

## PERSONAL AND SOCIAL FACTORS AS CORRELATES OF ACADEMIC UNDERACHIEVEMENT AMONG STUDENTS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

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### Abstract

*This study examined academic underachievement among students with hearing impairment in Ibadan, Nigeria. A descriptive research design of correlational type was adopted. Purposive sampling technique was used to select 60 students with hearing impairment from two schools in Ibadan, Nigeria. Data were collected with the Academic Underachievement Questionnaire (AUQ) which consists of four sections which are Peer Influence Scale ( $r = .877$ ), Self-concept scale ( $r = .653$ ), School environment Scale ( $r = .265$ ) and Teachers' effectiveness Scale ( $r = .303$ ). Three research questions were raised to guide the conduct of the study. Data were analyzed using frequency count, percentage, Pearson Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis. Peer influence, self-concept, school environment and teachers' effectiveness had significant correlation with academic underachievement among students with hearing impairment. All the independent variables jointly contributed to academic underachievement of the respondents. Using the standardized regression coefficient to determine the relative contribution of Peer Influence ( $\beta=0.954$   $t=9.856$ ,  $p< 0.05$ ) indicates most potent contributor to the prediction, followed by Self Concept ( $\beta=0.707$   $t=5.60$ ,  $p< 0.05$ ), Teachers' effectiveness ( $\beta=0.27$   $t=3.879$ ,  $p< 0.05$ ) and School Environment ( $\beta=0.214$   $t=2.185$ ,  $p< 0.05$ ). Therefore, students with hearing impairment should be assisted by their teachers to tackle all the factors that are capable of causing academic underachievement among them.*

**Keywords:** Academic underachievement, Self-concept, Peer influence, School environment, Teachers, Effectiveness.

### Introduction

The rate of underachievement among secondary school students is of great concern to researchers and other stakeholders in the field of special needs education. For instance, Isaiah (2010) submitted that the academic implication of hearing impairment of secondary school students with hearing loss is worrisome. The presence in a student with hearing impairment of five or more of the following indicators should lead teachers to suspect under functioning: inconsistent pattern of achievement in schoolwork, Inconsistent pattern of achievements

within a subject area, discrepancy between ability and achievements, with ability much higher, lack of concentration, daydreaming, clowning and other work-avoidance strategies, poor study habits, non-completion or avoidance of assignments, refusal to write anything down, over activity and restlessness, over assertive and aggressive or over submissive and timid social behavior, Inability to form and maintain social relationships with peers, inability to deal with failures and avoidance of success.

Academic Underachievement is defined as failure to meet the academic requirements of the school setting (Connor, 2009). One might think that underachieving students lack motivation, but Mandel and Marcus (as cited in Reiss, 2008) assert that underachievers are, in fact, highly motivated in directions other than getting good grades. This acknowledges that academic underachievement can also result from extracurricular circumstances that distract youngsters from paying attention to their schoolwork. Young people who fail to utilize their potential waste educational and occupational opportunities that are within their reach.

Butler-Por (2006) argues that underachievement is not caused primarily by inability to do better, but by either a conscious or unconscious choice. There are several models in the theoretical literature attempting to describe origins of underachievement among students. Typically, individual, family and school related factors are discussed as contributing to underachievement.

A model can be used to predict underachievement status among underachieving students. Individual etiologic model: Based in the “medical model” tradition within psychology and education, the individual difference approach holds that the roots of underachievement lie within the child (Baker 1998). From this perspective underachievement is usually attributed to motivational or behavioural /emotional problems on the part of the student. Weaknesses in the academic and “school survival” skills also contribute to problems on the part of the student.

Self-concept is a collection of beliefs about oneself that includes elements such as academic performance, gender identity, sexual identity and racial identity. As Tabone (2011) reported, self-concept is a type of self-appraisal that is created through interaction with one’s environment and the influence of significant others. It is one’s self-perception surmised from attitudes, feelings, and knowledge about one’s skills, abilities, appearance, and social acceptance. Green et al. (2006) believed that positive self-concept would be an extremely important goal for educational programs to promote, and held that it was linked to positive outcomes including higher academic achievement and effort. The development of self-concept starts from birth. This is first evidenced through the emotional attachment of the child and the mother. The quality of interactions may contribute to or weaken the self-concept of the student. Students’ positive perception is helpful in achieving success throughout life, while the success in learner’s lives depends not only on cognitive ability, but also on emotional skills (Gliebe 2012).

Zelege (2004) compared two types of self-concept for students: social (general) and academic. Social self-concept includes a more global understanding of the student, in terms of popularity, appearance etc. academic self-concept is related to how a student perceives himself or herself as a student. The researcher believed that social self-concept was less understood as a factor to academic success than academic self-concept. With regard to

academic self-concept, Manning et al (2006) posited that it has two levels and relates to how well we do in school or how we learn. While the first level deals with the general academic self-concept of how good one is in all subjects, the other has to do with asset of specific content related to self-concept that describes how good one is in Mathematics, Science, Social studies or English Language.

According to the frame of reference model, academic self-concept will depend on a student's own academic ability and the ability level of other students within the same class. When a student perceives himself or herself as the best in class, he or she tends to hold a positive self-concept of him or herself (Acosta, 2007).

Peer Influence refers to the influence exerted by a peer group in encouraging a person change his or her attitudes, values in order to conform to group norms (Kirk, 2000). Peer group is an important socialization agent. Involving in peer activities is a primary stage of development for school-aged children. Many students see some of their peers as role models. Teachers, parents and peers all provide adolescents with suggestions and feedback about what they should think and how they should behave in social situations. These models can be a source of motivation or lack thereof.

Lockwood, Jordan and Kunda (2002) classify role models into two, namely positive role models and negative role models. Positive role model, they say, refers to individuals who have achieved outstanding success and are widely expected to improve others to pursue similar excellence. Negative role model on the other hand, refers to the individuals who have experienced misfortunes and are widely expected to motivate people to take the steps necessary to avoid similar unpleasant outcomes. Positive role models can inspire one by illustrating an ideal desired, self-highlighting possible achievement that one can strive for, and the root for achieving them. Negative role model can inspire one by illustrating disasters and highlighting mistakes that must be avoided. Peer group is a key part of a child's development process, they can have a negative effect on young people due to peer pressure, which is the pressure from others in certain activities, and peer conformity, which is the degree to which an individual adopts actions that are sanctioned by their peer group.

The influence of conducive school environment on academic performance cannot be underestimated. Any school environment that is not conducive for learning may lead to underachievement. Provision of adequate learning facilities at all levels including equipment and human resources enhances the quality and relevance of imparted skills of students. Demir (2009). Learning involves interaction of learners with the environment.

School environment, positive or negative, affects students' sense of safety and their risk for delinquency. Students will actively avoid schools that have an unpleasant environment or schools where they feel out of place. A negative school environment also increases risks of serious violent behaviour. A conducive school environment must be a physical environment that is welcoming and conducive for learning, a social environment that promotes communication and interaction, an affective environment that promotes a sense of belonging and self-esteem and an academic environment that promotes learning and self-fulfillment. Teachers' effectiveness has been accepted as a multidimensional construct since it measures a variety of different aspects of teaching such as: subject mastery, effective communication,

lesson preparation and presentation. The influence of teachers' teaching effectiveness on the learning outcome of learners as measured by learners' academic performance has been the subject of several studies. Effective teaching is a significant factor of students' academic achievement. Therefore, effective teachers should produce students of higher academic performance.

It is assumed that the school, teacher, peer and the students' factors have a large influence on the academic underachievement of students with hearing impairment. Therefore, it is imperative to study the personal and school factors as correlates of academic underachievement among students with hearing impairment.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Students with hearing impairment have been known to always lag behind in their academics which are as a result of social and personal factors. They do not believe that they can succeed in school which makes most of them find it difficult to perform well in their academic work. This emanates from their inability to hear which gives them the impression that they cannot succeed in life. Consequently, majority of them are not interested in learning which may lead to underachievement.

Academic underachievement is a common occurrence among the students with hearing impairment despite the studies by various researchers on academic underachievement among secondary students. This study therefore, examined personal and social factors as correlates of academic underachievement among students with hearing impairment in Ibadan, Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions were answered in the study:

1. Is there any significant relationship among the independent variables (self concept, peer influence, school environment and teachers' effectiveness) and the dependent variable (academic underachievement) among students with hearing impairment?
2. What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (self-concept, peer influence, school environment and teachers' effectiveness) to academic underachievement among students with hearing impairment?
3. What is the joint contribution of the independent variables (self-concept, peer influence, school environment and teachers' effectiveness) to academic underachievement among students with hearing impairment?

### **Methodology**

The research design used for this study was a descriptive survey research design of correlational type. This design was appropriate for the study because the researchers examined the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable and the variables of interest were not manipulated. A total of 60 secondary school students with hearing impairment were selected from Ijokodo School for the Deaf, Ijokodo, Ibadan and Andrew Foster School for the Deaf, Ibadan using purposive sampling technique. The major instrument for data collection in this study was tagged "Academic Underachievement Questionnaire." The questionnaire consists of two sections. That is, section A and B. Section A contains information on respondents' bio data while the section B forms the main body of the questionnaire with ten items each on Peer Influence, Self-Concept, School Environment

and Teachers' Effectiveness with respect to academic underachievement among students with hearing impairment. The respondents were required to respond to the items by indicating their levels of agreement or disagreement with the items in a scale comprising: Strongly Agree (SA), Strongly Disagree (SD) Agree (A) and Disagree (D). The researchers administered the questionnaire on the respondents and the data collected were analyzed using frequency count, percentage, Pearson product moment correlation and multiple regression analysis.

## Results

Three research questions were raised and answered thus:

Research Question 1: Is there any significant relationship between the independent variables (self-concept, peer influence, school environment and teachers' effectiveness) and the dependent variable (academic underachievement) among students with hearing impairment?

**Table 1:** Pearson Product Moment Correlation showing the relationship between self concept, peer influence, school environment and teachers' effectiveness and academic underachievement

| Variables                 | Mean  | S.D   | N  | R      | P    | Remark |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|----|--------|------|--------|
| Academic underachievement | 20.33 | 3.592 | 60 | -      | -    | -      |
| Peer Influence            | 21.77 | 4.685 |    | .877** | .000 | Sig.   |
| Self Concept              | 21.17 | 4.503 |    | .653*  | .000 | Sig.   |
| School Environment        | 21.57 | 6.026 |    | .265** | .041 | Sig.   |
| Teachers' effectiveness   | 22.72 | 6.564 |    | .303** | .019 | Sig.   |

Table 1 shows that peer influence ( $r=.877$ ,  $N=60$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), self-concept ( $r=.653$ ,  $N=60$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), school environment ( $r=.265$ ,  $N=60$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) and teachers' effectiveness ( $r=.303$ ,  $N=60$ ,  $p<0.05$ ) had significant relationship with underachievement among students with hearing impairment.

Research Question 2: What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (self concept, peer influence, school environment and teachers' effectiveness) to academic underachievement among students with hearing impairment?

**Table 2:** Summary of Regression Analysis of the combined prediction of self concept, peer influence, school environment and teachers' effectiveness on academic underachievement

|                          |                |          |             |                   |                            |        |
|--------------------------|----------------|----------|-------------|-------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| .R                       |                | R Square |             | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |        |
| 0.898                    |                | 0.807    |             | 0.793             | 1.635                      |        |
| SUMMARY REGRESSION ANOVA |                |          |             |                   |                            |        |
|                          | Sum of Squares | Df       | Mean Square | F                 | P                          | Remark |
| Regression               | 614.363        | 4        | 153.591     |                   |                            |        |
| Residual                 | 146.971        | 55       | 2.672       |                   |                            |        |
| Total                    | 761.333        | 59       |             |                   |                            |        |

Table 2 shows that there is a significant joint contribution of self-concept, peer influence, school environment and teachers' effectiveness to academic underachievement among students with hearing impairment. The table also shows a coefficient of multiple correlations

(R) of 0.898 and a multiple R square of 0.807. This means that 79.3% (Adj. R<sup>2</sup>=0.793) of the variance in the academic underachievement is accounted for by the independent variables, when taken together. The significance of joints contribution was tested at  $p < 0.05$  using the F-ratio at the degree of freedom (df-4/55). The table also shows that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded a F-ratio of 57.477 (significant at 0.05 level). It implies that there was a joint contribution of self concept, peer influence, school environment and teachers effectiveness on academic underachievement.

Research Question 3: What is the joint contribution of the independent variables (self concept, peer influence, school environment and teachers' effectiveness) to academic underachievement among students with hearing impairment?

**Table 3:** Relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variables (Test of significance of the regression coefficients)

| Variable                | Unstandardized Coefficients |       | Standardized Coefficients | T     | Sig. | Remark |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-------|---------------------------|-------|------|--------|
|                         | (B)                         | Std.  | Beta                      |       |      |        |
| Model                   | (B)                         | Std.  | Beta                      | T     | Sig. | Remark |
| Constant                | 6.377                       | 1.096 | -                         | 5.818 | .000 | -      |
| Peer Influence          | .732                        | .074  | .954                      | 9.856 | .000 | Sig.   |
| Self Concept            | .056                        | .090  | .707                      | 5.630 | .005 | Sig.   |
| School Environment      | .013                        | .069  | .214                      | 2.185 | .009 | Sig.   |
| Teachers' Effectiveness | .127                        | .068  | .327                      | 3.879 | .007 | Sig.   |

Table 3 reveals that there was a significant relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights. The correlation coefficients of self-concept, peer influence, school environment and teachers' effectiveness on academic underachievement. Using the standardized regression coefficient to determine the relative contributions of the independent variables, Peer Influence ( $\beta = 0.954$ ,  $t = 9.856$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) indicates most potent contributor to the prediction, follow by Self concept ( $\beta = 0.707$ ,  $t = 5.630$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ), Teachers' effectiveness ( $\beta = 0.327$ ,  $t = 3.879$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) and school environment ( $\beta = 0.214$ ,  $t = 2.185$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). It implies that there was a significant relative contribution of the independent variables (self-concept, peer influence, school environment and teachers' effectiveness) to the dependent variable (Academic underachievement) among students with hearing impairment.

## Discussion

The finding of this study reveals that personal and social factors had significant relationship with underachievement among students with hearing impairment. The finding corroborates with Gliebe (2012) that personal and social factors are helpful in achieving success throughout life among students with hearing impairment, while their academic success depend not only on cognitive ability, but also on other personal and environmental factors. Agharuwhe (2013) found that teachers' attribute has significant relationship with students' academic performance.

The finding from research question two shows that there is a significant joint contribution of self-concept, peer influence, school environment and teachers' effectiveness to academic

underachievement among students with hearing impairment. The finding is in line with Nambaya (2013) who reported that any school environment that is not conducive for learning may lead to underachievement among the learners.

The findings from research question three shows that there is a significant relative contribution of the independent variables to dependent variable. That is, the relative contributions of the independent variables, Peer Influence indicates most potent contributor to the prediction, followed by Self-concept, Teachers' effectiveness and school environment has a contribution to academic underachievement. This result is in line with that of Reis and McCoach (2009) who reported that positive peer influence contributed to some students' underachievement, but negative peer attitudes can often account for underachievement. Also, other personal and school-related factors were responsible for underachievement among secondary school students

### **Conclusion**

Personal and school factors are variables that can correlate academic underachievement among students with hearing impairment. From the findings of this study, the abilities of these factors on academic underachievement of students with hearing impairment are obvious. Factors such as peer influence, self-concept, school environment and teachers' effectiveness, significantly related to the academic underachievement among students with hearing impairment in Oyo State, Ibadan.

Also, through the findings of the study, it was observed that peer influence is the most potent contributor to academic underachievement among students with hearing impairment followed by self -concept, teacher's effectiveness and school environment. Although the influence of these factors varies, as some have more significance than the others, all of them are important predictors and should, be taken seriously in order to challenge students with hearing impairment for higher academic achievement. The research reveals that all of the four independent variables can lead to underachievement among students with hearing impairment.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are made based on the findings of the study:

1. The students with hearing impairment should be helped by the teachers to believe in their abilities to compete favourably with their hearing counterparts.
2. Seminars, workshops should be organized for teachers of students with hearing impairment on the appropriate methodologies for teaching students with hearing impairment.
3. Government should improve on the provision of instructional materials to make learning meaningful for students with hearing impairment.
4. Specially trained teachers who have skills in teaching students with hearing impairment should be employed so that teaching and learning process can be successful.
5. Students with hearing impairment should be made to understand the importance of striving for excellence and working towards achieving educational goals.

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