

ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT AS CORRELATE OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF STUDENTS WITH AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOURS IN IMO STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated Academic Engagement and academic achievement of students with aggressive behaviour in Owerri Education Zone of Imo State. The study was guided by two research questions and one null hypothesis. The population of the study consisted of 548 students of SS2 who manifested aggressive behaviours. A correlational research design was adapted. Data collection was done using Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire [BPAQ], and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale [UWES] –student version. BPAQ had Cronbach Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.86..while UWES had reliability coefficient of 0.88. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer Research Questions 1 and 2, while test of significance of correlation was used to test H_{01} at 0.05 level of significance .The findings indicated that there is weak and positive relationship between academic engagement and academic achievement of students with aggressive behaviour. Academic engagement accounted for 0.14% of the variance observed in academic achievement of students with aggressive behaviour. Based on the findings and implications, it was recommended that teachers and parents should utilize the knowledge about academic engagement to increase students' academic achievement. There should be continuous public enlightenment campaign on the importance of academic engagement. Also there is need to help secondary school students overcome every problem associated with academic engagement.

Keywords: Academic Engagement, Academic Achievement, Aggressive Behaviour

Introduction

In the history of education, one of the major reasons why students go to school is to learn or acquire knowledge. This is done by diligently carrying out all academic activities expected of such students. These activities include going to school/classes, listening attentively to teachers, asking questions in the class to get clearer understanding, doing all homework/assignment given to such students, writing test/examination as a way of evaluating such

students. Meaningful participation of students in the above activities is referred to as academic engagement. Academic engagement is a topic with great appeal because of its demonstrated positive relationship to a number of academic outcomes: grades, mastery of material and overcoming impediments

The concept of academic engagement is often discussed within a broader context of overall student engagement and is understood in terms of students' involvement in educational activities that support learning (Adeyomo, 2001). It is a multidimensional construct that is gaining increasing attention in education as a means of promoting positive academic and social behaviour outcomes for diverse learners across all levels of education. Academic engagement is an indicator that combined academic identification (which refers to getting along with teachers, having an interest in the subject matter, and related behaviours and attitude) and academic participation (which captures the student's work effort both inside and outside of school, including hours spent on homework, meeting deadlines, not skipping classes and so on).

Academic achievement is accomplishment and achievement of education through higher learning principles. Steinmayr, MeiBner, Weidinger and Wirthwein (2015) defined academic achievement as 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. Considering the fact that the field of academic achievement is very wide-ranging and covers a broad variety of educational outcomes, the definition of academic achievement depends on the indicators used to measure it. Among the many criteria that indicate academic achievement, there are very general indicators such as procedural and declarative knowledge acquired in an educational achievement test, and cumulative indicators of academic achievement such as educational degrees and certificates. All criteria have in common that they represent intellectual endeavours and thus, more or less mirror the intellectual capacity of a person (Steinmayr *et al.* 2015).

In many schools and even in Imo state, students that have aggressive behaviours are not likely engaged in their studies. This is because they engage in fighting their colleagues, bully their fellow students, show hostility to other students and loiter around the school when classes are going on. Most of them avoid classes and doing of class assignments; other students avoid making friends with them. This, in turn, reflects on their esteem, engagement in their studies and ultimately in their academic achievement. Some of them look withdrawn, move in groups or form clicks and become very vulnerable in

joining cult groups. This is likely going to impact on their self-esteem, academic engagement and achievement negatively. This may now compound their problems and lead to more behavioural challenges, violence, disengagement from their studies, and ultimately lead to indulgence in examination malpractices. The school on its own try to correct these students by either giving corporal punishment, suspension, or outright expulsion from the school, but of recent, aggressive behaviour among students seems to be a matter of great concern among researchers as reports show that the occurrence is on the increase.

Aggression such as bullying and violence are pervasive problems in schools that affect a lot of students. In recent times, aggression has become a bigger crisis with vicious consequences. This is evident in the fact that several properties are destroyed and in some cases lives are lost in instances of aggression in secondary schools. Some aggressive students join cult groups and so convert the time of their studies to making secret meetings, strategizing on attack on fellow students. Students involved in aggressive behaviour seem to be often distracted from their studies. The time they should use to read is expended in loitering outside school. Those involved in bullying usually plan how to extort and forcefully take some things away from their fellow students. This scenario is a contradiction to the assertion that schools have always remained one of the safest places next to home. It seems to be the other way round in the present society.

In recent times, it is observed with dismay that in many secondary schools, students are running to 'miracle centers' to register and write their external examinations. They prefer obtaining certificates with high scores which they cannot defend. Such students are not in active engagement with their studies. In some schools they are ready to attack supervisors and teachers who will not allow them to copy and cheat during examinations. They prefer teachers and supervisors who will aid them to cheat in examination hall. The researcher is worried about this trend and therefore interested in finding out the relationship existing between academic engagement and academic achievement of students with aggressive behaviours in Owerri Education Zone, Imo State.

Some research work like Ojukwu (2017) gave support to the researchers' worry by saying that insecurity of school environment significantly affects the academic performance of secondary school students. Ojukwu defined school environment as all human and material resources available in the school in which a child can see, hear, touch, smell, taste, feel and respond to. She came out with the following findings and said that the performance of Imo State Secondary School students in external examinations

such as the Senior Secondary School Certificate conducted by the West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) appears to be poor, failing to meet the minimum learning requirements of acquiring basic skills and competence. Poor academic achievement seems to be the order of the day as reflected in the students' examinations. For example, the SSCE'S result for 2012, 2013 and 2014 reveals that only 25.99%, 29.27% and 31.28% respectively of the candidates who sat for the examinations obtained five credits including Mathematics and English language which are required for admission into the Nigerian Universities. These evidences strengthened the worry of the researcher to embark on this study and find out how academic engagement and self esteem correlate with academic achievement of students with aggressive behaviours.

Method

This study adapted a correlational survey design. It was carried out in Owerri Education Zone 1 of Imo State, Nigeria. The population of this study consisted of 548 senior secondary two students (SS2) drawn from 70 government-owned secondary schools in Owerri Education Zone 1 in Imo State that showed one form of aggressive behaviour or the other Owerri Education Zone 1 has 70 public secondary Schools and is fairly large with five local government areas. In this study, the sample size is the same with the population as all the 548 SS2 students who manifested aggressive behaviours were used. Simple random sampling technique was used to select the schools. Twenty-seven schools were sampled from seventy government-owned secondary schools in the five local government areas that make up Owerri Zone. Data collection was done using Buss Perry Aggression Questionnaire BPAQ and Utrecht Work Engagement Scale- UWES. The questionnaires had 0.86 and 0.88 respectively. Data collected was analyzed using Pearson product moment correlation and test of coefficient of relation.

Result

Table 1: Summary of the Correlation Coefficient between Academic Engagement and Academic Achievement of Students with Aggressive Behaviours.

Variables	N	r	Remark
Academic engagement	548	0.038	Weak positive relationship
Academic achievement	548		

Table 1 shows the summary of the correlation coefficient between academic engagement and academic achievement of students with aggressive behaviours. The result revealed that academic engagement related positively but weakly with students' academic achievement.

Table 2 Percentage of variation in Academic Achievement Accounted for by Academic Engagement..

Variables	N	r²	% Contribution
Academic engagement	0.038	0.001444	0.14

Table 2 presents a percentage variation in Academic achievement accounted for by academic engagement. The result shows that students' academic engagement accounted for 0.14% of the variance observed in academic achievement of students with aggressive behaviours.

Table 3: Test of Significance of Relationship between Academic Engagement and Academic Achievement of Students with Aggressive Behaviours.

Variable	N	R	Sig.	Remark
Academic Engagement Academic Achievement	548	0.038	0.374	Not significant

Table 3 shows that the statement of hypothesis 1 is accepted; implying that there is no significant relationship between academic engagement and academic achievement of students with aggressive behaviours. This is because the p-value (Sig. = 0.374) is greater than the 0.05 level of significance.

Discussion

Findings of the study revealed that academic engagement related weakly but positively with students' academic achievement. There is weak and positive relationship between academic engagement and academic achievement of students with aggressive behaviours. T Onyishihere is no significant relationship between academic engagement and academic achievement of students with aggressive behaviours. This result agreed with the findings of Ugwu, Onyishi, and Tyoyima (2013) which showed that academic outcome was positively related with academic engagement . However, the relationship is positive but weak. It also agrees with Shaari, Yusoff, Ghazali, Osman & Dzahir (2014) and Sbroco (2009) who found a positive relationship between academic engagement and academic achievement of students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study it was concluded that academic engagement related positively but weakly to academic achievement. This showed that aggressive students' academic achievement will increase as academic engagement increases but in an insignificant level.

Recommendations

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

1. There is need to help secondary school students overcome every problem associated with academic engagement . Such help and effort, by school guidance counselors, school authorities, parents and teachers, will go a long way to increasing students' academic achievement and at the same time help students to reduce the stress caused by aggressive behaviour. .
2. There should be continuous public enlightenment campaign by schools and educational authorities on the importance of academic engagement . This enlightenment campaign should be carried out at the national, state and local government levels.
3. Students should be made to realize that aggressive behaviours should be avoided because it leads to destruction, regret and frustration.

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