

SELF-EFFICACY AS PREDICTOR OF AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOURS AMONG UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES IN SOUTH EAST, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined self-efficacy as predictor of aggressive behaviour among university undergraduate in South East Nigeria. Two research questions guided the study and two null hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study comprised 5,401 (1,858 students from Micheal Okpara University of Agriculture Umudike, 1,801 students from Nnamdi Azikiwe University Awka and 1,742 students from University of Nigeria Nsukka) final year Faculty of Education students in the year 2019/2020 academic session. A sample of 540 students was used for the study. Multistage sampling procedure was used to draw the sample. The instruments for data collection were Students Self-Efficacy Scale (SSES) and Students Aggression Scale (SAS₂). Cronbach Alpha reliability technique was used to determine the internal consistency of the instruments which gave indices of 0.76 and 0.83 for SSES and SAS₂ respectively. Simple Linear Regression Analysis and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used for the data analysis. The study revealed that self-efficacy ($r = 0.781$; $p = 0.001$), aggressive behaviour of male and female ($r = 0.573$ and 0.774 ; $p = 0.000$) students positively and significantly predicted aggressive behaviour among university undergraduates in South East, Nigeria. Based on the findings, the study recommended that educational institution should implement gender-specific interventions addressing self-efficacy to manage aggressive behaviour among university students in South East, Nigeria, based on the significant predictive role identified for both male and female undergraduates.

Keywords: Self-Efficacy, Aggressive Behaviour, University Undergraduates, South East Nigeria.

Introduction

Education is the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes through formal instruction, training, or experience. It enables individuals to understand the world around them, make informed decisions, and contribute meaningfully to society. Ugochukwu et al. (2021) noted that education is the single most significant element in the advancement of a nation. Its importance cannot be overemphasized as it plays a pivotal role in the supply of manpower needed for national development. Education is typically categorized into three levels: Primary, secondary, and tertiary. Tertiary education encompasses post-secondary schooling, including colleges, universities, and vocational institutions, offering advanced academic or professional training. At the University level, students are equipped with advanced academic and practical skills that are essential for various professions.

Universities are valued institutions that creatively and innovatively consolidate a nation's foundations and serve as an arena where the growth and stability of future generations begin. Moreover, universities often serve as hubs for cultural diversity and intellectual exchange, promoting unity by bringing

together individuals from different backgrounds and fostering an environment of collaboration. At this stage, Galanta (2018) maintained that students should learn necessary skills that allow them to adjust easily and smoothly to the rapid physical, emotional, mental and social changes. As students transition into university life, they encounter a multitude of challenges, including demanding coursework, diverse social interactions, and increased responsibilities and as such learn some aggressive behaviours that impact negatively not only to their academic performance but also to their social life (Onukwufor, 2013).

Aggressive behaviour is a very complicated behaviour with a variety of multidimensional causes. It is actions or conducts that are intended to cause harm, injury, or distress to others. Glowacz et al. (2013) defined aggressive behaviour as a behaviour whose purpose or function is to injure physically or psychologically of the intended person. Abdulmalik et al. (2016) defined aggressive behaviour as the expression of feelings of anger or hatred by an individual towards another person with the intention to harm, injure, intimidate, dominate or even kill an individual who is motivated to avoid such harm. The intricacies of contemporary life always causes some stress, anxiety and attacking behaviour in human beings which can lead to several anti-behaviours among in undergraduate students.

Aggressive behaviours in universities are one of the most troublesome social problems in the nation today (Warburton et al., 2016). There has been a lot of uncertainties; clashes leading to aggressive behaviour which is upsetting among university undergraduates as well as other age groups in society. Recently the reports of aggressive behaviours exhibited in different universities across Nigeria have been on the news. For example, incidents of violence occurred in various Nigerian universities over the years. In 2015, Delta State University experienced tragic killings, followed by similar incidents at Lagos State University in 2016, and Cross River State in 2017. During that same year, Bayero University Kano also witnessed violence, while the alarming riots at the University of Port Harcourt made headlines in 2018, and the pattern continued onwards. Aggressive behaviour is a significant problem both at individual and societal levels, and has a negative impact on both victims and perpetrator (Sanya, 2018). However, developing the ability to express oneself not only reduces stress and boosts self-worth but also enhances decision-making abilities, self-confidence and overall flexibility. This skill fosters self-efficacy, and satisfactory interpersonal relationships as noted by Alberti & Emmons (2015).

Self-efficacy is an individual belief in his/her capacity to act in the ways necessary to reach specific goals. It is a fundamental component of self-confidence and influences how people approach challenges, set goals and perseveres in the face of difficulties. Maddux and Kleiman (2020) defined self-efficacy as the beliefs about a person's ability to effectively perform the tasks needed to attain a valued goal. Abedi (2015) averred that self-efficacy is an important aspect of human drive and behaviour as it influences actions that affect one's life. It is the beliefs in one's capabilities to form and affect the courses of action necessary for managing prospective situations. This concept was introduced by Albert Bandura as a key element in his social cognitive theory, highlighting the role of personal beliefs in shaping behavior and achievement.

Self-efficacy is closely related to one's perceived control over their actions and outcomes, impacting their motivation, resilience, and overall performance in different aspects of life (Omebe & Omebe, 2015). Individuals also promote self-efficacy beliefs as a result of social persuasions they received from others as well as physical and emotional states such as anxiety, stress, arousal, and mood states. Within this social cognitive framework of human performance, self-efficacy plays an important role as the core facilitating factor for determining people's behaviours that are stimulated by their emotions such as happiness, sadness, arrogance, shame, etc. (Bandura in Haddad & Taleb, 2015). Gender roles and stereotypes can shape individuals' self-efficacy belief, influencing how they perceive their abilities in different domains. These perceptions, in turn, can impact the likelihood of individuals resorting to aggressive behaviours when they doubt their ability to achieve goals through non-aggressive means.

Predictive value of gender on both self-efficacy and aggressive behaviour has been another area of interest to researchers in education (Skara et al., 2018; Mulhollem, 2015). While some research studies showed evidence that male gender engage more in aggressive behaviours and perceive that they are stronger in their abilities to accomplish tasks than female gender. Others believe that gender has no influence on how individuals view their capacity to achieve and accomplish tasks (Nagoshi & brzuzy, 2014). Following these inconsistencies, this study sought to contribute in resolving this controversy on gender as it affects aggressive behaviour among university undergraduates. It is against this background that the study examined self-efficacy as predictor of aggressive behaviours among university undergraduates in South East, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Nigerian universities have faced a concerning and escalating issue related to aggressive behaviours among undergraduate students in recent times. The primary objectives of university education, which include the training of students for national development and the inculcation of values essential for personal and societal survival, are increasingly being hindered by the prevalence of aggressive conduct within university campuses. The transformation of these institutions from centers of learning into arenas of conflict and violence has become a matter of great concern to stakeholders in education. Aggressive behaviours exhibited by university students has given rise to a multitude of physical, psychological, and social complications that not only disrupt the educational process but also have far-reaching implications for the individuals involved. These complications manifest in various forms, such as peer rejection, academic underachievement, alcohol and drug abuse, delinquency, self-harm, aggression, anxiety, and even tragic incidents like suicides. This alarming trend has caught the attention of researchers, prompting a growing interest in understanding and addressing this issue.

The complex nature of aggressive behaviour necessitates a thorough examination of the factors contributing to its prevalence among university students. Several interconnected elements have been identified as potential influencers, including family upbringing, family environment, parental conduct, academic pressures, societal norms, economic disparities, peer influences and the misuse of alcohol and substances. Self-efficacy, which is an integral component of an individual's self-perception, may play a moderating role in the relationship between students and their aggressive behaviours. Hence, the central problem addressed in this study is to determine whether self-efficacy can serve as predictive factor for aggressive behaviour among undergraduate students in South East, Nigeria.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to determine self-efficacy as predictor of aggressive behaviour among university undergraduates in South East, Nigeria. Specifically, this study sought to;

1. Examine the predictive value of self-efficacy on aggressive behaviour among university undergraduates in South East, Nigeria.
2. Find out predictive value of self-efficacy on aggressive behaviour among male and female university undergraduates in South East, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the predictive value of self-efficacy on the aggressive behaviour among university undergraduates in South East, Nigeria?
2. What is the predictive value of self-efficacy on the aggressive behaviour among male and female university undergraduates in South East Nigeria?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at .05 level of significance:

1. Self-efficacy would not significantly predict aggressive behaviours among university undergraduates in South East, Nigeria.
2. Self-efficacy would not predict significantly aggressive behaviours among male and female university undergraduates in South East Nigeria.

Research Methods

The study adopted correlational research design. The population of the study comprised 5,401 final year undergraduates from Faculty of Education in three Federal universities in South-Eastern States, Nigeria in 2019/2020 academic session (Academic Planning Unit of the various universities). The sample for this study was made up of 540 final year students of faculties of education, 180 from Michael Okpara University, 180 from Nnamdi Azikiwe University and 180 from University of Nigeria. Multi stage sampling technique was used to draw the sample size from the study population. The instruments used for data collection were Students' Self-Efficacy Scale (SSES), and Students Aggression Scale (SAS₂). The instruments were divided into section A and B. Section A which has 15-item statement elicits information on students' self-efficacy; while the Section B has 19-item statement that elicits information on aggressive level of the students. All the instrument were on four point rating scale of Strongly Agree (SA) (4 points), Agree (A) (3 points), Disagree (D) (2 points), and Strongly Disagree (SD) (1 point). Face and construct validity of the instrument were established by three experts; two from Educational Psychology and one from Measurement and Evaluation. All the experts were all from the Faculty of Education, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University. The

questionnaire reliability was ascertained through a pilot test. The data collected were analyzed with Cronbach Alpha method and coefficient values of 0.76 and 0.83 were obtained. The data collected were analyzed using Simple regression analysis to answer the research questions; while the hypotheses formulated for this study were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Simple Linear Regression Analysis and one way analysis of variance (ANOVA) (F-test).

Results

Research Question 1: What is the predictive value of self-efficacy aggressive behaviours among university undergraduates in South East, Nigeria?

Table 1: Simple regression analysis of self-efficacy as predictor of aggressive behaviour among university undergraduates in South East, Nigeria

	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Std error of the estimate	df ₁	df ₂	Significant change
Model							
1	.781	.609	.753	4.50713	1	538	.000

Predictor (constant): Self-efficacy of undergraduates

Result in Table I showed the simple regression analysis of self-efficacy as predictor of aggressive behaviour among University Undergraduate Students in South East, Nigeria. The result showed that when the responses of the respondents on self-efficacy were correlated with aggressive behaviour of undergraduates' correlation coefficient (R) of 0.781 with associated coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.609 were obtained. This coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.609 indicated that 60.9% of variation in aggressive behaviour of university undergraduates' can be explained or attributed to self-efficacy.

Research Question 2: What is the predictive value of self-efficacy on aggressive behaviour among male and female university undergraduates in South East, Nigeria?

Table 2 Simple regression analysis of self-efficacy on aggressive behaviour of male and female university Undergraduates in South East, Nigeria.

	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Std error of the estimate	df ₁	df ₂	Significant change
Model							
1	.568 ^a	.322	.550	4.52657	1	178	.000
1	.475 ^b	.225	.441	4.51132	1	358	.000

a. Predictor: (constant): Self-Efficacy of male undergraduates (N=180)

b. Predictor: (constant): Self-efficacy of female undergraduates (N=360)

Result in Table 2 revealed the simple regression analysis of self-efficacy on aggressive behaviour of male and female undergraduates' in South East, Nigeria. The correlation coefficient (R) for male was 0.568 with associated coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.322 were obtained. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.322 implied that 32.2% of variation in male aggressive behaviour can be explained or attributed by male self-efficacy. In the same vein, the correlation coefficient (R) for female undergraduate was 0.475 with associated coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.225 were obtained indicated that 22.5% variation in female aggressive behaviour can be attributed or explained by female self-efficacy.

Hypothesis 1: Self-efficacy would not significantly predict aggressive behaviour among university undergraduates in South East Nigeria.

Table 3: Regression ANOVA Test of significance between self-efficacy and aggressive behaviour among university undergraduate students in South East Nigeria.

Model		Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig
1	Regression	27374.902	1	27374.902	1347.589	.000
	Residual	10929.034	538	20.314		
	Total	38303.936	539			

a. Dependent variable: Aggressive behaviour of undergraduates students

b. Predictor: (constant): Self-efficacy of undergraduates

Table 3 showed regression ANOVA between self-efficacy and aggressive behaviour among undergraduate students in South East, Nigeria. This result was an indicative that the variation in aggressive behaviour among university undergraduate students that can be attributed or explained by self-efficacy was significant ($F(1(538)) = 1347.589$, $P = .000$). The associated probability value of .000 was less than 0.05 level of significance since the P-value of .000 was less than 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis

was rejected and the inference drawn was that self-efficacy of undergraduates students is a significant predictor of aggressive behaviour of university undergraduate students in South East Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: Self-efficacy would not significantly predict aggressive behaviours among male and female university undergraduates in South East, Nigeria.

Table 4: Regression ANOVA test of significance between self-efficacy and aggressive behaviour among male and female university undergraduate students in South East, Nigeria.

Model		Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F	Sig
1 Male	Regression	88145.781	1	88145.781	4301.920	.000
	Residual	3647.194	178	20.490		
	Total	91792.978	179			
1 Female	Regression	181576.199	1	181576.199	8921.778	.000
	Residual	7286.023	358	20.352		
	Total	188862.222	359			

- Dependent variable: Aggressive behaviour of undergraduate students
- Predictor: (constant): Self-efficacy of male undergraduates
- Predictor: (constant): Self-efficacy of female undergraduates

Result from Table 4 revealed regression ANOVA between Self-efficacy and aggressive behaviour among male and female university undergraduate students in South east, Nigeria. The result revealed that for male undergraduates the variation in aggressive behaviour among male undergraduates that can be explained or attributed by Self-efficacy was significant ($F(1,178)=4301.920$, $P = .000$). The associated probability value of .000 was less than 0.05 level of significance, hence the null hypothesis was rejected. In the same vein, the result for female undergraduates revealed that the variation in aggressive behaviours among female undergraduates that can be explained or attributed by Self-efficacy was significant ($F(1,358) = 8921.778$, $P = .000$). The associated probability value of .000 was less than 0.05 level of significance, therefore the null hypothesis was rejected. Meanwhile, Self-efficacy is a significant predictor of aggressive behaviour among male and female university undergraduates in South east, Nigeria.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that self- efficacy predicted aggressive behaviour of undergraduate students in federal public Universities in South East, Nigeria. This finding shows that increasing students self –efficacy can reduce students aggressive behavior. This implies that high level of self- efficacy can reduce student's aggressive behaviour. This is to say that there is a strong positive prediction between student's aggressive behavior and their level of self- efficacy. This finding is in line with the works of Williams (2015) who observed that individuals with high levels of self-efficacy see difficult task as challenges rather than a threat to be circumvented. In agreement with the finding, Clow (2016) revealed significant associations between self-efficacy and aggression type with service utilization.

The findings also revealed that self-efficacy predicted aggressive behaviour of male and female students in public universities in South East, Nigeria This implies that there is moderate positive prediction between self-efficacy and aggressive behavior of male and female undergraduates in public universities in South East Nigeria. This finding showed that gender is a significant predictor of aggressive behavior when self-efficacy is partially considered. This also means that gender influence as a motivating variable exist between students' self- efficacy and their aggressive behavior. This finding is in agreement with the result of Nigde (2019) who found that gender is a significant predictor of aggressive behaviour Similarly, Okechi and Nwankwo (2013) revealed that individuals who are internally controlled tend to be highly assertive than those who are externally controlled. The externals believed that the environmental forces determine their life and events around, they blame the environment and could be passive submissive or aggressive and feel irresponsible of events.

Conclusion

Universities in Nigeria are designed for teaching and learning, and are expected to produce students by providing them with information and skills in various fields of study, to enable them to be self-employed and effectively contribute to National Development. Some of the University undergraduates do not behave well and it has been shown that non-cognitive factors such as self-efficacy may have an impact on their behaviours. The study therefore sought to evaluate the predictive values of self-efficacy on aggressive

behaviours of students in South East, Nigeria. Results revealed that there was strong prediction among self-efficacy and students aggressive behaviours in the three public federal universities in South East, Nigeria.

Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Universities should implement supportive strategies such as counselling services and workshops to help undergraduate students in South East, Nigeria better understand and manage their aggressive tendencies, fostering a more harmonious campus environment.
2. Educational institutions should implement gender-specific interventions addressing self-efficacy to manage aggressive behaviours among university students in South East, Nigeria, based on the significant predictive role identified for both male and female undergraduates.

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