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Predictive Power of Sociability and Self-Confidence on Students' Academic Achievement in Business Studies in Ogoja Education zone, Cross River State

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Abstract

This study investigated the predictive power of sociability and self-confidence on students' academic achievement in Business Studies in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational survey research design and covered a population 6,284 Junior Secondary School III (JSS III) students. A sample of 377 students was chosen using a multi-stage sampling procedure. Students' Sociability and Self-Confidence Questionnaire (SSSCQ) and Students' Academic Achievement Proforma (SAAP), developed by the researchers, were used for data collection, and were analyzed using simple linear and multiple regression analyses. The findings revealed that sociability and self-confidence significantly ($p < .05$) predicted students' academic achievement in Business Studies both separately and jointly. Thus, it was recommended, among others, that teachers should adopt instructional strategies that are capable of enhancing students' classroom participation and sociability, while school counsellors should organize programmes aimed at enhancing students' self-confidence and positive interpersonal relationships for improved academic achievement in Business Studies.

Keywords: Sociability, Self-confidence, Academic achievement, Business Studies, Predictive power

INTRODUCTION

Education remains a fundamental instrument for national development, social transformation, and human capital advancement. Thus, secondary education is expected to equip learners with relevant competencies and employable skills necessary for effective participation in economic and social life. Consequently, the National Policy on Education emphasizes the need for functional and skill-oriented learning experiences capable of preparing students for productive living and self-reliance (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2014). In achieving this, Business Studies has been positioned in the Nigerian junior secondary school curriculum to expose learners to fundamental business concepts, entrepreneurial knowledge, office competencies, and practical commercial skills required for further education and occupational development. The subject integrates components such as bookkeeping, commerce, office practice, keyboarding, and shorthand with the aim of equipping learners with practical knowledge and vocational competencies needed in contemporary workplaces (FRN, 2014). According to Amoor and Udoh (2022), Business studies foster entrepreneurial orientation, business literacy, communication skills, and workforce preparedness among secondary school students.

Despite the strategic importance of Business Studies in the educational system, the level of students' achievement in this subject has been a constant worry for teachers, school authorities, parents and policy makers. Ogunode and Jegede (2024) noted that the performance trends of secondary school students in business studies in Nigeria continue to show poor achievement both internally and externally. The poor achievement of students in Business Studies negatively affects their performance in future academic courses, their entry into the business world and their progression into higher education as well as the national visions and ambitions on vocational competence, entrepreneurship development and economic productivity. As a result, the problem of poor achievement of students in Business Studies and the possible strategies to achieve good learning outcome have become a concern.

However, Nwafor and Ugochukwu (2021) observed that students' poor academic achievement has been commonly attributed to school-related factors like poor teaching quality, inadequate teaching materials, overcrowded classrooms and poor educational infrastructure. Furthermore, Adebayo and Olatunde (2022) noted that the impact of other factors such as socioeconomic factors and environmental factors like parental background, school location, and teacher effectiveness has been highlighted by other researchers. These are still predominant, but more recent studies in education strongly suggest that social and psychological factors of students could also be significant factors in academic achievement.

Sociability is one of many potential psychosocial variables that have received increased attention of researchers in relation to students' academic achievement. Sociability is defined as the tendency to engage in positive social interactions, form social relationships and be active in social settings. Sociability is expressed in classroom involvement and involvement with peers, in communication, in cooperative learning, and in social bonds. Wentzel (2017) posits that sociability is linked to better academic adjustment as students who are socially connected will help to be more engaged in school-related activities, will seek academic

support, and will be supported by peers in their learning. Moreover, positive peer interaction has been associated with enhanced academic engagement, classroom motivation and learning outcomes of adolescents (Jiang & Koo, 2020). Others have found there to be positive correlations between sociability and academic performance in various educational settings (Estell & Perdue, 2021; Chen et al., 2010). Students low on sociability, on the other hand, may suffer from social withdrawal, decrease involvement, inadequate school adjustment and lack of peer support that can have a negative impact on school performance.

Another important variable that could be associated with students' academic achievement is their self-confidence. Self-confidence is defined by Honicke and Broadbent (2016) as the students' confidence about their capacity to do well in academic tasks and to face learning obstacles. High self-confidence often leads to greater perseverance, resilience, task engagement, and willingness to try out challenging academic activities among students. On the other hand, Fong and Kim (2021) found that students who lack self-confidence tend to feel anxious, fear failure, uncertain, and avoid taking risks which can negatively impact their learning outcomes. Research has shown that there are positive relationships between students' self-confidence, academic self-efficacy, and academic performance (Fong & Kim, 2021; Aryana, 2022). Self-confident learners tend to be more at ease to engage themselves in class discussion, work independently on class tasks, and persist with challenges in learning. These behavioural habits can have a profound effect on their success, especially when it comes to hands-on tasks and solving problems.

While sociability and self-confidence have both been the focus of much research individually, there are important conceptual and contextual gaps in the existing literature. Previous studies have tended to be more general, and do not target specifically Business Studies, at the junior secondary level in particular. There is little or no empirical evidence about the predictability of sociability and self-confidence in the secondary school students setting in Ogoja Education zone of Cross River State. Thus, the extent of the students' academic achievement to be predicted by their sociability and self-confidence in Business Studies is still not understood. In view of these concerns, there was a need for empirical research on the relationship between sociability and self-confidence on the students' achievement of academic outcomes in Business Studies. It was against this background that the present study investigated the predictive power of sociability and self-confidence on students' academic achievement in Business Studies in Ogoja Education zone, Cross River State.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the predictive power of sociability and self-confidence on students' academic achievement in Business Studies in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to determine the:

1. predictive power of sociability on students' academic achievement in Business Studies;
2. predictive power of self-confidence on students' academic achievement in Business Studies; and
3. joint predictive power of sociability and self-confidence on students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

Research Questions

The following research questions were posed for the study:

1. What is the predictive power of sociability on students' academic achievement in Business Studies?
2. What is the predictive power of self-confidence on students' academic achievement in Business Studies?
3. What is the joint predictive power of sociability and self-confidence on students' academic achievement in Business Studies?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H01: Sociability does not significantly predict students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

H02: Self-confidence does not significantly predict students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

H03: Sociability and self-confidence do not jointly and significantly predict students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

METHODS

This study adopted a predictive correlational survey research design, since it sought to determine the direction and magnitude of relationship that exists among the variables. The study was a carried out in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The population of the study comprised the 6,284 Junior Secondary School III (JSS III) students in public secondary schools in Ogoja Education Zone during the 2025/2026 academic session. A sample of 377 JSS III students drawn through a multistage sampling procedure was used for the study. This sample size was in line with Cohen et al. (2018). In drawing the sample, at the first stage, three Local Government Areas (LGAs) were randomly drawn for the study out of the five LGAs covered by Ogoja Education Zone. In the second stage, 18 secondary schools were selected across the three sampled LGAs through proportionately stratified random sampling technique. In the third stage, a sample of JSS3 students was drawn from each school using systematic sampling technique, totaling 377 students.

Two researcher-developed instruments were used for data collection, namely: Students' Sociability and Self-Confidence Questionnaire (SSSCQ) and Students' Academic Achievement Proforma (SAAP). The SSSCQ consisted of

two sections. Section A elicited respondents' demographic information, while Section B comprised 30 items arranged into two clusters with 15 items each measuring sociability and self-confidence respectively. Cluster A measured students' sociability, while Cluster B measured students' self-confidence. The instrument was structured on a four-point Likert-type scale with response options of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and Strongly Disagree (SD), weighted 4, 3, 2, and 1 respectively. The Students' Academic Achievement Proforma (SAAP) was used to collect students' academic achievement scores in Business Studies. The proforma contained columns for students' first term, second term, and third term examination scores in Business Studies for the 2024/2025 academic session. The average of the three consecutive end-of-term examination scores was computed and used as the measure of students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

The instruments were face-validated by three experts, comprising two experts in Measurement and Evaluation from the Department of Science Education and one expert in Educational Psychology from the Department of Educational Foundations, University of Calabar. The experts assessed the instruments with respect to clarity of items, appropriateness of language, relevance to the study variables, and suitability for measuring the intended constructs. Their observations and suggestions guided the revision and final modification of the instruments before administration. The reliability of the SSSCQ was established through trial testing using 30 JSS III students drawn from public secondary schools in Ikom Education Zone outside the study area but with similar characteristics. Cronbach Alpha reliability method was used to determine the internal consistency of the instrument because the instrument involved polytomous scoring. Reliability coefficients of 0.81 and 0.84 were obtained for the sociability and self-confidence clusters respectively, with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.86, indicating that the instrument possessed adequate internal consistency for the study.

Permission for data collection was obtained from the principals of the sampled schools. The researcher, with the assistance of Business Studies teachers in the participating schools, administered the questionnaire directly to the respondents and retrieved the completed copies immediately after completion to ensure high return rate and minimize data loss. Students' academic achievement scores in Business Studies were obtained from the Vice Principals (Academics) of the sampled schools using the Students' Academic Achievement Proforma.

Data collected were screened, coded, and analyzed using simple linear regression and multiple regression analyses. Research Questions 1 and 2 were answered using simple linear regression analysis, while Research Question 3 was answered using multiple regression analysis. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to determine the proportion of variance in students' academic achievement explained by the predictor variables. Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested using the t-test associated with the regression coefficients, while Hypothesis 3 was tested using F-test statistics associated with multiple regression analysis. All hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance.

RESULTS

The results of the study are presented below.

Research Question One: What is the predictive power of sociability on students' academic achievement in Business Studies?

Table 1: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of the Predictive Power of Sociability on Students' Academic Achievement in Business Studies

Model Variable	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	*β*	*t*	*p*-value
Sociability	.412	.170	.168	8.421	.412	8.203	.000

Results presented in Table 1 revealed that sociability had a positive relationship with students' academic achievement in Business Studies (r = .412). The coefficient of determination (r^2 = .170) showed that sociability accounted for 17.0% of the variance in students' academic achievement in Business Studies. The standardized beta coefficient (β = .412) indicated that sociability positively predicted students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

$H0_1$: Sociability does not significantly predict students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

Results in Table 1 showed that sociability significantly predicted students' academic achievement in Business Studies, $t = 8.203$, $p < .05$. Since the probability value (.000) was less than the 0.05 level of significance at which the result was being tested, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, inference drawn was that sociability significantly predicts students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

Research Question Two: What is the predictive power of self-confidence on students' academic achievement in Business Studies?

Table 2: Simple Linear Regression Analysis of the Predictive Power of Self-Confidence on Students' Academic Achievement in Business Studies

Model Variable	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	*β*	*t*	*p*-value
Self-confidence	.587	.345	.343	7.364	.587	13.156	.000

Results in Table 2 showed that self-confidence had a positive relationship with students' academic achievement in Business Studies (r = .587). The coefficient of determination (r^2 = .345) indicated that self-confidence accounted for 34.5% of the variance in students' academic achievement in Business Studies. The standardized beta coefficient (β = .587) revealed that self-confidence positively predicted students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

Results in Table 2 also indicated that self-confidence significantly predicted students' academic achievement in Business Studies, t = 13.156, p < .05. This is because the probability value (.000) was less than .05 level of significance at which the result was being tested, as such, the null hypothesis two was rejected. Thus, inference drawn was that self-confidence significantly predicts students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

H02: Self-confidence does not significantly predict students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

Research Question Three: What is the joint predictive power of sociability and self-confidence on students' academic achievement in Business Studies?

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis of the Joint Predictive Power of Sociability and Self-Confidence on Students' Academic Achievement in Business Studies

Model variables	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	*β*	*t*	*p*-value
Sociability					.271	5.462	.000
Self-confidence	.654	.428	.425	140.214	.511	10.307	.000

Results presented in Table 3 revealed that sociability and self-confidence jointly had a positive relationship with students' academic achievement in Business Studies (R = .654). The coefficient of determination (R^2 = .428) showed that sociability and self-confidence jointly accounted for 42.8% of the variance in students' academic achievement in Business Studies. The adjusted R^2 value of .425 indicated that the regression model was stable and substantial in predicting students' academic achievement. The standardized beta coefficients further revealed that sociability (β = .271, p < .05) and self-confidence (β = .511, p < .05) significantly predicted students' academic achievement in Business Studies. However, self-confidence emerged as the stronger predictor of students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

H03: Sociability and self-confidence do not jointly and significantly predict students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

Table 4: ANOVA Summary of the Joint Predictive Power of Sociability and self-confidence on students' academic achievement in Business Studies

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2242.435	2	1121.218	244.327	.000
Residual	1716.186	374	4.589		
Total	3958.621	376			

Results in Table 4 showed that sociability and self-confidence jointly and significantly predicted students' academic achievement in Business Studies, $F(2, 374) = 244.327$, p < .05. Since the associated probability value (.000) was less than .05 level of significance at which the result was tested, the null hypothesis was consequently rejected. Therefore, inference drawn was that sociability and self-confidence jointly and significantly predict students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

DISCUSSION

The study investigated the predictive power of sociability and self-confidence on students' academic achievement in Business Studies in Ogoja Education Zone of Cross River State, Nigeria. The study findings indicated that the students' academic achievement in Business Studies independently and jointly was significantly predicted by sociability and self-confidence. The results also revealed that self-confidence was

the more powerful key element in the prediction of students' academic performance when compared to the other variable studied. This positive and significant predictive ability of sociability in students' academic achievement in Business Studies can occur when students are very active, interact with their peers in the classroom, ask for academic assistance when needed, and are able to participate actively in group learning activities. These can increase learning experiences and enrich the understanding of the content of instruction. The finding in agreement with Wentzel's (2017) submission that students' interpersonal relationships and social connectedness have a significant impact on classroom engagement and academic achievement. Likewise, positive peer interaction and social support were identified as significant predictors of students' academic engagement and learning outcomes by Jiang and Koo (2020). The finding is also in line with Estell and Perdue (2021), who found that socially connected students adjust and perform better academically than socially isolated students.

The study also showed that self-confidence had statistically significant predictive influence on students' performance in Business Studies. This implies that those students who are more confident about their academic skills are more likely to perform their academic skills better in Business Studies. This is possible as self-confident students might show higher persistence, resilience, willingness to try out difficult tasks and longer engagement in learning activities. Students like this tend to be more positive towards their own learning abilities and are more likely to be actively engaged in learning activities and to face academic difficulties and succeed. The finding is also congruent with the results of Honicke and Broadbent (2016) who found that a higher level of self-confidence and academic self-efficacy is correlated with better academic outcomes and academic resiliency amongst students. Similarly, students' self-confidence and academic self-efficacy were found to have significant positive correlations with academic achievement by Yongsheng and Kim (2021). Aryana (2022) also obtained results that students who have high self-confidence perform well in learning, while students who have low self-confidence do not perform well.

Another important finding of the study was that sociability and self-confidence jointly and significantly predicted students' academic achievement in Business Studies. The high joint predictive effect of the two variables indicates that the self-confidence and sociability of students can predict classroom adjustment, academic involvement and learning behaviours, which in turn can predict the achievement of students. The finding confirms specifically Bandura's (1986) theory regarding the relation between personal factors, behaviours and environmental experiences being mutually interactive in determining academic functioning.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that sociability and self-confidence are significant predictors of students' academic achievement in Business Studies. This therefore highlights the need to consider sociability and self-confidence as important factors that affect students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

Recommendations

The study's findings suggest the following recommendations:

1. To enhance students' sociability and participation in the classroom, teachers should change their classroom behaviour to allow cooperative learning, peer interaction, and participation in the classroom.
2. School counsellors and teachers must plan confidence building programmes, mentoring programmes and motivational workshops to enhance the self-confidence and positive academic self-beliefs of students.
3. Classrooms should be supportive and inclusive and promote students' ability to express themselves freely, engage in learning and have positive interpersonal relationships.

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