

OPTIMISM AND SELF EFFICACY AS PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG SPECIAL NEEDS LEARNERS

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ABSTRACT

This is a correlational research aimed at determining the extent to which optimism and self-efficacy predict academic achievement among special needs learners in Port Harcourt, Rivers State of Nigeria. The population consisted 137 special needs learners (hearing (and visually impaired) in a public Special school. A sample of 75 special needs learners (60 hearing impaired and 15 visually impaired) was drawn through proportionate sampling technique. Four research questions and four hypotheses guided this study. Three instruments were used for data collection including Life Orientation Test- Revised (LOT-R) by Scheier, Carver & Brooks (1994), Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES) by Chemers, Hu and Garcia (2001) by Zajacova, Lynch & Espenshade (2005) and Student Grades Record (SGR) obtained from the school under study. The LOT-R and ASES are standardized instruments with reliability coefficients of 0.78 and 0.65 respectively. Data analysis for the study was conducted using multiple regression, ANOVA and t-test associated with multiple regressions at 0.05 alpha level. Result got after data analysis indicated that optimism and self-efficacy positively predicted academic performance among special needs learners. It was also found that gender and nature of challenge significantly influenced the extent to which optimism and self-efficacy predicted academic achievement among special needs learners. Based on these results, recommendations were made for government to employ educational psychologist and guidance counsellors to special school to help them in their problems, etc.