

Influence of Psychosocial Factors on Students' Academic Achievement of Some Selected Universities in Nigeria.

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Abstract

The study examined the influence of psychosocial factors on students' academic achievement in some selected universities in Nigeria. Poor students' academic performance in both public and private institutions is gaining the attention of many researchers around the globe in the field of teaching and learning process (Muzenda, 2018). The researchers employed quantitative approach with correlational research design. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized. The population of the study was 131,402. Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sample size determination table was used and 384 was collected as sampled. Simple random sampling technique was also applied in obtaining the data from the respondents. The findings revealed that there is positive and significant relationship between motivation ($r=.416, p<0.01$), academic self-efficacy ($r=.324, p<0.01$), social control ($r=.409, p<0.01$) and self-regulation ($r=.376, p<0.01$) and students' academic achievement. However, motivation ($R^2=0.713$) appeared to be strongest variable that can predict students' academic achievement. Therefore, based on the findings, it is recommended that since motivation is the strongest factor that influence students' academic achievement. Thus, it should be responsible of Nigerian Ministry of Education to be organizing workshops and seminars to the universities management, students and parents on importance of students' motivation and supports where social psychologists, educational psychologists and other experts in humanities will be delivering lectures on students' motivation in academic learning for better students' academic achievement. Finally, policy makers should create rules and awareness through sensitization that will oriented the students' in dedication, commitment and perseverance in school toward achieving better academic performance

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I. Introduction

It is important for students to do well in the university because this lays the foundation for their many accomplishments and achievements in life, such as furthering their education and secure a good job in the labor market after graduation. The influential relationship of psychosocial factors and academic achievement globally cannot be over emphasized. Because students success or failure represent and intensely investigating issues within psychosocial context. A major contributor to the study of the relationship between psychosocial factors and academic achievement is Vincent Tinto (1997) who developed a student's integration model which suggests that a motivation between the academic ability and motivation of the students with social, psychological and academic qualities of the institution foster academic and social integration into the university system. According to the model, if student is not integrated into the university, they will develop a low commitment into the university. Tinto's model has gained support in several literatures.

Academic achievements of university students is thought to be affected by many variables including intelligence, readiness, attitude, studying habits, anxiety, health, thinking skills, self-competence, motivation and academic self-regulated learning, academic self-efficacy and social control have been examined (Gagné & St Pére, 2001; Fan & Chen, 2001; Bandura, 1986; Finn & Rock, 1997). For the purpose of this proposal, the term academic achievement specifically refers to students' academic abilities as measured by outcomes at the end of semester school-based achievement testing. While there are number of conceptual terms which are typically used interchangeably to described components of academic abilities (for example, 'performance' or 'attainment') academic achievement has been selected with the purpose of describing the result that students actually achieved in their educational facility in a giving academic year.

Psychosocial factors like motivation, self-efficacy, social control and self-regulation of students has an influential relationship on predicting students' academic achievement and are essential product of quality teaching delivery and learning process. These factors however, remain key determinant of students' academic achievement (Fishbein, 1967; Bandura 1968 & Brophy, 2001) the development of any society is directly connected with students' academic achievement (Mustaq et al., 2012). Students' academic performance plays a

crucial role in bringing qualitative graduates whom are expected to move a country to the right path and development arena in the near future. (Ali et al., 2009) and poor students' academic achievement is not only frustrating the students and parents, it went further to affect equally grave side on the society in terms of collapse and death of manpower in all dimension of the economy and politics (Aremu&Sokan 2003).

Although many educational policies and interventions stressed the improvement of academic achievement, more comprehensive educational models have been proposed that described a broader range of educational outcomes. For example, state-wide policies in Illinois, Alaska, Missouri and New Jersey described the need to incorporate psychosocial skills into educational programs use grade-appropriate psychosocial standards, guidelines, curriculum modules, checklist, and more (Laniter, 2008). The integration of psychosocial factors change the meaning of educational accountability from a focus on achievement testing to helping student's life-long autonomous learners (Bellanca& Brandt, 2010). Psychosocial factors are predictors of and mediators for later academic achievement in higher education settings like university (Dymnicki, 2004; Kyllonen, Walters, & Kaufman, 2005; Lounsbury, Welsh, Gibson & Sundstorm, 2005; Payton et al., 2008; Robins, Oh, Lee & Button, 2009). Several studies have shown that psychosocial factors such as self-efficacy, motivation, locus of control, attitude toward learning strategies, and learning flexibility add incremental validity to cognitive factors, such as ability and prior achievement in predicting future academic achievement (Grigorenko et al., 2009; Yen, Konold, & McDemott, 2004). Similarly, a review of social and emotional learning in schools found that self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making improved student academic performance (Payton et al., 2008).

In Nigeria, academic performance is considered as a criterion for one's personal progress and societal development in general and is normally been measured by student semester examination results (Cambridge University Report, 2003). Similarly, academic performance is defined as "student academic performance in school" (Chen, 2007). The issue of poor student academic performance or dropping students' academic achievement has posed a serious challenge to Tertiary institutions and the society at large.

Therefore, this study have filled the gap by examine how psychosocial factors (motivation, academic self-efficacy, social control and self-regulation) influence academic performance of universities students because these variables have not been considered in a single research to investigate how they influence student's academic achievement, but others studies have looked at one or two of these variables (Li, 2012; Maina, 2013; Tenaw, 2013; Gagné& St Pére, 2001; Fan & Chen, 2001; Bandura, 1986; Finn & Rock, 1997). That is why the present study tried to examine the problem from psychosocial point of view and see how relevant of these factors (motivation, academic self-efficacy, social control and self-regulation) related to student academic performance in the listed universities in North Eastern Nigeria which serve as one Geo-political zone of the country (Yobe State University, Damaturu, University of Maiduguri, Borno, Taraba State University, Taraba, Gombe State University, Gombe, Adamawa State University, Mubi and Abubakar Tabawa Balewa University, Bauchi) in order to bridge the gap in the existing literature particularly in Nigeria context and world at large.

Research Question

The following research questions had guided the study;

1. What is the demographic characteristics of the respondents?
2. Which of the psychosocial factors most predict Universities students' academic achievement?

Empirical Studies

Motivation and academic achievement

Numerous studies have shown that students with higher motivation are more likely to attain better academic outcomes (Covington, 2000; Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, & Whalen, 1993; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991; Dweck, 2000; Hustinx, Kuyper, van der Werf, & Dijkstra, 2009; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Steinmayr & Spinath, 2009). Martin (2009) argued that secondary school students are less likely to be motivated and engaged when compared to elementary school and college students. Less motivated students are more likely to show poor academic achievement and therefore have a greater likelihood of dropping out between grades 10 and 12 (Allensworth & Easton, 2007; Balfanz, Herzog, & Mac Iver, 2007; Neild, Balfanz, & Herzog, 2007; Rumberger & Lim, 2008). Furthermore, Heckman and Rubinstein (2001), who examined students with General Education Degrees (GEDs), found that, even though GED recipients had higher average ability than other high-school drop outs, GED recipients demonstrated poor persistence and an inability to plan ahead when compared with peers who had not dropped out of high school. One possible explanation of relationships between motivation and academic achievement is that students who are highly motivated academically choose more stimulating learning environments where they develop better academic skills (Shiner, 2000).

Not all studies support the importance of motivation in the prediction of achievement. For example, Gagné and St Pére (2001) studied female 8th graders in an all-girl high school and found motivation did not predict academic achievement after controlling for students' cognitive ability. Critics of the study suggested that

the failure of observe effects for motivation reflected a restricted range of motivation in the sample, the use of an instrument lacking construct validity, a domain-unspecific measure, or a short-term study design (Hustinx et al., 2009; Steinmayr&Spinath, 2009).

Academic Self-efficacy and Academic Achievement

Another psychosocial factor that influence student academic performance is their academic self-efficacy which is the belief that an individual can efficiently perform some tasks that usually influence his or her own behavior in a positive way. Self-efficacy is a psychological concept that influence healthy behaviors (Von Ah, Ebert, Ngamviro, Park, Kang, 2004). "Self-efficacy is a belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the causes of action required to manage prospective situation' (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy implies the belief that our efficient as on doing something determine our behavior at the end. According to Schunk (1991) academic self-efficacy refers to individuals' convictions that they can successfully deliver any academic tasks at designated levels. "Academic self-efficacy refers to students' perceptions of their competence to do their classwork" (Midgley et al., 2000).

Bandura theory of self-efficacy argued that, human behavior can be predicted by an individual levels of confidence in their ability to succeed in a specific task (Bandura, 1997). Self-efficacy is one of the important aspect of social cognitive theory because most of the individual level of self-efficacy are from external experiences and self-perception which it determine the results of tasks and circumstances they encountered (Bandura, 1997; Miller & Dollard, 1941; Bandura 1986). A lot of studies have revealed that there was a significant influence of self-efficacy on human behavior and this cannot be overemphasized because people use to have high self-efficacy in some situation and lower in others. This shows that it is a behavioral change and it depends on one's situation or condition (Bandura, 1997; Ando &Asakura, 2007).

Previous studies on academic self-efficacy on students' academic performance has been a topic of interest to many researchers and particularly social scientists. This is because, it was revealed by many findings that academic self-efficacy was strongly associated with student academic performance. For example, there was a study conducted by Tenaw (2013) on a relationship between self-efficacy, academic achievement and gender in analytical Chemistry at DebreMarkos College of Teacher education, Ethiopia. The researcher invited 100 students to complete a questionnaire of 15 items with 5-point Likert scale and the instrument was adapted from Diane (2003). Example of the items are "I am confident I can do well in ACI" and "I don't think I will get a good grade in ACI". The results from Pearson Correlation analysis showed that, there was significant and positive relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement ($r = .385, p < 0.01$).

In another study, Li (2012) studied attitude, self-efficacy, effort and academic achievement among students of City University of Hong Kong. A sampled of 153 students with Male having 49.7% and Female 50.3% the respondents were obtained through Convenience and Snowball sampling techniques. To measured students levels of self-efficacy on academic achievement the researcher used 14 items with 7-point Likert Scale (1= strongly disagree) to (7= strongly agree) example of the items "I like research methods" and "I think research methods are worthless". The Cronbach's alpha for the study was .915. The results from multiple regression analysis indicated that academic self-efficacy ($\beta=.355, p < .01$) could significantly predict academic achievement better than attitude and effort in the study. Adeyemo (2007) examined the moderating influence of emotional intelligence on the link between academic self-efficacy and achievement among undergraduate students of University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The sampled of 300 hundred students participated in the study and their age ranged between 16.5 to 30 years with mean age of 19.4 years. The results showed that academic self-efficacy was significantly correlated with academic achievement ($r =0.28, p < 0.01$). And this is in line with Bandura (1986) stated that self-efficacy played a great role in determining how individual feelings and thought motivated themselves, which then ultimately influenced their behavior and the outcome.

Social control and Academic Achievement

Students with better social skills and more involvement in extracurricular activities have better academic achievers, and earn higher salaries in their chosen field (Fredricks, Blumenfeld, & Paris, 2004; Lleras, 2008). Dropouts show less engagement with school activities and tend to have estranged relationships with teachers and peers (Renzulli& Park, 2000; Rumberger& Lim, 2008). On the other hand, students who have strong relationships with teachers and peers are more likely to attend class (Allensworth& Easton, 2007). Also, students perform better in safer schools (Creemers, 1994; Gronna& Chin-Chance, 1999). In addition to school environment, family plays an important role in students' learning. When students perceive support from parents, they tend to adjust better during the transition between middle school and high school (Isakson & Jarvis, 1999). Metaanalytic studies show that parent involvement, especially parental aspirations and expectations for education, predict academic achievement (Fan & Chen, 2001; Hill & Tyson, 2009). Also, Eamon (2005) argued that differential parenting practices might lead to the sex differences in achievement. Specifically, female students might receive more rules or supervision from parents, and, in turn, perform better in school. In sum,

social control -- including relationships with school personnel, school safety, and family engagement in school learning -- is a significant predictor of later academic achievement.

Self-regulation and Academic Achievement

Self-regulation of behavior and emotion correlates significantly with academic achievement in middle school students. Antisocial behaviors and failures to regulate their emotions are related to poor academic achievement (Fredricks et al., 2004; Gumora & Arsenio, 2002; Wentzel, 1993). Similarly, Finn and Rock (1997) examined a large sample of minority, low-income students in grades 8 to 12. They found that better students were less likely to engage in disruptive behaviors. These findings are consistent with other developmental studies, which describe cascading effects of students' aggressive or disruptive behavior, emotions, and academic achievement (Masten et al., 2005; Moilanen, Shaw, & Maxwell, 2010). Along these lines, students who display behavior problems in childhood are more likely to have lower academic achievement in secondary school and have a higher likelihood of showing emotional problems in young adulthood (Masten et al., 2005). Male students are especially likely to demonstrate disruptive behaviors (e.g., Cohn & Modecki, 2007; Zimmer-Gembeck, Geiger & Crick, 2005). Some studies also show that emotional problems, such as anger, sadness, or depression, are mildly related to poor academic achievement in 7th and 8th grades (e.g., Fredricks et al., 2004; Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000). On the other hand, studies show that students who could regulate impulsive behaviors were more likely to have better academic achievement (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005; Hair & Hampson, 2006; Spinella & Miley, 2003).

II. Theoretical Framework

Functionalist Theory

The proposed theoretical framework of this study is functionalist theory, which is also called functionalism, is one of the major theoretical perspectives in sociology. The structural functionalism approach owes much to Auguste Comte and it has its origins in the work of Emile Durkheim. Thus, functionalism was first associated with Emile Durkheim and Herbert Spencer. Most of its basic concepts were developed by Talcott Parsons and Robert K. Merton. It is a framework for building theory that sees society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability. As such it is a theory that focuses on the macro-level of everyday life. Functionalists perceive society as a system of interconnected parts that work together in harmony to maintain a state of social balance for the whole.

Functionalists believe that an individual's academic success depends completely upon the person's IQ (intelligence quotient) and the effort they apply to their studies. They also believe that society works in a meritocratic system; that people work for what they deserve, according to their own merit and effort. Thus, they work hard, achieved academic success, and to get a lucrative job in later life. In functionalist theory, the different parts of society are primarily composed of social institutions, each designed to fill different needs like family, economy, education, the core institution that defined sociology (social) etc. Likewise, students' academic achievement comprises of different factors which include psychosocial variables of motivation, academic self-efficacy, social control and self-regulation. According to functionalism a factor exists because it serves a vital role in the functioning of students' academic achievement. If one factor is not functioning well then it will affect all the other variables and cause disruption for students' academic achievement.

Functionalism has been found on various educational treatments, programs as well as an explanation and also can make justification on the relationship between psychosocial factors and academic achievement. Functionalists perceive academic achievement as a system of interconnected parts that work together in harmony to make students' academic achievement relatively stable. Therefore, stability and harmony can only occur when psychosocial variables of motivation, academic self-efficacy, social control and self-regulation perform their function well where students need to be highly motivated to learn well in school (Motivation), to recognize and use the social support that can facilitate their learning (social control) and regulate their behaviors and manage their feelings, then these interdependency and interconnection lead students to achieve academic success. Moreover, functionalist theory can make justification on the latent function of all psychosocial variables of this study where motivation consists of academic discipline, commitment to school and optimism; social control consists of family attitude toward education and family involvement, relationship with school personnel and school safety climate; self-regulation consists of managing feelings, orderly conduct and thinking capacity. Therefore, functionalist theory has been adopted to serve as the theoretical of this study because it will help to evaluate on how these psychosocial factors or variables are necessary for students to attain academic achievement.

III. Methodology

This study adopted quantitative approach with correlational research design. The study used correlation research design because it attempts to investigate the influence of psychosocial factors on student academic achievement among universities students. The population of the study were students of Yobe State University, Damaturu, University of Maiduguri, Borno, Taraba State University, Taraba, Gombe State University, Gombe, Adamawa State University, Mubi and AbubakarTabawaBalewa University, Bauchi which were 131,402 population. Krejcie & Morgan (1970) sample size determination table was used and 384 was drawn as sampled of the study and simple random sampling techniques was also applied. Questionnaire was used as the instrument of data collection because is a method of data collection especially in survey research design that is widely uses in social science (Dillma, 2000). In the research, content validity was applied in which the instrument were evaluated by some experts in the field of the study to ensure that the instruments correctly measures what the researcher intends to measure. According to Amin (2005) content validity is determined by an expert judgment. While, reliability is about internal consistency of the research instrument that is, ability of the research instrument to produce similar results after some time and again under consistent conditions. Finally, Statistical Packet for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22 was used to analyze the data. The independent variables were psychosocial factors (motivation, academic self-efficacy, social control and self-regulation) and dependent variable (academic achievement). Two statistical procedures; descriptive and inferential statistics were utilized for data analyses in the study.

IV. Results And Discussions

This chapter focuses on the IV. results of quantitative analysis on the influence of psychosocial factors on students' academic achievement of some selected universities, North East, Nigeria. The first section describes the demographic characteristics of the respondents and the descriptive statistics include; frequency, percentage, minimum and maximum age were presented. The second section deals with the major objective as presented in introductory part.

Respondents Background Profile

This section provides details of respondents' personal bio-data. It describes the age, gender and school. Table 4.1 depicts the statistical analysis of the respondents' background profile

Table 4.1 Respondents Characteristics according to Background Profiles (n= 384)

Background	Frequency	Percentage	Minimum	Maximum
Age			18	49
18-27	302	78.65%		
28-37	59	15.36%		
38-47	21	5.47%		
48 and above	02	0.52%		
Gender				
Male	209	54.43%		
Female	175	45.57%		
Schools/Universities				
University of Maiduguri	95	24.74%		
Yobe State University, Damaturu	47	12.24%		
Adamawa State University, Mubi	51	13.28%		
Gombe State University, Gombe	52	13.54%		
AbubakarTabawaBalewa University, Bauchi	90	23.44%		
Taraba State University, Jalingo	49	12.76%		
Total	384	100		

The descriptive analysis of the demographic variables in the study indicates that the minimum age recorded was 18 years old, while maximum age was 49 years old. The majority (78.65%) of the respondents were between the ages 18-27 years old, follow by 28-37 age category with 15.36%, 38-47 age category with 5.47% and only 0.52% to age category 48- 57 years old. In terms of gender, 54.43% (n= 209) of the respondents were male while 45.57% of the respondents were female. However, in terms universities of the respondents, the findings revealed that university of Maiduguri has the majority of the respondents with (n=95) 24.74%, Yobe State university 12.24%, Adamawa State University 13.54%, Gombe State University 13.54%, Taraba State University 12.76% and lastly AbubakarTabawaBalewa University with the second highest respondents (23.44%).

Objective 2 of the Study is to examine the Most Influential Psychosocial Factors that predict Student Academic Achievement among the universities students

Multiple regression using stepwise method was applied to achieved the above objective in which the result in Table 4.2 shows that motivation 71.3% of variance significantly contributes towards students' academic achievement of 384 respondents ($R^2 = 0.713$).

Table 4.2 Stepwise Multiple Regression Analysis of Predictors of Student Academic Performance.

Model		B	Beta	T	Sig. Value
1	(Constant)	1.297		8.200	0.07
	Motivation	1.018	0.786	9.629	0.000
2	(Constant)	1.002		5.936	0.000
	Motivation	0.13	0.864	6.412	0.000
	Self-efficacy	0.004	0.633	4.287	0.000
	Self-regulation	0.003	0.614	5.347	0.000
		R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	R Change
1		0.806	0.713	0.613	4%
2		0.864	0.656	0.652	
3		0.678	0.647	0.649	

Based on the outcome of this analysis as indicated in Table 4.6 it can be concluded that not all the prediction factors are contributing to students' academic achievement. But, on the other hand, it could be reported that only motivation and self-efficacy are the two main independent variables that contributes towards positive students' academic achievement and this findings was supported by Martin (2009) who reported that students with higher motivation are more likely to attain better academic outcomes.

V. Conclusion And Recommendations

This study established relationship between psychosocial factors and students' academic achievement. All the psychosocial factors have significant relationship with academic achievement and predicting students' academic achievement. Motivation ($R^2=0.713$) appeared to be the psychosocial factors that predict students' academic achievement. It has showed from the study that students' who achieved more and perform better are often motivated, socially controllable and are self-regulated students. In line with this, it has been showed that students with higher motivation are more likely to attain better academic outcomes through academic discipline, commitment to school and optimism. Therefore, based on these findings it is recommended that if any intervention is to be carry out in order to enhance students' academic achievement, the others factors like; self-regulation, academic self-efficacy and social control should be given more emphasize or to be included in the research. This is very crucial for school counsellors, universities management and government at large because this study revealed motivation as only variable that predict students' academic achievement among universities students'.

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