

# **The Influence of Psycho-Social Variables on Students Academic Performance in some Selected Secondary Schools in Lagos Metropolis**

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## **Abstract**

This research was conducted to investigate the influence of psycho-social variables on students' academic performance, using 150 respondents from five secondary schools in Lagos Metropolis. Questionnaires were used to obtain information from the respondents while Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics (PPMC) served as the major tool of data analysis. While the results found that Psycho-Social variables did not show a significant correlation on students' academic performance. Also, the results revealed that there is no significant relationship between psycho social variables and academic performance but it exists between them. Lastly, the study indicated a significant correlation exists between students' self-efficacy and their self-concept. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made.

**Keywords:** Influence, Psycho-social variables, self-efficacy, students' academic performance

## 1. Introduction

Past studies have shown that students performance in post primary education has continued to decline in Nigeria (Adesina, 1977). Several research efforts have also emerged to determine factors responsible for this problem and to also proffer solutions (Ifedili, and Ochuba, 2009; Nbina, 2012; Borisade, 2013; Kakwagh, 2013; Uwameiye, 2014) so as to redefine education system in Nigeria.

Most of these studies, however, focused on systemic failure in education system. On this ground, the nation's government is liable, probably for her inability to perceive education as the social responsibility of the state, which could be akin to poor funding of education system. Besides, other articles blame the government for poor motivation for manpower in teaching profession (Kakwagh, 2013). Due to poor remunerations and conditions of service, people are not interested in the profession. It could be observed that manpower assets in the profession are only trying to get a means of livelihood hence, their inability for dedication and commitment to the profession (Kakwagh, 2013). Further to the above, extrinsic factors around the students have equally been considered as strong factors responsible for the massive poor performance of student. However, it has been observed that little emphasis has been placed on intrinsic factors around students in an attempt to discover reasons for their poor performance. It is upon this background that this study was conceived.

The study considers the fact that education in any society is the bedrock of development (Kakwagh, 2013). The poor performance of students over the years in all levels of education could be the major reason why Omonijo, Uche, Rotimi and Nwadiolor, (2014, p. 1) argue that "the education system is of little or no effect in handling day-to-day challenges of life" among Nigerians and it could have a significant negative impact on the nation's development.

This problem has persisted because the efforts of government in providing solutions have yielded little or no result (Okeke, 2015). Even the heavy investment of private individuals on education Omuta, (2012) seems not to have recorded any remarkable result on quality education at the elementary level.

The study focused on secondary school students in one of the Education District of Lagos State with the purpose of achieving the following objectives: (i) to identify whether students' self-efficacy will significantly influence their academic performance, (ii) to find out whether students' self-efficacy will have significant relationship with their self-concept, (iii) to examine whether students' social network will have a significant relationship with their academic performance.

The study proceeds in numerical order as indicated below.

### 1.1 Definition of Concepts

**Psycho-social variable:** - This referred to the psychological and social independent variables. Psychological independent variable includes students' self-efficacy, while the social variable includes social network of students.

**Self-efficacy:** - Ability of students to perform very well.

**Social Network:** - In this study, the construct is used to represent a student's social relationship with his/her family, teachers and friends. It is also used synonymously as significant others, or social support.

**Academic Performance:** - This refers to students' scores in all subjects at the end of an examination. It could be good or poor as the case may be.

**Students:** - This refers to Senior Secondary School Two students in Lagos State Education District One.

## **2. Literature Review on Psycho-Social Variable**

### **2.1 Self-Efficacy**

The concept of self-efficacy has received attention of scholars in academia in the last few decades (Zimmerman, 2000). It means the belief of mankind in their abilities to perform very well in events that define their lives. It could be compared with a strong power of will which enable humanity to succeed in life. Based on the works of (Schunk, Hanson & Cox, 1987), self-efficacy connotes the level of human endeavours on a task, how long it takes them to stay on course in addressing difficult situations as well as rejuvenating after facing unwelcome situations. Therefore, the more people possess high self-efficacy, the more they have endeavours to remain steadfast and committed to a given task Pajares and Schunk (2001), for the purpose of excelling in life.

Past articles have shown some level of relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance in different milieu (Pajares and Miller, 1994). Arguably, students with boldness to succeed will usually confront any intricate task with the aim of becoming victorious instead of being afraid to indulge in them. From the studies of Pajares and Miller, (1994), a student with strong self-efficacy may likely perform better than one with poor self-efficacy. This study is an attempt to authenticate this position, using secondary school students in Lagos.

### **2.2 Self-Efficacy and Self Concept**

The line of demarcation between self-efficacy and self-concept has not been clearly drawn in academia(Pajares, 2003). Hence, Reyes, (1984) perceives the two as the same thing while Harter, (1990) perceives self-concept as a generalized form of self-efficacy. In another development, other scholars have argued that self-efficacy is an aspect of self-concept (Pajare and Schunk, 2001).In contrary to the above views, however, McInerney, *et.al*(2001), states that self-efficacy is the evaluation of ones boldness in his capability while self-concept has to do with a person self-accompanied worth of evaluative judgment. Given this, self-concept beliefs has to do with assessing one's ability (Marsh, Walker, and Debus, 1991)and it depends on how people in a given culture consider the attributes which they place on their feelings of self-worth but self-efficacy beliefs are not largely connected with cultural values on feelings relating to capacity for performance.

Dwelling on the above, the two concepts (self-efficacy and self-concept) connotes people divergent views of themselves (McInerney*et.al*, 2001) and it could prompt them to ask different questions on whether they can do something or not Pajares and Schunk (2001), whereas self-concept beliefs hinge on human feelings about different issues of life. Therefore, responses to self-efficacy questions which people ask themselves, more often than not shows their level of confidence, either negatively or positively in handling tasks successfully. Apparently, Self-efficacy and self-concept show different views of oneself.

The present study therefore examines whether internal factors, such as self-efficacy of students' and social network could relate with their academic performance and their social concept.

### **2.3Social Networks as a Predictor of Academic Performance**

A student's social networks have been described by Farber (2004) as the relationship he or she has with his family, friends and teachers. This relationship could be at home and on campus. Since family members and friends based at home while friends at times and teachers are found on campus they can impact negatively or positively on students' academic performance. Apart from social networks, therefore, the role of environments in this discourse should not be neglected or ignored. It may likely have a negative or a positive impact on students' academic performance and their developmental values. But since our focus in this section is on social networks, our discussion on environmental factors is thereby constrained.

In respect of the contributions of parents to students' academic success, Farber (2004) further stated that psychological, emotional, economic and financial support for students from parents may

likely motivate them and enhances their performances positively. On this account, a student who does not lack anything in the course of his or her studentship may be positively influenced to succeed academically than indigent students.

Also, in the school environments, the support from peers and teachers could play a significant role in students' academic performance. It is evident in the literature that students from broken home Omonijo, (1995) who lack paternal and maternal care could be assisted by their friends and teachers. It is possible that Godly children from good homes could want to be their brothers' keepers by encouraging them to succeed in school. More often than not, God faring teachers are equally fond of supporting such children, either morally or financially.

Further to the above discussion, the role of religious associations in students' academic success should not be waved aside. In various campuses across the nation, there are campus fellowships of some of many denominations. Brethren in such fellowships could influence the success of their members throughout their studentship.

It is most likely therefore, that students who lack the above mentioned supports may not be able to perform satisfactorily in their studies. This is because human beings need motivation and support for performances that leads to a successful life. Hence, anyone who is discouraged may not likely succeed in his career.

In the light of the above, this study intends to discover if students social networks actually correlate with their academic performance.

### **3. Methods of Data Collection**

As a descriptive survey, this study described how students' self-efficacy and social network influenced their academic performance as well as their self-concept. This informed the study's use of survey research design.

All Senior Secondary School two (SSS II) students in one Education District in Lagos State represent the population of study. They are 152 in number. The participants were selected from (from the table of random numbers) of the six education districts of Lagos State. Two Public post-primary schools were selected from Agege, Alimosho and Ifako-Ijaiye areas that constitute the district. One public school was however chosen from the last of the three councils, to make five public schools altogether, for the study. Thirty students from each of the five schools were selected randomly.

Students' Self-Efficacy Scale (SSES) is one of the research instrument used to collect data. This is a 20 – item scale selected from the design of Sherer, Maddux, Mercaderite, Prentice-Dunn, Jacobs & Roger (1982) to measure the general level of beliefs in one's own competence in a given task.

In term of methods of data collection, the researchers visited the principals of the five schools. After due permission, they worked hand in hand with the English and Mathematics teachers in the schools to help mobilize and organize the students for the exercise. At the end of the exercise, the instruments were collected and the researcher expressed gratitude to all who have worked with her.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Statistics was eventually used to analyze the data collected.

**Reliability:** The instrument had an internal consistency of  $\alpha$  0.86 and a test-retest reliability of 0.69 was obtained after a two weeks interval, which corroborates (Longe, 2008)

#### **3.4.2 Social Network Scale (SNS)**

This is also a 20-item scale adapted from Farber (2004)'s Social Support Scale. The instrument consists of 11 positive and 9 negative items measuring the students' relationship with their family, teachers and friends. Participants responded to the instruments by assigning their level of relationship on a 5-point likert scale, from strongly agree (SA) to Strongly Disagree (SD).

**Reliability:** An internal consistency of  $\alpha = 0.86$  was obtained with good test-retest reliability ( $r = 0.78$ ).

### 3.4.3 Students Achievement Test in English and Mathematics

This is a 40 – item multiple choice question in English and Mathematics (20 for each subject, from past West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examinations)

**Reliability:** The test- retest reliability( $r = 0.79$ ) of the instrument was obtained at 0.05 level of significance.

### 3.4.4 Self Concept Scale

This is a 20 – item 5 – point likert scale ranging from Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (U), and Disagree (D) to Strongly Disagree (SD).It was selected from Walter Hudson’s 22-item scale. It was designed to measure the feelings the respondents have of themselves.

**Reliability** – The test- retest reliability( $r = 0.72$ ) of the instrument was obtained at 0.05 level of significance.

## 3.7 Research Questions

- In what ways do students self-efficacy correlate with their academic performance?
- In what ways do students’ self-efficacy impact on their’ self-concept?
- What relationship do students’ social networks have with students’ academic performance?

## 3.8 Testing of Research Hypotheses

**Ho<sub>1</sub>:** A significant correlation exists between self-efficacy and students’ academic performance.

**Table 1:** Correlation Between Students Self Efficacy and Academic Performance.

Variables	N	Df	r-cal	r-crit
Self-Efficacy	150	148	0.070	0.394
Academic Performance	150	148		

Source: Researchers field work, (2016)  
 $P < 0.05$

Results from **Table 1** indicate that self-efficacy scores of students did not significantly correlate with their academic performance. This deduction is based on the fact that r-calculated which is 0.070 and it is less than the r-critical value of 0.394 @ 0.05 level of significance.

**Ho<sub>2</sub>:** A significant correlation exists between self-efficacy and students self-concept.

**Table 2:** Correlation Between Students’ Self Efficacy and their Self Concept

Variables	N	Df	r-cal	r-crit
Self-Efficacy	150	148	0.157	0.055
Self-Concept	150	148		

Source: Researchers field work, (2016)

As shown in **Table 2**, the students’ self-efficacy scores correlated significantly with their self-concept scores. This deduction is based on the fact that r-cal which is 0.157 is greater than the r-crit value of 0.055 at 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, a significant correlation exists between students’ self-efficacy and self-concept.

**Ho<sub>3</sub>:** A significant correlation exists between social network and students’ academic performance

**Table 3:** Correlation Between Students' Social Networks and Academic Performance

Variables	N	Df	r-cal	r-crit
Social Networks	150	148	0.098	0.234
Academic Performance	150	148		

Source: Researchers field work, (2016)

**Table 3** shows that the students' social network scores did not significantly correlate with their academic performance scores. This deduction is based on the fact that r-cal which is 0.098 is less than the r-crit value of 0.234 @ 0.05 level of significance.

### 3.5 Discussion

The first hypothesis in this study investigated if psycho-social variables significant correlate students' academic performance. The result revealed no significant relationship between psycho social variables and academic performance but it exists between them. This shows that a student's belief about his capability to perform certain tasks may not necessarily be an impetus to his academic achievement. This is totally at variance with the assertions of some previous studies on self-efficacy such as that of Pajares & Schunk,(2001) who argued that psycho-social variables predict academic performance.

The second hypothesis investigated if there was a significant correlation between students' self-efficacy and their self-concept. The result shown on **Table 2** follows that there is a significant correlation between students' self-efficacy and their self-concept.

The third hypothesis investigated if a significant correlation existed between students' social network and their academic performance. The result revealed that students' social network did not significantly relate with their academic performance. This result agrees with the findings of Mullis, Rathage & Mullis (2003) that both parental and student networks may not add any contribution to students' academic performance, and that of Hattie, (1992) who demonstrated that the teacher is unlikely to be a very effective agent of change in enhancing academic achievement beyond other variables, implies that the relationship of a student with his or her family, friends and his teachers, has neither a positive nor negative effect on the his or her academics. The result however does not agree with some other studies such as those by Gonzalez & Padilla (1997), McInerney *et.al.* (2001) and Farber (2004), who contend that a student's relationship with his significant others, has an ever increasing importance on his academic performance.

### 3.10 Conclusion

Dwelling on the above findings our conclusion in this study varies. On one hand, we conclude that no significant correlation exist between students' psycho-social variables and their academic performance while on the other hand we conclude that there is no significant correlation between students social networks and their academic performance but it exists between them. Lastly, it is concluded that a significant correlation exists between students' self-efficacy and their self-concept

### 3.11 Recommendations

To improve on the academic performance of students, the following recommendations are made:

1. Educational psychologists as well as school guidance counsellors should be exposed to trainings and seminars on self-efficacy beliefs, so they can in turn educate students on ways to improve their self-efficacy.
2. Parents and teachers should act as good models of self-beliefs to students, as children learn from the actions of their models.

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