

## **SELF EFFICACY AS CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN ANAMBRA STATE.**

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### **Abstract**

*The study examined self efficacy as correlate of academic achievement among primary school pupils in Anambra state. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses tested at 0.05 level of significance. The study adopted Correlational research design. The population of the study comprised 13,742 primary five pupils in public primary schools in Anambra state. Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed to draw a sample size of 687 primary five pupils. General Self Efficacy Scale (GSES) was adapted as instrument for data collection. The instrument was subjected to face validation. The reliability of the instrument was established using Cronbach Alpha and it yielded a co-efficient value of 0.83. Instruments were administered through direct delivery approach. Research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient while hypotheses were tested using test of significance of Pearson's Correlation. Findings from the study showed that; the relationship between self efficacy and academic achievement of primary school pupils in English Language is not significant. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that School counsellors should help pupils in primary school pupils on the various ways of acquiring and developing self efficacy in the classroom, and the need to have the opportunity to practice them.*

### **Introduction**

Education is an instrument for equipping individuals with skills and knowledge for the development of a nation. It is for this reason that resources are heavily invested in the education sector. Acquisition of education is also acquisition of knowledge. The above notwithstanding, for one to be said to be educated means that the person must have achieved or performed well in academics.

Academic achievement as a specific statement about what student had been able to do or achieve after been administered with one test or the other on areas of subject they had been taught (Karoly, 2018). It is a good indicator of a student growth over time and it pin points a student's strength and weakness. The Federal Republic of Nigeria (2014) stated the objectives of secondary education to include; inspire students with a desire for self improvement and achievement of excellence, raise a generation of people who can think for themselves, respect the views and feelings of others and dignity of labour, provide trained manpower in the applied science, technology and commerce at sub-professional grades.

The question that now bothers everyone is whether present day secondary schools in Nigeria are living up to their mission given the frequency and intensity of students' violent demonstrations, poor academic performances, examination malpractices, cultism, drug abuse and addictions.

There was a decline in the pupils' academic achievement, especially at the primary school level in Nigeria. For instance, statistics from Olusegun (2019) indicated that less than 40 percent of the candidates who sat for public examinations in Nigeria obtained up to credit passes in five subjects, which are the minimum academic qualifications for admission into tertiary institutions in Nigeria. Consequently, the

academic achievement of students in Nigeria has since remained a source of concern to researchers, especially as the academic achievement of secondary school students is deemed to be continually declining. Kuh et al (2016) opined that academic achievement signifies the students' performance outcomes and how they accomplish specific goals related to their courses. It defines the possible working career of the students and brings positive socio-economic development to the country. Drew (2022) defines academic achievement as any recognized success you may have achieved in an educational context, that you might be able to present on a resume or scholarship application as evidence of your academic skills and unique academic strengths. The example of academic achievement includes; your school grades, certification, leadership in an academic club or society, receiving an academic award or prize, winning a scholarship among others. Academic achievement represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college and university. Contextually, academic achievement can be referred to as the amount of academic content a student learns in a specific period. This can be any attempt student has achieved short-term or long-term academic goals within an academic setting. It encompasses a broad range of factors, including grades, test scores, research outcomes and overall academic achievement.

In the recent time, the investigations of the factors that influence academic achievement of students have attracted the interest of and concern of stake holders and researchers. This is because of the public outcries concerning the low standard of education in the country. The prevailing poor academic achievement of students in Nigeria today has an overwhelming effect on the country's image and presents a devastating challenge to teachers and parents. The consequences of poor academic achievement may include; ineffectiveness/inefficiency, poverty of ideas, fraudulent acts, depression and loss of confidence. The poor academic achievement is mostly recorded in core subjects like English Language.

Adejoh (2017) examined the causes of poor academic achievement among secondary school students. Some of the factors identified were poor intellectual ability, poor study habit, lack of vocational goals, low self-efficacy, low socio-economic status of family, problem of inadequate facilities in the school, societal problems like government policies and low funding of education sector.

Okorie (2020) noted that academic achievement should be considered to be a multifaceted construct that comprises different domains of learning. It also involves the school system cognitive goals that either apply across multiple subject areas such as critical thinking or include the acquisition of knowledge in a specific intellectual domain which could be numeracy, literacy, science and history. This based on the notion that the field of academic achievement is very wide-ranging and covers a broad variety of educational outcomes. Students' academic achievement and success in school thus require that they develop strong self-efficacy.

Self-efficacy is defined by Ochieng (2015) as one's belief in his capacity to perform a specific action successfully. Self-efficacy is one's belief in the ability to produce designated levels of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives. Thus going by these definitions, students' self-efficacy would likely go a long way to influence how they feel, think, motivate themselves, and perform certain tasks. This would likely play a major role in how one approaches goals, tasks, and challenges. Therefore, in the context of this study, self-efficacy refers to students' trust and confidence in their capabilities and skills to plan, coordinate, and perform academic-related tasks successfully at the required level.

Self-efficacy also has a measure of control over an individual's thought, feelings, and actions (Meral, et al, 2016). In other words, the beliefs individuals hold about their abilities and outcomes of their efforts have the tendency to influence in great ways how they behave. Students with a strong sense of self-efficacy get involved in challenging tasks, invest more effort and persistence, and show excellent academic achievement in comparison with students who lack such confidence. A strong sense of self-efficacy promotes human accomplishment and personal well-being. A student with high self-efficacy views challenges as things that are supposed to be mastered rather than threats to avoid. These students are able to recover from failure faster and are more likely to attribute failure to a lack of effort. They approach threatening situations with the belief that they can control them. These things have been linked to lower levels of stress and a lower vulnerability to depression. In contrast, students with low sense of self-efficacy view difficult tasks as personal threats and shy away from them. Difficult tasks lead them to look at the skills they lack rather than the ones they have. It is easy for them to lose faith in their own abilities after a failure. Low self-efficacy can be linked to higher levels of stress and depression.

Social cognitive psychologist like Bandura emphasized the concept of one's belief in performing a task, therefore affirming the notion that persons with high self-efficacy are able to plan effectively and successfully in the completion of a task. The reason is that human achievement tends to depend on

interactions between one's behaviours, personal factors, and environmental conditions. Self-efficacious persons believe in their capacities and confidently apply them in such a way that they achieve their goals.

Yazachew (2018) stated that Self-efficacy, also called perceived ability, refers to the confidence people have in their abilities for success in a given task. If they possess the ability to successfully perform, then that task will be attempted. The task will be avoided if it is perceived to be too difficult. Although inefficacious individuals usually avoid challenging tasks, when they do attempt them they give up more easily than individuals with high efficacy. When inefficacious individuals fail, they attribute the unsuccessful result to a lack of ability and tend to lose faith in their capabilities. When they succeed, they are more likely to attribute their success to external factors. If students master a challenging task with limited assistance, their levels of self-efficacy rise.

Bandura (2012) opined that four factors determine self-efficacy: enactive mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological and emotional states. The most influential of these factors is enactive mastery experience, which refers to individuals' experiences with success or failure in past situations. Information gathered from these experiences is then internalized. Past successes raise self-efficacy and repeated failures lower it, which indicates to individuals their levels of capability. In a vicarious experience, individuals compare themselves to peers whom they perceive are similar in ability and intelligence to themselves. Watching peers succeed raises observer's self-efficacy and seeing them fail lowers it. Exposure to multiple successful role models helps increase self-efficacy in observers. Verbal persuasion tries to convince individuals, who may doubt their capabilities, that they possess the skills needed for success at a given task. In education, verbal persuasion delivered by teachers often takes the form of verbal feedback, evaluation, and encouragement. Persuasion must be realistic, sincere, and from a credible source; otherwise it can negatively affect student self-efficacy beliefs. In addition to the four factors that determine general self-efficacy, aptitude, attitudes, and attributions are found to predict science self-efficacy.

Efficacy beliefs vary between individuals and will actually fluctuate within an individual for different tasks. In many activities, self-efficacy contributes to self-esteem. Self-efficacy beliefs affect how people approach new challenges and will contribute to performance since these beliefs influence thought processes, motivation, and behaviour. Self-efficacy is not static and can change over time resulting from periodic reassessments of how adequate one's performance has been (Bandura, 2012). Thus, from the foregoing the notion that self-efficacy is a crucial variable in learning performance of social, cognitive, motor skills strategies, and behaviours is an indication that self-efficacy has a critical role to play in educational achievement. On a contrary, study carried out by Mustafa et al (2015), revealed that there is no significant relationship between self efficacy and academic performance.

It is important to note that self-efficacy has gender perspective (Adejoo, 2017). Gender can be seen as the range of physical, biological, mental and behavioural characteristics pertaining to and differentiating between the feminine and masculine. Adejoo (2017) sees gender as a specially constructed phenomenon that is brought about as society ascribes different roles, duties, behaviours and mannerism to the two sexes (male and female). It is a social connotation that has sound psychological background and it is used to refer to specific cultural patterns of behaviours that are attributed to human sexes. In Nigeria males and females are not expected to behave in the same way or play the same role as Nigeria cultural system assigns traditional roles that are mutually exclusive to males and females.

Gender issues as a factor or moderator variables in the study of academic achievement is not yet skewed to any direction. There are four different findings on the influence of gender on academic achievement, some are in favour of males, others in favour of females and sometimes no gender differences are found. Researchers like Yazachew (2018) found no significant difference between male and female students in academic achievement while Gupta and Bashir (2018) ascertained that there exists a significant gender difference in favour of males in academic achievement while females have low academic achievement in secondary schools. Jafari, et al (2019) observed that the status of study habits and academic achievement of male and female students did not significantly differ from each other. On the contrary, Obineli (2017) reported that students have significant gender differences in their study habits and academic achievement. On the contrary Shukullaku, (2016) revealed no significant difference between male and female in their self-efficacy and there was no difference between male and female in academic performance. Also a significant relationship was found between the students' self-efficacy and academic performance. The possible explanation for these controversial findings might be probably because the studies were carried out with different geographical location and on diverse population under vary learning environment. Many researchers have attempted to carry out studies in self efficacy as correlates of academic achievements in different geographical locations sometimes in the past but their findings must have been taken by the changes in the society. Therefore, there is need to investigate self-efficacy as correlates of academic achievement

of secondary school students in Anambra state in an attempt to build a new evidence on self-efficacy as correlates of academic achievement.

### **Statement of Problem**

Nigeria as a country places great emphasis on education because it is believed to be the principal avenue for national development. However, this can only be achieved if students will get actively involved in academic activities to attain better academic achievement and consequently contribute to the National development. Schools are established with the aim of imparting knowledge and skills to those who go through them, and behind the idea is the goal of enhancing academic achievement. Meanwhile, observation and statistics have shown that despite the laudable values attached to learning outcomes, the overall academic achievement rating seem to be on a steady decline in core subjects like English Language. This unimpressive academic achievement of ss in our pupils schools has been a major source of concern for stakeholders in education because if it continues, it may lead these young ones into being involved in all sort of societal crimes like drug abuse, dropping out of school, loss of interest in academic pursuit and some may turn out to become street rascals, thus become a threat to the society. Many researchers have indicated that many factors are at play in determining the academic achievement of students. Thus it was noted that attribute such as self efficacy could individually or collectively have relationship on academic achievement. Many of the studies were conducted outside, and few conducted in Nigeria do not seem to have resolved the question of the relationship between self efficacy and academic achievement. This is the motivation for this study which is set to investigate self-efficacy as correlates of academic achievement of primary school pupils in Anambra state.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement of primary 5pupils in English Language in public primary schools in Anambra state?
2. What is the relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement of male and female primary 5pupils in English Language in public primary schools in Anambra state?

### **Hypotheses**

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

1. There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement of primary 5pupils in English Language in public primary schools in Anambra state.
2. There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement of male and female primary 5pupils in English Language in public primary schools in Anambra state.

### **Method**

The study adopted a correlational research design. Anambra state is the area of the study. The population of the study comprised 13,742 (6600 males and 7142 females) primary 5pupils in public primary schools in Anambra state. The sample for the study consisted of 687 SS2 students (330 males and 357 females). Proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to draw the sample size. Stratification was based on gender. Two instruments were used for data collection. These were the General Self-Efficacy scale (GSES) and the third term examination scores in English Language. The instruments were subjected to face validity. The instruments were trial tested in a simple administration on a representative sample of 30 primary five (15 males and 15 females) drawn from two public primary schools in Enugu state. This was done using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. They yielded coefficient value of 0.80 for Self-efficacy Scale. The researcher directly administered the instruments to the respondents with the help of three research assistants. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions. Test of significance of Pearson was used to test hypotheses.

### **Results**

**Research Question One:** What is the relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement of primary five pupils in English Language in public primary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 1: Pearson's Correlation on Self-efficacy and English Language Scores of primary five pupils in Public Primary Schools in Anambra State**

Variables	N	Self-efficacy	English Language Scores	Remark
Self-efficacy	638	1.00	-0.025	Very Low Negative Relationship
English Language Scores	638	-0.025	1.00	

Table 1 shows the Pearson's correlation between self-efficacy scores and English Language scores of primary five pupils. The correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) = -0.025 indicates that there was a very low negative relationship between self-efficacy and English Language scores of primary five pupils in Anambra State.

**Research Question Two:** What is the relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement of male and female primary 5pupils in English Language in public primary schools in Anambra State?

**Table 2: Pearson's Correlation on Self-efficacy and English Language Scores of Male and Female primary five pupils in Public Primary Schools in Anambra State**

Primary Five Pupils in Public Primary Schools in Anambra State						
Variables	N	Self-efficacy	English Language Scores	Remark		
<b>Male</b>						
Self-efficacy	250	1.00	-0.133	Very Low Relationship	Negative	
English Language Scores	250	-0.133	1			
<b>Female</b>						
Self-efficacy	388	1.00	0.029	Very Low Relationship	positive	
English Language Scores	388	0.029	1.00			

Results presented in table 2 shows the Pearson's correlation between self-efficacy scores and English Language scores of primary 5pupils according to gender. For the male pupils, the correlation coefficient was -0.133 which indicates a very low negative relationship, while the correlation coefficient for the female pupils was 0.029. This indicates a very low positive correlation. These suggest that the direction and size of the correlation between self-efficacy and English Language scores of the pupils was different for the male and female pupils. While a negative and low correlation was reported for the males, there was positive and very low correlation for the female pupils.

**Hypothesis One:** There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement of primary five pupils in English Language in public primary schools in Anambra State.

**Table 3: Test of Significance of Pearson's Correlation on Self-efficacy and English Language Scores of primary five pupils in Public Primary Schools in Anambra State**

Variables	N	Self-efficacy	English Language Scores	p-value	Decision
Self-efficacy	638	1.00	-0.025	0.532	Not Significant
English Language Scores	638	-0.025	1.00		

Table 3 revealed that the relationship between self-efficacy and English Language scores of primary five pupils was not statistically significant,  $r = -0.025$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . The  $p$ -value was greater than 0.05 level of significance, therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected.

**Hypothesis Two:** There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement of male and female primary 5pupils in English Language in public primary schools in Anambra State.

**Table 4: Test of Significance of Pearson's Correlation on Self-efficacy and English Language Scores of Male and Female primary five pupils in Public Primary Schools in Anambra State**

Variables	N	Self-efficacy	English Language Scores	p-value	Decision
<b>Male</b>					
Self-efficacy	250	1.00	-0.133	0.036	Significant
English Language Scores	250	-0.133	1		
<b>Female</b>					
Self-efficacy	388	1.00	0.029	0.574	Not Significant
English Language Scores	388	0.029	1.00		

As displayed in Table 4, there was a significant negative relationship between self-efficacy and English language score of primary five pupils,  $r = -0.133$ ,  $p < 0.05$ . On the other hand, relationship between self-efficacy and English Language scores was not significant,  $r = 0.029$ ,  $p > 0.05$ . This implies that there was significant relationship between self-efficacy and English Language scores among male primary five pupils, and a non-significant relationship between self-efficacy and English Language scores among female primary five pupils.

## Discussion of findings

### Relationship between self efficacy and academic achievement of primary five pupils

The findings of the study as shown in Table 1 revealed that there were a very low negative relationship between self efficacy and academic achievement of primary five pupils in English Language in Anambra state. The result of the null hypothesis revealed that the relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement of primary five pupils in English Language was not statistically significant. This finding is agreement with Mustafa et al (2015) whose study revealed non significant relationship between the students' self efficacy academic achievement. The findings are surprising, considering the fact that an individual who is aware of self and capabilities will be able to identify the limits and strengths and by so doing build more on strengths while making efforts to reduce the limitations. Going from Bandure (2012) assertion that students with high self efficacy beliefs are not only more likely to attempt a task, but they will also work harder and persist longer in case of any difficulties, while students with low self efficacy belief do not expect to do well because they tend to believe in their abilities to do well. This nonetheless is not the case with present study as the findings revealed that a non-significant negative relationship exist between self efficacy and academic achievement of secondary school students in English Language. The finding is also in disagreement with the findings of Meera and Jumana (2015) who revealed that there exist a high positive relationship between self efficacy and academic achievement in English Language of primary school pupils. One critical aspect of this finding is that students who are more confident and self assured are more likely to attain higher level of academic achievement, which implies that the beliefs of self efficacy appears to play an important role in guessing students' academic achievement.

This finding shows that the relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement of primary 5pupils in English Language was not statistically significant, that people may have performed poorly on the academic tasks not necessarily because they possess high or low self efficacy, but because they lack other cognitive abilities and capabilities.

### Relationship between self efficacy and academic achievement of male and female primary five pupils

The findings of the study as indicated on Table 3 showed a low negative relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement of primary five pupils in English Language. While a low positive relationship exists between self efficacy and academic achievement of primary five female pupils in English Language. The result of the null hypothesis revealed that there was a significant relationship between self-efficacy and academic achievement of primary five male pupils in English language and a non significant relationship between self efficacy and academic achievement of primary five female pupils in English Language.

Shukullaku (2016) found opposite result, in which there is no significant gender difference in their self-efficacy and academic achievement of pupils. However, female students' self efficacy is slightly lower than that of males while males receive learning faster than female pupils. Both males and females have no significant difference in self efficacy.

### Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are made:  
There is a significant low relationship between self efficacy and academic achievement of primary school pupils in English Language in Anambra state. These findings thus suggest that variables that are consistently associated with high academic achievement include self efficacy among others. The pupils will most likely carry forward what they learn during this school time in their lives, so it is crucial to their development that they learn how to build their self efficacy beliefs, that they are valuable and capable member of the society and that they could become successful in their academic pursuit.

### Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. School counsellors should help pupils in our primary schools on the various ways of acquiring and developing self efficacy in the classroom, and the need to have the opportunity to practice them.
2. Government should post more trained counsellors to all the public primary schools in Anambra state so as to help counsel pupils with low self efficacy.

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