| Research Article

Investigating the Impact of Interest and Motivation on Literacy Achievement in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba State

Oboh Veronica Nkeiru

Faculty of Education Federal University Wukari, vincentvero@fuwukari.edu.ng

Kate Daniel-Ameh

Faculty of Education Federal University Wukari, Nicole2006.kda@gmail.com

Abstract: The study investigated the Influence of Self-Efficacy on Student's Achievement in Literacy Skills in Wukari Education Zone, Taraba State, Nigeria. The study tried to determine the influence self-efficacy has on students' achievement in literacy skills. The population of the study was 1,287 JS II students made up of 598 males and 689 females. A sample of 330 JS II students was selected through proportionate sampling. The study was guided by two research questions and two hypotheses. Ex-post facto design was used to carry out the work and three instruments: Self-Efficacy Scale (SES), Writing Achievement Test (WAT) and Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (RCAT) were used to collect data for the study. Data collected were analysed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions while the hypotheses were tested using regression analysis. The study revealed that students' self-efficacy beliefs influenced their achievements in literacy skills and a significant difference in the mean achievement scores in literacy skills between students with low self-efficacy and those with high self-efficacy. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that schools should develop and implement programs aimed at enhancing self-efficacy among students, particularly targeting those with low self-efficacy levels and also educators should regularly assess students' literacy skills and provide constructive feedback as this practice will help students recognize their progress and capabilities, reinforcing their belief in their literacy abilities and motivating them to strive for higher achievements.

Keywords: Interest, Motivation, Literacy skills, Achievements, Students

Introduction

The process of learning, especially literacy acquisition, is significantly influenced by students' interest and motivation. Literacy, defined as the ability to read and write, is essential for academic success across all subjects in Nigerian schools (Muodumogu, 2019). In particular, the National Policy on Education stipulates that English is the medium of instruction from the fourth year of primary school onward (FRN, 2013). Given the centrality of literacy skills in academic

achievement, it becomes essential to examine the role that interest and motivation play in shaping students' literacy outcomes. Renninger and Hidi (2016) argue that interest is a key motivational factor that energizes learning, directs attention, and fosters sustained engagement with academic tasks.

In the Wukari Education Zone, where students face unique challenges, fostering interest in literacy tasks is crucial for improving their academic achievement. According to Subramaniam (2009), interest significantly influences how students engage with reading and writing. Students who find reading and writing activities engaging are more likely to invest time and effort into mastering these skills. Conversely, those who lack interest may struggle to develop literacy skills, leading to poorer academic performance. The link between interest and literacy achievement is supported by empirical evidence suggesting that motivated students are more likely to persevere in the face of difficulties and achieve greater success in reading and writing tasks (Gottfried in Carrol & Fox, 2017). Motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation, plays a central role in students' literacy development. Bandura's (1997) self-efficacy theory underscores the importance of motivation in literacy achievement, as students who believe in their ability to succeed are more likely to remain engaged with literacy tasks. However, motivation is not solely tied to self-efficacy; it is also driven by students' interest in the subject matter. When students are intrinsically motivated, they find reading and writing activities enjoyable and rewarding, which increases their likelihood of engaging deeply with literacy tasks (Owens & Valesky, 2015). In contrast, students who are not motivated may view literacy tasks as burdensome, leading to avoidance and disengagement, which negatively impacts their academic performance.

The relationship between interest, motivation, and literacy achievement is especially important in contexts like Wukari Education Zone, where educational outcomes are often affected by external challenges. As Aina and Olanipekun (2014) note, literacy skills are critical for success across all subjects in the Nigerian educational system, and students' interest and motivation can determine their success in acquiring these skills. Teachers and educational stakeholders must recognize the importance of creating learning environments that stimulate students' interest in reading and writing. By making literacy tasks more engaging and relevant to students' lives, it is possible to enhance their motivation and, consequently, their literacy achievement.

Statement of Problem

The ongoing decline in students' performance in English language, particularly in reading and writing, has raised concerns among stakeholders in education within Wukari Education Zone, Taraba State. This poor literacy achievement is evident in students' struggles with comprehension, poor expressions, and difficulties in mastering basic language skills, which significantly hinders their academic progress. The lack of interest and motivation has been identified as key factors contributing to this trend. When students are disinterested or unmotivated, they are less likely to engage with reading and writing tasks, leading to academic underperformance and a rising dropout rate. Despite the recognized importance of interest and motivation in fostering learning, these factors have not been adequately explored in relation to literacy skills. Thus, this study aims to investigate the impact of interest and motivation on students' literacy achievement in the Wukari Education Zone.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to;

i.   Determine the impact of interest in literacy on students' achievement in literary skills.

ii. Find out the impact of male students' interest in literacy on their achievement in literacy skills.

iii. Determine the impact female students' interest in literacy has on their achievement in literacy skills.

Research Questions

1. What is the impact of interest in literacy on students' achievement in literary skills?

2. What is the impact of male students' interest in literacy on their achievement in literacy skills?

3. What impact does female students' interest in literacy have on their achievement in literacy skills?

Hypothesis

i. Students' interest in literacy does not significantly impact their achievement in literacy skills.

ii. Male students' interest in literacy does not significantly impact their achievement in literacy skills.

iii. Female students' interest in literacy does not significantly impact their achievement in literacy skills.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will provide crucial insights for curriculum developers, guiding them in enhancing literacy programs in Nigeria. By understanding the pivotal role that self-efficacy plays in students' academic achievement, curriculum designers can create educational frameworks that prioritize boosting students' self-belief and confidence in their abilities. This approach is expected to lead to improved overall academic performance, fostering an environment where learners feel empowered to engage with literacy tasks effectively. Additionally, guidance counselors will benefit from the findings as they will be equipped with strategies to assist students facing challenges in acquiring literacy skills. By implementing methods that enhance self-efficacy, counselors can help students navigate difficulties, ultimately leading to improved academic outcomes. School administrators and principals will also find value in the evidence presented, as it will inform decisions regarding resource allocation, textbook selection, and teacher training. These insights will promote a supportive learning atmosphere that bolsters students' self-efficacy, thereby reducing dropout rates and enhancing literacy achievement.

Theoretical Framework

This study was anchored on Self-Efficacy theory. Self-Efficacy Theory (SET), developed by Albert Bandura in 1977, is rooted in Social Cognitive Theory and emphasizes the significance of self-efficacy beliefs in human motivation and behavior. According to Bandura (1995), self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capabilities to organize and execute actions necessary to manage prospective situations. This theory posits that individuals are more inclined to engage in tasks they believe they can successfully accomplish, while avoiding those they doubt their ability to perform.

SET identifies four major psychological processes - cognitive, motivational, affective, and selection - that influence performance outcomes. Cognitive processes encompass self-assessment of abilities, goal-setting, and developing scenarios for success and failure. Motivational processes highlight how self-efficacy beliefs affect self-regulation of motivation through attribution, expected outcomes, and clarity of goals. Affective processes involve self-perception of coping abilities, which impacts emotional responses to stress, such as anxiety. Finally, selection processes refer to how individuals make choices regarding their environment, career, and daily activities based on their perceived capabilities, leading to enhanced opportunities for goal achievement and personal development. Thus, SET provides a valuable framework for understanding how self-

efficacy beliefs can influence students' achievement in literacy skills because it has influence over students' ability to learn, their motivation and their performance, as students will often attempt to learn and perform only those tasks for which they believe they will be successful. Students who possess high self-efficacy are likely going to learn how to read and write with ease compared to students who possess low self-efficacy.

Methodology

This study adopted an ex-post facto design to investigate the influence of self-efficacy and interest on students' achievement in literacy skills. The ex-post facto design is deemed appropriate for this study because it seeks to explore the relationship between the independent variable (self-efficacy) and the dependent variable (students' achievement in literacy skills) without manipulating the variables. The population comprised 1,287 Basic 8 (Junior Secondary II) students from 30 public Universal Basic Education (UBE) schools in the Wukari education zone, with 598 males and 689 females. A sample size of 330 students (25.6% of the total population), including 150 males and 180 females, was selected using a multi-stage sampling technique. Stratified sampling was employed to categorize schools in the education zone, and simple random sampling was used to select classes.

Data Analysis

Data were collected using three adapted instruments:

Self-Efficacy Scale (SES): Adapted from Jerusalem and Schwarzer's original 10-item scale, modified to 20 items to suit students' understanding and context. The SES measured students' self-efficacy through a 4-point Likert scale.

Writing Achievement Test (WAT): Adapted from the Junior Secondary II Intensive English textbook, comprising five essay topics that assessed students' writing abilities in descriptive, narrative, and letter formats.

Reading Comprehension Achievement Test (RCAT): Adapted from the same textbook to evaluate students' reading comprehension skills.

Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer research question one and two while Regression analysis and independent t-test were used to test the null hypotheses one and three respectively at 0.05 level of significance.

Analysis and Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: What is the influence of self-efficacy on students' achievement in literacy skills?

Table 1: Regression Analysis of Influence of Self-efficacy on Students' Achievement in Literacy Skills

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.351[a]	.123	.120	.647
a. Predictors: (Constant), SES				

Table 1 shows the regression of influence of self-efficacy of students on their achievement in literacy skills. The table reveals a positive linear regression model of self-efficacy and students' achievement in literacy skills. The analysis implies that the correlation between self-efficacy rating and JSII students' achievement in literacy skills is 0.35 with a coefficient of determination of 0.12. This implies that 12.3 percent of students' achievement in literacy skills is accounted for by their self -efficacy in literacy.

Research Question 2: What is the difference in the mean achievement scores in literacy skills of students with low and high self-efficacy?

Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation of Achievement Scores of Low and High Self Efficacy Students in Literacy Skills

Level of Self Efficacy		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	Mean Difference
WAT	Low Self Efficacy	209	1.7402	.60994	.04219	0.74
	High Self Efficacy	111	2.4811	.56093	.05324	

Table 2 reveals means of 1.74 and 2.48 for low self-efficacy and high self-efficacy students respectively. The standard deviations are 0.61 and 0.56 respectively. The difference between the two means is 0.74 in favour of students of high self-efficacy. This implies that students who scored high in self-efficacy in literacy also scored high in their achievement in literacy skills.

Hypothesis 1: Students' efficacy belief does not significantly influence their achievement in literacy skills.

Table 3: Regression Analysis of Students' Self-Efficacy and their Achievement in Literacy Skills

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	18.660	1	18.660	44.572	.000[b]
	Residual	133.128	318	.419		
	Total	151.787	319			
a. Dependent Variable: WAT						
b. Predictors: (Constant), SES						

Table 3 reveals that $F(1, 318) = 44.57$; $p = 0.00 < 0.05$. The p-value is less than 0.05 level of significance; thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that there is significant influence of self-efficacy of students in literacy on their achievement in literacy skills. Also, it can be concluded that based on evidence from data analysis that students' self-efficacy in literacy has significant influence on their achievement in literacy skills.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference in the mean achievement scores in literacy skills of students with high and low self-efficacy belief.

Table 4: t-Test Analysis of Mean Difference between Achievement Scores of Students with Low and High Literacy Skills

Level of Self Efficacy		N	Mean	T	Df	Sig(2-tailed)
WAT	Low Self Efficacy	209	1.74	10.63	318	0.00
	High Self Efficacy	111	2.48			

Table 4 reveals that $t(318) = 10.63$, $p = 0.00 < 0.05$. Since p is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is therefore rejected. This implies that there is significant difference in mean achievement scores in literacy skills between students with low self-efficacy and those with high self-efficacy. Thus, it can be concluded that based on evidence from data analysis that the mean achievement scores in literacy skills of students differ significantly between those with low self-efficacy and those with high self-efficacy.

Discussion of Findings

Discussion of findings is based on the variables of the study as guided by the findings of the hypotheses.

Self-Efficacy and Academic Achievement in Literacy Skills

The findings of this study underscore the significant influence of self-efficacy on Junior Secondary School II (JS II) students' achievement in literacy skills. The rejection of the hypothesis stating that self-efficacy does not significantly influence literacy achievement indicates that students who believe in their capabilities tend to perform better academically. This aligns with the assertions of Redmond (2015) and Zimmerman (2000), who emphasized that self-efficacy is a critical motivator and predictor of students' learning and performance in classroom settings. Furthermore, the results corroborate previous research conducted by Mills, Pajares, and Herron (2006), highlighting self-efficacy as a robust predictor of academic success.

Also, Adelodun and Asiru (2015) asserted that academic self-efficacy had a positive relationship with performance in English discourse. Adeoye and Feyisetan (2015) established that self-concept and self-efficacy jointly and relatively contributed to academic achievement in English language. Pertinently, the study further revealed that self-efficacy is a crucial variable in learning and performance as supported by Adeoye and Emeke (2010).

Levels of Self-Efficacy and Academic Achievement in Literacy Skills

The findings of hypothesis 2 and research question 2 reveal that there is a significant difference between the achievement of students with low and high self-efficacy. This supports the earlier study of Nasiriyan, Azar, Noruzy and Dalvand (2011) who found that students with strong sense of self-efficacy tendency involve in challenging tasks, invest more effort and persistence and show excellent performance in comparison with students who lack such confidence. Yogurtcu's (2013) study also affirms that students who possess a high academic self-efficacy have a better school experience and accomplish more academically. Thus, fostering students' self-belief could potentially enhance their academic outcomes, particularly in literacy skills.

Conclusion

The study demonstrated a significant influence of self-efficacy on students' achievement in literacy skills, affirming that higher self-efficacy beliefs lead to improved performance. This relationship underscores the importance of fostering self-efficacy in students. The findings suggest that interventions aimed at enhancing self-efficacy, tailored to address gender differences, can be crucial in promoting better literacy outcomes. Overall, self-efficacy emerges as a vital factor in motivating students to engage with literacy tasks effectively.

Recommendations

The implication of the result of this study as it borders on self-efficacy and achievement in literacy skills are as follows:

i. **Implement Self-Efficacy Enhancement Programs**: Schools should develop and implement programs aimed at enhancing self-efficacy among students, particularly targeting those with low self-efficacy levels. These programs can include workshops, mentoring, and peer support groups that focus on building confidence in literacy skills through positive reinforcement, skill mastery, and goal-setting activities.

ii. **Regular Assessment and Feedback**: To monitor and enhance self-efficacy, educators should regularly assess students' literacy skills and provide constructive feedback. This practice helps students recognize their progress and capabilities, reinforcing their belief in their literacy abilities and motivating them to strive for higher achievements.

References

1. Adelodun, G.A. & Asiru, A.B. (2015). Academic self-efficacy and gender as determinants of performance in English discourse writing among high achieving students in Ibadan, Oyo State. *European Science Journal*, 11(28); 308 – 318.

2. Adeoye, H & Feyisetan, T. (2015). Influence of self-concept and self-efficacy on academic achievement in English Language among senior secondary school students in Oyo and Ogun States. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities Reviews* 5(2); 123-131.

3. Adeoye, H., & Emeke, E.A. (2010). Emotional intelligence and self-efficacy as determinants of academic achievement in English language among students in Oyo state senior secondary schools. *IFE Psychologia: An International* Journal, 18(1), 232-251. https://doi.org/10.4314/ifep.v18i1.51663

4. Bamidele, I.A., Haliso, Y. & Onuoha, U.D. (2016). Self-efficacy, reading, library use habits and academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria. *Ebonyi Journal of Library and Information Science*, 3(1); 3-23.

5. Bandura A. (1997). Self-efficacy: The exercise of Control. New York: W. H. Freeman and Company.

6. Bandura, A., & Adams, N. E. (1977), Analysis of self-efficacy theory of behavioural change.

7. *Cognitive Therapy and Research,* 1(4), 287 – 310.https://doi.org/10.1007/BF01663995

8. Chen, G., Gully, M. S. & Eden, D. (2004). General self-efficacy and self-esteem: Toward theoretical and empirical distinction between correlated self-evaluations. *Journal of Organizational Behavior,* 25(3); 375-395. Retrieved September 2018 from https://doi.org/10.1002/job.251.

9. Mills, N., Pajares, F. & Herron, C. (2007). Self-efficacy of college intermediate French students: Relation to achievement & motivation. *Language learning,* 57(3); 417 – 442.

10. Muodumogu C.A & Viashima I.M, (2019), reading and writing comics and senior secondary II students achievement in Grammar and reading comprehension in Gboko Local Government Area, Benue State, Nigeria. *Journal of PanAfrican Reading and Literacy Research,* 1(2), Pp. 15-27

11. Owens, R. & Valesky, T. (2015). Organizational Culture and Organizational Climate. In Organizational Behavior in Education: Leadership and School Reform (Eleventh ed., pp. 184-212). Upper Saddle River: Pearson Education.

12. Redmond, B. (2015). Self-efficacy and social cognitive theory. Retrieved July 2, 2019, from https://wikispaces.psu.edu/display/PSYCH484/7.

13. Yogurtcu, K. (2013). The impact of self-efficacy perception on reading comprehension on academic achievement. *Procdia-Social and Behavioral Sciences, 70*, 375-386.

14. Zimmerman, B.J. (2000). Self-efficacy: An essential motive to learn. Contemporary. *Educational Psychology, 25*, 82-91. Retrieved from doi: 10.1006/ceps.1999.1016