

DISSERTATION ASSESSMENT

Higher education institution:	Palacký University in Olomouc, Faculty of Education
Field of study:	Special education
Applicant:	OLAYI, JAMES EBURIKURE
Opponent:	Doc. Mgr. Dita Finková, Ph.D.
Supervisor:	Prof. PhDr. PaedDr. Miloň Potměšil, Ph.D.
Title of dissertation:	INCLUSIVE EDUCATION AND ITS IMPACT ON THE SOCIETY AND STUDENTS WHO ARE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED: A SURVEY OF NIGERIA

The present dissertation by Olayi James Eburikure has a total of 140 pages and is provided with annexes, which matches the criteria for this type of thesis. The list of bibliographic references contains 92 scientific publications, professional publications, and other professional sources.

From a formal perspective, the dissertation meets the required standards and is visually well arranged and provided with appropriate tables that illustrate the topic.

The dissertation has a logical concept, the author uses a scientific language, which matches the current level of scientific practice in the field of special education and complies with applicable terminology.

The author selected an original and rather challenging topic relating to the current trends in approaching persons with disability. The challenging nature of the dissertation lies in the content and in the fact that the research was carried out outside the territory of the Czech Republic.

The design of the present dissertation is theoretical-empirical, which corresponds with its content.

Evaluation of the theoretical part

The theoretical part of the dissertation focuses on visually impaired persons, inclusion, and education.

Chapter 1 of the dissertation presents the effects of inclusive education on the society and students with visual impairment, particularly those who are blind and purblind. The chapter explains the importance of education as a tool for inducing changes in the society, both of a quality and quantity nature. The chapter suggests that even today there are countries, where the tolerance to and support of persons with disability does not reach a required level compared with European standards. The author emphasises a necessity to introduce a different approach to children with disability and suggests a need for cooperation between the legislative sector, schools and families, and a need for increased qualification of teachers in this respect, etc. The author of the dissertation

claims that although Nigeria is a signatory to documents acknowledging and supporting inclusion, in reality children with specific needs are rejected due to a lack of adequate schools, where inclusion would be implemented. In this area the author sees considerable differences between Nigeria and some other countries of the world (including the Czech Republic).

The chapter also outlines the theoretical framework of the dissertation, reasons, anticipations and presumptions, research questions and hypotheses, research specifics, and a definition of terms for the whole topic of the dissertation. In my opinion the citation sources are too modest, there should be more of them and the citations should be more varied.

Chapter 2, which is the core part of the dissertation, describes the author's review of literature concerning the topic of special education, this specifically includes studies, articles, etc. on inclusion. The chapter presents an overview of the approach to persons with disability, specifically visual impairment, from a historical perspective both in Europe and in Nigeria. The text for example describes special schools in Nigeria, but also political decisions in favour of special education.

The author also mentions a necessity to use correct terminology and defines the difference between blindness and purblindness. The author further provides classifications of visual impairment; the opponent has an objection to one of them. This is classification by Similarly, Okeke (2001) stated on p. 31, which seems rather strange. This classification combines various criteria in a single classification, e.g. levels of vision and types of impairment. The author further considers the conditions, possibilities and limitations of visual impairment.

Chapter 2.1.7 presents the principles of inclusion, which we consider significant concerning the topic of the dissertation. Everything is compared both in an international context and with respect to the approaches in Nigeria.

According to the opponent, an interesting part is Chapter 2.2.3, which informs about the approach of teachers and other persons to the target group, approaches to the family, the need for support and development of the target group, with the primary aspect being independence. Another successful part is Chapter 2.4, which presents an overview of the possibilities of assistive technologies in the education of visually impaired persons. However, this part could have been more elaborate and specific.

The theoretical part as a whole corresponds with the standards of dissertations and the anticipated empirical work of the author. The dissertation enriches the area of special education. The author adheres to citation standards, the quality of citation sources is appropriate.

Evaluation of the empirical part

Chapter 3 belongs to the practical part of the dissertation. The purpose of the dissertation was to analyse the impact of inclusive procedures in a usual environment on blind and purblind students in six specific areas of Nigeria.

The research is of a quality-based design, as claimed in the introductory part of the chapter; however, regarding the need for data processing (see the methods section) the design is rather of a mixed nature.

The objective of the research was to map, describe and evaluate the inclusion of visually impaired persons in mainstream education, and social and cultural system of the Nigerian society.

The author further specifies the locations of the research and the rather extensive research sample (this should be more specific). The author also identifies data collection tools, which included the questionnaire and interview. The author also mentions a pilot survey, which preceded the research involving a large sample of respondents. Then the author describes the methods of data analysis, which we consider to be too general. The opponent believes a more specific description would be appropriate.

Chapter 4. This part defines five hypotheses, the areas of the research and data processing. The results are thoroughly commented on, and conclusions and recommendations for practice are defined, including a description of possible development of the attitudes to the target group.

In the final part the author summarizes the results in relation to the empirical part of the dissertation in various tiers.

Overall assessment of the dissertation:

The present dissertation makes a balanced and compact impression and achieved its intentions and objectives. By using professional terminology the author demonstrates his erudition in the issue. The dissertation is original. The dissertation meets the criteria defined for this type of thesis.

Questions for the author of the dissertation:

- Based on your knowledge and experience, try to summarize the current state of development in the world concerning inclusion.
- Describe the effects of the standard of living of a student with visual impairment on educational opportunities in a mainstream school (in the present and in the future).

Conclusion:

The dissertation submitted by Olayi James Eburikure, meets the basic requirements for this type of thesis in the area of special education and presents new scientific knowledge. Therefore, I **recommend the dissertation for defence**, and in case of successful defence I recommend that **Ph.D.** be awarded to the author.

In Olomouc, 1 May 2016

Doc. Mgr. Dita

Ph.D.

Opponent of the

Dissertation Assessment

Programme: DSP Special education

Field of study: Special education

Student: Olayi, James Eburikure

Title of thesis: Inclusive Education and its Impact on the Society and Students who are Blind and Visually Impaired: a Survey of Nigeria

Opponent: doc. PhDr. Lea Květoňová, Ph.D.

Department: Department of Special Education, Faculty of Education, Charles University in Prague

In the dissertation the author analyses the current knowledge about inclusive education in relation to the development of quality of life, individual needs, social relationships, and economic, social and political circumstances in Nigeria. This coherent assessment significantly contributes to the development of inclusive and special education.

The dissertation is well arranged. The chapters of the dissertation form separate sections that follow one another well.

The text in the theoretical part contains appropriate references to a solid body of literature.

The author presents the issue of visual impairment in a wider context.

All chapters of the theoretical part are factually correct; the citations meet the relevant standards.

The well-founded theoretical chapters provided very good background for the research part of the dissertation.

The research questions and the corresponding research hypotheses focus on a relatively wide range of areas relating to quality of life and the education of visually impaired persons.

In the research study the author focused on the assessment of the impact of exclusion of visually impaired persons on their quality of life in the Nigerian society, assessment of the impact of poverty on the lives of persons with health disability, specifically visually impaired persons, assessment of the improvement of the quality of the learning process in pupils and students with visual impairment through assistive technologies, and last but not least assessment of the impact of political commitments and measures for the implementation of inclusive education in Nigerian schools.

The author claims that his research was a qualitative study; the research methods applied indicate that the research study was of a mixed design.

During data collection the author used questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The research sample included a total of 5,700 respondents from six geopolitical zones of Nigeria. The participants were representatives of institutions responsible for setting educational policy, representatives of Nigerian associations of visually impaired persons, associations of parents and supporters of visually impaired persons, pupils and students with visual impairment from special as well as mainstream schools, and representatives of non-profit organizations.

The selected research hypotheses were verified only by means of statistical processing of the data from the questionnaires, the information acquired through the interviews and focus groups were not analysed. The data were confronted with professional literature.

Based on the research data, the author formulated recommendations for improving the quality of life of visually impaired persons.

The dissertation is a theoretical study with an empirical survey, which is an appropriate method to address the issue. The methods and techniques are adequate with respect to the objectives of the research project of the dissertation.

The results are clearly shown and adequately commented.

I consider the conclusions formulated by the author beneficial for special education theory and practice.

I recommend that selected passages and chapters especially of the theoretical part of the dissertation be published.

I have no objections to the dissertation. In terms of language and graphical layout the present text meets the requirements for this type of paper.

Questions for defence:

What are the similarities and differences between the education of persons with severe visual impairment in Nigeria and Europe?

Conclusion

The present dissertation by Olayi, James Eburikure is a significant contribution for special education theory and practice.

In the dissertation the author demonstrates profound knowledge and a capability of independent creative work in the area.

Therefore, I recommend the dissertation for defence, and after successful completion of the study I recommend, in compliance with the Act on Higher Education Institutions, that the doctoral student be awarded the academic degree Ph.D.

In Prague, 16 May 2016