



An Assessment of Psycho-Social Variables on Students Academic Performance in Nigeria

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Abstract: *This study assessed the impact of Psycho-social variable (interest, learning environment and self- esteem on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Nigeria. By analyzing current research and secondary data on related topic. The paper concluded that that student's interest influence his/her academic performance in public secondary school in Nigeria, Student's self-Esteem has significant relationship with their academic performance in public secondary school in Nigeria and learning environment has significant relationship with students' academic performance in public secondary school in Nigeria. Based on the findings of the study the researchers recommended that Parents and teachers should endeavour to help pupils develop the positive interest on their studies to prepare them for higher education. Government and school administrators should provide conducive environment learning. This will motivate the students to study hard and as that will bring about better academic performance in their academic. Students of secondary schools should be well monitored by their parents, teachers and guardians in all their school activities. Students should be encouraged to have high self-esteem toward their academic.*

Key words: *Academic Performance, Interest, Learning Environment, Self- Esteem*

1.0 Introduction

Psychosocial variable seems to affect student's academic performance. Psychosocial, social, socioeconomic, extracurricular, teacher quality among others are factors affecting learners' academic achievement in English language (El-Omari, 2016). In Nigeria, teaching and teaching techniques, and psychosocial variables seem to be the most significant predictors of pupil's achievement in English language. Teaching according to Idea Group Incorporation Global (IGI Global, in Chidobe, 2023), is a combination of practices and interactions between learners and instructors aimed at positive and permanent changes in the learners' behaviour. While Psychosocial factors in education relates to a multidimensional theory, which measures various aspects of interpersonal characteristics that influence teaching and learning (Eya, et. al, 2020; Chidobe, 2023).

Psychosocial factors therefore, refers to social and psychological factors that could influence learner's academic achievement in English language. Psychosocial variables such as attitudes, motivation, social control, self-regulation, and social interaction with peers are major variables that may influence pupil's academic achievement as well as quality teaching-learning delivery in English Language (Eya, et. al). Hence, there is a crucial need for a regular and consistent assessment and reassessment of psychosocial dispositions of pupils since they are at the foundation level of future academic achievement (Federal Republic of Nigeria (FRN), 2013). This study is interested in interest, learning environment and self-esteem as psychosocial variables that affect student's academic performance in public secondary schools in Nigeria

The performance of students in process skill acquisition has also been investigated over the years. Academic performance as relative to some standards, and he further states that academic achievement and other dimensions of learning can be measured by a variety of yardsticks or measuring instruments, the results of which are types of scores, ranks, or grades and are usually associated with mental success (Bakare (2015). Marshall in Chidobe, (2023) defined academic performance as the extent to Academic performance is the quality of students' scores in a test or examination when compared with those of other students of the same level. James (2015) maintained that academic performance really involved knowing how much students had learned.

In Nigeria, reports by the chief examiners of examination bodies like WAEC and NECO indicate persistent failure of students, which is due to a lack of interest by the students (Musa, 2019). Educationists and education evaluators have expressed worries over the worsening academic performance since its adverse effects are felt in schools. To this effect, one begins to wonder if the abysmal performance of students could be traced to some psychosocial factors such as interest, learning environment and self- esteem. It is based on this that this study seek to investigate the impact of psychosocial variables such as; interest, learning environment and self- esteem as psychosocial variables that affect student's academic performance in public secondary schools in Nigeria

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of psychosocial variables such as; interest, learning environment and self- esteem as psychosocial variables that affect student's academic performance in public secondary schools in Nigeria. The specific objectives includes;

1. To assess the impact of interest on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Nigeria.
2. To find out the impact of learning environment on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Nigeria.

3. To find out the impact of self-esteem on students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Nigeria.

1.3 Research Assumption

Based on the objectives of the study, the following assumptions were formulated for the study;

1. There is no relationship between interest and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Nigeria.
2. There is no relationship between learning environment and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Nigeria.
3. There is no the relationship between self-esteem and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Nigeria.

1.4 Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions;

1. What is the relationship between interest and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Nigeria?
2. What is the relationship between learning environment and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Nigeria?
3. What is the relationship between self-esteem and students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Nigeria?

2.0 Review of Literature

2.1 Concept of Interest

Adeyemi and Adeyemi (2014) interest has to do with a learner's predisposition to react positively in certain ways towards certain aspects of the environment and is usually developed in relation to and remains allied to more basic motives. According to Encarta Dictionary. (2004) "interest is a feeling of curiosity or concern about something that makes attention turn towards it". As opined by Hidi, Renninger, and Krapp in Khan., et al (2022), personal interest develops slowly and tends to have long-lasting effects on a person's knowledge and values, whereas situational interest is an emotional state that is evoked suddenly by something in the immediate environment and that may have only a short term effect on an individual's knowledge and values. Situation interest is aroused as a function of the interestingness of the content and context and partially under the regulation of teachers (Schraw, G. & Lehman, 2001). Interest is a psychological state of engaging or having the tendency to re-engage in a particular content in the course of time. The contemporary theorists on interest carved three components of interest as personal interest, situational interest and academic interest (Harackiewicz & Hulleman, 2010)

Interest, as viewed by Nekang (2014), is an emotionally oriented behavior trait that determines students' energy and enthusiasm for tackling educational programs or other activities. Interest is an important aspect of the learning process because the learners' interest is a fundamental factor in inculcating the right knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that the curriculum seeks to attain. It helps in sustaining concentration, purpose, commitment to learn, and cooperation with the teacher in the learning process. It is therefore the duty of the teacher to identify and use the appropriate learning strategies that will make students develop an interest in learning. According to Obeka in Khan., et al

(2022), interest is the course of certain actions that acts as drive or motivation that propels people to act in certain ways and as the effect of an activity from which a child learns to pay attention as the lesson goes on, if the student is interested in the same particular lesson and the method of instruction. It has been shown that students are usually attentive to certain subjects or topics that appeal to them but show apathy towards others that they do not fancy (Iji, Abah, & Anyor, 2017).

2.2 Concept of learning Environment

Learning environment encompasses all resources human and material, programmes and opportunities, for students to use these resources creatively and imaginatively to learn and develop their potentials (Adekoya, Ayanwale, & Adeyemi, & Ibrahim, 2022). According to Oduwaye in Adekoya, et al (2022), learning environment refers to the context in which learning takes place. It is the surrounding circumstances which effects learning. An environment in which learning occurs can be as wide as particular society and it may be viewed as an educational institution. A leaning environment is the condition and influence which a learner comes in contact with, resulting in a series of complex interactions and ensuring a permanent change in the area. Tshui and Cai in Adekoya, et al (2022) described learning environment as an orderly environment in which the school family feels valued and able to pursue the schools mission free from concern about disruptions and safety. Conducive learning environment has been identified as essential for effective teaching and learning to take place. Olutola in Adekoya, et al (2022) postulated that school learning environment which includes instructional spaces, administrative spaces, circulations spaces, spaces for conveniences and accessories are essential in facilitating teaching-learning process.

Learning environment is reflected by curricular and co-curricular activities in which teachers and learners engage in classrooms, libraries, laboratories and other places in the school. Social environment is created through interaction among teachers and learners in the classroom and other places in the school. The cultural environment consists of rules, regulations, values and discipline. It also includes all school activities which are meant to initiate learner into societal culture and the dominant among these features is the physical environment as described by Ajayi in Adekoya, et al (2022) that school physical features consists of the basic systems and structures which are viable and are needed by schools or institutions in order to function effectively and to fulfill the purpose for which it was established. According to (Study.com, 2018) learning environment encompasses learning resources and technology, means of teaching, modes of learning, and connections to societal and global contexts. The term also includes human behavioral and cultural dimensions, including the vital role of emotion in learning. The learning environment is a composite of human practices and material systems, much as an ecology is the combination of living things and physical environment (Balog, 2018).Contemporary learners deserve learning spaces that meet their individual and collective needs. To meet this challenge, educational leaders must provide physical and cultural environments that are empowering and engaging (Orlu, 2013).

2.3 Concept of Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is the set of positive or negative evaluations of individuals about their own selves (Erzen, 2017). Self-esteem as more about perception rather than reality (Zeigler-Hill, 2013). For example, it can refer to a person's belief about whether or not he or she is intelligent and attractive, but it does not necessarily identifies whether the person actually possesses those traits (Baumeister, Campbell, Kreuger, & Vohs, in Khan,, et al 2022). Self-esteem is the combination of skills and emotional states that describe how highly people respect themselves or think about themselves (Ghezelbash, Rahmani, Peyrovi, Inanloo & Shekarchian 2015). Self-esteem is self-value. That is the gap between the ideal and

real self (Fiassa & Nader-Grosbois & De la (2016; Ogunode, & Ahaotu, 2021; Ogunode, Edinoh, & Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2023).

Self-esteem is an important human fundamental concept that plays an important role in a person's growth, development, and quality of life. A person's self-esteem shapes that person's beliefs which in turn shape their actions, and these actions in turn shape their social reality and the social realities of the people around them (Baumeister, Campbell, Kreuger, & Vohs, 2003). Another describes self-esteem as an evaluation one makes about oneself, based on one's self-worth and is high or low (D'Mello, Meena, & Pinto, 2018; Ogunode, Olowonefa, & Ayoko, 2023; Ogunode, 2021).

According to Rosenberg in Khan, et al (2022), self-esteem is an internal belief system that is an evaluation of self-made by someone regarding himself in a negative or positive way, as explained by Rosenberg (Wilson & Dunn 2004). Self-esteem is defined as the set of positive or negative evaluations of individuals about their own selves (Rosenberg 1965). Self and self-esteem constitute two different dimensions of personality. The self represents the cognitive part of the personality, whereas self-esteem represents the affective and psychologic dimension. The personality traits of the individuals, their physical features, abilities, skills, social relations, feelings and their ideas about their academic or professional performance and the satisfaction they feel as a result of these ideas, are included in the concept of self-esteem (Yılmaz 2000; İzgiç et al. in Khan, Anwar, Khan, Ullah, Suliman, & Sultan, 2022).

3.0 Method

The study sought to determine the relationship between psycho-social variable on students' academic performance in secondary schools in Nigeria. The study used secondary data. The content analysis method was adopted for the selection of data. The data were collected from the following sources: review of published articles from reputable international journals such as CEON, Elsevier, Hindawi, JSTOR, IEEE, Learn Techlib, SAGE, Nebraska and Springer, amongst others.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

This research article presents the results of an in-depth study that included conference papers and article. It excludes information from edited books, preprints, monographs, information below 2000 and book chapters.

4.0 Result and Discussion

In the section, many literature were review to establish the assumption

A) Impact of interest on academic performance of students

Tella, Tella and Adeniyi (2011) working with 500 JSS students on locus of control, interest in schooling and self-efficacy as predictors of academic achievement in Osun State Nigeria, found that interest jointly and independently significantly predicted achievement, Lawanto, Santoso and Liu (2012) in their own work on understanding of the relationship between interest and expectancy for success in engineering design activity with grades 9-12 students found that there was a significant relationship between students' interest and expectancy for success. Also Kpolovie et al (2014) using a sample of 518 SSCE students in Port-Harcourt, Nigeria, worked on "Academic achievement Prediction: Role of interest in learning and attitude towards school". They found a significant correlation and multiple prediction of students' academic achievement with the explanation variables accounting for 21.60% of the variance in students' academic achievement. Findings also revealed that there was positive significant relationship students' interest and their academic performance (Musa,

2019). Trumper, (2006) and Elster, (2007) that indicated positive relationships between students' interest and learning in their various findings.

b) Impact of learning environment on academic performance of students

This study by Charles, Paul, and Munyua, (2022) investigated the reasons behind the smaller number of students transiting from secondary school level of education to tertiary and university institutions in Marakwet East Sub-County. This was in response to concerns raised by education stakeholders in the area. The study findings recommended for funding of secondary schools by government and other education stakeholders. This will facilitate schools' improvement of the physical environments and procuring of teaching learning resources. It also recommended for in-service training for the teachers to acquire knowledge, managerial skills, and attitudes and resources for enhanced management of human, physical resources and improvement of students' academic achievements.

Boh, and Mishelia, (2020) did a study that examined the impact of learning environment on students' academic performance in English Language in some selected junior secondary schools in Shongom Local Government Area of Gombe State. The findings of the study revealed that a classroom building; classroom with adequate furniture; class with small class population and the use of instructional materials were found to have positive impact on the performance of students' performance in English Language in junior secondary schools in Shongom local Government of Gombe State. Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes that conducive learning environment is very essential for effective teaching and learning.

Adamu, (2015) did a study that examined the Impact of Learning Environment on the Performance of Students in Social Studies in Junior Secondary Schools in Taraba State, Nigeria. Four (4) objectives which include, to determine the impact of classroom building on the performance of JSS students in Taraba State and to determine the impact of the adequate class furniture on the performance of JSS students in Taraba State were formed to guide the study, four (4) research questions and four (4) hypotheses were formulated in line with the objectives. Population for the study comprised twenty five thousand three hundred (25, 3000) JSS students from two hundred (200) public secondary schools in Taraba State. The research instrument used for data collection was Social Studies Achievement Test (SSAT) that contained 20 items and was adopted from Junior Secondary School Certificate Examination (JSSCE) conducted in Taraba State between 2008 and 2012. Independent t-test was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance, while mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions. Findings from the study showed that all the hypotheses were rejected. The findings revealed that there was a significant difference in the performances of the two groups (Experimental and Control). This revealed that a classroom building; class with adequate furniture; class with small class population and the use of instructional materials were found to have positive impact on the performance of students in Junior Secondary schools in Taraba State.

Adekoya, Ayanwale, Adeyemi, and Ibrahim, (2020) did a that study examined the effect of Learning Environment on the performance of Students in Business Studies in Junior Secondary Schools in Ogun State. The findings revealed that there was a significant difference in the performances of the two groups (Experimental and Control). This revealed that a classroom building; class with adequate furniture; and the use of instructional materials were found to have positive effect on the performances of students in Junior Secondary Schools in Ogun State. Shamaki, (2015) influence of learning environment on students' academic achievement in mathematics at senior secondary school level. Thus the study investigated some components of learning environment and their possible influence on students' academic achievement in mathematics. A sample of 337 randomly selected SS II students

was taken from a population of 1682 students in Potiskum LGA, Yobe state. The findings were discussed with a view to improving both the quality of learning environment and academic achievement in mathematics. In view of that therefore, recommendations were made for the improvement of the learning environment.

Melaiye, Iorshaer, Cephas, Kuru, Bulba, Chuboh, Galadima, & Ibrahim, (2021) did a study that assessed the impact of Learning Environment on the Students' Academic Performance in Rural Secondary Schools in Jalingo Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria. The result derived from the analysis revealed that learning environment has impact on students' academic performance as perceived by teachers in Jalingo local government area. The four (4) null hypothesis that were formulated on their significant relationship with the students' academic performance, all revealed that, there was significant relationship between learning environment and the students' academic performance.

c) Impact of Self-esteem on academic performance of students

Those who have high Self-esteem are presumed to be psychologically happy and healthy, where as those with low self-esteem are believed to be psychologically distressed and perhaps even depressed. Lavoie (2002), discovered that students with low self-esteem will consistently communicate self-derogatory statements, exhibit learned helplessness, not volunteer, Practice perfectionism, be overly dependent, demonstrate an excessive need for acceptance: a great desire to please authority figures, have difficulty making decisions, exhibit low frustration tolerance and become easily defensive Self-esteem has been associated with academic performance. Several research has reached the conclusion that self-esteem and academic performance are positively correlated (Bankston and Zhou, 2002; Lockett and Harrell, 2003; Ogunode 2020a; Ogunode, Lawan, Gregory & Lawan.2020).

Another study conducted by Carr, in Fiassa and Nader-Grosbois De la (2016)., found self-esteem to be a significant predictor of reading awareness as pupils with higher self-esteem were more able to read and write compare to those with lower self-esteem. This belief suggests that positive self-esteem is vital to a child's level of achievement. However, the examination of research studies investigating the relationship between self-esteem and academic success indicates that it is a parallel one in which one side increases at a similar rate as the other (Dickinson 2015).

According to the studies of Pullmans and Allik in El-Omari, (2016) low general self-esteem does not necessarily signal a poor academic achievement. Their result shows that low (not high) general self-esteem is a significant predictor of superior school performance. However, research finding from Marsh and O'Mara, in El-Omari, (2016) suggested that prior self-esteem has small positive effect on subsequent educational attainment. Therefore a rise or fall in academic success will likely cause an equal rise or fall in self-esteem.

Arshad,Syed and Mahmood (2015), carried out study on Self-Esteem and academic achievement among university students. They found out that there was significant relationship ($r=0.87, p<0.01$) between self-esteem and academic achievement and significant difference was found between male and female students on self-esteem and academic achievement, which indicate that female students have scores on academic achievement as compared to male students, and male students have high scores on self-esteem as compared to female students.

Ahamauaara and Houston in Adekoya, et al (2022), conducted study using 856 English secondary school students in grade 7 and grade 10.the study focus on the relationship between sex, self-esteem and academic achievement .the study found that boys report higher level of self-esteem than girls

regardless of their school type. Another study examining sex difference in matter of achievement beliefs and value beliefs in 2053 fifth grade students. The result found that boys reported higher level of pride in math's compared to girls which lead to higher self-esteem. In addition, the research showed that girls reported lower domain value in self-esteem than boys (Frenzel & Pekrun, in Bahrami, et al 2015).

Rosli, Othman & Omar in Arshad, et al (2015), carried out a cross sectional study to examine the relationship between self-esteem and students' academic achievement 220 second year undergraduates students were selected on systematic random sampling, responded on survey domain. The study found out that students with high self-esteem perform better in their academics. Self-esteem is one of the key factors in affecting students' academic achievement more significant than other contributing factors such as stress and body image.

4.1 Finding

The paper revealed that interest, learning environment and self-esteem have significant relationship with students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Nigeria

4.2 Conclusion and Recommendations

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that

- Student's interest influence his/her academic performance in public secondary school in Nigeria.
- Student's self-Esteem influence his/her academic performance in public secondary school in Nigeria.
- learning environment has significant relationship with students' academic performance in public secondary school in Nigeria.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the researchers recommended that;

1. Parents and teachers should endeavour to help pupils develop the positive interest on their studies to prepare them for higher education.
2. Government and school administrators should provide conducive environment learning. This will motivate the students to study hard and as that will bring about better academic performance in their academic.
3. Students of secondary schools should be well monitored by their parents, teachers and guardians in all their school activities. Students should be encouraged to have high self-esteem toward their academic.

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