An Assessment of Self Confidence as A Determinant of Students Academic Achievements in The University of Bamenda

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Abstract: **This study sets out to study self confidence as a determinant of students Academic achievements in the University of Bamenda. Building self confidence is salient as far as success in academics is concerned. Low academic achievements are indicators of internal inefficiency which could equally affect external efficiency adversely. Low academic achievements could to a certain extent be attributed to lapses in self confidence building by students. This to a large extent could adversely influence students' self efficacy in academics. Within the context of this study, 412 students were selected to constitute the sample of the study. The purposive sampling technique was adopted and the main instrument for data collection was the questionnaire. The tool for data analysis was the spearman rank correlation and the following results were obtained: for the hypothesis one, it was found that goal setting significantly influences students academic achievement by 73.9%(p-value<0.05), while in the second hypothesis vicarious learning influences students academic achievement by 63.2%(p-value<0.05). Based on these results we conclude that self confidence significantly affects students academic achievement in the university of Bamenda.**

Key word: **Self confidence, determinants, students' achievements, university.**

I. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

Students' academic achievements remain a salient aspect of education production function in every institution of learning; which cannot be undermined as it has been utilized to determine the internal and external efficiency and effectiveness of the school system. The school system is characterized with many students failing courses, many repeating and some finally dropping out of the system. This could be due to issues related to student's inability to build strong self confidence to systematically face the challenges. Low academic achievement would certainly prevent the university system in economizing scarce resources as well as meeting set institutional objectives. This reduces possibilities for youths who are tomorrow's developers to actively participate in the socio-economic and political development of the society as they should because of lapses in relevant skills. Within the context of this study, self confidence is seen in terms of setting realistic expectations and goals, vicarious learning and handling peer criticisms within the context of teaching and learning.

Main research question:

To what extent does building self confidence influence students' academic achievement in the University of Bamenda?

Specific questions:

- How does goal setting affect students' academic achievement in the University of Bamenda?
- In what ways does vicarious learning affect students' academic achievement in the University of Bamenda?

From the research questions the following hypotheses were raised to guide the study.

Main hypothesis

Ha: There is a significant relationship between building self confidence and students' academic achievement in the University of Bamenda.

Ho: There is no significant relationship between building self confidence and students' academic achievement in the University of Bamenda.

Specific Hypotheses

Ha1: There is a significant relationship between goal setting affect students' academic achievement in the University of Bamenda.

Ha2: There is a significant relationship between vicarious learning and students' academic achievement in the University of Bamenda.

Research objectives

Main Research objective.

- To assess the influence of building self confidence on students' academic achievement in the University of Bamenda.

Specific research objective.

- To study the relationship between goal setting affect students' academic achievement in the University of Bamenda.
- To investigate the effects of vicarious learning on students' academic achievement in the University of Bamenda.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Setting Goal /expectations Academic Performance

Within the context of this study the concept of self confidence which is a component of the psychological construct of self efficacy introduced by Bandura has been

viewed in terms of setting realistic goals, vicarious learning and handling peer criticism among students as dire elements that could possibly affect students motivation and learning.

According to Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock (2001), goal setting for students is the process of determining a direction for learning. Schunk (2009) adds that although goal setting might increase student motivation and academic accomplishment, just articulating a goal does not necessarily assist students. However, when properly executed, goal setting has the potential to enhance learning. Moreover, it has become more challenging to motivate learners to achieve at a high level. Jenkins (1994) argues that irresponsibility, not inability, is the primary cause of many students' troubles in school. According to Hwang (1995), the apathy of students is immense. This complacent attitude and lack of motivation have far-reaching implications and demand a different direction for schools to achieve their aims.

Set the goals which are quite time- sensitive, specific, measurable, attainable and, reasonable. In order for students to view goals as meaningful, they must have a clear understanding of what specific target(s) they are aspiring to accomplish (Doran, 1981). There are a couple of options for developing effective student growth goals. For Dotson (2016); simply writing down a goal does not impact student learning. It is the activities that the student will participate in during the learning process that have the potential to positively influence student achievement. In collaboration with the teacher, the student will need to brainstorm different possibilities beyond core instruction that could increase achievement. I do not recommend writing generic actions such as paying better attention in class, trying harder, or turning in all assignments; these are things that should be part of the standard expectations for all students. Activities should be meaningful and provide learning opportunities that will enhance the student's knowledge and understanding in the specified area.

Goal setting keeps learners focused on desired results and gives them a clear path to success. The key to developing goals that deliver results is to make them detailed, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-sensitive; and goals must be accompanied by a specific action plan that defines the activities to be done to achieve maximum success.

Vicarious Learning

Learning vicariously from others' experiences in school has long been considered a valuable process for innovation and performance. (Manz & Sims, 1981). Vicarious learning occurs through individuals being exposed to, and making sense of, others' experience and outcomes (gained through passive means, such as observation, or more active and discursive means, such as storytelling) in their work setting (Myers, 2018). This perspective views others' experience as beneficial for individual learning insofar as making meaning of another's experience helps refine and expand the individual's repertoire of possible responses to future events focusing less on whether the particular lessons drawn from others' experience are "right" or "wrong" and instead on   the

benefits that accrue from greater awareness of others' knowledge and experience and a more robust set of responses an individual could apply in the face of future task challenges (Myers, 2018). In this way, vicarious learning allows individuals to enhance their own experiential learning processes (i.e., reflecting on and making meaning of their own idiosyncratic set of work experiences) by reflecting on and drawing lessons from others' experiences, gained through inherently interpersonal processes of observation, discussion, and interaction with others in their learning environment. Indeed, learning has long been seen as a social phenomenon in school that involves action at both the individual and collective level (Argyris & Scheon, 1978; Weick, 1979, 1995), leading scholars to consider network-based approaches as a means of understanding organizational learning. Viewing this learning as built on a network of interpersonal connections in organizations (Weick & Roberts, 1993). In line with this approach, network scholars have examined how the distribution and characteristics of particular relationships influence learning (Levin & Cross, 2004). In this context the nature of the relationship matters a lot and the strength of the relationship could be a salient determinant in deciphering whether positive or negative learning actually goes on smoothly. Lancaster (2003) in his study found out that embedded ties among friends allow for the transfer of more tacit knowledge and experience between devoted learners.

Whereas the embeddedness of a tie is one feature of a network relationship, another key feature is whether the relationship is reciprocal. Here reciprocity appears to be very important as far as learners are concerned as the relationship has to enhance vocarious learning for all team members. Though broadly associated with the strength of a tie (Granovetter, 1973), the reciprocity of a tie reflects a distinct focus on the tendency of a given pair of individuals to develop mutual connections with each other (Newman, 2010]). In terms of vicarious learning, a reciprocal relationship can thus be considered one in which each individual learns from the experiences and knowledge of the other in a mutual give-and-take of knowledge (Ipe, 2003). This is actually where the problem may be; that is enhancing mutually in learning experiences for all members. This can be contrasted with a nonreciprocal relationship, where one person shares knowledge and experience with the other but the reverse is not true. Rogers & Kincaid, (1981) noted that for reciprocity to be an integral part of information-sharing, because it helps refine and shape emerging insights from shared knowledge, suggesting that it is key to realizing the learning benefits of a relationship.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The population of study is the totality of individuals having common characteristics on which the researcher bases to make inference and test the research hypotheses.

Our sample in this study was made up of 412 University students. In order to collect data about the problem under study, the questionnaire was used. The questionnaire is a standardized instrument constructed by the researcher about the research Problem under investigation which is to be used to collect

information from respondents. Our questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part enhances on respondents background information. The second part of the questionnaires deals with items on the independent variable while the third part looks at the questions on the dependent variable. The questionnaire was used to facilitate data collection and also to economise time and finances. Also, they offer the surest means on anonymity to the respondents.

Reliability of questionnaire

In order to establish the reliability of the instrument, we used the test retest reliability type or the stability reliability type. We first administered the instrument to a group of twenty teachers.

Cronbach's coefficient alpha

$$\alpha = \frac{k}{k-1}\left(1 - \frac{\sum \sigma \frac{2}{k}}{\sigma^2}\right)$$

Where:

$\sum \sigma \frac{2}{k}$ is the sum of the variances of the k parts which are the items of the test or instrument.

σ = standard deviation of the test or instrument.

Table 1. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
,986	,936	54

After two weeks we re-administered the instrument to the same group of people. The scores were computed to obtain a coefficient of stability index of 0.9. This coefficient stability is significant. This shows that the instrument had a good test re-test reliability.

Data Collection with Questionnaire

As already mentioned above, the rationale for using questionnaire in this study is based on the fact that they facilitate data collection thereby economizing time and financial resources. A total number of 412 questionnaires were administered to respondents with the intension of data collection. In order to do this, we sought the collaboration of school authorities who gave us the right to contact the teachers and distribute the instrument to them in their respective schools. Some of the questionnaires were collected on spot for those who had time to fill them while the rest were collected on rendez-vous. The collection of data with the questionnaire took us a time span of about two months. This was based on the fact that the field of study was vast.

Data analysis technique

The data collected from the field with the use of questionnaires were analyzed using the Spearman correlation index and multiple regression analysis.

Spearman Correlation

Spearman Correlation is expressed as:

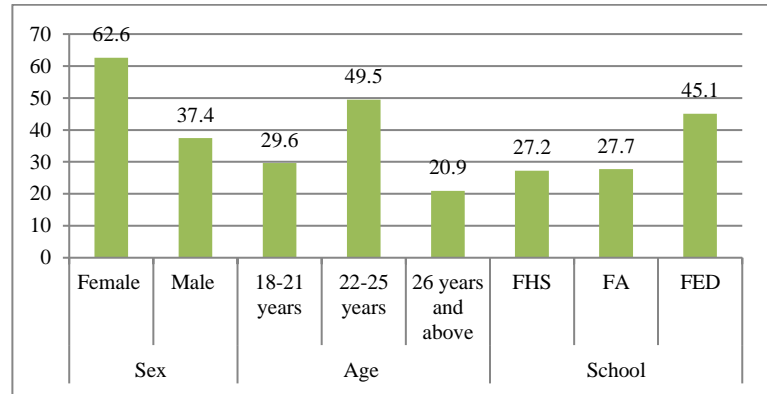$$r_s = 1 - \frac{6\Sigma D^2}{n(n^2 - 1)}$$

Where:

Σ = sum

D is the difference between the ranks of X and the corresponding ranks of Y

n= the number of paired ranks

Data presentation and analysis

Figure 1: Demographic data of respondents.

The graph above is on demographic data. Most of the respondents were female (62.6%) while 37.4% of them were males. The highest number of students who provided information were between 22 and 25 years old making up 49.5 % while 20.9% are 26 years and above. Concerning students' distribution according to schools, 45.1%, 27.2% and 27.7 % were from faculty of health sciences, faculty of Arts and faculty of education.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics on Goal Setting					
	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
As an individual you have set academic goal to be attained by the end of the academic year	412	1.00	4.00	1.0437	.88405
Your teachers/peers help you in goal formation	412	1.00	3.00	2.5437	.62044
Your peers help you in attaining your academic objectives	412	1.00	3.00	2.8738	.61892
You always look for time to measure and evaluate your objectives by the end of the academic year.	412	1.00	3.00	1.9515	.76897
You always set academic goals and objectives at the start of the academic year but achieving them is challenging.	412	1.00	3.00	1.0777	.77916
Most students are involved in drug/substance abuse to boost self confidence	412	1.00	3.00	1.0825	.85321
Drug addiction generally affects students' personality negatively	412	1.00	3.00	1.9757	.72789
Valid N (listwise)	412				

The descriptive statistics table above presents respondents' views on goal setting in view of academic performances. In the first item, the means of 1.0437 falls in the area of agreement indicating that most of the respondents do set goals at the beginning of the academic year. In the second and third items, most of them disagreed (Mean =2.5437 and 2.8738) that their teachers and peers help them in the goal setting and attainment of objectives respectively. In the four item most of the students always take time to evaluate their objectives to ascertain the extent to which they have attained them. Fifthly, many students agreed that they set academic goals and objectives at the beginning of the school years but achieving them is challenging. This means that students do not really organize themselves in meeting set objectives. Many are distracted by a lot of factors such as laziness, clubbing and drug abuse. The non attainment of set objectives by students could equally be as a result of their inability to surmount challenges related to access to quality teaching and learning scenarios. Students who do not have access to quality internet connection for instance may not perform as required. In the sixth item, most of the students agreed (mean =1.0825) that most students are involved in drug consumption and abuse and one of the reasons is to boost self confidence. This seriously affects the attainment of set goals and objectives as drug addicted students may not reason very normally to boost or build the supposed self confidence purported.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics on Vicarious Learning					
	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Dev.
You have a group of students which is created to enhance effective learning through research	412	1.00	4.00	2.0097	.81941
Your classmate often learn good and bad habits from you	412	1.00	4.00	1.0680	.68721
Your classmate often explain issues to you and you learn from	412	1.00	4.00	1.9951	.74152
The group members are very interactive on academic issues mostly.	412	1.00	4.00	1.4660	.89677
Your experiences in this learning team has affected your academic performance positively	412	1.00	4.00	2.4515	.89610
You have mates you admire and emulate them in their academic pursuits	412	2.00	4.00	2.6893	.60055
Most students involved in drug/substance abuse do copy it from their friends	412	1.00	4.00	2.2136	.92703
Valid N (listwise)	412				

Vicarious learning amongst students dwells on learning by imitation which is not only positive; negative vibrations can equally be learnt. In the first item we observed that mean of 1.0097 indicates that group learning does not only take place in the classroom. It equally occurs within group context. The means of the second, third and four items indicates that in as much as existing students' groupings encourage peer interaction; it equally promotes learning and imitation of good and bad habits. What people receive from others really affect their personality diversely. The learning of bad habit is really the issue at stake in schools today. Most at times, students come to school with weapons and act violently and equally involve in sexual crimes. And many are involved in drug consumption and substance abuse which is not only detrimental to human health but negatively affects personality construction as well as academic achievement. In the fifth item, most students disagreed (Mean=2.4515) that their experiences in learning teams has affected their academic performance positively. This rightly means that adolescent grouping would not fully optimize positive learning and subsequent academic achievement if it is not being monitored strictly.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics Academic achievements					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
You are satisfied with your final year results as a student	402	1.00	4.00	2.5971	.66749
You are satiated with the skills acquisition	412	1.00	4.00	2.9248	.83516
You academic objectives are completely attained by end of year	410	1.00	4.00	2.1553	.56253
Students involved in drug addiction perform well	412	1.00	4.00	2.7718	.70548
Promotion rates in your school are over 70 percent	412	2.00	4.00	1.7160	.64648
Valid N (listwise)	412				

On the table of descriptive statistics above, most of the respondents disagreed (Mean =2.5971) that they are satisfied with their results as students. At the same time they equally indicated that they are not satisfied (mean=2.9248) with the respective skills they are supposed to acquired. This really proves that students are not learning as much as they are supposed to learn. Even though promotion rates are over 70 percent as indicated in the last item, students' performance in terms of quality remains wanting.

Testing hypotheses

Table 5. Correlations on goal setting and academic achievements			Goal Setting.	Academic Achievements
Spearman's rho	Goal setting	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.739**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.001
		N	412	412
	Academic Achievements	Correlation Coefficient	.739**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.
		N	412	412
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

The table above is on correlations on goal setting and Academic Achievements. The p-value (0.00) less than 0.05 which is the alpha. Based on this we deduce that goal setting has a significant influence with Academic Achievements. The correlation coefficient is 0.739 indicating that Vicarious Learning as an independent variable influences Academic Achievements by 73.9 percent. The correlation coefficient is positive, thus indicating that the better goal setting is optimized, the more Academic Achievements is optimized.

These findings corroborate with the ideas of Locke and Latham (2013), who opined that Goal setting is clearly related to individual performance improvement. Goal-setting theory, developed in the mid-1960s by Edwin Locke, provides one of the most influential and practical accounts of motivation, and academic scenarios. This means that goal setting is in itself an aspect of intrinsic motivation which could trigger learning and subsequent academic achievement. In the same light, Zimmerman and Schunk, (2001) noted that the formation of specified, difficult goals drives goal-directed behaviour and improves performance, while Schipers and Scheepers and Peterson (2015) added that Conscious goal setting appears to increase the probability of goal-directed action and goal-related outcomes, while the acts of mentally contrasting positive and negative outcomes and considering how goal-related obstacles might be overcome appears to free up mental resources, improving student self-discipline and performance. This therefore implies that students need to have a well-designed goal-setting programme which will enable them not only in goal setting but also to link specific subgoals to more general, comprehensive goals and, likewise, proximal subgoals to their more distal counterparts Latham and Brown (2006) demonstrated, for example, that goal setting enhanced academic performance of MBA students who set their own proximal and distal learning goals. Pursuing academics is a project and every project in life is bound to experience obstacles and as such those involved should be concerned with surmounting the various challenges. These goals should be clear enough and teachers are expected to assist students in this process. This is because, students who set clear goals are better able to withstand the temptation to procrastinate and detraction from their academic foci. Thus, setting goals appears to improve what has been commonly characterised as self-regulation Zimmerman and Schunk (2001). For this to occur, goals must be sufficiently challenging to inspire the pursuit of their achievement, but not so difficult as to make failure likely.

The table above is on correlations on Vicarious Learning and Academic Achievements. The p-value (0.00) less than 0.05 which is the alpha. Based on this we deduce that Vicarious Learning has a significant influence with Academic Achievements. The correlation coefficient is 0.652 indicating that Vicarious Learning as an independent variable influences Academic Achievements by 65.2 percent. The correlation coefficient is positive, thus indicating that the better Vicarious Learning is optimized, the more Academic Achievements is achieved. Applied to the context of team learning, reciprocity thus reflects a distinct characteristic of the various member–member dyadic ties that make up a team's vicarious learning network, with unique implications for team processes and outcomes relative to other characteristics of the network. I therefore formally define team vicarious learning reciprocity as a compositional construct, consisting of the proportion of reciprocated vicarious learning ties between team members (out of all realized ties in the team network). Though this definition refers to the simple case of unweighted ties (i.e., focusing only on the presence or absence of ties), it is easily adapted to network studies considering tie weight. Specifically, reciprocity of weighted vicarious learning ties can be defined as the proportion of the total tie weight present in both directions between pairs in existing network within the group. In this sense, a team's vicarious learning reciprocity is distinct from other characteristics of the team's vicarious learning network, such as its density (New-man, 2010). In the context of vicarious learning relationships, density can thus be broadly considered as the amount of vicarious learning happening within the team including vicarious learning that is reciprocated as well as unreciprocated, whereas reciprocity is a feature of the distribution of this overall amount of vicarious learning in the team. At the same time, reciprocity is also distinct from other forms of the distribution of these ties, such as their centralization. The most basic, and often-used, characterization of network centralization comes from Freeman's (1978) degree centrality, which involves capturing the number of ties a given node is involved in and then comparing the distribution of these centrality values among nodes in the network.

This rightly entails that for effective vicarious learning to take place among students, the quality of reciprocity and nodes has to be strengthen so as to optimize vicarious learning scenarios in school. This equally means that students reciprocity and node building has to be monitored so as to minimize negative influences.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study examined the the relationship between building self confidence and how it influences students academic achievements in the university of Bamenda. Advancing prior approaches that aggregate team learning goal setting and vicarious learning as a unidirectional relationship, this study theorized and tested vicarious learning and goal setting as important underlying characteristic of self confidence building and achievement, contributing to a more nuanced, interpersonal network view of learning in teams and organizations

Table 6. Correlations Vicarious Learning and Academic Achievements

			Vicarious Learning	Academic Achievements
Spearman's rho	Vicarious Learning	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.652**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000
		N	412	412
	Academic Achievements	Correlation Coefficient	.652**	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.
		N	412	412
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

dramatically determines self confidence construction which significantly influences students academic performance.

Based on the findings of this study we recommend the following to respective stakeholders.

Students should learn to consciously build self confidence through the elaboration and setting of clear goals. If Individual goal setting is well done aggregate learning and performance will be achieves succinctly. Further students should learning to imitate rewarding behaviours from peers and also avoid those factors responsible for distraction from academic activities. When students realize a profitable node among themselves, the degree of proximity should be intensified to solidify the node. This would certainly augment achievement.

School authorities and through teachers and counseling services should be able to help students who are really frustrated using plausible techniques. Parents should collaborate with school authorities and the students to systematically enhance effective self confidence building since it significantly influences students academic achievements.

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