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Psychological Factors and School Adjustment as Correlate of Academic Self-Efficacy among Secondary School Students in the Ibadan Metropolis

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Abstract
This study investigated the extent to which psychological factors (prior learning experience, self-esteem, teachers' support, peer relationship, and school adjustment) and school adjustment predict academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in Ibadan Metropolis. The study employed a descriptive survey design. A multi-stage sampling technique was used to select participants across public secondary schools in Ibadan Metropolis. Standardized scales were administered to measure the independent variables (prior learning experience, self-esteem, teachers' support, peer relationship, and school adjustment) and the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy). Results revealed significant positive correlations between academic self-efficacy and prior learning experience ($r = .42$, $p < .05$), self-esteem ($r = .53$, $p < .05$), teachers' support ($r = .48$, $p < .05$), peer relationship ($r = .39$, $p < .05$), and school adjustment ($r = .51$, $p < .05$). The regression analysis showed that the predictor variables jointly accounted for 46% of the variance in academic self-efficacy ($R^2 = .46$, $F(5, 344) = 58.72$, $p < .05$). Self-esteem ($\beta = .31$, $p < .05$) and teachers' support ($\beta = .27$, $p < .05$) made the strongest relative contributions, followed by school adjustment ($\beta = .22$, $p < .05$). Prior learning experience ($\beta = .18$, $p < .05$) and peer relationship ($\beta = .15$, $p < .05$) contributed moderately. Based on these findings, it is recommended that schools strengthen teacher–student support systems, introduce programs that boost students' self-esteem, and promote peer mentoring to enhance school adjustment. Policymakers and educators should design interventions that reinforce positive prior learning experiences to build resilience and confidence in learning. Collectively, these measures can foster stronger academic self-efficacy and improve overall educational outcomes.

Keywords: Academic, Adjustment, Psychological-factors, Self-efficacy, Students

Introduction

Academic self-efficacy is a construct grounded in Banduras Social Cognitive Theory, referring to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully organize and execute actions necessary to accomplish specific academic tasks (Bandura, 1997). This belief system plays a vital role in shaping students motivation, learning strategies, and ultimately, their academic achievements. Unlike general self-confidence, academic self-efficacy is task-specific and dynamically influences how students approach challenging learning activities, solve problems, and persist in their efforts despite setbacks. Unlike general confidence, academic self-efficacy is task-specific and influences how students approach challenges, engage with learning materials, and regulate their effort. Research shows that students with high academic self-efficacy are more likely to set ambitious academic goals, maintain persistence despite difficulties, and employ effective problem-solving strategies. Such beliefs empower students to approach difficult tasks with a positive mindset, reducing anxiety and enhancing their likelihood of success. On the other hand, low academic self-efficacy can result in avoidance behaviors, decreased motivation, and poor academic performance, which may hinder student's educational and personal development (Usher & Pajares, 2023). Therefore, academic self-efficacy is not just a predictor of academic outcomes but also a crucial factor in students emotional well-being and lifelong learning dispositions.

In Nigeria, academic self-efficacy among secondary school students has become a subject of growing concern and research, particularly due to widespread challenges in academic performance and retention. National reports and educational assessments frequently highlight alarming trends of underachievement and dropout rates in Nigerian secondary schools, particularly in public institutions where infrastructural and resource deficits are common (Oluwatayo & Adeoye, 2020). Studies conducted within Nigerian contexts reveal that many secondary school students exhibit low levels of academic self-efficacy, often compounded by socio-economic disadvantages, inadequate learning environments, and limited access to quality teaching resources (Adewale and Odu, 2022). These factors combine to undermine students' belief in their academic capabilities, especially in regions where educational inequality is pronounced. The frequency of low academic self-efficacy in Nigeria raises concerns not only about individual student outcomes but also about broader implications for national development, as education remains a key driver for social mobility and economic growth.

The manifestations of academic self-efficacy, or lack thereof, among Nigerian secondary school students are observable in various academic and behavioral indicators. Students with low self-efficacy often exhibit reluctance to participate actively in class, demonstrate minimal persistence in completing assignments or mastering new skills, and experience heightened levels of academic anxiety or fear of failure. Such students tend to attribute academic setbacks to internal deficiencies rather than external, changeable factors, which can lead to a fixed mindset and learned helplessness (Ibrahim and Adebayo, 2023). Conversely, students with higher academic self-efficacy are more resilient, demonstrate better time management, and approach learning tasks with greater enthusiasm and strategic effort. These positive behaviors translate into improved academic outcomes and higher engagement levels. Understanding these manifestations is crucial for educators and counselors as it helps identify students at risk of academic failure and informs the development of targeted support interventions.

Research has consistently demonstrated that students with high academic self-efficacy tend to set higher academic goals, show greater intrinsic motivation, engage more deeply with learning materials, and exhibit resilience in the face of academic difficulties (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021; Zimmerman, 2023). This positive self-belief not only encourages students to take on demanding tasks but also helps reduce anxiety and fear of failure, creating a more conducive mindset for academic success. Conversely, students with low academic self-efficacy often doubt their capabilities, which may lead to avoidance of challenging tasks, lower persistence, and poorer academic performance (Usher & Pajares, 2023). Given these impacts, academic self-efficacy is regarded as one of the most important psychological predictors of students' educational outcomes across diverse cultural and socioeconomic contexts.

The implications of academic self-efficacy for educational stakeholders in Nigeria are far-reaching. For students, high academic self-efficacy is linked to enhanced motivation, improved academic performance, and greater persistence, all of which contribute to successful school completion and positive career trajectories. Psychologically, it supports better emotional regulation and reduces stress associated with academic challenges (Obasi & Nwankwo, 2021). For teachers and school administrators, recognizing the importance of fostering academic self-efficacy highlights the need to create supportive classroom environments, provide constructive feedback, and adopt instructional methods that build students' confidence and competence. At the policy level, understanding the role of academic self-efficacy underscores the importance of investing in teacher training, educational resources, and student support services to boost learning outcomes nationally. Given the potential for academic self-efficacy to influence both educational success and broader psychosocial development, it is imperative that Nigerian educational systems integrate this construct into curriculum design and student assessment frameworks.

Prior learning experiences serve as the foundational building blocks for developing academic self-efficacy beliefs. Mastery experiences, which include successful completion of academic tasks, contribute significantly to reinforcing students confidence in their capabilities. When students repeatedly succeed in tasks such as solving math problems, writing essays, or performing well on tests, they internalize these successes as evidence of their competence (Eze *et al*., 2022). In contrast, repeated failure or difficulty in mastering academic content can lead to diminished self-efficacy and decreased motivation. This phenomenon is particularly critical in the formative secondary school years, where students are still developing key academic skills and attitudes toward learning. If students encounter challenges early without adequate support or strategies for success, their academic self-efficacy may decline, potentially resulting in disengagement and poor academic outcomes.

In addition to mastery experiences, vicarious experiences observing peers successfully complete academic tasks also influence students self-efficacy. Seeing classmates or friends overcome academic challenges can inspire students to believe that they too can succeed if they put in similar effort and strategies (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2021). This modeling effect is especially relevant in secondary schools where peer influence is strong. Teachers' and parents' feedback about past performances also serves as a powerful source of information for students' self-efficacy judgments. Constructive feedback that highlights effort, progress, and strategies for improvement can help students reinterpret past setbacks as learning opportunities rather than failures, thereby sustaining or rebuilding their academic self-efficacy. However, negative or punitive feedback can reinforce feelings of inadequacy and

reduce confidence. Research in Nigeria supports these views, indicating that students interpretations of their past academic experiences are significantly shaped by the quality of social feedback they receive from adults and peers, which directly affects their motivation and performance (Oluwatayo and Adeoye, 2020). Thus, prior learning experience interacts with social contexts to shape the trajectory of academic self-efficacy development.

Self-esteem, which encompasses an individual's overall sense of worth and self-acceptance, is intricately linked with academic self-efficacy, though the two constructs differ in scope and focus. While academic self-efficacy is domain-specific and concerned with confidence in academic tasks, self-esteem represents a more global appraisal of ones value as a person (Rosenberg, 1965). Nonetheless, high self-esteem often provides the emotional foundation upon which academic self-efficacy can thrive. Students who feel good about themselves generally approach academic challenges with optimism and resilience, even when faced with setbacks. This positive self-regard buffers against the negative emotional impacts of failure and helps maintain motivation to try again, thus sustaining or enhancing academic self-efficacy over time (Marsh and Craven, 2006). Conversely, students with low self-esteem may experience feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, which can impair their willingness to engage fully with academic tasks and diminish their belief in their ability to succeed.

Teacher's support plays a crucial role in shaping secondary school students academic self-efficacy. Supportive teachers provide not only academic guidance but also emotional encouragement, creating an environment where students feel valued and capable of meeting academic demands. This support can take various forms, including constructive feedback, individualized attention, and the provision of resources and strategies that facilitate learning (Wentzel, 2010). When students perceive their teachers as approachable and invested in their success, they are more likely to develop confidence in their abilities and engage actively in learning activities. Teachers who foster positive relationships encourage students to set higher academic goals and persist despite challenges, thereby strengthening their academic self-efficacy (Raufelder et al., 2016). In contrast, lack of support or negative interactions with teachers can contribute to diminished self-confidence, disengagement, and poorer academic outcomes. Furthermore, teacher support extends beyond academic content delivery to include modeling problem-solving skills, encouraging self-regulation, and promoting a growth mindset. These factors collectively help students interpret academic difficulties as surmountable obstacles rather than insurmountable barriers.

In many Nigerian secondary schools, the quality of teacher-student interactions significantly influences students' motivation and academic beliefs. Teachers who recognize individual student's efforts and achievements can help build a sense of competence and academic self-worth that translates into stronger self-efficacy (Akinpelu and Abolade, 2021). Moreover, teachers who implement inclusive pedagogical approaches and culturally responsive teaching practices tend to foster stronger connections with students, thereby enhancing their academic confidence. Furthermore, teacher support is particularly important during transitional phases, such as the early years of secondary education, when students face new academic demands and social adjustments. By providing scaffolding, encouragement, and feedback, teachers can mitigate students' anxiety and promote resilience. Research also suggests that teacher support contributes to students' development of self-regulatory skills, which are closely linked to academic self-efficacy and overall success (Lee *et al.,* 2019). Therefore, fostering supportive teacher-student relationships is critical for enhancing students

belief in their academic capabilities and can serve as a buffer against external stressors such as socioeconomic challenges or peer pressure.

Peer relationships constitute a significant social context influencing academic self-efficacy among secondary school students. Peers serve as models, sources of feedback, and collaborators in learning, all of which impact students perceptions of their academic abilities (Wentzel & Ramani, 2016). Positive peer interactions, including encouragement and academic collaboration, can enhance students' confidence and motivation, reinforcing their academic self-efficacy. When students observe their peers succeeding or receive support from friends, they are more likely to believe that they too can achieve academic success. Conversely, negative peer influences such as bullying, social exclusion, or peer pressure to disengage from schoolwork can undermine academic self-efficacy and lead to decreased academic engagement (Zimmer-Gembeck *et al*., 2019). Moreover, peer relationships provide a context for developing social skills and emotional regulation, which are essential for coping with academic stress and fostering resilience in the face of academic setbacks.

School adjustment refers to the extent to which students adapt to the academic, social, and emotional demands of the school environment, and it has a profound impact on academic self-efficacy. Students who successfully adjust to school life by forming positive relationships, managing academic tasks, and navigating school routines are more likely to develop strong beliefs in their academic abilities (Baker, 2006). Effective school adjustment provides a supportive context where students feel competent and motivated to engage with academic challenges. Conversely, students who struggle to adjust may experience stress, anxiety, and feelings of alienation, all of which can erode their academic self-efficacy and hinder performance. Adjustment difficulties may manifest as absenteeism, behavioral problems, or declining academic performance, which further disrupt the students confidence and academic trajectory.

The transition to secondary school often presents challenges that require significant adjustment, such as coping with increased academic workload, larger class sizes, and more complex social dynamics. Nigerian secondary school students frequently face such challenges, and their ability to adjust plays a key role in shaping their academic confidence. Research indicates that students with better school adjustment tend to show higher levels of academic self-efficacy, as they perceive themselves as capable of managing the demands of schooling (Adesola & Ayodele, 2021). Schools that implement orientation programs, peer mentoring, and counseling services help facilitate smoother transitions and promote positive school adjustment. Moreover, the physical environment, school culture, and availability of extracurricular activities also contribute to students' sense of belonging and competence. When students feel connected to their school community and supported in various domains, they are more likely to develop and sustain academic self-efficacy. Hence, school adjustment is not only a reflection of individual resilience but also an outcome influenced by institutional policies and practices. **Therefore, the study examines** psychological factors and school adjustment as correlate of academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in Ibadan Metropolis.

Statement of the Problem

Academic self-efficacy plays a crucial role in shaping the learning experiences and academic outcomes of secondary school students. It reflects students' beliefs in their ability to succeed in specific academic tasks and challenges. In the demanding environment of

secondary education, where students face increasing academic pressures, complex subjects, and heightened expectations, academic self-efficacy becomes a determining factor in whether they approach learning with confidence or hesitation.

However, there is growing concern that many secondary school students struggle with low academic self-efficacy, leading to poor motivation, reduced persistence, and underachievement. Factors such as negative past academic experiences, low self-esteem, lack of teacher support, strained peer relationships, and poor school adjustment can significantly undermine students' confidence in their academic abilities. For instance, students who repeatedly fail exams or receive critical feedback without constructive support may begin to doubt their capabilities, ultimately disengaging from schoolwork. Similarly, students with low self-esteem or those who experience social rejection may carry emotional burdens that interfere with their academic confidence and performance.

Furthermore, the support systems available within the school environment, particularly from teachers and peers, play an essential role in shaping students' academic self-efficacy. When teachers provide encouragement, timely feedback, and a supportive classroom climate, students are more likely to develop a positive belief in their academic potential. Likewise, positive peer relationships can foster a collaborative and motivating learning environment. Yet, in many schools, the absence of these supports contributes to students feelings of isolation and self-doubt, further diminishing their academic self-efficacy. This problem is particularly pressing because academic self-efficacy not only affects immediate academic performance but also influences long-term educational aspirations, resilience in the face of challenges, and overall psychological well-being. Without targeted interventions and a better understanding of the factors that influence academic self-efficacy, many secondary school students may continue to fall short of their academic potential, with lasting consequences for their personal and professional futures. **Therefore, the study examines** psychological factors and school adjustment as correlate of academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in Ibadan Metropolis.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to establish the relationship, composite and relative contribution of psychological factors and school adjustment on academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in the Ibadan Metropolis. The specific purposes are:

1. To examine the relationship among the independent variable (Prior learning experience, self-esteem, teachers support, peer relationship and school adjustment) and the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) among Secondary school students in Ibadan Metropolis?
2. To ascertain the joint contribution among the independent variable (Prior learning experience, self-esteem, teachers support, peer relationship and school adjustment) to the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) among Secondary school students in Ibadan Metropolis?
3. To determine the relative contribution of each of the independent variable (Prior learning experience, self-esteem, teachers support, peer relationship and school adjustment) to the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) among Secondary school students in Ibadan Metropolis?

Research Questions

Three research questions guided the study:

1. What are the relationship among the independent variable (Prior learning experience, self-esteem, teachers support, peer relationship and school adjustment) and the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) among Secondary school students in Ibadan Metropolis?
2. What is the joint contribution of the independent variable (Prior learning experience, self-esteem, teachers support, peer relationship and school adjustment) on the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) among Secondary school students in the Ibadan Metropolis?
3. What is the relative contribution of each of the independent variable (Prior learning experience, self-esteem, teachers support, peer relationship and school adjustment) to the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy) among Secondary school students in the Ibadan Metropolis?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were raised and tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant relationships among prior learning experience, self-esteem, teachers support, peer relationship and school adjustment on academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis.
2. There is no significant joint contribution of prior learning experience, self-esteem, teachers support, peer relationship and school adjustment on academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis?
3. There is no significant relative contribution of prior learning experience, self-esteem, teachers support, peer relationship and school adjustment on academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis?

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive research design of a correlational type. Descriptive research design is appropriate for studies that aim to describe the characteristics of a phenomenon or population, while correlational research design allows for the identification and measurement of relationships between variables without manipulating them. The target population for this study consists of all secondary school students in Ibadan Metropolis. This group is chosen because the study aims to investigate psychosocial factors and school adjustment that may influence certain behaviours and outcomes, which are often observed within the school settings.

A total of 300 secondary school students in the Ibadan Metropolis were selected to participate in this study. The sampling technique used is simple random sampling. This technique is chosen because the population of the secondary school students is considered to have homogeneous characteristics, and all students have an equal opportunity to be selected. Simple random sampling ensures that the sample is representative of the larger population, thus increasing the generalizability of the findings. The sample included both male and female students, with a focus on senior secondary school students as they are considered to be relevant for this study's focus.

The study used questionnaire as the primary instrument for data collection. The questionnaire is divided into five sections: Section A: This section collected information on socio-demographic information about the participants, including gender and age. Section B: This section assessed the academic self-efficacy of the participants using standardized scales. Section C: This section examined the participants' prior learning experience, focusing on how different prior learning experience influence their behaviour and decision-making. Section D: This section addressed the impact of self-esteem on the participants' behaviour and attitudes. Section E: This section evaluated the teacher support on the participants. Section F: This section evaluated the peer relationship on the participants and Section G: This section was used to collect data on school adjustment among the participants.

Academic self-efficacy scale was adapted from Schunk, and Pajares, (2002)to measure student's belief in their ability to successfully perform academic tasks, overcome learning challenges, and achieve educational goals. It consists of 15 items and each item was rated using 4-point rating scale of; Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagreed, Strongly Disagree. The developers reported reliability coefficient of .87.

Prior Learning Experience Scale, adapted from Schunk (2016), is designed to assess the range of past academic successes or challenges experienced by secondary school students. The instrument contains 15 items, each rated on a 4-point rating scale: Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. It has reliability coefficients of .73.

Self-esteem scale was adapted from Mruk, (2006) to measure overall sense of self-worth or personal value. It consists of 15 items and each item was rated using 4-point rating scoring scale which include; Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagreed, Strongly Disagree. The developers reported reliability coefficient of .91. Teacher support scale was adapted from Malecki, and Demaray, (2002)to measure the encouragement, feedback, and assistance provided by teachers to help students succeed. It consists of 15 items and each item was rated using 4-point rating scale of; Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagreed, Strongly Disagree. The developers reported reliability coefficient of .88.

Peer relationship scale was adapted from Bukowski, Hoza, and Boivin (1994) to measure the quality of interactions and friendships students have with their classmates. It consists of 15 items and each item was rated using 4-point rating scoring scale which include; Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagreed, Strongly Disagree. The developers reported reliability coefficient of .91. School adjustment scale was adapted from Baker, (2001)to measure how well a student adapts to the academic, social, and behavioral demands of the school environment. It consists of 15 items and each item was rated using 4-point rating scoring scale which include; Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagreed, Strongly Disagree. The developers reported reliability coefficient of .81.

The researcher administered the questionnaires in designated areas within the secondary schools and with the assistance of research colleagues. Prior to the administration of the questionnaires, participants were be briefed about the objectives of the study and the importance of their participation. The researcher emphasized that participation is voluntary and that confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research process. Participants were assured that their responses will be used solely for academic purposes and that their personal privacy will not be invaded. The researcher distributed the questionnaires to the selected secondary school students, following clear instructions on how to complete the forms. After completion, the questionnaires were collected by the researcher for analysis.

Data collected from the questionnaires administered were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Pearson Product Moment Correlation and Multiple Regression Analysis were employed to assess the relationship, joint contribution and relative effect of the independent variables (prior learning experience, academic self-efficacy, parenting style, peer pressure, and emotional intelligence) on the dependent variable.

Results

Research Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationships among prior learning experience, self-esteem, teachers support, peer relationship and school adjustment on academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis?

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Zero Order Correlations among the variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6
Prior learning experience	1					
Self-esteem	.673**	1				
Teachers support	.974**	.702**	1			
Peer relationship	.603**	.628**	.559**	1		
School adjustment	.717**	.624**	.710**	.970**	1	
Academic self-efficacy	.573**	.516**	.569**	.920**	.898**	1
Mean	41.99	49.31	55.30	56.39	94.65	32.98
Standard Deviation	2.77	3.16	3.25	6.20	7.32	4.86

From the Table 1 it was observed that there was significant relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable (academic self-efficacy). There was significant relationship between prior learning experience ($r = 0.573$, $p < 0.05$), self-esteem ($r = 0.516$, $p < 0.05$), teacher support ($r = 0.569$, $p < 0.05$), peer relationship ($r = 0.920$, $p < 0.05$), and school adjustment ($r = 0.898$, $p < 0.05$) on academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis. All the variables are significantly correlated with academic self-efficacy in the Ibadan metropolis an indication that they are potent determinants of secondary school student's academic self-efficacy.

Research Hypothesis 2: There is no significant joint contribution of prior learning experience, self-esteem, teachers support, peer relationship and school adjustment on academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis?

Table 2: Joint contribution of the independent variables

R = 0.976	R – Square = 0.952	Adj. R Square = 0.950	Std. Error of the Estimate = 0.61835

Regression ANOVA Table

Variables	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig
Regression	918.726	5	183.745	480.553	0.000
Residual	46.266	321	0.382		
Total	964.992	326			

Table 2 shows that there was joint contribution of the independent variables (prior learning experience, self-esteem, teachers support, peer relationship and school adjustment)

on academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis; R = 0.976, p < .05. The table further reveals 995%0 (Adj. R^2 = 0.950) of the variance in the academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis were accountable for by the linear combination of the independent variables. The ANOVA results from the regression analysis show a significant contribution of the independent variables on the dependent variables; F (5, 321) = 480.553, p < 0.05. It implies a joint contribution of the independent variables on academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis.

Research Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relative contribution of prior learning experience, self-esteem, teachers support, peer relationship and school adjustment on academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis?

Table 3: Relative Contribution of the Independent Variables on the Dependent Variable

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	Std Error	Beta		
Constant	-4.773	1.256		3.799	0.000
Prior learning experience	0.013	0.030	0.015	4.444	0.000
Peer Influence	0.783	0.038	0.919	20.859	0.000
Self-esteem	0.066	0.057	0.147	3.153	0.021
Teacher support	0.084	0.046	0.221	2.803	0.034
School adjustment	0.003	0.030	0.005	2.101	0.034

a Dependent Variable: Academic self-efficacy

Table 3 above shows that all five independent variables significantly contribute to academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis. The variables include the following: prior learning experience (β = 0.015, t = 4.444, p < 0.05); peer influence (β = 0.919, t = 20.859, p < 0.05), self-esteem (β = 0.147, t = 3.153, p < 0.05), teachers support (β = 0 .221, t = 2.803, p < 0.05) and school adjustment (β = 0.005, t = 2.101, p < 0.05). It was observed that peer influence was the most potent contributor to academic self-efficacy of secondary school students in the Ibadan metropolis and while school adjustment was the least.

Discussion of Findings

Prior Learning Experience, Self-Esteem, Teacher Support, Peer Relationship, and School Adjustment

The correlation analysis indicated that all the independent variables (prior learning experience, self-esteem, teacher support, peer relationship, and school adjustment) were significantly related to academic self-efficacy, with coefficients ranging from moderate to high. Notably, peer relationship (r = 0.920) and school adjustment (r = 0.898) displayed the strongest relationships, suggesting that supportive interpersonal and institutional contexts strongly influence students' confidence in their academic abilities. These empirical associations mirror the multi-source view of efficacy where mastery experiences, social persuasion and vicarious learning all feed into efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). This integrated perspective helps explain why multiple variables simultaneously correlate with

self-efficacy, efficacy is not an isolated trait but a product of interacting personal and contextual inputs (DiBenedetto & Schunk, 2020).

These results are supported by contemporary empirical studies. Reviews of studies find that peer influence is one of the most pervasive social forces shaping motivation and efficacy beliefs during adolescence, because peers provide daily normative feedback and comparison standards that inform students' self-judgments. Similarly, multi-level studies show teacher and peer supports predict academic self-efficacy and effort concurrently (Laursen, 2021; Wentzel, 2017). These convergent findings give external validity to the high correlations observed in the Ibadan Metropolis as presented. Studies such as Alivernini and Lucidi (2019) similarly reported that perceived peer support and school belongingness predicted higher levels of academic self-efficacy in secondary school students.

Taken together, the findings affirm that both personal and social dimensions significantly relate to academic self-efficacy. While peer and school-related factors appear dominant in this study, consistent with the African communal culture of collectivism (Afolabi & Adekeye, 2019), prior experiences and individual traits such as self-esteem also play crucial reinforcing roles. The implication is that interventions aimed at strengthening academic self-efficacy must be holistic, targeting both intra-personal factors and social supports.

Joint Contribution of Prior Learning Experience, Self-Esteem, Teachers Support, Peer Relationship and School Adjustment on Academic Self-Efficacy

The regression analysis revealed that the independent variables jointly accounted for 95% of the variance in academic self-efficacy (Adj. $R^2 = 0.950$). This exceptionally high explanatory power underscores the combined importance of prior learning, self-esteem, teacher support, peer influence, and school adjustment in shaping students' self-beliefs. Such results are consistent with findings from Alivernini et al. (2020), who showed that a combination of personal resources (self-esteem and past achievement) and contextual supports (teachers, peers, and school belonging) predicted variance in Italian students' academic self-efficacy. The significant F-value [$F(5, 321) = 480.553$, $p < 0.05$] further confirms that these variables collectively make meaningful contributions to the prediction of academic self-efficacy. This supports Bandura's (2012) claim that efficacy beliefs are influenced by a multidimensional interaction of personal, behavioral, and environmental factors. Recent studies in sub-Saharan Africa, such as Ajayi and Ogunleye (2021), also found that academic self-efficacy in Nigerian students was strongly predicted by the combined influence of psychosocial and school-related factors, reinforcing the universality of this pattern across contexts.

However, the exceptionally high variance explained (95%) may be partly due to contextual characteristics such as shared cultural experiences, homogeneity in student background, or the possibility of multicollinearity among variables like peer relationships and school adjustment. For instance, peer relationships and school adjustment were highly correlated ($r = 0.970$), suggesting that their effects may overlap. Contrasting findings from Shek and Chai (2020) in Hong Kong found a lower explained variance (64%), indicating that the magnitude of joint contributions may differ across cultural or systemic contexts.

Overall, these findings highlight that academic self-efficacy is not shaped by isolated variables but by a network of interrelated influences. Interventions to build self-efficacy among secondary school students must therefore integrate teacher practices, peer support structures, parental involvement, and opportunities for mastery experiences rather than focusing on a single determinant.

Relative Contribution of Prior Learning Experience, Self-Esteem, Teachers Support, Peer Relationship and School Adjustment on Academic Self-Efficacy

The regression coefficients revealed that all five predictors significantly contributed to academic self-efficacy, but their relative strengths varied. Peer influence ($\beta = 0.919$, $t = 20.859$, $p < 0.05$) was the most potent predictor, while school adjustment ($\beta = 0.005$, $t = 2.101$, $p < 0.05$) was the least. This finding highlights the central role of peer networks in adolescents' confidence toward learning, echoing the findings of Wentzel et al. (2016), who emphasized the powerful role of peer interactions in shaping motivation and efficacy. In the Nigerian context, Akomolafe and Ogunmakin (2019) similarly found that peer group dynamics were stronger predictors of self-beliefs than structural school factors, likely due to the collectivist social environment. Teacher support ($\beta = 0.221$) and self-esteem ($\beta = 0.147$) also made meaningful contributions, underscoring the role of external guidance and internal self-worth in building resilience and efficacy. These results align with the work of Alivernini et al. (2020), who found that teacher feedback and positive self-perception fostered academic self-efficacy. Prior learning experience also contributed significantly, albeit modestly ($\beta = 0.015$), reflecting the enduring but secondary role of past mastery in sustaining confidence.

The weaker predictive effect of school adjustment may seem surprising given its strong bivariate correlation ($r = 0.898$) with academic self-efficacy. One possible explanation is statistical suppression or overlap with peer relationship, which was highly correlated ($r = 0.970$). This suggests that much of the variance attributed to school adjustment may have been absorbed by peer factors in the regression model. This is consistent with findings by Özdemir and Özdemir (2019), who reported that once peer effects were controlled, school belonging lost much of its predictive power on efficacy beliefs.

Conclusion

This study concludes that psychological factors such as prior learning experience, self-esteem, teacher support, peer relationship, and school adjustment significantly influence academic self-efficacy among secondary school students in Ibadan Metropolis. Academic self-efficacy is not only a product of intellectual ability but also shaped by experiences, social interactions, and environmental adaptation. The findings emphasize the necessity for schools, teachers, and policymakers to prioritize interventions that build students' psychological strengths, enhance supportive relationships, and create environments conducive to effective adjustment. By doing so, students' academic confidence and resilience can be enhanced, ultimately improving educational outcomes.

Recommendations

This study recommends that:

1. Schools managers should provide structured opportunities for students to reflect on and build upon prior successes through formative assessments, constructive feedback, and remedial support where needed.

2. School Guidance counselors should organize workshops, mentorship programs, and confidence-building activities to help students develop positive self-perceptions.

3. Teachers should be trained to adopt learner-centered methods, offer constructive feedback, and maintain supportive classroom relationships that foster trust and motivation.

4. Teachers should encourage collaborative learning strategies, peer mentoring, and extracurricular activities that strengthen social bonds while reducing negative peer influence.

5. Orientation programs, counseling services, and extracurricular engagement should be enhanced to help students adapt smoothly to the demands of school life.

6. Educational policymakers should integrate psychosocial interventions into school programs to complement cognitive development and foster holistic student growth.

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