

Skills Acquisition by Youth with Disabilities: The Need for Vocational Rehabilitation Services

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Abstract

The study was designed to determine Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRSs) needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state. Four research questions and one hypothesis, tested at .05 level of significance guided the study in which a descriptive survey research design was adopted. The study was carried out in Niger state, Nigeria and the population was 70 subjects. The instrument for data collection was Vocational Rehabilitation Services Questionnaire (VRSQ). The VRSQ which was structured with Five Points Likert Scale was validated by experts in physiotherapy, vocational education and training as well as guidance and counseling who ascertained the correctness of the items of the questionnaire based on the research questions. Mean and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed among others that youth with disabilities needed provision of prosthetic and orthotic devices such as artificial limbs; eyeglasses and other visual aids; training on photography and video coverage; ceramic making; skills in electronic appliances repair; as well as job placement services for economic self-reliance. Based on these findings, it was recommended that: (1) Stake holders should provide youth with disabilities opportunities to practice and improve their workplace skills, consider their career interest and get real world work experience; (2) Government should encourage employers to employ youth with disabilities by offering reductions in tax liability and provide loan services to those that wish to establish their own businesses; and (3) NGOs and individuals should assist in providing facilities and infrastructure necessary for adequate vocational rehabilitation of youths with disabilities.

Key Words: Job Placement Services; Physical and Mental Restoration Services; Vocational Guidance and Counseling Services; Vocational Rehabilitation Services; Vocational Training Services; Youth with Disabilities.

Introduction

The avalanche of beggars in the streets, motor parks, markets as well as bank premises in Niger state is a clear indication of the conspicuous incidence of unemployment and consequent poverty amongst the disabled, especially youth with disabilities. The National Youth Policy defined youth as a Nigerian citizen between the ages of 18 – 35 years. The distribution of this category of individuals by states and their various forms of disabilities as reported by National Bureau of Statistics (NBS, 2017) indicated that 37.3 % representing a total number of 1, 472 youth with disabilities in Niger state have partial visual impairment; 38.6 % representing 1, 624 have poliomyelitis; 24.1 % representing 952 have partial paralysis and other forms of major and minor disabilities. This is pathetic as in most cases this massive population of youth with disabilities become the most vulnerable group for rituals, drug abuse, moral abuse and other inhumane situations which are too

many to mention that could be averted if they are given adequate attention. One way of giving this much desired attention is through providing Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRSs) with the aim of reforming or turning around their socio-economic misfortune into fortunes.

VRS is a program which assists people with disabilities to obtain services that can help them to prepare, secure and maintain employment. These services may be offered in form of educational programmes, skills training and other interventions that can make them useful to themselves and the society at large. According to Wheeler (2008), VRSs may include: (a) assessment or selections of individuals with disabilities to determine eligibility and needs for VRSs; (b) vocational guidance and counseling services; (c) physical and mental restoration services; (d) vocational training services; and (e) Job placement services, including searching for employment and placement assistance.

Job placement services enable persons with disabilities to overcome barriers to accessing, maintaining or retaining employment. Todd, Allison, Maura and Steven (2013) asserted that these services may include: identification of job opportunities, provision of loan services and systemic collaboration with small and medium enterprises for job placement of youth with disabilities. Lack of these services may lead to unemployment and underemployment which are well known nexuses to the incidence of poverty. Although there are some institutions for disabled persons in Niger state, it is important to note that training for persons with disabilities has globally begun to change from programmes delivered through specialized institutions to mainstream vocational rehabilitation services offered through government, service providers, NGOs or private companies (Freedman, 2008). A key role in the empowerment of youth with disabilities is to ensure that they are trained in skills which are appropriate to the local labour market demand. This could lead to a greater degree of financial independence and increased capacity to weather economic shocks. More so, within a traditional context where family and community continue to prompt attitudinal barriers resulting into misconceptions, discouragement and inferiority complex, vocational guidance and counseling services are a means of increasing or fine-tuning the minds of disabled youth who perhaps understandably prefer begging on the streets, rather than learning vocational skills that could prepare them for self-reliance.

Through vocational guidance and counseling services, youth with disabilities can be convinced to belief that if employed, they will be regarded as contributors, not as liabilities, challenging many negative perceptions the family and community may have. Vocational guidance and counselling services may include efforts by counselors to assist the youth in selecting a specific employment based on vocational assessment; planning to reach employment goals and preparing to engage in activities that are more financially rewarding (Wehman, Chan, Ditchman & Kang, 2014). Another key point worth mentioning is that VRS must consider specific needs of youth with different types of disabilities, rather than simply putting them together in the same generic category and same geographical location. For example, even where there are provisions for youth with disabilities, it appears that the full range of impairments are often not considered (Majid & Razzak, 2015); such as the need for prosthetic and orthotic devices that could help the physically disabled youth to cope with specific trainings and occupations. Consequently, Gregory (2015) argued that VRS should be given to the disabled based on their category of disability.

When a disabled youth is 'group-labeled' or put in the right category he/she belongs to, he/she is often motivated to do better and feel at home among people with his/her type of disability. The

Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN, 2013) categorized disabilities to include: (a) visual disability (partially sighted and blind); (b) hearing disability (partially hearing and deaf); (c) physical disability among others. This categorization will enable VRS providers to offer the right physical and mental restoration services according to the needs of the various categories of disabilities (Majid & Razzak, 2015). For instance, the physically disabled youth may need prosthetic and orthotic devices such as artificial limbs and braces. The partially hearing disabled youth may need auxiliary listening devices while the deaf may need a more sophisticated aids such telecom devices. Moreover, the partially sighted may need eyeglasses and other visual services in order to cope with the right vocational training services (Dench, Meager & Moris, 2016).

Vocational training services involves imparting work-related skills for individuals to adjust and fit into a specific job so that the high returns of resources that may be invested in them today can have both immediate and long term economic benefits. Where they existed and are functioning well, vocational training services as part of the major components of VRS, play an important role in building life skills of youth with disabilities, strengthening families and communities, and working towards sustainable development as a major contributor to the overall progress of a country. Although Bello, Danjuma and Adamu (2007) observed that computer maintenance and repair services; tailoring; data processing and typing skills; radio and television repairs skills; photography and video coverage skills among others were the vocational skills needs of 15 – 25 years old out-of-school youths; it still remains uncertain the opinion of various vocational training experts on skills needed by youth with disabilities that can give them the much needed economic self-reliance in Niger state.

Vocational training experts are lecturers in Universities and Colleges of Education who have acquired advanced training in Technical Vocational Education and Training. A study by Omede (2016) indicated continuous reduction in the enrolment of students with disabilities from one educational level to another across public schools in Nigeria. Consequently, there may be higher number of disabled youth in Colleges of Education than in the Universities in Niger state as a result of the present level of perceived negligence of educational rights of youth with disabilities. To this end, vocational training experts in Colleges of Education are likely to have more experience in dealing with disabled youth than their counterparts in the Universities. Therefore, lack of clear position in the literature concerning differences in the opinions of vocational training experts on the vocational skills needed by youth with disabilities prompted a need for further inquiry.

Skill is the ability that has to do with individual's knowledge, practice and aptitude to do something well, which is often related to labour or work for self-survival. In other words, a man without work-related or vocational skills may be regarded as a man without food on his table. As such, skills acquisition by youth with disabilities becomes imperative as they have suffered and are still suffering from stigma, prejudice and exclusion from society because the basic human rights of disabled people have suffered a long time neglect in both developed and developing countries such as Nigeria.

This situation has spread poverty, homelessness and an army of bowl-carrying disabled youth that are aimlessly roaming the streets of Niger state. Their personal safety and that of the society cannot be guaranteed as many fall into the hands of criminals and the reason for this menace may

not be unconnected with the fact that their age-long neglect has downgraded them to the background of a voiceless section of our society. Disability has only recently gained recognition as a legitimate subject of anti-discriminatory legislation and it is submitted that people with disabilities are entitled to special services such as vocational rehabilitation that are capable of maximizing their potential. Different categories of youth with disabilities need specific VRSs that agree with their type of disability and the environment they find themselves. Therefore in the quest to identify the much needed services, the following question arises: What are the Vocational Rehabilitation Services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state.

Theoretical Framework

Social Theory of Disability: The Social Theory of Disability (STD) was propounded by the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS, 1976). The theory has it that disabled people are disadvantaged not because of their impairments, but as a result of the limitations imposed on them by social, cultural, economic, and environmental barriers. Disability according to this formulation is not about health or pathology but about discrimination and social exclusion. In other words, from a STD perspective, disability is a socio-political issue. This in turn leads to fundamentally different policy priorities and choices, mainly around the removal of disabling barriers, as well as a strong emphasis on human and civil rights (Oliver, 1990). Unlike medical model assumptions of individual abnormality and the primacy of cure, the STD while not rejecting medical intervention, implicitly acknowledges the normality of impairment.

STD is so powerful because it illuminates the fact that the roots of poverty and powerlessness among the disabled do not reside in biology but in society. This theory is related to the present study as it suggests that with the intervention of Vocational Rehabilitation Services given to youth with disabilities in Niger state and beyond, they can live a meaningful life and contribute positively in the socio-economic development of their society. Therefore, STD offers a powerful device for the liberation of youth with disabilities who remain the poorest of the poor in most countries, both developed and developing. Hence, the theory is adopted in the present study.

Objectives of the Study

Specifically, this study sought to determine:

1. The vocational guidance and counseling services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state
2. The physical and mental restoration services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state
3. The vocational training services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state
4. The job placement services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state

Research Questions

The following research questions were formulated in line with the objectives to guide the study:

1. What are the vocational guidance and counseling services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state?
2. What are the physical and mental restoration services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state?
3. What are the vocational training services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state?

4. What are the job placement services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state

Research Hypothesis

The following null hypothesis tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study:

HO: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of vocational training experts in the Universities and Colleges of Education on the vocational training services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state

Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive survey research design to solicit the opinion of experts on the Vocational Rehabilitation Services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state. The population for the study was 70 subjects. These included 20 experts in vocational guidance and counseling services from special centers, 10 experts in physical and mental restorations services (physiotherapists) from hospitals, and 40 experts in vocational training from Federal University of Technology Minna, and College of Education Minna, in Niger state. No sampling was done since the population was manageable.

The instrument for data collection was Vocational Rehabilitation Services Questionnaire (VRSQ) which is made up of two parts. Part One sought information on the personal data of the respondents. Part Two is further divided into sections A, B, C and D. These sections which contained a total number of 62 items deals with vocational guidance and counseling services; physical and mental restoration services; vocational training as well as job placement services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state. The VRSQ was structured with five points Likerd scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). These response options weighted 5, 4, 3, 2 and 1 respectively.

The VRSQ was validated by experts in vocational guidance and counseling, physical and mental restoration, as well as vocational training to ascertain the correctness of the structure as well as organization and suitability of the items based on the research questions. Corrections made by the experts were effected in the final copy of the questionnaire. The reliability of the instrument was established after a pilot test was carried out using 30 respondents with similar characteristics in Kaduna state, Nigeria. Split Half method was used to analyze data which yielded a Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) of 0.80 as the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire. The instrument was therefore administered by the researchers to collect data from the respondents and a 100% return rate was achieved. Data obtained was analyzed using Statistical Software for Social Sciences (SPSS, Version 20). Statistical Mean and Standard Deviation (SD) were used to answer the research questions while t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The criteria for accepting or rejecting an item is such that any item with a mean score of 3.00 and above was adjudged agreed, while items with the mean score of 2.99 and below were deemed disagreed by the respondents.

Result

Research Question 1: What are the vocational guidance and counseling services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state?

Table 1: Vocational Guidance and Counseling Services Needed by Youth with Disabilities

SN	ITEM	X	SD	REMARK
1	Guiding youth with disabilities to choose employment goals based on vocational assessment	3.12	0.78	Agreed
2	Fine-tuning the mind of youth with disabilities to believe in the dignity of labour	4.10	0.65	Agreed
3	Assisting youth with disabilities to make right choices in academic and nonacademic pursuits	3.98	0.76	Agreed
4	Making youth with disabilities realize their potentialities to make maximum contribution to the welfare of the society.	4.01	0.76	Agreed
5	Assisting youth with disabilities to make proper and satisfactory adjustment for improved occupational performance.	4.62	0.34	Agreed
6	Provide advices to youth with disabilities based on their unique potentialities	3.99	0.67	Agreed
7	Help youth with disabilities to have a sense of direction	2.97	0.56	Disagreed
8	Provide guidance and counseling on methods of studying, sexually related problems, leisure and time management	4.65	0.43	Agreed
9	Inform youths with disabilities about the qualifications needed for different kinds of work or employment	3.66	0.06	Agreed
10	Assist disabled youth with guidance on how to make friends from opposite sex and socialize with members of the society	4.02	0.56	Agreed
11	Advice youth with disabilities on how to select a life partner and build a successful family	2.76	0.87	Disagreed
12	Educate youths with disabilities about their capabilities and job opportunities as well as the risks involves in various jobs	4.97	0.76	Agreed
13	Utilize a wealth of data from parents, guardians and peers of youth with disabilities to make appropriate and convincing suggestions in solving their problems	4.31	0.98	Agreed
14	Create a cordial atmosphere for the guidance and counselling session through warm and friendly behavior	3.24	0.69	Agreed
15	Suggest a number of solutions to problems and give the youth some level of freedom to choose the appropriate one	3.76	0.76	Agreed

Key: X = Mean Score and SD = Standard Deviation

Result from Table 1 revealed that all the items on the Guidance and Counseling services needed by youth with disabilities were deemed agreed except items 7 and 11 which were on 'Helping youth with disabilities to have a sense of direction' and 'Advising youth with disabilities on how to select a life partner and build a successful family' that were adjudged disagree by experts in guidance and counseling.

Research Question 2: What are the physical and mental restoration services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state?

Table 2: Physical and Mental Restoration Services Needed by Youth with Disabilities

SN	ITEM	X	SD	REMARK
1	Provision of prosthetic and orthotic devices such as artificial limbs and braces for youth with physical disabilities	4.16	0.78	Agreed
2	Provision of eyeglasses and other visual aids for youth with partial sight disabilities	3.57	0.68	Agreed
3	Diagnostic and treatment services for mental and emotional disorders	4.88	0.67	Agreed
4	Corrective surgery for youth with partial and major physical challenges	4.32	0.87	Agreed
5	Speech therapy to help youth who are speech impaired overcome speech problems	4.01	0.37	Agreed
6	Physical and mental therapy to help disabled youth develop physical abilities	3.67	0.76	Agreed
7	Nutritional services to help youth individualize diets for special health problems	3.56	0.76	Agreed
8	Therapeutic treatment of a mental or physical impairment	3.69	0.77	Agreed
9	Provide surgery, treatment and clinic services to youth with disabilities	2.92	0.98	Agreed
10	Provision of hearing aids for youth that have partial hearing problems	3.01	0.78	Agreed
11	Special services for the treatment of individuals with end-stage renal disease, including transplantation, dialysis, artificial kidneys, and supplies	3.78	0.87	Disagreed

Key: X = Mean Score and SD = Standard Deviation

Result from Table 2 showed that most of the items on the physical and mental restoration service needed by youth with disabilities were agreed upon by respondents. However, respondent disagreed with item 26 which stated that 'Special services for the treatment of individuals with end stage renal disease, including transplantation, dialysis, artificial kidneys, and supplies' should be rendered to youth with disabilities as part of physical and mental restoration services.

Research Question 3: What are the vocational training services needed by youth with disabilities Niger state?

Table 3: Vocational Training Services Needed by Youth with Disabilities

SN	ITEM	X	SD	REMARK
1	Training in photography and video coverage	3.12	0.50	Agreed
2	Skills in dyeing and bleaching services	3.69	0.87	Agreed
3	Skills in knitting services	3.58	0.68	Agreed
4	Training on radio, television and other appliances repairs	3.57	0.87	Agreed
5	Skills in office assistance services	3.54	0.69	Agreed
6	Skills in plumbing and pipe fitting services	4.33	0.99	Agreed
7	Ceramic making	4.04	0.59	Agreed
8	Bookkeeping services	4.76	0.64	Agreed

9	Commercial tri-cycling and motorcycling services	2.02	0.69	Disagreed
10	Skills in VCD dubbing and rental services	4.11	0.87	Agreed
11	Training in computer maintenance and repair services	4.59	0.69	Agreed
12	Tailoring skills	3.85	0.69	Agreed
13	Electrical installation and maintenance work skills	4.66	0.79	Agreed
14	Training in carpentry, joinery and furniture making	3.57	0.88	Agreed
15	Skills in bricklaying and concrete works	3.97	0.67	Agreed
16	Wood machining operation skills	3.02	0.98	Agreed
17	Skills in lotion and cream making	4.11	0.99	Agreed
18	Skills in fuel hawking	2.12	0.67	Disagreed
19	Soap making	3.98	0.78	Agreed
20	Training on GSM and telephone services	3.56	0.87	Agreed
21	Training on animal rearing	3.97	0.67	Agreed
22	Skills in bakery making	3.97	0.82	Agreed
23	Yoghurt and ice cream making	3.65	0.94	Agreed
24	Typing and data processing	4.11	0.67	Agreed
25	Training on art work and graphics	4.03	0.58	Agreed

Key: X = Mean Score and SD = Standard Deviation

Analysis in Table 3 indicated that respondents agreed with all the items on vocational training services needed by youth with disabilities except items 35 and 44 that have to do with training on Commercial tri-cycling and motorcycling services and Skills in fuel hawking respectively.

Research Question 4: What are the job placement services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state?

Table 4: Job Placement Services Needed by Youth with Disabilities

SN	ITEM	X	SD	REMARK
1	Placing youths with disabilities in relevant firms for industrial attachment in the course of vocational rehabilitation program	3.12	0.96	Agreed
2	Motivation through financial support to employers of youth with disabilities to expand their businesses	4.27	0.86	Agreed
3	Creating awareness among white and blue collar job providers to facilitate conducive atmosphere that can accommodate youth with disabilities	4.00	0.59	Agreed
4	Provide financial supports to employers of youth with disabilities to hire job coach who shall provide necessary support and coaching at work place	4.57	0.79	Agreed
5	Collaborate with job providers to overcome mistaken perceptions of people with disabilities and their capacity to work	4.03	0.73	Agreed
6	Enticing employers to hire youth with disabilities by offering reductions in tax liability	4.56	0.84	Agreed
7	Follow-up services to monitor the progress of youth with disabilities at their places of employment	4.80	0.29	Agreed

8	Create awareness among youths with disabilities on the existing job opportunities in the labour market	3.56	0.84	Agreed
9	Encourage employers to provide facilities in structure in accordance with the special need of youth with disabilities	4.10	0.29	Agreed
10	Updating the curriculum for the training of youth with disabilities in line with the current labour market skills demands	3.99	0.87	Agreed
11	Providing loan facilities to youth with disabilities to set up their own businesses	4.69	0.93	Agreed

Key: X = Mean Score and SD = Standard Deviation

Data analysis in Table 4 showed that all the items on job placement services needed by youth with disabilities were accepted by the respondents.

Research Hypothesis: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of vocational training experts in the Universities and Colleges of Education on the vocational training services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state

Table 5: t-test Analysis on Vocational Training Services Needed by Youth with Disabilities

Subjects	X	SD	N	df	t-cal	t-table	Decision
UL	3.75	0.77	25	38	0.42	1.68	Accepted
CL	3.69	0.70	15				

Significance Level = 0.05

Key: X = Mean Score, SD = Standard Deviation, N = Number of Subjects, df = Degree of Freedom, UL = University Lecturers, CL = College of Education Lecturers

The result in Table 5 shows that with t-calculated value of 0.42 which is less than the t-table value of 1.68 at 0.05 level of significance and 38 degree of freedom, the null hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of vocational training experts in the Universities and Colleges of Education on the vocational training services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state.

Discussion

Findings from Table 1 indicated that respondents accepted the following as guidance and counseling services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state: Fine-tuning the mind of youth with disabilities to believe in the dignity of labour; Making youth with disabilities realize their potentialities to make maximum contribution to the welfare of the society; Assisting youth with disabilities to make proper and satisfactory adjustment for improved occupational performance; Inform youth with disabilities about their capabilities and job opportunities as well as the risks involved in various jobs; and Utilize a wealth of data from parents, guardians and peers of youth with disabilities to make appropriate and convincing suggestions in solving their problems among others. This findings are in line with the assertions of Wehman *et al.* (2014) who observed that vocational guidance and counselling services may include efforts by counselors to assist the youth in selecting a specific employment based on vocational assessment; planning to reach employment goals and preparing to engage in activities that are more financially rewarding. The simple explanation to this finding is that youth with disabilities require concerted effort by experts in guidance and counseling to accept their nature and belief in the dignity of labour.

Data analysis in Table 2 revealed that almost all the items on the physical and mental restoration services needed by youth with disabilities were agreed upon by respondents. These included: Provision of prosthetic and orthotic devices such as artificial limbs and braces for youth with physical disabilities; Diagnostic and treatment services for mental and emotional disorders; Corrective surgery for youth with partial and major physical challenges; Speech therapy to help youth who are speech impaired overcome speech problems; and Nutritional services to help youth to individualize diet for special health problems. This finding is in line with the submissions of Gregory (2015) as well as Majid and Razzak (2015) who in separate studies suggested that VRS should treat the disabled based on their category of disability. This implies that different categories of youth with disabilities needed different physical and mental restoration services which will enable them to cope with skills acquisition and other aspects of VRS such as vocational training and job placement services.

Analysis in Table 3 indicated that respondents agreed with all the items on vocational training services needed by youth with disabilities except items 35 and 44 which have to do with training on commercial tri-cycling and motorcycling services and skills in fuel hawking respectively. This may be because commercial tri-cycling and motorcycling can be more challenging to youth with disabilities as it sometimes requires carrying of heavy loads onto the vehicle or to the house of the customer. Furthermore, even though Bello *et al.* (2007) found that fuel hawking is one of the skill needs of 15-25 years old out-of-school youth, it is not surprising in the present context that such opinion is rejected since fuel hawking is an illegal business which could lead to persecution by state authorities. In addition, respondents agree that vocational training should be offered to youth with disabilities in: Photography and video coverage; Plumbing and pipe fitting services; Ceramic making; Bookkeeping services; Computer maintenance and repair services; Electrical installation and maintenance work skills as well as Typing and data processing among others.

Concurrently, the result from t-test analysis in Table 5 reveals that there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of vocational training experts in the Universities and Colleges of Education on the vocational training services needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state. This implies that even though there may be higher number of disabled youth in Colleges of Education than in the Universities in Niger state as a result perceived negligence of their educational rights as suggested by Omede (2016), vocational training experts in both institutions shared similar opinion on the vocational training services needed by youth with disabilities.

Result in Table 4 showed that all the items on job placement services needed by youth with disabilities were accepted by the respondents. These included: Placing youths with disabilities in relevant firms for industrial attachment in the course of vocational rehabilitation program; Motivation through financial support to employers of youth with disabilities to expand their businesses; Provide financial supports to employers of youth with disabilities to hire job coach who shall provide necessary support and coaching at work place; Enticing employers to hire youth with disabilities by offering reductions in tax liability; Follow-up services to monitor the progress of youth with disabilities at their places of employment; and Providing loan facilities to youth with disabilities to set up their own businesses. This is in agreement with the opinion of Todd *et al.* (2013) who posited that job placement services may include: identification of job opportunities, provisions of loan services and systemic collaboration with small and medium enterprises for job placement of youth with disabilities. Furthermore, findings implies that job placement services are

of paramount importance in rehabilitating youth with disabilities towards a better socio-economic life.

The findings in the present study have implications on the Social Theory of Disability (STD). According to the theory, disabled people are disadvantaged not because of their impairments, but as a result of the limitations imposed on them by social, cultural, economic, and environmental barriers. In line with the assertions of this theory, it can simply be submitted that when the required vocational guidance and counseling, physical and mental restoration, vocational training as well as job placement services are provided, the negative assumptions and misconceptions of individuals, families and general society about youth with disabilities will be revised to make individual traits of disabled youth less disabling in terms of their socio-economic prosperity.

Conclusion

Discrimination of youth with disabilities in Niger state and Nigeria at large in form of marginalization from education, health care and other important services has led to unemployment and consequential prevalence of poverty amongst this group of individuals. This study investigated the Vocational Rehabilitation Services (VRS) needed by youth with disabilities in Niger state. Findings revealed that youth with disabilities need some vocational guidance and counseling services, physical and mental restoration services as well as job placement services. Based on these findings, it was concluded that for youth with disabilities to be self-reliant and fully employed in the world of work, these VRSs should be provided.

Recommendations

It is therefore recommended that:

1. Government at all levels should collaborate with stakeholders to augment the services provided at special center with guidance and counseling; physical and mental restoration, vocational training as well as job placement services that are capable of helping youth with disabilities to secure and maintain lucrative jobs in the state;
2. Stake holders should provide youth with disabilities opportunities to practice and improve their workplace skills, consider their career interest and get real world work experience;
3. Government should also entice employers to employ youth with disabilities by offering reductions in tax liability and provide loan services to those that wish to establish their own businesses.
4. NGOs and individuals should assist in providing facilities and infrastructure necessary for adequate vocational rehabilitation of youths with disabilities.
5. Youth with disabilities should avail themselves to every vocational rehabilitation services provided for them to improve their socio-economic status.

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