

IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON THE KNOWLEDGE AND ATTITUDE OF PEOPLE TOWARDS ALBINOS IN THE FEDERAL COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, PANKSHIN, PLATEAU STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Albinism is a genetic condition that affects the pigmentation of the skin, eyes and hair. Albinos are born with an unusual “white” skin colouration. The hair appears bleached and the eyes are affected as they have to squint to see clearly. In Africa they are the subject of many negative myths and misconceptions that have stigmatized them and rendered them as outcasts in many communities. One of the major challenges they encounter is non-acceptability and therefore isolation from their family peers. In the education sector, their opportunities are restricted because of this psychological challenge of isolation but also because the schools are generally designed for non-albino students. The study investigates the impact that education may have on the knowledge and attitudes of staff and students towards albinos in the Federal College of Education, Pankshin, which is a tertiary institution. The study adopted a quasi-experimental design, with a sample size of 334. A knowledge and attitude liker-scale questionnaire was administered after which a workshop was conducted to discuss albinism and its challenges. The respondents were then re-tested on the knowledge and attitude scale questionnaire again to determine if there have been any changes to the knowledge and attitude of respondents towards albinos. A chi-square, principal component and paired-sample t-test were used to test hypotheses. The study found that the participants were generally knowledgeable about albinism and had an accommodating and sympathetic attitude towards them though some of them also exhibited a distant/detached attitude as well. Age, gender, educational qualification and status were all found to significantly affect the knowledge of participants on albinism. The workshop also was also found to be significant in improving the knowledge base and attitudes of participants towards albinos. The study recommended that the institution should organize mandatory education and enlightenment workshops for its staff and students to sensitize them on disabilities especially albinism and how they can be fully integrated into the school systems.

KEYWORDS: *Knowledge and Attitudes, Organize Mandatory Education and Enlightenment Workshops*