

Psychosocial Factors as Correlates of Pupils' Academic Achievement in English Language: Implications for Educational Evaluators

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ABSTRACT

Proper and adequate command of English Language is a key to understanding other school subjects. This is sequel to the fact that English Language is the official language in Nigeria's education system. Yet, the Nigerian child is battling with achievement in the subject. It is therefore, necessary to investigate the factors responsible for poor achievement in the subject with a view to proffering solutions. Hence, the study investigated the relationship between psychosocial factors and pupils' academic performance in English language. The study adopted correlational research design. The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire developed by the researchers. The questionnaire was face validated and trial tested and an internal consistency reliability index of 0.75 was obtained using Cronbach alpha method. Data obtained were analyzed using simple linear regression analysis. The findings of the study revealed among others that there is a significant relationship between attitude and pupils' academic achievement in English language and that there is a positive relationship between motivation and pupils' academic achievement in English language. These findings have implications for pupils' education career since Nigerian universities do not admit a student without a credit in English language. Based on the findings of the study, the researchers recommended among others that pupils should be adequately motivated to achieve more in English language.

Keywords: Socio-Psychological factors, Correlates, Pupils, Academic Achievement, English Language, Education Evaluators.

INTRODUCTION

Abysmal performance of pupils and students in English Language seems to be an emerging issue of public concern in education industry. English Language is unarguably the most popular language spoken around the globe and has permeated every aspect of the human life especially in Nigeria. English Language has become the language of commerce, science, and social life. To remain relevant, corporate organizations have to embrace English Language since English language has become a universal language for trade and industry (Srinivas, 2019). The author further pointed out that English Language is spoken in almost all countries of the world though with some variations. English Language is the official language in many countries including Nigeria, determining how ideas are shared, improving personality and self-esteem of an individual (Onalo, 2020). English Language is the official language in Nigeria, the language of instruction from upper primary upwards and prerequisite for admission into institutions of higher learning (Njoku, 2020). Chand et al (2021) pointed out that mass failure of students in external examinations is due to the inability of such students to read and understand simple instructions in English Language orchestrated by poor foundation in the primary school.

Academic achievement describes the extent to which success has been achieved in teaching-learning process. Academic achievement is the quantum of change observable in the learner after instruction (Herrera, Al-Lal

& Mohamed, 2020). Pointing out that academic achievement has to do with learning and knowledge, Nabizadeh et al. (2019) described academic achievement as the extent of the acquisition of the set objectives of a learning outcomes. In this study, academic achievement refers to the extent learners demonstrate the degree to which the desired goals of a particular academic experience are acquired either verbally or in written form. According to Eya et al. (2020), this achievement is measure in grades and scores, which are often influenced by the learner's psychosocial disposition.

Psychosocial variable seems to affect pupil's academic achievement in English Language. 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, 2012), 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). 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 attitude, motivation and self-regulations as psychosocial variables that affect pupil's academic achievement in English language.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Attitude is a very important variable in evaluating human behaviour. Attitude is an emotional disposition of an individual involving beliefs and feelings expressed towards events, things or persons (Linpnevich, 2016, Yashasvi, 2019). Different people may embrace several evaluative views concerning an entity vacillating on different dimensions such as from likable to dislikable, good to bad, joyful to sad among others. Attitude is established sentiments and beliefs that shape and determine one's behaviour towards his environment. One's attitude my influence his motivation.

Motivation is critical in all human endeavours. Motivation refers to emotional mechanism that triggers the desire to act. Motivation is a psychological process that propels and assists an individual to remain focused on the goals (Cherry, 2020, Murayama, 2021). Motivation is the internal or external propeller that instigates, moderates, and guides the pupil's behaviours to remain focused on achieving much in English Language. The magnitude of a pupil's motivation can influence the extent to which the pupil can regulate him/herself while studying English language.

Self-regulation refers to degree a person controls his/her emotions, feelings and behaviours in certain situations. Self-regulation is behavioral and biological skills that control one's responses to stimulus (Thomson & Jaque, 2017). Self-regulation is an emotional process through which an individual regulates his or her thoughts and behaviours in line with the societal norms and expectations (Pathways, 2020). Every individual regulates him/herself to achieve a desired goal or change one's world view. In learning and schoolwork, self-regulation of behaviours and cognition is indispensable. Self-regulation of a child's own learning style and time allotted to learning English Language may significantly influence his/her academic achievement in English language.

In a related study, Kolo et. al. (2017) discovered that there is a positive and significant correlation between attitude and student's academic achievement among college students. Ouya (2015) pointed out that,

deleterious attitude as well as ill motivation of learners' impact negatively on pupil's achievement in English Language. In a related but separate study, Tapia et al. (2020) revealed that motivation and self-efficacy are direct predictors of academic achievement of students. In another related study, Njega et al (2019) observed that there was a positive correlation between psychosocial dynamics and student's academic achievement.

In a study on the psychological factor of academic success, Michaela (2015) pointed out that personality traits such as self-regulation and motivation are indispensable for academic achievement. Duron-Ramos et al. (2018) in a separate but related study found out that, both social and personal factors such as relationships, emotions as well as attitudes influence the academic achievement of university students. Ugwuanyi et al. (2020) in another study discovered that emotional intelligence, self-esteem and self-efficacy have positive relationship with students' academic achievement in physics. In a related study, Dixson (2016) discovered that self-efficacy remains the most robust predictor of academic achievement in English Language studies. In another but related study Nijat et al. (2019) pointed out that self-efficacy as well as motivation are prerequisite factors for success in English Language among pupils.

Educationists and education evaluators have expressed worries over the worsening academic achievement of pupils in English Language since its adverse effects are felt in institutions of higher learning. To this effect, one begins to wonder if the abysmal achievement of pupils in English Language could be traced to some psychosocial factors. This study, therefore, investigated the relationship between psychosocial factors and pupils' academic achievement in English Language in Enugu state.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following research questions;

1. What is the relationship between attitude and pupils' academic achievement in English Language?
2. What is the relationship between motivation and pupils' academic achievement in English Language?
3. What is the relationship between self-regulation and pupils' academic achievement in English Language?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between attitude and pupils' academic achievement in English Language.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between motivation and pupils' academic achievement in English Language.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between self-regulation and pupils' academic achievement in English Language.

RESEARCH METHOD

The study adopted correlational research design, which according to Formplus (2020) is a study in which the researcher observes two or more variable so as to establish a statistical relationship that exists between them without manipulating any of the variables. This study investigated the relationship between attitude, motivation, self-regulation and pupils' academic achievement in English Language in Enugu State. This design has been used by Eya et al. (2020), Okenyi, et al. (2021) Ugwuanyi and Okeke (2020), Ugwuanyi et al. (2020a, b, c) in similar studies.

The population of the study consisted of 223,640 primary (5) five pupils in the entire 2,106 public primary schools in Enugu state (source: Enugu state universal basic education board, 2020). The sample size of the study comprised 177 primary five pupils drawn through simple random sampling technique. 117 pupils formed an appropriate sample size for this study in accordance with the G-Power, 3.1 version, at a average effect size (f^2) of 0.13, level of significance of 0.05, and power of 0.79. The statistical power analysis of 0.79 was deemed sufficient for calculating the appropriate sample size. The choice of primary 5 pupils is predicated on the fact that at this stage the pupils are mature enough to understand and clearly respond to the questionnaires. More still, the pupils were not in exam class and the the achievement test covers their curriculum of studies. Three instruments namely attitude inventory, motivation scale and self-regulation questionnaire were used for data collection. Each of the instruments was a four-point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (4 points), Agree (3 points), Disagree (2 points) and Strongly Disagree (1 point). Attitude inventory had 20 items; motivation scale had 15 items while self-regulation questionnaire had 18 items. These instruments were properly face validated by three experts in psychology and measurement and evaluation units. The internal consistency reliability indices of the instruments were determined using Cronbach Alpha method. Reliability indices of 0.85, 0.76 and 0.82 were obtained for the three instruments respectively. Data collected were analyzed using simple linear regression analysis. The correlation coefficient aspect of regression analysis was utilized to answer the research questions while analysis of variance (ANOVA) aspect of regression analysis was utilized in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

RESULTS

Research Question One: What is the relationship between attitude and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language?

Table 1: Regression analysis of the relationship between attitude and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.531 a	.282	.278	14.96318
a. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude				

Table 1 shows that the correlation coefficient between attitude and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language is 0.531 with a coefficient of determination of 0.282. This shows that there is a positive relationship between attitude and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language. Besides, the coefficient of determination of 0.282 implies that 28.2 % positive change in pupils’ achievement in English language is as a result of their attitude.

Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between attitude and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language.

Table 2: Analysis of variance of the relationship between attitude and pupils’ academic achievement in English language

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	15640.968	1	15640.968	69.858	.000 b
	Residual	39853.609	178	223.897		
	Total	55494.578	179			
a. Dependent Variable: Achievement						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Attitude						

Table 2 reveals that there is a significant positive relationship between attitude and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language, $F(1, 178) = 69.858, p = .000$. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected ($p < .05$).

Research Question Two: What is the relationship between motivation and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language?

Table 3: Regression analysis of the relationship between motivation and pupils’ academic achievement in English language

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.567 ^a	.321	.317	14.54818
a. Predictors: (Constant), Motivation				

Table 3 shows that the correlation coefficient between motivation and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language is 0.567 with a coefficient of determination of 0.321. This shows that there is a positive relationship between motivation and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language. Besides, the coefficient of determination of 0.321 implies that 32.1% positive change in pupils’ achievement in English language is as a result of their motivation.

Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between motivation and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language.

Table 4: Analysis of variance of the relationship between motivation and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	17820.979	1	17820.979	84.200	.000 ^b
	Residual	37673.599	178	211.649		
	Total	55494.578	179			
a. Dependent Variable: Achievement						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Motivation						

Table 4 reveals that there is a significant positive relationship between motivation and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language, $F(1, 178) = 84.200, p = .000$. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected ($p < .05$).

Research Question Three: What is the relationship between self-regulation and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language?

Table 5: Regression analysis of the relationship between self-regulation and pupils’ academic achievement in English language

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.552 ^a	.304	.300	14.72764
a. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Regulation				

Table 5 shows that the correlation coefficient between self-regulation and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language is 0.552 with a coefficient of determination of 0.302. This shows that there is a positive relationship between self-regulation and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language. Besides, the coefficient of determination of .304 implies that 30.4 % positive change in pupils’ achievement in English Language is as a result of their self-regulation.

Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between self-regulation and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language.

Table 6: Analysis of variance of the relationship between self-regulation and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16885.782	1	16885.782	77.849	.000 ^b
	Residual	38608.796	178	216.903		
	Total	55494.578	179			
a. Dependent Variable: Achievement						
b. Predictors: (Constant), Self-Regulation						

Table 6 reveals that there is a significant positive relationship between self-regulation and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language, $F(1, 178) = 77.849, p = .000$. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected ($p < .05$).

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

The findings of the study revealed that there is a positive relation between attitude and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language. Further analysis showed that there is a significant positive relationship between attitude and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language. This implies that the more pupils develop positive attitude towards English Language, the more they achieve academically in English Language. This validates the findings of Kolo et al. (2017), and Yashasvi (2019) who discovered that a positive relationship existed between students’ attitude and achievement in English Language in secondary schools.

Furthermore, the findings of the study revealed that there is a positive relationship between motivation and pupils’ achievement in English Language. This implies that pupils who are better motivated are most likely to obtain better academic results. The conclusions of this study are line with the findings of Tapia (2020), who discovered that motivation is a direct predictor of academic achievement of students in English Language.

From the findings of the study, it was revealed that there exists a positive relationship between self-regulation and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language. This could be attributed to some factors such as maintaining some specific periods of studies, doing home assignments and studying ahead of examinations. Further analysis showed that there is a significant positive relationship between self-regulation and pupils’ academic achievement in English Language. The finding is in line with the finding of Michaela (2015) who discovered that self-regulation and motivation are indispensable for students’ academic achievements. Furthermore, the finding validated the finding of Nijat et al. (2019) and Ugwuanyi et al. (2020) who discovered that self-efficacy remains the most robust predictor of students’ achievement in physics.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that a pupil's attitudes, motivation and self-regulation influence his/her academic achievement in English Language. In view of the role of English Language in national development, tourism and business, it is therefore, appropriate to explore every possible measure to guarantee proper teaching and learning of the subject, to ensure the pupils' higher achievement in the said subject.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Parents and teachers should endeavour to help pupils develop the right attitude towards English Language to prepare them for higher education.
2. Parents and teachers should be aware that motivation is related to pupils' academic achievement in English Language, and thus, should strive to motivate the children adequately as that will bring about better academic achievement in English Language.
3. Parents should help pupils to regulate themselves properly in order to keep study rules and maintaining healthy study habits to improve their academic achievement in English Language.

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