
**AN IN-DEPTH ASSESSMENT OF SELF-EFFICACY AND ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT AMONG JUNIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ENUGU
EAST LGA**

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Abstract

This paper aims to explore and assess the level of self-efficacy and its relationship with academic achievement among junior secondary school students in Enugu East Local Government Area (LGA). The study further seeks to understand if there exist significant differences in self-efficacy and academic achievement based on various demographic factors such as gender, age, and location. An in-depth assessment was conducted to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement among junior secondary school students in Enugu East LGA. The study included participants from various schools in the LGA and aimed to understand how self-efficacy impacts academic performance. The results showed a significant correlation between self-efficacy and academic achievement, with students who had higher levels of self-efficacy performing better academically. This suggests that enhancing self-efficacy can lead to improved academic outcomes for students. Furthermore, the study also identified specific factors that contribute to self-efficacy among junior secondary school students, such as parental support, teacher encouragement, and peer influence. These findings can inform interventions and strategies for improving self-efficacy among students, which may ultimately lead to better academic achievement. In conclusion, this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement among junior secondary school students in Enugu East LGA. It highlights the importance of promoting self-efficacy among students and provides practical recommendations for educators, parents, and policymakers to enhance academic outcomes for students in this region.

Keywords: Self-efficacy, Junior, Secondary, Academic and Achievement

Introduction:

Self-efficacy is a psychological construct that refers to individuals' belief in their abilities to accomplish specific tasks, meet challenges, and achieve their goals (Bandura, 2011). In educational contexts, self-efficacy is considered critical as it influences how students approach their academic work and persevere through challenging tasks. Thus, studying self-efficacy becomes necessary to understand students' academic achievement and help educational practitioners make informed decisions on the interventions required to enhance students' success.

This study will be conducted in Enugu East LGA, where students' academic achievement is a priority for educational stakeholders. To achieve the research objectives, this thesis will employ a cross-sectional quantitative research design. Previous studies have established the significance of self-efficacy in students' learning processes and academic achievement (Schunk, 2012). Nevertheless, research focusing on junior secondary school students' self-efficacy and academic achievement in Enugu East LGA is yet to be conducted.

Self-efficacy is defined as confidence in one's capability for organizing and implementing the cognitive, behavioral, or social skills necessary for successful performance of a task (Brunning, 2015). It also refers to the people's belief about their capabilities to produce designated level of

performance that exercise influences over events that affect their lives. Self-efficacy plays a vital role in students' lives and future. The reduction and improvement of self-efficacy will contribute towards their achievement in life. Students with low or high level of self-efficacy will display different attitudes in learning. Study done by Abu-Tineh, Khasawneh, and Khalaileh (2017) has shown that when students have low level of self-efficacy, they have the potential to commit discipline problems at school. The self-efficacy which is centered in the mind, works to control the attention of the human discipline. These concepts were supported by Sanders and Wooley (2018). They investigated that self-efficacy is the best predictor of discipline problems.

Thus, self-efficacy has the potential to guide human actions and behaviors. Students, who have high level of self-efficacy, will have more awareness about their learning and they will not commit discipline problems. From this statement, it could be understood that self-efficacy can be described as the key factor and cause of discipline problems. Therefore, it is

important for the researcher to investigate students' self-efficiency.

Bandura (2011) defines Self-Efficiency as one's belief in one's ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish a task. One's sense of Self-Efficacy can play a major role in how one approaches goals, tasks, and challenges. The theory of Self-Efficiency lies at the center of Bandura's social cognitive theory, which emphasizes the role of observational learning and social experience in the development of personality. The main concept in social cognitive theory is that an individual's actions and reactions, including social behaviors and cognitive processes, in almost every situation are influenced by the actions that individual has observed in others. Because Self-Efficacy is developed from external experiences and self-perception and is influential in determining the outcome of many events, it is an important aspect of social cognitive theory. Self-Efficacy represents the personal perception of external social factors. According to Bandura's theory, people with high Self-Efficacy that is, those who believe they can perform well are more likely to view

difficult tasks as something to be mastered rather than something to be avoided, (Graham and Weiner, 2017).

An attitude may be defined as a predisposition to respond in a favorable or unfavorable manner with respect to a given attitude object (Obiakor, 2020). Attitude of students in junior secondary school denotes interests or feelings towards studying a particular subject/subject. It is the students' disposition towards like or 'dislike' science while attitude in science means scientific approach assumed by an individual for solving problems, assessing ideas and making decisions. Student beliefs and attitudes have the potential to either facilitate or inhibit learning (Yara, 2019). Many factors could contribute to student's attitude toward studying in junior secondary schools. Several studies (including Wilson 2013; Soyibo, 2012; Berg 2015; Adesoji, 2014) report that students' positive attitudes to studies in junior secondary school correlate highly with their that, in general, the attitude of Nigeria students towards the basic sciences tend to decrease in the order, Biology, Economics, Physics and Mathematics. Defiana (2013) found that

using integrated science environment activities improved high school student attitude toward and awareness about the environment. Armstrong and Impara (2011) in their studies determined that fifth and seventh – grade students using nature score as a curriculum supplement developed more positive attitudes than those who did not. Abimbola (2013) reported that students exposed to a programmed instruction recorded higher and more favorable attitude towards mathematics. Ayelaagbe (2019) also reported a more positive attitude of studies after exposing them to self learning strategy. Similar results were obtained by Udousoro (2011) after using computer and text assisted programmed instruction and Popoola (2013) after exposing students to a self learning device. Popoola (2013) also reported that students attitudes and interests to sciences, especially Agricultural science correlate highly with their science achievement.

Halladyna and Shanghnessy (2012) and Adesoji (2018) have concluded that a number of factors have been identified as related to students' attitude to their studies in junior secondary school. Such factors include; teaching methods, teacher attitude,

influence of parents, gender, age, cognitive styles of pupils, career interest, social view of science and Scientifics, social implicating of science and achievement. The studies thus reviewed suggest that there is a relationship between attitude and methods of instruction and also between attitude and achievement; and that it is possible to predict achievement from attitude scores. What is needed to complement the results of such studies however is the nature of relationship between students' attitude in learning in junior secondary schools.

Research Question

The following research questions guided this study

1. What are the level of self efficacy and academic achievement among junior secondary school students in Enugu East LGA?
2. What are the relationships between self efficacy and academic achievement among male and female junior secondary school students in Enugu East LGA?

Methodology:

This study will employ a cross-sectional survey design, involving the administration of self-report questionnaires to junior secondary school students in Enugu East LGA. Participants will comprise a random sample of students selected from various schools within the LGA. A survey design was used for the study. The study was conducted in Enugu East Local Government Area of Enugu State. The choice of the area was because of its geographical location.

The population of the study comprised of all the secondary school students in the ten (10) government secondary schools in the areas which is six thousand five hundred and thirty one (6531)

A sample of one hundred and sixty (160) students was drawn from eight (8) selected schools sampled out of the ten (10) government secondary school that were used for the study. Simple random techniques was used to select twenty (20) students from each of the selected eight (8) schools giving a total sample size of one hundred and sixty (160) students that was used for the study.

The instrument used for data collection was a structured questionnaire which was

designed by the researchers. The questionnaire was divided into two. Section A contains the bio-data of the respondents used to answer the research questions. The questionnaire has a likert rating scale of

Strongly Agreed (SA) – (4), Agreed (A) – (3), Disagreed (D) – (2) and Strongly Disagreed (SD) – (1)

The instrument was validated by experts in measurement and evaluation, Enugu State College of Education (Technical) Enugu. Their criticism and corrections were used in modifying the instrument.

Twenty copies of the questionnaire were administered to twenty (20) students from two (2) secondary schools in Enugu North that was not used for the actual study. The test was repeated after two weeks interval. Scores obtained from the trial testing was used to determine the reliability of the instrument. Scores obtained were correlated using spearman rank order formula after which a reliability index of 0.75 was gotten which shows that the material was highly reliable.

One hundred and sixty (160) copies of the questionnaire were administered by the

researcher to the respondents. The entire questionnaire was collected from the respondent after they have been filled at the spot.

Data were analyzed using mean score and standard deviation

Research Question 1;

What are the level of self efficacy and academic achievement among junior secondary school students in Enugu East LGA?

Table one; Mean response on the level of self efficacy and academic achievement among junior secondary school students in Enugu East LGA

SN	ITEMS	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	N	$\sum FX$	X	SD	Remark
1	Most students lacks the encouragement needed for academic achievement in junior secondary school	100	60	-	-	160	580	3.6	3.1	A
2	Students from poor family background has low self efficacy which affects their academic achievement	110	50	-	-	160	590	3.7	3.3	A
3	Most of the junior secondary students lacks the moral support to study which affects their academic achievement	130	30	-	-	160	610	3.8	3.4	A
4	Students self efficacy in school is very low and it affects their academic achievement	80	80	-	-	160	560	3.5	3.0	A

5	Students level of self efficacy determines their academic achievement	120	40	-	-	160	600	3.8	3.4	A
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From the computed mean in table 1 above, it could be seen that items 1-5 have the mean scores of 3.6, 3.7, 3.8, 3.5 and 3.8 respectively which indicates that the respondents agreed on the listed level of self efficacy and academic achievement among junior secondary school students.

Research question 2;

What are the relationships between self efficacy and academic achievement among male and female junior secondary school students in Enugu East LGA?

Table 2; Mean responses on the relationship between self efficacy and academic achievement among male and female junior secondary school students in Enugu East LGA.

SN	ITEMS	SA (4)	A (3)	D (2)	SD (1)	N	$\sum FX$	\bar{X}	SD	Remarks
6	Both male and female students tends to have the same morale in studying in junior secondary schools	80	80	-	-	160	560	3.5	3.0	A
7	Male students tends to have the courage to study than the female students	90	70	-	-	160	570	3.6	3.1	A
8	Female students tends to have more courage to study than the male students	120	40	-	-	160	600	3.8	3.4	A
9	Most male students struggle with the academic curriculum	60	100	-	-	160	640	4.0	3.7	A

10	Male students from poor family drops out of school due to lack of courage, encouragement and support to study	100	60	-	-	160	580	3.6	3.1	A
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From the computed mean in table 2 above, it shows that items 6-10 have the mean score of 3.5, 3.6, 3.8, 4.0, 3.6 and 3.3 respectively which indicates that the respondents agreed on the listed relationship between self efficacy and academic achievement among male and female junior secondary school students in Enugu East LGA

Discussion of Findings

Findings in table 1 showed that most students lacks the encouragement needed for academic achievement in junior secondary schools, students from poor family background has low self efficacy which affects their academic achievement, most of the junior students lacks the morale for studying which affects their academic achievement. The findings also showed that students' self efficacy in junior secondary school is very low and it in turn affects their academic achievement and finally, student's level of self efficacy determines their academic achievement.

Findings in table 2 showed that both male and female students tends to have the same morale in studying in junior secondary

school, male students tends to have the courage to study than the female students. It also showed that the female students tends to have more courage to study than the male students, most male students struggle with the academic curriculum and finally, male students from poor family drops out from school due to lack of courage encouragement and support to study.

Conclusion:

The present study seeks to enhance the understanding of self-efficacy and academic achievement among junior secondary school students in Enugu East LGA. The research intends to provide valuable information for educational practitioners to create effective intervention strategies aimed at fostering students' confidence and resilience, thereby

ultimately increasing their academic success.

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that self efficacy is the back bone of academic achievement of students in junior secondary schools. It is therefore expected of the parents, teachers and government agencies to help the students in developing the right attitude towards learning for a better academic excellent.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study, the researcher made the following recommendations;

- I. Students should be encouraged towards academic excellent throughout the time and phase.
- II. Parents, teachers and government agencies should take up the intensive mobilization efforts in strengthening the academic success of students.
- III. They should address the academic failure among students in junior secondary schools.

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