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SELF-EFFICACY AS A PREDICTOR OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACHIEVEMENT AMONG PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN RIVERS STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated self-efficacy as a predictor of English language achievement among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State. Correlational research design was adopted for the study. Three research questions and three null hypotheses guided the study. The population of the study consisted of 63,846 secondary school one (SSI) students from three hundred and eleven (311) public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The sample size of the study was 480 senior secondary school one (SS1) students selected through the multistage sampling procedure. Self-structured questionnaires titled 'Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (SEQ)' and 'English Language Performance Test (ELPT)' was used in data collection. The instruments for data collection (SEQ and ELPT) were validated by three experts in Educational Psychology, Measurement and Evaluation and English Language. The reliability of the SEQ was determined using the test-retest method. The reliability of the English Language Performance Test (ELPT) was determined using Cronbach alpha. The instrument yielded reliability co-efficients of academic self-efficacy sub-scale (.831), social self-efficacy sub-scale (.811) and emotional self-efficacy sub-scale (.791). The English Language Performance Test (ELPT) yielded a reliability co-efficient of .861. Simple regression analysis was used in answering the research questions and in testing the corresponding null hypotheses at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that self-efficacy to a high extent significantly predicted students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State and social self-efficacy significantly predicted students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended among others that teachers should provide opportunities for reflective learners to engage in activities that allow for thoughtful analysis.

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INTRODUCTION

Academic achievement in the English language remains a central concern in secondary education globally and particularly in Nigeria, where English serves as both the medium of instruction and a core subject assessed in national examinations. Despite the importance of mastery in English, many students in public senior secondary schools continue to perform below expected standards, raising questions about the underlying factors that influence English language learning outcomes. One psychological factor that has garnered significant scholarly attention in recent years is self-efficacy, which is defined as an individual's belief in their capacity to execute actions necessary to produce specific performance attainments. Rooted in Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (Baanu et al., 2016), self-efficacy influences how students think, feel, motivate themselves and behave in learning contexts (Akinpelu, 2016; Abubakar, 2016). Their specific research suggested that students with higher self-efficacy are more likely to engage with challenging academic tasks, persist through difficulties and in the end achieve better academic outcomes than their less efficacious peers.

To Bandura (2013), self-efficacy is domain-specific that involves learners' beliefs about their capability in one subject area may differ significantly from another. In the context of English language learning, self-efficacy pertains to students' confidence in their ability to understand, use, and perform in English reading, writing, listening, and speaking tasks. Empirical studies consistently show that self-efficacy is a robust predictor of academic achievement. For example, research among high school students has demonstrated a positive correlation between self-efficacy beliefs and English language performance, with interventions aimed at increasing self-efficacy, which yields improvements in learners' outcomes. Moreover, studies conducted in secondary school settings have found significant relationships between students' self-efficacy and their overall academic achievement, suggesting that increases in self-efficacy beliefs are associated with improved performance across academic domains, including English language learning.

The relevance of self-efficacy to academic performance can be explained through its influence on motivation and learning behaviour. Students who believe they can succeed in learning tasks are more likely to set higher goals, expend greater effort, and persevere when faced with academic obstacles. Conversely, Amadi (2018) noted that those with lower self-efficacy may avoid challenging tasks that engages minimally with learning activities and experiences on anxiety or negative self-appraisal that undermines their performance. Within the English language classroom, self-efficacy affects not just cognitive engagement but also affective variables such as anxiety, interest, and willingness to participate in communicative practices, which are critical for language acquisition and performance (Amadi, 218). Therefore, investigating the role of self-efficacy in predicting English language achievement offers insights into how psychological factors contribute to educational outcomes beyond traditional measures of ability or instructional quality.

Research (Bandura, 2013) also stressed that self-efficacy beliefs do not operate in isolation but interact with contextual and instructional variables. Teachers' instructional strategies, classroom environments, feedback patterns, and peer interactions can either support or impede the development of positive self-efficacy beliefs among students. For instance, scaffolding techniques, mastery experiences, and opportunities for successful practice can enhance learner self-efficacy, leading to improved academic performance in English language tasks (Amadi, 2018). Additionally, supportive learning environments that promote autonomy,

encourage risk-taking in language use, and provide constructive feedback may strengthen students' confidence in their English abilities, thereby boosting achievement.

In spite the wealth of international research linking self-efficacy to academic success, there remains a scarcity of studies focused specifically on the Nigerian context, and even fewer that investigate this relationship among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State. Nigeria's educational landscape is characterized by diverse socio-economic conditions, varying quality of instructional resources, and different levels of student support, all of which may interact with self-efficacy beliefs and influence English language outcomes. Public schools in Rivers State face particular challenges, including large class sizes, limited access to learning materials, and socio-cultural factors that may affect students' language learning experiences. Hence, exploring self-efficacy as a predictor of English achievement in this specific context is both timely and necessary to inform educational policy, teacher training, and interventions aimed at improving language learning outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

Academic performance in the English language remains a persistent challenge among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State, despite its central role in national examinations and as the medium of instruction. Many students continue to struggle with English proficiency, particularly in reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, leading to consistently low achievement scores. This persistent underperformance has been attributed to multiple factors, including inadequate instructional resources, large class sizes, and ineffective teaching strategies. However, emerging research has continually suggested that psychological factors, especially self-efficacy, play a critical role in shaping students' learning behaviors and academic outcomes.

Students with high self-efficacy are more likely to engage actively with learning tasks, persevere through challenges, and achieve higher academic results, while those with low self-efficacy tend to avoid difficult tasks and demonstrate poor motivation. Despite the established importance of self-efficacy in predicting academic success, there is a paucity of empirical studies specifically examining its relationship with English language achievement among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State. Consequently, this study pursued to address this gap by investigating the extent to which students' self-efficacy predicts their performance in English language, with the aim of informing strategies that can enhance learners' confidence and improve academic outcomes.

Aim and Objectives of the Study

The major aim of the study was to investigate self-efficacy as a predictor of English language achievement among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State. Specifically, the study's objectives are to:

- Investigate the extent to which academic self-efficacy predicts students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Examine the extent to which social self-efficacy predicts students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Examine the extent to which emotional self-efficacy predicts students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Questions

Three research questions guided the study:

- To what extent does academic self-efficacy predict students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- To what extent does social self-efficacy predict students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?
- To what extent does emotional self-efficacy predict students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypotheses

Three hypotheses further guided the study:

- Academic self-efficacy does not significantly predict students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Social self-efficacy does not significantly predict students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.
- Emotional self-efficacy does not significantly predict students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

CONCEPTUALIZATION

Self-Efficacy

Self-Efficacy is the belief that one can master a situation and produce positive outcomes. Self-efficacy is defined as one's belief in his/her capacity to perform a specific action successfully (Bandura, 2001 in Baanu et al., 2016). Self-efficacy determines how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. Such beliefs produce these diverse effects through four major processes, which include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes. Self-efficacy is described as a sense or feeling that one is competent and effective (Onukwufor, 2016). The learner's self-efficacy could no doubt determine his or her accomplishment in his/her academic task and pursuit (Anierobi et al., 2022). Self-efficacy is an important fact in determining one's life attainment. It generally refers to the trust an individual has towards himself to produce certain task or responsibilities properly and affectively (Lee & Mendlinger, 2011 in Anierobi et al., 2022). Self-efficacy beliefs play a role in shaping the thought pattern, perception and behaviour of individuals (Nwaukwa et al., 2019). This implies that the level of one's self-efficacy will determine their disposition towards taking on challenges and their chances of success in achieving set goals. Self-efficacy therefore, is the belief that one can take up an academic task and accomplish it. In the words of Hanum et al., (2017), self-efficacy refers to the level of confidence and self-belief of a learner to complete a task and to produce something at its best according to their capabilities.

Self-efficacy is the confidence (or lack of confidence) in one's ability to do something or to learn something new. Human accomplishments thrive on the belief in one's ability and in the

worth of what one is doing. Because this concept is so crucial for the success of the learning efforts, schools may be well positioned to pay more attention to self-efficacy. Individuals who have a strong sense of self-efficacy will view difficult assignments as a challenge to be conquered rather than as a threat to be avoided. Zeldin and Pajares (2000) in Baanu et al., (2016) noted that efficacious students look for new challenges, show persistence at tasks and have the alternate success. Even though such students have prior difficulties, the belief in their capabilities to overcome these difficulties results in the motivated performance. Students might have different self-efficacy judgements in different types of task or domains. For example, a student who feels efficacious in mathematics might not feel efficacious in English Language. Self-efficacy influences people's choice of tasks, showing effort and persistence at the task, and thus, is a predictor of performance and motivation compared to other variables (Bandura, 1997 in Baanu et al, 2016).

Self-efficacy is largely grounded in the social cognitive theory. This theory explains that human functioning results from interactions among personal factors (e.g. cognitions, emotions), behaviours and environmental conditions (Bandura, 1997 in Baanu et al., 2016). From this perspective, self-efficacy affects one's behaviour and the environments with which one interacts and is influenced by one's actions and conditions in the environments. Self-efficacy is hypothesized to affect individual's task choices, effort persistence and achievement. Compared with learners who doubt their capabilities, those who feel self-efficacious about learning or performing a task competently are apt to participate more readily, work harder, persist longer when they encounter difficulties and achieve at higher levels. Self-efficacy is the self-trust, self-reliance and self-confidence in oneself (Musa, 2020). Hayat et al., (2020) opined that a self-efficacious person is one who believes in one's capacities to plan and execute the courses of action necessary to generate certain attainments. When it is related to academics, it simply means a student's belief that he can effectively complete any academic activity at any level (Kolo et al., 2017).

Self-efficacy has to do with students' confidence in their cognitive skills to learn and perform the academic course work. Self-efficacy influences the choices students make and the courses of action they pursue. Students tend to select tasks and activities in which they feel confident and competent and avoid those in which they do not (Palmer, 2006 in Ayoola, 2019). Students will have little incentive to engage in those actions in which they believe their actions will not have the desired consequences. Self-efficacy has been shown to be a predictor in influencing learning environment and helping self-regulation in learning (Hedeshi, 2017). Self-efficacy is one of the factors that can predict learning achievement (Fokkens-Bruinsma et al., 2021). Self-efficacy is part of intrinsic motivation that can affect a person's ability to survive in the face of difficulties or obstacles (Pasha-Zaidi et al., 2019).

Zimmerman (2000) in Hajjina and Retnawati (2022) argued that self-efficacy motivates individuals to learn through goal setting, self-management, self-respect, and self-regulation through strategy execution. Self-efficacy can shape a person's life through career choices and situations. Self-efficacy allows people to take difficult actions and choose situations that they believe can be resolved. Self-efficacy responds to events and situations that occur effectively, works in good faith, believes in their abilities, sees difficulties as challenges rather than threats, seeks new situations, and seeks goals.

Gibson and Donelly (2000) in Hajjina and Retnawati (2022) pointed out that self-efficacy has three aspects: belief in the ability to deal with problems that are not easy to solve, belief in strength, and expectations for overall performance. Someone with high self-efficacy in problem-

solving tends to be independent and directly involved in very challenging tasks. People with high self-efficacy perceive failure as a lack of commitment, knowledge and skills. Individuals who have low self-efficacy do not like to think about the best way to solve complex problems. In the face of failure, they do not quickly regain their confidence.

Bandura (1997) in Sharma (2021) distinguished between efficacy expectation and outcome expectation. Outcome expectation is one's assessment that, for most people under normal circumstances, specific actions will actually lead to certain results. It implies that a person's belief that a given behaviour will lead to a particular outcome. Efficacy expectation, in contrast, is the belief that one personally has the ability to perform a specific task well. It is the conviction that the person himself or herself can successfully produce the behaviour required to generate the particular outcome. It determines how hard people will try and how long they will persist at a particular behaviour (Sharma, 2021). Many individuals shy away from challenging tasks, not because they do not have the ability to perform the assignment, but because they doubt their ability, dwell on their deficiencies, and give up without trying, in other words, they lack self-efficacy. The distinction between efficacy expectation and outcome expectation is crucial; the extent to which a person will try to attack a difficult or dangerous task or problem may not depend on "outcome expectation" (which many parents and teachers emphasize), but on "efficacy expectation", which takes into consideration not only confidence and courage, but also fear, worries, intimidation, and the feeling of being totally overwhelmed by the task. As social learning theory emphasizes, self-efficacy is different from the ability to perform a task. Thus, in observing students, one can find an over confident youngster, full of energy, who literally has persuaded himself or herself that he or she can do anything and will actually try impossible tasks. This is in sharp contrast to the bright, but shy, intimidated individual who will avoid difficult tasks because he or she lacks self-efficacy, but which in all probability he or she could do well.

Self-efficacy is the belief that one can master a situation and produce positive outcomes. Self-efficacy is obviously a valuable quality. Cherry (2023) noted that we begin to form our sense of self-efficacy in early childhood by dealing with various experiences, task, and situations. However, the growth of self-efficacy does not end during youth but continues to evolve throughout life as people acquire new skills, experiences, and understanding. Bandura (2000) in Cherry (2023) identified four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, persuasion and encouragement, and interpretation of emotional arousal.

Mastery experience is the most effective path to self-efficacy through mastering new skills. Mcgiven (2021) opined that mastery experiences play a crucial role in the establishment of self-efficacy. Mastery experiences build a powerful belief in the ability or capability of the individual. In acquiring more difficult skills, people usually make mistakes. If they persist through failure experiences to eventual success, they learn the lesson of self-efficacy: I can do it! Vicarious experience is another way to improve self-efficacy by watching others perform a skill you want to learn. It is important that the individual chooses a model that is competent at the task, and it helps, if the model is similar to the individual. For example, if an individual is shy about speaking up for himself or herself observing someone who is good at doing so can help the individual develop the confidence to do it himself or herself. Mcgiven (2021) maintained that seeing others putting in effort and succeeding can increase your belief in your own ability to succeed. Although it is less effective than the first two approaches, a third way to develop self-efficacy is through the encouragement of others. For example, if a student is having a hard time

applying appropriate effective study skills, a friend's encouragement to consciously cultivate them might give the student just the push he or she needs.

Our own responses and emotional reactions to situations also play an important role in self-efficacy. Moods, emotional states, physical reactions, and stress levels can all impact how a person feels about their personal abilities in a particular situation. A person who becomes extremely nervous before speaking in public may develop a weak sense of self-efficacy in these situations. It is important to note that it is not the intensity of emotional and physical reactions that matters but rather how they are perceived and interpreted.

Maddux (2013) in Mcgiven (2021) suggested a fifth way of developing self-efficacy through imaginable experiences. Imagined experience is the art of an individual visualizing himself or herself behaving effectively or successfully in a given situation. This study will focus on the following aspects of self-efficacy: academic self-efficacy, social self-efficacy and emotional self-efficacy.

Academic Self-Efficacy

Academic self-efficacy refers to the student's beliefs and attitudes towards their capabilities to achieve academic success, as well as belief in their ability to fulfil academic tasks and the successful learning of the materials (Senol et al., 2018). Sadia and Uyar (2013) in Enekwechi (2022) defined academic self-efficacy as the person's conviction that he or she can successfully achieve at a designated level in a specific academic subject area. Self-efficacy is the degree of assurance people have in their capacity to carry out plans of action or achieve particular performance goals. Self-efficacy is an important factor in learning especially for arts subjects like English Language. This is because, 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 (Brown & Green, 2015). Therefore, self-efficacy can influence the choice of task and perseverance while doing them.

Students' self-efficacy beliefs have a big impact on whether they will put in the effort necessary to complete a task and keep up with academic challenges. When academic tasks are challenging, people with a high level of self-efficacy attempt them and remain trying, whereas people with a low level of self-efficacy frequently give up easily (Botta & Anzaldi, 2013 in Enekwechi, 2022). Romppel et al. (2013) maintained that self-efficacy affects how a task is chosen and committed to, how much energy is expended on it, and how well it is performed. Students' belief in their apparent potential to succeed in any academic task is, thus, a measure of their self-efficacy.

Academic self-efficacy belief refers to student perception that they can complete the given academic tasks at specified levels (Bhati et al., 2022). Midgley et al. (2000) in Bhati et al., (2022) explained academic self-efficacy as students' perceptions of their competence to do their classwork. Students' belief in their efficacy in an academic environment, provide the foundation for motivation, and personal achievement. It is because students have little incentive to act or persevere in the face of difficult circumstances unless they believe that their actions will result in the outcomes they deserve. In addition, students with a strong belief in their academic efficacy are more interested in academic activities by setting up challenging goals and working hard to achieve the goals (Fenollar et al., 2007 in Bhati et al., 2022). It can be shown in the behaviour of the students who have higher efficacy belief that they can demonstrate a high level of enthusiasm while working on the tasks, such as collecting assigned assignments on time, never complaining

while an assignment is provided, and always attempting to complete the tasks despite the high level of difficulty. Meanwhile, others with lower academic self-efficacy often seem to choose and perform well on tasks that match their abilities, however, if the tasks are perceived to be too challenging, they avoid and ignore them which creates the problems of academic procrastination (Bandura, 2013).

Social Self-Efficacy

Smith and Betz (2000) in Gazo et al. (2020) defined social self-efficacy as the individual's trust in his own ability to participate in social interactive tasks which are needed to preserve personal relationships. Also Wei et al., (2000) in Gazo et al., (2020) defined it as the individual's belief in his/her ability to initiate social interactions and make new friendships. Social self-efficacy helps the individual in assessing his/her success in social relationships. Individuals with high social self-efficacy can start social interaction and make new friendships. Social-self-efficacy, one aspect of effective social skills, refers to a readiness to initiate behaviour in social conditions. It is the individuals' beliefs that they are capable of initiating social contact and developing new friendships. Social self-efficacy is also considered as the students' expectancy that they can successfully perform or complete a target behaviour in an academic or everyday situation involving social interaction (Connolly, 1989 in Iskender & Akin, 2017).

Social self-efficacy is important not only in its possible relationship to effective social behaviour but also it has been widely applied to psychological adjustment and marital health. For example, it has been consistently shown to be related to higher levels of global self-esteem (Smith & Botz, 2002 in Gazo et al., 2020). In a similar study Bandura et al., (1996) in Iskender and Akin (2017) found that social self-efficacy was related to the emotional well-being of higher school students. Social self-efficacy beliefs encourage people to develop social relationships, which in turn are vital for themselves to satisfy their personal needs.

Connolly (1989) in Solmaz (2015) identified participation in a social group or activity, social boldness, friendly behaviours, and getting and giving help as social self-efficacy skills. An individual with strong social self-efficacy will be likely to seek out social experiences with the expectation that these experiences will be successful. If social experiences are perceived as failures, an individual may lower their efficacy expectations and reduce the frequency of social interaction (Butler, 2012 in Solmaz, 2015).

Emotional Self-Efficacy

The emotional self-efficacy concept is a new concept which emerged as a result of combining the concepts of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy (Totan et al., in Gok & Arslan, 2022). Gok and Arslan (2022) defined emotional self-efficacy as the ability to cope with negative emotions. It encompasses the skills of the individual to avoid negative emotional states (for example, avoiding irritability and suppressing negative thoughts) or returning to a normal emotional state (for example, self-talk to gain a positive attitude, calming when you are afraid or worried) when experiencing negative emotions. Valois et al., (2008) in Etminan et al. (2020) defined emotional self-efficacy as the set of behavioural readiness and desires of the individual in recognizing, processing and organizing emotional information. Etminan et al. (2020) noted that emotional self-efficacy affects the main emotional processes as well as the consequences associated with adaptive and maladaptive emotional functions.

The ability of the individual to perform emotional processes in a healthy way affects the level of harmonious and incompatible emotional functionality. Emotional self-efficacy can only be regained as a characteristic when emotional intelligence is considered as a personality trait, since different factors might arise which could affect the individual's perception of the level of emotional functionality (Kirk et al., 2008 in Gok & Arslan, 2022). Gok and Arslan (2022) maintained that emotional self-efficacy consists of four basic building blocks. The first building block is the ability to recognize, perceive, comprehend, sense, interpret and explain emotion completely and accurately from a person's facial expression, body language and tone of voice. The second building block emphasizes the extent to which emotions support thought; it is the ability to reach or produce emotions when needed. The third building block is the ability to understand emotions and information gathered through emotions; it includes analyzing emotions, predicting situations which might be related to each other in the process, and understanding the results. The fourth building block is the ability to regulate emotions in a way that drives emotional and intellectual growth; it includes the management of emotions within the scope of one's goals, self-knowledge and awareness level. With emotional self-efficacy, the person gains the ability to control his emotional states by calming himself or gaining a more positive perspective.

Hashemi (2014) in Beri and Akhoun (2018) found that emotional self-efficacy plays an important role in the formation of effective social interactions and it generally enables an individual how to manage emotions and relations in order to reach desired outcomes. It was also found that students who are having high emotional self-efficacy can maintain their relations efficiently and it was also suggested that high emotional self-efficacy leads to positive attitude and creative ideas in the classroom.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory of Motivation

Self-efficacy theory is largely rooted in the social cognitive theory of Bandura (Baanu et al., 2016). This theory explains that human functioning results from interactions among personal factors (e.g. cognitions, emotions), behaviours and environmental conditions. From this perspective, self-efficacy affects our behaviours and the environments with which one interacts and is influenced by one's actions and conditions in the environment.

Self-efficacy theory emphasizes the importance of the individual and the individual's perceptions of his/her personal capabilities as key determinants of successful outcomes. Self-efficacy theory, and broader social cognitive theory in which self-efficacy is encompassed, therefore clearly endorses a democratic ideal that suggests that all individuals are competent and capable of being successful, provided they have the opportunities and self-efficacy necessary to pursue their goals.

Self-efficacy beliefs develop as a result of information from four types of resources: mastery (enactive), vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion and physiological states. Mastery experience is the experience one gains when one takes on a new challenge and becomes successful at doing it. Vicarious experience involves observing other people successfully completing a task. Verbal persuasion is a comparatively weak source of self-efficacy which focuses on the encouragements given by people. The last source of students' self-efficacy is

physiological reactions which are stress, anxiety and other feelings seen as signs of physical incompetence.

Self-beliefs of efficacy play key role in the self-regulation of motivation. Most human motivation is cognitively generated. People motivate themselves and guide their actions anticipatorily by the exercise of forethought. They form beliefs about what they can do. They anticipate likely outcomes of prospective actions. They set goals for themselves and plan courses of action designed to realize valued futures. Self-efficacy beliefs contribute to motivation in several ways: they determine the goals people set for themselves, how long they persevere in the face of difficulties; and their resilience to failures. The rationale of this model is that students will be more willing to choose tasks where they already feel confident of succeeding.

METHODS

This study adopted a correlational research design. The population comprised 63,846 senior secondary one (SS1) students across 311 public senior secondary schools in Rivers State, with 30,440 males and 33,406 females. A sample of 480 SS1 students was drawn from 12 Local Government Areas (LGAs) across Rivers West, East, and South East senatorial districts. The sample was determined using Taro Yamane's formula, which gave a minimum of 398; this was rounded to 400 and increased to 480 for better representation. Multistage sampling was employed: first, senatorial districts were identified; four LGAs were randomly selected from each district; five schools were then randomly selected from each LGA; and eight students were randomly chosen from each school.

Data were collected using a self-structured questionnaire, the Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (SEQ), and the English Language Performance Test (ELPT). Section A collected demographic data, while Section B measured cognitive styles, learning styles, and self-efficacy using a modified Likert scale (VHE = 4, HE = 3, LE = 2, VLE = 1). The ELPT contained 21 items selected after item analysis.

The instruments were validated by experts in Measurement and Evaluation, Educational Psychology, and English Language for content and face validity. Reliability was established via test-retest for the SEQ (academic self-efficacy = .831, social self-efficacy = .811, emotional self-efficacy = .791) and Cronbach's alpha for the ELPT (.861), indicating high reliability suitable for fieldwork.

Permission was obtained from school principals and 480 copies of the instruments were administered with the help of research assistants and teachers. All copies were retrieved for analysis. Data were analyzed using simple linear regression to answer research questions and test hypotheses at a .05 significance level. Statistical analysis was conducted with SPSS version 28.

RESULTS

Research Question One: To what extent does academic self-efficacy predict students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypothesis One: Academic self-efficacy does not significantly predict students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 1: Summary of Simple Linear Regression Model of Academic Self-efficacy on Students' Academic Performance in English Language

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.871 ^a	.758	.755	3.6134		
ANOVA Associated with Simple Regression						
		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-value	P-value
Regression		3145.186	1	3145.186	98.604	.000 ^b
Residual		10462.134	478	31.897		
Total		13607.186	479			

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Academic Self-efficacy

Table 1 showed the model summary of academic self-efficacy on students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The simple linear regression model gave a coefficient of .871, R^2 of .758 and adjusted R^2 of .755. This showed that academic self-efficacy accounted for 76% variation in the students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This therefore indicated that to a very high extent, academic self-efficacy predicted students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

The table also revealed the results of ANOVA associated with simple regression which yielded an F-value of 98.604 gotten at degree of freedom between 1 and 478 with its corresponding P-value of 0.000 which is less than the chosen level of significance ($p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected. It therefore, indicated that, academic self-efficacy significantly predicted students' academic performance in English Language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question Two: To what extent does social self-efficacy predict students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypothesis Two: Social self-efficacy does not significantly predict students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 2: Summary of Simple Linear Regression Model of Social Self-efficacy on Students' Academic Performance in English Language

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.783 ^a	.613	.611	3.2136		
ANOVA Associated with Simple Regression						
		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-value	P-value
Regression		2552.182	1	2552.182	60.120	.001 ^b
Residual		2462.134	478	42.451		
Total		5414.316	479			

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Social Self-efficacy

Table 2 showed the model summary of social self-efficacy on students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The simple linear regression

model gave a coefficient of .783, R^2 of .613 and adjusted R^2 of .611. This showed that social self-efficacy accounted for 61% variation in the students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This therefore indicated that to a high extent, social self-efficacy predicted students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

The table also revealed the results of ANOVA associated with simple regression which yielded an F-value of 69.543 gotten at degree of freedom between 1 and 478 with its corresponding p-value of .001 which is less than the chosen level of significance ($p < 0.05$). The null hypothesis is rejected. It therefore, indicated that, social self-efficacy significantly predicted students' academic performance in English Language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Research Question Three: To what extent does emotional self-efficacy predict students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State?

Hypothesis Three: Emotional self-efficacy does not significantly predict students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

Table 3: Summary of Simple Linear Regression Model of Emotional Self-efficacy on Students' Academic Performance in English Language

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate		
1	.790 ^a	.624	.621	3.2281		
ANOVA Associated with Simple Regression						
		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F-value	P-value
Regression		2952.177	1	3145.186	72.665	.001 ^b
Residual		3575.168	478	40.627		
Total		5414.316	479			

a. Dependent Variable: Academic Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Emotional Self-efficacy

Table 3 showed the model summary of emotional self-efficacy on students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. The simple linear regression model gave a coefficient of .790, R^2 of .624 and adjusted R^2 of .621. This showed that emotional self-efficacy accounted for 62% variation in the students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State. This therefore indicated that to a high extent, emotional self-efficacy predicted students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

The table also revealed the results of ANOVA associated with simple regression which yielded an F-value of 72.665 gotten at degree of freedom between 1 and 478 with its corresponding p-value of .001 which is less than the chosen level of significance ($p < .05$). The null hypothesis is rejected. It therefore, indicated that, emotional self-efficacy significantly predicted students' academic performance in English Language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

DISCUSSION

Academic Self-Efficacy and Students' Academic Performance

Table 1 of research question one and hypothesis one shows that the extent to which academic self-efficacy predicts students' academic performance in English Language is very high in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State; while the result of the corresponding hypothesis indicated that academic self-efficacy significantly predict students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

This finding is in line with the study of Amadi (2018) who found that academic self-efficacy predicted academic performance in English Language of secondary school students in Rivers State, which is consistent with the present study. Similarly, students with high self-efficacy are more likely to use effective learning strategies, such as organization, elaboration and critical thinking. These strategies enhance their ability to process and retain information, leading to better academic performance.

Boyle et al. (2020) also supported that academic self-efficacy significantly relate to academic performance in physics of high school students in Portugal. This result could be because high self-efficacy students are more likely to engage in effective problem-solving processes, analyzing problems thoroughly and applying appropriate solutions, which enhances academic performance of students.

Nnachi (2021) revealed that academic self-efficacy significantly influenced academic performance in English Language of high school students in Abia State. This could be probably because students who believe in their academic abilities are more likely to enjoy learning activities, participate actively in class, and approach their studies with enthusiasm and curiosity.

Social Self-Efficacy and Students' Academic Performance

Table 2 of research question two and hypothesis two shows that the extent to which social self-efficacy predicts students' academic performance in English Language is very high in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State; while the result of the corresponding hypothesis indicated that social self-efficacy significantly predict students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

This finding is in accordance with the study of Okoye and Okorie (2018) who recorded that social self-efficacy significantly relates to academic performance of secondary school students in Rivers State. This is probably because students with social self-efficacy are more likely to participate in class discussions and other interactive activities. This active engagement can lead to a deeper understanding of the material and better academic outcomes.

Nwagwu (2020) collaborated that social self-efficacy predicted academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. This is because students who believe in their ability to communicate effectively are more likely to seek help from teachers, ask questions and clarify doubts. This proactive approach can lead to better comprehension of subjects and improved academic performance.

Nathaniel (2021) also supported that social self-efficacy predicted academic performance among secondary school students in Akuku-Toru Local Government Area of Rivers State. This could be because students with social self-efficacy tend to have a more positive attitude towards

school and learning. They are more likely to enjoy school activities and stay motivated, which can translate into better academic performance.

Emotional Self-Efficacy and Students' Academic Performance

Table 3 of research question three and hypothesis three showed that the extent to which emotional self-efficacy predicts students' academic performance in English Language is very high in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State; while the result of the corresponding hypothesis indicated that emotional self-efficacy significantly predict students' academic performance in English language in public senior secondary schools in Rivers State.

This finding is in harmony with the study of Ogbebor (2020) who revealed that emotional self-efficacy predicted academic performance of secondary school students in Ikwerre Local Government Area of Rivers State. This is probably because the ability to regulate emotions helps students avoid distractions caused by emotional disturbances. They can maintain better concentration on their studies, which contributes to improved academic performance.

Briggs (2021) supported that emotional self-efficacy predicted academic performance of secondary school students in Akuku-Toru Local Government Area of Rivers State. This is because students with high emotional self-efficacy are more skillful at using effective coping strategies when faced with difficulties. Instead of giving up, they seek solutions and support, which helps them overcome obstacles and succeed academically.

Nwagwu and Ogbonna (2022) also found that emotional self-efficacy predicted academic performance of secondary school students in Akikpo-South Local Government Area of Rivers State. This finding could be because effective emotional regulation fosters healthier relationships with peers and teachers. Positive relationships create a supportive learning environment, enhancing the overall academic experience.

Daniel (2023) also supported that emotional self-efficacy predicted academic performance of secondary school students in Obio/Akpor Local Government Area of Rivers State. This could be because emotional self-efficacy is linked to higher levels of engagement in academic activities. Engaged students are more likely to participate in class, complete assignments on time, and show interest in learning, leading to better academic outcomes.

CONCLUSION

This study established that self-efficacy is a significant predictor of English language achievement among public senior secondary school students in Rivers State. Students with higher self-efficacy consistently demonstrated greater motivation, persistence, and strategic approaches to learning, which directly contributed to improved performance in English. In contrast, low self-efficacy was linked to avoidance behaviors, reduced effort, and difficulties in tackling challenging language tasks, resulting in lower achievement.

The findings from this study emphasized that students' belief in their own capabilities is central to their academic success. Enhancing self-efficacy can therefore play a pivotal role in improving English language outcomes. Teachers and educators should intentionally create learning environments that promote mastery experiences, provide constructive feedback, model effective language use, and encourage self-reflection. Such strategies can empower students to overcome language anxiety, build confidence, and engage more actively in the learning process.

Moreover, school administrators and policymakers should integrate self-efficacy development into curricula and teacher training programs, ensuring that classroom practices systematically support students' belief in their abilities. Placing self-efficacy as a core educational focus, schools do not only improved language achievement but also long-term academic resilience and success. Therefore, self-efficacy stands out as a critical determinant of English language achievement.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, discussion and conclusion of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- There should be workshops focused on key academic skills, such as essay writing, reading comprehension, and vocabulary building. By equipping students with effective strategies and tools, their self-efficacy in tackling English language tasks can be enhanced, leading to improved academic performance.
- Teachers should create a classroom environment that encourages active participation and values diverse perspectives. Positive reinforcement from teachers and classmates can build students' confidence in their social interactions within the academic setting.
- Ministry of education should implement programmes that focus on emotional well-being, such as mindfulness training, stress management workshops and counseling services. These programmes can help students develop resilience and better cope with academic pressures, thereby enhancing their emotional self-efficacy.

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