

# **SOCIAL PERCEPTION, MOTIVATIONAL PREFERENCE AND EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS OF THE CHALLENGED YOUTH IN CROSS RIVER STATE**

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## **Abstract**

This study investigate the prevailing and unabated poor motivation unemployment syndrome of the challenged youth in Cross River State Four hypotheses wee formulated and tested. 200 parents, 200 challenged youth and 200 employers of labour all from 25 government and 30 private establishments including the 3 Special Education Centres in the State were randomly selected and used. Social Perception of Challenged Youth employment Prospects Inventory TCYRP and the Self-Concept of the Challenged Inventory, SCCHI were used to collect data for the study. The data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation and independent t-test, all were used at .05 level of significance. The research findings show that the society still has a very low perception of the Challenged Youth and this has negative effects on their Self-Concept, achievement, motivation and employment prospects. In view of this, the study therefore opines that the entire Cross Riverians and Nigerian as a whole should change their cultural ideal and attitudes towards the challenged youth and get abreast with the wind of change and grant equity to them.

## **Introduction**

Perception is one of the most significant yet complex challenges we face as social animals. It is the first critical stage in any interaction among people since we must first perceive and interpret other people's view before we can meaningfully relate with them. In the world of vocational and educational achievements, every individual including the challenged is unique. The Challenged individual says and does thing other people do not understand and seems to see the world of vocation an education through different perspectives. Yet because each individual including the challenged plays such a key role in one another's life, the mystery of other people is one we cannot afford to have unresolved. Accordingly we are often engaged in efforts to understand others, to gain insight into the intentions, traits and motives, (Ikpaya, 2001).

We try to figure out what the challenged are really like, why they do and say certain things. On the basis of such knowledge people try to determine the best ways of interacting with then in terms of vocational placement and motivational preferences. How the society handles the problems posed by the presence of challenged individuals reflects its fundamental conception of the nature and worth of the individual and its basic assumptions concerning its obligations to him. Nigerian have traditionally seen themselves as devoid of social class bids and their society as uniquely open and fluid, (Burt, 2002). They believe strongly that all people are born free and equal, every persons, the challenged inclusive is entitled to such other freedoms and equality as equity in law, equal right to life and self-actualization. Each person has a right to dignity, courtesy, respect and the maximum provision for him to develop whatever potentials he has through positive achievement motivations. In our Nigerian society today, the assets and liabilities of the challenged are determined as much by the tasks and demands of society as by the objective fact of the types and degrees of disability, (Abang, 2002).

The cultural ideal of physical wholeness means that visible disabilities generally produce more negative reactions and social discrimination than mere disabling invisible disabilities, (Lawson, 2005; and Oni, 2000). Other social values are also intertwined with aptitudes of a person. Social stereotype also functions as value laden norms in the intellectual vocational, motivational and behavioural realm. The idea of a sound mind in a sound body is still a norm in our society. Hence the challenged being perceived as unsound and regarded incapable of performing effectively in any vocation and is poorly motivated even at times being kept out of the scheme of things and therefore declared devalued people (Thomas, 2000).

In recent years, the attitude of people towards the disabled people has gradually progressed from that of extermination to custodial care and education. This has been attributed to social consciousness and awareness through the emergence of special education and the resultant patronage of philanthropic organization and individuals, (Feingold, 2003).

Abang (2002) revealed that every adult in an ideal situation is expected to contribute in some ways to the developmental effort of his nation in its significant respects, be it economic, political, social, motivational, physical or cultural. Each of these provides numerous opportunities for the citizens including the challenged to contribute singly or collectively (Onyejiaku, 2001). Of all these aspects, the economic sector which involves employment appears to be the foundation on which other aspects depend for fuller expression and each person's disability notwithstanding should be identified with one particular gainful employment (Bassey, 2003).

The social acceptability level of challenged tends to place him at a disadvantage as the motivational preference of the challenged towards realistic career decision making is quite low at times non-existent (Nicholas, 2000). Acquisition of vocational skills and adequate vocational information enhance the job opportunities of the challenged. Special education centres should be well equipped and staffed too cope with the modern demands so that the training offered in these centres would motivate the challenged to take realistic vocational decision that can prosper their job opportunities, (Bakwan, 2004).

### **Statement of the Problem**

The problem of motivational preferences and employment of the challenged in Cross River State is an enigma which had long plagued the independent and cooperative efforts of specialists in the field of special education, psychology, vocational rehabilitation personnel and others. The relationship between motivational preference and job performance of the challenged persons lacks consistent position in our literature.

It is evident that many parents, teachers, peers and employers of labour in Cross River State still tend to underestimate the capacities of the challenged. They are always unemployed particularly at the semi-skilled and skilled levels. At school they are usually neglected and poorly motivated, their efforts are not recognized and adequately rewarded.

It is undoubted accepted that the numerous problems are generally associated with the traditional but mistaken notion that the challenged are devoid of skills and aptitude and thus achieve less in any field of endeavour. It therefore becomes imperative for this study to establish whether social perception and motivational preferences of the challenged youth have any influence on their job prospects.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Motivational preference of the challenged people and their employment prospects in Cross River State, Schools and labour markets have been a pressing concern for the challenged themselves, parents, schools personnel and the general public in recent times.

This study tries to establish if the perception of the challenged youth be the society especially the employers of labour has any negative or positive influence on their job prospects. The study also attempts to establish if the level of motivation of the challenged youth could facilitate their achievement in any area of job prospects.

### **Hypotheses**

The study is guided by the following hypotheses

1. There is no significant relationship between social perception of the challenged Youth and Government policies on the challenged.
2. There is no significant relationship between social perception of the challenged youth and the type of disability.
3. There is no significant relationship between the employment prospects of the challenged youth and the execution of Government policies.

4. There is no significant relationship between self concepts of the challenged youth and their motivational preferences.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study will be of immense benefits to state and federal governments, management of special centres, teachers, parents and the challenged youth. Also to benefit from this work are specialists to vocational training, special education and psychology department of the Universities in Nigeria and elsewhere.

The study, because of its expository and cooperative outlook, will provide sound basis for the upliftment and equal treatment of the challenged youth in Nigeria in general and Cross River State in particular. Finally, this study is significant because it would add to our growing knowledge on youth and the challenged youth in particular.

### **Design of the Study**

The survey design was considered as the most appropriate technique for this study. This is because the research is based on the responses from a number of people who are representatives of a population.

### **Population**

The population of the study is made up of all the handicapped students in all the three Special Educational Centres in Calabar, Ogoja and Obudu in Cross River State-Government and Private sectors. A total population of 1480 handicapped students from the three Education Centres were the subjects of the study.

### **Sample and Sampling Techniques**

The sample of this study is made up of 200 challenged youth, 200 Government and Private officials and 200 parents of the challenged youth. The sample size was randomly selected from 34 Government/Private establishments within the 3 Senatorial Districts of the Cross River State. Stratified random sampling technique was employed to select both the Government and Private establishments based on the nature of the study.

### **Instrumentation**

The instruments for this study were Social Perception of the Challenged Youth Inventory, SPCYI; Motivational Preference Inventory, MPI; the Challenged Youth employment Prospects Inventory, TCYEPI and the Self-Concept of the Challenged Inventory, SECOHI. The instruments were structured questionnaire adopted by the researcher to exact some control over the choice of responses by the respondents and force them to be more objective in their choice by agreeing or disagreeing on various degrees.

### **Validation**

A team of experts in test and measurement in the Faculty of Education University of Uyo did the validation of these instruments. The items were restructured and reorganized properly to elicit adequate information by the experts from the respondents.

### **Results**

The variables as well as the statistical analysis technique were adopted to test the hypotheses. The 0.05 level of significance was used for the statistical testing of each of the hypotheses.

### **Hypothesis 1**

This hypothesis stated that there was no significant relationship between social perception of the challenged youth and the Government policies on the challenged. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis was considered the most appropriate to test this hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1:** Pearson Product Moment Analysis of the Relationship between Social Perception of the Challenged Youth and Government Policies.

Variables	$\frac{\sum Y}{\sum Y}$	$\frac{\sum X^2}{\sum Y^2}$	$\sum XY$	r-Value	Decision
Social Perception of the Challenged Youth	21888	20461	1053441	0.64	Ho is rejected
Government Policies	17850	16257			

- Significant at 0.05, Critical r = 0.88, df = 598

The result as presented above indicates that the calculated r-value of 0.64 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.88 at .05 level of significance with 598 degree of freedom. With the result of this analysis the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate is upheld.

**Hypothesis 2**

This hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between social perception of the challenged youth and the type of stability. Pearson Produce Moment Correlation Analysis was used to test the hypothesis. The result of the analysis is presented in Table 2.

**Table 2:** Pearson Moment Analysis of Relationship between Social Perception of the Challenged Youth and their type of disability.

Variables	$\frac{\sum Y}{\sum Y}$	$\frac{\sum X^2}{\sum Y^2}$	$\sum XY$	r-Value	Decision
Social Perception of the Challenged Youth	21888	20461	1042432	0.57	Ho is rejected
Type of disability	18384	14238			

- Significant at 0.05, Critical r = 0.88, df = 598

The result in Table 2 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.57 than the critical r-value of .088 at .05 level of significance with 598 degrees of freedom. This is higher result indicates that there is a significant relationship between social perception of the challenged youth and the type of disability among them.

**Hypothesis 3**

This hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between the employment prospects of the challenged youth and execution of Government policies.

**Table 3:** Pearson Product Moment Analysis Relationship between employment Prospects of the Challenged youth and execution of the Government Policies (N = 600)

Variables	$\frac{\sum Y}{\sum Y}$	$\frac{\sum X^2}{\sum Y^2}$	$\sum XY$	r-Value	Decision
Employment Prospects	20892	22763	1130531	0.85*	Ho is rejected
Government Policies	17850	19738			

- $P > .05$ , Critical  $r = 0.88$ ,  $df = 598$

An examination of the result shows that calculated r-value of 0.85, this is greater than the critical r-value of 0.85, this is greater than the critical r-value of .088 at .05 level of significance with 598 degrees of freedom. With the result of this analysis the null hypothesis is rejected while the alternate is retained. This implies that there is a significant relationship between the employment of the challenged youth and the execution of government policies.

#### **Hypothesis 4**

This hypothesis states that there is no significant relationship between self-concept of the challenged youth and their motivational preferences. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Analysis of the Relationship between Self-Concept of the Challenged youth and their Motivational Preferences (N = 600).

**Table 4:** Pearson Product Moment Analysis of Relationship between self-concept of the Challenged Youth and their motivational Preferences.

Variables	$\frac{\sum Y}{\sum Y}$	$\frac{\sum X^2}{\sum Y^2}$	$\sum XY$	r-Value	Decision
Social Perception of the Challenged Youth	21888	20461	1042432	0.57	Ho is rejected
Type of disability	18384	14238			

- Significant at .05, Critical  $r = .088$ ,  $df = 598$

The result in table 4 shows that the calculated r-value of 0.84 is higher than the critical re-value of .088 at .05 level of significance with 598 degree of freedom. With this result the alternate is up-held. This means that there is a significant relationship between self-concept of the challenged Youth and their motivational preferences.

#### **Finding of the Study**

The result of the first hypothesis in Table 1 indicates that relationship exists between social perception of the challenged youth and government policies. The findings are in line with that of Fadeity (1994) which revealed that policies of different Nigerian Governments favour the non-handicapped than the handicapped because of the societal influence.

The social perception of the challenged youth and the type of disability among them are very much related. To support the findings of this study Olutoyinbo (1996) revealed that the more severe and visible a handicapping condition, the more of attacks the attention and sympathy of the society. This may explain why the public accommodates those challenged Youth with more disabling visible disabilities.

The third hypothesis as shown in Table 3 reveals that the employment prospects of the challenged youth were significantly related to execution of Government policies. The findings are in

line the principles of Nigerian National Policy on Education (2001) which clearly indicated that there should be concrete equal employment/educational opportunities for all children normal or challenged. When this is translated into concrete terms, the youth should be able to fully play their roles in the development of the nation.

The result of the 4<sup>th</sup> hypothesis indicates that job prospects of the challenged youth have a very good relationship with the societal assistance given to them. The findings of the study were in agreement with Osudukwu (1996) who is in describing the attitude of Nigerians towards the challenged said the apathy and prejudices against the challenged in employment and progress on jobs are quite visible even in the most enlightened quarters both in the public and private sectors.

### **Recommendations**

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

1. Government should not only make policies but should also execute policies that would influence the social perception of the challenged youth.
2. The challenged youth should be trained to develop in whatever they lay their hands on and in their areas of interest and anticipation bearing in mind that everything is a challenge in itself.
3. People at the corridors of power and the society in general should always assist the challenged youth through motivation.
4. Employment opportunities should be provided to all categories of youth. Besides, the government and non-governmental agencies should embark on enlightenment programmes to modify and motivate the behavior of the youth.

### **Conclusions**

Based on the findings of the study the following conclusions are made:

Social perception of the challenged youth has a significant relationship with government policies and with the type of disability among the youth.

Challenged youth-parent relationship is a human necessity thus employment prospects must have a significant relationships with the assistance of the society.

The execution of the government policies has a direct effect on the stability of the society and wellbeing of the people, challenged youth inclusive.

Self-concept of the challenged youth has a true reflection with their motivational preferences.

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