

PEER PRESSURE, SELF-CONCEPT AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS PREDICTORS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN NORTH CENTRAL ZONE OF NIGERIA

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Abstract

The research design for this study is descriptive survey using correlational study type. The study covered all secondary schools in the North central geo-political zone of Nigeria. The sample size for the study composed of 1,500 SS2 students, drawn from an intact class of a randomly selected 50 secondary schools in North-Central Education Zone. Peer Pressure Inventory (PPI); Adolescent Personal Data Inventory; International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) and English Language Achievement Test were used in data collection. Percentage were used to answer the research questions, while Multiple Regression statistics methods were used to test the stated hypothesis for predicting the variables. Findings show that peer pressure, self-concept and emotional intelligence all positively and significantly predicted English language performance among SS2 students of North Central geo-political zone. It was also found that the majority of the secondary school students sampled pass the academic achievement test. From the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that in the Nigerian schools' environment, the issue of peer pressure, emotional intelligence and academic achievement is still controversial amongst scholars in educational research. It is recommended that educational psychologists as main stakeholders in the education industry, be alive to the interwoven relationship among self-concept, peer-pressure, emotional intelligence and academic achievement. Also, a similar study should be carried out in other geo-political zone to see if similar results will be obtained.

Key words: Peer pressure, self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic achievement

Introduction

Education is a very important aspect of human endeavour. It plays a major role in every child's life. It aims at making every individual in a society a significant member. Education is a means through which people develop their physical, emotional, intellectual, moral, and social competencies. The overall growth and development of a nation is largely determined by the level of educational attainment of its populace. Most developed nations in the world today are nations who paid special attention to the education of their citizens. Education helps individuals to gain knowledge and understanding of various aspects of life and to be able to relate the knowledge added to daily lives. Educational processes centre on teaching and learning. Learning literally means acquisition of knowledge and skills involving teaching and learning which is a major aspect of education and schools are responsible for the teaching and learning process. Psychologically, learning means a relatively permanent change in behaviour as a result of past experience.

Education in a broadest sense is seen as a life-long process, which transforms the life of an individual from that of a helpless and dependent creature to a self-reliant, rational and skilful person who can contribute efficiently to the development of his society. The National Policy on Education (2013) has one of the objectives of education as geared towards self-realization, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness, and national unity as well as towards social, cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological emancipation. Changes most often are

effected through the educational system of the nation through various reform programmes and curriculum development. It is a fact that education is the vehicle for effecting any social change. Education is said to be a polyvalent agent for the transmission of appropriate values, norms, ideals and skills from generation to generation. Azikwe (2007) noted that education is also the most powerful instrument for developing and empowering members of the society to compete for survival.

Peer pressure is the influence a peer group or an observer exerts to change the attitudes, values or behaviours of an individual in order to conform to the group norms (Treynor, 2009). Peer pressure is the influence of a social group over an individual. Peer Pressure are of two types, Positive and Negative Peer Presse. Positive peer pressure is therefore, an essential means of success; and it plays a basic part as an instigator to succeeding. As the world problems multiply, the need for positive peer pressure becomes more pressing and apparent. Students can be part of, or influenced by multiple peer groups at the same time (Sallee, 2007). However, students might simultaneously feel pushed to achieve success through a group of peers in a class but receive clues from their bosom friends that academic achievement is not to be necessarily valued. Students' success is also shaped by their position among peer groups and various social networks. For instance, some students belong to peer-groups that have access to fewer resources for the college-going process. Santor, Santor, et. al., (2000) opined that negative peer pressure leads to a decrease in academic achievement

through the mediation of self-system processes involving low perceived relatedness and low perceived academic competence.

Closely related to the variable of peer pressure in the academic achievement of secondary school students, particularly in this study, is self-concept. Self-concept is broadly defined as the image of perceptions that students hold about themselves (Onawola, 2011). Self-concept can also be defined as the totality of a complex, organized and dynamic system of learners' beliefs, attitudes and opinions that each person holds about his or her personal existence. It includes attitudes, feelings and knowledge about abilities, skills, appearances and social acceptability (Boulter, 2002). Self-concept is therefore, an important variable in education, since it links student's motivation, achievement confidence and psychological wellbeing (Hay, 2005). Also, Kayode (2000) reported that self-determined academic motivation is a key mediator between academic self-concept and academic achievement. Self-concept is associated with students' grades and achievement scores. Positive academic self-concept is shown by high academic self-concept score; while negative self-concept is shown by low academic self-concept score.

The relationship between self-concept and academic achievement is supported by researches, such as Rouse and Cashin (2000); Worrel (2007) whose finding supports the view that self-concept influences academic achievement differently, depending on race or culture. Emotional intelligence is closely related to peer-group pressure and self-

concept. Uzma and Tajama, (2004) opined that the concept of emotional intelligence brings new depth to the understanding of human intelligence; it expands our ability to evaluate one's general or overall intelligence. Like cognitive intelligence, emotional intelligence is difficult to define. The Institute for Health and Human Potential (2008) defined emotional intelligence (EI) as an ability or capacity to perceive, assess, and manage the emotions of one self, and of others. Emotional intelligence can be defined as the intellectual processes involving in the recognition, understanding, use, and management of one's own and others' emotional states to solve problems and regulate behaviour (Salovey & Mayer, 2002).

Furthermore, Onawola (2011) viewed EI as ability or competence which is distinguishable from being rooted in personality attributes. Emotional intelligence from this tradition refers to an individuals' ability to reason about emotions and to process emotional information in order to improve cognitive processes. So, it is a learned activity or behaviour, and not a personality attribute. Mayer and Salovey (2002) defined emotional intelligence as the ability to monitor one's and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide ones thinking and actions. Broadly speaking, emotional intelligence addresses the emotional, personal, social and survival dimensions of intelligence, which are often more important for daily functioning than the traditional cognitive aspects of intelligence. Emotional intelligence is concerned with understanding yourself and others, relating to people, adapting to and coping with the

immediate surroundings so as to deal successfully with environmental demands.

The researcher examined the prediction of peer pressure, self-concept and emotional intelligence with academic performance in English Language of Secondary school students in North Central Nigeria. This is due to the fact that English Language is a requirement for further studies at all levels. Since English language is our lingua Franca and the bedrock of other subjects or courses, no student can perform excellently in other courses or subjects without understanding its rudiments and prompt usage. Hence, effective teaching and learning as well as better performances in all ramifications lies on our understanding of this language. The importance of English language on educational attainment can never be over emphasized. English language has been the language of instruction in Nigerian schools till today; students who are deficiency in it might find it very tough to cut across academically. When Students' Performances in English Language is encouraging, it definitely influences and improves the academic performance of such students in all ramifications. Nevertheless, when English Language is lacking in any academic setting, it will definitely lower the academic performance of such students. English language is one of the factors contributing to poor performance of students in other subjects. English Language, in no doubt, has positive impact on academic performance of students in other fields. Although several studies have been conducted in Nigeria and other nations, peer pressure, self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic achievement remain of important area in

research because of the low level of research using these variables together in Nigeria.

Academic achievement has become an index of a child's future in this highly competitive world. It is one of the most important goals of the educational process, a major goal which every individual aspires to attain. The decline in the academic achievement of secondary school students in Nigeria has been a major source of concern to stakeholders and policy makers in the education sector (Nwadinigwe, 2012). Measures taken by the government at various levels to eliminate this problem and improve the academic achievement of students have focused more on improving infrastructure, equipping the schools and providing qualified teachers; steps which may not have produced the desired results. Learners achievement have been empirically found to be low over the years and this trend has been attributed to many factors including inadequate facilities, teachers' and learners' poor attitudes towards the subject as well as inappropriate teaching strategies (Adepoju & Oluchukwu, 2011).

As a result, researchers have been forced to shift attention to identifying both internal and external factors that may be responsible for secondary schools' students' achievement in English language. It is on this basis that this study was conducted in North central zone of Nigeria using the variables of peer pressure, self-concept and emotional intelligence as predictor of academic achievement of secondary school students in English language. This study is therefore concerned with these variables as a complimentary study to the existing knowledge and at amply justifiable.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study was to examine peer pressure, self-concept and emotional intelligence as predictors of secondary school students' achievement in English Language in North Central zone of Nigeria. Specifically, this study examined:

- i. The general level of secondary school students' peer pressure, self-concept, emotional intelligence and level of students' achievement in English language in North Central zone of Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following questions have been raised in line with the research purpose:

- i. What is the general level of peer pressure, Self-concept and emotional intelligence of secondary school students' achievement in English language in the North-Central zone, Nigeria?
- ii. Will peer pressure, self-concept and emotional intelligence predict secondary school students' achievement in English Language in North Central zone of Nigeria?

Research Hypotheses

H₀₁: Peer pressure, self-concept and emotional intelligence will not significantly predict secondary school students' achievement in English Language in North Central zone of Nigeria.

Method and Materials

The research design for this study is descriptive survey using correlational study

type. The correlational method was used for this study because it will enable the researcher to interpret accurately the variables and their inter-relationships. The study covered all secondary schools in the North central geo-political zone of Nigeria. There is a total population of 1,232,367 secondary school students. The target population of the study consisted of all the 985,230 senior secondary school II students in North-Central Education zone, Nigeria. The sample size for the study composed of 1,500 SS2 students, drawn from an intact class of a randomly selected 50 secondary schools in North-Central Education Zone. These figures represented 2.5% of total population of SSS II students in the zone.

Instruments for data collection were: Peer Pressure Inventory (PPI) developed by Santor, Messervey and Kusumaker (2000) to measure peer pressure, The adolescent Personal Data Inventory developed by Akinboye and validated in (1985) to measure general self perception, and The adopted International Personality Item Pool (IPIP) scale developed by Barchard (2003) measuring seven components potentially related to emotional intelligence to measure students' emotional intelligence.

In order to measure academic achievement of the students, practicing graduate English Language teachers from different secondary schools were engaged in generating test items for the achievement test. Each of them constructed twenty-five (25) objectives test on different set of topics in English language for the Senior Secondary School II class based on the topic covered. The researcher then pooled the items and drafted twenty-five

questions from them. Percentage was used to answer the research questions, while Multiple Regression statistics methods were used.

Answering of Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the general level of the peer-pressure, self-concept, emotional intelligence and academics

achievement of Secondary School Students involved in the study?

In order to answer this research question, respondents' responses on the peer pressure, self-concept, and emotional intelligence questionnaire and achievement test were collated. The summary of the results are as shown in table 2.

Table 2: Level of Peer-Pressure, Self-Concept, Emotional Intelligence and Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in North Central Zone, Nigeria

Variable	Score Range	Frequency	Percentage	Mean Score
Peer-Pressure				
Positive	87-150	1,455	97.0	88.32
Negative	60-85	45	3.0	
Total		1,500	100.0	
Self-concept				
Positive	91-150	1,445	96.0	91.02
Negative	60-90	55	4.0	
Total		1,500	100.0	
Emotional Intelligence				
High	201-340	1,475	98.4	201.38
Low	68-200	25	1.6	
Total		1,500	100.0	
Academic Achievement				
Passed	40-100	1,316	87.7	93.65
Failed	0-39	184	12.3	
Total		1,500	100.0	

Results in Table 2 revealed that, out of the 1500 students that participated in the study, 1,455 representing (97.0%) had positive peer-pressure with the mean score of 88.32, while 45 representing (3.0%) had negative peer-pressure. This means that the total points scored by 1,455 respondents were above the mean score while the total points obtained by the remaining 45 (3%) respondents were below the mean score. This implies that the peer pressure among secondary school students in North-Central,

Nigeria was classified as positive peer pressure which is normal for the students to survive in the school environment. Also, from Table 2, out of the 1,500 students that participated in the study, 1,445 representing (96.0%) had positive self-concept with the mean score of 91.02, while 55 representing (4.0%) had negative self-concept. This means that the total points scored by 1,445 respondents were above the mean score while the total points obtained by the remaining 55 (4%) respondents were below

the mean score. This implies that, the self-concept among secondary school students in North-Central, Nigeria was classified as positive self-concept which is normal for the students to survive in the school environment.

From Table 2, out of the 1500 secondary school students that participated in the study, 1475 representing (98.4%) had high level of emotional intelligence with the mean score of 201.38, while 25 representing (1.6%) had low level emotional intelligence. This means that the total points scored by 1,475 respondents were above the mean score, while the total points obtained by the remaining 25 (1.6%) respondents were below the mean score. This implies that, the emotional intelligence among the secondary school students in North-Central, Nigeria was classified as high emotional intelligence which is normal for the students to survive in the school environment. Also, from Table 2, out of the 1,500 secondary school students that participated in the study, the result

indicated that 1,316 representing 87.7% of the secondary school students in North Central, Nigeria passed the academic achievement test with the mean score of 63.65, while 184 representing 12.3% failed the academic achievement test. This shows that the majority of the secondary school students sampled pass the academic achievement test.

Hypotheses Testing

H0: Peer pressure, self-concept and emotional intelligence will not significantly predict secondary school students' achievement in English Language in North Central zone of Nigeria

Table 3a: Summary of the Multiple Regression Analysis

Dependent variable = English
Multiple R = 0.076
R Square = 0.006
 Adjusted R Square = 0.004
 Standard error of the estimate = 21.321

Table 3b: Results of Regression Analysis Relationship Among Independent and Dependent Variables

Analysis of variance	Df	Sum of squares	Mean Square	Cal. F	Sig.	Decision
Regression	3	3942.80	1314.27	2.89*	0.03	Rejected
Residual	1496	680060.15	454.59			
Total	1499	684002.95				

Results in Table 3b show that results of multiple regression yielded a multiple correlation of $R = 0.076$ representing 7% conservative estimate of the variables explained and F ratio of 2.891 significant at 0.05 level. The results of the analysis of variance of the model, as contained in Table

3b, revealed F ratio of 2.891, degree of freedom (df) of 3, 1499, $p < 0.034$, which is lower than $p < 0.05$ set for the study, thus indicating a statistically significant relationship exist. The results, therefore, revealed that the three independent variables are significantly related to the dependent

variables. While the research hypothesis was restated as peer pressure, self-concept and emotional intelligence significantly predict secondary school students' achievement in English Language in North Central zone of Nigeria. Clearly the subjective independent variable predicted the subjective measure of

the respondents' achievement in English. The researcher further examined the unstandardized regression with (B), standard regression weight (Beta) and Error of Estimate STD error B, T scores and significant indices of the variables as shown below in Table 4

Table 4: Results of Regression Coefficients for Independent (Peer-Pressure, Self-Concept and Emotional Intelligence) and Dependent Variables (Academic Achievement)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	76.296	8.665		8.805	.000
Peer-Pressure	.078	.051	.040	1.539	.124
Self-Concept	.123	.051	.063	2.422	.016
Emotional Intelligence	.004	.030	.003	.129	.897

a. Dependent Variable: English Language Achievement

The Unstandardized regression weights range from 0.004 to 0.123, and the Standardized regression weights range from 0.003 to 0.063. The standard error ranges from 0.030 to 0.051 with T scores ranging from 0.129 to 2.422, which are not significant, Peer pressure: .124, and emotional intelligence: .897. The score of 2.422 is significant at .01. Meaning the beta of self-concept predicted student's academic achievement in English language.

Discussion of the Findings

The results revealed that peer pressure had mean score of 88.32 which indicated that the students involved in the study had above average mean score. A total of 1,295 participants indicated that they score above average on self-concept with the mean score of 91.02. On the variable of emotional intelligence, the mean score of 201 was obtained. The participants made up of 1,453 scored above average on emotional

intelligence. The general trend was that the students involved in the study had above average mean score in peer pressure (88.32); self-concept (91.02) and Emotional intelligence (201.38). Concerning academic achievement, the senior secondary school students had a mean score of 63.65 which is above average. The total of 1,316 participants had above 50% passed while 184 made up of 12.3% failed because they had below the 40% bench mark or cut off point that was used to categorize the failing or passing participants. From the above statistics, the students involved in the study can be adjourned as generally above average students in performance on English language as a major subject.

The second finding that is, the joint predictors of the variables indicated low significant predictors of peer pressure, self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic achievement of the students

involved in the study. If, therefore, peer pressure, self-concept and emotional intelligence predicted academic achievement, and the majority of the students indicated above average of these qualities; (i.e. peer pressure, self-concept and emotional intelligence) high academic performance might not have been a surprise in this instance.

Concerning the other independent variables of peer pressure, and emotional intelligence, they cannot be jettisoned because scholars such as Iheanacho (2002); Mitchell, Oley and McGraw (2006); Punithavathi (2011) had reported high and significant relationship of peer pressure, emotional intelligence and academic performance. However, there are other researchers such as Yahaya, Ramli, Boon, Ghaffar and Zakariya (2009) that had reported significant high predicted value of these variables with peer pressure, self-concept and emotional intelligence.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Having discussed the findings of the study, the researcher concluded that in the Nigerian schools' environment, the issue of peer pressure, emotional intelligence and academic achievement is still controversial amongst scholars in Educational research. That is, self-concept might be an important variable in the students' academic performance in English Language.

Based on the findings of the study and their educational implications already highlighted, it is hereby recommended that education stakeholders should replicate the study in other geo political zones with more variables. This is important, bearing in mind

that the influences of students' peer pressure, self-concept and emotional intelligence on academic achievement are inconclusive. Furthermore, it is recommended that Educational psychologists as main stakeholders in the education industry, be alive to the interwoven relationship among self-concept, peer-pressure, emotional intelligence and academic achievement and their role in enhancing positive development of peer-pressure, self-concept, emotional intelligence and academic achievement should be of great concern.

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