

FACTORS INFLUENCING STEM CAREER INTERESTS IN HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

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ABSTRACT

Studies in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) have focused considerably on issues related to underrepresented groups' participation in STEM disciplines. Students with disabilities are among the groups that are underrepresented in STEM careers worldwide. The problem is of great concern as persons with disabilities are rarely found in stem career fields. This study investigated whether and to what extent the selected factors predict STEM career interest in students with disabilities in senior secondary schools in Nigeria. A quantitative approach was utilized in the study, using descriptive research design. Data were collected using a demographic questionnaire, three subscales were of the interest in STEM career questionnaire developed by Halim et al., (2018), and stem Career Interest Survey (STEM-CIS) (Kier et al., 2014). Data analyses were conducted using descriptive statistic and regression analyses. Descriptive statistics showed that participants recorded high score in social influences on STEM career interests (Mean= 3.42, SD=.69) and poor perception of STEM career (Mean=2.45, SD=.72) among students with disabilities. Regression analysis showed that interest in STEM career fields, such as science, technology, engineering and mathematics related careers were predicted by social influences, perception of STEM career and STEM self-efficacy in the participants. It was concluded that social influences, perception of STEM careers and STEM self-efficacy were the major determinants of STEM career interests in students with disabilities. These findings can be used to inform career counseling and research.

KEYWORDS: Career Developments, Career Interests, Disabilities & STEM

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