

Causal Attribution for Failure and Academic Self-Efficacy as Factors Relating To Academic Achievement of Secondary School Students in Okene, Kogi State.

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ABSTRACT: This study examined causal attribution for failure and academic self-efficacy as factors relating to academic achievement of secondary school students in Okene, Kogi state. Three hypotheses were formulated inline with the objectives of the study and tested. The population for the study was 2639 SSII students out of which 335 students were sampled. Correlational research design was employed in the conduct of the research. Causal Attribution and Self-efficacy Questionnaire (CASQ) with reliability coefficient of 0.93 was used to collect data from the respondents. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to analyze the hypotheses. Results of the analysis indicated that significant relationship exists between students' academic self-efficacy and academic achievement ($r = 0.897, p = 0.000$) between internal causal attributions for failure and academic achievement ($r = 0.317, 0.000$). However, significant inverse relationship was observed between external causal attribution for failure and academic achievement ($r = -0.927, p = 0.000$). Recommendations were made based on the research findings which include that; adequate measures should be made by both parents and teachers to sensitize their students from the unproductive internal belief and to know that effort must be incorporated with belief for them to succeed academically.

KEYWORDS: Causal attribution, self-efficacy and academic achievement.

I. INTRODUCTION

Attributions are inferences that people make about the causes of events and behavior. People make attributions in order to understand their experiences. Attributions strongly influence the way people interact with others. Causal attribution concerns the explanations people offer about the causes of their own or other people's behavior. It has contributed to an understanding of emotions as well as people's reactions to failures, and the reasons that they give for those failures. Causal attribution refers to the mechanism of attributing meaning to something, whether it is an action, event, behavior, or situation (Maha, 2017). According to Balarabe as cited in Sambo and Muhammed (2015), attribution is related to success or failure in academic environment. Studies revealed that individuals normally expect success in the academic task, and hence have greater tendencies to attribute successful outcome to internal cause. He further revealed that as individuals experience repeated success (such as students who have undergone several assessments successfully) they tend to expect success to the element. Attributions can also be classified as either internal or external. Internal attributions emphasize dispositional or personality-based explanations, while external attributions emphasize situational factors. For example, when a person aces a test, an internal attribution might be the conclusion that she must be very smart. An external attribution for the same outcome might be that she must have received extra help before the test or that the test was too easy (Boundless, 2016). He further explain that in our attempts to make sense of the world around us, we tend to look for reasons and causes behind events and situations. To do this, we make either explanatory or interpersonal attributions. An explanatory attribution is an attempt to understand the world and seek reasons for a particular event. People with an optimistic explanatory style attribute positive events to global, stable, internal causes and negative events to specific, unstable, external causes. The inverse is true for those with a pessimistic explanatory style: they attribute negative events to global, stable, internal causes and positive events to specific, unstable, external causes.

Weiner (1985) explains academic success and failure in terms of three sets of characteristics. First, the cause of the success and failure may be internal or external. That is, people may succeed or fail because of factors that they believe have their origin within them or because of factors that originate in their environment. Second, the cause of the success and failure may be either stable or unstable. If the cause is stable, then the outcome is likely to be the same if students perform the same behavior on another occasion. If it is unstable, the outcome is likely to be different on another occasion. Third, the cause of the success and failure may be either controllable or uncontrollable. A controllable factor is one which people believe they can alter if they wish to do so. An

uncontrollable factor is one that people do not believe they can easily alter. Ability, effort, task difficulty and luck are the four attributional styles to which people ascribe their successes and failures (Hashemi & Zabihi as cited in Habtamu, 2016). The cause of events can be internal/external, stable/unstable, and controllable/uncontrollable. Locus is whether the cause of events is perceived as internal or external. While ability and effort are internal attributions, luck and task difficulty are external factors. The stability dimension is the extent to which the cause of an event is fixed and stable, or unstable, over time. Ability, for instance, is regarded as stable; effort, on the other hand, is considered to be an unstable dimension. Finally, control examines how much control an individual has over a cause.

The psychological theory of attribution emerged from Social Psychology. Social Psychologists were interested in the kinds of attribution which explains motives. Motivation is the driving force behind all the actions of an individual. The influence of individual's needs and desires has a strong impact on the direction of their behaviour. This leads to the questions of: How do people decide the likely cause of their behaviours? Why do they attribute an individual's action to one cause rather than another? In the effort to answer such questions, social psychologists started pursuing the basic motives and tried to ascertain the rules the average person follows when analyzing the cause of behavior. The study of these rules is termed, attribution theory (Obochi as cited in Ibrahim, 2018).

Self-efficacy is the belief in oneself that he or she can do a particular task without the help of another person. It can also mean confidence and belief in one's ability to succeed in a particular task. According to Dogan (2015), self-efficacy is about the belief in one's ability to succeed especially within specific situations or accomplishment of certain tasks. Consequently, self-efficacy is another factor that is likely to be considered as a variable defining and determining academic performance. Academic Self-efficacy refers to a student's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments (Bandura, 1977). Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation, behavior, and social environment (Bahmanabadi & Baluchzade, as cited by Oyuga, Raburu, and Aloka, 2019). According to Betoret, Roselló, and Gómez-Artiga (2017) Self-efficacy is a key personal variable of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT), defined as an individual's belief in his or her own ability to organize and implement action to produce the desired achievements and results (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Potentially, even a very talented student with the ability to achieve at a high level may have low self-efficacy beliefs, thereby reducing the chance of academic success (Bandura, 1997). Bandura (1989), states that self-beliefs of efficacy can enhance or impair performance through their effects on cognitive, affective, or motivational intervening processes. The impact that self-efficacy beliefs, therefore, can have upon learning should not be underestimated.

The study conducted by Houston (2016) on the role of specific dimensions of attributional style in predicting subsequent academic performance, in which a sample of pupils (5979) from both high and low achieving schools participated in the study. He makes use of hierarchical regression and moderation analyses and discovered that internal, stable, and global, attributional styles for positive events predict higher levels of academic performance. Global attributions for negative events were related to poorer performance across all schools. Stable attributions for negative events were related to higher level performance in high achieving schools but not in low achieving schools. Higher levels of internality for negative events were associated with higher performance only in low achieving schools.

Sambo and Muhammed (2015) investigated the relationship of causal attributions and academic attainment of Colleges of Education students in north-west geo-political zone of Nigeria. The study was guided by a research question and four null hypotheses., based on the hypothesis that there is no significant relationship between causal attributions academic attainment of students. The questionnaire on Academic Causal Attribution Scale (ACAS) were administered to 389 students (300 level) drawn from eight (8) Colleges of Education. They used students' Grade Point Average (GPA) as measures of academic attainment and Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed to determine the degree of relationship of the said variables. They discovered that there were no significant correlations among the causal attributions factors and academic attainment of students except with external attribution of failure in which significant correlation was established with academic attainment.

Mohamad and Ghada as cited in Ibrahim (2018) studied the effect of attribution retraining on high school students' academic performance in mathematics. Sixty-seven students from grades 10 and 11 conducted the Attribution Questionnaire as a pre-test. Twenty- two students were chosen for the experimental group based on their low score on the questionnaire. The control group which had been selected from the other 45 students

was formed by matching their results in mathematics with that of the experimental group. Both the experimental and control groups were equal in number ($n=22$). The study used a pretest-posttest control group design with matching. Although, random assignment of subjects to experimental and control groups was not performed, the research design is a form of quasi-experimental one. The results demonstrated the positive effect of attribution retraining on students' academic achievement in mathematics and their attribution styles. In adopting adaptive attributions, students in the experimental group were able to view their success as a result of effort and ability rather than luck and task difficulty.

A study of Vereová and Foglová (2017) examined Academic Self-Efficacy, Approach to Learning and Academic Achievement. The sample consisted of 457 adolescents (268 girls and 189 boys). They used Morgan-Jinks Student Efficacy Scale. They measured academic achievement by grade point average. Autonomous evaluation of academic achievement was measured by perceived self-evaluation of academic achievement. Approach to learning we measured with The Revised Study Process Questionnaire. Their assumption about the correlation of all variables monitored (only with exception of the surface approach to learning) was confirmed. They identified that academic self-efficacy constitutes an important predictor of heteronomous evaluation of academic achievement. Similarly, Oyuga, Raburu and Aloka (2019) study investigated the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic performance among orphaned secondary school students in Kenya. The research was anchored on Social Cognitive theory. The study adopted concurrent triangulation research design within the mixed method approach. The target population comprised 300 orphaned students and 35 principals. A total of 300 orphaned students in secondary schools and 11 principals were selected through saturated and simple random sampling strategies respectively to form the representative sample. Students' questionnaires, document analysis and interview guide for the head teachers were the main data collection instruments. In ensuring reliability, a pilot study was carried out using 75 students from and 5 head teachers from Rarieda Sub-Country who were not part of the representative sample in the study. Validity of research instrument was ensured by the university lecturers' and supervisors' expert judgment. A reliability coefficient of 0.891 was reported. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentages) and inferential statistics (Pearson correlation and regression analysis) while qualitative data was analyzed using thematic analysis. SPSS version 24 was used to conduct the analyses. Study findings revealed a significant weak (small) positive relationships between self-efficacy belief and academic performance ($r= .276$). Results from the interviews revealed that self-efficacy is a vital component of academic performances amongst orphan students in Bondo Sub-County.

The study of Obochi as cited in Ibrahim (2018), focused on the relationships between self-esteem, causal attributions and academic achievement in secondary school students in Bwari Area Council of Federal Capital Territory. The research sought to find out how self-esteem and causal attribution interact with the of students' academic achievement. The design of the study was survey and sample size was 191 participant comprising 90 males and 101 females from five secondary schools in Bwari Area Council, FCT. Two standardized questionnaires were used, the Academic Causal Attribution Scale which is a five point scale questionnaire and Rosenberg Self Esteem Scale which is a four point scale questionnaire. Academic achievement was measured by the term result of a standardized examination given to the students by the education board. The data were analysed using Pearson product Moment Correlation to test relationships and Independent sample t-test to test differences between variables. At 0.01 level of significant, self- esteem was positively associated with academic achievement so also internal attribution for success. At 0.05 significant level, external attributions for success was negatively related to academic achievement. At 0.01 alpha level, external attributions for failure was related to academic achievement.

All secondary students desire success academically, but are driven by different motives and different stimuli for attainment of the success. Students do different things to attain desired academic performance. Some students lack self-confidence and may resort to examination malpractice for their test scores. Some are studious but still do not do very well in their educational pursuit, some have examination phobia maybe due to some unpleasant situations experienced at younger age in school that has resulted in apathy in schooling. While some students attribute their successes and failures to outside factors like their luck, teachers and other influential persons; some accept total responsibility for their successes and failures. Some students level of achievement is dependent upon the level of motivation they get from people directly or indirectly (Basturk, 2010). Though there may be other factors like social and environmental factors that militate against students' achievement, this study is interested in finding out the magnitude and relationship of two variables: students' causal attribution for failure and academic self-efficacy. The interest is due to the fact that the two variables are resident in the students. And the researcher believes that if properly and adequately addressed, students' academic achievement

will be improved. And the findings of this nature will be significant because it will be of benefit to stakeholders, subject or curriculum designers, teachers, students, examination bodies, school administrators and counselors. Therefore, this study investigated causal attribution for failure and academic self-efficacy as factors relating to academic achievement of secondary school students in Okene-Kogi state. With a view to ascertain the relationship that exists between students' internal causal attribution for failure, external causal attribution for failure, academic self-efficacy with their academic achievement.

Objectives of the study

1. To find out the relationship that exists between students' internal causal attribution for failure and their academic achievement.
2. To examine the relationship between students' external causal attribution for failure and their academic achievement.
3. To examine the relationship between students' academic self-efficacy and their academic achievement.

Research Questions

The study sought answer to the following research questions.

1. What is the relationship between students' internal causal attributions for failure and academic achievement among Senior Secondary Schools in Okene?
2. What is the relationship between students' external causal attributions for failure and academic achievement among Senior Secondary Schools in Okene?
3. Is there any relationship between students' academic self-efficacy and the academic achievement among Senior Secondary Schools in Okene?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- Ho₁: There is no significant relationship between students' internal causal attribution for failure and their academic achievement.
- Ho₂: There is no significant relationship between students' external causal attribution for failure and their academic achievement.
- Ho₃: There is no significant relationship between students' academic self-efficacy and their academic achievement.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a correlational design as it tried to examine the relationship between variables. The population of this study comprised the total number of two thousand six hundred and thirty-nine (2639) public senior secondary II students in Okene, Kogi State of Nigeria. The sample size is three hundred and thirty-five (335) SS II students, which were randomly selected from five (5) senior secondary schools. This size was determined using Research Advisor's table (2005) for determining sample size from a given population, which stated that a given population with ranges of 2600 to 2779 should be represented with 335 sample size. Simple random sampling technique involving balloting method was used to select the number of schools. A questionnaire titled Causal Attribution and Self-Efficacy Questionnaire was used, it was extracted from the Academic Causal Attribution Scale (A.C.A.S), which was designed by Balarabe (2007). All the items in the CASQ were measured on a Likert Scale; its required the respondents to indicate whether they strongly agreed (SA), agreed (A), not sure (NS), disagreed (DA), or strongly disagreed (SD) to statement on the scale. Copies of the adapted instrument were given to 3 experts in Educational Psychology, Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling, Ahmadun Bello University, Zaria to validate in terms of looking and observing the instruments to ascertain their appropriateness and effectiveness with reference to the research objectives. Their input of modifying and improving the instruments make it appropriate for use in this study. To establish the reliability of the data collection instrument, a pilot testing was conducted in three populated schools, which are not part of the schools selected for the study. On-spot mode of assessment was administered. Fifty (50) questionnaires were distributed to 25 male and 25 female students. The data collected were coded and analysed using Guttman Split-Half method of estimating reliability co-efficient to measure the internal consistency. Academic Causal Attribution Scale has reliability figure of 0.93. The data obtained were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), mean standard deviation was used to analysed the research questions while Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistics was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significant.

III. RESULT

Research Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between internal causal attributions for failure and students' academic achievement in Okene, Kogi State.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation statistics on the relationship between students' internal causal attribution and academic achievement.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev	Df	r	p-value
Internal causal attribution	149	70.99	6.40	147	0.317**	0.000
Academic achievement	149	37.28	4.30			

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The Correlation result between students' internal causal attributions for failure and academic achievement were computed and presented in table 1. The result revealed weak relationship between these two variables ($r = 0.317$, $p = 0.000$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, it could be said that there is significant but a weak relationship between internal causal attributions for failure and academic achievement.

Research Hypothesis Two: *There is no significant relationship between students' external causal attribution for failure and their academic achievement in Okene, Kogi State.*

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation statistics on the relationship between students' external causal attribution and academic achievement.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	r	p-value
External causal attribution for failure	170	26.6176	6.61695	168	0.927**	0.001
Students' academic achievement	170	42.34	6.807			

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation result between students' external causal attributions and academic achievement were computed and presented in table 2. The result revealed strong inverse relationship between these two variables ($r = 0.927$, $p = 0.000$). Thus, the null hypothesis is rejected. Consequently, this indicated that there is significant relationship between external causal attributions and academic achievement. As students' external causal attribution for failure increases, their academic achievement tends to decrease.

Research Hypothesis Three: *There is no significant relationship between students' academic self-efficacy and academic achievement among senior secondary schools in Okene, Kogi state.*

Table 3: Relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic achievement.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	df	r	p-value
Students self-efficacy	319	47.95	13.70	317	0.897**	0.000
Students' academic achievement	319	31.13	7.63			

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 2 revealed a positive significant relationship between students' academic self-efficacy and their academic achievement ($r=0.897$, $p = 0.000$). Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between students' academic self-efficacy and students' academic achievement in Okene-Kogi state is rejected.

Findings

- Significant positive relationship exists between student's internal causal attribution for failure and their academic achievement ($r = 0.317$, $p = 0.000$).

- Significance inverse relationship exists between students' external causal attribution for failure and academic achievement ($r = -0.927$, $p = 0.000$).
- Significant positive relationship exists between students' academic self-efficacy and their academic achievement ($r = 0.897$, $p = 0.000$).

IV. DISCUSSION OF RESULT

Relationship between students' internal causal attributions for failure and Academic Achievement: results revealed a weak relationship between internal causal attributions for failure and academic achievement, while significant inverse exists relationship between external causal attributions for failure and academic achievement of students. Attributions such as efforts, good teacher, and good schools, schools' facilities, environment, being calm and lack of luck were most common reasons pointed out by the respondents to explain their experiences of academic success and failure. They tended to attribute their success or failure to efforts and teacher influence. This result confirmed Sambo and Muhammed (2015) which depicted that there were no significant correlations among the causal attributions factors and academic attainment of students except with external attribution of failure in which significant correlation was established with academic attainment. Also, the study of Mkumbo and Amani (2012), the results show that the majority of students attributed their academic performance to internal, stable and controllable factors. High performing students were more likely to attribute their academic performance to internal and controllable factors than low performing students. Success was attributed to internal and controllable factors, while academic failure was attributed to external and uncontrollable factors. Also, relationship exist between students' academic self-efficacy and Academic Achievement, the results revealed a significant relationship between the two variables. This indicated that students' academic self-efficacy is a strong influence on the academic achievement of students. This study is inline with the study of Vereová and Foglová (2017) which identified that academic self-efficacy constitutes an important predictor of heteronomous evaluation of academic achievement. And also, the result of Oyuga, Raburu, Aloka (2019) study indicated that self-efficacy is a vital component of academic performances amongst orphan students in Bondo Sub-County.

V. CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that relationship exists between students' internal causal attributions for failure and academic achievement. It is concluded that external causal attribution has strong inverse relationship with students' academic achievement; the higher external causal attribution the lower academic performance of students which constitutes serious problems that distract the students from maximum academic achievement. Whenever a student performed well it is actually their effort and ability, but when its happened the other way, its the teachers fault, luck, subject difficulties. More so, relationship exists between students' academic self-efficacy and academic achievement; whenever a student over believe that he/she knows a particular task, they tend to over relax without reading their books which affect their academic achievement negatively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are hereby put forward:

1. Adequate measures should be made by both parents and teachers to sensitize their students from the unproductive internal belief and to know that effort must be incorporated with belief for them to succeed academically.
2. Curriculum planners, educators and stakeholders should bear in mind and make decision based on students' attribution style that will hopefully keep their positive attitude to school and learning.
3. The students should be discourage from over confidence and believe, they should rather be encourage to apply knowledge and skills taught through feedback and assignment by the teachers.

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