

PSYCHOSOCIAL FACTORS PREDISPOSING ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS IN OBUDU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF CROSS RIVER STATE

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ABSTRACT

The study investigated on psychosocial factors predisposing academic adjustment of students' with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State. The study adopted correlational research design for the study. Three research questions from which three hypotheses was drawn was used to guide the study. The study sample comprised of 205 teachers, drawn using stratified sampling technique from a population of 1,351 teachers in 25 public secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State. The two instruments for data collection was titled: Psychosocial factors Questionnaire (PFQ) with 15 items designed on a 4 point likert type scale and Students with Special Needs Academic Adjustment Scale (SWSNAAS). The validity of the instrument was determined by experts in educational measurement and evaluation. The reliability of two instruments was determined using test re-test method which resulted in a reliability co-efficient of 0.78, 0.81 and 0.95. Data analysis was done using Pearson Correlational Coefficient to test hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The result revealed that there is a significant relationship between motivation, family support, self-efficacy and academic adjustment of students with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State. Based on this result, it was recommended that inclusive education should be emphasized with adequate resources to empower, encourage and enhance motivation of students with special needs in the classroom settings.

KEYWORDS: Psychosocial factors, academic adjustment, students with special needs, motivation, family support and self-efficacy.

Introduction

The field of Special Need Education (SNE) in general, is one of the most topics that has received attention at all educational levels and in all scientific field, as it studies individuals whose needs vary greatly. The category of people studied by Special Needs Education includes; gifted, people with learning difficulties, people with language disorders and other groups of individual with disabilities (Al-Adra, 2016).

According to Maingi-Lore (2016), Special Needs Education is define by the United Nations convention on the equal right of persons with disabilities 2006 as those students who have physical, sensory or chronic health impairment which hinder them from their full, active participation in the society on equal basis with the others and hinder them from benefit fully from learning instructions in the regular settings. Also, the concept of special educational need if their capacity to participate in and benefit from education and benefit fully from the school curriculum

are restricted due to enduring physical, sensory, mental or other impairment, including any visual, hearing, learning or physical incapability, which impacts adversely on social, economic or environmental participation. Several appropriate adaptations and modifications on the curriculum content, mode of delivery as well as the physical amenities are required. These adaptation and modification according to Abdulhameed (2022) are carried out in the field of Special Needs Education which is defined as the individual educational requirements of a student suffering from any of wide range of physical disabilities, medical conditions, intellectual difficulties and emotional problems or a student with a disadvantaged background with a disability of an intellectual, sensory, physical, emotional or behaviour nature and with a mental emotional of physical disability. In special Needs Education, students with special needs in this process of academic need, needs academic adjustment.

However, adjustment is a continuous process by which a person varies his/her behaviour to produce a more harmonious relationship between himself/herself and his/her environment (Salamin in Manuabachi&Obikoys, 2017). It implies changes in our thinking and way of life to the demands of the situation. Welten and Lioyd in Oguntayo, Agberotimi, Oyeleke, Olaseni and Ayinde (2020) define adjustment as the psychological processes through which people manage or cope with the demands and challenges of everyday life. It is the harmony, congruence or a goodness of fit between an individual and standards against he/she is adjudged. Manuabachi and Obikoye (2017) highlighted four sub-scale of adjustment which include; academic, social, personal, emotional as well as institutional attachment adjustment respectively.

Academic adjustment refers to how well students deal with educational demands, such as motivation to complete academic requirement, academic effort and satisfaction with academic environment. Social adjustment refers to how well the students involves in social activities and the satisfaction with various aspects of school experience. Institutional attachment describes a students' satisfaction with the school experience in general and with the school he/she is attending while personal emotional adjustment refers to how satisfied a student feels psychically, psychologically and psychosocially.

The essence psychosocial factors associated with students' with special needs have gained the attention of researchers in the global enquiry into the issue of academic adjustment, in particular among vulnerable individual. Evidence has shown that stigma is one of the major psychosocial problems that students with special needs usually experience. Bunning (2017) in this process stated that students with special needs are often organized in schools, organisations and in general society. Inganzo (2017) defines psychosocial factors refers to the interplay between psychological and social elements that influence an individual's mental health, behaviour, and overall wellbeing. These factors encompasses emotions, social relationship, cultural norms, socioeconomic status, and environmental stressors which has to do with motivation, family support, self-efficacy, peer pressure among others that has a significant effect on academic adjustment of students with special needs.

Like other parts of the learning process, motivation is an individual matter, because, what motivates one learner may be a weaker motivation to some and no motivation at all to another. Carew and Oguche (2012) noted that motivation to learn is characterized by long-term, quality involvement in learning and commitment to the process of learning. As a result, both normal and people with special needs require motivation to perform tasks. This also applies to students with special needs. Students with special needs are those children who need help in one way or the other to achieve their potentialities. And in other hand family support in the education of students with special needs at home with the parents providing a safe healthy environment, appropriate learning experiences, support and a positive attitude about school. Several studies indicate increased academic adjustment with students that have support from their parents (Epstein, 2009 and Whitaker & Flore, 2021). Studies also indicate that family support is most effective when viewed as a partnership between educators and parents (Emeagwali, 2019 and Epstein, 2009). By examining family support and academic adjustment of special needs students, educators should have a better understanding of effective family support in promoting students adjustment in

academics.

Self-efficacy is the belief that an individual has the ability to carry out certain actions that will result in a desired outcome. Self-efficacy could be defined as the personal belief of possibility the ability to perform professional task with mastery (Okweye&Onoyase, 2024). Academic self-efficacy is considered as a key factor contributing to students with special needs academic adjustment as it affects the choices and decisions that disabilities make and the sources of action they pursue (Aajaves, 2012). Students' beliefs in their efficacy in an academic environment, provide the foundation for motivation, and personal achievement. It is because, disabilities have little incentive to all in the face of difficult circumstances unless they believe that their actions will result in the outcomes they deserve.

However, students' with special needs who receive psychosocial services or support at their school are more likely to persist in their studies and graduate at the same rate as their peers without disabilities (Jorgensen in Oguntayo, Agberotimi, Oyeleke, Olaseni&Ayinde, 2020). Students' with special needs often experience verbal abuse and discrimination when attempting to gain employment, and they often fail to achieve socially valued goals, such as living independently, getting married and having a job. It can also be shown that peer rejection predict learning difficulty among students with special needs and absence of psychological and social support from parents, peers and relations making them to have worse learning difficulties. This scenario lead the researcher to conduct a research on psychosocial factors predisposing academic adjustment of students' with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Statement of the problem

In Nigeria as persee, students with disabilities are not believed to be capable of living independent lives and are expected to require content help from nondisabled people to achieve their academic goals. This expectation from people had most students with disabilities to be discriminated and deprived of psychological and social support from people in the society. However, the researcher observed that in Cross River State especially in Obudu Local Government Area, students with special needs are not only seen as financial and resources burden internally, but also by the most communities seen as shame to the family of such students with disabilities. People still expect no or low potential from disabilities and this prevent them to achieve sound education in school to adjust academically. Also, psychosocial factors like motivation, family support and self-efficacy were not provided as required that led to decline in their academic adjustment. In this extent, the researcher now determine to carry out an investigation into psychosocial factors predisposing academic adjustment of students with disabilities in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State.

Purpose of study

The main purpose of the study is to investigate psychosocial factors predisposing academic adjustment of students with disabilities in Obudu Local Government Area.

Specifically the study sought to:

- i. Examine if motivation factor relate with academic adjustment of students' with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area.
- ii. Investigate if family support relate with academic adjustment of students' with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area.
- iii. Assess if self-efficacy relate with academic adjustment of students' with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area.

Research questions

The following research questions were design to guide the study:

- i. To what extent does motivation factor relate with academic adjustment of students' with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area?
- ii. How does family support relate with academic adjustment of students' with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area?
- iii. How does self-efficacy relate with academic adjustment of students' with special needs in

Obudu Local Government Area?

Statement of hypotheses

The following hypotheses were developed using null format and will be tested as 0.05 level of significant.

- i. There is no significant relationship between motivation factor and academic adjustment of students' with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between family support and academic adjustment of students' with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area.
- iii. There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic adjustment of students' with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area.

Significance of the study

The significance of this study come to shed light on student with special needs and how to care for this category and provide assistance to them by diagnosing the factors that affect their performance and achievement. There is need to activate and develop the services provided to enable them to overcome and to reduce their problems and difficulties they face.

It is also hope that the findings of this study would help the academic institution to ensure that the good policies are being implemented fully in the teaching of students' with special needs. This will help to formulate and implement practices that are geared towards improving the academic adjustment of students with special needs.

Educators will find this study interested by preparing programme that aim at sensitizing and equipping the staff with knowledge and skills needed to effectively cater students with special needs.

The findings of this study will be important to students' with special needs by establishing and pointing out how social justice, social inclusion and attitudes play a part in the learning potential in the disabilities.

Empirical review

Abdulhameed (2022) conducted a study on factors influencing academic performance and achievement of students' with disabilities. The aim of the study is to identify the factors influencing the academic performance and achievement of disabled students; the study was guided by the social cognitive theory (SCT) based on the review of the relevant literature, the study concluded that there are several factors that influence the academic performance and achievement of students' with disabilities such as emotional factors such as the disabled students fear, depression, low self-confidence, feelings of shame, withdrawal, self-concept and feelings of inferiority. Mohamed (2020) reported that there are more factors that influence the academic adjustment of students with special needs which include; the inability of some teachers to employ educational activities to meet the needs of students with special needs in the integration programme received by teachers. Further, the academic preparation does not sufficiently contributes to teaching special education teachers how to employ e-learning that meets students with special needs but the programmethat can harmonize special need students academic adjustment.

Manuabuchi and Obikoya (2017) investigated psychosocial factors predicting academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates in River State, Nigeria. The extent of the study was to know if emotional intelligence, social support, self-esteem and coping strategies predict academic adjustment of first Year University undergraduates in River State. Correlation design was adopted for the study. Seven research questions and seven corresponding hypotheses guided the conduct of the study at 0.05 alpha levels. A sample of 382 first year university undergraduates of IgnationAjum University of Education, Port-Harcourt, 2015/2016 academic session was chosen for the study through simple and proportional stratified random sampling techniques. Five instruments were used for data collection; Mangal Emotional Intelligence Inventory, Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Coping Strategies Inventory and Students Adaptation to College Questionnaire. All data collected were

subjected using statistical package for social science (SPSS). Results showed that emotional intelligence, social support, self-esteem and coping strategies taken together significantly predicted academic adjustment of first year university undergraduates.

Salami (2011) examined the contribution of psychological and social factors to the prediction of adjustment of college. A total of 250 first year students from college of education in Kwara State, Nigeria, completed measure of self-esteem, emotional intelligence, stress, social support and adjustment. The participants were randomly selected for the study regression analysis revealed that social support predicted adjustment among first year college of education students.

Oguntayo, Agerotimi, Oyeleke, Olesant and Ayinde (2020) examined the influence of psychosocial factors on learning difficulties among individual with special needs. A crossed sectional research design was utilized. 120 adolescents comprising 56.7% males were purposively selected among students at a facility for special needs individuals in Ilorin, Nigeria. Data were collected with a structured questionnaire containing perceived stigma of intellectual disability scale, social support questionnaire and Colorado learning difficulties questionnaire. Data were subjected to statistical analysis utilizing the SPSS V20. Results to the end revealed that there was no significant gender difference on the learning difficulties among individuals' with special needs. Individuals with high perceived stigma reported significant higher learning difficulties compared to their peers with low difficulty. And individual with intellectual impairment exhibited more learning difficulty compared with those with visual impairment.

Dibia, Moses and Ajoku (2024) investigated effects of motivation on enhancement of learning for children with special needs in River State. Four null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significant. Fifty one (51) senior secondary school were used and 408 senior secondary school students were selected for data study. Pearson Moment Correlation Coefficient (PMCC) and two way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were employed for data analysis. The results showed that there was a significant relationship among academic/social self-concept, motivation and achievement. This implies that the higher the academic or social self-concept of an individual, the higher his motivation for academic adjustment.

Ozoh, Danrani and Aleje (2012) investigated the motivational factors that enhance the learning among primary school pupils. Findings of the study showed that motivational variable are provided by the social agents and the more the desire of the children for education increases and others. Motivation influence individuals academic behaviour. It is a feeling of self-directed competence and is still required for effective learning and academic performance.

Okweye and Onoyase (2024) examined the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial district. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Correlational research design was adopted. 1,647 secondary school III students were sampled from the total population of 16,473 in the Delta North Senatorial District. A multistage sampling procedure was used in the sampling. A questionnaire and students' past result was used for data collection. A reliability was tested by using Cronbach alpha for estimating the internal consistency of the instrument. Pearson Product Correction analysis at 0.05 level was used in testing the hypotheses. The findings of the study revealed that there was a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance of secondary school students whereas sex, school location and age has a significant relationship with students' academic performance.

Eze (2018) conducted a research to predict students' with special needs adjustment based on family support. 250 high school students in the Department of Special Needs Education were selected randomly using cluster sampling technique. The instruments of the study included the Family Inventory Support Questionnaire (FISQ) and Students Adjustment Inventory (SAI). Multiple regression analysis showed that family support significantly and positively predict social, emotional and psychological status of students with special needs.

Methodology

Correlational design by multiple prediction design was used for the study. According to Kpolovie in Mannuabuchi and Obikoye (2017), multiple prediction design is a high order correlation research design that extends the least-square association principle to the study of relationship between one dependent variable and two or more independent variables. The population of this study consists of one thousand three and fifty one (1,351) teachers in twenty (25) public secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State (Obudu Local Government Area Education Authority, 2025). A sample of 205 teachers was selected for the study using simple and proportional stratified random sampling techniques. Two instruments were used for data collection titled: Psychosocial Factors Questionnaire (PFQ) and Students with Special Needs Academic Adjustment Scale (SWSNAAS) with 15 items design on a 4 point likert type scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) and 20 items respectively. However, to ensure validity of the instruments in the present study since they were adopted, the instruments were presented to two experts in educational measurement and evaluation.

In essence, the reliability of the two instruments was established. For the purpose of the present study, the reliability of the two instruments were determined by the researcher through the test-retest method. The initial and the (second) retest scores were then conducted using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The stability coefficients obtained for the three sections of motivation, family support were 0.75, 0.81 and 0.95 was obtained and those were considered adequate and high level of inter-item consistencies. The instruments were personally administered and collected by the researcher and four assistants. Pearson Moment correlation analysis at 0.05 level of significant was used for data analysis. Perhaps, all the data were subjected to analysis using statistical package for social science (SPSS 24.0).

Results

Hypothesis I

There is no significant relationship between motivation factor and academic adjustment of students with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area. In this hypothesis, motivation was the independent variable measured using item 1-5 on the questionnaire. The variable was a continue variable and was defined on a four point interval scale. Therefore, the data obtained were continues. Also, the dependent variable was academic adjustment of students with special needs, measured using 20 items. Hence the dependent variable was also a continue variable. Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to test the hypothesis. The test was carried out at 0.05 level of significance. The result was presented on table 1.

TABLE 1

Results of Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) of the relationship between motivation factor and academic adjustment of students with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area ($n = 205$)

S/N	Variables	No. of items	Mean	SD	Sum	r-value
1	Motivation factor (x)	5	15.41	2.17	? $x^2 = 938.38$? $xy = 590.630$	.507*
2	Academic adjustment of students with special needs (y)	20	15.79	2.70	? $xy^2 = 1447.755$	

*Significant, $p < .05$, critical $r = .139$, $n = 205$, $\alpha = 0.05$

On table 1, the mean and standard deviation of motivation factor (mean = 15.41, SD = 2.17) and the academic adjustment (mean = 14.79, SD = 2.70) have been presented. Also, the calculated r -value was 0.507 ($p < .05$). This value was positive, showing a fairly strong direct relationship and greater than the critical r -value of 0.139 ($n = 205$, $\alpha = 0.05$), hence the null hypothesis was rejected. The study thereafter revealed that there is a significant relationship between motivation factor and academic adjustment of students with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area.

Hypothesis II

There is no significant relationship between family support and academic adjustment of students' with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area. In this hypothesis, family support was the independent variable. Items 6-10 on the questionnaire defined on a four point likert type scale were used to measure the variable. The variable was therefore measured continuously. Data obtained also were continue. Furthermore, a stated earlier, the dependent variable was a continues variable reformed to academic adjustment of students' with special needs. This was measured using 20 items. The data obtained therefore, were continues; hence to seek the relationship that exist between the two sets of the variables, Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) was used. The result of the test at 0.05 level is presented on table 2.

TABLE 2

Results of Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) of the relationship between family support and academic adjustment of students with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area ($n = 205$)

S/N	Variables	No. of items	Mean	SD	Sum	r-value
1	Family support (x)	5	16.51	2.80	$\sum x^2 = 1561.995$ $\sum xy = 1250.715$	.0832*
2	Academic adjustment of students with special needs (y)	20	15.79	2.70	$\sum xy^2 = 1447.755$	

*Significant, $p < .05$, critical $r = .139$, $n = 205$, $\alpha = 0.05$

On table 2, the calculated r -value was 0.832 ($p < .05$). This value was positive indicating a direct relationship. Its value also showed a very strong relationship and thirdly, the r -value of 0932 was greater than the critical r -value of 0.39, hence the null hypothesis was rejected. To this end, the outcome of the test of this hypothesis showed that family support has a very strong, direct and significant relationship with academic adjustment of students with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area.

Hypothesis III

There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic adjustment of students' with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area. To test this hypothesis, the independent variable was self-efficacy, measured using item 11-15 at the interval scale. While the dependent variable was academic adjustment of students with special needs. Data obtained were continuous. Therefore, both the dependent and independent variable were continuous variables. Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significant. The result is presented on table 3.

TABLE 3

Results of Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) of the relationship between self-efficacy and academic adjustment of students with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area ($n = 205$)

S/N	Variables	No. of items	Mean	SD	Sum	r-value
1	Motivation factor (x)	5	15.89	2.50	? $x^2 = 1242.355$? $xy = 1138.055$	.849*
2	Academic adjustment of students with special needs (y)	20	15.79	2.70	? $xy^2 = 1447.755$	

*Significant, $p < .05$, critical $r = .139$, $n = 205$, $r = 0.05$

From table 3, the calculated r-value was 0.849 ($p < .05$) as against the critical r-value of 0.139. Since the calculated r-value was greater than the critical r-value, the test was significant and the null hypothesis was rejected. To this end, the study concluded that there is a significant, positive and very strong relationship between self-efficacy and academic adjustment of students' with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area.

Discussion of results

Motivation factor and academic adjustment of students' with special needs

The tested hypothesis using Pearson Correlation Coefficient was rejected meaning that there is a significant relationship between motivation factor and academic adjustment of students with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area. This findings was in line with that of Dibia, Moses and Ajoku (2024) who justify that motivating children with special needs will go a long way in helping them not only to learn effectively bunt also to feel, behave and become adjusted as their counterparts in the regular schools and society where they find themselves. Ozurumba and Ebuara (2002) posits in their study implying that students' who have high motivation tend to perceive well in academic works. Also, Mohammed and Ozoh (2012) in their study findings revealed that there is a significant relationship between motivation and academic adjustment of students. Implying that motivation is a feeling of self-directed competence that required for effective learning and academic performance of students'.

Family support and academic adjustment of students' with special needs

Based on the results presented on table 2 of hypothesis 2 prove that there is a significant relationship between family support and academic adjustment of students' with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State. Therefore, to give credence to this findings, Turnbull, Turnbull, Erwin, Soodak and Shogren (2011)who in their study justify that families have a major impact on the success of the progress of education and upbringing of children. Involvement of families is fully related to their position at home (monitoring the learning of children), as well as participation in activities organized at school Durisic and Bunijevac (2017) further express that the level of family support is associated with academic adjustment or success of students" especially those with special needs. Sheldone (2019) who confirmed that children whose families are actively support in their schooling benefit better than those whose parents are passively support or involved in their schooling. Specifically, if parents attend teacher conferences, they have much contribution to the academic pursuit of their children.

Self-efficacy and academic adjustment of students' with special needs

The findings on this hypothesis prove that there is a significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic adjustment of students' with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area. Reason was that the calculated r-value was confirmed to be higher than the critical r-value.

This findings was in support to that of Okweye and Onoyase (2024) in their study revealed that there was a significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic adjustment of secondary school students in Delta North Senatorial District, Nigeria. Also, Msuya (2016) says that self-efficacy is considered as a key factor contributing to learners with disabilities as it affect the choices and decisions that they make and the courses of action then pursue. Olanrewaju and Anofojie (2021) highlighted that students' beliefs in their efficacy in an academic environment, provide the foundation for motivation and personal achievement. This is because, students' have little incentive to act or persevere in the face of difficult circumstances unless they believe that their actions will result in the outcomes they deserve. Also, Ugwanyi, Ugwuanyi, Ezenwa-Nebife, Gana, Ene, Oguguo and Ikech (2020) in their findings prove that students" with high self-efficacy demonstrated higher motive in their academic while students' with low self-efficacy have least and weak in their academics adjustment.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of study, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between psychosocial factors predisposing academic adjustment of students" with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area. This is because, the calculated r-value was found to be greater than the critical r-value meaning that there is a significant relationship between motivation and academic adjustment of students with special needs in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study:

- i. Inclusive education should be emphasized with adequate resources to empower, encourage and enhance motivation of students' with special needs in the classroom settings.
- ii. Interaction between the school and home need to be more positive, requiring teachers to contact families through and not just when the problem arise.
- iii. Schools should implement programmes that enhance students' self-efficacy through mentorship, goal-setting, workshop, and positive reinforcement strategies to adjust the academic structure of students' with special needs.

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