**PSYCHOLOGICAL VARIABLES AND STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SOCIAL STUDIES IN UYO LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study was conducted to investigate the impact of psychological variables on students academic performance. It specifically sought to determine the influence of self-efficacy, motivation, and learning experiences on academic performance. The study was anchored on the Social Learning Theory while reviewing related literature. The survey research design was employed and a sample size of 293 were recruited from seven secondary schools in Uyo metropolis. The instrument of the questionnaire was used to elicit responses from the students participants. The Pearson moment correlation was used to determine the relationship between the variables and students academic performance. Results from the analysis revealed that there is a significant positive relationship between self-efficacy, motivation, learning strategies and academic performance. This study recommends that parents should always assist their children/wards with school home-works and during this moment interact with them in order to identify how these factors affect their performance. On the other hand, teachers and school administrators have a responsibility to initiate, develop, or adopt better learning strategies in order to ensure good comprehension by students and boost their academic performance in social studies.

**CHAPTER ONE**

**INTRODUCTION**

* 1. **Background to the study**

A person's entire existence is frequently determined by the quantity of knowledge he or she accumulates and how much of that knowledge is applied to the advancement of the individual, the nation, and the entire globe. This provides the justification for the requirement for education. Knowledge is the fundamental thing that one gains from school. One learns about a variety of subjects, from political science to literature to mathematics. The worldly information we acquire via school has a significant impact on our future and enables us to comprehend events in a way that is much more coherent. While student academic achievement serves as a gauge of educational accomplishment.

Studies in educational psychology place a strong emphasis on the contribution of psychological factors to knowledge acquisition processes as well as academic achievement and performance (Kyndt, Coertjens, van Daal, Donche, Gijbels, & Van Petegem 2015). Three psychological factors—perceptions of one's own efficacy, motivation to study, and learning strategies—seem to be key for student learning and academic achievement. Self-efficacy perception is defined as a person's conviction in their own ability to plan and carry out actions to attain specific goals (Bandura, 2017), and it plays a crucial role in learning as well as how people create and live their lives (Bandura, 2017). From the perspective of human agency, people have control over the effects of their acts, according to the Social Cognitive Theory (Schunk and Dibenedetto, 2015). Self-efficacy beliefs determine how committed students are to reaching their academic goals in the educational context, which affects their final academic success (Long and cumming, 2013).

Self-efficacy is a definite predictor of motivation and learning, according to Zimmerman (2000). Numerous research examining students' self-efficacy in secondary schools show its impact on their efforts, perseverance in carrying out an activity, learning new abilities, and ultimately, the academic achievements attained (Pajares, 2016). When analyzing the relationship between secondary school students' academic performance and self-efficacy, Komarraju and Nadler (2013) emphasize the crucial role of the latter as a variable that promotes the use of learning strategies and other essential resources for successful academic performance. Recent studies that examined the relationship between self-efficacy beliefs and learning strategies (Martins & Santos, 2018; Santos, Ferraz, & Inácio, 2019) or academic satisfaction (Santos, Ferraz, & Inácio, 2019) found positive correlations between these variables and emphasized the significance of developing new studies and proposals for intervention based on self-efficacy given its high potential to enhance adaptation processes and the academic success of students.

In addition to being closely tied to self-efficacy, motivation is an essential factor in understanding human behavior. It can be characterized as internal mechanisms that motivate and direct action (Seli & Dembo, 2012), or, put another way, as the readiness to exert physical or mental effort in pursuit of an objective or result (Meece & Pintrich, 2012). Theorists in this area, most notably those who created the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), see it as a continuum with demotivation, extrinsic motivation, and its various forms of regulation (from the most external to integrated regulation) at one end and intrinsic motivation at the other. Extrinsic motivation, in its most extreme form, is typically defined as behavior driven by the desire to avoid punishment and the pursuit of reward or recognition, whereas intrinsic motivation is defined as behavior driven by choice, interest, or pleasure (Sogunro, 2015; Bzuneck & Boruchovitch, 2019; Ryan & Deci, 2020). People can behave out of value for an activity or out of personal interest, but they can also act out of coercion or fear, for example. Motivation comes in many different kinds.

In this context, the term "academic motivation" refers to a student's propensity to pursue educational endeavors that are both personally meaningful and beneficial (Zeynali, Pishghadam & Hosseini Fatemi, 2019). Thus, the level of student involvement in the learning process is correlated with motivation. Studies in this area show that students achieve more academically when they are motivated by intrinsic or autonomous factors, i.e., when they learn how to complete tasks because they truly want to learn them or when they understand how crucial the task is to their own learning (Kyndt, Coertjens, van Daal, Donche, Gijbels, & Van Petegem 2015). Learning strategies, which are the methods, procedures, or actions used by students to complete a task or attain learning goals, are a third psychological factor that is crucial for academic achievement (Oliveira & Caliatto, 2018; Weinstein & Acee, 2018). Despite the various taxonomies found in the research, according to Boruchovitch & Santos (2006), learning techniques can be divided into two main categories: cognitive and metacognitive (Seli & Dembo, 2012). Metacognitive strategies involve the planning, monitoring, and control of cognitive, motivational, affective, and behavioral factors involved in the learning process. Cognitive strategies are related to the organization, treatment, and storage of information (Weinstein, Acee & Jung, 2011; Boruchovitch & Santos, 2015; Weinstein & Acee, 2018). The deliberate application of learning strategies encourages introspection and self-evaluation as well as variety in study techniques, leading to enhanced academic performance (Weinstein & Acee, 2018). According to studies, the application of learning techniques is associated with academic performance (Wang, Kim, Bong, & Ahn 2013). Additionally, there is a moderate to high association between learning techniques, self-efficacy, and motivation (Martins & Santos, 2018). It implies a relationship between these three factors and a potential mutual impact on university students' academic performance and learning. Also, according to the findings of certain studies, college students do not always have appropriate learning strategies, or they use them improperly, which shows that it is important for interventions to foster the development of such strategies (Lins, 2014).

* 1. **Statement of the problem**

Students have a propensity to struggle with a variety of psychological issues if they do not possess the intellectual skills that are required of them in the classroom. There is growing worry over the number of students who are switching from rigorous academic pursuit to social networking. The ability to assume the necessary intelligence and acuity to be a scholar may not be available to students who do not possess stable and adaptable psychological dispositions. Students who lack a scholarly attitude are less committed to their studies and other school-related activities. This may be the cause of the high failure rate in courses like social studies on internal examination. Additionally, a lack of a scholarly attitude has a strong likelihood of preventing students from engaging in active academic activities, which exposes them to social vices. Taking into account the significance of this topic and the significance of the aforementioned variables for understanding academic performance in secondary schools. It is against this background that this study seeks to investigate the impact of self-efficacy beliefs, motivation to learn, and learning strategies on students' academic performance in social studies.

* 1. **Purpose of the study**

The main purpose is to investigate the effect of psychological variables on students academic performance in social studies. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine the impact of self-efficacy beliefs in students academic performance in social studies.
2. Assess the role of motivation in enhancing students academic performance in social studies
3. Ascertain the impact of learning strategies on students academic performance in social studies.
   1. **Research questions**

The following research questions were raised for this study:

1. What is the impact of self-efficacy in students academic performance in social studies?
2. What is the role of motivation on students academic performance in social studies?

How does learning strategies impact on students academic performance in social studies?

* 1. **Hypotheses**

For the purpose of this study, the following hypotheses were formulated:

**H01:** There is no significant relationship between self-efficacy and improved students academic performance in social studies.

**H02:** There is no significant relationship between motivation and students academic performance in social studies

**H01:** There is no significant relationship between learning strategies and improved students academic performance in social studies.

* 1. **Significance of the study**

The relevance of this study to students is illustrated by the fact that it sheds light on the elements wholly or partially accountable for their academic success in social studies. This study would be helpful to social studies teachers as well because it clarifies the psychological factors affecting students' success in social studies. As a result of this research, educational authorities may be able to better implement policies that direct the influence of psychological characteristics in the proper directions, which would be a win-win for everyone involved.

* 1. **Delimitation of the study**

First, the investigation was delimited to the metropolitan area of Uyo. The findings may or may not be applicable to other geographical areas. Second, the study was restricted to junior secondary school pupils as the study's target population. Thirdly, the scope of the study is confined to employing a convenience sample to select secondary schools and a simple random sample to select participants. Finally, the study population was restricted to 1,217 individuals. A population sample of 304 students from the specified secondary school were enrolled.

* 1. **Limitations of the study**

Limitations refers to possible flaws that are beyond the researcher's control. Limits are intrinsic restrictions resulting from the research design and technique. These components turn the investigation into a rigorous scientific examination. Two limitations were noted by the researcher during the course of this study. First, this study was limited to the students who took part to fill out a copy of the questionnaire, thereby limiting the amount of data collected. The way that data was gathered is the second restriction.

* 1. **Assumptions of the study**

This study assumes that there is a relationship between psychological variables and students academic performance. Also, the researcher assumes that the participants understands the content of the questionnaire and the responses given are true.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter reviewed the related literature under the following sub-headings: theoretical framework, conceptual framework and empirical framework.

**2.1. Theoretical Review**

**Social Learning Theory (SLT) by Albert Bandura**

This theory is based on the idea that we learn from our interactions with others in a social context. Separately, by observing the behaviors of others, people develop similar behaviors. After observing the behavior of others, people assimilate and imitate that behavior, especially if their observational experiences are positive ones or include rewards related to the observed behavior.

According to Bandura, imitation involves the actual reproduction of observed motor activities. The SLT has become perhaps the most influential theory of learning and development. It is rooted in many of the basic concepts of traditional learning theory. This theory has often been called a bridge between behaviorist learning theories and cognitive learning theories because it encompasses attention, memory, and motivation. (Muro & Jeffrey 2008). However, on this regards, Bandura believes that direct reinforcement could not account for all types of learning. For that reason, in his theory he added a social element, arguing that people can learn new information and behaviors by watching other people. According to the elements of this theory there are three general principles for learning from each other.

**SLT Concepts**

Based on the literature, there are concepts in SLT. Firstly, people can learn through observation which is known as observational learning. Secondly, mental states are important factor for learning it is also named as intrinsic reinforcement.

**Observational Learning**

In 1961 Bandura conducted his famous experiment known as the Bobo doll experiment, to study patterns of behavior, at least in part, by social learning theory, and that similar behaviors were learned by individuals shaping their own behavior after the actions of models. Bandura's results from the Bobo Doll Experiment changed the course of modern psychology, and were widely credited for helping shift the focus in academic psychology from pure behaviorism to cognitive. The experiment is among the most lauded and celebrated of psychological experiments. (Newman, 2007). The study was significant because it departed from behaviorism’s insistence that all behavior is directed by reinforcement or rewards. The children received no encouragement or incentives to beat up the doll; they were simply imitating the behavior they had observed. Bandura termed this phenomena observational learning and characterized the elements of effective observational learning as attention, retention, reciprocation and motivation. He demonstrated that children learn and imitate behaviors which they have observed in other people.

**Intrinsic Reinforcement**

One of the other formats of learning is described as a form of internal reward, such as pride, satisfaction, and a sense of accomplishment. Based on some researchers’ view such as Muro and Jeffrey (2008), which supported Bandura’s SLT concepts, this kind of learning also emphasis on internal thoughts and cognitions and it can help connect learning theories to cognitive developmental theories. On this regards, Bandura (1986), criticized this process and believed that external, environmental reinforcement is not the only factor to influence learning and behavior.

**Constructivism Learning Theory**

The theory of learning known as constructivism is predicated on the concept that students actually construct their own learning by drawing on the experiences they have had in the past. Students incorporate what they are being taught into their existing bodies of information and experiences, so producing a reality that is singular to each individual student. This learning paradigm emphasizes education as a dynamic, participatory process that is very individualistic and tailored to the specific needs of each student. Constructivism is an approach that can assist educators in comprehending the reality that every student will bring their own unique history to class each day. In constructivist classrooms, the role of the teacher is more akin to that of a guide who assists students in developing their own learning and knowledge. They assist the person in the creation of their own world and process based on their own history. This is absolutely necessary in order to assist a wide variety of pupils in taking their personal experiences and incorporating them into their learning.

**Humanism Learning Theory**

Constructivism and humanism share very tight ties to one another. The pursuit of one's own self-actualization is front and center in the humanist philosophy. Everyone functions in accordance with a predetermined order of needs. Self-actualization is the highest level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and it refers to those fleeting times when a person thinks that all of their wants have been met and that they are their greatest possible selves. Self-actualization is the highest level of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This should be everyone's objective, however the way in which learning environments are organized can either advance toward or away from meeting these requirements. Teachers have the ability to create classroom environments that are conducive to the self-actualization of their students. The provision of a secure and pleasant learning environment, a enough quantity of food, and the required assistance can assist teachers in assisting students in meeting both their emotional and physical needs. Students will find the most success in their educational pursuits in this setting.

**Connectivism Learning Theory**

One of the most recent educational pedagogical approaches is known as connectivism. The central theme is the concept that people learn and mature as a result of the interactions they make with other people. This could be a connection with each other, or it could be a relationship with the tasks and responsibilities they have in their lives. Connections to learning can come from a variety of sources, including goals, people, and hobbies. Connectivism is a teaching strategy that can be implemented in schools with the goal of assisting students in learning by assisting them in making connections to topics that interest them. The use of digital media allows educators to build meaningful, constructive connections to students' educational experiences. Teachers can assist in the development of connections and relationships with their students as well as with the students' peer groups in order to assist kids in developing an interest in studying.

**2.1. Conceptual Review**

**The concept of Self-efficacy beliefs**

In Social Foundations of Thought and Action, Albert Bandura (1986) wrote that individuals possess a self system that enables them to exercise a measure of control over their thoughts, feelings, and actions. This self system houses one's cognitive and affective structures and includes the abilities to symbolize, learn from others, plan alternative strategies, regulate one's own behavior, and engage in self-reflection. It also plays a prominent role in providing reference mechanisms and a set of sub-functions for perceiving, regulating, and evaluating behavior, which results from the interplay between the self system and external environmental sources of influence. As such, the self system serves a self-regulatory function by providing individuals with the capability to alter their environments and influence their own actions.

Bandura (1986) considered self-reflection the most uniquely human capability, for through this form of self-referent thought people evaluate and alter their own thinking and behavior. These self-evaluations include perceptions of self-efficacy, that is, "beliefs in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to manage prospective situations". These beliefs of personal competence affect behavior in several ways. They influence the choices individuals make and the courses of action they pursue. People engage in tasks in which they feel competent and confident and avoid those in which they do not. Efficacy beliefs help determine how much effort people will expend on an activity, how long they will persevere when confronting obstacles, and how resilient they will prove in the face of adverse situations—the higher the sense of efficacy, the greater the effort, persistence, and resilience. Efficacy beliefs also influence individuals' thought patterns and emotional reactions.

People with low self-efficacy may believe that things are tougher than they really are, a belief that fosters stress, depression, and a narrow vision of how best to solve a problem. High self-efficacy, on the other hand, helps to create feelings of serenity in approaching difficult tasks and activities. As a result of these influences, self-efficacy beliefs are strong determinants and predictors of the level of accomplishment that individuals finally attain. For these reasons, Bandura argued that "beliefs of personal efficacy constitute the key factor of human agency".

Academic self-efficacy is one of the important factors influencing academic performance. Academic self-efficacy refers to the students’ beliefs and attitudes toward their capabilities to achieve academic success, as well as belief in their ability to fulfill academic tasks and the successful learning of the materials. Self-efficacy beliefs lead to the individuals’ excellent performance through increasing commitment, endeavor, and perseverance. The learners with high levels of self-efficacy attribute their failures to lower attempts rather than lower ability, while those with low self-efficacy attribute their failure to their low abilities. Therefore, self-efficacy can influence the choice of tasks and perseverance while doing them. In other words, students with low self-efficacy are more likely to be afraid of doing their tasks, avoiding, postponing, and give them up soon.

**Concept of Motivation**

The concept of motivation is closely related to other constructs in education and psychology. They include attention, needs, goals and interests which all focuses on stimulating individual learners and rising their interest and attention towards engaging in an action or behaviors and the accomplishment of such actions or goals (Fontana, 2016). The concept of motivation is functional when an individual is thrilled to satisfy some need or desire. The individual will involve in, or be attracted toward actions that are perceived as having the possibility to meet this need or desire (Tuysuz, 2010). Educational psychologists are of the view that students‟ motivation is an indispensable requirement for efficient learning to take place (Abu Bakar, 2010). Fontana (2016) believed that, in the event of insufficient motivation to learn, the outcome of such learning will be unsatisfactory (Mahyuddin, 2009). The concept of motivation has been defined differently. However, all centered on what induce a person to perform a given action.

Denhardt, Denhardt, & Aristigueta (2008) viewed motivation as “what causes people to behave as they do”. To them, motivation sketches the achievement and pursuit of goals. According to Lawler (1994) motivation is goal directed. That is individuals perform an action due to the goal they want to achieve. Pettinger (1996) took a different view in defining motivation. To him, motivation is environmentally dependent. That is people‟s action is tailored by environmental influences. Campbell and Pritchard (1976) saw motivation as series of psychological procedures that cause the initiation, direction, intensity and the persistence of actions. Denhardt, Denhardt, & Aristigueta (2008), stressed that motivation is not observe directly. They pointed out that motivation is an inner feeling that made people act in a particular way to achieve a given goal and purposes. Denhardt, Denhardt, & Aristigueta (2008), further argued that motivation can not be controlled directly They maintain that motivation occurs within individual‟s minds and hearts and should not be regarded as something that people do to others. Equally they stressed that motivation is not the same as satisfaction. To them, satisfaction is past-oriented while motivation is future oriented.

**The Concept of Learning Strategies**

Learning strategies are defined as a set of approaches that learners use to acquire information and knowledge, such as taking notes, organizing information, summarizing and coding (Muelas & Navarro, 2015). There is a difference between learning style and learning strategies. Learning style is used to describe the information processing routines associated with students' personalities, whereas learning strategies refer to students' learning approaches in specific learning activities and learning situations (Curry, 1990; Li, Medwell, Wray, Wang, & Xiaojing, 2016). Effective learning strategies refer to techniques and approaches learners use to achieve the acquisition, storage, retention, recall and adoption of knowledge. Cognitive learning theories consider learners as primary participants in the education process in which their role goes beyond passively acquiring information to being active participants. Consequently, students not only receive information and knowledge but also perform mental activities to process and adopt information effectively (Shi, 2017). Accordingly, learners have a wide range of sources and are free to select their learning strategies, direct their learning process and control their tendencies and emotions to serve their learning objectives (Díaz, Zapata, Diaz, Arroyo, & Fuentes, 2019).

Academics claim that students are not well prepared to meet higher education requirements, and they face huge challenges in being self-regulated students (Rosário, Núñez, Vallejo, Cunha, Nunes, Suárez, Fuentes, Moreira, 2015). The study by Tomar and Jindal (2014) described seven effective learning strategies as follows:

1. Determine the information that is most significant by extracting keywords, ideas and models.
2. Make notes that are more frequently used within classroom time, which help students to recall the information mentioned by the lecturer.
3. Retrieve relevant information associated with the constructivist learning approach, which relies on making associations among prior information and newly acquired information.
4. Organize the content and material using the specific plan and obvious objectives previously formulated by learners.
5. Elaborate on the content of the material and course sources, extract conclusions and extrapolate the information.
6. Summarize the information into general ideas and concepts and determine the more important relationships and conceptual definitions.
7. Monitor their memorization and comprehension periodically to ensure their understanding and their knowledge.

Similarly, the study of Montero and Arizmendiarrieta (2017) explicated 10 learning strategies consisting of elaboration, time and effort, perseverance, organization, classmates' support, metacognition, self-questioning, the study environment, repetition and instructors' help. Furthermore, Juste and López (2010) identified seven learning strategies that include the planning and reinforcement of self-esteem, classification, problem-solving, repetition, cooperation, deduction and inference, and prediction and assessment. Apart from identifying specific strategies, Muelas and Navarro (2015) classified strategies into four main categories (i.e. information acquisition strategies, information coding strategies, information retrieval strategies and processing support strategies), while Vega-Hernández, Patino-Alonso, Cabello, Galindo-Villardón and Fernández-Berrocal (2017) identified three main categories of learning strategies: cognitive and learning control strategies, learning support strategies and study habits.

Further studies have attempted the classification of learning strategies into micro and macrostrategies (Jiménez, García, López-Cepero, & Saavedr, 2017). Planning and self-regulation are the main pillars of macrostrategies while summarizing and highlighting information are related to tasks and situations that are present in microstrategies. According to Nikou and Economides (2019), homework is one of the main examples of a microlearning strategy, and this explains why microstrategies are often used among students. Microlearning delivers learning through small and short units within short, focused activities. In micro-learning, students summarize and highlight content to obtain smaller units, such as definitions, formulas and brief paragraphs. Conversely, the concept of macrostrategies is seen as a set of approaches encompassing monitoring, revising, checking and self-assessment. Macrostrategies are more general and developmental, and they cannot be directly defined.

Another classification associated with the use of learning strategies (Rosário, Núñez, Vallejo, Cunha, Nunes, Suárez, Fuentes, Moreira, 2015), stated that students have to be self-regulated to control their learning and effectively implement learning strategies. Therefore, students must acquire three types of knowledge: declarative, procedural and conditional knowledge. Declarative knowledge includes information about various learning strategies. Procedural knowledge includes knowing the appropriate way to apply the different learning strategies. Finally, conditional knowledge identifies the proper context to implement a specific learning strategy.

In addition to identifying and classifying the different learning strategies that students employ, a number of studies were carried out to examine the different preferences among students when adopting learning strategies. A study (Vega-Hernandez, Patino-Alonso, Cabello, Galindo-Villard & Fern, 2017), explored the differences in learning strategy utilization among students according to gender and age and found that male students preferred learning support strategies and study habits, while female students used cognitive and learning control strategies more frequently. Studying in a group, learning through graphic expression and focusing on information synthesis are most commonly used by university students (Dıaz, Zapata, Diaz, Arroyo, & Fuentes, 2019). In a recent study, Tan (2019) found that students rarely used surface or strategic learning strategies, while they frequently used deep learning strategies, but at a moderate level, thus exhibiting less interest in reading and solving word and numeric problems in math.

The subject area has also been found to have an effect on the use of learning strategies. For example, Muelas and Navarro (2015) investigated student strategy use in three main subject areas: language, math and social sciences. In the language subject, the information coding and information recovery strategies were found to be the most significantly related to higher achievement. The coding strategy was the only strategy that had a significant correlation with higher achievement in math and social science subjects. Muelas and Navarro (2015) argued that teaching learning strategies can be a remedial solution for low student achievement, and they illustrated how to exploit brain competencies through learning strategies to improve academic achievement.

Apart from academic achievement, studies have also looked at other psychological aspects in the context of effective use of learning strategies. For example, Tan (2019), concluded that the use of learning strategies has a moderating effect on the relationship between self-concept and problem-solving skills in students studying mathematics. Similarly, Montero and Arizmendiarrieta (2017), found that remedial interventions in enhancing the use of learning strategies improved student motivation and learning beliefs. Vega-Hernández et al. (2017), also found the use of learning strategies had a positive relationship with perceived emotional intelligence (repair, attention and clarity).

**2.3. Empirical Review**

Hayat et al. (2020) in Iran, investigated the mediating effects of metacognitive learning strategies and learning-related emotions in the relationship between academic self-efficacy with academic performance in medical students. The study enrolled a total of 279 students of medicine studying at Shiraz University of Medical Sciences. The students filled out three questionnaires: academic emotions (AEQ), metacognitive learning strategies, and academic self-efficacy questionnaires. The data were analyzed using SPSS and Smart PLS3. The results of structural equation modeling revealed that the students’ self-efficacy has an impact on their learning-related emotions and metacognitive learning strategies, and these, in turn, affect the students’ academic performance. Moreover, learning-related emotions influence the metacognitive learning strategies, which in turn mediate the effect of emotions on academic performance.

Ricarda (2019), in Germany, investigated whether the reported previous findings can be replicated when ability self-concepts, task values, goals, and achievement motives are all assessed at the same level of specificity as the achievement criteria (e.g., hope for success in math and math grades). The sample comprised 345 11th and 12th grade students (M = 17.48 years old, SD = 1.06) from the highest academic track (Gymnasium) in Germany. Students self-reported their ability self-concepts, task values, goal orientations, and achievement motives in math, German, and school in general. Additionally, we assessed their intelligence and their current and prior Grade point average and grades in math and German. Relative weight analyses revealed that domain-specific ability self-concept, motives, task values and learning goals but not performance goals explained a significant amount of variance in grades above all other predictors of which ability self-concept was the strongest predictor.

Christiana (2009), in Nigeria, investigated, the influence of motivation on students' academic performance. Four research questions and 4 null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The study employed the survey design. The sample comprised of 720 respondents comprising of 640 students and 80 teachers randomly drawn from 16 secondary schools and 15 people from different walks of life. Researcher's self-developed motivational questionnaire (IMOAP) on influence of motivation on academic performance for secondary school students and teachers duly vetted by specialists in educational measurement and evaluation, guidance and counselling and educational psychology were used to obtained information from the respondents. Data collected were analyzed using the simple percentage. The results of data analysis showed that: Motivation of students is very important for better output in the academic pursuit. Students' motivation has high positive correlation in their academic performance. There is significant relationship between school environment and structure and students' motivation.

Charles (2017), in Liberia, explored the motivational beliefs and learning strategy used by Liberian junior and senior high school students in connection with their academic performance. It also solicited students’ self-reports about presumed factors hindering their learning. Utilizing a cross-sectional quantitative research design, 323 participants took part in the study from 2 counties. Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ) was adapted and 12 potential learning hindrances were identified and used as instruments. Data analyses were conducted using SPSS 17.0. The results showed the motivational belief component of extrinsic goal orientation as the most preferred belief and test anxiety was the least possessed belief. Rehearsal strategies were found to be the most frequently used, while help seeking was reported to be the least strategy considered. The result also showed significant relationships between the two constructs. In addition, the study found some learning hindrances. A number of conclusions as well as some practical recommendations for action relative to the improvement of student performance have been advanced.

Sabri (2020), in Malaysia, investigated whether there is a statistically significant correlation between students’ learning strategies and their academic performance in learning business and accounting courses. The Learning Strategies Scale was adapted from the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ). This instrument includes 31 items concerning students’ use of different cognitive and metacognitive strategies and 19 items regarding student management of different resources. Students’ academic performance was measured by their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA). A total of 312 business and accounting undergraduate students participated in this study. Based on the correlational analysis, the results showed that effort regulation was positively correlated to their academic performance. Nevertheless, there was no relationship between other subscales of the learning strategies and students’ academic performance. This study offers insights on the relationship between learning strategies and academic performance which could assist to develop instructional strategies in enhancing students learning skills.

**2.4. Summary**

This chapter provides a literature review on the impact of psychological variables on the academic performance of pupils. Previous research has demonstrated that students' self-efficacy influences their learning-related emotions and metacognitive learning techniques, which in turn influence their academic achievement. In addition, emotions associated with learning alter metacognitive learning techniques, which in turn mediate the effect of emotions on academic achievement. Moreover, student motivation is essential for improved academic performance. A positive link exists between student motivation and academic success. The association between school environment and structure and student motivation is substantial. In addition, the results revealed substantial correlations between the two concepts. In addition, the study uncovered some obstacles to learning. Many conclusions and some practical recommendations for action regarding the enhancement of student performance have been presented. While these results and assertions are significant contributions to the debate, there is a dearth of evidence from local literature. There is a need to rethink these findings within a local context in order to either align them with academic data that has already been established or to reveal the fundamental distinctions between these psychological variables. This effort will strengthen empirical findings, advance understanding, and position the topic for future investigation.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**RESEARCH METHODS**

**3.1. Research Design**

This study employed the survey research design to examine certain psychological variables and how they influence students academic performance in social studies. The survey design allows for the collection of information from a sample of individuals through their responses to questions (Check & Schutt, 2012). This type of research allows for a variety of methods to recruit participants, collect data, and utilize various methods of instrumentation. Survey research can use quantitative research strategies (e.g., using questionnaires with numerically rated items), qualitative research strategies (e.g., using open-ended questions), or both strategies (i.e., mixed methods).

**3.2. Area of study**

This study was carried out in Uyo metropolis. Uyo is the capital of Akwa Ibom state, one of the rich-oil producing states in Nigeria. It lies on the road from Oron to Ikot Ekpene. A collecting station for agriculture, it is also a local trade centre for an area inhabited mainly by the Ibibio people. The town has a brewery and a textile mill. It is the site of the University of Uyo and has an estimated urban population of 440,000.

**3.3. Population of study**

The population of this study comprises of students from seven secondary schools in Uyo local government area. A total of 1,217 students (Jss1-Jss3) constitute the population for this study. The population distribution as collected from school administrators are presented in the table 3.1 (see appendix).

**3.4. Sample And Sampling Technique**

This study employed a simple random sampling technique to select a total of 300 junior secondary school students (JSSS) from seven secondary schools in Uyo local government area of Akwa Ibom state. The simple random sampling is a probabilistic sampling technique that involves the random selection of a subset of individuals from a larger population by the researcher. Every individual within the population has an equivalent probability of being chosen. Subsequently, information is gathered from a significant proportion of the aforementioned randomized subset.

**3.5. Instrumentation**

This study employed the questionnaire as the element of instrumentation to obtain data and record data from the respondents. The questionnaire titled “Psychological Variables And Students Academic Performance In Social Studies Questionnaire” (PVSAPSSQ) is structured into two parts- section A and B.

**3.6. Validation of Instrument**

The instrument was critique by the project supervisor. It was thereafter given to two experts in measurement and evaluation unit of the department of psychological foundation, faculty of Education, University of Uyo for validation.

**3.7 Reliability of Instrument**

In order to determine the degree to which the same results could be obtained with a repeated measure of accuracy from the same instrument, a test-retest method was used to pilot the questionnaire in order to obtain reliability. Twenty (20) students received the questionnaire. These were not included in the study sample but came from a population with similar traits. The pilot data were gathered by the researcher in person. The same respondents' group received the same questionnaire again after a two-week interval. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used to code and analyse the reliability coefficient between the two sets of scores. This resulted in a reliability coefficient of 0.7554. The questionnaire was therefore regarded as trustworthy.

**3.7.1. Administration of Instrument**

This study adopted the personal delivery method to administer copies of the questionnaire to the participants of the various selected secondary schools. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to students in groups and retrieved after completion within a defined period of time.

**3.8. Method of Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics while the null hypothesis was tested using the Pearson correlation coefficient.

**CHAPTER FOUR**

**DATA ANALYSIS, RESULT AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

This chapter presents the summary of data collected using the questionnaire instrument. The research questions were analyzed using descriptive statistics while the null hypotheses were tested using the Pearson moment correlation

**Table 4.1. Questionnaire Distribution**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Total number of Valid questionnaire | 293 | 96.3% |
| Total number of invalid questionnaire | 11 | 3.7% |
| Total number of questionnaire issued | 304 | 100 |

In the table above, a total of 304 copies of the questionnaire were administered to students of various selected secondary schools. A total of 11 copies representing 3.7% of the questionnaire was rendered invalid due to inappropriate filling while a total of 293 representing 96.3% of the questionnaire was valid for analysis. This figure is used in this study as the right sample size .

**4.1. Answers to Research Questions**

**Research Question 1:** What is the impact of self-efficacy on students academic performance in social studies?

Table 4.2. Self-efficacy and students academic performance

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **SA** | **A** | **SD** | **D** | **U** |
| I know that I can finish my assignments in social studies and get the grade I want, even when others think I can’t. | 134  (45%) | 88  (30%) | 52  (18%) | 19  (6%) | 0 |
| If I try hard enough, I can obtain the academic goals in social studies. | 122 (38%) | 135 (46%) | 15  (5%) | 21  (7%) | 0 |
| Even if I get distracted in class, I am confident to pass my classwork in social studies. | 109  (37%) | 126  (43%) | 22  (8%) | 36  (12%) | 0 |
| I understand what my social studies teacher teaches. | 147  (50%) | 112  (38%) | 12  (4%) | 22 (8%) | 0 |
| I can my social studies test even on a bad day. | 110 (38%) | 109 (37%) | 54 (18%) | 20 (6%) | 0 |

Source: Survey data, 2023

From the responses presented in table 4.2 above, majority of the students displayed a high level of self-efficacy. This fact is evidenced by the high number of students (45+30=75%), who agreed that they can achieve better grades irrespective of the opinions of their colleagues. Further show of self-efficacy is seen in the number of students who believed that they can achieve their social studies goals (84%), overcome distractions in social studies classes (80%), and pass the class test (75%). The implication of this observation is discussed in the discussion section of this chapter.

**Research question 2:** What is the role of motivation on students’ academic performance?

Table 4.3. Motivation and students academic performance

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **SA** | **A** | **SD** | **D** | **U** |
| I love being praised when I do well. | 108(36%) | 122(38%) | 21(7%) | 42(14%) | 0 |
| I want to get a gift or an award when I pass my social studies exams. | 122(41%) | 135(46%) | 15(5%) | 21(7%) | 0 |
| I like when my social studies teacher answers my questions in the class. | 109(37%) | 126(43%) | 22(8%) | 36(12%) | 0 |

Source: Survey data, 2023

The responses presented in table 4.3 above describes the emotional ambience of the students as motivation, which is received in form of compliments, gift or awards can drive academic performance. A total of 74% of the valid respondents expressed their admiration for praise when they do well; 87% desired to be appreciated via gifts or award after a successful exams; while 80% loved being individually recognized whenever they ask questions.

**Research Question 3:** How does learning strategy impact on students’ academic performance in social studies?

Table 4.4. Learning Strategy and students academic performance

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **SA** | **A** | **SD** | **D** | **U** |
| I prefer my study time being spaced. | 108(36%) | 21(7%) | 122(41%) | 42 (14%) | 0 |
| I understand better when my social studies teacher talk more. | 122 (38%) | 135 (46%) | 15(5%) | 21(7%) | 0 |
| I can recite something in my mind without looking at my book. | 109(37%) | 126(43%) | 22 (8%) | 36 (12%) | 0 |
| I can study my social studies note and another subject at once. | 54 (18%) | 105 (35%) | 112(38%) | 22 (8%) | 0 |
| I like when my teacher give examples when teaching. | 110 (37%) | 111 (38%) | 52 (17%) | 20 (7%) | 0 |

Source: Survey data, 2023

Learning strategy is a huge academic factor that influences the performance of students. Some students preferred a spaced study period (43%) while 57% do not prefer a spaced study time. A greater percentage (84) of the respondents agreed to understand better when details of lessons are given. A total of 53% agreed to be able to switch subjects when studying while 47% disagreed on this ability. A total of 75% preferred lesson explanations backed up with examples while 25% disagreed.

**4.2. Analysis of Hypothesis**

Table 4.5. Pearson Correlation table showing the impact of self-efficacy on students academic performance in social studies

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Self-efficacy | Academic performance |
| Self-efficacy | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .821\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
| N | 293 | 293 |
| Academic performance | Pearson Correlation | .824\*\* | 1 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
| N | 293 | 293 |

Source: Survey data, 2023 \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The Pearson Correlation result in Table 1 contains the degree of association between Self-efficacy and academic performance. From the result, the Pearson correlation coefficient, r, value of 0.821 was positive and statistically significant at (p< 0.000). This indicates that changes in the self-efficacy of students will result in changes in academic performance. Thus, academic performance and Self-efficacy are correlated positively.

**Table 4.6.** Pearson Correlation Table showing the role of motivation on students’ academic performance.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Correlations | | motivation | academic performance |
| motivation | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .648\*\* |
| Sig. (2-tailed) |  | .000 |
| N | 293 | 293 |
| academic performance | Pearson Correlation | .648\*\* | 1 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 |  |
| N | 293 | 293 |

Source: Survey data, 2023 \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The Pearson correlation Table 2 shows the degree of association between motivation and academic performance. The result shows that the two variables (motivation and academic performance) are moderately and positively correlated (r= .648). Furthermore, there exists a statistically significant (p<0.000) relationship between the two variables. Thus, the positive and significant relationship between motivation and academic performance indicates that an increase in motivation can bring a corresponding increase in academic performance.

Table 4.7. Pearson Correlation Table showing the impact of learning strategy on students’ academic performance in social studies

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Correlations | | learning strategy | academic performance |
| learning strategy | Pearson Correlation  Sig. (2-tailed)  N | 1  293 | .675\*\*  .000  293 |
| academic performance | Pearson Correlation  Sig. (2-tailed)  N | .675\*\*  .000  293 | 1  293 |

Source: Survey data, 2023 \*\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

In Table 4 is the Pearson Correlation result showing the degree of association between learning strategy and academic performance. The correlation coefficient, r, between the two variables is 0.675 indicating a perfect positive correlation. Moreover, such relationship was statistically significant at (p< 0.000). This indicates that changes in academic performance are moderately correlated with changes in learning strategy.

**4.3. Discussion of Findings**

The findings of this study revealed that there is a positive and significant correlation between self-efficacy and academic performance. There is also a strong correlation between motivation and academic performance as well as visible relationship between learning strategies and academic perofmance. It should be noted that high self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one’s own motivation, behavior, and environment, and allows students to become advocates for their own needs and supports. Research (Hayat, Shateri, & Amini, 2020), suggests that self-efficacy can boost student achievement, foster emotional health and well-being, and serve as a valid predictor of motivation and learning.

Studies (Mega, Ronconi, De Beni, 2014; Sagheb, Amini, Saber, Moghadami, Nabiei, Khalili, 2018), also have shown that students with high levels of self-efficacy participate more in class, work harder, persist longer, and have fewer adverse emotional reactions when encountering difficulties than students with lower self-efficacy. Furthermore, motivated students are much more likely to achieve their potential and find success. Motivation is an essential ingredient in effective teaching and learning. It not only yields more positive behaviour in students, but it also contributes to a greater sense of wellbeing.

Understanding how to motivate children and young people in education is crucial, if they will be provided with the best possible start in life. Also, strategies help students begin to understand the process of learning. Strategies help students to bypass their areas of weakness and to perform at the level at which they are capable. Strategies promote flexible thinking and teach students the importance of shifting their approaches to different tasks. Thus, it can be concluded in this study that psychological variables have a significant effect on students’ academic performance.

**CHAPTER FIVE**

**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION**

**5.1 Summary of the study**

Academic performance is a result of internal and external influences. These influences determine to a large extent the performance of students and leaves a footprint for possible modification. This study have investigated how psychological variables impacts of the academic performance of students in social studies. Anchored on the social learning theory, this investigation adopted the survey research design to elicit opinions and concerns of a defined population using the questionnaire instrument. This study also employed the Pearson moment correlation to determine the relationship between psychological variables and student academic performance. Evidence from the analysis revealed that changes in self-efficacy of a student impacts on the academic performance of students in social studies. This impact could be positive or negative. Also, changes in motivation have a significant effect on students’ academic performance; as well as changes in students learning strategies.

More so, it should be noted that a student achieves positive academic performance when changes in any of the psychological variables assumes a positive shift. Similarly, a student will achieve a poor academic performance in social studies when the psychological variables assumes a negative shift. However, the extent of academic performance in social studies whether positive or negative is predicated on the extent of individual variable shift. This means that a student may achieve a positive result in social studies if he/she is rightly motivated and taught with the right learning strategies, even though self-efficacy is low. However, the extent of this positive academic performance in social studies will be low when compared with a student who has all the three psychological variables skewed to the positive. Thus, psychological variables do impact on students academic performance in social studies.

**5.2. Conclusions**

The study revealed that psychological factors such as motivation, self-efficacy and learning strategies are potent predictors of students’ academic achievement in social studies. Precisely, the finding of this study implies that students require certain level of motivation, self-efficacy and learning strategies that would promote their achievement in the subject otherwise their achievement in social studies will be negatively affected.

**5.3 Recommendations and implications of the study**

The evidence from this study raises a call to action by teachers and parents. This is important as these two categories of individuals are most constant factor in a students life. A large amount of time is spent by the student at home with the parents while a protracted period of time is spent in the schools. Thus, it is expedient that in order to achieve a positive academic performance in social studies, parents and teachers have a key role to play in ensuring that the psychological variables discussed in this study are skewed in the right direction. Parents can begin by assisting their children with school home-works and during this moment interact with them on how these factors affect their performance. They can also motivate their children, which is the right motivation needed for students’ progress. On the other hand, teachers and school administrators have a responsibility to initiate, develop, or adopt better learning strategies in order to ensure good comprehension by students and boost their academic performance in social studies. Also, teachers as good observers should not relent in this skill as they could easily identify when each of these variables are lacking in a student or the school as the case maybe and make possible amend. Thus, it is the recommendation of this study that:

1. Parents should be active in the lives of their children to identify missing psychological variable and develop the right modalities to fill the gap.
2. Teachers and school administrators should not relent in identifying non-performing students and initiate actions to reestablish self-efficacy, right motivation and improve students learning strategies.
3. Policy makers in the education sector have a role in ensuring positive academic performance by reviewing existing policies to identify possible gaps or to align the policies with contemporary changes. This action will further give credence to the institutional effort of enhancing academic performance.

**5.4 Suggestions for further research**

The limitation of this study has allowed gaps for further research. Further studies may consider evaluating the extent of impact by individual psychological variable or compare the impact of learning strategies between groups. Evidence from these future studies will further amplify the results presented in this study and contribute to knowledge.

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**Appendix I**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

Hello students, my name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. I am conducting a research on the impact of psychological variables on students’ academic performance in social studies. I like you to read through the questions and tick in the right spaces. Please, ask me any question whenever you want.

**SECTION A**

Students Information

1. What is the name of your school? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What class are you? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
3. Are you a boy or a girl? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
4. Are you taught social studies? YES or NO \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION B**

Please tick the right boxes after reading the sentences

**SA** means Strongly Agreed

**A** means Agreed

**SD** means Strongly Disagreed

**D** means Disagreed

**U** means Uncertain

Now read the sentence and tick any option you like.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Statements** | **SA** | **A** | **SD** | **D** | **U** |
|  | I know that I can finish my assignments in social studies and get the grade I want, even when others think I can’t. |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | If I try hard enough, I can obtain the academic goals in social studies. |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Even if I get distracted in class, I am confident to pass my classwork in social studies. |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | I understand what my social studies teacher teaches. |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | I can my social studies test even on a bad day. |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Statements** | **SA** | **A** | **SD** | **D** | **U** |
|  | I love being praised when I do well. |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | I want to get a gift or an award when I pass my social studies exams. |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | I like when my social studies teacher answers my questions in the class. |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **S/N** | **Statements** | **SA** | **A** | **SD** | **D** | **U** |
|  | I prefer my study time being spaced. |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | I understand better when my social studies teacher talk more. |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | I can recite something in my mind without looking at my book. |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | I can study my social studies note and another subject at once. |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | I like when my teacher give examples when teaching. |  |  |  |  |  |

**Appendix II**

Table 3.1. Population distribution of students

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Name of school** | **Number of students** | **% in population** |
| Community secondary school Aka Offot | 280 | 23 |
| Nuco comprehensive college | 114 | 9.3 |
| King Solomon secondary school | 187 | 15.3 |
| Uyo high school | 233 | 19.1 |
| West Itam secondary school | 169 | 13.8 |
| Cornelia cornelly college | 121 | 9.9 |
| Community secondary school, four towns | 113 | 9.2 |
| Total | 1217 | 100 |