journals.unizik.edu.ng/jgcs ISSN: 1596-1141

JOURNAL OF GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING STUDIES

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' SELF-ESTEEM AND THEIR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN EDO STATE

[1]IFEDIORAMMA Divine Chiamaka & [2]Prof. ANYAMENE Ada Nnennia

[1&2]Department of Guidance and Counselling, Faculty of Education, Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka, Anambra State.

Email: [1]divine4her@gmail.com, [2]an.anyamene@unizik.edu.ng

Corresponding Author: divine4her@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement secondary school students in Edo State. Five research questions guided the study, and two null hypotheses was tested at 0.05 level of significance. Correlation research design was adopted for the study. The population for this study consisted of 20,098 senior secondary school (SS2) students. The sample of the study consisted of 2,040 students drawn through multi-stage sampling procedure. The instrument used for the study were Hare Self-esteem Scale (HSS) with a reliability coefficient alpha of 0.83. Descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation were used for data analysis. Results obtained from the study showed that majority of the students in Edo state have high self-esteem. The results also showed that most of the students have high academic achievement in English language and mathematics. Moreso, the result revealed a high positive significant relationship between students' self-esteem and their academic achievement in English language and Mathematics respectively. The study concluded, among others that secondary school students' self-esteem is highly related to their academic achievement in English language and Mathematics. It was recommended, among others that counsellors should provide both group and individual counselling services to boost students' self-esteem. This will help the students to feel worthy and capable of achieving higher academic success through diligence and personal effort.

Keywords: Self-esteem, secondary school, students, academic achievement, Edo state

Introduction

Education as an indispensable asset has been recognized globally as the bedrock of every society. Perhaps, this is the reason why no nation of the world would attain meaningful technological, economic, and socio-political development without education. However, to ensure the realization of reliable attainment of sustainable growth and development which is the major goal of education, the level of students' achievement in their academic endeavour must be ascertained. Hence, in Nigeria, particularly in Edo state, academic achievement is considered as a criterion for judging students' total potentialities and capabilities.

Academic achievement as a very crucial term in the education system has been defined in various ways. For example, Manhood and Igbal (2015) defined academic achievement as the education goal that is achieved by students, teachers or institutions over a certain period. Academic achievement has to do with students' ability to study and remember facts and being able to communicate their knowledge orally or in writing form even in an examination condition. According to Mkpae and Obowu (2017), academic achievement is a term usually employed to describe a students' performance in subjects taught and tested in schools. Oguzie, Nwokolo, Mokwelu and Ezunu (2019) viewed academic achievement as students' scholastic ability and attainment, which signifies the overall level of knowledge they have acquired in school, a subject or a learning situation.

In clearer terms, academic achievement is the yardstick with which educational outcomes are measured (Ozuome, Oguzie, Mokwelu & Anyamene, 2020). In the view of Okudo and Obumse (2023), academic achievement is the outcome of education that indicates the extent to which the students, teachers, curricular, counsellor or the educational institution has achieved the predetermined educational goals. Moreso, Okafor, Obi and Oguzie (2018) conceptualized academic achievement as the overall measured cognitive, affective and psychomotor achievement of students with which they are judged academically fit or unfit. For the purpose of this study, academic achievement is a symbol that indicates the level of knowledge/experience a student has acquired in a particular course of study and their ability to communicate this knowledge/experience in oral or written form.

In general, as a multidimensional construct that includes several academic substrates, such as learning skills, attitude, interest and ability of learners, academic achievement occupies a vital position in the education system as well as in the learning process. Academic achievement is interestingly an important issue; a fundamental premium upon which all teaching and learning processes are measured. Practically, academic achievement is very important for students, teachers, parents, government and the society in general. Possibly, this underscores why the government, teachers, counsellors, parents, researchers and examination bodies are much concerned with, and are working very hard to unravel the mystery behind the poor academic achievement among students.

Currently, the Nigeria system of education makes use of academic achievement to indicate the level of students' knowledge acquisition. However, over the years, there has been a re-occurring incidence of students' poor academic achievements in English Language and Mathematics among secondary school students have been on the increase (Ozuome, Oguzie, Onwukwe & Emeji, 2024). In this regard, Daniel and Abide (2023) asserted that the goal of education has not been achieved judging from the poor academic achievement of students in Nigerian secondary schools. Odofin (2022) in his study on students' academic achievement reported that poor academic achievement is high in the state. Also, Okigbo and Onoshakpokaiye (2023) in their study observed that many secondary schools record poor academic achievement especially in mathematics. In infect, the problem of poor academic achievement emotionally evokes sad and bitter feelings among Edo State students and their parents (Nwanwukwu & Asiyai, 2024). Judging from the above observations by previous researchers, it appears that the Nigerian secondary school system is plagued by academic under-achievement.

Undeniably, the problem of poor academic achievement has become a worrisome phenomenon because of its tendency to affect students' overall success in life and the likelihood that under-achieving students may resort to anti-social behaviours like drug abuse, robbery, alcoholism, withdrawal from school among others, as coping mechanisms. Braide (2018) posited that the standard of education has not only fallen in Nigerian but will continue to fall if necessary measures are not taken to arrest the trend. This fallen standard of education is possibly indicated by the poor academic achievement of students in the country.

Studies have shown that one possible factor that may correlate with students' academic achievement is self-esteem (Zheng, Atherton, Trzenieweski & Robins, 2020). In a study carried out by Edeh (2019), it was observed that many secondary school students have low self-esteem which resulted to their poor academic achievements. Self-esteem refers to the perception of an individual's abilities, skills, and overall qualities that guide and motivate specific cognitive processes and behaviours in the individual. According to (Nwokolo & Oguzie, 2021), self-esteem is the belief, perception and opinion people have about themselves which influence their behaviours and consequently affects their performance and achievements in life. It is the amount of realistic respect that one has for oneself. Self-esteem highlights an individual's subjective evaluation of his or her worth as a person, which has an important function to psychological well-being. Ersoy (2018) stated that self-esteem is the attitude and overall evaluation of one's own worth, or evaluation of given traits, position in the group, own activities and relationships with others.

Moreso, self-esteem according to Okafor, Obi and Oguzie (2018), is a very important aspect of an individual's overall life. It is an overall reflection of an individual's self-worth, which encompasses beliefs about the individual as well as the emotional responses to those beliefs. One's confidence in one's ability to compete, perform, and satisfactorily complete a task may have a positive or negative effect on an individual. Thus, self-esteem may serve as a very important determinant of a student's actions and behaviour in social situations, as it represents the capacity to feel worthy of happiness and be able to successfully address life challenges. In the context of this study, self-esteem is defined as student's belief, attitude and opinion about themselves which in-turn influences their behaviour to themselves and others. Self-esteem may be high or low.

In consequence, people with high self-esteem feel more worthy and happy about themselves and participate more actively in their social environment in order to pursue further self-enhancement, while individuals with low self-esteem participate considerably less in order to protect the little self-esteem they have (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger & Vohs, 2015). High self-esteem is associated with higher perceptions of competence, locus of control, autonomy, and motivation (Heimpel, Elliot & Wood, 2016). Students who archive high in their academics tend to be more emotionally stable, happy and face reality appropriately than the low achievers. As a result, high self-esteem students tend to be more engaged and persistent in achievement contexts,

and exhibit more adaptive cognitive and emotional reactions to challenge, which then increases the likelihood that they will do well in school. Moreso, high self-esteem students may spend more time on homework or think more deeply about a test question because they feel competent and motivated, and as a result, receive higher grades and test scores. Arndt and Goldenberg (2017) corroborated that high self-esteem facilitates adaptive coping responses which enables students to recover from poor academic achievement.

Conversely, low self-esteem leads to heightened emotional distress, including depression and anxiety which negatively impacts achievement (Sowislo & Orth, 2015). Also, the depressive symptoms of low self-esteem may cause difficulties in concentration and completing school tasks which may lead to school absenteeism. A study by Nwokolo and Oguzie (2021) showed that students with low self-esteem display characteristics such as excessive self-criticism and dissatisfaction, hypersensitivity to criticism with resentment against critics, chronic indecision and exaggerated fear of mistake. Low self-esteem students exhibit excessive willingness to please others, perfectionism, dwelling on the magnitude of past mistakes, pessimism and a general negative outlook (Shaffer, 2017). With these explanations, it appears that students' self-esteem may influence their level academic achievement.

A study carried out by Okafor, Obi and Oguzie (2018) concluded that self-esteem positively correlated with students' academic achievement. Similarly, Zheng, Atherton, Trzenieweski and Robins (2020) in their study found that students' self-esteem is significantly correlated with their level of academic achievement. In addition, students' self-esteem may influence their belief of the source of success or failure in their academic endeavour.

Since, student's academic achievement plays very important role in their academic and overall wellbeing, the problem of poor academic achievement has raised a serious concern to teachers, counsellors, government, examination bodies and other stakeholders. Hence, establishing the influence of students' personal variable such as self-esteem as per its relationship to students' academic achievement will provide counsellors, educators and researchers with good knowledge of various factors that predispose secondary school students to the problem of poor academic achievement in Edo State. Moreso, the review of literature has shown that studies seeking to address this issue in the Nigeria context particularly from the perspective of Edo State secondary schools are insufficient. This is a dearth in literature and a gap in knowledge that needs to be filled.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the self-esteem scores of secondary school students in Edo state?
2. What are the achievement scores of secondary school students in English Language in Edo state?
3. What are the achievement scores of secondary school students in Mathematics in Edo state?
4. What is the relationship between secondary school students' self-esteem and their academic achievement in English Language in Edo state?
5. What is the relationship between secondary school students' self-esteem and their academic achievement in Mathematics in Edo state?

Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant relationship between secondary school students' self-esteem and their academic achievement in English language in Edo state.
2. There is no significant relationship between secondary school students' self-esteem and their academic achievement in Mathematics in Edo state.

Method

This study was carried out in Edo State. The study adopted the correlation research design. A correlation design according to Brainna (2023), is a type of research design that looks at the relationships between two or more variables. Correlation studies are non-experimental, which means that the experimenter does not manipulate or control any of the variables. According to Nworgu (2015), a correlation research is a type of research that examines the statistical relationship between two or more variables without manipulating them. A correlational design was considered appropriate for this study because it sought to use data to be collected to establish the relationship between self-esteem and academic achievement of public secondary school students in English language and Mathematics in Edo state. Moreso, correlation provided a simple summary description of the degree of relationships that existed among the researcher's variables of interest. The population of the study comprised all 20,098 senior secondary two (SS2) students from all 297 public secondary schools in Edo State. The sample size for the study consisted of 2,040 SS2

students drawn through multi-stage sampling procedure. The instrument used for data collection was Hare Self-esteem Scale (HSS) was developed by Hare in 1985. Hare Self-esteem Scale is a self-esteem report psychometric scale which was developed to measure individual's self-esteem as it relates to interaction with peers, in homes and schools. The Hare Self-esteem Scale for this study contains 30 items which are directed towards measuring students' level of self-esteem. The instrument is on a four-point scales of strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. When administering the HSS, the respondents were required to indicate by ticking (√) how often they experience certain feelings, thought and actions. All responses for the 30items on Hare self-esteem scale were computed together to yield a total score of 120. The maximum score for each item is 4 point. Hence, the maximum total score for this scale was 120 points. During scoring, any score from 90 and above was regarded as high self-esteem and scores below 90 was regarded as low self-esteem. This scale was adopted for this study because it is highly related to students' self-esteem, was revalidated for the Nigerian population and has been used by indigenous researchers with good results (Okafor, Obi & Oguzie, 2018; Nwokolo & Oguzie, 2021). Descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Results

Table 1: Range of scores on students' self-esteem

Range of scores	N	%	Remark
30 – 89	550	27.13	Low self-esteem
90 – 120	1477	72.87	High self-esteem

Table 1 showed that 1477(72.87%) of the students with the scores ranging from 90 to 120 have high self-esteem, while 550(27.13%) of the students who scored between 30 and 89 have low self-esteem.

Table 2: Range of achievement scores of students in English language

Range of scores	N	%	Remark
0 – 49	431	21.26	Poor achievement
50 – 69	543	26.79	Average achievement
70 – 100	1053	51.95	High achievement

In table 2, it was observed that 1053(51.95%) of the students with the scores ranging from 70 to 100 have high achievement in English language, while 543(26.79%) students who scored between 50 and 69 have average achievement whereas 431(21.26%) of the students have low achievement in English language.

Table 3: Range of achievement scores of students in Mathematics

Range of scores	N	%	Remark
0 – 49	188	09.27	Poor achievement
50 – 69	817	40.31	Average achievement
70 – 100	1022	50.42	High achievement

Table 3 showed that 1022(50.42%) of the students with the scores ranging from 70 to 100 have high achievement in Mathematics, while 817(40.31%) students who scored between 50 and 69 have average achievement whereas 188(09.27%) of the students have poor achievement in Mathematics.

Table 4: Pearson r on students' self-esteem and their achievement in English Language

Source of Variation	N	Self-esteem r	Achievement r	Remark
Self-esteem	2027	0.00	0.65	High positive relationship
Achievement	2027	0.65	0.00	

Table 4 revealed that there is high positive relationship of 0.65 between the secondary school students' self-esteem and their academic achievement in English Language.

Table 5: Pearson r on students' self-esteem and their achievement in Mathematics

Source of Variation	N	Self-esteem r	Achievement r	Remark
Self-esteem	2027	0.00	0.63	High positive relationship
Achievement	2027	0.63	0.00	

Table 5 showed that there is high positive relationship of 0.63 between the secondary school students' self-esteem and their academic achievement in Mathematics.

Discussion

The results of this study revealed that majority of secondary school students (72.87%) in Edo state have high self-esteem. This finding therefore showed that despite the various life challenges encountered by the students at the course of their day to day life activities in this modern day society, many students still view themselves as unique, capable and worthy individuals. This finding is consistent with the reports from previous researchers (Okafor, Obi & Oguzie, 2018; Mehboob & Shahzad, 2019; Akuezuilo, Mbachu & Akunne, 2020; Nwokolo & Oguzie, 2021; Oguzie, Obi, Nnadi, Nwobi & Okpala, 2023) that majority of secondary school students have high self-esteem. However, this finding contradicted the report from the previous study conducted by Edeh (2019) who observed that many secondary school students experienced low self-esteem especially those who find it difficult to succeed academically.

One possible reason for the finding of this study contradicting the report of the previous research may be as a result of the various self-esteem enhancing programmes being provided to the students by their counsellors and researchers who may have worked in one way or the other to encourage high self-esteem among students in Edo state.

The findings showed that most of the students (51.95%) in Edo state have high academic achievement in English Language. The result also indicated that most of the students (50.42%) in Edo state have high academic achievement in Mathematics. This result showed that despite the discouraging effect of the economic situation and high cost of education coupled with the deteriorating nature of education system in the country, secondary school students in Edo state still work hard to excel in their academic pursuit. The above finding is in consonance with the report of previous researchers (Akuezuilo, Mbachu & Akunne, 2020; Christian-Ike & Okoli, 2021; Okafor, Obi and Oguzie, 2018) who found that many students have high academic achievement. The finding further supported the previous report of the study by Akunne and Anyanmene (2021) who found that most students have high academic achievements in English language and mathematics. The high academic achievement recorded by most students in this study is not surprising since majority of the students feel they are worthy and believe in their personal capacities and abilities to successfully carry out academic tasks required of them to achieve good grade in their examinations.

However, the finding contradicted the finding by (Edeh, 2019) who reported that many secondary school students have low academic achievement. This finding also refuted the reports of Odofin (2022) and Okigbo and Onoshakpokaiye (2023) many secondary schools record poor academic achievement especially in mathematics. The reason for the disagreement in the findings of this study and those of the previous researchers may be due to the difference in research construct, methodological approach and location. Edeh, Odofin and Okigbo focused their studies only on exploring the relationship between a single variable and students' academic achievement, while the present researcher in her study recognized academic achievement as a multidimensional construct that may be impacted upon by multiple variables instead of a single factor. Moreso, the previous researchers may have ran into some research errors in their data collection, analysis or even their discussion of findings.

The result of the study revealed that a high positive significant relationship existed between the students' self-esteem and their academic achievement in both English Language and Mathematics. This finding indicated that students' self-esteem was clearly linked to the grade they obtain in their school examinations. It also shows that as students' self-esteem increases their likelihood to achieve higher in their academics increases. This finding agreed with the report by previous researchers (Okafor, Obi & Oguzie, 2018; Anyanwu & Emesi, 2020; Okoye & Onokpaunu, 2020) who concluded that there is a high positive relationship between students' self-esteem and their academic achievement English Language and Mathematics. This finding of the study also supports the findings of Akuezuilo, Mbachu and Akunne (2020) reported that self-esteem as a variable is significantly correlated with students' academic achievement in the high positive direction.

The similarity in this finding of the study and those of the previous researchers may be because people with high self-esteem are more engaged and persistent in achievement contexts, and exhibit more adaptive cognitive and emotional reactions to challenge, which then increases the likelihood that they will do well in school. Supporting this assertion, Heimpel, Elliot and Wood (2016) reported that high self-esteem is associated with higher perceptions of competence, locus of control, autonomy, and motivation. Moreso, high self-esteem students may spend more time on homework or think more deeply about a test question because they feel competent and motivated, and as a result, receive higher grades and test scores. Arndt and Goldenberg (2017) corroborated

that high self-esteem facilitates adaptive coping responses which enables students to recover from poor academic achievement. Similarly, Ozuome, Oguzie, Mokwelu and Anyamene (2020) concluded that students with high self-esteem are intrinsically motivated to successfully achieve their desired academic and social goals. The implication of this was that students with high self-esteem felt worthy and adequate enough to grapple with the complexities of academic environment, and therefore obtained high academic excellence. Hence, encouraging students' self-esteem would help to boost their ability to handle academic tasks, and enable them to achieve good grade in their examinations.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study summarized above, the researchers concluded that majority of the students in Edo state have high self-esteem. It was also concluded that majority of the students in Edo state have high academic achievement in English Language and Mathematics. The study further concluded that the students' self-esteem is a high positive significant correlate of their achievement in English Language and Mathematics, respectively.

Recommendations

In the light of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Since students' self-esteem was significantly related to their academic achievement, counsellors should provide both group and individual counselling services to boost students' self-esteem. This will help the students to feel worthy and capable of achieving academic success through their personal effort.
2. Secondary school teachers should try to use suitable teaching/instructional methods that will help to encourage the interest in schooling they have already developed.
3. Counsellors and allied professionals should create programmes that will help instill strong belief in self-worth among students so that they will feel worthy and capable of achieving higher in academics.
4. Parents should ensure careful observation of children' behaviours and guard against such behaviours that could be detrimental to their self-esteem.

5. Government and other stakeholders should come up with reinforcing packages in form of incentives, scholarships, and promotions so as to encourage students to maintain good academic achievement and strive to achieve better in future.
6. Secondary school authorities should design programmes that will lay emphasis on giving students the opportunities to participate freely and actively in school activities and decision making. It is hoped that this will promote their sense of worth beliefs about themselves and their academic activities.
7. Teachers should ensue kin and objective observation of their students' behaviour, and promptly refer those who have low self-esteem to the counsellors for professional assistance.

References

Agu, N. (2014). *Basic statistics for education and behavioural biosciences.* Awka: J' Goshen Publishers.

Arndt, J. & Goldenberg, J. L. (2017). From threat to sweat: The role of physiological arousal in the motivation to maintain self-esteem. In A. Tesser, J. V. Wood, & D. A. Stapel (Eds.), *Self and motivation: Emerging psychological perspectives* (pp. 43– 69). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Baumeister, R.F., Campbell, J.D., Krueger, J.I. & Vohs, K.D. (2015). Does high self-esteem cause better performance, interpersonal success, happiness, or healthier lifestyles? *Journal of Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 4*(1), 1-44.

Braide, D.M. (2018). Study habits and academic performance of secondary school students in River State. *Unpublished Masters Thesis,* University of Portharcourt.

Daniel, R. & Abide, E.A. (2023). Emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, parental motivation as correlates of academic performance of secondary school students in Bayelsa State. *Delta Journal of Guidance and Counselling, 8*(1), 77-878.

Edeh, F. G. (2019). Causes and consequences of low self-esteem and poor academic achievement among secondary school students in Orumba South Local Government Area of Anambra state. *Unpublished* degree project, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka.

Ersoy, E. (2018). The role of perceived parental attitudes and self-esteem in predicting secondary school student's depression. Cypriot Journal of Education Science, 13(3), 299-309.

Heimpel, S.A., Elliot, A.J. & Wood, J.V. (2016). Basic personality dispositions, self-esteem, and personal goals: An approach-avoidance analysis. *Journal of Personality, 74*, 1293–1320.

Manhood, K. & Igbal, C. (2015). Psychological adjustment among adolescents. *Journal of Education and Practice, 6*(1), 15-20.

Mkpae, S.G. & Obowu, A.V. (2017). School-based assessment: Benefits and teachers' perception in Nigeria secondary schools. *International Journal of Education and Evaluation, 3*(2), 19-27.

Nwanwukwu, L. & Asiyai, R. (2024). Influence of family background on academic achievement of students in Edo State, Nigeria. https://rsisinternational.org/journals/ijriss/articles/...

Nwokolo, C.N. & Oguzie, A.E. (2021). Relationship between secondary school students' self-esteem and their attitude towards examination malpractice in Imo State. *Sapientia Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies, 4*(1), 33 – 44

Nworgu, B.G. (2015). Educational research: Basic issues and methodology (3rd ed.). *University Trust Publishers.*

Odofin, T. (2022). Influence of family socio-economic status on students' academic achievement in Delta Central Senatorial District, Delta State. *Journal of the Nigerian Academy of Education, 16*(1), 1-11.

Oguzie, A.E., Nwokolo, C., Mokwelu, O.B. & Ezunu, E.N. (2019). Relationship between secondary school students' study behaviour and their academic achievement in Imo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Guidance and Counselling Studies, 3*(2), 133-140.

Okafor, E.O., Obi, J.S. & Oguzie, A.E. (2018). Relationship between students' self-esteem and their academic achievement in Imo State. *HOFA: African Journal of Multidisciplinary Research, 1*(2), 24-32.

Okigbo, E.C. & Onoshakpokaiye, O.E. (2023). Relationship between academic self-concept and academic performance in Mathematics of secondary school students in Delta State, Nigeria. *Indonesian Journal of Mathematics Education, 6*(2), 63-71.

Okudo, O.C. & Obumse, N.A. (2023). Relationship between study skills and academic achievement of public senior secondary school students in Anambra State. *Sapientia Foundation Journal of Education, Sciences and Gender Studies, 5*(2), 199-207.

Ozuome, C.C., Oguzie, A.E., Mokwelu, O.B. & Anyamene, A. (2020). Locus of control as a correlate of secondary school students' academic achievement in Imo State, Nigeria. *Journal of Guidance and Counselling Studies, 4*(2), 155-168.

Ozuome, C.C., Oguzie, A.E., Onwukwe, M.C. & Emeji, J.C. (2024). Secondary school students' self-efficacy as correlates of their academic achievement in Imo state. *Journal of Guidance and Counselling Studies, 8*(1), 15-32.

Sowislo, J.F. & Orth, U. (2015). Does low self-esteem predict depression and anxiety? A meta-analysis of longitudinal studies. *Psychological Bulletin, 139*, 213-240.

Zheng, L.R., Atherton, O.E., Trzenieweski, K. & Robins, R.W. (2020). Are self-esteem and academic achievement reciprocally related? https://www.researchgate.net/publication/34116607.