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Effects of Self-Concept and Attitude on Academic Achievement of Senior Secondary School Students in Economics in Mangu Local Government Area

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Abstract

The study examines the effect of self-concept and attitude on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in economics in Mangu Local Government Area, plateau state, Nigeria. The study adopted the simple random sampling technique. The total population of the study was 227 despondences drawn from government owned secondary schools in Mangu local government area of plateau state. Primary data were collected using structured questionnaire that were administered to a sample of 188 which were used for analyses. Four hypotheses were formulated and tested with the used of SSPS, were mean and standard deviation was used to analyze the research question while t test and ANCOVA was used to test the hypothesis at 0.05 level of significance. The result indicated that positive self-concept can have a significant impact on a student academics achievement, motivation and confidence. This implies that students who believes in their capabilities and have a positive self-concept are more likely to succeed and persevere through challenges. The study recommends among others that economics teachers and school administrators should always educate and oriented economics students on the need to have good concept or perceptions toward the course.

***Keywords**: Academic Performance, Attitude, Economics, Self-Concept.*

Introduction

Education plays a great role in the development of any economy which can never be over emphasized. Education helps in constructing, building and developing a nation's economy. Education has been the main priority of some previous Nigerian government, yet the education system is still facing great challenges in these modern times. The types of challenges are: poor funding, lack of infrastructures, poor parenting and guidance, lack of teaching aids, unstable curriculum and subject, unwillingness to study education in schools, lack of teachers' welfare, corruption, lack of responsibility and control, politicization of education, discipline. It is the wheel power and lubricant that keeps the train of human society moving, which makes human as the main component of the society to be able to cohabit, cooperate and co-exist with others in the human environment and to be useful to himself/herself and others in the society. Education liberates, elevates, integrates and equilibrates the nation's economy. Funding education has remained an issue over the years. It has been oscillating among complete private sector financing model, joint partnership financing model and sole-government financing model (Azi,2019). Regardless of whichever model in operation, the government plays a regulatory role through the Ministry of Education or its agencies. Despite all these laudable efforts, the academic achievement of students remains low at the secondary school level as reflected in the performance of students in the West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) results released from 2009 – 2022, which shows the percentages of students that passed with five credits including mathematics and English Language are 25.99 percent, 24.94 percent, 20.70 percent, 20.04 percent, 36.57 percent, 31.28 percent, 38.68 percent, 52.97 percent, 56.63 percent, 48.09 percent, 64.18 percent, 65.24 percent and 57.16 percent respectively, (Chief Examiners' Report, 2022). The results revealed the poor academic achievement of secondary school students that fall below the global standard of seventy.

Economics is Federal gave elective s.co.ng / nature/proficient instruction/nature/ Economics is an

optional subject in the senior secondary school level indicated by Nigeria's National Policy on Education.[1] It is applied for the higher secondary school education and deals with basic aspects of human behaviour but more towards resource allocation or decision making. According to the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (2018), such curriculum should prepare the pupils with appropriate knowledge and skills that will make them understand economic issues facing Nigeria as well as make them adapt easily to changes in the Nigeria economy. However, one of the important notes is that students have always done well in Economics. In the context of intermediate levels of achievement seldom exceeding a C grade, successive reports from the West African Examinations Council in1977 2006; 1999–2022 indicate low and less than consistent student performance. Common reasons are — incomplete syllabus coverage, lack of conceptual clarity, graphical representation of demand curve (demand curve) too weak, incorrect diagram construction and solving equations related to demand too difficult. Since this level Economics includes theory, stats and maths application mastery of fundamentals is necessary for improved academic performance.

However, academic success is dependent on a number of interdependent components and not subject content alone. Factors like students' IQ, school climate, teacher quality, instructional resources and learners' self-esteem and readiness to learn are all important. Interest is a crucial motivational influence in learning; it describes the interplay between the learner and the subject matter (Michelson, 2013). In this context, academic performance is something that has to do with teachers but also psychology in the way students develop self-concept and attitude; Since these two factors are crucial for successful student learning of economics.

Self-concept is a self-perception or how someone sees and regards themselves, including all perceptions of the totality of their beliefs about his own traits or abilities. It indicates how people evaluate themselves in relation to those aspects they deem vital for success (Hadley, Hair & Moore, 2018). Clark (2020) notes that self-concept is multidimensional, consisting of academic and non-academic domains. Academic self-concept is a general belief that one has about his or her ability in specific subject areas (e.g. Mathematics, English and Economics) while non-academic self-concept covers students' social, emotional and physical aspects. Such perceptions are formed in relation to the social context, mainly reflecting feedback and experiences from important others (family members, teachers or peers) (Cole et al., 2021). At a fundamental level, self-concept refers to how we think about ourselves and this thinking is shaped both by our experiences and by what others say about us. Self-concept is a key determinant of attitudes, feelings and awareness about themselves including capabilities, physical appearance and social acceptance that exists when the ideal self is a desired state for them to be ideally aligned with their actual self.

Attitude is a relatively stable organisation of beliefs, feelings and behaviours directed toward objects, people or events that are socially significant. These orientations are often learned from experience and may operate consciously or unconsciously. An attitude is made up of three interrelated components, an affective (feelings), a cognitive (beliefs or knowledge) and behavioural (actions or tendencies)[1] according to Syyeda 2016[2] Vaughan 2015. The practical implications from numerous studies also support that students' attitudes on a subject have a direct impact on how they use learning strategies and academic outcomes (Sankaran & Bui, 2017). Learning, albeit critical consideration in the process of education requires to go along with attitude, which hardly is a matter of discussion among many stakeholders of education. The value students ascribed to a subject or their interest in it positively impacts their level of engagement and achievement. Attitudes, according to the following statement of Mensah (2013), are feelings, beliefs and values that determine how one thinks, acts and reacts in an educational situation.

Self-concept: Since attitude is closely related to self-concept, its subtypes can be separated into academic and non-academic areas. Academic self-concept is the way in which a person views his or her abilities and skills in an educational setting, and non-academic self-concept includes perceptions of one as a social being, emotional well-being, and physical identity (Carus, 2013). Attitude itself can be defined as a learned tendency to respond positively or negatively toward an object place, person, or situation. These kinds of responses are characterized by relative psychological stability, thus resisting change. During this study, attitude is operationalized to represent students feelings towards Economics and problem-solving activities—for instance, whether they exhibit interest, enjoyment of the subject or anxiety. So statements like "I like Economics" or "Economics is boring" will then show the learners' attitudinal frame of reference for the subject.

Students with weak self-concept, negative attitude and unfavourable belief about Economics are prone to poor performance in academic especially following subjects that require quantitatives skills. Confounding evidence indicates that students have fallen into a steady decline in the levels of achievement, particularly for more quantitative parts of Economics at the secondary school level. This indicates that apart from mental capabilities, psychological variables like mindset and belief in self are key to learning outcomes. It follows that the challenge is to try to identify

what lies behind students attitude and how it can be improved by means of methods which build on confidence, interest and motivation in their respective disciplines. As such, teachers are critical to the process of influencing learners attitudes by providing environments that are supportive of learning and promoting engagement with positive subject attitudes.

As such, teaching strategies and student–teacher interactions should be systemized around developing not only cognition but also the emotional and behavioural aspects of learning. Teachers should use ways to create more positive image and improve self-concept), which can enhance interest towards Economics. In this context, the current study aims at investigating how students attitude and perceptions affect their academic performance in Economics selected secondary schools in Mangu Local Government Area. To explore aspects of self-concept which are focused on how students feel and experience personal identity, understand the role that belief-in-self plays in the academic performance of learners, and to investigate how these psychological variables can work together to affect student learning outcomes in Economics.

Statement of the Problem

The negative attitude of students toward Economics is widely recognized as significant predictor of poor performance in Economics. These types of attitudes classify as fear, anxiety and lack of confidence which in turn lead to a cataclysmic decline in passion, curiosity and effort on the part of learners. Many studies have recognized the crucial contribution of attitude to achievement but this variable has not been suitably addressed in education. Burstein (2017) indicates upon that student beliefs and attitudes represents a significant facet of "socio-cognitive learning" -- which you must address if the learner is to engage interest in the material with success. Since these psychological factors are not merely random, understanding them well is essential to examine how students vary in terms of performing in Economics.

The performance of students in Economics at the senior secondary school level in Nigeria has been consistently low over the years. Trend analysis released by the West African Examinations Council (2021) show inconsistencies in performance as the percentage of candidates securing credit passes between 2014 and 2020 varied. Even with minor progress in some years, the overall achievement is quite low compared to the number of candidates who take the exam. Key economic ideas among students have also been identified as one of the reasons highlighted in the WAEC Chief Examiners' Report (2021), which results in negative attitudes and student performance. This scenario highlights the need for interventions that are tailored to specific cognitive and affective aspects of learning in Economics.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to find out the effect of self-concept and attitude on the academic performance of senior secondary school students in economics in Mangu Local Government Area. The objectives of the study are:

1. To determine the perception of students about academic achievement in economics in secondary schools in Mangu LGA, Plateau State.
2. To examine the factors influencing Economics students' self-esteem towards academic achievement in secondary schools.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study:

1. What is the perception of secondary school Economics students towards academic achievement in Mangu L.G.A, Plateau State?
2. What are the factors influencing Economics students' self-esteem towards academic achievement?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. There is no difference in the perception of secondary school students toward Economics.
2. There is no difference in factors influencing secondary school students' attitudes towards Economics.

Literature review

The way students perceive themselves—often understood as self-concept or self-esteem—greatly influences the academic results they achieve. This is related to learners self-perceptions, indeed their beliefs, attitudes and emotional responses regarding their own ability or success. Positive self-perceptions influence students' motivation, confidence and persistence (in other words, their beliefs about their ability to succeed in a task), thus fuelling their motivations for academic success. On the other hand, perceptions of low self-efficacy can result in less effort and avoidance of difficult tasks. Behaviors like self-handicapping (where someone quotes aggressively low and their performance suffers to maintain a good set of mental organization) may offer short-term emotional shelter, but almost always lead to worse outcomes over the longer term (Gruman, 2016). And these behaviours can lead others to judge those individuals as less able, or simply undermotivated, validating a negative academic path further.

Not only students themselves make an impression on academic performance due to their self-perception but teachers too with so-called self-fulfilling prophecy. This happens at three stages, where a teacher forms either accurate or inaccurate expectations of student performance; those expectations shape their behaviour towards students; and the students respond in ways which confirm the original expectation of that child. Baboons set high bar and achieve it; low expectations, as in reading scores, hurt students. Consequently, to improve academic outcomes students may require not only the generation of positive self-concept but also a de-biasing of teacher perception. We must help people learn to set expectations that are realistic, supportive, and equitable in order to foster a successful learning environment for all students.

Social psychological constructs such as attribution and self-perception largely contribute to the way student–teacher relationships are facilitated in school settings. Fundamental attribution error, belief perseverance, and social categorization are situated sensory concepts that students internalize to tell the story of their wins and losses, affecting overall academic performance (Gruman; 2016) For example, self-serving bias encourages students to believe that success is because of their own ability but failure can be blamed on the teachers or environmental factors. These patterns stress doing your best to build friendly and supportive classrooms that reinforce positive learning behaviours. Research findings indicate that promoting a growth mindset, the belief that learners can improve their abilities instead of possessing fixed qualities, is positively associated with resilience, flexibility and persistence in academic challenges (Chen, 2022). This resilience is crucial in encouraging both academic achievement and general well-being.

The relationship between self-concepts of ability and academic achievement has not been determined consistently or with certainty. Similar studies like the one conducted by Baiduri (2022) which involved 151 Economics education students in University of Muhammadiyah Malang using descriptive statistics, correlation and ANOVA, found self-perception related to academic performance. Only a weak correlation between students self-image and their performance in the Economics paper was revealed by the findings. Inflation and Other Costs In addition, other half of pages the data had no differentiation between how self-perception varied by academic level (but achievement levels were be rather by semester). Due to self-perception these results show that while self-perception is involved, their actual part in academic performance might be marginal or mediated by other factors. Some research also suggests students perceptions may lead to negative achievements in Economics at the Secondary School level but, given limited and sometimes conflicting evidence on this issue (only at Secondary School level however), there is an ongoing need for research.

Though first introduced mainly by private candidates in the General Certificate of Education at both ordinary and advanced level, economics ultimately was much more widely taught to school candidates for formal examinations. It later became more established as an important subject with its relevance in dealing with social issues like poverty and unemployment. Before its official debut as an independent subject in Australian secondary schools, economic concepts were integrated with other disciplines such as geography, history, civics and current affairs. There has been significant growth in the number of schools offering Economics and students registering to study the subject since its official inclusion in WAEC school certificate examinations (Jacob & Sarafadeen, 2021). Nevertheless, its relevance in respect to commerce and industry is well-known but Economics education has been characterized by lack of sound instructional resources (Robert & Owan, 2019) and limited access to meaningful audio-visual materials that facilitate effective teaching.

Additionally, various pedagogical and learner factors have been associated with poor performance in Economics. The reasons for low achievements in the subject identified by (Adu & Galloway, 2015) include ineffective student–teacher interaction and limited student participation especially reluctance to ask question, poor self-perception, and overreliance on lecturing. Students have performed poorly overall in Economics and performance through 2021 − 2023 shows further decline, establishing a pressing need to better engage learners and improve the teaching of the subject.

Research Design

This is a quasi-experimental research designs that adopt non-equivalent control group design. This method also uses experimental and control groups, but it does not use random assignment to these groups. The researcher will not randomly assign participants to treatment and control, but will instead use existing groups such as intact classrooms, making the design useful in conditions that are difficult or unethical for randomization. This type of approach enables comparison of end results between groups without having to disrupt the normal classroom.

The design is conceptually represented below:

Group A 01 X 02

Group B 01 X 02

Where;

For this kind of study design, Group A will be the experimental group and Group B would serve as a control group. (O_1) = pre-test (X) = Treatment --- [nonrandomization] (O_2) = post test The groups are formed using intact classes, rather than random assignment, meaning they might not be equivalent before the study begins. Specifically, one public secondary school will be assigned to be the experimental group and another will be assigned to be a control group. The intervention effect will be measured on the experimental group using the pre-test and post-test. However, true experimental methods are impractical and modern ethics would disapprove of the use of true experimental methods in conducting educational or social science research, therefore a quasi-experimental non-equivalent control group design is most appropriate method to be applied.

Target PopulationThe target population for the study consisted of the two selected public secondary schools within the study area, being all 227 Senior Secondary School Two (SSS2) students. You are it suitable this group is because the students have already been brief on critical items of the Economics curriculum, well put together for test in preparing and are getting ready Senior School Certificate Examination (SSCE). Therefore, they are a suitable sample for analysing the effect of the intervention on Economics academic performance.

The research adopted Research Advisors (2006) to select the sample size of the respondents (see Appendix A4). based on this, the sample for this study will be made up of students offering economics in two public secondary schools in mangu local government area. 127 Government secondary school students Mangu, 100 Government secondary school students Mangu Halle. The students will be divided into two; experimental group and control group. The two public secondary school will be shared in to two, one public secondary school will be experimental group while another public secondary school will be the control group**.** One-stage cluster sampling techniques will be used for this study, cluster sampling is a means of obtaining a sample from a population by taking a simple random sampling of clusters, and observation is obtained from each of the sample clusters.

The researcher will use the Economics Achievement Test (EAT) and Economics Attitude Scale (EAS). The EAS will be used to measure students' attitudes in economics specifically quantitative economics, while the EAT will be used to measure the academic achievement of students in economics. The Economics Achievement Test (EAT): This instrument comprises of two sections, namely section A and B. The section A is the bio-data section made of items on school type, gender, age of students and class. Section B is made up of 30 multiple choice items in the Economics Achievement Test (EAT) with four multiple choice options from A, B, C and D for the students to respond appropriately. The items cover the following topics; basic tools for economics analysis, demand and supply theory, price determination, and production and cost theory market structure. The validity will be ascertained through the supervisors and some experts in test and measurement and economics, to critically determined whether the instrument measure the area it is supposed to measure and to determine it is worded properly to suit our culture and the need of the society.

Reliability of the qualitative and Quantitative Economics Attitude Scale (QQEAS). To ensure reliability of QQEAS, an interval of two weeks will be given for the retesting to of the instruments. The Cronbach Alpha method will be used to establish the reliability of the EAS instrument used in this study. The face-to-face or on-the-spot method will be used for the data collection for this study by the researcher. The method of data analysis based on the research question and hypotheses will be discussed in this sub-section. The scores from the pre-test and post-test will be subjected to statistical analysis using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 23.

Results

Research Question One

What is the perception of secondary schools' economics students towards academics' achievement in Mangu LGA? Table 2 shows responses on the pretest and posttest perception mean scores of secondary schools' economics students in the experimental and control groups in secondary schools Mangu LGA**Table 2**

Results of the pretest and posttest perception mean scores of the experimental and control group.

GROUP		N	X	SD	mean gain	X-Diff
Experimental	pretest	100	48.75	3.51		
	posttest	100	63.06	9.33	14.31	11.98
Control	pretest	88	50.00	4.78		
	posttest	88	51.08	3.911	1.08	

From the data analyzed in table 2, it shows that experimental group achieved a mean score of 48.75 (SD = 3.51) on pretest and mean score of 63.06 (SD =9.33) on posttest therefore by gain of means in favour to posttest is equals to [14 ·31]. The control group had a pretest mean score of 50.00 (SD = 4.78) and posttest mean score of 51.08 (SD = 3.91); here, the difference between the two means produced a smaller gain in knowledge as compared to intervention plus support students by ($M=1.08$). In addition, posttest scores comparison between the two groups showed a mean difference of 11.98 in favour of this experimental group. The results indicate that the intervention was effective in improving senior secondary school students attitude towards learning Economics than those who not receiving the treatment.

Hypothesis One

There is no difference in the pretest and posttest perception scores of the experimental and control group. Table 3 shows responses on the difference in the perception of pretest and posttest perception scores of the experimental and control group.

Table 3

Result of the ANCOVA analysis on pretest and posttest mean perception toward economics mean scores between the experimental group and the control group

Sources	Type ii sums of squares	Df	Mean sum of square	F	Sig.	Partial
Corrected model	4685.2971	2	2342.648	47.572	0.000	0.508
Intercept	2846.129	1	2846.129	57.796	0.000	0.386
Pre interest	52.029	1	52.029	1.057	0.307	0.011
Group	4391.850	1	4391.850	89.185	0.000	0.492
Error	4530.451	92	49.244			
Total	3040008.00	95				
Corrected total	9215.747	94				

R squared= 0.508 (adjusted R square =498)

The ANCOVA was carried out to look for a significant difference between the mean posttest scores in interest in Economics of senior secondary school students who were exposed to the experimental and control groups. The findings in Table 7 showed a statistically significant effect, F (1,92) = 89.185, p <0.05 and η^2=0.492 indicating large effect size (49.2%). The p-value (0.000) < α = 0.05 level of significance indicates that the null hypothesis, which mentions no difference and states that there is an improvement in pretest and posttest perception scores of the two groups was rejected at P value test (p < 0.05). This signifies that the students can see or feel a great adverse difference between Experimental group and control group with respect to Economics. In addition, the adjusted R^2 value of 0.498 indicates that about 49.8% of the variation in students' perception was explained by the treatment, with the remaining variance attributed to other omitted variable bias. The difference of means between groups (i–j = 11.98) provided additional evidence that the treatment was successful in positively impacting students' attitudes toward Economics.

Research Question Two

What are the factors influencing Economics students' self-esteem towards academic achievement? Table 4 shows responses on the factors affecting self-esteem toward academic achievement.

Table 4

Factors affecting self-esteem toward academic achievement in economics in Mangu LGA

s/n	Items	M	SD	Decision
1	Students motivation affect their self-esteem in economics	3.12	0.93	Accept
2	Student background is also a factor that affect student self esteem	3.23	0.84	Accept
3	Teachers attitude is a determining factor in student self esteem	3.01	0.99	Accept
4	Environmental factors affect student self-esteem	3.89	0.67	Accept
5	Peer group influence affect student self esteem	3.32	0.75	Accept
	Grand mean	3.31		

Data in Table 4 indicated that the sampled respondents agreed in all items. The corresponding mean of the agreed items are 3.12, 3.23, 3.01, 3.89 and 3.32 respectively. With standard deviation of 0.93, 0.84, 0.99, 0.69 and 0.75. The study has the grand mean of 3.31 which shows that the respondents accept items in research question two which showed that student's self-esteem affects their academic achievement in economics in Mangu LGA.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference between factors influencing students' self-esteem and their achievement in economics. Table 5 shows responses on the Significant difference between attitude and student achievement test

Table 5

Result on t test analysis on the relationship between student self-esteem and achievement in economics

Control	N	Mean	SD	P value	DF	Alpha	tcrit	Decision
Self esteem	50	30.40	11.27	3.04	87	0.05	1.99	Reject
Achievement	50	38.90	16.22					

The result of the t test analysis from Table 5 reveals that self believe has the mean scores of X= 70.40, SD= 15.04 while student achievement had 70.95, SD= 10.84. the result indicted that t(6.3)=6.05, p>0.05. the p value of 0.135 is higher than the significant difference interest mean scores of self believe and achievement of secondary school students. Hence it can be concluded that student self -esteem does affect student achievement

Discussion

Research questions one which sought to find out the perception of secondary school student in economics. The result of the study findings reveals that after the administration of treatment there was improvement in senior secondary school student's perception in leaning economics more than the control group. Hypothesis one which sought to find out whether there is significant difference in the pretest posttest scores of the experimental group and control group on their perception toward economics. the study finds out that the treatment given to the experimental group was effective in shaping their perception toward economics than the control group. The findings of the study are in consonance with Amadi (2015) who reported that students that were expose to motivation develops positive perception toward economics than those not exposed to motivation. The implication of the findings is that the motivation has the potentials to improves student's perception in economics. Adedeji and Aderiti (2020) who reported a significant different in the achievement of students that were exposed to treatment of self-esteem and perception than those that were not. The implication is that self-perception treatment has a significant effect on student achievement in economics.

Research question two studied if self-esteem influence students academic achievement in Economics, and the result indicates that self esteem significantly influenced students performance in Mangu Local Government Area. It followed, therefore, that the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between factors affecting students' self-esteem and their performance in Economics must be rejected. The findings confirm what we thought: Students with high self-esteem tend to ace in academic challenges, as they are more confident, motivated, and persistent in the face of learning tasks. This finding agrees with the position of Gruman (2016) who argued that positive self-beliefs promote higher academic performance while negative self-perceptions interfere with learning by undermining confidence and motivation. Behaviours such as self-handicapping—deliberately doing things to make it harder to perform and thus provide an excuse for poor performance—highlight how low self-esteem can be detrimental.

Conclusion

The study highlights that students for better academic performance, motivation and confidence take positive self-perception. Students who have a strong sense of efficacy and view themselves positively are more likely to succeed academically and recover from adversity. On the other hand, negative self-concepts lead to decreased motivation and self-efficacy alongside poor achievement so creating positive self-beliefs amongst learners is Thomas et. al (2005).

The study revealed that students 'achievement is affected by different factors such as learners' abilities attitudes, perception, and self- beliefs. this implies that students' perception and attitudes plays a significant role in students' academic achievement, thus the importance of this study. The implication of the findings is that the motivation has the potentials to improves student's perception in economics.

Recommendations

1. Economics teachers and school administrators should always educate and oriented economics students on the need to have good perception

toward the course. This will go a way to boost their perception toward economics

2. Economics teachers need to educate economics students on ways to improve their self-esteem.
3. Students must be educated on the need to have positive self-concept about themselves and economics. This will improve their academic achievement in economics.

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