



Psychosocial Predictors of Academic Achievement in Business Studies: A Path Analysis

Adeyemi O. Oyodeji¹; Oguguo, B. C.E.¹ & Sebastine E. Andor²

¹Department of Science Education, Faculty of Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

²Department of Educational Psychology, Faculty of Educational Foundation Studies, College of Education, University of Calabar, Calabar

Corresponding Author: andorsebastine59@gmail.com

Abstract

This study investigated psychosocial predictors of academic achievement in Business Studies using path analysis. Specifically, the study developed a causal model involving students' sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, study habits, and academic achievement in Business Studies among junior secondary school students in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. Three research questions and two null hypotheses guided the study. Correlational survey research design was adopted. The population of the study comprised 5,511 JSS III students in public secondary schools within the study area. A sample of 331 students selected through multistage sampling procedure participated in the study. Data were collected using the Students' Psychosocial Variables' Questionnaire (SPVQ) and Students' Academic Achievement Proforma (SAAP). The instruments were validated by three experts, while reliability coefficients of 0.83, 0.79, 0.87, 0.78, and 0.86 were obtained for the respective clusters using Cronbach Alpha, with an overall reliability estimate of 0.89. Data collected were analyzed using path analysis and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed a parsimonious causal path model involving sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, study habits, and students' academic achievement in Business Studies. The findings further showed significant direct and indirect effects of the predictor variables on students' academic achievement, with interest emerging as the strongest predictor. The predictor variables jointly accounted for a substantial proportion of variance in students' academic achievement in Business Studies. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others, that teachers should adopt learner-centred instructional approaches capable of stimulating students' interest, motivation, self-confidence, and effective study habits in Business Studies.

Keywords: Psychosocial predictors, academic achievement, Business Studies, path analysis

Introduction

Education remains one of the most important instruments for national development, human capital formation, and socioeconomic transformation. Across developing nations, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa, secondary education is increasingly expected to equip learners with functional knowledge, employability competencies, entrepreneurial capacities, and adaptive skills necessary for

participation in a rapidly changing economy. In Nigeria, the philosophy underpinning secondary education emphasizes the acquisition of relevant knowledge, values, and practical competencies required for productive living and sustainable national development. This position is reflected in the National Policy on Education, which recognizes vocational and business-oriented subjects as essential components of

functional education geared toward self-reliance and workforce preparation (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 2014).

Against this background, Business Studies occupies a strategic position in the Nigerian junior secondary school curriculum. The subject was introduced to provide learners with foundational commercial, entrepreneurial, clerical, and office-related competencies necessary for occupational development and further education in business-related disciplines. As outlined in the revised National Policy on Education, Business Studies is designed to expose learners to fundamental concepts in commerce, bookkeeping, office practice, keyboarding, shorthand, and related business activities while simultaneously equipping them with practical and employable skills (FRN, 2014). The subject therefore serves both vocational and academic purposes by preparing learners either for direct participation in the world of work or for advanced studies in commercial and management-related fields.

Scholars have consistently acknowledged the importance of Business Studies in promoting entrepreneurial consciousness, technological adaptability, and economic productivity among young learners (Amoor & Udoh, 2022; Ezenwafor & Okeke, 2021). As an integrated vocational subject, Business Studies contributes significantly to manpower development by fostering practical competencies, problem-solving abilities, communication skills, and workplace readiness among students. According to Akinola (2023), in contemporary societies characterized by economic uncertainty and rising youth unemployment, the relevance of Business Studies has become even more pronounced because of its capacity to promote self-employment, business literacy, and entrepreneurial orientation among school graduates.

However, despite the recognized importance of Business Studies within the Nigerian educational system, students' academic achievement in the subject has remained a source of concern among educators, policymakers, parents, and examination bodies. Evidence from public examinations continues to indicate unsatisfactory achievement trends among secondary school students in business-related subjects, including Business Studies, Commerce, Financial Accounting, and Office Practice (Ogunode & Jegede, 2024). Persistent underachievement in these subjects poses serious implications for vocational education development, entrepreneurial education,

and the broader goals of national economic advancement.

Several explanations have been advanced for students' poor academic achievement in Business Studies and related subjects. Traditionally, emphasis has been placed on school-related and instructional variables such as inadequate teaching facilities, overcrowded classrooms, and poor instructional quality (Nwafor & Ugochukwu, 2021). Others are insufficient learning resources, ineffective pedagogical practices, and inadequate teacher preparation (Adebayo & Olatunde, 2022). While these factors undoubtedly contribute to educational outcomes, growing empirical evidence suggests that academic achievement is also strongly influenced by psychosocial variables operating within learners themselves (Putwain et al., 2023; Mega et al., 2019).

Psychosocial variables are particularly important because learning does not occur in isolation from students' emotional, behavioural, interpersonal, and motivational experiences. Theoretical perspectives such as Bandura's (1986) Social Cognitive Theory, Vygotsky's (1978) Social Learning Theory, and Deci and Ryan's (2000) Self-Determination Theory collectively suggest that academic achievement is influenced not only by cognitive ability but also by students' beliefs, social interactions, motivations, and behavioural tendencies. These theories emphasize that learners' academic performance is shaped through reciprocal interactions among personal, behavioural, and environmental factors. Thus, psychosocial variables such as sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, and study habits may significantly determine how students engage with learning tasks and ultimately perform academically.

Sociability as mentioned above refers to an individual's tendency or capacity to interact effectively with others, establish interpersonal relationships, and participate meaningfully in social environments. As noted by Wentzel (2017), sociability promotes collaboration, peer learning, communication, and classroom participation, all of which may facilitate academic success. Highly sociable students are more likely to engage in cooperative learning, seek academic support, exchange ideas with peers, and develop positive classroom relationships that enhance learning outcomes. Recent studies have shown that positive peer interactions and social connectedness significantly predict students' academic engagement

and achievement across different educational contexts (Jiang & Koo, 2020; Estell & Perdue, 2021). Conversely, students with poor sociability may experience social withdrawal, reduced classroom participation, and diminished academic engagement, which can negatively affect learning outcomes.

Self-confidence also constitutes a critical determinant of students' academic functioning. It reflects students' beliefs in their abilities to perform successfully in academic tasks and overcome learning challenges. Learners with high self-confidence tend to display greater persistence, resilience, task engagement, and academic optimism, whereas learners with low self-confidence often experience anxiety, self-doubt, and avoidance behaviours that undermine performance (Honicke & Broadbent, 2016). Self-confidence influences how students perceive academic demands, respond to challenges, and sustain effort during learning activities. Empirical evidence has consistently shown positive associations between students' self-confidence, academic self-efficacy, and academic achievement (Fong & Kim, 2021; Aryana, 2022). In the context of Business Studies, students who possess stronger confidence in their academic abilities may demonstrate greater participation, commitment, and persistence in mastering business concepts and practical tasks.

Closely related to self-confidence is motivation, which remains one of the most widely researched determinants of academic achievement. Motivation refers to the internal and external processes that initiate, direct, sustain, and regulate goal-oriented behaviours. According to Self-Determination Theory, intrinsically motivated students engage in learning activities because of inherent interest, enjoyment, and personal satisfaction, whereas extrinsically motivated students are driven by external rewards, pressures, or expectations (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Motivation influences students' willingness to invest effort, persist in difficult tasks, and maintain academic engagement over time. Research evidence indicates that highly motivated learners are more likely to demonstrate better academic performance, deeper learning strategies, and stronger educational aspirations (Howard et al., 2021; Guay, 2022). In Business Studies, motivation may determine the extent to which students actively participate in learning activities, complete assignments, and persist in acquiring vocational competencies.

Students' interest in learning is another psychosocial factor strongly associated with academic achievement. Interest represents a psychological state characterized by focused attention, positive emotional engagement, and enduring predisposition toward specific activities or subject areas (Hidi & Renninger, 2006). Interest enhances concentration, persistence, cognitive engagement, and meaningful learning because students tend to devote greater effort to activities they find enjoyable or personally valuable. Scholars have argued that interest promotes intrinsic motivation and contributes significantly to academic success by encouraging learners to engage deeply with learning materials (Krapp, 2007; Schiefele, 2009). Recent studies similarly reveal that students' subject interest predicts classroom engagement, academic persistence, and achievement outcomes (Harackiewicz et al., 2016; Ainley, 2019). Thus, students who develop sustained interest in Business Studies may be more inclined to devote attention and effort toward achieving academic success in the subject.

In addition to the above, students' study habits constitute another important behavioural variable associated with academic achievement. Study habits refer to the consistent learning strategies, study routines, and behavioural patterns students adopt while preparing for academic tasks. Effective study habits typically involve time management, concentration, note-taking, reading strategies, organization, revision practices, and disciplined study routines (Credé & Kuncel, 2008). Students with effective study habits are more likely to process information meaningfully, retain learned concepts, and perform successfully in examinations. Conversely, poor study habits often contribute to low academic engagement, inadequate preparation, and poor performance. Empirical studies continue to affirm significant relationships between students' study habits and academic achievement across various disciplines and educational levels (Nonis & Hudson, 2019; Ayodele & Adebisi, 2023).

Although these psychosocial variables have individually received considerable research attention, existing literature reveals several important gaps. Firstly, many previous studies examined these variables independently rather than collectively, thereby limiting comprehensive understanding of their combined influence on academic achievement. Secondly, most existing studies relied predominantly on simple correlational techniques, t-tests, or multiple

regression analyses that do not adequately explain the complex direct and indirect relationships among psychosocial variables. Thirdly, relatively few studies have specifically investigated these relationships within the context of Business Studies among junior secondary school students in Nigeria. Consequently, the pathways through which sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, and study habits jointly influence students' academic achievement in Business Studies remain insufficiently understood.

The complexity of these interrelationships necessitates the use of more advanced analytical approaches capable of simultaneously estimating direct and indirect effects among variables. Path analysis provides such an opportunity. As an extension of multiple regression analysis, path analysis enables researchers to examine hypothesized causal relationships among variables while estimating the magnitude of direct, indirect, and total effects within a model (Kline, 2023; Mega et al., 2019). According to Byrne (2022), unlike conventional correlational methods, path analysis provides clearer insights into the structural relationships among variables and allows researchers to identify the relative contributions of different predictors to academic achievement. This makes path analysis particularly suitable for investigating multidimensional psychosocial influences on students' learning outcomes. It is against this background that the present study investigates psychosocial predictors of academic achievement in Business Studies using path analysis.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the study was to investigate psychosocial predictors of academic achievement in Business Studies using path analysis. Specifically, the study sought to:

1. construct a parsimonious causal model involving students' sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, study habits, and academic achievement in Business Studies;
2. estimate the proportion of variance in students' academic achievement in Business Studies attributable to each of the predictor variables; and
3. identify the predictor variables with direct and indirect effects on students' academic achievement in Business Studies..

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the parsimonious causal model involving sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, study habits, and students' academic achievement in Business Studies?
2. What is the proportion of variance in students' academic achievement in Business Studies attributable to each of the predictor variables?
3. Which predictor variables have direct and indirect effects on students' academic achievement in Business Studies?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses guided the study and were tested at the .05 level of significance:

H01: The standardized path coefficients of the predictor variables in the causal model involving sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, study habits, and students' academic achievement in Business Studies are not statistically significant.

H02: The proportion of variance in students' academic achievement in Business Studies attributable to each of the predictor variables is not statistically significant.

Methods

This study adopted a correlational survey research design and was carried out in Nsukka Education Zone of Enugu State, Nigeria. The zone comprises three Local Government Areas, namely: Nsukka, Uzo-Uwani, and Igbo-Etiti. The area is located in the northern part of Enugu State, and the inhabitants are predominantly farmers, traders, artisans, and civil servants. The study's population comprised 5,511 Junior Secondary School III (JSS III) students in the 58 public secondary schools in Nsukka Education Zone during the 2024/2025 academic year (Post Primary Schools Management Board [PPSMB], Nsukka, 2025).

A sample of 331 JSS III students was used for the study. The sample represented approximately 6% of the study population, which is considered adequate for correlational studies involving large populations

(Cohen et al., 2018). A multi-stage sampling procedure was employed in drawing the sample. At the first stage, two Local Government Areas were selected from the three Local Government Areas in the zone using simple random sampling technique. At the second stage, proportionate stratified random sampling technique was used to select 12 public secondary schools from the two sampled Local Government Areas. At the third stage, proportionate stratified random sampling technique was further used to draw the 331 JSS III students from the sampled schools. The proportionate stratified sampling procedure ensured adequate representation of the schools and participants based on population distribution across the sampled strata.

Two researcher-developed instruments were used for data collection, namely: Students' Psychosocial Variables' Questionnaire (SPVQ) and Students' Academic Achievement Proforma (SAAP). The SPVQ consisted of two sections. Section A elicited respondents' demographic information, while Section B comprised 50 items organized into five clusters measuring sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, and study habits, respectively. 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 SAAP was used to obtain students' academic achievement scores in Business Studies. The proforma contained students' first term, second term, and third term Business Studies examination scores 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 Nigeria, Nsukka. The validators assessed the instruments with respect to clarity, appropriateness,

relevance of items, and suitability of the instruments for measuring the variables of the study. Their observations and suggestions guided the final modification of the instruments. The reliability of the SPVQ was established through trial testing using 30 JSS III students drawn from public secondary schools in Obollo-Afor 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. The reliability coefficients obtained for the five clusters were 0.83, 0.79, 0.87, 0.78, and 0.86 respectively, with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.89, indicating high internal consistency of the instrument.

Permission for data collection was obtained from the authorities of the sampled schools. The researcher, with the assistance of Business Studies teachers in the participating schools, administered the SPVQ 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 path analysis and multiple regression analysis. Research Questions 1, 2, and 4 were answered using path analysis, while Research Question 3 was answered using the coefficient of determination (R^2) derived from multiple regression analysis. The standardized beta coefficients obtained from the regression analyses were used as path coefficients in estimating the direct and indirect effects of the predictor variables on students' academic achievement in Business Studies. Hypothesis 1 was tested using the significance test of regression weights associated with the standardized path coefficients, whereas Hypothesis 2 was tested using F-test statistics. 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 parsimonious causal model involving sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, study habits, and students' academic achievement in Business Studies?"

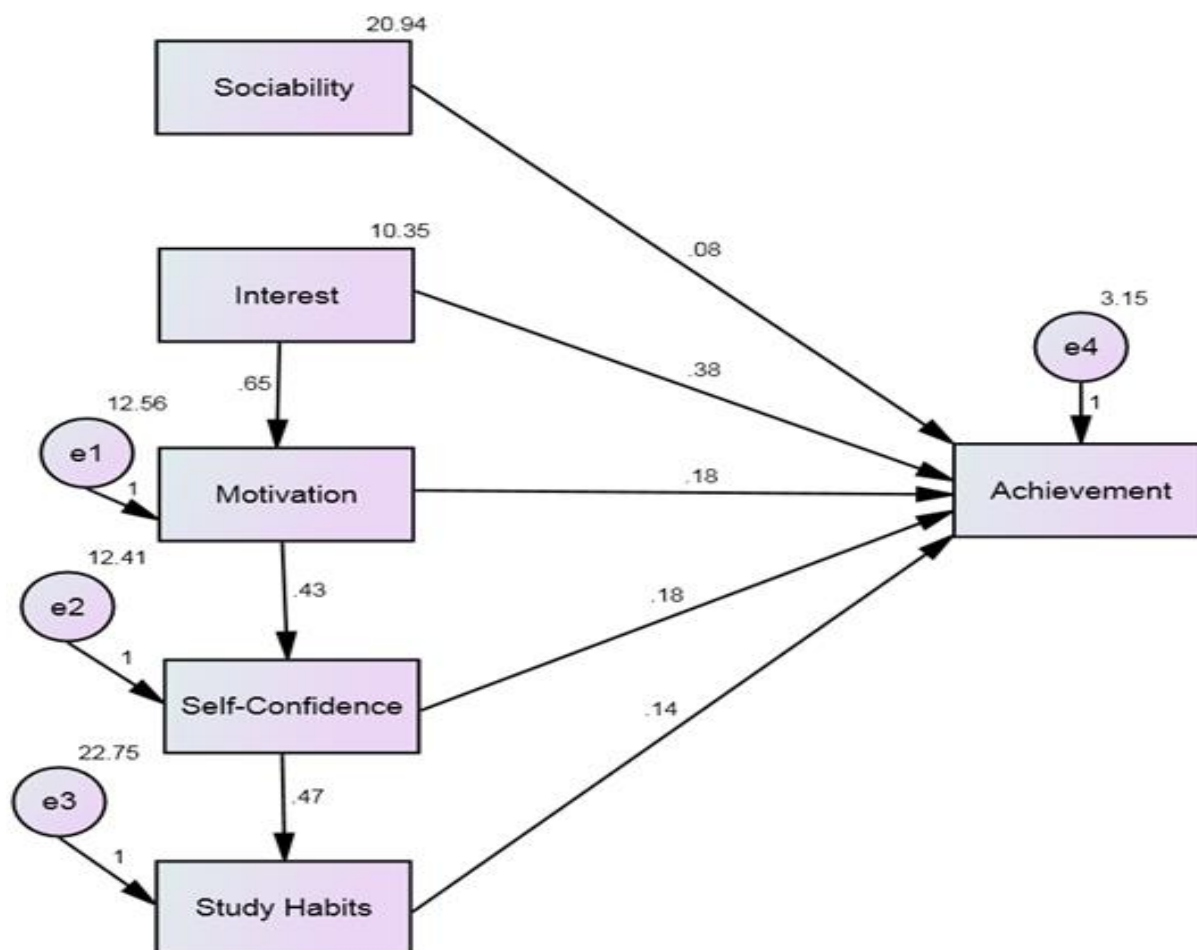


Figure 1: A parsimonious path analytic causal model involving six predictor variables-(sociability, interest motivation, self-confidence and study habits) on students' academic achievement in Business studies original beta weights.

The above path analytic model developed in this study revealed significant ($p < 0.05$) relationships among sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, study habits, and students' academic achievement in Business Studies. Among the predictor variables, interest demonstrated the strongest direct effect on academic achievement ($\beta = .38$), followed by motivation ($\beta = .18$), self-confidence ($\beta = .18$), study habits ($\beta = .14$), and sociability ($\beta = .08$). The findings imply that increases in students' psychosocial variables were associated with corresponding increases in academic achievement in Business Studies. The results further revealed

significant interrelationships among the predictor variables. Interest significantly predicted motivation ($\beta = .65$), motivation significantly predicted self-confidence ($\beta = .43$), and self-confidence significantly predicted study habits ($\beta = .47$). Thus, the final model was found to be parsimonious, with all retained paths demonstrating statistical significance ($p < 0.05$). This implies that, sociability, interest, motivation, self-confidence, and study habits all demonstrated direct effects on students' academic achievement in Business Studies. In addition, interest significantly predicted motivation, motivation significantly predicted self-confidence, and self-confidence

significantly predicted study habits. The parsimonious path causal model therefore involves students' sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, study habits, and their academic achievement in Business Studies.

H0₁: The standardized path coefficients of the predictor variables in the causal model involving sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, study habits, and students' academic achievement in Business Studies are not statistically significant.

The results presented in Figure 1 showed that all the standardized path coefficients were statistically significant at the 0.05 level at which the results were being tested. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected. Thus, inference drawn was that the standardized path coefficients of sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, and study habits in predicting students' academic achievement in Business Studies were statistically significant.

Research Question Two: What proportion of variance in students' academic achievement in Business Studies is attributable to each of the predictor variables?

Table 1

Proportion of variance in students' academic achievement in Business Studies is attributable to each of the predictor variables (N=331)

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	r	r ²
Sociability	23.00	4.58	.53	.28
Self-Confidence	24.90	3.95	.60	.36
Motivation	22.14	4.11	.63	.40
Interest	23.20	3.22	.74	.55
Study Habits	21.06	5.12	.58	.34

Note: Number of respondents (N) = 331, r = Correlation coefficient,
r² = Coefficient of determination

As shown in Table 1, all the predictor variables demonstrated moderate to high positive relationships with students' academic achievement in Business Studies. Interest had the highest coefficient of determination (r² = .55), indicating that 55% of the variance in students' academic achievement was attributable to students' interest. Motivation

accounted for 40% of the variance in academic achievement (r² = .40), while self-confidence, study habits, and sociability accounted for 36% (r² = .36), 34% (r² = .34), and 28% (r² = .28), respectively. These findings indicate that interest was the strongest predictor of students' academic achievement in Business Studies among the variables investigated.

H0₂: The proportion of variance in students' academic achievement in Business Studies attributable to each of the predictor variables is not statistically significant.

Table 2

Model Summary and ANOVA for the Combined Contribution of Psychosocial Predictors to Academic Achievement in Business Studies

Model Summary									
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.846 ^a	.714	.711	1.792	.715	163.257	5	325	.000

ANOVA ^a					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	2622.432	5	524.486	163.257	.000 ^b
1 Residual	1044.106	325	3.213		
Total	3666.538	330			

a. Dependent Variable: Achievement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Study Habits, Sociability, Self-Confidence, Motivation, Interest

The results in Table 2 revealed a significant combined contribution of the predictor variables to students' academic achievement in Business Studies, $F(5, 325) = 163.26$, $p < .001$, with an adjusted R^2 of .711. This indicates that sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, and study habits jointly

accounted for approximately 71.5% of the variance in students' academic achievement in Business Studies. Accordingly, the null hypothesis was rejected. The findings imply that the proportion of variance in students' academic achievement attributable to the psychosocial predictor variables was statistically significant.

Research Question Three: Which predictor variables have direct and indirect effects on students' academic achievement in Business Studies?

Table 3

Direct and Indirect Effects of Psychosocial Predictors on Academic Achievement in Business Studies

Variable	Direct Effect (β)	Decision at $\alpha=.05$	Indirect Effect (β)	Decision at $\alpha=.05$
Sociability	.08	< .05	.00	> .05
Self-Confidence	.18	< .05	.09	< .05
Motivation	.18	< .05	.15	< .05
Interest	.38	< .05	.20	< .05
Study Habits	.14	< .05	.00	> .05

$\alpha=.05$: level of significance, S: Significant, NS: Not Significant

The findings in Table 2 revealed that interest had the highest direct effect ($\beta = .38$) and indirect effect ($\beta = .20$) on students' academic achievement in Business Studies. Motivation also demonstrated substantial direct ($\beta = .18$) and indirect effects ($\beta = .15$), while self-confidence had direct and indirect effects of $\beta = .18$ and $\beta = .09$ respectively. Sociability and study habits demonstrated only direct effects on academic achievement, with no significant indirect effects observed. Thus, the findings suggest that

interest, motivation, and self-confidence functioned both directly and indirectly in predicting students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

Discussion

The study investigated psychosocial predictors of academic achievement in Business Studies using path analysis. Specifically, the study developed a causal model involving sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, study habits, and

students' academic achievement in Business Studies. The findings revealed that the most parsimonious causal model explaining students' academic achievement involved significant direct and indirect relationships among the psychosocial variables and academic achievement in Business Studies. The findings further demonstrated that sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, and study habits significantly predicted students' academic achievement in Business Studies both independently and collectively. The significant fit of the causal model indicates that psychosocial variables meaningfully explain variations in students' academic achievement in Business Studies.

The findings of the study support the assumptions of Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory and Ryan and Deci's Self-Determination Theory, which emphasize that students' academic behaviours and learning outcomes are influenced by reciprocal interactions among personal, motivational, behavioural, and environmental factors (Bandura, 1986; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The findings suggest that students' academic achievement in Business Studies is not solely dependent on cognitive ability or instructional factors but is substantially influenced by psychosocial dispositions that shape learners' engagement, persistence, and learning behaviours.

The findings showed that sociability had a significant positive direct effect on students' academic achievement in Business Studies, although its predictive strength was lower than those of the other predictor variables. This finding implies that students who demonstrate stronger interpersonal relationships, classroom interactions, and social engagement tend to achieve better academically in Business Studies. This may be because sociable students are more likely to participate actively in classroom discussions, collaborate effectively with peers, seek academic assistance when necessary, and benefit from cooperative learning experiences. The finding corroborates earlier studies by Wentzel (2017), Jiang and Koo (2020), and Estell and Perdue (2021), which reported that positive peer interactions and social connectedness significantly predict students' academic engagement and achievement. The finding also aligns with Chen, Rubin, and Li (2010), who observed that sociable learners often exhibit better academic adjustment and achievement outcomes because of their stronger classroom participation and interaction patterns. However, the relatively smaller effect size of sociability in the present study suggests

that although social interaction contributes to achievement, more internally regulated psychosocial variables may exert stronger influence on students' academic performance in Business Studies.

The study further revealed that self-confidence had significant direct and indirect effects on students' academic achievement in Business Studies. This finding indicates that students who possess stronger confidence in their academic abilities are more likely to demonstrate better achievement outcomes in Business Studies. Students with higher self-confidence may exhibit greater persistence, resilience, task engagement, and willingness to confront academic challenges. The finding supports the position of Honicke and Broadbent (2016), who argued that self-confidence enhances students' academic resilience and learning persistence. Similarly, Fong and Kim (2021) and Aryana (2022) reported significant positive relationships between students' self-confidence, academic self-efficacy, and academic achievement. The indirect effect observed in the present study further suggests that self-confidence may influence achievement partly through its effect on students' study habits and learning behaviours. Thus, students who believe in their academic capabilities may be more likely to adopt disciplined and effective study routines that subsequently enhance achievement outcomes.

Motivation was also found to exert significant direct and indirect effects on students' academic achievement in Business Studies. The finding implies that motivated students tend to demonstrate greater commitment to learning activities, higher persistence in academic tasks, and stronger engagement with instructional activities, thereby achieving better academically. This finding is consistent with Self-Determination Theory, which posits that motivated learners demonstrate greater effort, persistence, and academic engagement because of internalized goals and psychological needs satisfaction (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The finding corroborates previous empirical studies by Howard et al. (2021), Guay (2022), Akomolafe et al. (2013), and Oriahi (2009), all of which reported positive associations between students' motivation and academic performance. The indirect effect of motivation observed in the present study further indicates that motivation may strengthen students' self-confidence and study habits, which subsequently contribute to academic achievement. This finding highlights the central role of motivation

in promoting sustained academic engagement and effective learning behaviours among students.

Among all the predictor variables, interest demonstrated the strongest direct and indirect effects on students' academic achievement in Business Studies. This finding suggests that students who possess stronger interest in Business Studies are more likely to devote attention, effort, persistence, and emotional engagement toward learning activities in the subject. Students' interest may therefore serve as a major driving force underlying motivation, concentration, and active participation in classroom learning. The finding supports the assertions of Hidi and Renninger (2006) and Krapp (2007), who emphasized that interest promotes deeper cognitive engagement, persistence, and meaningful learning. Similarly, Harackiewicz et al. (2016), Ainley (2019), and Schiefele (2009) found that students' subject interest significantly predicts academic engagement, persistence, and achievement outcomes. The strong direct and indirect effects observed in the present study suggest that interest not only independently predicts achievement but may also stimulate other psychosocial processes such as motivation and positive learning behaviours that further enhance students' academic performance. This finding underscores the importance of developing instructional approaches capable of stimulating and sustaining students' interest in Business Studies.

The findings additionally revealed that study habits had significant positive direct effects on students' academic achievement in Business Studies. This implies that students who adopt effective study routines, time management strategies, concentration skills, revision practices, and organized learning patterns tend to achieve better academically. The finding corroborates the studies of Credé and Kuncel (2008), Nonis and Hudson (2019), and Ayodele and Adebisi (2023), which reported significant positive relationships between effective study habits and students' academic achievement. The finding also supports the argument that successful academic performance is strongly associated with disciplined learning behaviours and systematic study practices. Students with effective study habits may process learning materials more meaningfully, retain information better, and prepare more adequately for examinations, thereby improving academic achievement outcomes.

Another important finding of the study was that the predictor variables jointly accounted for a

substantial proportion of variance in students' academic achievement in Business Studies. The findings revealed that sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, and study habits collectively explained approximately 71.5% of the variance in academic achievement. This finding indicates that psychosocial variables constitute powerful determinants of students' academic achievement in Business Studies. The finding aligns with Mega et al. (2019), who reported that motivational, emotional, and behavioural variables collectively exert substantial influence on students' academic performance. Similarly, Putwain et al. (2023) observed that students' academic outcomes are significantly shaped by interacting psychosocial factors rather than isolated cognitive abilities alone. The substantial explained variance obtained in the present study therefore highlights the multidimensional nature of academic achievement in Business Studies and demonstrates the relevance of psychosocial variables in understanding students' academic achievement the subject.

Conclusion

Based on the study's findings, it was concluded that sociability, self-confidence, motivation, interest, and study habits are significant psychosocial predictors of students' academic achievement in Business Studies. The findings demonstrated that these variables exert both direct and indirect influences on students' academic achievement, with interest emerging as the strongest predictor. The substantial proportion of variance in academic achievement explained by the psychosocial variables further highlights the important role of students' psychosocial functioning in influencing academic achievement in Business Studies. The study therefore established that, improving students' psychosocial experiences may constitute an important means for enhancing academic achievement in Business Studies.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. School administrators and teachers should adopt instructional practices that stimulate and sustain students' interest in Business Studies through learner-centred and activity-based teaching approaches.

2. Guidance counsellors and educators should organize programmes aimed at improving students' self-confidence, academic motivation, and positive attitudes toward learning in order to enhance academic achievement.
3. Teachers should encourage collaborative learning, peer interaction, and classroom participation to strengthen students' sociability and academic engagement.
4. Students should be trained on effective study habits such as time management, concentration strategies, note-taking, revision techniques, and organized study routines to improve their academic performance.

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