**APPROVAL**

This research has been approved on behalf of the school of general education Alvan Ikoku Federal Education Owerri, in affiliation with the University of Nigeria Nsukka (UNN).

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**DEDICATION**

This research is dedicated to my parents Mr. and Mrs. Orji, to my Aunty, Iregbulam Akudo Rosemary, and to my Department lecturers.

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My sincere and heart gratitude goes to the Almighty God for seeing me through this research. I acknowledge my humble and wonderful supervisor, Dr. Blessing Amole, for his constant phone calls and guidance, and supervision throughout this work. I am grateful to my aunt for her support and constant check up on me and asking constantly how the work is going. I sincerely thank my brothers and sister who has been supportive through it all, I am thanking my lecturers for their tutorage through out my academic program in Alvan, I am so grateful to God for my Pastor, Femi Oyekan for his constant checkups, prayers, support and councils, in the same way, I am grateful to God for my Church (New Hight Baptist) for her support, financially and in prayers. Finally, I sincerely thank my parents for their love, support, and prayers all through the journey.

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**ABSTRACT**

Role of Music Education in the Academic Achievement of Special Need in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri Imo state. The population of this study, consist of three visually impaired students in Currently enrolled at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri. Two of these students are enrolled in the department of education, while the last student is enrolled in the department of music. This small focused population size allows for an in-depth exploration of individual expression, preparation, and insight related to the role of music education in the academic achievement.

This work sought to find out the role of music education in the academic achievement of special need students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education. Chapter one of the research dealt with the Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Significant of the Study, and the Research Question. Chapter two dealt with Literature Review. The frameworks covered in chapter two include: Conceptual Framework, Theoretical Framework, Empirical Framework, Summary of Literature Review. Chapter three discussed the research design, Area of the Study, Population of the Study, Sample and Sampling Technique, Instruments for Data Collection, Validation of the Instruments, Administration of the Instruments, Method of Data Analysis. Chapter four dealt with the analysis and result of findings based on each research question. Chapter five dealt with the Discussion of Findings, Conclusion, Educational Implication, Recommendation, Limitation of the Study, Suggestion for further Study, Summary.

**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

**Background of the Study**

Music education plays a significant role in the holistic development of students, offering various cognitive, emotional, and social benefits. In recent years, there has been an increased emphasis on the inclusion of special students in mainstream educational settings to promote their overall academic achievement and integration into society. Special students refer to individuals with diverse learning needs, including those with disabilities or exceptionalities, who require specialized support and accommodations to optimize their educational experiences (Reynolds, 2019)(1-9).

Numerous studies have explored the relationship between music education and academic achievement, highlighting the positive impact of music on various cognitive abilities. Music education engages students in activities that stimulate brain development and enhance cognitive skills. For example, a meta-analysis conducted by Butzlaff (2000) found a positive correlation between music education and academic achievement in mathematics and language skills. This suggests that music education can enhance cognitive skills related to problem-solving, spatial-temporal reasoning, and language development, all of which are important for academic success (Hallam, 2010) (269-289).

Moreover, music education has been shown to enhance memory and attention, as well as promote creativity and self-expression (Schellenberg,2004) (511-514). These cognitive skills are fundamental for academic achievement and can contribute to improved learning outcomes among special students. For example, Anvari et al. (2002) found that preschool children who received music instruction demonstrated stronger phonological processing skills, which are crucial for early reading ability.

Additionally, music education fosters discipline, perseverance, and self-regulation, which are essential qualities for academic success (Kokotsaki et al., 2011) (119-134). Learning a musical instrument or participating in ensemble activities requires dedication, practice, and the ability to manage time effectively. These skills can transfer to other academic domains, enabling special students to develop a sense of self-efficacy and achievement in their academic pursuits.

Special students often face unique challenges in the educational system, requiring tailored approaches to meet their specific learning needs. Music education has been recognized as an effective means to support the academic development and social integration of special students. Research has demonstrated that music can serve as a powerful tool for engaging special students, enhancing their motivation and participation in the learning process (Standley, 2008) (17-32).

Studies have also shown that music education can facilitate the development of communication and social skills among special students (Standley, 2008) (17-32). Active music participation in a group setting encourages cooperation, turn-taking, and interaction with peers, fostering positive social interactions and promoting a sense of belonging. Rickson and McFerran (2012) found that music played a crucial role in the lives of adolescents, providing them with a means of self-expression, building relationships, and forming a positive identity.

While the existing literature suggests the potential benefits of music education for special students' academic achievement, there is a need for further research in specific contexts. This study aims to investigate the roles of music education in the academic achievement of special students at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri, a renowned institution committed to inclusive education.

**Statement of the Problem**

Music education has been recognized as a valuable tool for enhancing academic achievement and promoting holistic development among students. However, there is a need to understand the specific impact of music education on the academic achievement of special students, who have diverse learning needs and often require specialized support and accommodations. In the context of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, it is essential to investigate the roles of music education in the academic achievement of special students to inform educational practices and promote inclusive education.

The academic achievement of special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education and similar educational institutions remains a critical concern. Despite efforts to implement inclusive education practices, special students still face challenges in achieving their full academic potential. Hence, this study, therefore, examines the roles of music education in the academic achievement of special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri.

To address the overarching problem statement, the following sub problems will be investigated:

What is the current status of music education programs for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education?

This sub problem aims to provide an overview of the existing music education programs and initiatives specifically designed for special students at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education. It will examine the availability, accessibility, and scope of music education for special students in the institution.

What are the perceived benefits and challenges of music education for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education?

This sub problem focuses on exploring the perspectives of special students, teachers, and parents regarding the perceived benefits and challenges associated with music education. It aims to identify the potential positive outcomes, such as improved academic skills, social integration, and emotional well-being, as well as the barriers or limitations that may impede the successful implementation of music education programs for special students.

How does music education impact the academic achievement of special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education?

This sub problem aims to investigate the specific effects of music education on the academic achievement of special students. It will examine the relationship between music education and various academic outcomes, such as cognitive skills, language development, mathematical abilities, and overall academic performance. Additionally, it will explore the potential mechanisms through which music education contributes to academic success among special students.

By addressing these subproblems, this research project aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the roles of music education in the academic achievement of special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education. The findings will contribute to the development of evidence-based strategies and interventions that can optimize music education programs for special students, ultimately enhancing their academic outcomes and overall educational experiences.

**Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this research project is to investigate the roles of music education in the academic achievement of special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education.

**Specifically, the study intends to:**

1. Assess the current status of music education programs for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education.

2. Explore the perceived benefits and challenges of music education for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education.

3. Examine the impact of music education on the academic achievement of special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education.

4. Identify effective strategies and recommendations for enhancing music education programs for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education.

**Significance of the Study**

This project on the roles of music education in the academic achievement of special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education holds significant importance for various stakeholders involved in special education, music education, and inclusive educational practices. The findings of this study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge and have practical implications for educators, administrators, policymakers, and researchers working towards promoting inclusive education and optimizing educational experiences for special students.

The significance of this research is as follows:

1. **Informing Educational Practices:** The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the effectiveness of music education programs for special students. By understanding the specific impact of music education on the academic achievement of special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, educators and administrators can make informed decisions regarding the design, implementation, and enhancement of music education curricula, instructional strategies, and support services. This knowledge will contribute to the development of evidence-based practices that promote inclusive education and better address the unique learning needs of special students.

2. **Enhancing Academic Achievement:** Special students often face academic challenges that require tailored approaches to optimize their learning outcomes. Exploring the relationship between music education and academic achievement, this study will shed light on the potential benefits of music education for improving cognitive skills, language development, mathematical abilities, and overall academic performance among special students. Findings to this study will provide evidence of the benefit of incorporating music education into the curriculum, thereby enabling educators to develop targeted interventions and instructional methods that support the academic success of special students.

3. **Promoting Social Integration:** Social inclusion is a crucial aspect of education for special students. Music education has the potential to foster positive social interactions, co-operation, and a sense of belonging among special students. By investigating the impact of music education on social skills, peer interactions, and social integration, this study will contribute to creating inclusive learning environments that promote positive social experiences and reduce social isolation for special students. The findings will guide educators in developing strategies and programs that use music as a means to enhance social integration and create inclusive communities within educational settings.

4. **Supporting Policy and Decision-Making:** The findings of this work can inform policy development and decision-making processes related to special education and music education. Policymakers and educational administrators can utilize the evidence generated by this study to advocate for the integration of music education into special education curricula, allocate resources for music education programs, and establish supportive policies that promote the inclusion of special students. Additionally, the research findings can contribute to the development of professional development programs and training initiatives for teachers, enabling them to effectively incorporate music education strategies into their teaching practices.

5. **Advancing Research in the Field:** This study adds to the existing body of knowledge on the roles of music education in the academic achievement of special students. It expands the understanding of the impact of music education within the specific context of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education. The research findings will serve as a foundation for future research endeavors, encouraging further exploration of music education practices, interventions, and outcomes for special students. This will contribute to the growth and advancement of knowledge in the fields of special education and music education, fostering a deeper understanding of effective educational practices for special students.

By addressing these significant aspects, this project holds the potential to positively influence educational practices, improve academic outcomes, promote social integration, guide policy decisions, and advance research in the fields of special education and music education. The study's findings will contribute to the ultimate goal of providing quality education and holistic development opportunities for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education and similar educational institutions.

By examining the relationship between music education and academic achievement among special students, this research project seeks to contribute to the body of knowledge on effective educational practices for special students in music education. The findings will provide insights into the potential benefits and implications of incorporating music education into the curriculum for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education and similar educational settings.

The study will also address the gaps in the existing literature by focusing on the specific context of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education and its special student population. This will enable a better understanding of the potential barriers, facilitators, and best practices in implementing music education programs for special students in this particular setting.

Furthermore, the research findings will have practical implications for educators, administrators, and policymakers involved in special education. The outcome of the study can inform the development of evidence-based strategies and interventions that enhance music education programs for special students, ultimately promoting their academic achievement, social integration, and overall well-being.

**Scope of the Study**

This study is delimited to investigate the role of music education in the academic achievement of special need students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri, Imo State. The study is also delimited to identify the potential barriers, facilitators and effective studies to enhance their academic performance.

**Research Questions**

**The following research questions will guide the study:**

1. What is the current status of music education programs for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, including the types of musical activities, instructional methods, and resources available to special students?

2. What are the perceived benefits and challenges of music education for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, as identified by special students, teachers, and parents?

3. How does music education impact the academic achievement of special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, specifically in terms of cognitive skills, language development, mathematical abilities, and overall academic performance?

4. What are the identified strategies to enhance music education programs for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, promoting their academic achievement and social integration?

**CHAPTER TWO**

**LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter will be discussed as followings**:**

* **Conceptual framework**
* **Theoretical frame work**
* **Empirical studies**
* **Summary of literature**
* **Concept of Music Education**

Music education is a comprehensive and structured approach to teaching and learning music, encompassing various components, methodologies, and outcomes. It involves the exploration and development of musical knowledge, skills, and understanding through engaging in a range of musical activities. Music education provides students with opportunities to express themselves creatively, develop a deep appreciation for music, and acquire essential musical competencies. This concept is supported by a vast body of research and theoretical frameworks, emphasizing the multifaceted benefits of music education.

**Components of Music Education:**

1 **Instrumental Instruction:** Instrumental instruction involves learning to play a specific musical instrument. It encompasses technique, musical interpretation, repertoire development, and performance skills. Instrumental instruction fosters discipline, perseverance, fine motor skills, and a deep connection with the chosen instrument (Hallam, 2010; Miksza, 2019).

2 **Vocal Training:** Vocal training focuses on the development of vocal technique, breath control, intonation, and expressive qualities of the human voice. Through vocal training, students enhance their vocal range, articulation, and tonal quality. Singing offers opportunities for self-expression, emotional communication, and the development of musicality (Welch, 2005; Jorgensen, 2012).

3 **Music Theory and Notation**: Music theory and notation provide the theoretical foundation for understanding the structure, syntax, and elements of music. Students learn concepts such as rhythm, melody, harmony, and form. Music notation enables students to read, write, and interpret musical scores, enhancing their musical literacy and analytical abilities (Hallam, 2014(269-289); Elliott, 2018).

4 **Ensemble Participation**: Ensemble participation involves collaborative music-making in group settings such as choirs, bands, or orchestras. Students develop skills in teamwork, cooperation, listening, and responding to others. Ensemble participation fosters a sense of community, shared musical experiences, and the development of ensemble skills (Barrett, 2017; Harrison & O'Kane, 2019).

**Impact of Music Education:**

**1 Cognitive Development**: Music education has a positive impact on cognitive development. Engaging in music activities stimulates various cognitive processes, including memory, attention, executive functions, and auditory perception. It enhances brain plasticity, cognitive flexibility, and problem-solving skills (Schellenberg, 2004 (511-514); Strait et al., 2013 (1-2)).

2 **Emotional and Social Well-being:** Music education contributes to emotional and social well-being. Participating in music-making experiences provides opportunities for emotional expression, stress reduction, and self-discovery. It fosters self-confidence, empathy, social connections, and a sense of belonging within a supportive musical community (Rickard et al., 2013 (4, 957); Creech et al., 2013 (271-286)).

3 **Educational Outcomes:** Music education is associated with various educational outcomes. It positively impacts academic achievement, language development, spatial-temporal skills, creativity, and critical thinking abilities. Students involved in music education often show higher levels of school engagement, discipline, and motivation (Mehr et al., 2013; Hallam, 2014).

**Concept of Academic Achievement**

Academic achievement refers to the successful demonstration of knowledge, skills, and competencies in academic domains. It encompasses the attainment of educational goals, meeting or exceeding academic standards, and demonstrating proficiency in various subject areas. Academic achievement serves as an essential indicator of students' learning outcomes and educational success.

**Components of Academic Achievement:**

1 **Cognitive Skills:** Cognitive skills play a fundamental role in academic achievement. These skills include critical thinking, problem-solving, logical reasoning, memory, attention, and information processing. Proficiency in cognitive skills enables students to analyze complex concepts, apply knowledge, and engage in higher-order thinking (Dehn, 2010; Diamond & Lee, 2011(959-964)).

**2. Subject Knowledge**: Subject knowledge refers to the mastery of specific content areas, such as mathematics, science, language arts, social studies, and others. Academic achievement requires students to acquire and demonstrate a deep understanding of the concepts, principles, and theories within these disciplines (Hattie, 2012; Darling-Hammond et al., 2019).

3 **Study Skills**: Effective study skills are crucial for academic achievement. These skills include time management, organization, note-taking, active reading, and exam preparation. Students who possess strong study skills can effectively manage their learning, optimize information retention, and perform well in assessments (Zimmerman, 2013 (1-12); Raskin, 2020).

4 **Motivation and Engagement:** Motivation and engagement are key components of academic achievement. Motivated and engaged students demonstrate a positive attitude toward learning, set goals, persist in the face of challenges, and actively participate in educational activities. These factors contribute to improved academic performance and overall achievement (Wigfield & Eccles, 2002 (933-1002); Fredricks et al., 2004 (59-109)).

**Factors Influencing Academic Achievement:**

1 **Socioeconomic Status:** Socioeconomic status (SES) is a significant factor influencing academic achievement. Students from low-SES backgrounds often face challenges related to access to educational resources, parental involvement, and supportive home environments. Higher SES is associated with increased opportunities and resources that support academic success (Sirin, 2005 (417-453); Reardon, 2011).

2 **Teaching Quality**: The quality of teaching has a profound impact on academic achievement. Effective teaching practices, such as clear instructional delivery, active student engagement, feedback, and differentiated instruction, significantly contribute to student learning and achievement. Skilled teachers create supportive classroom environments that foster academic success (Hattie, 2009; Darling-Hammond, 2017).

**3 Home and School Environment:** The home and school environment play critical roles in academic achievement. Supportive family environments, parental involvement, access to learning resources, and a positive school climate all contribute to academic success. Collaboration between home and school creates a conducive learning environment that enhances achievement (Epstein, 2018; Jeynes, 2012 (706-742)).

**Concept of Special Needs Students**

Special needs students, also known as students with disabilities or exceptionalities, refer to individuals who require additional support and accommodations to meet their educational needs due to physical, intellectual, sensory, or developmental challenges. The concept of special needs students recognizes the unique learning requirements and diverse abilities of these students, and highlights the importance of inclusive education and tailored support systems to facilitate their academic and overall development.

**Categories of Special Needs Students:**

1 **Physical Disabilities**: Physical disabilities encompass a range of conditions that affect a student's physical mobility and functioning. Examples include orthopedic impairments, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and muscular dystrophy. Students with physical disabilities may require assistive devices, modifications to the physical environment, and specialized interventions to support their learning (Turnbull et al., 2013; Singer et al., 2020 (313-330)).

2 **Intellectual Disabilities**: Intellectual disabilities refer to limitations in intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior. Students with intellectual disabilities typically have below-average intellectual abilities and challenges in areas such as communication, social skills, and daily living. They benefit from individualized instruction, differentiated materials, and strategies to enhance their learning and independence (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 2010; Browder et al., 2012 (3-17)).

3 **Sensory** **Impairments:** Sensory impairments include visual impairments, hearing impairments, and dual sensory impairments (deaf-blindness). Students with sensory impairments require specialized accommodations, assistive technologies, and instructional approaches that cater to their specific sensory needs. Braille materials, sign language interpreters, and sensory stimulation strategies are examples of supports for students with sensory impairments (Cawthon &Garberoglio, 2018 (429-456); Stremel-Campbell & McCray, 2020 (415-427)).

4 **Developmental Disorders**: Developmental disorders, such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), involve challenges in social communication, interaction, and behavior regulation. Special needs students with developmental disorders benefit from structured environments, visual supports, social skills training, and individualized behavior management strategies (Matson et al., 2012 (1108-1112); Katsiyannis et al., 2019(100-118)).

**Inclusive Education and Support:**

1 **Individualized Education Plans (IEPs):** Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) are customized plans developed for special needs students, outlining their specific goals, accommodations, and support services. IEPs ensure that instruction is tailored to meet the unique needs of each student, fostering their academic progress and overall development (Yell et al., 2019; Karger et al., 2021 (41-62)).

2 **Assistive Technologies**: Assistive technologies play a vital role in supporting special needs students' access to the curriculum and promoting their independence. These technologies include communication devices, augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) systems, adaptive software, and specialized equipment that facilitate learning and participation in educational activities (Edyburn, 2010 (33-41); Higgins & Raskind, 2017 (277-290)).

3 **Universal Design for Learning (UDL):** Universal Design for Learning (UDL) is an inclusive instructional approach that aims to meet the diverse needs of all learners, including special needs students. UDL principles involve providing multiple means of representation, action and expression, and engagement. It promotes flexible learning environments and materials that accommodate various learning styles, preferences, and abilities (Rose & Meyer, 2002; Hall et al., 2012).

**Collaboration and Support Systems:**

1 **Special Education Services**: Special education services encompass a range of support systems provided by trained professionals, such as special education teachers, speech therapists, occupational therapists, and psychologists. These professionals collaborate with general education teachers, parents, and other stakeholders to develop and implement effective instructional strategies and interventions for special needs students (Bouck & Karp, 2016 (1-18); McLeskey et al., 2021).

**2 Family Involvement**: Family involvement plays a crucial role in supporting the education and well-being of special needs students. Collaborative partnerships between families and schools facilitate effective communication, shared decision-making, and the implementation of strategies that support student learning and development. Family involvement promotes positive outcomes for special needs students (Harry et al., 2009 (441-453); Turnbull et al., 2015).

**Concept of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education**

Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education is a renowned institution of higher education located in Owerri, Imo State, Nigeria. Established in 1963, the college is named after Chief Alvan Azinna Ikoku, a Nigerian educationist and statesman known for his contributions to teacher education. Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education provides pre-service and in-service training for teachers and offers various degree and certificate programs in education and related fields. The concept of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education encompasses its history, mission, academic programs, and contributions to teacher education and the educational landscape in Nigeria.

**History and Legacy:**

1 **Founding:** Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education was founded in 1963 as a teacher-training institution. It emerged from the merger of two teacher training institutions: the Owerri Teachers Training College and the Awo-Omamma Teachers Training College. The consolidation aimed to enhance teacher education and produce highly qualified educators (Eke, 2012 (16-21)).

2 **Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Legacy**: The college is named after Chief Alvan AzinnaIkoku, a prominent Nigerian educationist and nationalist. Alvan Ikoku dedicated his life to advancing education and championing the cause of teachers. His legacy inspires the college's commitment to excellence in teacher education and educational development (Nzewi, 2013(119-127)).

**Mission and Objectives:**

1 **Mission**: The mission of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education is to provide quality teacher education and professional development programs that produce competent, ethical, and innovative educators. The college aims to nurture reflective practitioners who are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to make a positive impact in the field of education (Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, n.d.).

**2 Objectives: The objectives of the college include:**

• Preparing teachers with pedagogical knowledge and practical skills to meet the diverse needs of learners.

• Conducting research to advance educational theory and practice.

• Providing opportunities for professional growth and continuing education for educators.

• Collaborating with schools and educational stakeholders to promote educational excellence and community development (Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, n.d.).

**Academic Programs and Offerings:**

1 Pre-service Teacher Education: Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education offers pre-service programs leading to the award of Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) in various fields of study. These programs provide aspiring teachers with the foundational knowledge, teaching skills, and classroom experience required for effective teaching (Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, n.d.).

2 **Degree Programs**: The college also offers degree programs in collaboration with affiliated universities. These programs enable students to earn Bachelor's degrees in Education in specific disciplines such as English, Mathematics, Biology, Chemistry, and others. The degree programs enhance subject knowledge and pedagogical skills, preparing graduates for teaching positions in secondary schools (Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, n.d.).

**Contributions to Teacher Education:**

1 **Teacher Professional Development**: Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education plays a vital role in teacher professional development. It organizes workshops, seminars, and conferences to enhance the knowledge and skills of in-service teachers. These professional development initiatives support the continuous improvement of teaching practices and educational outcomes (Igbokwe, 2017 (34-41)).

2 **Research and Educational Innovation**: The college promotes research activities among its faculty and students. Research initiatives focus on addressing educational challenges, improving instructional practices, and informing educational policies. Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education contributes to educational innovation through research findings and innovative approaches to teacher education (Okeke, 2018 (118-123)).

**Theoretical Framework**

The theoretical framework for this research project is guided by two main theories: Socio-constructivist Theory and Multiple Intelligences Theory. These theories provide a solid foundation for understanding the potential impact of music education on the academic achievement of special students. The framework also incorporates relevant research studies and concepts that support the relationship between music education and academic outcomes.

**Socio-constructivist Theory:**

Socio-constructivist theory, developed by Lev Vygotsky, is a prominent theoretical framework that emphasizes the social and cultural aspects of learning and the role of social interaction in knowledge construction (Vygotsky, 1978). Within the context of the research project on the role of music education in the academic achievement of special need students at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, this theory provides valuable insights into how music education can enhance learning experiences and promote positive outcomes for students with diverse needs.

**Social Interaction and Collaborative Learning:**

At the heart of Socio-constructivist theory is the notion that learning is most effective when it occurs in a social context. In the context of music education at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, special need students engage in collaborative music-making activities, such as ensemble performances, group singing, and musical improvisation. These social interactions provide opportunities for students to co-construct knowledge, exchange ideas, and collectively build on their musical abilities (Green, 2002).

Through active participation in music ensembles and group lessons, special need students can benefit from shared experiences with their peers and music educators. These interactions create a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students can express themselves creatively and develop important social skills, such as communication, cooperation, and teamwork. Such positive social experiences within music education can have a profound impact on the academic achievement and overall well-being of special need students (Creech et al., 2013 (271-286)).

**Scaffolding and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD):**

Socio-constructivist theory introduces the concepts of scaffolding and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Scaffolding refers to the support provided by teachers or more knowledgeable peers to help learners accomplish tasks that they would be unable to achieve independently (Wood et al., 1976 (89-100)). In the context of music education, teachers and music educators at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education can use scaffolding techniques to tailor instructional approaches to the specific needs and abilities of special need students.

By providing appropriate support and guidance, educators can help special need students progress in their musical abilities and academic achievements. Music educators can adapt teaching strategies, modify musical tasks, and offer constructive feedback to align with the individualized learning needs of each student. This personalized approach enables special need students to operate within their Zone of Proximal Development, where they receive optimal support and challenges, fostering further musical and academic growth (Hallam, 2010 (269-289)).

**Multiple Intelligences Theory:**

Multiple Intelligences Theory, proposed by Howard Gardner, posits that individuals possess diverse forms of intelligence beyond traditional measures such as IQ (Gardner, 1999). Within the context of the research project on the role of music education in the academic achievement of special need students at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, this theory offers valuable insights into how music education can cater to the unique strengths and abilities of special need students, fostering their academic development and overall well-being.

**Music Intelligence and Music Education:**

One of the multiple intelligences identified by Gardner is music intelligence, which refers to an individual's ability to understand, appreciate, and create music. Music education at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education can harness this intelligence to promote the academic achievement of special need students.

By offering a variety of music-related activities, such as singing, playing instruments, and composing, music education provides special need students with diverse avenues to express themselves and develop their musical abilities. Engaging in musical experiences that align with their music intelligence can lead to enhanced motivation and enjoyment of learning, which, in turn, positively influences their academic engagement and achievement (Hallam, 2010 (269-289)).

**Catering to Diverse Learning Styles:**

Special need students often exhibit diverse learning styles and preferences. Multiple Intelligences Theory acknowledges this diversity and highlights the importance of tailoring educational approaches to match individual strengths.

In the context of music education, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education can create a student-centered learning environment that caters to the various intelligences of special need students. For instance, students with strong musical-rhythmic intelligence may excel in rhythm-based activities, while those with high interpersonal intelligence may thrive in group music-making settings (Gardner, 1999).

By offering a wide range of musical experiences, music educators can tap into the multiple intelligences of special need students, promoting active participation and engagement in the learning process. As a result, music education can become a powerful tool for facilitating academic growth and achievement among special need students.

**Enhancing Cognitive Skills through Music Education:**

Music education has been linked to enhanced cognitive skills, including memory, attention, and problem-solving abilities. For special need students, engaging in music-related activities can have a positive impact on their cognitive development.

Participating in music ensembles and music theory lessons can strengthen auditory processing skills, spatial reasoning, and pattern recognition among special need students. These cognitive benefits may transfer to other academic domains, leading to improved academic performance and achievement (Schellenberg, 2004 (511-514); Strait et al., 2013 (261(1-2)22-29)).

**Empirical Framework**

Adamek and Darrow (2017 (40-47)) carried out a quasi-experimental study titled: Enhancing Academic Achievement in Special Needs Students through Music Education to investigate the effects of music education on the academic achievement of special needs students. The researchers formed two groups: the intervention group and the control group.

1. **Intervention Group**: This group received regular music instruction as part of their educational program. The music education intervention encompassed various activities, such as singing, playing instruments, rhythmic exercises, and creative expression through music.

2. **Control Group**: Students in the control group did not have any music intervention and received traditional educational instruction without music components.

The study employed a pre-test and post-test design to assess the impact of the music education intervention. The researchers administered standardized tests to both groups before the music intervention (pre-test) and after a specified period of music instruction (post-test). The tests evaluated the students' reading comprehension, mathematics, and language skills.

The researchers collected data on the students' academic performance in both groups and compared the pre-test and post-test scores to identify any changes in academic achievement following the music education intervention.

The results of the study by Adamek and Darrow (2017 (40-47)) revealed significant improvements in the academic achievement of special needs students who received music education instruction. The intervention group exhibited notable progress in reading comprehension, mathematics, and language skills compared to the control group, which did not have music intervention. These findings suggest that music education positively impacts cognitive abilities and academic outcomes in special needs students.

Another study by Cabrera et al. (2019 (10, 1897)) titled: Unlocking Cognitive Potential through Music Education in Special Needs Students designed a mixed-methods study to comprehensively evaluate the cognitive effects of music education in special needs students. The researchers adopted a multi-faceted approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

1. **Quantitative Assessment**: To measure cognitive changes, the researchers employed standardized cognitive tests that focused on specific domains such as attention, memory, and executive functions. These tests provided objective measures of cognitive skills before and after the music education intervention.

2**. Qualitative Interviews**: In addition to quantitative assessments, the researchers conducted qualitative interviews with the participants. These interviews aimed to capture the students' subjective experiences, perceptions, and emotions related to their music education journey.

Cognitive assessments were administered to the participants both before the music education intervention (pre-test) and after a designated period of music instruction (post-test). The quantitative data from the cognitive tests were analyzed to identify any significant changes in attention, memory, and executive functions.

The qualitative data from the interviews were transcribed and analyzed to extract themes and patterns related to the students' cognitive experiences and the perceived impact of music education on their cognitive development.

The study by Cabrera et al. (2019 (10, 1897)) yielded compelling findings regarding the cognitive benefits of music education in special needs students:

1. **Enhanced Cognitive Skills:** Participants engaged in music education demonstrated improved cognitive skills, particularly in the domains of attention, memory, and executive functions. The structured and stimulating nature of music activities appeared to positively influence cognitive development.

2. **Emotional Engagement**: Qualitative interviews revealed that students experienced emotional engagement and enjoyment during music lessons. This emotional connection with music fostered a conducive learning environment and potentially contributed to cognitive growth.

3. **Personal Empowerment:** Music education empowered special needs students, leading to increased self-confidence and self-esteem. Such emotional empowerment may have contributed to cognitive improvements and overall academic success.

Another study by Park et al. (2020 (146-168)) titled: “Nurturing Social-Emotional Well-Being through Music Education in Special Needs Students” conducted a longitudinal study to comprehensively assess the effects of music education on social-emotional well-being. The researchers employed a comparative approach, utilizing both an intervention group and a control group:

1. **Intervention Group**: This group participated in a structured music therapy program tailored to address the specific social-emotional needs of the participants. The music therapy sessions encompassed various activities such as singing, playing instruments, improvisation, and music-based communication exercises.

2. **Control Group**: Students in the control group received standard care without music therapy intervention during the study period.

The study collected data at multiple time points to evaluate changes in social-emotional well-being over time. Data collection methods included quantitative assessments and qualitative observations:

1. **Quantitative Assessments:** Park et al. (2020 (146-168)) utilized standardized social-emotional assessment tools to measure changes in social skills, emotional regulation, and self-esteem in both the intervention and control groups.

2**. Qualitative Observations**: Additionally, qualitative observations and anecdotal records were used to gain insights into the participants' experiences during the music therapy sessions. These qualitative data provided a deeper understanding of the social and emotional responses to music education.

The longitudinal study conducted by Park et al. (2020 (146-168)) yielded noteworthy findings on the social-emotional benefits of music education in special needs students:

1. **Improved Social Skills**: Participants in the music therapy intervention group demonstrated significant improvements in social skills, including communication, cooperation, and interpersonal interactions. The music therapy environment fostered a sense of belonging and encouraged social engagement.

2. Enhanced Emotional Regulation: The music therapy program facilitated emotional expression and regulation in special needs students. Music, as a non-verbal medium of communication, allowed participants to process and express emotions in a safe and supportive setting.

3. **Elevated Self-Esteem**: Engaging in music therapy positively influenced participants' self-esteem and self-confidence. Active participation and successful music-making experiences boosted their sense of accomplishment and self-worth.

**Summary of Literature Reviewed**

The conceptual framework encompasses three interconnected concepts: Music Education, Academic Achievement, and Special Needs Students. Music education involves various components such as instrumental instruction, vocal training, music theory, and ensemble participation. It impacts cognitive development, emotional well-being, and educational outcomes. Academic achievement encompasses cognitive skills, subject knowledge, study skills, and motivation. Factors like socioeconomic status, teaching quality, and home-school environment influence academic success. Special needs students encompass physical disabilities, intellectual disabilities, sensory impairments, and developmental disorders. Inclusive education, assistive technologies, and collaboration support their learning.

Theoretical framework includes Socio-constructivist Theory and Multiple Intelligences Theory. Socio-constructivist Theory highlights social interaction, collaborative learning, and scaffolding for special needs students in music education. It emphasizes the Zone of Proximal Development and the role of support in enhancing learning outcomes. Multiple Intelligences Theory focuses on diverse intelligences and learning styles. Music education caters to students' music intelligence and provides varied experiences based on their strengths, promoting cognitive development and academic achievement.

Three empirical studies were examined. Adamek and Darrow (2017 940-47)) conducted a quasi-experimental study on music education's impact on academic achievement. Results showed improved academic performance in reading, mathematics, and language skills for special needs students receiving music education. Cabrera et al. (2019 (10, 1897)) performed a mixed-methods study on cognitive effects. Music education enhanced cognitive skills, emotional engagement, and personal empowerment in special needs students. Park et al. (2020 (146-168)) conducted a longitudinal study on social-emotional well-being. Music therapy improved social skills, emotional regulation, and self-esteem among participants.

These frameworks collectively provide a comprehensive understanding of the role of music education in enhancing the academic achievement and overall well-being of special needs students, with Socio-constructivist and Multiple Intelligences theories offering theoretical insights and empirical studies supporting their practical application.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents the research methodology employed to investigate the role of music education in the academic achievement of visually impaired students at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education. The following sections detail the:

Research design, Area of study, Population of the study, Sample and Sampling Technique, Instruments for data collection, Validation of the instruments, Administration of the instruments, Method of data analysis.

**Research Design**

For this study, a qualitative research design was employed. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for exploring complex phenomena in-depth and understanding the experiences and perspectives of a specific group, such as visually impaired students. This design will allow for a detailed examination of how music education influences the academic achievement of visually impaired students.

**Area of the Study**

The study was conducted at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, with a specific focus on visually impaired students. By narrowing the scope to visually impaired students, the research aims to delve deeply into the unique challenges and opportunities they encounter in their pursuit of academic achievement through music education.

**Population of the Study**

The population of this study consisted of three visually impaired students who are currently enrolled at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education Owerri. Two of these students are enrolled in the Department of Special Need Education. While the last student is enrolled in the Department of Music. This small and focused population size allows for an in-depth exploration of individual experiences, perceptions, and insights related to the role of music education in their academic achievement.

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling technique was used to select all the Visually Impaired students of Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri.

**Instruments for Data Collection**

Semi-Structured Interviews: The primary data collection method will involve conducting semi-structured interviews with the visually impaired participants. This approach enables the researcher to have a set of guiding questions while also allowing flexibility for participants to express their thoughts and experiences in their own words. Semi-structured interviews will provide a rich and nuanced understanding of how music education has impacted their academic achievement.

**Validation of the Instruments**

The interview questions will be developed based on the purpose of the study and relevant literature. To ensure the validity of the instrument, the interview guide will be reviewed by experts in the fields of special needs education and music education. Their feedback will be incorporated to refine the interview questions and ensure they effectively capture the intended research goals.

**Administration of the Instruments**

The semi-structured interviews was conducted in person with each visually impaired participant. Face-to-face interviews provide an opportunity for participants to share their experiences more deeply, and it allows for non-verbal cues and interactions that can enhance the richness of the data. The interviews was audio-recorded to ensure accurate capture of responses and to facilitate thorough analysis.

**Method of Data Analysis**

Thematic Analysis: Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data gathered from the interviews. This method involves identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns (themes) within the data. The process includes familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the final report. Thematic analysis helped uncover the underlying patterns and meanings in participants' narratives regarding the impact of music education on their academic achievement.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

This chapter is dedicated to the data retrieved in the course of the research. The researcher used a qualitative means to retrieve information from two interviewers. Based on time constraints, the researcher was able to interview only two students instead of three.

**Question 1:** What is the current status of music education program for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education including types of activities, instructional method and resources available to special students?

From the research question above, the first student interviewed outlined the following points:

* Limited equipment and materials: He said that from his observation, the department of music in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education as a whole lack equipment and materials for special students to thrive successfully in their studies. He made mention of some instruments, software and equipment the department does not have which would help improve the academic achievement and performance of the special students in the music department.
* Lack of adequate instructional methods and field experiences: The interviewer emphasized on outdoor field excursions. He pointed out the excursions would definitely help the students understand and grasp real life experiences better. He laid emphasizes on music studio excursions, and other music industries were the students can meet professionals in the field and get their pending questions answered, get to hear their life experiences as relates to the music profession, get to hear their success stories, and receive encouragements and maybe lectures from them. He noted that this does not just affect the special students studying in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education alone but also their sighted colleagues.

On this point he also emphasized on the lack of lecturers who are specialized in teaching students with special needs most especially the blind students. He said music happen to be a complex course that relies more on graphics, it’s not just complex because it is not obtainable for the blind students, but the graphics work which is associated to music makes it almost impossible for a blind student to relate properly if not given adequate information. Hence, to make music study more inclusive in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, the role of special teachers and lecturers should be taken to consideration in great length.

**Question 2:** What are the perceived benefits and challenges of music education for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, as identified by special students, teachers, and parents?

On the benefits for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, the first interviewer made little or no comment on that, but however, he actually did make comments on the challenges. His points are as follows:

* Limited materials, equipment, and resources: He noted that lack of these materials, equipment and resources pose great challenge to special students. He made mention of blind students learning without brille textbooks, without provision for quality internet in the department for special students to brows the internet and perform researches as relates to their academics. Also, he mentioned lack of special music teachers/lecturers to help facilitate learning among students with special needs particularly the blind students.
* Poor approach to conveying graphical information: One essential challenge he mentioned is the lack of resource or material to help present the images and diagrams in music to the blind students. As we all know, the blind students get more understanding on things they can hear, touch and feel. He said, if these diagrams or images can not be presented in a way the students can feel and understand for themselves, then that is a great challenge the special students (the blind students) are facing.

**Question 3:** How does music education impact the academic achievement of special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, specifically in terms of cognitive skills, language development, mathematical abilities, and overall academic performance?

On this question, the interviewer outlined very few impacts of music to special students as regards to their cognitive skill, mathematical ability and overall academic performance. The few impact of music to special students noted from the first interview include:

* Memory muscle: He noted that music has helped special students to have strong ability to retain things in their memory. In his own words, the special students i.e the blind students he has met in the past have this strong ability of retaining things in their memory. Hence, they don’t find it so difficult to learn new related things. It’s just a matter of remembering the previous things, analyzing the new things and finding patterns to relate them with what they already have in memory, which also speaks well of the way and manner the approach problems. He noted that music requires a student to memorize some things such as the names of the lines and spaces on the staff which have its memory aid.
* Sense of Mathematics: The interviewer noted that music has helped special students in their mathematical abilities. He mentioned that calculating and knowing how many notes should be appropriate in a bar shows a sense of mathematics. The calculations done while playing certain musical instruments without looking at them or without knowing what they look like also shows a sense of mathematical ability in the role of a special student.

**Question 4:** What are the identified strategies to enhance music education programs for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, promoting their academic achievement and social integration?

* Implementation of adequate instructional method and fieldwork experiences: The interviewer recommended fieldwork experience as one key ingredient that will enhance musical achievement in the role of music education in the academic achievement of special students. In his words, he noted that if the school will plan excursions for the students and provide avenue for them to interact with professionals already in the field, It will help encourage them in the part of carrier they’ve chosen and that the lecturers HOD and everyone who help to plan this activities will be amazed at the kind of results it will yield in the academic achievement of the whole students and not just the special students.
* Organization of music competitions and musical performances: he affirmed that if the school can organize programs and events where the special students and every other students can display their talents, it could serve as a source of motivation and help them sit up and face their academic squarely.

He also made mention of interschool competitions. At that, he said if the music department at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education can organize musical and instrumental competitions between itself and other institutions, it could motivate the special students to put in their best effort in their work.

* Provision of materials, equipment, and resources: He also affirmed that if the school can provide quality equipment, materials and resources, it will go a long way to help the special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education. He said the school can provide software that are screen-reader friendly, provide special music teachers and lecturers that can help explain and simplify things to the special students, and also help present diagrams to the special students in a way they can feel and understand better, they can also provide high speed internet in the department so that the students can have access to browse the internet and source for helpful materials to enhance their studies.

The following information was obtained from the second interview conducted in the course of this research project.

**Question 1:** What is the current status of music education programs for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, including the types of musical activities, instructional methods, and resources available to special students?

The status of music education programs for special students at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education is still very much in its infancy by my reckoning. Although, the programs herein entail a myriad of educational activities and resources to facilitate a better learning experience for students, I believe that they are way short of constituting a flourishing environment for special students. For instance, music pieces handed out to students are only in print. That goes without saying that this, to a large extent, renders music literacy wholly inaccessible to a blind student. Simply put, the current status of music education programs for special students leaves much to be desired; and a whole lot more still has to be done to truly foster an inclusive musical education for special students at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education.

**Question 2:** What are the perceived benefits and challenges of music education for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, as identified by special students, teachers, and parents**?**

**Benefits**

* Provision of a rare opportunity for special students to study music in an accommodating environment: Special students at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education have the unique advantage of a specialized program tailored to accommodate their needs. This rare opportunity allows them to engage in the study of music within an inclusive and supportive environment, fostering a sense of belonging and empowerment.
* Introduction of a wide range of programs by which special students can express and enhance their musical abilities and creativity: The introduction of a wide range of programs enables special students to explore and enhance their musical abilities and creativity. These initiatives provide diverse avenues for self-expression, allowing students to discover and develop their unique talents in music.
* Openness to make music education more accommodating for special students going forward: The openness to making music education more accommodating for special students reflects a commitment to continuous improvement. This proactive approach signals a willingness to adapt and evolve educational practices to better meet the needs of special students in the future.

**Challenges**

* Inadequate resources to accommodate the needs of special students: The primary challenge identified is the inadequate availability of resources to meet the unique needs of special students. This includes a shortage of specialized teaching materials, adaptive technologies, and financial support, hindering the creation of an optimal learning environment.
* Lack of a special teacher to provide the support necessary to carry special students along: Another significant challenge is the absence of dedicated special education teachers. The lack of specialized educators who can provide the necessary support for special students creates a gap in the delivery of inclusive music education.
* Inaccessibility of many educational programs and instructional methods for special students: The inaccessibility of many educational programs and instructional methods poses a barrier to the effective engagement of special students in music education. This challenge underscores the importance of addressing systemic issues to ensure equal access and participation.

**Question 3**: How does music education impact the academic achievement of special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, specifically in terms of cognitive skills, language development, mathematical abilities, and overall academic performance?

* **Reinforced memorisation skills:** Live music performances are a big feature of music education. These performances help improve memory skills in special students, as they will have to be familiar with the notes and/or lyrics of every piece beforehand. Improved memory facilitates improved learning which, in effect, translates to better academic performances overall.
* **Concentration enhancement:** Music is an art of precise beats, sounds, count, etc. By majoring in music, special students learn to pay close attention to cues in a piece, noting when to come in and exit and how long or short to sustain every note. By so doing, they inadvertently improve their attention span and concentration levels, which is then applied to other areas of academic life like Mathematics where high concentration level is paramount.
* **Teamwork spirit development:** With music education, special students get to perform in groups, orchestras, and different competitions. These societies and programs afford special students the opportunity to collaborate with others and ultimately build a teamwork spirit in them.

**Question 4**: What effective strategies and recommendations can be identified to enhance music education programs for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, promoting their academic achievement and social integration?

* **Provision of assistive technologies:** Special students often require assistive technologies, in one form or the other, to foster a favourable environment for learning. The computer and several software solutions form the core of these technologies. And the judicious application of assistive technologies in the study of music at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education is the key towards creating a conducive learning environment for special students herein.
* **Provision of accessible educational materials:**Educational materials should not be limited to printed hard copies only. They should also be presented in other formats like soft copies, braille, etc. By so doing, special students will be provided the opportunity of personally interacting with these materials at their own pace, time and convenience.
* **Special teacher procurement:** A special teacher should be acquired to personally oversee the special interest of special students in their music studies. The teacher or teachers should be well versed in music literacy, and at hand to provide the complementary teaching that may be required to bring special students up to speed with their course outline and improve their music literacy skills.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATION, RECOMMENDATION, LIMITATION OF STUDY, SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDY AND SUMMARY**

**Discussion of the Findings**

This section discusses the findings based on the research questions used to guide the research work.

Research question one was focused on finding the status of music education as it relates to the special students in the department.

The interviewee stated that the music department lacks equipment and materials specific to the needs of special students, hindering their academic success. This suggests that the current program may not be fully equipped to cater to the diverse needs of students with disabilities.The interviewee highlighted the importance of outdoor field excursions for enhancing learning and real-life application. He specifically mentioned music studio excursions and interactions with music industry professionals as crucial for students. This finding suggests that the current program may lack opportunities for practical learning and exposure to the professional world.Finally the interviewee emphasized the need for specialized teachers, particularly for blind students, due to the complex nature of music and its reliance on graphics. This finding reveals a potential gap in the program's ability to effectively support students with specific learning disabilities.

The finding is supported by Smith et al. (2022) who examined music education programs for students with disabilities and found similar shortcomings. They reported that many programs lacked specialized equipment, trained teachers, and adapted instructional materials, hindering the inclusion and success of these students. Also, they explored the impact of field trips on music learning and found that such experiences enhanced students' engagement, understanding, and creativity. This supports the interviewee's point about the value of outdoor excursions for special students. Finally

The study by Brown et al. highlighted the importance of specialized training for music teachers working with students with disabilities. This finding aligns with the interviewee's suggestion about the need for specialized teachers in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education.

Research question two sought to find out the benefits and challenges the special students are facing.

**Benefits**

The program provides a unique and valuable opportunity for special students to engage in music education within an accommodating environment. This fosters a sense of belonging, empowerment, and inclusion for this often-marginalized population.The diverse programs offered cater to the individual needs and interests of each student, allowing them to explore and express their musical abilities and creativity. This promotes self-discovery, talent development, and a sense of personal achievement.The willingness to adapt and evolve educational practices to better meet the needs of special students demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement and inclusivity. This proactive approach fosters a positive learning environment where students feel valued and supported.

**Challenges**

The lack of specialized teaching materials, adaptive technologies, and financial support significantly hinders the creation of an optimal learning environment for special students. This poses a major obstacle to their academic progress and full participation in the program.The absence of specialized teachers trained in disability-inclusive pedagogy creates a significant gap in the provision of support and guidance for special students. This can lead to frustration, disengagement, and ultimately, hinder their learning outcomes.Also, many programs and instructional methods lack adaptations and modifications to cater to the diverse needs of special students. This accessibility issue restricts their ability to fully engage with the material and limits their opportunities for learning and growth.

The study is supported by Jones et al. (2020) who found that music education can significantly benefit special needs students by enhancing their social skills, emotional well-being, and cognitive development. Also, he emphasized the crucial role of specialized programs and resources, including adapted instruments, Braille music scores, and assistive technologies, in facilitating the success of special needs students in music education.

Research question three focused on the impact of music education in the academic achievement of special students.

The interviewee highlighted the role of live music performances in enhancing memory skills. Rehearsing and performing music requires memorizing notes, lyrics, and cues, leading to improved cognitive function and information retention. This can positively impact academic performance across various subjects. Also, the interviewee pointed out how music training involves focusing on precise details like beats, sounds, and timing. This practice strengthens concentration and attention, which can be applied to other academic areas, particularly subjects like mathematics requiring sustained focus.

This finding is supported by Jones et al. (2023) who found that music education can significantly improve cognitive skills like memory, attention, and processing speed in special needs students. Also, he demonstrated the effectiveness of music education in enhancing spatial reasoning and mathematical abilities in students with autism spectrum disorder. Finally, he found that music education can promote overall academic achievement in special needs students by boosting motivation, engagement, and self-confidence.

Research question four focused mainly on the recommendations and strategies that can help enhance music education in the department of music Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education. The strategies and recommendations discussed are:

**1. Assistive Technologies:**Implement technology like screen readers, music notation software with accessibility features, adapted instruments, and audio description tools, equip music teachers with skills to utilize assistive technologies effectively in their teaching practices, and Organize workshops for special students to familiarize them with available assistive technologies and enhance their independence in learning.

2. **Accessible Educational Materials:** Create Braille music scores, audio recordings, tactile diagrams, and alternative representations of visual information, explore online platforms and applications offering accessible music resources and learning materials. And Provide personalized materials based on each student's specific needs and learning styles.

**3. Specialized Teacher Training:** Hire qualified music teachers with expertise in special education and disability-inclusive practices, organize training programs for existing music teachers to acquire skills and knowledge in working with special needs students and finally, Collaborate with special education specialists to develop and implement inclusive music education programs.

**Conclusion**

The research conducted through interviews and supported by existing literature suggests that music education programs for special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education have the potential to provide numerous benefits. These benefits include:

• Improved academic achievement: Music education can enhance cognitive skills, language development, mathematical abilities, and overall academic performance in special needs students.

• Enhanced social integration: Music programs promote teamwork, collaboration, and communication, fostering social integration and belonging for special students.

• Emotional well-being and self-esteem: Music education can improve emotional well-being, reduce stress and anxiety, and boost self-confidence in special students.

• Creative expression and individual development: Music programs provide a platform for special students to express their creativity, explore their talents, and develop their individual strengths.

However, the research also identified several challenges that need to be addressed to ensure the success of these programs, including:

• Lack of resources: Inadequate funding and resources limit the availability of specialized equipment, accessible materials, assistive technologies, and qualified teachers.

• Limited accessibility: Educational materials and instructional methods often lack adaptations to cater to the diverse needs of special students, hindering their full participation.

• Lack of specialized training: Music teachers may lack the necessary training and expertise in disability-inclusive pedagogy to effectively support special students.

To address these challenges and create a more inclusive and effective music education program for special students, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education should consider the following recommendations:

• Increase funding and resource allocation: Invest in specialized equipment, accessible materials, assistive technologies, and qualified special education teachers.

• Develop and adapt educational materials: Create Braille music scores, audio recordings, tactile diagrams, and other alternative representations of visual information.

• Train music teachers in disability-inclusive pedagogy: Provide professional development programs and training opportunities for music teachers to acquire the skills and knowledge needed to effectively teach special students.

• Promote collaborative partnerships: Collaborate with special education departments, technology specialists, and disability organizations to share resources and expertise.

• Advocate for inclusive practices: Raise awareness about the importance of inclusive music education and advocate for policies that support the needs of special students.

• Regularly evaluate and improve programs: Continuously monitor the effectiveness of music education programs and implement changes based on student feedback and research findings.

By implementing these recommendations and building on the existing strengths of the program, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education can ensure that all students, regardless of their abilities, have the opportunity to experience the joy and benefits of music education. This will create a more inclusive and equitable learning environment where all students can thrive and reach their full potential.

**Educational Implication**

Based on the research findings and the identified benefits and challenges, several educational implications can be drawn for music education programs at Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education and beyond:

**1. Importance of Inclusive Music Education:**

The research highlights the significant role of music education in promoting academic achievement, social integration, emotional well-being, and individual development for special students. This emphasizes the need for educational institutions to prioritize and invest in creating inclusive music education programs that cater to the diverse needs of all students, regardless of their abilities.

**2. Adapting Resources and Curriculum:**

The research identifies the need for accessible educational materials, specialized equipment, and assistive technologies to ensure that special students can fully participate and benefit from music education. This calls for curriculum adaptation and the development of alternative teaching methods that cater to different learning styles and disabilities.

**3. Specialized Teacher Training:**

The research underscores the importance of specialized training for music teachers in disability-inclusive pedagogy. Teachers need to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and strategies to effectively support and teach special students, creating a more conducive and inclusive learning environment.

**4. Collaboration and Partnerships:**

The research suggests that fostering collaboration between music departments, special education specialists, technology experts, and disability organizations can significantly benefit music education programs for special students. Such collaborations can lead to the sharing of resources, expertise, and best practices, ultimately improving program quality and effectiveness.

**5. Advocacy and Policy Change:**

The research highlights the need for continued advocacy and awareness-raising about the importance of inclusive music education. This includes advocating for policy changes and increased funding to support inclusive practices, ensuring that all students have equal access to music education opportunities.

**Recommendation**

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher made the following recommendations:

1. The Government should higher quality special music instructors. This will help break most barriers the special students in the Department of music in Alvan Ikoku are facing.
2. The Government should provide quality materials, equipment, and resources for the special students in the Department of music. This will ensure that the student have the required materials and as such have all it takes to thrive and excel in their chosen profession.
3. The school should organize excursions to studios, music industries and other related places so the students will have the opportunity to learn from other professionals in the field and also learn from their experiences so as to help prepare them for their carrier after school.
4. The government should help provide comfortable environment for learning. This will help increase the interest of special student in their studies, and help improve academic outcomes.

**Limitations of Study**

In the course of carrying out this research project, the researcher came across some limitations which include:

1. Inadequate time to carry out an indebt research.Based on this the researcher had limited time to gather enough special students for his interview.

**Suggestion for further Study**

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are made for future research on the Role of Music Education In the Academic Achievement of Special Student.

1. Study examining the long term effect of music education on the academic achievement of Special students.
2. A Study investigating the impact of music education on non-academic areas of development such as social skills for special students.

**Summary**

This research work sought to find out the role of music education in the academic achievement of special students in Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education.

Chapter one of the research work dealt with Background of the Study, Statement of the Problem, Purpose of the Study, Scope of the Study, Significant of the Study, and the Research Question.

Chapter two dealt with literature review. The frameworks covered in chapter 2 include: Conceptual Framework, Theoretical Framework, Empirical Framework, and Summary of Literature Reviewed.

Chapter three discussed the Research Design, Area of Study, Population of Study, Sample and Sampling technic, instrument for data collection, Validation of the Instrument, Administration of the Instrument, and Method of data Analysis.

Chapter four dealt with the analysis and result of findings based on each research question.

Chapter five dealt with the discussion of the findings, conclusion, educational implications, recommendations, limitation of the study, suggestion for further studies and summary of the study.

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