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Effect of Rhymes on Social Skill Acquisition of Children with Special Needs

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A B S T R A C T

This paper explored the improvement of special needs children's social skills through rhymes. A pre-test post-test control group quasi-experimental research design was used for this study. The population of this study comprised all special needs children in the Ilorin metropolis of Kwara state, Nigeria. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 2 special needs schools. To determine the validity of the instruments, the two instruments were subjected to both facial and content validity. Findings were revealed, creating new recommendations for the improvement of education. There was no significant main effect of treatment on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. Treatment had no significant effect on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs, gender had no significant effect on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs, and Special needs type had no significant effect on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs. The physically impaired and visually impaired should be exposed to another teaching strategy. Thus, they can acquire social skills. They should be encouraged to play around, interact well with peers and communicate effectively with society at large to build or develop their social skills.

A R T I C L E   I N F O

1. INTRODUCTION

Children with special needs often face a lot of difficulties in socializing, communicating, making friendships, participating, and interacting with family/families and society at large. They are often neglected among peers and society, they are objictified in society, and society treats them as an object and does not regard them. Some have disabilities such as hearing difficulties, difficulties in seeing, intellectual disability, learning disability, disability in behaviors or behavioral problems, and other forms of disabilities and health challenges.

Children with special needs face difficulties interacting with people around them, they may struggle to make eye contact, ask and answer questions, or respond appropriately in different social situations (Matson *et al.,* 2003). Children with disabilities often need to be taught appropriate social interactions, such as making requests, imitating interactions, sharing, exercising reciprocity (give and take), and turning to take (Morrison *et al.,* 2001). As they lack the skills in socializing with others, children with special needs may be overwhelmed and prefer to keep to themselves instead, children diagnosed with disability often face social challenges and struggles with everyday human interactions, they may fail to respond to their name, have no interest in the people in their surroundings (Morrison *et al.,* 2001), children with special needs may need special education in other to acquire social skills like typically developing children.

Special Education has different meanings, for example, the term handicapped refers to difficulties in performing a task the way it is normally performed (Farrell, 2001). While disabled refers to lasting physical or mental impairment that causes an individual difficulty in performing particular functions, therefore reflecting a deficit in the functional performance and effectiveness of an individual. Also, developmental disability describes factors that affect the development of a child, mentally, physically, or as a functional limitation in major life activities that requires the provision of special services or treatment for a long period. Therefore, special education refers to the provision of suitable education for those children who do not have typical needs; it does not necessarily describe education for those children who are disabled or handicapped, as per the definitions above. Difficulty in regulating emotions may also be a challenge and also these children tend to lose control and become frustrated in many situations. When a child is frustrated, this can lead to "self-injurious behaviors such as head banging, hair pulling or self-biting.

There are many essential factors involved in properly fulfilling the needs of individual students and helping them to obtain the benefits of education (Haase, 2005). The knowledge and skills of teachers, the appropriate use of behavioral interventions, and an appropriately designed curriculum are all fundamental to the success of students with these difficulties. Generalizing a universally applicable strategy is difficult given the previously stated variations among children with special educational needs (SEN) in general and intellectual disability (I/D) in particular, other than to underline the importance of creating and implementing an Individual Education Plan (IEP) to ensure that instruction and curriculum design meet the needs of particular students.

Thus, one of the most effective learning strategies is one based on individual learning which a teacher can employ in the planning of educational procedures to meet the difficulties faced by students with intellectual disabilities. In terms of preparation and application, an individualized educational plan is based on a set of steps as follows. With regards to the first step, it concerns identifying the practical performance level of the student, by starting to teach the special education skill, which should be done individually through standardized reference tests, as well as those based on curricula and scientific observations. The data from

these evaluative tools should give a true picture of the child's unique and special needs in the designated skills to be taught.

The second step takes account of the formulation of the behavioral objective in light of the child's unique and special needs. This behavioral objective is formulated in terms of special sequential behavioral skills to be learned by students to achieve a wider skill. The third step involves the division of the behavioral goal, by using task analysis, into the elements of which it is composed starting from that part of the knowledge already possessed by the student.

In this sense, the task of analyzing the behavioral objective is the process by which the teacher recognizes the elements of the behavioral objective on the one hand, and the student's mental characteristics, cognitive abilities, and experience, as well as how they learn, on the other; in so doing, these students should be provided with the most appropriate learning environment. In other words, this process of segmenting the skills represented in the behavior target includes small gradual steps which together permit the more complex steps to be constructed leading to the achievement of the annual goals. Children with special needs find it difficult in socializing.

Social skill is a very important skill that can help a child to succeed in all aspects of life. Social skills are influential to children's independence, the more social skills performed by children, the higher their chance to show independent behavior. Therefore, teachers should consider it in conducting learning activities for early-age learners at school by designing a good learning model and interaction among students. This study aims to investigate the effect of rhymes on the social skills acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis. Rhymes and songs improve children's zeal towards learning, it also improves teacher and pupils, pupils and the classroom, and pupils and pupil's relationship.

The process of socialization begins very early in a child's life. It is the process by which a child acquires the language and culture of his or her family and the community into which he or she is born. Social skills are complex and include skills of communication, problem-solving, assertion, and peer interaction, all of which are needed to develop and maintain food social relationships. Children's social skills predict important outcomes, such as peer acceptance, friendships, and positive opinions by significant others. The early development of social skills promotes psychological well-being, resilience, and mental health. Children with disabilities sometimes lack the understanding to learn from their life experiences and have more difficulty with social skills.

Within this community, children learn the language, norms, values, behaviors, expectations, and social skills that are appropriate for their "world" of children with special needs who are vulnerable to social problems. They may have difficulty following a conversation when a group is talking or may miss important information that causes them to react inappropriately. Children with special needs social support to develop their social skills. Social skills are generally defined as intra and interpersonal skills such as communication, teamwork, and collaboration skills. Social skills as personality traits, social gracefulness, fluency in the language, personal habits, friendliness, and optimism to varying degrees.

In recent years Social skills are the most important aspects to develop as early as possible to prepare individuals facing various problems in the world related to their status as social creatures who will continuously do interaction. Children with better social skills will run their life more effectively too because they can select and perform appropriate attitudes based on environmental demands. Children will be able to adapt to standards expected by societies, select the appropriate ways of communication, have relationships with others, and appreciate them. This shows that children with good social skills can communicate well with other children in a group based on the applicable rules (etiquette).

The development of Social skills is affected by children's dependence on doing interaction with their environment, this then will bring a positive impact on the integration of disciplinary behavior. Therefore, this skill will also bring a very big effect on developing dependence thus self-discipline can be achieved. Based on the discussion above, it is important to carry out a study about the relationship between social skills and children's independence. The latter aspect is very important to take into account by first ensuring their social interaction ability through some social skills. Rhymes create enthusiasm among children and also promote their zeal toward learning and interactions.

A rhyme is a short poem often for children; it is a word that ends with the same sound as another word. Nursery rhymes are simple verses often accompanied by a simple tune, used for the entertainment and education of small children which are easy yet amazingly powerful memory techniques. The children also have fun when they recite the rhymes and sing the songs while they perform actions that go with them.

Music activates the language, hearing, and rhythmic motor control centers of the brain all the time. Words put on songs are often much easier to remember and bring up the example of the ABCs songs, concerning the fact that once learned, most people will never forget it (Gomes & Pereira, 2014). This study revealed that rhymes should be used so that children with special needs can acquire social skills, age-appropriate vocabulary, and skills in interacting with society while staying engaged and having fun. Rhymes will lead children with special needs to build a strong foundation of social skills in terms of cooperation, interaction, and friendship, Children with special needs can associate with one another by singing rhymes aloud and making gestures along with the rhymes like clapping, jumping and dancing which will also foster their social skills.

This can help children identify their own emotions and understand the real emotions of others. When children act out the nursery rhyme stories they hear, they learn to imagine, be creative, and express themselves. Nursery rhymes teach history and connect children to the past. Kenney (2005) which can be of help to children with various special needs which can be visually impaired and physically impaired both male and female.

There is ample evidence that females with disabilities experience major psycho-social problems, including depression, stress, lowered self-esteem, and social isolation, which remain largely neglected. Evidence also suggests that women tend to be restricted to home-based activities, while men are likely to be supported in more public and outward-looking avenues. Stereotypes are artifacts of culture that can only be understood by exploring their relations to each other in the cultural system. Rhymes are very important to children, they help in improving the mode of interaction, communication, and friendship.

Repetition of rhymes and stories is good for the brain, teaching how language works and building memory capabilities, nursery rhymes help develop inference skills, both with encountering new words and in reading comprehension. Because these verses are made up of patterns, they are easy first memorization pieces, nursery rhymes are important for language acquisition and help with speech development they help children develop auditory skills such as discriminating between sounds and developing the ear for the music of words, rhymes like these help children articulate words, modulate voices (practicing pitch, volume, and inflection) and enunciate clearly by saying them over and over without fear of criticism. Nursery rhymes are excellent, the natural choice for a first recitation selection, the mouth and tongue muscles are developed as children say these rhymes. Listening comprehension is a foundational skill that is often skipped, but nursery rhymes can help ensure this crucial ability that precedes reading comprehension is covered.

Since many nursery rhymes involve movement, coordination, and physicality are integrated with their readings think "Ring around the Rosey" or "London Bridge." Coordinating finger plays are helpful to fine motor skill development. Nursery rhymes develop humor, because of the connection between movement, rhythm, and words, singing these songs can be a great group activity. Children can learn social skills from many of the rhymes. Nursery rhymes are familiar and can thus provide comfort and support to youngsters in uncomfortable situations.

Bryant *et al.* (1989), this study intends to carry out the effect of rhymes on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, however, this study has not been done in this locale, and it has not been done on the social skills of children with special needs basically visually impaired and physically impaired but in male and female.

Lakshmi *et al.* (2009) reported that there was a significant difference in the attitude of the parents toward their visually impaired children in the area of social and emotional behavior, sibling attitude, and towards the concept of integrated education. Good communication and positive societal interaction foster relationships and emotional adjustment, but for a visually impaired child, these channels are blocked, sometimes resulting in emotional instability Pradhan (2010).

The adjustment of visually challenged adolescents concerning their anxiety and degree of impairment and concluded that low anxious visually challenged males are better adjusted than highly anxious males while there was no significant difference between low-anxious females and high-anxious females, low and high anxious partially visually challenged males and low and high anxious partially visually challenged females on adjustment. The relationship between self-concept and adjustment of visually impaired adolescents studying in inclusive and special schools. The findings of the study revealed that the development of self-concept was better in inclusive schools. It was even better in the case of male adolescents than the female ones. The relationship between self-concept and level of adjustment in the case of female adolescents was better in inclusive school settings than in their male counterparts. This trend was reversed in the case of the relationship between those aspects in special schools.

Visually impaired have similar needs as the sighted. They continuously interact with their surroundings to satisfy their needs, it may be home, school, or personal, and even their own emotion. Visually impaired having limited experience and opportunity posed a serious problem to adjust. Thus, for proper adjustment of the visually impaired, parents, teachers, and peer groups need to have a positive attitude which in turn develops a positive self-concept and positive attitude. People, particularly students with physical disabilities are usually perceived by societies as disadvantaged groups. Hence, they are in a position of missing some economic, political, and social benefits including the right to access equitable and quality education. This is in line with Mcleod who points out that students with physical disabilities experience personal limitations in school environments that affect their social, psychological, and academic spheres that may likely affect their academic performances at school. Some of the limitations can be alleviated with parental, community, and government support.

They have been criminally victimized within society's institutions mostly due to negative psychological factors such as negative attitudes, prejudices, stereotyping, and stigmas. People, particularly children with physical disabilities are usually perceived by societies as disadvantaged groups. Hence, they are in a position of missing some economic, political, and social benefits including the right to access equitable and quality education. This is in line with Mcleod who points out that, students with physical disabilities experience personal

limitations in school environments that affect their social, psychological, and academic spheres that may likely affect their academic performances at school. Some of the limitations can be alleviated with parental, community, and government support.

The development of social skills lays a critical foundation for later academic achievement as well as work-related skills. A child needs to have good social skills to learn meaningfully while interacting with the members of society. However, studies have shown that children with special needs often face social challenges and struggles with everyday human interactions. In schools, they exhibit inappropriate classroom behavior, inattention during instructional periods, aversive relationships and interactions with educators and classmates, and disruptive classroom behavior.

The lack of social skills has produced negative consequences in the children's classwork and homework assignments; examinations, tests, and quizzes; the lack of organization surrounding school work; tardiness and absenteeism, and the inability to maintain or sustain social relationships among classmates. In addition, the impact of the lack of social skills on the student's academic skills has shown to exist in the student's ability to engage in proper studying skills, problem-solving, decision-making, content mastery, performance skills, and task management skills which could be as a result of the strategies employed by the teachers, children with special needs require strategies that will enhance interaction with their society. Rhymes improve children's interaction, communication, and friendship.

However, it has been observed that different researchers have carried out studies on rhymes as learning strategies for academic performance while few have studied the effectiveness of rhymes on pupils' academic achievement in literacy and other art subject which may not have examined the effect rhymes on social skill acquisition of children with special needs and also in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. Hence, this justifies the need to examine the effect of rhymes on the social skills acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state.

The following Null hypotheses were tested in this study:

(i) Ho1: There is no significant effect of rhymes on social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state, Nigeria

(ii) Ho2: There is no significant effect of gender on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state, Nigeria.

(iii) Ho3: There is no significant effect of special needs type on social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state, Nigeria

(iv) Ho4: There is no significant interaction effect of rhymes and gender on social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state, Nigeria

(v) Ho5: There is no significant interaction effect of rhymes and special needs type on social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state, Nigeria

(vi) Ho6: There is no significant interaction effect of gender and special needs type on social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state, Nigeria

(vii) Ho7: There is no significant interaction effect of rhymes, gender, and special needs type on social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state.

The research question is "What is the level of pupils with special needs social skills in the Ilorin Metropolis of Kwara State?".

2. METHODS

The study adopted a pre-test, post-test, control group quasi-experimental design due to the suitability in establishing possible effect relationships. It was a non-equivalent, control

group design that required the non-random assignment of pupils into groups. The quasi-experimental research design was considered appropriate because the primary four intact classes will be used to avoid disruption of normal class lessons. The factorial design of 2x2x2 was adopted to test the null hypotheses for this study. The first two factorial levels are experimental and control groups, the second factorial design level is gender occurring in either male (M) or female (F), while the last factorial level is special needs type which is Physical impairment and visual impairment. All the hypotheses were tested at a 0.5 level of significance.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Ho1: There is No Significant Effect of Rhymes on Social Skill Acquisition of Children with Special Needs in the Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State

Table 1 shows the effect of treatment on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. There was no significant main effect of treatment on social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State ($F_{(1; 39)}$ = 0.190, P< 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in light of the result since the significant value (0.666) is greater than 0.05. This implies that treatment had no significant effect on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.

Table 1. Summary of analysis of covariance (ancova) showing the main effect of treatment of pupil's academic performance in basic science and technology.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	234.544[a]	8	29.318	1.456	0.213
Intercept	358.781	1	358.781	17.817	0.000
Pre-Test	122.337	1	122.337	6.077	0.190
Treatment	3.828	1	3.828	0.190	0.666
Gender	3.820	1	3.820	0.190	0.666
Special need type	27.147	1	27.147	1.348	0.254
Treatment * Gender	12.067	1	12.067	0.599	0.445
Treatment * Special need type	0.139	1	0.139	0.007	0.934
Gender* Special need type	35.879	1	35.879	1.782	0.192
Treatment * Gender * Special need type	2.303	1	2.303	0.114	0.737
Error	624.231	31	20.136		
Total	12865.000	40			
Corrected Total	858.775	39			

a. R Squared = 0.273 (Adjusted R Squared = 0.086)

3.2. Research Hypothesis Two: There is No Significant Effect of Gender on The Social Skill Acquisition of Children with Special Needs in The Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State

Table 1 reveals the effect of gender on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. There was no significant effect of gender on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State ($F_{(1; 39)}$ = 0.190; P > 0.05). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in light of the result since the significant value (0.666) is greater than 0.05. This implies that gender had no significant effect

on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.

3.3. Research Hypothesis Three: There is No Significant Effect of Special Needs Type on The Social Skill Acquisition of Children with Special Needs in the Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara state.

Table 1 also reveals the effect of special needs type on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state. There was no significant effect of special needs type on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state ($F_{(1; 39)}$ = 1.348; $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in light of the result since the significant value (0.254) is greater than 0.05. This implies that special needs type had no significant effect on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state.

3.4. Research Hypothesis Four: There is No Significant Interaction Effect of Treatment and Gender on Social Skill Acquisition of Children with Special Needs in the Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara state

Table 1 also reveals the interaction effect of treatment and gender on social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state. There was no significant interaction effect of treatment and gender on social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state ($F_{(1; 39)}$ = 0.599; $P < 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in light of the result since the significant value (0.445) is greater than 0.05. This implies that the interaction of treatment and gender had no significant effect on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.

3.5. Research Hypothesis Five: There is No Significant Interaction Effect of Treatment and Special Needs Type on Social Skill Acquisition of Children with Special Needs in the Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

Table 1 also revealed the interaction effect of treatment and special needs type on social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. There was no significant interaction effect of treatment and special needs type on social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State ($F_{(1; 39)}$ = 0.007; $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in light of the result since the significant value (0.934) is greater than 0.05. This implies that treatment and special needs type had no significant effect on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.

3.6. Research Hypothesis Six: There is No Significant Interaction Effect of Gender and Special Needs Type on the Social Skill Acquisition of Children with Special Needs in the Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State.

Table 1 also revealed the interaction effect of gender and special needs type on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. There was no significant interaction effect of gender and special needs type on social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State ($F_{(1; 39)}$ = 1.782; $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in the light of the result since the significant value (0.192) is greater than 0.05. This implies that the interaction of gender and special needs type had no significant effect on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.

3.7. Research Hypothesis Seven: There is No Significant Interaction Effect of Treatment Gender and Special Needs Type on Social Skill Acquisition of Children with Special Needs in the Ilorin Metropolis, Kwara State

Table 1 also reveals the interaction effect of treatment, gender, and special needs type on social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State. There was no significant interaction effect of treatment, gender, and special needs type on social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State ($F_{(1; 39)}$ = 0.114; $P > 0.05$). The hypothesis is therefore not rejected in light of the result since the significant value (0.737) is greater than 0.05. This implies that treatment, gender, and special needs type had no significant effect on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara State.

3.8. Research Question One: What is The Level of Pupils with Special Needs Social Skills in the Ilorin Metropolis of Kwara State?

Data in **Table 2** shows the frequency of pupils with special needs social skills in the Ilorin Metropolis of Kwara State. The weighted mean is 1.73 which is a clear indication that the pupils possess these skills.

Table 2. Frequency of pupils' skills before treatment.

S/N	Skills	Often	Always	Never	Mean
1.	The child can develop the ability to turn-taking	22(55.0)	5(12.5)	13(32.5)	1.78
2.	The child can have the confidence to try new things	16(40.0)	15(37.5)	9(22.5)	1.83
3.	The child enjoys being around friends	20(50.0)	10(25.0)	10(25.0)	1.75
4.	The child can develop the ability to share among peers	22(55.0)	8(20.0)	10(25.0)	1.70
5.	The child can interact with friends and peers	17(42.5)	14(35.0)	9(22.5)	1.80
6.	The child becomes more aware of and sensitive to the feelings of others	23(57.5)	9(22.5)	8(20.0)	1.63
7.	The child is caring and has a solid friendship	18(45.0)	11(27.5)	11(27.5)	1.83
8.	The child gains a strong sense of empathy	27(67.5)	7(17.5)	6(15.0)	1.48
9.	The child wants to be liked and accepted by friends	21(52.5)	10(25.0)	9(22.5)	1.70
10.	The child enjoys group activities that focus on a common interest	21(52.5)	11(27.5)	8(20.0)	1.68
11.	The child treats peers with respect when playing game together	20(50.0)	12(30.0)	8(20.0)	1.90
12.	The child love playing with friends	22(55.0)	11(27.5)	7(17.5)	1.63
	Weighted Mean				**1.73**

3.9. Discussion of Findings

The study investigated the effect of rhymes on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state, Nigeria. It was observed from the study that; rhymes do not affect the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis due to the short period the work is not significant, a long period should be used to interact and get familiar with them well.

This goes against the study conducted by Hery and Arsyad (2020) which reviewed that rhymes have a significant effect on pupils' academic performance. However, rhymes showed that about 70% of kindergarten teachers use rhymes and songs in all aspects of their numeracy lesson delivery and as such it created a positive impact on children's learning of numeracy. In addition, it is contrary to Hery and Arsyad (2020) who reviewed that the use of rhymes can significantly enhance the awareness of vocabulary among pupils. This research also has significant pedagogical implications and developments on the use of nursery rhymes to teach English vocabulary.

Gender had no significant effect on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state. This is contrary concluded that significant gender differences exist, although broader and lateral studies are needed to examine the relationship between gender identities, social skills, and subjective happiness more in-depth, and thus, understand the effect of these constructs in the development of personality. This goes along with the study conducted which aimed to investigate gender differences in social skills, problem behaviors, and academic competencies of Iranian kindergarten children. Results showed that girls scored higher than boys on social skills.

Females who perceive social skills as more important had higher grade point averages (GPAs), higher attendance rates, and fewer disciplinary problems than their male counterparts. Conversely, females who perceive social skills as of lesser importance have lower GPAs, poorer attendance, and more disciplinary referrals than their male counterparts. Findings highlight pertinent gender differences in the relationship between social skills mindsets and outcomes among high-school freshmen students.

Special needs type had no significant effect on the social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state. Visually impaired students receive bursaries and allowances from government and non-government organizations; meals, accommodation, and scholastic materials from their universities; extra time during examinations; oral examinations; and buddy support.

However, constraining limitations in the methods of instruction and assessment used and the instructional materials provided were noted. Based on these findings, recommendations for the better education of visually impaired students are made. This is corroborated by a study conducted by Arini *et al.* (2019) which indicated that students with disabilities' mean scores were 44.45 from a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 63, which is closest to the minimum. The levels of social skills of students with disabilities tend to the fair to very poor level (82.5%). Effective social skills instruction, such as intensive social skills training is required to enhance the level of social skills of students with disabilities in inclusive schools.

4. CONCLUSION

From the findings of the study, rhymes on social skill acquisition of children with special needs in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state, Nigeria. It is revealed that rhymes do not have a significant effect on social skills acquisition in children in the Ilorin metropolis, Kwara state, Nigeria.

In light of this conclusion, the following recommendation was made:

(i)   Physically impaired and visually impaired should be exposed to another teaching strategy. Thus, they can acquire social skills. They should be encouraged to play around, interact well with peers and communicate effectively with society at large to build or develop their social skills.

(ii)   Teachers in special needs schools should invest their time and materials in teaching the pupils

(iii)   Governments and private special needs school owners should ensure that the teachers employed at special needs schools have a high competence level in teaching.

(iv)   Government should include a strategy that will be more significant than rhymes that will make children with special needs acquire social skills.

5. AUTHORS' NOTE

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article. The authors confirmed that the paper was free of plagiarism.

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