



Academic Motivation as a Correlate of Academic Achievement in English Language among Senior Secondary School Students in ORLU Education Zone of Imo State

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

Article Information

DOI: 10.9734/AJESS/2023/v41i4902

Open Peer Review History:

This journal follows the Advanced Open Peer Review policy. Identity of the Reviewers, Editor(s) and additional Reviewers, peer review comments, different versions of the manuscript, comments of the editors, etc are available here: <https://www.sdiarticle5.com/review-history/97710>

Original Research Article

Received: 14/01/2023

Accepted: 18/03/2023

Published: 25/03/2023

ABSTRACT

This study investigated academic motivation as a correlate of academic achievement in English language among senior secondary school students in Imo State. The study was directed by three research questions, and three null hypotheses were evaluated at a significance level of 0.05. The correlational research design was used in this study. The area of the study is Orlu Education Zone of Imo State Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of all the 1,569 senior secondary year two (SS2) students in the 156 public secondary schools in Orlu Education Zone of Imo State. The whole population size of 1,569 was used as the sample size because it was considered manageable by the researcher. The students' academic motivation questionnaire (SAMQ) was adapted from 'Students' Motivation towards Science Learning (SMTSL) Questionnaire' which was a

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20-item questionnaire. The academic achievement test was measured by English Language examination scores derived from SS 2 English Language students' termly results for 2021/2022 academic session. The Students' Academic Motivation Questionnaire was an adapted tool, therefore it underwent face validation by professionals. Cronbach Alpha Method was used to determine the internal consistency of SAMQ and a co-efficient of 0.77 was obtained. Frequency counts, percentages and Pearson Product Moment was used to answer the research questions while correlated samples t-test was used to test the null hypothesis at 0.05 alpha level. The results showed that there is very weak negative and significant association between secondary school students' academic motivation and their academic achievement in English language. Based on the findings, it was recommended amongst others that since academic motivation did not influence secondary school students' academic achievement; it is recommended that teachers/parents should find other means of boosting students or their wards' desire to learn so as to achieve higher academically.

Keywords: Motivation; self-esteem; academic achievement; English language.

1. INTRODUCTION

“English is a language of instruction in schools particularly the upper level of primary school, secondary school and beyond in Nigeria. No career choice identified by students to be studied in the university level goes without the making at least a credit grade in Senior Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE)” [1]. “English language is compulsory and a pre-requisite for entering into the university. This is why the use of English Language is compulsory in JAMB for all candidates seeking admissions into tertiary institutions. Sequel to this, it is important to note that English Language functions as a vehicle of interaction and an instrument of communication” [1]. Olusoji [2] viewed that “English Language is a dominant language of international business and economic development, and that dominance continues to grow with continued globalization of business through mergers and international investments”.

Despite the importance of English language in our daily lives, it is very disappointing to observe that students' academic achievement in the subject at the senior secondary school level of education has not been satisfactory. Academic achievement is generally regarded as the outcome of learning. Okoli and Egbunonu [3] opined that achievement in teaching-learning means the attainment of set objectives of instruction. Thus, Steinmayer, Meibner, Weidinger and Wirthwein [4] stated that “academic achievement can determine whether a student will have the opportunity to continue his or her education; it will define whether one can take part in higher education based on what he/she attains; it also influences one's vocational career after education; it can be used to analyze strengths and weaknesses of a nation's

educational system, and to guide educational decision policies”. “Academic achievement is therefore one of the major variables that is used to measure an individual success or failure in school activities. Student's academic achievement is commonly measured through examination and continuous assessment” Steinmayer, Meibner, Weidinger and Wirthwein [4].

Researchers [5] have shown that “there is apparent poor academic achievement among secondary school students in English language. This is evident in available result from West African Examination Council of 2016 and 2017”. “Analysis of SSCE results from 2009-2017 revealed the level of students' academic achievement in English language to be very poor” [6]. Thus, WAEC chief examiners report (2014- 2018) show that English language has a low average academic achievement compared to other subjects. The poor academic achievement in English language according to researchers [6,7] are blamed on a number of factors such as lack of qualified English language teachers, lack of methodological competencies, large class size and inadequate infrastructures. Similarly, Auwalu, et al. noted that English language syllabus is over loaded.

Over the years, efforts have been made by researchers, government and non-governmental organizations in seeking ways of improving students' achievement in various subjects, as well as in English language. However, the level of academic achievement in the subject still remains unsatisfactory. With regards to this, it could be that other variables such as motivation and self-esteem play major roles in students' academic achievement and influences it.

Motivation according to Denhardt, Denhardt and Aristigueta [8], is defined as what causes people to behave as they do. Motivation is the force, internal or external, that moves an organism into action. It is that which initiates behaviour, directs and sustains an action in order to achieve a particular goal. "Academic motivation therefore is defined as the drive to work with diligence and vitality, to constantly steer toward targets, to obtain dominance in challenging a difficult task and create sense of achievement as a result" [9]. Erhuvwu and Adeyemi [10] defined "achievement motivation as those factors that affect student's perceptions of their relationship to the achievement setting (e.g. the classroom)". Tella [11] added that "academic motivation should be carefully manipulated whether in the work situation or study situation, so that students are neither under-motivated nor over-motivated but appropriately motivated so as to be useful to themselves in their society and the world at large".

It is important to note that academic motivation is an important concept to educational psychologists because they are said to be embodied in individuals' mental structure, mediating cognition and learning and influencing individual development. Thus, the authors asserted that students' neglect to studies is an indication of lack of academic motivation. Therefore, in the various studies reviewed on students' motivation, it was found that most of the studies were conducted on different subjects, rather than English language; some of them were conducted for other levels such as primary and university students instead of secondary school students. Most of them were not carried out in Orlu Education Zone, Imo state; and more so, none of the studies investigated motivation as it correlates of academic achievement. Looking at these gaps, the present study deems it fit to investigate academic motivation as a correlate of academic achievement in English Language among senior secondary school students in Orlu Education Zone of Imo State. The study seeks to determine the:

1. Academic motivation scores of senior secondary school students in English language.
2. Academic achievement scores of senior secondary school students in English language.
3. Relationship between secondary school students' academic motivation scores and

academic achievement scores in English language.

Research Questions:

1. What are the academic motivation scores of senior secondary school students in English language?
2. What are the academic achievement scores of senior secondary school students in English language?
3. What is the relationship between secondary school students' academic motivation scores and academic achievement scores in English language?

Hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between academic motivation and academic achievement scores of secondary school students in English language.

2. THEORETICAL UNDERPINNINGS

2.1 Person-centered Theory by Carl Rodgers (1951)

The Person-centered theory was propounded by Carl Rodgers in 1951. The theory also called the self theory. The theory states that each person has within them the natural tendency to continue to grow and develop. As a result of this the individual's self-esteem and self-actualization is continually influenced. Rodgers investigated an internal influence, the child's self-understanding or self-insights that enable an individual to have personal assessment. He also investigated children's behaviour in relation to external factors which include family environment, economic and cultural influences as well as social and educational background. The results of his study show that self-understanding is the element that most correctly predicts later behaviour.

Rogers (1951) stated that "the basic nature of human being when functioning fully is constructive and trustworthy. When one is freed of defensiveness and is open to experience, his/her reactions are bound to be trusted as positive, forward moving and constructive. He argues that one needs to maintain and enhance the self, in order to become a fully functioning person, which is the main goal of all human beings". "He adds that a child's self-understanding encompassed the acceptance of self and reality as well as responsibility for the

self. Rogers posited that each person has a private experiential world, which includes the present experiences and memories of past experiences that actively guide the person's perception of the moment. He suggests that higher levels of development sharpen and define experiential world and they lead to the formation of the self. Rogers further noted that the development of the "self" emerges as the child interacts with other people and learns to distinguish what is direct and immediate to one self and what is external to oneself" Rogers (1951).

Relating this theory to this study, it is believed that for a high/positive self-esteem in a student, the student needs to develop a positive regard which includes acceptance, love and approval. This regard will propel high self-esteem which can in turn improve academic achievement. On the other hand, if a learner is not bestowed with positive regard/stimulation, the learners' tendency towards actualization and enhancement of self is hampered. This theory therefore failed to talk on motivation as an important variable in this study. This gap therefore informed the introduction of another theory called Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory.

2.2 Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory 1959

Two-factor theory was propounded by Fred Herzberg in 1959 which concentrated on motivation and job satisfaction. The two factors are referred to by various names. These are dissatisfiers-satisfiers; the hygiene-motivator; extrinsic-intrinsic factors. The theory states that those factors that are related to satisfaction or positive feeling about the job are called motivators or satisfiers. This is because these factors are related to the nature of work- the content of job itself – they are sometimes referred to as intrinsic factors. These factors encourage the growth and development needs of people at the workplace. Herzberg identified the following six factors as motivational factors; 1) achievement 2) recognition for achievement 3) the work itself 4) responsibility 5) advancement (promotion) 6) the possibility of personal growth. Herzberg claims that motivational factors are linked to job satisfaction but not job dissatisfaction. That is, when these motivational factors are present in a work situation they lead to strong motivation, satisfaction and good job performance, but do not cause dissatisfaction when they are absent.

On the other side, the elements that contribute to dissatisfaction are referred to as hygienes or dissatisfiers. This is because each of these characteristics has a connection to the job's context (environment). These are also known as the extrinsic motivational variables. Herzberg (1968) identified "ten hygiene factors; 1) company policy and administration 2) supervision 3) interpersonal relations with superior 4) interpersonal relations with peers 5) interpersonal relations with subordinates 6) working conditions 7) salary 8) personal life 9) status 10) job security. These extrinsic factors caused workers to be dissatisfied while their presence consequently failed to increase job satisfaction".

Herzberg maintained that if these extrinsic factors are present in the work situation, the employee will not necessarily be either satisfied or motivated. But if these factors are not forthcoming, the employee will be dissatisfied. Herzberg concluded that the opposite of job dissatisfaction was not job satisfaction. It was simply no job dissatisfaction and vice versa.

Relating this theory to the present study, when hygiene factors (such as motivation) are undesirable, students become unsatisfied. On the other hand, when hygiene factors are desirable, students become satisfied. Invariably, there is need to set a social environment where students see their personal needs as being satisfied for motivation purposes. If these personal needs are satisfied, it promotes students' self-esteem and motivates them to improve their academic achievement.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted correlational research design. The area of the study is Imo State Nigeria. The population of the study consisted of all the 1,569 senior secondary year two (SS2) students in the 156 public secondary schools in Orlu Education Zone of Imo State. The whole population size of 1,569 was used as the sample size because it was considered manageable by the researcher. The students' academic motivation questionnaire (SAMQ) was adapted from 'Students' Motivation towards Science Learning (SMTSL) Questionnaire' which was a 20-item questionnaire developed by Tuan, Chin and Shieh, (2005). The academic achievement test was measured by English Language examination scores derived from SS 2 English Language students' termly results for 2021/2022 academic

session. Students' Academic Motivation Questionnaire was an adapted instrument and therefore subjected to face validation by three experts. The SAMQ questionnaire was trial-tested using 20 students from a public secondary school in Anambra State and a co-efficient of 0.78 was obtained using Cronbach Alpha Method. Frequency counts, percentages and Pearson Product Moment was used to answer the research questions while correlated samples t-test at 0.05 alpha level.

4. RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the academic motivation scores of senior secondary school students in Orlu Education Zone of Imo State?

Table 1 reveals that 896 (57.1%) of the senior secondary school students with the scores ranging from 41 and 60 have poor academic motivation while 673 (42.9%) others who scored between 20 and 40 have average academic motivation.

Research Question 2: What are the academic achievement scores of senior secondary school students in English language?

Table 3 shows that 229 (19.2%) of the senior secondary school students with the scores

ranging from 70 and 100 have excellent academic achievement in English language and 147 (12.3%) of the students who scored between 60 and 69 have good achievement in English language.

Research Question 3: What type of relationship exists between academic motivation and academic achievement of senior secondary school students in English language in Imo State?

In Table 4 it was observed that very low or no negative relationship of -0.094 exists between senior secondary school students' academic motivation and their academic achievement in English language.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between secondary school students' academic motivation and their academic achievement in English language.

Table 4 indicates that at 0.05 level of significance and 1569 df, the calculated t 3.27 with p-value 0.001 which is less than 0.05, the first null hypothesis is rejected. The relationship existing between secondary school students' academic motivation and their academic achievement in English language Imo State is significant.

Table 1. Academic motivation scores of senior secondary school students in Orlu Education Zone of Imo State

Academic motivation scores	N	%	Remarks
20 – 40	896	57.1	Poor academic motivation
41 – 60	673	42.9	Average academic motivation

Table 2. Academic achievement scores of senior secondary school students in English Language

Academic achievement scores	N	%	Remarks
70 – 100	229	19.2	Excellent achievement
60 – 69	147	12.3	Very good achievement
50 – 59	230	19.2	Good achievement
40 – 49	233	19.5	Fair achievement
0 – 39	356	29.8	Poor achievement

Table 3. Pearson r on academic motivation and academic achievement of senior secondary school students in English language

Source of variance	N	Academic motivation (r)	English language (r)	Remark
Academic motivation	1569	1.00	-0.094	Very low or no negative relationship
English language	1569	-0.094	1.00	

Table 4. Correlation sample t-test on the relationship exists between secondary school students' academic motivation and their academic achievement in English language

N	Cal. r	Df	Cal. t	p-value	Remark
1569	-0.094	1567	3.27	0.001	S

S = Significant

5. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The study discovered a weak negative relationship between secondary school students' academic motivation and academic achievement in English. This finding was in line with the finding of Ibukun [12] that there is a moderate negative relationship between students' motivation and their academic achievement in mathematics in senior secondary schools in Anambra State. Similarly, the finding of Berg and Coetzee [13] revealed a low negative correlation exists between academic motivation and academic achievement in Cameroon. Contrarily, Adedeji [14] and Affum-Osei, Eric, Barnie and Forkuoh [15] revealed "a positive relationship between motivation and students' academic achievement learning outcomes in Mathematics. The difference in both findings could be as a result different respondents and change in geographical location".

The study discovered an important relationship between secondary school students' academic motivation and their academic achievement in English language Imo State. This finding agreed with the finding of Ibukun [12] that there is a significant relationship between motivational variables and academic achievement in mathematics. On the other hand, the study of Affum-Osei, Eric, Barnie and Forkuoh [15] revealed that "there is no significant relationship between achievement motivation and academic self-concept. The difference in both findings could be as a result different respondents and change in geographical location".

6. CONCLUSION

Based on the finding of the study, it was concluded that there is very weak negative and significant relationship between secondary school students' academic motivation and their academic achievement in English language. Furthermore, it was found that there is a weakly negative and substantial correlation between secondary school students' self-esteem and their academic success in English language [16-18].

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the finding of the study, the following recommendations were reviewed:

1. Since academic motivation did not influence secondary school students' academic achievement, it is recommended that teachers/parents should find other means of boosting students or their wards' desire to learn so as to achieve higher academically.
2. School administrators should find out the strategies to adequately motivate their students, such as organizing speech and price giving day celebration, quiz and debate among the secondary school students in order to facilitate learning and improve academic performance.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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Peer-review history:

The peer review history for this paper can be accessed here:
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