

Using Self-Esteem to Predict Students' Academic Achievement in Teaching Practice Exercise among University Students In Nigeria

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Abstract

The study was conducted to assess the association that existed between self-esteem and academic achievement. A correlational survey research design was utilized in the investigation. All university undergraduate students in Federal and State universities admitted for 2020 /2021 academic session from south east region formed the population. One research question guided the study and one hypotheses was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The researchers made use of 185 undergraduate students from faculty of education of three state universities as sample size employing stratified sampling technique. The instruments for data collection were TPSEQ, TP score sheets and TP general committee comments sheets. The instruments were validated by experts and the internal consistency reliability coefficient was estimated to be 0.75 using Cronbach Alpha method. The data collected were analyzed utilizing simple linear regression. The result of the study revealed that self-esteem has a positive significant influence on undergraduate students' academic achievement in teaching practice. The study recommended among others that teachers should inculcate positive self-image – belief in the learners and that a self-esteem enhancement programme should be put in place for students to help the children make positive evaluations of their personalities.

Keywords: Self-esteem, academic achievement, teaching practice.

Introduction

Education is the simplest way of bringing about overall change that could ensure accelerated national development and economic growth for any country. It is one of the fundamental human rights adopted by Federal Government of Nigeria in her National Policy on education since 1977 till date. Enemu and Onuorah (2024) pointed out that education is a planned activity-process through which an individual is guided to attain the development of his potentialities. Such guidance ought to start from kindergarten to the university. This would bring about rethought, transformation and reforms towards knowledge, notion style and values for nations growth, advancement and development (Enefu, Achimugu, Omachonu, Obaje, Okolo & Okeme, 2023). Researchers like Benson (2011), Okekeokosisi, Obili and Boh (2024) states that education begins with

the teacher not because he is the most important but because he is the most able to control his own behavior.

A teacher is a person who guides others to acquire knowledge, competences or values. He is the major indicator and determinant of quality instruction (Adesina & Fagbemiye, 2003). The assertion was supported by Ifelunni (2014) as he went further to define who a teacher is and his functions. A teacher is one who has acquired the requisite content and pedagogical skills needed to facilitate learning. The functions of a teacher as listed by Ifelunni (2014), Okekeokosisi and Okigbo (2018) include; a facilitator of learning, a motivator, a guidance counselor, a role model inspiring the students, takes cognizance of learners learning differences and intellectual abilities of individual learners. However, one can see that though the learner is the central focus as far as education is concerned, the teacher is the hub of any educational system because a learner cannot be better than their teacher. Education is judged to be effective when the recipients are seen to be productive and capable of contributing to the progress of the society.

Academic achievement is the outcome of instruction. It is the progress one make to reach a height either through effort or skill which is determined by the scores or grades that students – learners get in an examination or test. It is equally the degree of competence in school tasks usually measured by standardized tests and expressed in grades. Although higher grades are usually an indicator of better academic achievement, they are not always an indicator of supreme cognitive leverage (Eraikhuemen, David-Egbenusi & Onuigbo, 2024). Academic achievement in teaching practice exercise (TP) is characterized by effective application of strategies- skills, classroom management, effective use of instructional materials, evaluation et cetera during instructional delivery.

Teaching practice is a supervised instructional experience, usually the culminating course in a university or college of education. It is an integral part of a teacher education programme aimed at providing student-teachers an opportunity to put into practice their theoretical knowledge in a real school-life situation (Imam, 2024). It also offers teachers educators and educational managers a golden opportunity for practical appraisal of the effectiveness of teacher education programme. Collins (2024) viewed teaching practice as a period that a student-teacher spends teaching at a school as a part of his / her training. It grants student-teachers experience in the actual teaching and learning environment. In the same vein, Marais and Meier (2004) assert that the term TP represents the range of experiences to which student-teachers are exposed when

they work in classrooms and schools. During TP, a student-teacher is given the opportunity to try the art of teaching before actually getting into the real world of the teaching profession (Kasanda, 1995). In the course of the exercise, student-teachers also know the value of TP, decide the choice of career to make and work towards that. The Federal Republic of Nigeria in her first published policy on education (1977) outlined the objectives of TP as;

- To enable student-teachers (will be teachers) to discover their own strengths and weakness in classroom teaching and provide opportunities to enable them to overcome their weakness and consolidate on their strengths
- To familiarize student-teachers with the school environment as their future workplace
- To provide student-teachers with an opportunity for further acquisition of professional skills, competencies, personal characteristics and experience for full-time teaching after graduation
- To help student-teachers develop a positive attitude towards the teaching profession
- To serve as a means of assessing the professional competence of student-teachers.

Despite the objective of teaching practice programme - exercise, student-teachers face anxiety, mixture of anticipation, excitement, cultural and environmental challenges, geographical location of student-teachers posted to TP. These challenges if not addressed may affect student-teachers academic achievement in the exercise and may in the long run affect their perception of the teaching profession. Hence, this study on predicting students' achievement in teaching practice as a correlate of undergraduate students' self-esteem.

Self-esteem or self-belief or self-confidence is how individual value and perceive his / herself. It is an aspect of personality that deals with thinking, active, aggressive in approaching problem solving and not being separated from environmental situation (Rastovski, Zoretic, Siljeg & Jorgic, 2023). Self-esteem as defined by Honorio, Ramos, Santos, Serano, Petrica and Batista (2023) is the intended emotion of intrinsic satisfaction that identifies a level of efficiency. It is similar to self-judgment of perceived competence placed on self-assessment or conviction that one must be capable and deserving enough to achieve something in life. Wiggins in Mamah, Nnadi, Ezugwu,

Ezeudu, Eze and Ugwuanyi (2022) added that person's ability to deal with various challenges in life, the feelings of being worthy to do something extraordinary and to enjoy the right and the capability to do difficult work. In all, it is a construct that does not in actual fact reflect the attributes of an individual or how he / she is seen by others (Orth, Erol & Luciano, 2018). The concept of self-esteem was first introduced as psychological theory by William James. The theory states that self-esteem equals success divided by our pretensions. Pretensions, in this case refer to our goals, values and what we believe about our potential. James 1890/1983 states the benefits of self-esteem as confidence, mental health, resilience and better relationship. The benefits uplifts ones self-esteem and as such could be referred to as high self-esteem. However, Onyali, Okekeokosisi and Okoye (2014) linked Maslow's theory of human needs to self-esteem. Maslow's theory of human needs stressed that individual needs both appreciation from other people and inner self-respect to build esteem. Both of these needs must be fulfilled in order for an individual to grow as a person and reach self-actualization. For self-actualization to take place, the individual need to interact with his environment. Thus, the theory of social interaction was derived from self-esteem by Cooley and Mead. According to Cooley and Mead theory of social interaction, it states that the self is determined by people's social interaction. This is how one appears to others determines one's social identity or looking-glass self.

Many educators, social interactionism and researchers like Okeke and Ejoh (2019), Bourne (2004) believe that self-esteem is a very important variable in teaching-learning for the prediction of academic achievement of students. Aryana (2010) opined that students with high self-esteem may achieve higher since they tend to have more self-confident while students with low self-esteem lack confidence in themselves and may achieve less academically (Hiskin, 2011). They participate actively in class, ask questions and are not passive during the teaching and learning process while low self-esteem students partake passively in class activities. They are always silent, inactive and also exhibit a withdrawal or nonchalant attitude towards academic activities. Low self-esteem students according to Aryana (2010) do not involve themselves with anything that may expose their weakness or incompetence to others. Because of that and to avoid being called one thing or the other among their peers in class, they usually do not show or have interest in academic activities. Maslow (1954) contended that satification of self-esteem needs leads to feelings of self-confidence, worth, capability

and adequacy of being useful and necessary in the world but thwarting of these needs produces feelings of inferiority, weakness and helplessness.

Statement of the Problem

Since the introduction and implementation of national policy on education, teaching practice (TP) exercise has been a channel in which student-teachers exhibit and practice strategies-skills taught in the classroom. Such skills anticipated to be practiced by student-teachers are lacking leading to frustrating achievement of student-teachers in the exercise. This could be attributed to geographical location of student-teachers posted to TP, economic hardship, delay in payment of salaries, entitlement to lecturers and funding of institutions of higher learning. This study x-rays if undergraduate students' academic achievement in teaching practice exercise that could be attributed to self-esteem.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to ascertain the magnitude of undergraduate students' academic achievement in teaching practice exercise that can be ascribed to self-esteem. Specifically, the study investigated;

1. The extent to which self-esteem can predict undergraduate students' academic achievement in teaching practice exercise

Research Questions

The researchers formulated one research question that guided the study;

1. What is self-esteem's predictive power on undergraduate students' academic achievement in teaching practice exercise

Hypotheses

The hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance guided the study;

H₀₁: Self-esteem has no significant predictive power on undergraduate students' academic achievement in teaching practice exercise

Method

The study adopted a correlational survey research design. Correlational survey research design is a research design that allows the researcher to investigate the strength, the magnitude of the direction of the association that exists between two or more phenomena without manipulating the situation (Nworgu, 2015). This study was carried out in South East universities. There are 5 states in the South east region. Each of the

states has already established university both Federal and State. The institutions of learning contributes to human development and economic upliftment.

The population of the study comprised all university undergraduate students in Federal and State, admitted for 2020 /2021 academic session from south east region. Multistage sampling technique was used. Purpose sampling was used to select only state universities and faculty of education in the region. Faculty of education was chosen based on the national policy on education objectives. Faculty of education in Nigerian universities may house the following departments; educational foundation, science education, vocational and technical, guidance and counselling, adult, early child, special education, educational technology, health and physical, entrepreneurship education. Each of these departments has specialties in which students are admitted into. The researchers equally used purposive sampling to select a program of study that requires teaching practice exercise (TP). Such program that is run in the universities in Nigeria under undergraduate studies are regular, sandwich and part-time program. Lucky dip was used to select regular program. Simple random sampling balloting with replacement was used to select 3 out of 5 state universities. Thus, the researchers made use of 185 undergraduate students from faculty of education of three state universities as sample size employing stratified sampling technique. Stratified sampling was used to ensure that each undergraduate students from faculty of education are selected and used for the study. The study was carried out in 2022 / 2023 academic session of their teaching practice. The selection was done using matriculation numbers of students in the faculty of education admitted in 2020 /2021 and are currently in final year. The matriculation number was gotten from the sub-deans of faculty of education of the selected institutions. The researchers gave an adapted self-esteem questionnaire to the sub-deans. The questionnaire titled “Teaching Practice Self-Esteem Questionnaire (TPSEQ)” contains 15 items derived from Rosenberg (1965). TPSEQ is modelled on a four point rating scales that ranged from Strongly Disagree (4points), Agree (3points), Disagree (2points) and Strongly Disagree (1point). The adapted TPSEQ was given to TP supervisors of selected stratum from each institutions of the said faculty to administer to their supervisee on the same day of their supervision. TPSEQ admitted was collated on the spot and returned to the sub-deans along with each supervisees TP score sheets. The sub-deans released the general comments from TP committees along with the selected students’ score sheets and TPSEQ. Thus, the TP score sheets and TP general committee comments were also an adopted instruments used for data collection.

Only TPSEQ was validated by three experts from educational psychology, measurement and evaluation and guidance and counselling departments. The validation was done before administering the instruments. The instrument internal consistency yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.78 using the Cronbach Alpha reliability method. Data collected were analyzed utilizing simple linear regression. A correlation coefficient value below 0.30 was assumed low coefficient, 0.30 to 0.80 was a moderate coefficient while from 0.80 and above were assumed to be high. The hypotheses was tested using a regression t-test.

Result

The result of the research were presented in line with the study's research question and hypotheses.

Table 1: regression analysis of the predictive power of self-esteem on academic achievement of undergraduate students in teaching practice.

Model	R	R square	Adjusted R square	t	P
	.770 ^a	.592	.590	16.309	.000

a. Predictors: (Constant). Self-esteem

Data in Table 1 shows that the predictive power of self-esteem on academic achievement of undergraduate students' in teaching practice is 59.2% ($R^2 = .592$). It was further found that there is a significant predictive power of self-esteem on the achievement of undergraduate students in teaching practice, $t = 16.309$, $P = .000$. Thus, the null hypotheses was rejected since the p-value of .000 is less than the 0.05 level of significance.

Discussion

The findings of the study revealed that there exists a high and positive correlation between self-esteem and undergraduate students' academic achievement in TP. In addition, a 59.2% variation in undergraduate students' academic achievement in TP as predicted on self-esteem. The findings of the study collaborated the findings of Ojeleye, Adegbile and Apanpa (2023), Mamah, Nnadi, Ezugwu, Ezeudu, Eze and Ugwuanyi (2022), who in their separate studies found that self-esteem has a positive and significant effect on students' achievement. It equally shows that higher self-esteem outperformed those with low self-esteem in the classroom. This means that

the higher self-esteem the student possesses, determines its achievement. However, the findings of the study contradicted the findings of Kunhertanti and Santosa (2018) who found that self-esteem had no significant effect on the academic achievement of undergraduate students in mathematics.

Conclusion

Students are tomorrow's leaders and their academic success to a large extent, defines their destiny and contribution to the society. It equally points that students with higher self-esteem has reduced anxiety and increased interest in goal seeking.

Recommendations

Results from the findings of the study lead to the following recommendations;

- Educational stakeholders should encourage students to build and not to destroy their self-esteem by not talking down, negatively criticize or publicly humiliate them
- Educational stakeholders should encourage students to bounce-back from seemly difficult situation to stimulate their performance

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