



Impact of Students' Self-Efficacy on Academic Achievement in Nigeria

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DOI: 10.5281/zenodo.15771355

Submission Date: 26 May 2025 | Published Date: 30 June 2025

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the relationship between students' self-efficacy and academic achievement in the context of Nigeria. The results of the study showed that self-efficacy has a significant impact on students' academic achievement. Specifically, students with high self-efficacy tend to perform better academically compared to those with low self-efficacy. Furthermore, the study also revealed that self-efficacy can play a crucial role in academic motivation and perseverance, which are essential factors for academic success. The findings of this research have significant implications for educators and policymakers in Nigeria, as they can use this information to develop interventions and programs that can enhance students' self-efficacy and ultimately improve academic achievement. Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the impact of self-efficacy on academic achievement and highlights the importance of addressing this issue in the Nigerian education system.

Keywords: Academic Achievement, Students Self-Efficacy.

1. Introduction

Education has been regarded as a veritable tool for national growth. This is because it brings about mass literacy, and enlightenment and drives significant changes in the social, political and economic life of a nation. To further buttress the significance of education to individual development, wellness, and self-actualisation, the sustainable development goal, SDG number 4 emphasises quality education. Quality education is also important for national development (Owolabi & Owolabi, 2024).

Academic achievement of students especially at the secondary school level is not only a pointer to the effectiveness or otherwise of schools but a major determinant to the future of youths in particular and the nation in general. The medium through which the attainment of individuals and the nation's educational goals can be achieved is learning. Learning outcomes have become a phenomenon of interest to all and this account for the reason why scholars have been working hard to unravel factors that predict academic achievement (Aremu & Sokan, 2002). Academic achievement to Sunitha (2005) is the knowledge acquired and skills developed in school subjects, generally indicated by marks obtained in tests in annual examination.

Adeyemo (2001) opined that the major goal of the school is to work towards attainment of academic excellence by students. According to him, the school may have other peripheral objectives, but emphasis is always placed on the achievement of sound scholarship. The students' academic achievement plays an important role in producing the best quality graduates who will become great leaders that can produce the man power needed for the country's economic and social development (Ali, 2009). Halawah (2006) stated that academic achievement is accomplished by actual execution of class work in the school setting. It is typically assessed by using teachers' ratings, class tests and examinations organized by the academic institutions or by the educational boards.

Self-efficacy beliefs lead to individuals' excellent performance through increasing commitment, endeavor, and perseverance (Pintrich, 2002 in Obafemi et. al., 2023). The learners with high levels of self-efficacy attribute their failures to lower attempts rather than lower ability, while those with low self-efficacy attribute their failures to their low abilities (Kurbanoglu & Akim, 2010 in Obafemi et. al., 2023). Therefore, self-efficacy can influence the choice of tasks and perseverance while doing them. In other words, students with low self-efficacy are more likely to be afraid of doing their tasks, avoiding, postponing, and giving them up soon. In contrast, those with high levels of self-efficacy are more likely to rely on themselves when faced with complex issues to find a solution to the problem, as well as being patient during the process, making more efforts, and persisting longer to overcome the challenges.

Concept of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy is an individual evaluation of one's ability to achieve a goal. Schunk and DiBenedetto as in Owolabi & Owolabi (2024) viewed self-efficacy as the capabilities of learning at designated levels. This indicates that at an individual level of a student, Self-efficacy implies the act of trusting his or her abilities for learning and performance. They described self-efficacy as the belief of an individual to succeed in a specific situation. Bandura as in Owolabi & Owolabi (2024) developed elements that can be used to measure self-efficacy, such as mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and somatic/emotional state. In this context, mastery experience, as a key contributor to self-efficacy is described as the process of acquiring competence and developing confidence through positive experiences and skills gained from successful task completion, actual performance or overcoming challenges (Owolabi & Owolabi, 2024).

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.

Bandura as cited in Onukwufor (2012) described self-efficacy as an optimistic belief in one's own competence and effectiveness, and meeting and maintaining high performance standards. This is applicable to students in their academic achievement as the ability and the will power to conquer inability to excel is based on their self-efficacy power especially in subjects like English studies and mathematics as core subjects in Nigeria schools. Self-efficacy can be categorized as high or low. Low self-efficacy in students destroys their motivation, lower their aspiration, interfere with their cognitive abilities and adversely affect their physical health. For Chukwu (2025), self-efficacy as what individuals believe they can accomplish using their skills under certain circumstances. They further explained that the fundamental principles behind self-efficacy is that individuals are more likely to employ themselves in activities in which they have high self-efficacy and less likely to engage in those they do not. Ofole and Okopi (2012) opined that students with low self-efficacy are academically at risk whereas a student with high self-efficacy braces up and meets the academic rigour and excels better in school, because he or she perceives himself or herself as being capable of doing well in school. Conversely, a learner noted for having low academic self-efficacy inhibits good academic achievement because of the tendency to see himself or herself as being unable to cope with the academic challenge.

Mastery experiences, on the other hand, denote overcoming challenges through effort builds self-belief (self-efficacy) in students. This is especially true when new tasks are similar to past successes. Students who believe they can succeed are more likely to succeed academically (Owolabi & Owolabi, 2024). Vicarious experience means seeing other people that seem to be similar to oneself succeed with sustained determination. People are more likely to believe they can accomplish a task if they see someone similar to themselves succeed at it. This vicarious experience is important for students' self-efficacy, as seeing classmates succeed can motivate them to achieve similar results. Verbal persuasion as an element to measure self-efficacy is the positive messages that encourage students to believe in their abilities, and strengthens self-efficacy. This, in turn, leads to greater academic performance. Conversely, negative messages can decrease self-efficacy and hinder student effort. Verbal persuasion has been found in action studies to have positive impacts on self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is a student's belief in their ability to learn. Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to be engaged and achieve academically. It can be established that students who feel efficacious in learning achieve a higher level of success because of the academic engagement which is connected to their self beliefs (Okweye & Onoyase, 2023).

2.0 Method

This paper is a position paper with the aim of assessing the impact self-efficacy on academic achievement in Nigerian schools. The paper employed systematic literature review-based report method. It has collected and reviewed the related previous literature from various online sources. It has collected secondary information to generate knowledge on this

topic. It has followed the qualitative narrative design. The researcher has visited different online sites to collect the previous literature and analyze on self-efficacy on academic achievement in Nigerian schools.

3.0 Result and Discussion on Impact of Students' Self-efficacy on academic achievement

There are many investigations on the Students' Self-efficacy on academic achievement in Nigerian schools. For instance, Adeoye, and Feyisetan, (2015) carried out a study that investigated the influence of self-concept and self-efficacy on academic achievement in English Language among senior secondary school students with the hope of alleviating the problem. Descriptive survey research design was adopted. The administration lasted five weeks, using correlation analysis and multiple regression, the results show that self-concept and self-efficacy jointly and relatively contributed to academic achievement in English language of the participants. On the strength of this, the need to enhance academic achievement in this subject through self-concept and self-efficacy was stressed and recommended. Nwamadi, and Ekechukwu, (2020) carried out a study that investigated self-efficacy as predictor of academic achievement among secondary school students of Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. The study adopted the correlational research design. The findings revealed that self-efficacy predicted academic achievement for both male and female students significantly.

Okafor-Agbala, and Okigbo, (2021) did a study that focus on relationship between self-efficacy and secondary school two (SS 2) students' academic performance in mathematics in Anambra State, Nigeria was investigated. The findings of the study revealed moderate positive relationship between mathematics self-efficacy, and students' performance in mathematics. Okonkwo, Egolum, Samuel, and Okonkwo, (2023) did a study that examined self-efficacy and learning styles as predictors of academic performance among secondary school Chemistry students in Ogbaru Local Government Area. Findings show that self-efficacy and learning styles significantly predict academic performance among secondary school Chemistry students in Ogbaru L.G.A.

Bini, and Osadebamwen, (2023) did a study that investigated the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic achievement of students in Mathematics. Analysis revealed a strong positive relationship between academic self-efficacy and mathematics achievement. The study further revealed positive but not significant relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic achievement of male and female, public and private school and urban and rural school students, respectively. Bwenvu, (2023). The study aimed to establish the relationship between students' self-efficacy and academic performance at Makerere University. Findings showed that the students' self efficacy and academic performance mean scores are on the same level (high) and 2nd class upper, respectively. However, there is no significant relationship between students' academic self-efficacy and academic performance given the $p > .05$ for all constructs (perceived control, competence, persistence and self-regulated learning). The study concluded that the university should continue its academic programmes that will continuously develop the student's well-being in acquiring relevant experiences and skills in the University.

This study by Ozuome, Oguzie, Onwukwe, and Emeji (2024) investigated the correlation between secondary school students' self-efficacy and their academic achievement in Imo State. Results obtained from the study indicated that a good number of students in Imo state have high academic self-efficacy. The result also showed that a good number of the students in Imo state have good achievements in English language and mathematics. Finally, the result revealed that there is significant positive relationships secondary school students' Self-efficacy and their academic achievement in English Language and Mathematics respectively. Chukwu, (2025) study investigated the influence of self-efficacy on academic performance of undergraduates in Rivers State University, Port Harcourt. Four research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The findings of the study were as follows: self-efficacy has significant influence on class participation, class attendance, study habits and assignment completion of undergraduates in Rivers State University, Port Harcourt.

4.1 Findings

The paper revealed that students' self-efficacy contributed to academic achievement in the Nigerian schools.

4.2 Conclusion and Recommendations

The paper indicated that students' self-efficacy has significant influence on the students' academic achievement in the Nigerian schools. That, it is an undeniable fact that Self-efficacy is crucial in enhancing students' academic success. This means that changes in students' efficacy levels will negatively impact their academic achievement. Based on the findings, the paper recommends that self-efficacy of students should be improved by the subject teachers, guidance and counseling officers and parents in other for students to be confident in the ability to perform better in the school and teachers should apply reinforcement techniques in encouraging students who they noticed are not doing well in their academics.

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CITATION

Lawson L., Yusuf B. G., & Sa'ad, M. (2025). Impact of Students' Self-Efficacy on Academic Achievement in Nigeria. In *Global Journal of Research in Education & Literature* (Vol. 5, Number 3, pp. 114–117). <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.15771355>