



Interest in Social Interaction and Self-Efficacy Among Secondary School Students in Cross River State

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to find out if interest in social interaction has any influence on self- efficacy with regards to social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, language self-efficacy and moral self-efficacy. Ex -post facto design was adopted for the study. The sample consisted of 1,543 students randomly selected from 47 public schools in Cross River State. A self-designed questionnaire titled (ISIASEQ) was used to collect data for the study. The face validity of the instrument was determined by four research experts in Educational Psychology and measurement and evaluation, while the reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability method. The data collected from 1,529 subjects were analysed using One Way Analysis of Variance statistical tool, tested at .05 level of significance. The result of the analyses revealed a significant influence of interest in social interaction on social self-efficacy, language self-efficacy, moral self-efficacy, but showed a non-significant influence on academic self-efficacy. Based on the findings of this study, it was recommended that the parents, teachers, and educational psychologists should create avenues that will encourage students' involvement in social interaction. Students identified as anti-socials should be co-opted into social groups to encourage them build up efficacy to interact with teachers both in and outside the classroom and belong to reading groups for academic performance.

Keywords: Interest, Social Interaction, Self-Efficacy, Secondary School, Students, Cross River State, Nigeria.

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INTRODUCTION

Self-efficacy is the core human agency that strongly affect the human functioning, and a more consistent predictor of behavioural outcome, more than any other motivational variable (Smith & Betz, 2000). Social self-efficacy is an individual's confidence in his ability to interact, initiate and maintain interpersonal relationship in his environment .Studies have revealed self-efficacy to be significant and powerful for predicting, explaining and improving performance in academic activities, career choice, and generate optimism that reduces hopelessness (Malix & Amjad, 2010; Smith & Betz, 2000, Kardemas, 2006).

Despite the significance of self-efficacy in students total functioning, they has been a downward paradigm shift in the way students interact, communicate, attend to school activities, and their general academic performance. The researchers observe that students display poor cognitive abilities, they are not always motivated and avoid responsibilities they perceive as challenging which could be the reason for the poor self-efficacy they display. It has been observed that most students express self-doubt and lack the ability to handle challenging academic activities. They are afraid of failing and avoid asking questions regarding issues that are unclear to them. The researchers being class room teachers have observed that very few students think analytically which is evident in the way they answer questions, they lack problem solving skills and prefer to copy assignments from friends.

Their lack of belief in their abilities could be the reason why they find it difficult to answer abstract questions during examination. One begins to wonder how students will eventually cope with academic work if they do not belief they can achieve a designated level of performance without seeking help from people around them. Teachers provide counselling services, involve students in both indoor and outdoor activities, parents are encouraged to release their wards to participate in extracurricular activities like debate, quiz, drama, cultural displays, spelling, inter-house sports etc. to help students interact with others, build independence, speak in public and develop a mind-set of possibilities that will boast self-efficacy to no avail. This downward drift has left the researchers and other educational psychologist wondering what could be responsible for the display of poor self-efficacy by students despite all that has been put in place to help them harness their best personal characteristics for all round learning. This trend has made the researchers wonder if interest in social interaction could have any influence on students' self-efficacy with regard to social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, language self-efficacy, and moral self-efficacy.

In this study, self-efficacy is linked with interest in social interaction because of the overwhelming relationship between the two variables. Hidi and Rewinger (2006) stated that interest develops as a function of the person and Hidi et al. (2006) stressed that the interaction between a person and the object determines the extent of interest development. This means that personal characteristics and social factors determines the interest one develops when taking part in activities, the level of success recorded is what results to the development of self-efficacy.

Relatedly, Hidi et al. (2006) outlined three factors that promote the development of interest to be knowledge, positive emotion, and personal value. Hence, increase in knowledge boost individual's competence and skills that will help them perform well in a given task. They maintained that individuals may find personal meanings and relevance to activities they pay attention. Interest however, can be developed when individuals set goals for themselves, and get more engaged and develop competence to achieve the set goals.

Arnold (2007) reiterated that communication among individuals in class bring success faster than any material and technique. Ensuring a good communication with fellow students and teachers is an achievement of success for teachers. Only self-efficacious students can achieve this. Rubin, Matin, Bruning and Powers (2009), in a test of a self-efficacy model of

interpersonal communication competence, tested a path model involving past communicative experience, self-efficacy and interpersonal communication outcomes. Their findings revealed that self-efficacy affected situation difficulty on interpersonal communication outcome.

Khatib and Maarof (2015) carried out a study to investigate differences in self-efficacy in speaking English Language. Sixty (60) technical college students were used as sample based on gender in two semesters. The students responded to a questionnaire adapted from previous research. The students' perceived self-efficacy was measured using three constructs, namely ability, activity perception and aspiration. The findings revealed that female students and semester 5 students had a higher level of self-efficacy. The implication of the finding is that high self-efficacy is related to speaking proficiency. In a similar development, Idrus, Salleh, Hassan and Ali (2013) conducted a study on self-efficacy in English Language oral communication skills of technical trainees. Their main purpose was to examine how the level of self-efficacy of technical trainees affects their ability to speak in English. The study examined trainees' self-efficacy based on their English grades, and working experience and found that the level of trainees' self-efficacy affected their ability to speak in English.

Smith and Betz (2000) described perceived social self-efficacy as an individuals' confidence in his or her ability to socially interact, in a way that will promote interpersonal relationships, create a high level of social confidence and improve academic performance and develop self-efficacy beliefs among individuals (Malik & Amjad, 2010). Carmicheal and Taylor (2005) opined that self-efficacy is a major factor that promotes learners interest, persistence, and extent of effort students put up to learn a second language.

The learning experience is characterized by social interaction, essentially, through communication to get students involved and arouse their interest in learning (Hay, Hodgkinson, Peltier & Drago, 2004). A positive social interaction creates a threat free environment that enhances learning and promotes social self-efficacy (Abrantes, Seabra & Eages, 2007). Students' social interactions are influenced by their interest and openness which they communicate, the extent to which students express their views and ask questions for clarity in areas of difficulty, and how they relate in the teaching learning environment (Pelter, Schibrowsky & Drago, 2007). When students show interest in social interaction, they build up the will to clear doubts, explore uncertainties, and be conversant with the internal and external contradictions (Pelter, Hay & Drago, 2005). By implication, the awareness derived from the environment through social interaction is most likely going to boost the self-efficacy of students. Interest in social interaction stimulates general discussions, give students opportunity to ask questions, express opinions that are receptive to new ideas and viewpoints (Paswan & Young, 2002).

Peltier et al. (2007), sees social interactions as important learning opportunity for students to support and motivate each other to reach a high cognitive level, and to find personal meaning in life. It goes beyond the classroom, through web exchanges, and helps students to transit to a higher order learning process, self-reflection, transformation of visions and comparing one's response to others (Thorpe, 2001). Students social interaction is an opportunity for students to learn from each other, make useful contributions for effective learning (Hay et al., 2004).

However, Paswan and Young (2002) found that social interaction stimulates interest in overall learning. It is an avenue for the cultivation of interpersonal relationships and promotion of inter-teacher students' interaction, and positively affects learning outcome (Boex, 2000). An increased level of students' social interaction enhances learning performance (Duke, 2002). Communication among students and between students and teachers enhances class involvement in learning and promotes higher academic outcomes. This therefore means that enhancement in learning, communication, inter-person relationship

as a result of interest in social interaction will likely improve the self-efficacy level of students.

Cardosa, Ferreira, Abrautes, Seabra and Costa (2011), investigated personal and pedagogical interaction factors as determinants of academic achievement using about 2000 Portuguese high school students and found that students social interaction has a great impact on learning performance. They argued that social interaction influences the student to learn more through peer interaction. The result was supported by Hay et al., (2004) who stressed that social interaction enhances understanding and commitment to learning. When students understand the learning concept, and are committed to further learning, it could be translated to high self-efficacy.

Burr (2012) posits that extra-curricular activity is an avenue for social interaction where children form friendships and master new skills, using social cognitive theory to build self-efficacy through observation and impartation of the pattern or success skills of others. The importance of interest in social interaction in the development of self-efficacy cannot be overemphasized. Extra-curricular activities help students to develop social connections to others through teamwork and social skills. It promotes interpersonal relationships and extends children's social networks with both peers and adults, which are a source of social capital. Interest in social interaction gives students a strong sense of school belongingness, increase interest in school learning, increase motivation as students watch/imitate the successes and skills of others, thus, help them experience less anxiety, improve performance and self-efficacy (Osterman, 2004; Anderman, 2002; Lewis, 2004).

Interest in social interaction with peers contributes to the development of self-identity (Marsh & Kleitman, 2005). Social interaction creates social networks for students and offers students unique development opportunities that positively impact their social self-concept and social self-efficacy (Smith, 2008). Smith (2008) added that adolescents who do not have the opportunity of belonging to social groups suffer negative repercussions, including dropping out from school.

METHODOLOGY

The research design for this study was the ex-post facto design. It is a non-experimental design in which the phenomena of interest had already occurred and cannot be manipulated in any way (Idaka & Anagbogu, 2012). The design is aimed at investigating cause and effect relationship between two variables by identifying consequences that exist and collecting data for possible causal factor.

The research area for the study is Cross River State, Nigeria. It is one of the states in the South-South Geopolitical Zone of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The population of the study consists of all the 38,514 Senior Secondary I and II Students (18,697 males and 19,817 females) spread across the 246 government secondary schools in Cross River State under the State Secondary Education Board (S.S.E.B).

The stratified random sampling technique was used for the study. The schools in the area were first stratified based on LGA and the researchers randomly selected 20% of the schools in each of the LGAs through hat and draw method (balloting).

The sample used for this study consist of 1,529 students (663 males and 866 females) out of the initial 1,543 students randomly selected from 47 public secondary schools in Cross River State. A total of 802 students were selected from SS1 classes and 741 students from SS2 classes.

The instrument used for data collection is a questionnaire titled Interest in Schooling, and Self-efficacy Questionnaire (ISASEQ). The questionnaire consists of three sections. Section A elicited from the respondents demographic information, such as age and gender.

Section B was designed with five items to measure interest in social interaction while section C was designed with 24 items to measure the dependent variable, with four sub sections and six items to measure each sub variable of self-efficacy such as social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, language self-efficacy and moral self-efficacy. The scale is a four point Likert type.

To ascertain the face validity, the topic, purpose of the study, research questions, research hypotheses and instrument were given to 4 professionals with specialty in Educational Psychology and Measurement and Evaluation from Faculty of Education. To determine the reliability of the research instrument, a trial testing was done using fifty (50) students from three (3) secondary schools who did not take part in the actual study.

The researchers personally visited each of the selected schools and administered copies of the questionnaire to the 1,543 subjects. Data collected from 1,529 subjects out of the initial sample of 1,543 selected for the study was used for the data analyses while 14 copies of the instrument which were not properly filled were discarded. One-way Analysis of Variance was used in testing the null hypothesis formulated to guide the study which was tested at .05 level of significance. The procedure used for the data analysis is presented as follows:

Hypothesis

Interest in social interaction does not significantly influence students' self-efficacy. The independent variable in this hypothesis was interest in social interaction categorized into three (low, moderate and high), while the dependent variable was self-efficacy with four sub-components, namely, social self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, language self-efficacy, moral self-efficacy and overall self-efficacy. The One-way Analysis of Variance was used in testing this hypothesis, and the results of the analyses were as presented in Table 1 and 2.

Table 1: One-way Analysis of Variance of the influence of interest in social interaction on self-efficacy

| Variables | Source of variance | Sum of squares | df | Mean square | F-ratio | p-level |
|------------------------|--------------------|----------------|------|-------------|---------|---------|
| Social self-efficacy | Between Groups | 112.661 | 2 | 56.331 | 7.526* | .001 |
| | Within Groups | 11422.151 | 1526 | 7.485 | | |
| | Total | 11534.812 | 1528 | | | |
| Academic self-efficacy | Between Groups | 13.015 | 2 | 6.507 | .774 | .462 |
| | Within Groups | 12837.173 | 1526 | 8.412 | | |
| | Total | 12850.188 | 1528 | | | |
| Language self-efficacy | Between Groups | 186.074 | 2 | 93.037 | 7.110* | .001 |
| | Within Groups | 19966.906 | 1526 | 13.084 | | |
| | Total | 20152.980 | 1528 | | | |
| Moral self-efficacy | Between Groups | 265.450 | 2 | 132.725 | 13.886* | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 14585.457 | 1526 | 9.558 | | |
| | Total | 14850.906 | 1528 | | | |
| Overall self-efficacy | Between Groups | 1504.847 | 2 | 752.423 | 8.431* | .000 |
| | Within Groups | 136188.698 | 1526 | 89.246 | | |
| | Total | 137693.545 | 1528 | | | |

*Significant at .05 alpha level; $p < .05$.

The results as presented in Table 1 show that F-ratios of 7.526, .774, 7.110, 13.886 and 8.431 for social self-efficacy, language self-efficacy, moral self-efficacy and overall self-efficacy respectively are each significant at 2 and 1526 degrees of freedom and .05 level of significance except for academic self-efficacy. By implication, the null hypothesis that interest in social interaction does not significantly influence students' self-efficacy was rejected for all the various dimensions and overall self-efficacy except for academic self-efficacy. These results imply that interest in social interaction significantly influenced students' self-efficacy except for academic self-efficacy.

Given the significant F-ratios, a post hoc analysis was conducted using the Fishers' Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison test to check for the source of the difference except for academic self-efficacy. The result is presented in Table 2. An examination of the results in Table 2 show that the subjects who had low level of interest in social interaction had significant lower mean in social self-efficacy when compared with those who have moderate and high levels (MD=-.40; $p < .05$) and (MD=-1.14; $p < .05$) respectively. Other pair wise comparison showed that the subjects who had moderate and high levels of interest in social interaction, produced a mean difference that was also statistically significant (MD=-.73; $p < .05$).

Table 2: Fisher's Least Significance Difference (LSD) multi-comparison test analysis of the influence of interest in social interaction on self-efficacy

| Dependent Variable | (I) Interest in social interaction | (J) Interest in social interaction | Mean Difference (I-J) | p-level |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------|---------|
| Social self-efficacy | Low | Moderate | -.40* | .009 |
| | | High | -1.14* | .000 |
| | Moderate | Low | .40* | .009 |
| | | High | -.73* | .017 |
| Language self-efficacy | Low | Moderate | .18 | .386 |
| | | High | -1.35* | .001 |
| | Moderate | Low | -.18 | .386 |
| | | High | -1.52* | .000 |
| Moral self-efficacy | Low | Moderate | -.71* | .000 |
| | | High | -1.62* | .000 |
| | Moderate | Low | .71* | .000 |
| | | High | -.91* | .009 |
| Overall self-efficacy | Low | Moderate | -.94 | .078 |
| | | High | -4.50* | .000 |
| | Moderate | Low | .94 | .078 |
| | | High | -3.56* | .001 |
| | High | Low | 4.50* | .000 |
| Moderate | | 3.56* | .001 | |

*The mean difference is significant at the .05 level.

For language self-efficacy, the subjects who had low level in interest in social interaction, had a higher mean when compared with those who had moderate level in interest in social interaction but the mean difference was not statistically significant (MD=.18; $p>.05$) but they had a significant lower when compared with those that had high level of interest in social interaction (MD=-1.35; $p<.05$). Other pair wise comparison show that the subjects who had moderate level of interest in social interaction had a significant lower mean when compared with those who have high level of interest in social interaction (MD=-1.52; $p<.05$).

Concerning moral self-efficacy, the result show that the subjects who had low level of interest in social interaction had significant lower mean when compared with those who had moderate and high levels of interest in social interaction (MD=-.71; $p<.05$) and (MD=-1.62; $p<.05$) respectively. Other pair wise comparison show that the subjects who had moderate and high levels of interest in social interaction had a significant mean difference (MD=-.91; $p<.05$).

Finally, for overall self-efficacy, the result show that the subjects who had low level of interest in social interaction had a lower mean when compared with those who had moderate level but the mean difference is not statistically significant (MD=-.94; $p>.05$) but they had a significant lower mean when compared with those that had high level of interest in social interaction (MD=-4.50; $p<.05$). Other pair wise comparison show that the subjects who had moderate level of interest in social interaction had a significant lower mean when compared with those who have high level of interest in social interaction (MD=-3.56; $p<.05$).

DISCUSSION

The present findings revealed a significant influence of interest in social interaction on social self-efficacy, language self-efficacy, and moral self-efficacy, but showed a non-significant influence on academic self-efficacy. This could mean that since students who are interested in social interaction, are bound to initiate and maintain social relationship and successfully interact with others, their ability to maintain relationships could be the reason for the significant influence.

The outcome of this study is surprising to the researchers. The researchers expected interest in social interaction to have a significant influence on academic self-efficacy. It may be that students' constant use of the internet and social media, did not give room for the development of academic competences that would have in turn boosted their academic self-efficacy. Social interaction improves language development. This could be the reason for the outcome of this significant influence recorded in this result. Students model the language of those they admire; they learn new language, new vocabulary, during play and involvement in social activities, thereby develop language ability which may be the reason for the increased self-efficacy. The outcome of this result could be that students who are interested in social interaction, have ability to initiate, promote and maintain relationship, as such, may likely put in efforts to portray attitude and actions that are morally just, to be able to gain acceptance in the social setting. This may be the reason for the trend in the result.

The present study is in line with the results of Urus et al. (2013) who revealed a relationship between technical training with language self-efficacy. Paswan (2002) supports the present study when they discovered that social interaction stimulate learning. Cardosa et al. (2011), in their study, found out that students' social interaction greatly influence learning performance. This finding is slightly related to the present study that revealed a significant influence of interest in social interaction and self-efficacy.

The present findings also show a significant influence of interest in social interaction on social self-efficacy, language self-efficacy, and moral self-efficacy, but did not show a significant influence on academic self-efficacy.

CONCLUSION

The present findings shows a significant influence of interest in social interaction on social self-efficacy, language self-efficacy, and moral self-efficacy, but did not show a significant influence on academic self-efficacy .This suggest that students who are inclined to social interaction may lack academic self-efficacy since their involvement in social interaction may likely hinder their commitment to academic pursuits and achievement of set goals.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it is recommended that parents, teachers, and educational psychologists should create avenues for social interaction at home and in school to help students develop interest in social interaction. Students identified as antisocial should be co-opted into social groups to encourage them build up efficacy to interact with teachers outside the classroom and belong to reading groups for academic performance.

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