



مجلة جامعة السميطة

مجلة محكمة نصف سنوية يصدرها مركز البحوث والدراسات العليا

SUMAIT University Journal (SUJ)

A peer-reviewed biannual journal published by the Center of
Research and Postgraduate Studies (CRPS)

ISSN; 2507-7864

السنة الرابعة، العدد الثامن، يونيو 2021
Fourth Year, Issue No. 8, June, 2021

Psychosocial Factors as Predictors of Academic Self-Efficacy among Secondary School Students in Oyo State, Nigeria

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Received: 12/12/2020, Accepted: 22/03/2021

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Abstract

The study assessed the level of academic self-efficacy of secondary school students in Oyo State and how it can be affected by peer pressure, locus of control and student attitude. This study adopted the descriptive research design of the correlational type. A total of three hundred (300) secondary school students participated in this study using a multistage sampling technique. Three research questions were tested and answered at 0.05 level of significance. Reliable instruments (Peer Pressure Questionnaire; $r=0.86$, Locus of Control Survey; $r=0.88$, Student Attitude Questionnaire; $r=0.76$, Self-Efficacy Questionnaire; $r=0.82$) were used in collecting the data. Data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Linear Regression. It was discovered that there was a significant relationship between peer pressure ($\beta=.703$), locus of control ($\beta=.453$), student attitude ($\beta=-.210$) and self-efficacy. Regression analysis revealed that the three independent variables (peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude) jointly accounted for 54.5% (Adjusted $R^2=.545$) variation in the prediction of self-efficacy. The strongest predictors of self-efficacy were peer pressure and locus control, followed by student attitude. It was recommended that school counsellors should counsel students on the need to develop higher academic self-efficacy other than just stop at the moderate level, as the higher level would bring about excellent results in their academics and help them throughout their life endeavours.

Keywords: Psychosocial factors, Peer pressure, Locus of control, Student attitude, Academic self-efficacy

Introduction

Academic self-efficacy explains a person's confidence in his/her ability to solve a problem or accomplish a task. Self-efficacy is individual confidence in his ability to organize and execute a given course of action to solve a

problem or accomplish a task. In a simple definition academic self-efficacy as an individual's belief that he/she can successfully achieve a particular academic task at a designated level (Schunk and Pajares, 2001). The level of students' academic self-efficacy tends to explain how much conviction they will demonstrate and how long they will persist in the face of obstacles and frustrating experience they may encounter in the studies. Academic self-efficacy is a firm belief and self-confidence held by the learner that he/she can achieve the set academic goals and can perform specific academic tasks with ease (Vituli, 2016). Learners' self-efficacy can be in three dimensions; some learners have high academic self-efficacy while others have average and low academic self-efficacy. The three dimensions of academic self-efficacy affect a learners' academic achievement (Hill, 2016).

Self-efficacy at a high level creates a feeling of calmness or serenity when one approaches difficult academic tasks. Students, who are confident in their capability and can execute a problem-solving technique, are demonstrating a high level of self-efficacy. Students with a high level of self-efficacy tend to take a wider view of a task in order to determine the best plan and are more likely to exert efforts towards accomplishing academic tasks and persist when faced with difficulty (Akomolafe, 2010). Students with low self-efficacy are more likely to doubt their capability and give up easily, hindering the growth opportunities; they put in little efforts and give up quickly when they encounter challenges (Ugoji, 2013). Students who do not believe they can succeed in academic-related activities will avoid them if they can or put forth the minimal effort if they cannot, when confronted with typical academic challenges, students with low self-efficacy will be more likely to give up (Owodunni, 2019). However, Ugoji (2013) found that there was an increase in poor academic achievement among secondary school students mostly students with lower self-efficacy. Several studies concerned with the influence of self-efficacy in the field of education (teaching/learning) have yielded a positive result. Aremu (2009); Bakar, Tarmizi, Mahyuddin, Elias, Wong & Ayub (2010) posits that students' academic self-efficacy predicts achievement. Also, Ugoji (2013) found a significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement. This makes self-efficacy a major factor to improve student achievement. Aboma (2009) have postulated that there was a relationship between self-efficacy and students' achievement at different levels of

education. This study now identified peer pressure, locus control and student attitude as factors influencing students' academic self-efficacy.

The most influential factor among secondary school students in peer influence, and easily affect students with low self-efficacy. Peer pressure is the degree to which individuals feel pressure to act or think in a certain way. Also, is the extent to which behaviour among friends is correlated. Hence, peer pressure may be defined as a direct or indirect encouragement from one's age group to engage in activities that they may or may not want to engage in. Omotere (2011) found that peer pressure as the degree to which individuals feel pressured to act or think in different ways. Peer pressure is the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person to change his/her behaviours, values, characters, attitude to conform to the group norms (Turgut, 2013).

Peer pressure makes individuals behave in ways that they do not usually do and adolescent students are more vulnerable to peer influence because it is their time for experimenting with new experiences (Ugoji, 2013). Peer pressure leads to experimentation with sex, skipping school, alcohol, drugs, and various high-risk behaviours (Newton & Mwisika, 2009). Peer pressure tends to be more powerful than the influence of teachers and other authority figures and has more of an effect on children with low self-efficacy. No adolescent wants to be seen as the misfit or the one who does not quite fit in with the group, so peer pressure can be a major contributory factor in a students' self-efficacy. Whether teachers or parents like it or not, the opinions of the child's peers often carry more weight than theirs. Therefore, a peer group could negatively influence the academic self-efficacy of secondary school students (Omotere, 2011).

Locus of control can be explained as a factor consisting of a person's life history which encompasses learning experiences and the environment (Rotter, 1954). There are divergent views on the origin of locus of control among people. Some people see it as an inborn quality which forms a proportion of one's personality which others view it as a human characteristic that is shaped by one's experiences in the environment and interaction that a child interacts with other people such as teachers/parents. Children who grow up in supportive environments whereby their parents encourage them to be independent have increased interaction which results

in the development of a better locus of control. People's locus of control can either be internally oriented or externally oriented (Samuel, 2020).

Locus of control can be defined as the learner's attribution of the cause of his/her academic achievement; that is whether the learner performs with efforts from within oneself or the learner's performance is attributed and controlled by factors outside the learner which the learner is unable to control (Abbas, 2018). Locus of control is a changeable trait. Changing a person's thought patterns and altering the environment where an individual is based on automatically changes the person's locus of control (Rotter, 1954). Therefore, a learner's locus of control orientation can be changed by the school environment.

Based on Rotter's (1966), social learning theory, Morhead and Griffing (2004), defined locus of control as the extent to which individuals believe that their life circumstances are functions of their actions or external factors beyond their control. Halpert and Hill, (2011) also defined locus of control as where an individual place the primary causation of events in his or her life. Locus of control falls on a continuum, with those who believe that their lives are largely controlled by outside forces (externals) falling on one end of the spectrum while those who believe that by and large, they control their own lives (internals) falling on the other end. Previous researches have examined the relationship between locus of control and self-efficacy (Parker, 1999; Liu, Lavelle & Andri, 2000; and Qazi, 2009). Adedeji, Adeyinka & Olufemi (2009) emphasized the relationship between academic and locus of control focusing on if the locus of control together with extraversion and peer pressure could predict students' academic self-efficacy.

Attitudes towards school and learning are associated with academic achievement. Attitudes play a vital role in influencing student academic performance because it is an expression of likes or dislikes against a particular thing. An attitude is a disposition of beliefs, feelings, and behavioural tendencies towards socially significant objects, groups, events or symbols. Huang (2012) sees attitude as a patterned perception developed through one's reaction to the environment. Attitudes structure can be described in terms of three components: affective component (involves a person's feelings about an attitude object); behavioural component (the way the attitude we have influenced how we act or behave), and a cognitive

component (involves a person's belief/knowledge about an attitude object). This model is known as the ABC model or three-component model of attitudes (Geddes, Murrell and Bauguss, 2010; Fisher, Schult and & Hell, 2013; Kpolovie, Joe & Okoto, 2014). The important factor contributing to students' confidence in individual subjects is their attitude towards those subjects (Huang, 2012). If a good attitude is formed towards school and learning, students can better cope with learning challenges and develop academic self-efficacy.

Literature Review

The aim of education goes beyond the development of academic competence. Schools have the added responsibility of preparing self-assured and fully functioning individuals capable of pursuing their hopes and ambition. Educational practices should be gauged not only by the skills and knowledge they impart for present use but also for what they do to students beliefs about their capabilities which affect how they approach the future (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy also correlates with indexes of self-regulation, mostly the use of effective learning strategies. Self-efficacy, self-regulation and cognitive strategy use are positively inter-correlated and predict achievement. Students with high self-efficacy for successful problem-solving display greater performance monitoring and persist longer than do students with lower self-efficacy is not likely to influence male and female students' subsequent choice of career differently. Self-efficacy beliefs are influenced by various internal, external interactive factors and reflected in career-related outcome expectancies and performances.

The literature on academic self-efficacy beliefs and academic achievement exist. For example, the relationship between social science students' attitude towards research methods and statistics, self-efficacy, effort and academic performances were examined (Li, 2012). There was a significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance amongst high school students (Motlagh, Amrai, Yazdani, Altaib Abderahim, & Souri, 2011). There was a significant difference between males and females in self-efficacy and a correlation between self-efficacy and academic performance among secondary schools, which applied both qualitative and quantitative research approaches (Shkullaku, 2013). Self-efficacy can be used to improve academic performance which was the interest of the current

study (Motlagh et al, 2011). Even though it is good for various stakeholders to understand the positive correlation between self-efficacy and academic performance, it is also important for the said persons to understand how the former affects the latter. Furthermore, while focusing on high school students, Motlagh et al (2011) assumed that all students are equal when in a real sense this is not true as many students should be treated as a special interest. Having reviewed several articles, Honicke & Broadbent (2016) established that owing to the paucity and longitudinal nature of reviewed studies, it would be essential for deeper study on the relationships amongst the various variables under investigation, which the current study took up and investigated how self-efficacy relates to academic performance.

Besides, Zuffianò *et al.* (2013) established the effects of academic performances, gender, socioeconomic status, intelligence, personality traits, and self-esteem of the students on academic achievements. Chowdhury and Shahabuddin (2011) examined how self-efficacy, motivation and academic performance interact among students enrolled in an introductory marketing course in a private university of Bangladesh. In Singapore, Loo and Choy, (2013) found a significant relationship between self-efficacy (mastery experience, vicarious experience, social persuasion, emotional arousal) and academic performance.

In Nigeria, Ogunmakin and Akomolafe (2013) investigated the role of academic self-efficacy, academic motivation and academic self-concept in predicting secondary school students' academic performance. Two hundred and ninety-eight students constituted the study's sample. Descriptive research design correlational type was used in the reviewed study. Both the independent and dependent variables were measured with relevant standardized instruments. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyze the data collected. The results showed that academic self-efficacy, academic motivation and academic self-concept significantly predicted students' academic performance.

Onu, Asongwa and Obetta, (2016) studied whether the locus of control correlates to self-efficacy. 250 participants who had graduated from a university having pursued agriculture-related courses were sampled. These graduates were picked from five states which are located in the southeastern region of Nigeria. From each state, 50 respondents were purposively sampled. Data were collected using three self-developed questionnaires. The

results of the study were analyzed using the F-test and Analysis of variance. This study had some limitations. Purposive sampling used is subject to the biases of the researcher. Also, self-developed questionnaires may not be reliable. In the current study, the participants were randomly sampled and already existing standardized tools were adapted for data collection.

Onkundi, (2014) did a study on how students' locus of control, self-efficacy and academic achievement are related. A sample of 150 students from Nyamira County secondary schools participated in the study. The findings revealed the existence of a positive relationship between self-efficacy and locus of control. The study was guided by Attribution theory to explain locus of control and a correlational research design was used. The present study was guided by the Social Learning Theory by Rotter (1954) to explain the locus of control. Therefore, given that the present study was guided by a different theory and a different methodology was used to collect data, a similar study needed to be done to determine whether similar results will be obtained.

Statement of the Problem

Reports from WASSCE examiners show that the standard of education in Nigeria is falling yearly, while the number of students re-enrolling is increasing every year. This is to the dissatisfaction of the Government, parents, teachers, educational psychologists and educational stakeholders. Many educational researchers had carried out several kinds of research on factors influencing or contributing to students' achievement among senior secondary schools such as students' interest, study habits, parental involvement affecting students' academic self-efficacy. Based on past studies, little or no empirical findings have been conducted on the combination of these variables such as peer pressure, locus control, and student attitude to establish the relationship on students' academic self-efficacy. It is on this basis, the researcher seeks to establish an existing relationship among peer pressure, locus control, and student attitude on student academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between the psychosocial factors and the academic self-efficacy of secondary school students in Oyo State. The specific objectives were to;

- i. investigate the relationship between peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude on students' self-efficacy in senior secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria
- ii. determine the joint contribution of peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude on students' self-efficacy in senior secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria
- iii. examine the relative contribution of peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude on students' self-efficacy in senior secondary schools in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

- i. What is the relationship between the independent variables (peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude) and the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) among secondary school students?
- ii. What is the joint contribution of the independent variable (peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude) and the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) among secondary school students?
- iii. What is the relative contribution of the independent variable (peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude) and the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) among secondary school students?

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted a correlational design to establish the relationship between the study variables and the predictive weights of the independent variables on the variation of the dependent variable. This method was adopted because the variables of the study were existing variables that did not require any manipulation by the researcher.

The population of the Study

The population in this study comprised all public secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

The multistage sampling technique was adopted in the study. The first stage involved a random selection of five (5) local government areas in the State. The second stage involved the use of simple random sampling to select two (2) secondary schools each in a local government area. The third stage involved the use of simple random sampling to select thirty (30) secondary students from each school making a total number of three hundred (300) students that participated in the study.

Research Instrument

A questionnaire was used to collect relevant information from the participants of the study. The questionnaire was divided into five segments, with each of the segments tapping information based on the identified variables of interest. It comprised five sections: Section A: Demographic characteristics of the Respondents; Section B - Peer Pressure Questionnaire ($r = 0.86$), Section C - Locus of Control Survey ($r = 0.88$); Section D - Student Attitude Questionnaire ($r = 0.76$), and Section E - Self-Efficacy Questionnaire ($r = 0.82$). Data were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and Multiple Linear Regression to test the three research questions.

Results

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between the independent variables (peer pressure, locus control, and student attitude) and the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) among secondary school students?

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Inter-correlations among the Variables

Variables	N	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Academic Self-efficacy	300	43.91	4.25	1.000			
2. Peer Pressure	300	38.28	7.31	.703**	1.000		
3. Locus of Control	300	44.32	3.56	.453**	.594* *	1.000	
4. Student Attitude	300	26.54	8.51	-	.018	.119*	1.00

				.210**			0
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** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 1 reveals the inter-correlation matrix between the independent variables (student attitude, locus of control, and peer pressure) and the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) among the secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria. Peer pressure ($r = .703, p < 0.01$) and locus of control ($r = .453, p < 0.01$) positively and significantly correlated with self-efficacy, while student attitude was negatively and significantly correlated with self-efficacy ($-0.210, p < 0.01$) among secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Research Question 2: What is the joint contribution of the independent variable (peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude) and the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) among secondary school students?

Table 2: Regression Analysis showing the joint contribution of the variables on school Adjustment

Multiple R = .742					
Multiple R ² = .551					
R ² (adjusted) = .545					
Standard Error of Estimate = 2.869					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
1 Regression	2971.011	3	991.334	120.456	.000 ^b
Residual	2432.745	296	8.222		
Total	5403.756	299			

Table 2 shows the joint contribution of the independent variable (peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude) to the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) among secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria. The result revealed that peer pressure, locus control, and student attitude yielded a coefficient of multiple correlation $R = 0.742$, multiple correlation $R^2 = 0.551$ and the Adjusted $R^2 = 54.5\%$. This indicated that about 55.5% of the total variance of self-efficacy among secondary school

students in Oyo State was accounted for by the linear combination of peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude while the remaining 44.5% could be assigned to other estranged factors not considered in this study. Table 2 also reveals that peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude had a significant joint influence on self-efficacy among secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria ($F_{(3, 296)} = 120.456$; $p < 0.05$).

Research Question 3: What is the relative contribution of the independent variable (peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude) and the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) among secondary school students?

Table 3: Multiple Regression showing the Relative Contribution of each of the Variables

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta (β)		
1 (Constant)	27.544	2.122		12.918	.000
Peer Pressure	.376	.028	.653	13.406	.000
Locus of Control	.112	.057	.091	1.922	.042
Student Attitude	-.117	.021	-.233	-5.915	.004

Table 3 reveals the relative contribution of student attitude, locus of control, and student attitude to self-efficacy among secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria. The table also shows that student attitude ($\beta = -0.233$; $t = -5.915$; $p < 0.05$), locus control ($\beta = 0.091$; $t = 1.922$; $p < 0.05$), and peer pressure ($\beta = 0.653$; $t = 13.406$; $p < 0.05$) made significant independent contribution to self-efficacy among secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria. This implies that an increased influence of peer pressure will increase students' self-efficacy by 65.3%, student attitude will increase students' self-efficacy by 23.3%, while locus of control will increase students' self-efficacy by 9.1%.

Discussion of Findings

The relationships between the independent variables (peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude) and the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) among secondary school students have revealed. The outcome of the analysis reveals that academic self-efficacy reveal a positive correlation with peer pressure and locus of control, while student attitude does not correlate with academic self-efficacy. This implies that as peer pressure and locus of control positively increase, student academic self-efficacy also increase. This finding corroborates that peer pressure determines the academic self-efficacy of the students more often in the reverse. Teens succumb to peer pressure because they want to feel like they fit in or belong to a group (Ogunboyede & Agokei, 2016). On the contrary to this finding corroborates that peer group negatively influence the academic self-efficacy of secondary school students (Omotere, 2011).

This study also found a significant relationship between students' academic self-efficacy and locus of control. It was discovered that most of the students possessed an external locus of control. This relates to the fact that most of the students attributed their academic success to luck, fate or some other external power. This implies that the more internal a students' locus of control, the better his/her academic self-efficacy to influence performance (Qazi, 2009), locus of control has a significant relationship with self-efficacy (Nuga, 2013). Although previous studies have not delineated the direction of the relationship that exists between locus of control and self-efficacy, the findings of this study revealed a positive and significant relationship between both variables among secondary school students.

In this study, it was discovered that student attitude was negative and significantly correlated with self-efficacy. Therefore, an increase in student negative attitude will lead to a reduction in self-efficacy. Likewise reducing student negative attitude among secondary school students will enhance self-efficacy among them. This implies that the students' self-efficacy is a function of the level of student attitude.

Findings have revealed the joint contribution of the independent variable (peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude) on the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy). It shows that the (peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude) jointly accounted for 55.5% when pulled together have significant effects on the academic self-efficacy of secondary school students. This result justifies that students' peer pressure, locus of

control, and student attitude towards school and learning to an extent predict students' academic self-efficacy.

The most potent among the factors was peer pressure followed by the locus of control, and lastly, students' attitude made an only negative contribution to the prediction of academic self-efficacy. This finding corroborates that peer group influence the academic self-efficacy of secondary school students (Omotere, 2011). This also corroborates the findings of another researcher (Kpolovie, Joe & Okoto, 2014) who have reported a significant and positive correlation between attitude and academic self-efficacy. Academic self-efficacy correlates to a student's attitude towards learning and the school (Walker, 2010).

Conclusion

Self-efficacy is a desirable outcome expected in students, especially in the academic environment. But several factors can precipitate it. This research has established that peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude relatively predict students' academic self-efficacy. The finding of the study also revealed that peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude jointly predicted self-efficacy among secondary school students. It was also reported from Pearson Correlation that peer pressure, locus of control positively and significantly correlated with self-efficacy, while student attitude inversely and significantly correlated with self-efficacy among the secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria. This implies that self-efficacy among secondary school students in Oyo State, Nigeria can be developed if student peer pressure, locus of control, and student attitude are positively implemented by students.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following are recommended:

- Students should be sensitised by teachers, parents, and/or Counselling Psychologists applied to the importance of positive attitudes to school and learning and the dangers of their peers.
- Teachers should help guide students towards facts discovery and positive relationship with their peers as these are some of the strategies that could enhance attitude and academic self-efficacy in students.

- To enhance the level of students' academic self-efficacy, teachers should help build up confidence in students.

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