



Student-related variables and academic outcome of social science education students in the University of Calabar, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined the influence of student-related variables like peer influence, parental income and self-esteem on the academic outcome of Social Science Education Students in the Department of Social Science Education in University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria. The descriptive survey design was used for the study; while the purposive sampling technique was used in selecting 150 undergraduate students for the study. A 20-item Student-Related Variables Questionnaire (SRVQ) and a 60-item Social Science Education Achievement Test (SSEAT) were used to collect data for the study. Data analysis techniques adopted were the Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) and Independent t-test. The result showed that peer influence significantly relates with students' academic outcome, and that parental income, and students' self-esteem; significantly influence students' academic outcome. Based on the findings, it was recommended amongst others that students should be encouraged to put in the best into their studies and avoid all forms of distractions especially associating with any group that would not enhance their academic outcome; as this might help in addressing the problem of poor academic outcome.

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Keywords: Academic outcome, students, peer influence, parental income, self-esteem

1. Introduction

The ultimate development of any country is irrevocably related to its system of education, since education is a light that shows mankind the right direction to follow as well as being a catalyst for every society's growth and prosperity. It not only imparts expertise, skills and values, but also generates human capital that grows, pushes and sets technical creativity and development (Ajayi, 2010). Education in its broadest sense is any mechanism by which a person acquires information and understanding or develops attitudes or abilities. It is an event that has a crucial impact on an individual's intelligence, temperament, or physical capacity. Learning, in its conceptual context, is the mechanism whereby the culture actively transmits from one generation to another its inherited information, beliefs, and skills (Akinleye, 2010).

Education works collectively and individually; its social role is to help a person (a student) become a more productive member of the society by transferring the mutual past and present experiences on to him. On individual basis, its purpose is to allow the

individual to lead a more fulfilling and profitable life by preparing him for effective handling of new experiences (Hoxby, 2000). Only when the student's academic success is supported by themselves or by their heads and other related stakeholders will such functions be accomplished.

As teachers in the Department of Social Science Education, University of Calabar, we have observed students both within and outside the department exhibit some unruly behaviours. Students have been caught wanting in the character that defines scholarship and learnedness. We have watched students flagrantly engage in examination malpractice. Students have shamefacedly involved in acts of corruption, prostitution, cultism and sundry antisocial activities. Again, despite graduating with flying colours, we have seen graduate unemployment and the issue of employability rise (a situation Edinyang, Odey & Gimba, 2015 attribute to academic factors). In view of a surging enrolment rate in Nigerian universities and the number of graduates churned out annually, moral and ethical standards, social values, financial skills and human empathy are glaringly, grossly lacking in the thoughts, utterances and actions of Nigerian youths. Many of them claim that industrial conflict in the universities is attributable to their plight (Odey, Ekpoto & Akpa, 2020). This ugly trend persists unabated in the face of committed efforts of universities, governments and other stakeholders to bringing educational goals to reality. It becomes very necessary to examine other factors that may be accountable for this malady. Peer influence, parental income and self-esteem of the students have been considered in this research.

Education for every human activity is seen as a first step in this age of globalization and technological change. Education gives a crucial role in the creation of human resources, and is related to the well-being and better opportunities for human livelihood. It makes sure training and expertise are obtained to enable people to improve their satisfaction and productivity. Saxton (2008) maintained that increasing productivity also leads to new sources of earnings which enhance a country's and family's economic growth. Child education begins at home, and the importance of the home has long been recognized worldwide in the child's effective and systematic education. Parents and teachers in civilized climes know that the home and the school complement each other in the child's education. In general terms, if students have social contact issues in the classroom, they are likely to be disadvantaged in academic achievements and accomplishments.

This disparity in students' academic reward or success is also attributed to the socioeconomic status of parents. Socio-economic status is a sociological classification which indicates the close relationship between the relative wealth of someone and the social status of that person. It is often considered a composite combined economic and sociological measurement of the work experience of a person, and of the income and social status of an individual or family relative to others, based on employment, education and

career (Kraus, 2008). It is also a categorization of people according to their economic, education and occupational characteristics (Santrock, 2004). Li, Xu and Xia (2020) see socioeconomic status as an index of one's overall social status or prestige in society, and one of the most widely studied constructs in the social sciences. From the above definitions, however, socioeconomic status could be regarded as prestige or respect accorded to the members of the society based on their income, education and occupation. The place of self-esteem and peer influence in students' performance might as well be very impactful.

It is on the shoulders of all of these that this survey attempted to uncover the effect of student-related variables such as peer influence, parental income, and self-esteem on the academic outcome of Social Science Education students in the Department of Social Science Education in University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria.

1.1 Theoretical framework

The theory that provided the framework for this study is the Self-Determination Theory by Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000). Deci and Ryan (1985, 2000) introduced the philosophy of self-determination (SDT) as a theory of human motivation that explores the external and psychological influences that influence driven behaviour. Such behavior may be morally or extrinsically influenced (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2012). Intrinsic or self-determined motivation reflects the devotion of people to activities due to inherent personal interest or situational pleasure. Similarly, an individual can be self-determined to participate in actions in order to obtain the particular results desired by the individual without being under pressure from external contingencies (Deci & Ryan, 1985). Extrinsic motivation is linked to outside outlets. If a person is internally driven, habits are likely to endure; while behavioural consistency in managed actions will be maintained in the same way that external factors tend to behave (Hagger & Chatzisarantis, 2012).

SDT believes that meeting three intrinsic psychological desires – flexibility, competence and connectedness – motivates the implementation of autonomous motivation (Bachman & Stewart, 2011). Autonomy means the willingness of a person to participate in self-initiated and self-regulated behaviour, whereas competence refers to the ability to have an impact on the environment and therefore to produce desired outcomes. Link is an urge to feel connected to others. The more needs for SDT are fulfilled, the greater the self-determination and inspiration of each. That implies that external motivations are irrelevant to happiness when individuals are internally driven (Bachman & Stewart, 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2000). By default, self-determined students in Social science will become more inspired to perform very well academically irrespective of what their school environment holds.

1.2 Objectives of the investigation

The study sought to examine whether:

- i. Peer influence contributes to the academic outcome of Social Science Education students
- ii. Parental income significantly affects the academic outcome of Social Science Education students
- iii. Students' self-esteem significantly impacts the academic outcome of Social Science Education students

1.3 Hypotheses

- i. No significant relationship exists between peer influence and the academic outcome of the students
- ii. Parental income has no significant relationship with the academic outcome of students.
- iii. The self-esteem of students does not significantly relate with their academic outcome.

2. A review of the literature

2.1 Peer pressure and students' academic outcome

Peer pressure is an important factor in one's daily existence but during the transitional years of childhood and adolescence they become particularly essential. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary (2016) described peer group as a cluster of individuals of similar age or class of society. The peer group is the first social group outside the home in which the infant tries to gain recognition and acceptance. Adolescents frequently mimic their peers in some type of behaviour, particularly as socialization is mainly about behavioural changes, habits arising from interactions with other people, and experiential ones, a child learns more through peer experience. One mechanism in which there is so much peer interaction is the school which is an established academic institution in which the behavior of an individual is sharpened in order to get him / her ready for socialization of occupation. With "similar minds" and participation the child becomes a part of the social group in the school system. Knowledge is acquired from the various personalities, competencies, through role-play. Peer group as agent of socialization is about the teenage child's most important socializing agent.

Peer group is the center of social change, and through peer interaction, the identity of the infant is transformed from the helpless child to an evolved adult. According to Castrogiovanni (2002), a community of peers is described as a small group of people of similar ages; relatively close friends, sharing the same activity. The peer groups or cliques are generally two to twelve members, with a limit of five to six members. Peer groups as quoted in Bankole and Ogunsakin (2015) offer a sense of support and make teenagers ask questions about the theory of social identification such as "who am I" and "what do I want out of life?" Since teenagers and young adults, in particular undergraduate students, spend twice as much time with peers as they do with parents or other adults, research is needed. Smart students are believed to help their peers boost

their academic performance; this is due to having a shared team which is mutually ambitious (Landau, 2002).

Bankole and Ogunsakin (2015) examined the peer group's impact on high school student academic achievement in Ekiti State where a total of 225 high school students were randomly chosen from five mixed secondary schools. The tool used in the study is the Peer Group and Student Academic Achievement (PGAAP) questionnaire. The Instrument's reliability was calculated using the test-re-test method. The finding showed peer relationship influences secondary school students' academic performance.

Based on Texas longitudinal panel results, Hoxby (2000) estimates substantial peer influences on student achievement by examining the idiosyncratic heterogeneity of the race and gender composition of neighboring cohorts within one grade in a group. The author believes that recognition approaches are credibly free of selection biases since the differences between populations go beyond mere parent and school management. Another researcher, Sacerdote (2001) uses somewhat similar approaches to Hoxby's in analyzing peer-level impacts in classrooms, and shows that a high percentage of a female student increases academic success for both boys and girls. By analyzing only, the known peer traits, such as peer race and gender, both studies avoid simultaneous prejudices.

The culture of peers is a place of friendship, courtesy, empathy and curiosity. Parents should also speak with school counselors and experts to address the issue Allen, Porter, McFarland, Marsh and McElhaney (2005) noted that adolescents who were well-liked by other peers showed a high degree of ego growth and strong commitment, as well as stronger relationships with their closest friends. It has been found to have been minimized by associating with peers who have a positive effect on the self-satisfaction of better school students when associating with school-influenced friends (Ryan, 2000). Students who find it difficult to define themselves in a peer community can often experience intellectual distress from a psychological competency point of view in school (Wentzel, Barry, & Caldwell, 2004). Though the variations are more noticeable between the ignorant teenagers and those overlooked. Experiencing peer exclusion can lead to increased fear (e.g., anxiety about bullying or being left out) that interferes with classroom focus and prevents children from learning and keeping information (Nansel, Overpeck, Pilla, Ruan, Simons-Marton, & Scheidt, 2001).

2.2 Effect of parental income on academic outcome of students

A great deal of work has demonstrated how the parental wealth influences their students' overall success. These include those dealt with in the section below. In his research into socioeconomic factors affecting academic performance among students in Nigeria, Akanle (2007) has established parental income as a compelling factor in his work on which secondary school students' academic or vocational achievements lie. In sub-rural school areas, he considered parental income not adequate to support the

student's academic and personal social life. This greatly disrupted the inner equilibrium or homeostatic stability in the classroom, resulting in reduced concentration, weak vision, frustration, tiredness, and intellectual disability in the students' academic performance. Therefore, a child can be observed to perform poorly in his or her schoolwork if deprived of the necessary needs.

Bjorkman (2005), in Uganda, found that the involvement of children contributes to household income. The study showed that comparatively few students attended low-income school and there was a substantial difference in enrolling boys and girls, and that earnings shocks impacted not only children's participation in education, but also the student outcomes. Since families are constrained by smaller resources, and there are differences in obtaining education for boys and girls, this impacts children's learning. It was noticed that there was not enough money and time for both boys and girls to lead to low class grades. It has been found that the girl child is overworked with household chores which make her achieve low grades as compared to the boy.

Similarly, a study conducted by Mogaka (2012) in Keumbu Division Kisii County on: The impact of parents' socio-economic status on their children's performance in KCPE reveals that the level of education, parent history and number of siblings is very critical in deciding on the pupils' academic achievement. The study found that pupils from families with large numbers of kids and uneducated parents scored poorly compared with pupils from families with few kids whose parents had been educated. From previous studies it can be realized that the parent's income will affect the academic achievement of their children particularly if the earnings cannot allow the parents to provide their children with the simple necessities of which one of them is education.

According to Evans (2004), children with lower incomes have fewer healthy homes, more vulnerability to pollutants and abuse of the environment and more restrained social support networks for extra family homes. There is no doubt that in these settings, parents would display poorer behavioural expectations, less supervision of school work for youngsters, and less general management of social life compared with students from high socioeconomic and stable families. Evans has also consistently found that children with low SES are less cognitively motivated as a result of less reading and slower hearing than children with high SES, and have less nuanced parental contact and more restricted vocabularies.

On the other hand, Pedrosa (2006) found that in their research on social and educational history, some students who come mainly from poor socio-economic and educational backgrounds performed comparatively better than those from higher socio-economic and educational regions; They called this concept of economic elasticity "Family total income, monthly or yearly, and their spending can have a direct impact on the academic and work prospects of young people and their support for educational

achievement. However, he observed that low-income students usually attend school due to residential stratification and segregation

2.3 Students' self-esteem and their educational outcome

The investigation has well recognized the influence of self-esteem on educational outcomes; Arshad, Zaidi, and Mahmood (2015) have described the relationship between self-esteem and academic performance among GC students. Faisalabad University, in Pakistan. The research had three aims, and it proposed and tested three hypotheses at the point of significance of .01. For the research the focus groups come from the G.C. Baccalaureate degree. Faisalabad University, a group of eighty students was assembled using purposeful sampling technique. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) and the Student Achievement Assessment Scale (APRS) were used as data collection tool. The data obtained The Pearson product moment correlation coefficient and the t-test were evaluated using separate samples. Research found a strong link between self-esteem and academic achievement. By contrast, the self-esteem and academic performance made a significant difference, both in terms of male and female students. Based on these findings, the researchers suggested that high self-esteem had contributed to strong educational attainment.

An overview of the relationship between self-esteem, causal attributions and academic success among high school students was published in Bwari City Council, Federal Capital Territory, Obochi (2011). One of the aims of the study was to establish the relationship between self-esteem and the academic achievement among Bwari Area Council Secondary School students. The research used Survey Architecture. Academic Causal Attribution Scale and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale and Academic Achievement Proforma were used to collect data from 191 participants (including 90 males and 101 females) using random sampling methods from five secondary schools within the Bwari Area Council, FCT. Data collected were assessed at a meaningful level of 0.01 using Pearson product Moment Correlation to test related data. Research results showed that the Bwari Area Council, Federal Capital Territory, had a strong link among secondary school students between self-esteem and academic achievement. The findings reveal the study proposed that both parents and teachers should follow ways of maintaining a positive self-esteem.

Akinpelu (1998) explored the link between academic success in Nigeria and the self-conception of male and female students with hearing impairment. Students who enrolled in this study were chosen from the senior high school population of Nigeria (SS I, II, III) students with hearing loss. Because of their "unique appearance" the writer used the purposeful sampling technique to identify her subjects-there are a small number of students with hearing loss in high schools. A total of 566 students (362 males, 204 females) were listed, and all took part in the study. The results of the Junior Secondary School Certificate Examinations (JSCE) in English Language and Mathematics were

used to determine their academic success (these scores were obtained from the log books of the school, and received more often from counselors). The Adolescent Personal Data Inventory (APDI) developed by Akinboye (1985) was a ready method to determine the self-conception of the students. The results obtained were analyzed using the coefficient of correlation of moment of Pearson product and the separate t-test samples. Study reports demonstrated significant positive correlation between self-concept and academic success with hearing loss among male and female students in Nigeria. It further showed that there was no significant disparity between the scores of male and female hearing-impaired respondents' school performance, and that there was no large discrepancy in the self-concept scores of respondents with impaired hearing. Based on the report's findings, the researcher speculated that the slightly lower academic achievement of the female respondents was considered to have a relationship to academic achievement due to the lower self-concept as self-concept.

In the pre-university students in Qaemshahr, Iran, Aryana (2010) published a survey on the relationship between self-esteem and academic outcome. The essence of the investigation was to determine the correlation between self-esteem and educational outcome, and to investigate whether there are differences between boys and girls in self-esteem and academic achievement. The study's target population consisted of all pre-university Qaemshahr students; random sampling was used to select one hundred (50 male and 50 female) students. As a tool were used Cooper smith questionnaire and the scores of the students in their current. The research results showed a clear positive ($p < 0,01$) connection between self-esteem and academic achievement. There was clearly a considerable difference between the boys and girls in academic performance. There was no significant difference between males and females in self-esteem, either. High self-esteem has been found to be a major factor based on the results, and supports the students' desire at all levels of academic achievement.

Priyadharshini and Relton (2014) studied at Karunya University about the connection between self-esteem and outcome of fresheners. The study results showed high academic performance among the students, with low self-esteem. Based on this study, it is hypothesized that there is a considerably strong correlation between the students' self-esteem and academic achievements. Maropamabi (2014) reported that students at the University of Botswana lack a consistent connection between self-esteem and academic achievement.

3.0 Methodology

The descriptive survey design was used. This method is useful in gathering data about the mood, behaviours, and documentation of incidents that can be evaluated and interpreted to calculate the interaction between variables. Isangedighi (2012) proposed that a descriptive survey requires a systematic, intensive, objective and purposeful

evaluation of behaviour, trait or opinion and as detailed as practicable explanation of it. It allows the use of questionnaires to enhance effective data collection for the analysis.

This research was conducted in the Department of Social Science Education, Faculty of Education, University of Calabar, Calabar, Nigeria. Social Science Education started in 1976 under the Department of Education, Faculty of Arts. In 1981 it was transferred to Curriculum and Teaching Branch, Faculty of Education. Social Science Education units cover Economics, Political Science, Geography and Social Studies. Many other students from these units, with the exception of social studies graduates, take teaching subjects from the Faculty of Social Sciences. On 13 November 2014, when the then Department of Curriculum and Teaching was separated into five separate departments, including Arts Education, Curriculum and Teaching, Environmental Education, Science Education and Social Science Education, the Department of Social Science Education became its own branch. With effect from 1st February 2015, the Department started off with four programmes – Education Economics, Education Geography, Education Political Science, and Social Studies Education.

The research population included the 273 students admitted to study Social Science Education (Education Economics, Education Geography, Education Political Science and Social Studies Education) in the 2017/2018 academic session. This group of students were selected for the study since for at least two sessions they have completed one of those courses.

The study adopted stratified random sampling and purposeful sampling techniques in the sample collection of the four Units of the department. The study used one hundred and fifty (150) undergraduate students.

Two instruments were used to collect data; 15-item Student-Related Variables Questionnaire (SRVQ) and a 60-item Social Science Education Achievement Test (SSEAT) developed by the researchers checked by specialists in Educational Assessment, Analysis and Statistics. The questionnaire consisted of two sections; the first section contained items on the personal information of respondents, such as: unit, year of study, and age; the second section was a 4-point Likert-type questionnaire containing fifteen items based on the three variables. While the second instrument has 60 questions of multiple choice (15 on each of the four programs that make up the Department). Which implies students were to respond to the cluster that is concerned with the exact program of study.

A trial test was performed to assess the reliability of the instrument by 20 population-drawn undergraduates who are not among the population used for the analysis. The tests of the Cronbach alpha coefficient revealed a coefficient of reliability ranging from 0.713 to 0.802 which suggested that the instrument was very accurate for this analysis to be used.

4.0 Results and discussion

Hypothesis one:

No significant relationship exists between peer influence and the academic outcome of the students. The Independent Variable is peer influence; while the main predictor is students' academic outcome in Social Science Education. The key approach applied to statistical analysis was Pearson's Product Moment Correlation (r). The empirical results are presented in Table 1.

The result in Table 1 reveals that the calculated r-value of .432 exceeds the critical r-value of .159 at the significant level of .05 with 148 degrees of freedom. This means a strong correlation exists between peer pressure and academic achievement of the students. As a result of this analysis, the null hypothesis was discarded, suggesting that there exists significant correlation between peer pressure and students' academic achievement. This result indicates peer influence contributes significantly to the students' academic outcome.

Table 1

Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) analysis of the relationship between Peer influence and academic outcome (N=150)

Variable	\bar{X}	SD	r-value	Sig. Level
Peer influence	21.00	3.60	.432*	.000
Academic outcome	19.00	2.88		

* Significant at .05 level, critical r = .159, df = 148

Hypothesis two

Parental income has no significant influence on the academic outcome of the students. Parental income is the independent variable whereas academic outcome is the dependent variable. This hypothesis was checked using the independent t-test tool. The study findings are set out in Table 2.

The finding in Table 2 shows that the calculated t-value at 2.571 was higher than the critical t-value of 1.976 at 0.05 indicating 148 degrees of freedom. That finding rejected the null hypothesis that parental income is not having a direct impact on the children's academic success. It means the parental income significantly affects the learner's educational performance.

Table 2

Independent t-test analysis of the influence of parental income on students' academic outcome (N= 150)

Parental Income	N	\bar{X}	S.D.	t-value	p-level
High	79	15.09	3.74	2.571*	.000
Low	71	10.49	3.64		

* Significant at .05 level, critical t=1.976, df = 148

Hypothesis three:

Students' self-esteem of students does not significantly influence their academic outcome. The independent variable is the self-esteem of the students while the contingent variable is academic outcome. The particular statistical method used for testing this hypothesis is independent t-testing. Study results are outlined in Table 3.

The observation in Table 3 shows that the approximate t-value of 3.517 is greater than the critical t-value of 1.976 at 0.05 which suggests quantities of 148 degrees of freedom. This led to the rejection of the null hypothesis that claimed that self-esteem of the students did not significantly affect their academic outcomes. Which suggests that self-esteem of students has a big impact on the learner's academic outcome.

Table 3

Independent t-test analysis of the influence of self-esteem on students' academic performance (N= 150)

Self-esteem	N	\bar{X}	SD	t-value	p-level
High	78	14.78	2.98	3.517*	.000
Low	72	11.18	1.70		

* Significant at .05 level, critical t=1.976, df = 148

4.1 Discussion of findings

The findings of hypothesis one exhibited a strong association between peer influence and the students' academic performance. This finding coincides with Bankole and Ogunsakin (2015) who pointed out in their study of peer group impact on secondary school students' educational performance in Ekiti State, that peer interaction affects secondary school student educational output. The consequence of this observation is that students who interact with peers who take their studies seriously have often a very strong propensity to research seriously and are expected to do better with respect to their academics.

Findings on hypothesis two indicated that parental income has a big impact on the academic success of the students. This finding is consistent with Akanle (2007) who

identified parental income in his research on socio-economic factors affecting student academic achievement in Nigeria as a convincing cause for academic or vocational achievements of secondary school students. Consequently, it holds that the high achievement of students in Education Political Science can be strongly linked to the income level of their parents. This means students whose parental income level is high enough to carter for their school needs have a better chance of performing academically well than their peers whose parental income is low.

Around the same way, the outcome of hypothesis three testing shows that the students' self-esteem greatly affects their educational outcome. This finding is consistent with Obochi (2011) who reported a strong correlation between self-esteem and academic outcome among Federal Capital Territory high school students, Bwari Area Council. The analysis is based on findings suggested that all parents and teachers adopt strategies of developing healthy self-esteem. That is because a strong or optimistic self-esteem in a student acts as a catalyst not just to excel in academics but also in some other worthy undertaking.

5 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that:

- i. A significant relationship exists between peer influence and students' academic outcome
- ii. Parental income significantly influences students' academic outcome.
- iii. Students' self-esteem significantly influences their academic outcome.

6 Recommendations

The following policy recommendations were made from the findings:

1. Students should be encouraged to put in the best into their studies and avoid all forms of distractions especially associating with any group that would not enhance their academic outcome.
2. Parent should give adequate attention to adequately providing for their wards and put an eye on their progress record in school
3. Curriculum planners and teachers should give special attention towards building positive self-esteem in students; this might help in addressing the problem of poor academic outcome.

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