, apart from the health implications of indulging in drugs, prostitution, violent fights, cybercrimes, neuroticism and challenges of inclusive education have negative consequences on the increase of out-of-school children.

Statement of the Problem

The experience of frustration by children in the society or even in school has remained a critical issue with adverse consequences on the population of children out-of-school. Not providing for the needs of the physically challenged or vulnerable children in public schools has generated issues within the system such that it is assumed that many physically challenged children are either not in school or allowed to rot in special homes exclusive for them (Igbokwe and Akpan, 2020). The number of physically challenged children who are out-of-school are alarming and there is need to talk about it. Many children who are not provided for either by the system or parents become frustrated resulting in neurotic dispositions such as drug addiction, prostitution, stealing, aggression and drop-out out incidences. Ravaging public secondary schools in Imo State are large chunk of students deciding to stop school without completing their courses (Onyeka, 2021). The enrolment strength especially the male folk are persistently coming down raising questions as; could challenges of inclusive educationresult in drop-out-increase? Has neuroticism among students any link to the explosion of out-of-school intentions in public junior secondary schools? The researchers in answering these questions directed the study to a conclusion through findings made.

Purpose of the Study

Raising the outlined concerns of this study in background to the study, the purpose of the present study is to:

1. Examine the relationship between the challenges in inclusive education andout-of-school intention.
2. Determine the relation betweenneuroticism and out-of-school incidence among senior secondary school students.

Research Questions

The following research questions were answered in this study:

1. What is the relationship between challenges in inclusive education and out-of-school incidence?
2. What is the relationship between neuroticism and out-of-school senior secondary school incidence?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study.

1. There is no significant relationship between challenges of inclusive education and out-of-school incidence.
2. There is no significant relationship between neuroticism and out-of-school incidence.

Methodology

The design of the study was correlational survey. In correlational survey design, the researcher seeks to establish the relationship in magnitude, direction and positivity. According to Nworgu (2015), correlational design measures the magnitude and direction of the association between variables of interest in coefficients. The population of the study were vulnerable students,explained in physical challenges, being educationally at risk and susceptible to neurotic tendencies. Such students were one hundred and twenty in number (120) and it constituted the sample size. The sample size were purposively selected because of their peculiar characteristics evidenced in being vulnerable to adjustment problems in school.

Instruments used in data collection were vulnerability Dictation Questionnaire (SVDQ) adopted from Otolehi, Okwara-Kalu and Agulanna (2022). The instrument has a reliability coefficient of 0.78 with 10 item questions bordering on behaviours considered to be antisocial.

The second instrument was Inclusive Education Questionnaire (SIEQ) adopted from Atsau and Umaru (2016). The instrument borders on issues/factors of inclusiveness in classroom competences of a teacher. It has a reliability coefficient of 0.81.

The third instrument was named out-of-school Intention Questionnaire (SOSIQ) adopted from Okwara-Kalu & Ugochukwu (2024). The questionnaire borders on behaviours considered to lead to dropping out-of-school. It has a reliability coefficient of 0.70.

The instruments were validated by specialist in Measurement and Evaluation, Educational Psychologists and Guidance and Counselling. Their observations and recommendations formed the draft copy administered to students. The researcher, visited the schools, taking permission from school principals and classroom researchers. Approval was received for the exercise and days for the exercise adopted. The exercise was carried out in a week's interval considering the distances between the schools in Owerri Education Zone II. Students were seated in a row and administered the questionnaires. The exercise lasted for 45 minutes after which the questionnaire were collected and packaged onward for analyses.

Pearson Product Moment Correlational Matrix was applied in the analysis. The strength of the coefficient is determined in four domains: low, moderate, strong and very strong (0.19-0.299, 0.30-0.39, 0.40-0.499, 0.50-0.699 & 0.699-0.899). From 0.19-0.399 signifies low coefficient or low relationship; 0.40-0.50 signified moderate relationship while 0.599 – 0.699 signified strong relationship whereas above 0.699 signified very strong relationship. The hypotheses were tested by comparing and contrasting the calculated value of 'r' to criterion value level of significance (0.05). If the probability value is less than the criterion value, the hypotheses is rejected whereas the probability value is more than the criterion value the hypothesis is accepted.

Results

The results of the research questions and hypotheses are shown in tables below.

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Coefficient analysis between inclusiveness education and out-of-school intention

Variable		Inclusiveness	Out-of-School intention
Inclusiveness	Pearson correlation	1	.56
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Out-of-school intention	Pearson correlation	.56	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

**Correlation is significant at 0.05 (2-tailed)

In table 1 the co-efficient of the relationship between inclusiveness and out-of-school intention was strong representing 0.56 index. Similarly, in comparing the probability value to the criterion value; the relationship was determined to be significant, because the probability value was less than the criterion value. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between inclusiveness and out-of-school intention.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Coefficient analysis on neuroticism and out-of-school intention among junior secondary school students.

Variable		Neuroticism	Out-of-School intention
Neuroticism	Pearson correlation	1	.63
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	120	120
Out-of-school intention	Pearson correlation	.63	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	120	120

**Correlation is significant at 0.05 (2-tailed)

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A Pearson product moment correlation was run to determine the relationship between neuroticism behaviour and out-of-school intention. The coefficient of the relation was 0.63, in comparing the probability value of the criterion value. The probability value was 0.000 whereas the criterion value was 0.05. The relationship between neuroticism behaviour and out-of-school intention is significant. Students with neuroticism behaviour are most likely to drop-out-of-school.

Discussion

The result of the study is that there was a strong relationship between inclusiveness in classroom practice and out-of-school intention. The result means that inclusiveness practices has a linear and direct implication on out-of-school intentions. Thesesuggests, that when challenged students' are not giving adequate attention in class, they feel ignored, rejected hence, become frustrated. The reason for this result is because inclusiveness has a profound positive impact on vulnerable students. Students who are challenged either by having poor processing skills which affects rate of comprehension and in attention which manifests in hyperactivity, loitering, truancy and poor relationship with peers and teachers may underperform or completely decide to leave school. When a teacher for one reason or the other ignores giving attention to perceived weak students, out of frustration, the spillover effect of such negligence could be the student, abandoning classes, joining secrete cult groups in school, absenteeism and eventually dropping out-of-school. The findings of the present study is similar to the result of Otolehi, Okwara-Kalu and Agulanna (2023) which revealed that students may drop-out-of-school because of frustration, underachievement or vulnerability to adjustment in school. In another work, Chuka-Okonkwo (2019) revealed that educationally at-risk students are most likely to drop out of school because of frustration, and adjustment concerns.

The result of the study is that there was a strong relationship between neuroticism and out-of-school intention. The meaning of the result was that neuroticism among students lured them to decide leaving school. The reason for this result could be that various characteristics of neurotic students align with antisocial behaviours that have been attributed to reasons why students leave school untimely or are rusticated leading to expulsion. Neurotic traits are associated with substance abuse, violent behaviour, indiscipline, poor connection to school dictates and adjustment needs tilting to disobedience to rules and regulations of authorities and institution.

The finding therefore aligns to the purpose of the investigation in the study hence, the question whether neuroticism predicts out-of-school intention among students.

The finding of the study aligns to that of Agulanna and Nwoga (2016) where it was discovered that neurotic traits promoted bullying among secondary school students. It was also explained in the study that cybercrimes had foothold in students with neurotic traits. The gap created by previous studies in this claim associating neuroticism to out-of-

school intention was revealed in Onwuka (2019) studies that identified forty students with neurotic traits but failed to connect their conduct in school to indiscipline, or behaviours at variance to orderliness and rewarding outcome. However, the present finding tend to align to studies suggesting that neuroticism has strong relationship with out-of-school intension. The contrasting results may lend to cultural differences in both areas of the study. Onwuka (2019) used participants in an area rated for violent crimes among youths. The location of schools used in Onwuka's study were in cosmopolitan region infested by cultural differences, that has the tendency of generating antisocial behaviours among students. However, although students used rated high in antisocial scale it didn't reflect on their conduct in schools. The present study and its findings aligns to the strong link between neuroticism and out-of-school intentions among students.

Summary/Conclusion

The findings of the study supported studies that inclined to the assertion that inclusiveness and neuroticism correlated with out-of-school intention among students within adolescent's age bracket (secondary schools). In line with the objectives of the study, students who were considered vulnerable were susceptible to out-of-school intention because of the non-accommodating nature of school environment subsequently those considered neurotic had the same pre-disposition to out-of-school intention.

The researchers however did not extend the search to gender variations. There may also be the possibility that maturity and purpose which manifests after eighteen years to adulthood could alter the findings of this study. Therefore, using undergraduates in another study could yield a different result. Adolescent age has characteristics that resemble neurotic traits because of their mental ability and physical changes projecting them to be adults.

Recommendations

The researcher recommended the following:

1. Special education teachers should be employed in secondary schools to handle students with special needs because inclusive education is a hoax in practice.
2. Government should adequately equip secondary schools with modern internet materials to facilitate teaching students with special needs, making learning interesting.

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