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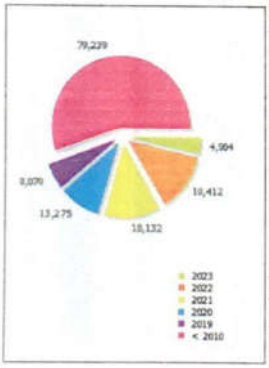
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Dispute Resolution Mechanism for Electricity Supply Industry in Nigeria

Barakat Adebisi Raji
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Adamu Idris Tanimu

ABSTRACT

Many Nigerian artisans have been rendered inactive in their various callings. One of the reasons for this is the poor supply of electricity by the designated industry. Unfortunately, many of these artisans do not know where to go and lodge their complaints when they are served expensive electricity bills. Therefore, this paper is aimed at evaluating the legal framework for electricity supply dispute resolution in Nigeria. It also examines the effectiveness of this legal framework. This paper employs a quantitative research approach by using a survey design for data collection and descriptive statistics for data analysis of the 15 stakeholders who were surveyed. The review showed that a dispute resolution outlet is provided for customers who may wish to express their complaints about easy access and quick settlements. The finding also revealed that the industry has moved to other more result-oriented dispute resolution mechanisms such as mediation, arbitration, and conciliation, among others. There is a regulatory commission charged with the dispensation of justice on dispute resolution. However, what is left is public enlightenment to enable people to explore these available dispute resolution outlets in order to minimize the settlement period.

Keywords: Dispute resolution mechanism; Electricity; poor service; customers; Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

The electricity industry is among the sectors that contributes to the economic development of any nation. Electricity is considered a major epitome of economic development in the drive for industrialization, supply to homes and businesses with a dismal in Nigeria.[1] Despite having a far larger population, Nigeria generates less electricity compared to other major African countries and is yet to accelerate its power generation parallel to its growing population. For instance, South Africa which has a population of 48 million generated 35,000 megawatts (MW) out of an installed capacity of 52,000MW in 2015.[2] Electricity production in South Africa has reached 20,240-gigawatt hour (GWh) in March 2022, compared with the 18,494 GWh in the previous months.[3] In the past decade, Ghana has experienced severe electricity supply challenges costing the nation an average of US $2.1 million in loss of production daily. This situation has developed even though installed generation capacity has more than doubled over the period; increasing from 1,730 MW in 2006 to 3,795 MW in 2016.[4] In the year 2018, Ghana had 4,889 MW of installed generation capacity, generating 16 terawatt-hours (TWh) of electricity annually.

Electricity demand in Ghana is satisfied by thermal generation (58%), hydroelectric generation (40%), imports (less than 2%), and solar (less than 1%).[5] Ghana has a target of generating at least 10% of its electricity from renewable technologies by 2030, where "renewable" does not include large hydro.[6] It is common knowledge that the electricity industry is vulnerable to various types of disputes ranging from the regionalized sale of electricity, disconnection, non-payment of bills, power-theft, among others.[7] Despite the fact that Nigeria generates electricity in commercial quantities for over a century, the quantum of electricity infrastructure development in the county is still brain-dead and power supply remains highly inadequate. These disputes have brought a lot of setbacks to the industry. This is because disputes, if not attended to, can lead to major crises. Low availability of power is currently a major obstacle facing the industry.[8] About 47% of Nigerians do not have access to grid electricity and those who do have access, face regular power cuts. In addition, the economic cost of power shortages in Nigeria is estimated at around $28 billion - equivalent to 2% of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP).[9] According to Shubham Chaudhuri, World Bank Country Director for Nigeria identified the inability to create jobs in Nigeria is as a result of the unreliable power supply that has stifled economic activity and private investment, which

ordinarily would have assisted to lift 100 million Nigerians out of poverty.[10] Considering the economy situation and population growth, there is a critical need to drive higher power availability. Cheap and abundant availability of power is a prerequisite for economic development, with the potential to have a multiplier effect on growth.[11] The industry needs to shift their mode of disputes settlement to a better result-oriented dispute resolution mechanism due to the dockets of cases before the courts.[12] Citizens are seriously aggrieved due to the poor supply of electricity which sometimes cause loss of properties. There is a sentiment that the electricity industry cannot be sued because it is controlled by the government. Also, because litigation is a long process, it is in no position to take the industry to a more effective administration of justice. This paper, therefore, calls for enlightenment to educate citizens that electricity industry is a corporate body that can sue, and as well be sued using better result-oriented dispute resolution mechanisms to achieve fairness and justice.

THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK USED FOR ELECTRICITY DISPUTES IN NIGERIA

The most common among the legal tools use for electricity dispute settlement in Nigeria is litigation. Court proceedings take lengthy time and decisions take several years, however, many of the electricity disputes require urgent and lesser time for their settlements.[13] More than 10,000 cases, include those of electricity disputes, are awaiting decisions in the superior courts of records in Nigeria. A State High Court in Ughelli, Delta State, declared the issuance of 'very high and exorbitant' estimated electricity bills to residents of Ughelli town by the Benin Electricity Distribution Company (BEDC) as "wrongful" and "illegal". The Judge, J. Edun, declared as illegal and contrary to the provisions of the law the issuance of "very high, unreasonable, and exorbitant" electricity bills on the claimants and other customers in the community.[14] Frequent power outages in both the federal and state high courts in Lagos have also become an embarrassment for the judiciary. In some cases, the power outage last for days shutting down judicial activities in the courts and leaving lawyers scrambling for excuses to angry clients regarding why their cases have stalled.[15] Despite the crucial roles of the judiciary, the judicial process is often painstakingly slow and leaves much to be desired. This has made many people lose confidence in using the courts as it is mostly believed that delayed justice is denied justice.[16] This and some other reasons facilitated the search for more effective modes of dispute resolution mechanisms. Hence, the emergence of exploring other alternative dispute resolution mechanisms that can work within the time frame required to resolve electricity disputes given the exigency of the electricity supply in the country. For example, the applicability of the time limit for arbitration proceedings has been stated in the Arbitration Act in 2019 as follows:

> "The award in matters other than international commercial arbitration shall be made by the arbitral tribunal within a period of twelve months from the date of completion of pleadings under sub-section (4) of section 23."[17]

However, by virtue of sub section 3 of section 29A, this period of 12 months may be extended by the consent of the parties for another 6 months. Impliedly, arbitration proceedings are said to be within the period of 18 months. In case of mediation, it is recommended that parties should at most settle their disputes within 60 to 90 days.[18] Given the nature and the size of the disputes occurring in electricity industry, it is desirable to use mediation. Where a party refuses to participate or discontinues to participate in mediation process, he or she may elect or be referred to arbitration panel for a binding decision through arbitration process. Parties combine mediation and arbitration processes for resolution of dispute depending on the nature of the dispute and for fear of non-compliance of outcome of mediation process while opting for litigation as the last resort.

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LITIGATION AND ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION (ADR)

The alternative dispute resolution (ADR) processes are constitutionally approved in addition to the court proceedings in the Nigerian Electricity Industry. This has enabled corporations, individuals, and states to negotiate freely and settle their disputes amicably. Alternative dispute resolution is generally faster and less expensive because there is far less discovery and sometimes without appeal. While litigation is more time consuming, expensive and cumbersome, the ever-increasing number of cases in courts have occasioned congestion of cases awaiting trials and delay in their determination. The average contract-based lawsuit takes a minimum of approximately two years to resolve in court of first instance, another two years at the Court of Appeal,

and four years minimum at the Supreme Court. The average duration of similar cases in arbitration can be as short as five or six months. If the extra 18 months of delay will impact positively on the relationship between the parties and the economic health of either party, then arbitration is worthy of adoption to be included in the contract.

In addition, the complexity of court litigation often tends to increase costs which parties naturally would want to avoid. However, monetary claims can easily be settled amicably without going to court for a redress. Consequently, alternative dispute resolution mechanisms have been developed such that disputes are settled within a reasonable time than litigation. Arbitration helps parties in the selection of a judge with expertise in the area of the dispute and submission to a jury with such expertise.

However, litigation can be resorted to when there is need to recover a huge loss which cannot be obtained by mutual agreement of the parties. Parties resort to litigation where arbitration fails to get their dispute resolved. This is what was established in the cases of National Nigerian Petroleum Corporation (NNPC) v Lutin Investment Ltd & Anor (2006) JELR 47375 (SC). These companies, Lutin and NNPC, submitted a business dispute in 1993 to binding international arbitration but the case did not get to Supreme Court until 2006 while the final award came on May 2, 2017. The case was not finally determined until 2007. This, among other reasons has led to the search for other alternative dispute resolution mechanism that are faster and more effective. Arbitration administrative costs, fees for arbitrators and other related costs are increasingly expensive thereby making things difficult for parties to contractual agreement to settle their disputes. This calls for a review in the cost and time spent in the hearing of arbitration cases. Despite all odds, arbitration is still the current considered alternative in the electricity industry until lately when people are agitating for mediation which yet is to be popularly used.

THE USE OF LITIGATION FOR ELECTRICITY BILL DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN NIGERIA

The prevalent use of litigation for the dispute resolution of electricity bill issues is a common practice in the electricity industry. Litigation provides more legal certainty compared to other non-litigation processes. Private individual(s) or company (ies) often resort to court to seek redress when they are served with outrageous bills or other related matters by the electricity industry. Delays occasioned through the court process has led to the search for other alternative settlement modes that are more effective and timeous. The result of litigation is usually adversarial and severe on the business relations among parties. Moreover, the unsuccessful party sometimes is compelled to reimburse both his own legal costs in addition to what has been accrued to the successful party (ies).[19] Delay in electricity dispute resolution usually result in loss of business and huge money on the part of individual or company. The individual or company, as the case may be, will be compelled to look for alternative in order to remain in business with their customers. There are lots of electricity cases awaiting the decisions of courts. Some of which have been there for a period not less than three years. Example of such case is that of Nigeria Electricity Power Authority (NEPA) v Alli.[20] This case commenced in 1977 but was not finally determined until 1992. Similarly, the case of Nigerian Electricity Regulatory Commission (NERC) v Eko Forum commenced on the 4th of April 2014 is still pending.[21] The NERC's appeal panel has adjourned the case between Mayfair Gardens and Eko Electricity Distribution Company (EKEDC) indefinitely, stating that they would inspect the entire Mayfair Gardens electrical infrastructure before making a ruling on the matter. The reason for this is that judges are overwhelmed with lots of cases they cannot handle within reasonable time. The hearing and resolution of cases are oftentimes determined by the preparedness and willingness (attitude) of the parties concerned which invariably beyond their control.

Globally, this traditional method of dispute resolution is gradually paving way to alternative dispute resolution techniques such as negotiation, arbitration, mediation, among others.[22] Undoubtedly, the administration of justice through regular courts is usually besieged with delays, technicalities, procedural and evidential rules, and the high cost of litigation.[23] The emergence of arbitration technique with other alternative dispute resolution methods is an attempt to combat delays and assure a faster dispensation of judgement.[24] Additionally, the complexity of court proceedings tends to increase in cost which disputants are naturally anxious to reduce. Parties are also compelled to pay for filing of processes and the services rendered by their counsels, which eventually affect their cash flow.

Apart from being time-consuming and cumbersome, parties exchange pleadings and this take time to do. Oftentimes, parties hide documents, party or counsel refuses to enter appearance, causing unnecessary adjournment, intentional delay thereby frustrating the other party involved. Hence, an affordable and cost-effective disputes resolution method is needed. Mediation technique is less cumbersome and most preferred in the resolution of electricity disputes in other clime because it is found to be more effective and time saving than litigation.

ADVANTAGES AND WEAKNESSES OF LITIGATION

Litigation has a binding effect on parties to disputes over other alternative dispute resolution mechanisms. It will be advantageous to use litigation for the settlement of complex disputes. For instance, litigation is more desirable where the property of a customer is seriously damaged as a result of negligence on the part of the electricity industry. In this case, ADR process may not be adequate to give sufficient compensation in term of what has been lost. A company which loses a machine worth a billion naira as a result of high voltage electricity supply may prefer to seek redress in court than go for arbitration process despite the length of time involved as well as the cost of the processes. The reason for this is that such a company will hope to get justice that will return the company to its status quo ante bellum and nothing less. In order to free the dockets of cases before the judges, courts encourage the use of ADR mechanisms nowadays while litigation be considered as the last resort. This does not abrogate or deplete the power of litigation as a means of dispute settlement. Hence, the reason for alternative processes such as mediation and arbitration are to enable them achieve a quick dispensation of justice.

ADRs COMMONLY USED FOR RESOLUTION OF CIVIL CASES IN NIGERIA

The most commonly used ADR for civil cases in Nigeria is arbitration. This is because arbitration award is binding on the parties and enforceable at the law court. Arbitration process is regulated by the Arbitration and Conciliation Act (ACA) Laws of the Federation of Nigeria (LFN) 2004 and also enshrined in the Lagos State Arbitration Law, 2009.[25] An arbitration clause is found in most of the contractual agreements executed between contracting parties and it is a settled law that parties to an agreement containing an arbitration clause must first comply with this clause before going to court. Where a party to such an agreement clause approaches a court contrary to the arbitration clause, the other party is empowered to apply for a stay of proceeding, and the court, upon the fulfilment of the relevant conditions will stay the action as provided by Sections 4 & 5 of the Arbitration and Conciliation Act (Ltd, 2021).[26] For example, arbitration is used for preparing agreement such as transfer of land ownership, for business settlement, among others.

Other ADR mechanisms include mediation, which is commonly used for family disputes, rent disputes, insurance claims, real estate matters, and any commercial dispute that would otherwise find its way to the court. Mediation process has transformed into a more structured process and within a legislative framework.[27] The Nigerian Arbitration and Conciliation Act Cap A18 Laws of Federal Republic of Nigeria (LFN) 2004, (the "Act") an adoption of the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration was enacted in 1988.[28]

THE USE OF MEDIATION PROCESS FOR RESOLUTION OF ELECTRICITY DISPUTES IN NIGERIA

The use of mediation is still at its infancy stage in the Nigerian electricity industry. It is yet to be popularly used because of the lack awareness on the part of its advocates. Government has played its part by establishing ADR Centres in all the states that request for it. For instance, in Lagos state, there are mediation Centres as well as multi-court door services connected to courts staffed with trained mediators.[29] The proactive intervention by the Lagos state citizen mediation Centre averted the brewing tension between the official of the Ikeja Electricity Distribution Company (IKEDC) and residents of Lasori-Abuja-Ifelodun Estate community in Ikorodu area of the state, Nigeria. The community has earlier petitioned the Citizen's Mediation Centre (CMC), a directorate of the state Ministry of Justice, requesting for an immediate intervention over an outrageous estimated billing by IKEDC to residents of the community. There is also a well-established and functional ADR Centre in Kano state, Nigeria.

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISION OF LITIGATION FOR ELECTRICITY SUPPLY DISPUTE RESOLUTION IN NIGERIA

Litigation is the oldest mechanism which has been provided for dispute resolution arising from all types of commercial transactions. This has been provided for in the Nigerian constitution (The 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria) (As amended).[29] The power to hear and determine civil cases relating to commercial transactions have been vested in the hands of both the federal and state courts, as well as the industrial court.[30] Disputes such as cases where existing customers' meters are no longer functional, customers whose meter reading cannot be read by the Electricity Distribution Company (EDC) due to inaccessibility occasioned by locked doors or customers not being at home at the time of reading the meter, the presence of dogs or other wild animals on the premises, or customers without meters: where customers have paid but are yet to be provided with meters, among others are heard and determined at the state high courts. The question as to who bears the liabilities of the outstanding electricity bills on a recently vacated property between the old tenant/landlord or new tenant/landlord after taking possession is not a new one. This question arose once again in the matter between Mr. Sunday Babalola v Eko Electricity Distribution Company (EKEDC) Plc wherein the court found that the claimant who had just acquired the property was not entitled to pay the outstanding electricity bill consumed by the former occupant of the said building.[31]

CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS FOR ARBITRATION AND ALTERNATIVE DISPUTE RESOLUTION MECHANISMS IN NIGERIA

Section 19(d) of the 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria provides for the settlement of disputes by arbitration, mediation, conciliation, negotiation, and adjudication.[32] This shows the efficacy of arbitration and other alternative dispute resolution mechanisms in the resolution of disputes. Unfortunately, many of the citizenry do not give cognizance to their existence and resort to litigation instead. These other forms of settlement mechanisms are provided to serve as compliments to the jurisdictions conferred on the courts by the constitution.[33] This unawareness was demonstrated during the interview conducted in the course of this work.[34] In fact, many individuals are not even aware of the existence of alternative dispute resolution Centres and their locations in the country.

Private persons who seek redress from court on electricity bill matters never attempted other forms of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms because of the fear of the lack of enforcement of alternative dispute resolution award,[35] while others believe that the electricity industry is as big as the government itself that cannot be sued. Hence people prefer to let go than to have issues with the industry, especially the downtrodden ones in the country. Clients such as fashion designers sometimes look for alternative means of providing electricity to enable them to meet the quest of their customers. They tap electricity supply from their neighborhood when there is a blackout at their end in order to provide for their family. However, people who have solar device are no longer having issues with power supply hence, free exorbitant bill charges.

METHODOLOGY

This paper employs a quantitative research approach by adopting a survey research method. Survey questionnaires were distributed to 57 respondents. Respondents for this work were selected from customers across Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria. The questionnaire was designed to encapsulate questions relevant to the legal framework for electricity power supply dispute resolution in Nigeria. Hence, the industry stakeholders such as the legal practitioners, fashion designers, petty traders, architects, engineers, welders, head teachers, professors, contractors and stylists were the respondents to the questionnaire distributed. From the total number of 57 questionnaires administered, 45 were useable and analyzed. Descriptive statistics were used for analyzing the collected data. As such, a descriptive analysis was employed to analyze the study.

KEY INFORMANTS

The purpose of the study is to gain an in-depth insight into holistic view of the customers of the electricity industry communicative negotiation process used for dispute resolution. As such, ten groups of customers were purposively selected to be interviewed. These consist of three legal practitioners, three academicians, three engineers, three architects, seven stylists, eleven petty traders, three teachers, four welders, and eleven tailors and fashion designers.

1. Legal Practitioners
2. Academicians
3. Contractors
4. Engineers
5. Architect
6. Stylists
7. Petty traders
8. Principal
9. Welders and
10. Tailors and fashion designers

The essence of the interview was to get full knowledge of the most preferred settlement mode used for the resolution of electricity disputes in Nigeria and the reason for such. These informants consist of people who frequently use electricity in their various endeavors. Data collected from these categories of people is adequate for this kind of research based on saturation in qualitative research.

TABLE 1. The profile of informants involved in the study

S /N	Informants	Expertise /Discipline	Interview Duration
1.	Professor	Academician	1hr. 3mins
2.	Senior Advocate of Nigeria (SAN)	Private Practitioner	1hr. 35mins
3.	Contractors	Private Practitioner	0hr.45mins
4.	Engineer	Private practitioner	0hr. 49mins
5.	Architect	Private practitioner	0hr. 51mins
6.	Stylist	Private practitioner	0hr. 41mins
7.	Petty Traders	Business Proprietor	0hr. 57mins
8.	Principal	Head Teacher	1hr. 45mins
9.	Welder	Private Practitioner	1hr. 00mins
10.	Tailor/ fashion designer	Private Practitioner	1hr. 10mins

INTERVIEW DESIGN AND DATA COLLECTION

This study conducted an in-depth face-to-face and provide explicit answers to the questions. The questions were targeted mainly to ask about the informants' point of views and understanding of the most preferred dispute resolution mechanism

to practice as barristers and solicitors either generally or for the purpose of any particular office or proceedings under the Legal Practitioner Act. Students with a law degree from an approved university are admitted into the law school, where they are trained as legal practitioners. These students are required to pass the Bar Part II Examinations, while students who are admitted into the school with degrees obtained outside Nigeria are required to pass in addition to the Bar Part I examination. A person is entitled to practice generally only if his name is on the Roll of Legal Practitioners kept by the Chief Registrar of the Supreme Court of Nigeria.

History of Disabilities Studies

In Nigeria, like many other underdeveloped countries, persons with disabilities (PWDs) are generally deprived of equal access to basic public education and other fundamental services that are guaranteed to their "non-disabled" counterparts. Due to cultural beliefs and social attitudes, these persons are treated as a social taboo associated with evil omens or bad luck. Consequently, they are excluded from upwardly mobile social and economic opportunities including access to educational pursuits with the consequence that, they face an uncertain future, a life of absolute poverty, deprivation, and abuse. Cultural beliefs relating to persons with disabilities are further compounded by British colonial policy that failed to consider the education of PWDs as a policy priority in the education of native people in Nigeria.[9] Therefore, this study will apply Foucault's genealogical approach to history, and critical disability theory in education to analyze the impact of Nigerian cultural practices, the influence of Christianity and Islamic religion, and also British colonial policy on educational policy priorities in post-independence Nigeria.[10] The concern of this paper is that the Nigerian educational system does not provide an equal educational opportunity for persons with disabilities, resulting from

[9] Edwin Etieyibo and Odinri, Religion, Culture, and Discrimination against Persons with Disabilities in Nigeria, *Afr J. Disabil.* 5, no. 1 (2016): 192; Helen Pinckney Senu-Oke, A Genealogy of Disability and Special Education in Nigeria: From the Pre-Colonial Era to the Present, (PhD Thesis, Miami University, 2011), 2–10.

[10] M. Miles, With C. Miles, West Midlands, UK, Disability in Africa: Religious, Ethical & Healing Responses, to and by People with Disabilities, Deafness, or Mental Debility: A Bibliography through Four Millennia, with Introduction and Partial Annotation, *Independent Living Institute (ILI);* Evelyn Folake Kissi, Sankofa: Disability and the Door of Return, (PhD Thesis, York University, 2020): 53–67.

the outcome of cultural practices, colonial and post-colonial policies that define individuals on the basis of whether they are "disabled" (unable) or "non-disabled" (able).

Diasbilities Courses and the Nigerian Law School Curriculum

The courses that can be taught or included are not limited to these:

Communication with Hearing Impairment

This is a form of communication option for a child who is Deaf or hard of hearing. There are a variety of communication options available for a child who is Deaf or hard of hearing, since every child is unique and different in their response to these techniques.[11] The various communication modalities open to this category of people are: Oral method of communication and cued speech method.[12] Manual communication method utilizes a child's ability to communicate through visual stimuli such as finger spelling and sign languages. Total communication method is for a child who is Deaf to use any and all communication methods necessary to facilitate language acquisition.

[11] Julia Rossano, Communication Resources for Deaf or Hard of Hearing Children in Mississippi: Parents' Perspectives, (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Southern Mississippi, 2021): 33–34; François Bergeron, Aurore Berland, Dominique Demers and Suzie Gobeil, Contemporary Speech and Oral Language Care for Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing Children Using Hearing Devices, *J Clin Med.* 9, no. 2 (2020): 378.

[12] Beverly J. Trezek, Cued Speech and the Development of Reading in English: Examining the Evidence, *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 22, no. 4 (2017): 349–364; Thomas E. Allen, Melissa L. Anderson, Deaf Students and Their Classroom Communication: An Evaluation of Higher Order Categorical Interactions Among School and Background Characteristics, *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 15, no. 4 (2010): 334–347; Matthew L. Hall, Wyatte C. Hall, Naomi K. Caselli, Deaf Children Need Language, Not (Just) Speech, *Sage Journal* 39, no. 4 (2019): 367–395; Prences Mae M. Langga, Kithamae N. Sabanda, Roseniya T. Datu-Ulama, Wardah D. Guimba, Adelyn N. Sialana-Nalla, and Jerryk C. Alico, Communication Approaches of Hearing-Impaired Students in an English Language Learning Classroom: The Case of a Public Elementary School, *International Journal of English Language Studies (IJELS)* 34, (2021): 89–99.

Introduction to Hearing Impairment

This course is specifically designed to help teachers of special needs children to be familiar with the education of children with hearing impairment. The objectives of this course are to:

Define hearing impairment and identify the causes of hearing impairment;

Describe the process of hearing and highlight the feature of the ear.

Identify the types and degree of hearing loss;

Explain the assessment procedure and early identification procedure of hearing;

Discuss the characteristics of persons with hearing impairment;

Highlight the educational intervention and classroom strategies for students with hearing loss; and

Identify professionals working with students with hearing loss.

Introduction to the Education of the Visually Impaired

The field of visual impairment is an area of special education. It is connected with the following assessment; incidence, study of the cross-section of the eyes, causes, identification, and treatment of visual problems. More specifically, it deals with refractive errors, the psychology, diagnosis, and treatment of visual problems, ranging from people with partial or low vision to total blindness. These are the group of people considered in this course. The objectives of this course include;

Helping students to understand the structure and functions of the different parts of the eyes.

To guide PWDs in defining and understanding the causes and prevention of blindness.

To familiarize students with the psychological effects of blindness and its educational implications, and lastly to equip them with the basic knowledge of Braille[13]

[13] Kim de Verdier, Children with Blindness: Developmental Aspects Comorbidity and Implications for Education and Support, (Ph.D. Thesis, Stockholm University, 2018): 17–20.

Deaf Culture and Its Community

Deaf culture focuses on the stimulation of the eye and the enhanced visual perceptiveness of Deaf individuals. The oral tradition of storytelling has allowed members of the Deaf community to pass down the histories of great Deaf men and women, providing Deaf children access to role models that enable them to feel rooted in history, while also giving them mentors with common experiences.[14] The visual–spatial environments make Deaf child becomes acculturated through language immersion as well as social interactions with others who share the same language and similar world view that is experienced primarily through visual rather than auditory experiences[15] in programs designed with Deaf children in mind, Deaf children are not only surrounded by a sizeable number of Deaf students, which provides them with a socially accessible environment, but are also exposed to educational programming through which the students gain access to the Deaf community, the history and the values of Deaf culture. It is important to provide a Deaf child with access to visual technology.[16] These tools such as videophones with access to video relay services (VRS), cell phones or pagers with data plans for emailing and texting, light flashers connected to doorbells and phones, and closed captioning on the television, create an environment that is compatible with a Deaf worldview, and making them a permanent facet of a Deaf child's life provides him or her full access to the environment.

[14] Kim de Verdier, Children with Blindness: Developmental Aspects Comorbidity and Implications for Education and Support, (Ph.D. Thesis, Stockholm University, 2018): 17–20.

[15] Marc Marschark, "Language and Psychosocial Functioning Among Deaf Learners With and Without Cochlear Implants," *The Journal of Deaf Studies and Deaf Education* 23, no. 1 (January 2018): 28–40; Marc Marschark, "Understanding Language, Hearing Status, and Visual-Spatial Skills," *J Deaf Stud Deaf Educ.* 20, no. 4 (2015): 310–330.

[16] Fungai Mashawi, "Benefits of Technological Equipment to Deaf Learners: A Case Study in Masvingo Province," *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Educational Sciences* 7, no. 4 (2019) "Using Online Information Technology for Deaf Students during COVID-19: A Closer Look from Experience," Heliyon 7(2021): 1–12; Matthew L. Hall, Wyatte C. Hall, Naomi K. Caselli Naomi K. Caselli, "Deaf Children Need Language, Not (Just) Speech," *SAGE Journal,* Available at https://doi.org/10.1177/0142723719834102 >Accessed on 25th February 2022.

Audiology and Speech Pathology

Audiology and Speech Pathology are allied health-related career fields of study concerned primarily with human communication systems, structures, growth, development, and difficulties. Audiology is the aspect of health science that deals with the hearing mechanism, psychophysical measurement of the reception and perception of acoustic stimuli, determination of hearing functions and problems(whether real or imagined, peripheral or central), as well as detection and rehabilitation of hearing difficulties.[17] In practice, Audiology utilizes a mechanism known as audiometry, through varied batteries of tests which include measurement of the speech intelligibility and measurement of various other functions connected with hearing.

Speech pathology, on the other hand, involves the study of, diagnosis and management of disorders (difficulties) related to speech, language, and swallowing.[18] This career field of study deals with the evaluation of any kind of communication and swallowing difficulties as well as the rehabilitation of patient with the identified difficulties not amenable to medical or surgical treatment. The teaching and learning of these allied health-related career fields of study will, to a large extent, provide the basic knowledge and techniques needed toward detecting and managing communication in any classroom setting. Also, this study has been designed to equip the student with the required skills, and the understanding of the strategies toward identification, determination, and rehabilitation of any identified human communication.

This course helps to understand the relationship between hearing and speech/language in human communication. It also helps to develop empathic spirit toward persons with special.

[17] Sebastian Hoth and Izet Baljić, "Current Audiological Diagnostics," *GMS Curr Top Otorhinolaryngol Head Neck Surg.* 16, (2017); Sarah Michelle Thompson, "Evaluation of Malingering Characteristics and Strategies During Hearing Assessment," (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Northern Colorado, 2017): 30–53.

[18] James Law, Jane A. Denis, and Jenna J.V Charlton, "Speech and Language Therapy Interventions for Children with Primary Speech and/or Language Disorders," *Cochrane Database Syst Rev.* 1, (2017).

Physical Exceptionalities

Physical exceptionalities are the kinds of severe physical limitations or deficiencies which prevent people from normal motor functions and learning. Children with any of the physical exceptionalities may require special equipment and assistance to enjoy learning.[19] In some cases, persons with physical exceptionalities might have other disabilities limiting their functional performance and such conditions might include intellectual disorder, learning disabilities, visual, and/or communication difficulties. In addition, some of them manifest some medical conditions which might include epilepsy, asthma, convulsion, diabetes, and sickle cell anemia. When an individual has several/different types of disability, professionals refer to it as multiple disabilities.[20] The teaching and Learning of these exceptionalities would help expose the teacher to the several types and nature of these conditions. It would also orientate students with varied preventive and management options in providing special assistance and opportunity for the affected individual to gain access to educational achievement equivalent to that of a person without any form of exceptionalities who are of the same development level.[21] The aim of this course is to expose students to various kinds of physical exceptionalities such as neurological impairment, orthopedic impairments, and other health impairments. It helps to develop requisite knowledge and skills in

[19] Olanrewaju Adebisi Rufus, Nalado Abubakar Liman, Patricia Kwalzoom Longpoe, "Using Assistive Technology in Teaching Children with Learning Disabilities in the 21st Century," *Journal of Education and Practice* 6, No. 24 (2015): 1–8.

[20] yard G. Evans, "Mental Health Counselors Working with Individuals with Developmental Disabilities: A Phenomenological Investigation," (PhD Thesis,University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, 2017): 12–13; Beth N. Oluka and Gloria O. Okorie, "Impacts of Counselling On People with Special Educational Needs," *IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME)* 4, no. 6 (November–Decēmber. 2014): 97–100; Susan Stuntzner and Michael T. Hartley, Disability and the Counseling Relationship: What Counselors Need to Know, *American Counselling Assoc.* (Paper based on a Program Presented at the American Counseling Association Conference, March 27–30, Honolulu, HI), (2014): 1–12.

[21] Cheyanne Maree Fannan, "Teaching Strategies for Students with Exceptionalities in the Secondary Art Classroom with a Focus on Students with Autism, Down Syndrome, and Visual Impairment," (Diss. Thesis, University of Central Florida, 2017): 5–12; John Dunlosky et al., "Improving Students' Learning With Effective Learning Techniques: Promising Directions From Cognitive and Educational Psychology," *Psychological Science Journal* 14, no. 1 (2013): 26–30.

identifying and classifying individuals with physical exceptionalities appropriately. Assist individuals with physical exceptionalities to learn how to be adjusted in life, and/or receive appropriate rehabilitation. To provide a mechanism to help parents of children with physical exceptionalities to become skillful in order to assist their wards toward getting appropriate management and educational/viz-a-viz vocational placements.

Communication Options for Deaf or Hard of Hearing

There are a variety of communication options available for a child who is Deaf or hard of hearing. Below is a brief description of the various communication options:

Oral Method
This method utilizes speech reading (lip-reading) and the maximal use of a child's residual hearing for the development and production of speech.[22] The premise behind this method is that a child who is Deaf or hard of hearing will be able to communicate more effectively with hearing individuals.

Cued Speech Method
This facilitates lip-reading by having the speaker simultaneously use hand gestures while speaking to help the listener visually distinguish between similar-looking sounds on the speaker's lips.

Manual Communication Methods
This method helps the child to communicate through visual stimuli such as finger spelling and sign language. American Sign Language (ASL) is composed of positions and gestures made with hands, body, and facial expressions to convey abstract concepts as with any spoken language.[23]

[22] Helen N Michaud and Louise Duchesne, "Aural Rehabilitation for Older Adults with Hearing Loss: Impacts on Quality of Life-A Systematic Review of Randomized Controlled Trials," 28, no. 7 (2017): 596-609; Alison M. Harding, "Speech and Hearing Professionals' Perspectives on Providing Aural Rehabilitation Services to Adults with hearing loss in Alberta," (Diss. Thesis, University of Alberta, 2017): 76–85; Jill E. Preminger, "Issues Associated With the Measurement of Psychosocial Benefits of Group Audiologic Rehabilitation Programs," *SAGE Journal* 11, no. 2 (2007): 113–123.

[23] L. Jing, X. Yang, Y. Tian, "Video You only Look Once: Overall Temporal Convolutions for Action Recognition," *Journal of Visual Communication and Image*

Manual English uses many of the traditional ASL signs while maintaining the English word order and grammar to develop a child's ability to read and write English. Examples are: Seeing Essential English (SEE), Signing Exact English (SEEII), and Signed English. Fingerspelling augments most sign language systems by using hand shapes to code the letters of the alphabets as well as numbers. Words are spelled out by using these individual letter codes.

Understanding Intellectual Disabilities and Learning Difficulties

This course is aimed at developing people's understanding, knowledge, and perception of intellectual and (neuro) developmental disabilities; exploring the basic facts about the causes of disabilities, including historical and contemporary concepts and models of disability, implications of terminologies such as the use of intellectual disabilities, learning disabilities, and ways to support individuals.

Spiritual, Cultural, and Scientific Perspectives on Mental Health Conditions

This course is aimed at exploring the historical, medical, and contemporary definitions of mental health and how policy and practice have changed over time; simultaneously illuminating the intricate yet close connection between spirituality and mental health from various perspectives.[24] It also develops an understanding of the way spiritual/religious and medical interpretations of mental health and illness influence the

Representation 52, (2018): 58–65; N.C. Camgoz et al., "Neural Sign Language Translation. CVPR 2018 Proceedings (2018); Cui, R., Liu, H., C. Zhang, "Recurrent Convolutional Neural Networks for Continuous Sign Language Recognition by Staged Optimization," In: IEEE Conference on Computer Vision and Pattern Recognition (CVPR) (2017); Diba, A., Fayyaz, et al.,:Temporal 3D ConvNets: New Architecture and Transfer Learning for Video Classification, "ArXiv e-prints (2017); M. Huenerfauth, "Evaluation of Language Feedback Methods for Student Videos of American Sign Language," *ACM Transactions on Accessible Computing (TACCESS)* 10, no. 1 (2017): 2; A. Er-Rady et al., "Automatic Sign Language Recognition: A Survey," In*: Proceedings of the 3rd International Conference on Advanced Technologies for Signal and Image Processing* (2017).

[24] Carla Moleiro, "Culture and Psychopathology: New Perspectives on Research, Practice, and Clinical Training in a Globalized World," *Front. Psychiatry* 10 (August 2018): 1.

experience of mental illness, the diagnosis, and the variety of treatments people access.

Inclusion and Participation of Disabled People in Education and Society (ISDS902)

This course is aimed at exploring factors and processes that lead to social and educational exclusion of disabled people in our society; exploring legislation/policies in relation to disability and their practical and cultural implications for disabled people, reflecting on ways in which the lives of disabled people might be improved in the ways they are supported.[25]

Recommendations

The paper recommended the disabilities courses be fully incorporated into the curriculum of the Nigerian Law School and generally the legal education at all levels. This is necessary to ensure that a level playing ground is given to all citizenry irrespective of their body makeup.

Secondly, there will be equal representations in court.

The government should grant scholarships to the best among PWDs to further their studies within and outside Nigeria.

Nigerian policymakers should emphasize the need for the establishment of a nondiscriminatory educational system as a matter of policy priority, and also as a means to guarantee fundamental human rights for all individuals with disabilities as a matter of social justice.

That an explicit concerted effort is made by the Nigerian Law School to ensure that PWDs are included in all its programs and activities.

Conclusion

This chapter traces the history of the Nigerian Law School courses from 1960 till the very moment. It has also been able to identify an obvious

[25] Mercy M. Mugambi, "Approaches to Inclusive Education and Implications for Curriculum Theory and Practice," *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)* 4, no. 10 (October 2017): 92–106;: Anna Cecilia Rapp & Anabel Corral-Granados, "Understanding Inclusive Education, theoretical Contribution from System Theory and the Constructionist Perspective," *International Journal of Inclusive Education* (2021) Available at (Online) Journal homepage: https://www.tandfonline.com/loi/tied2020 Accessed on 25th February 2022.

loophole in Nigeria's Legal Education. Furthermore, it has discussed the impact of the absence of teaching of the disabilities' courses in the curriculum of the Nigerian Law School. Hence, the urgent need to scale up disability inclusion in all levels of the education system, particularly in the legal education curriculum.