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Psycho-Social Perception of Students Towards Class-Peer Monitoring in Fostering Academic Resilience in Public Senior Secondary Schools in EPE, Lagos State

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Abstract:

This study examines psycho-social perception of students towards class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience in public senior secondary schools in EPE, Lagos State. Class-peer is a system of building effective learning interpersonal relationship among students through monitoring and evaluating partner's academic progress. Two hypotheses are raised and two hundred senior secondary school students (110 males and 90 females) randomly selected from 4 schools serve as respondents. A self-developed questionnaire relating to perception of students on class-peer monitoring was administered to these respondents. Findings revealed that there was a significant difference between male ($N = 110$, $X = 14.32$, $SD = 2.08$) and female students ($N = 90$, $X = 3.15$, $SD = 0.96$) perception of class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience and as such, hypothesis one was rejected. Hypothesis two was equally rejected since there was a significant difference between students who are an only child ($N = 64$, $X = 12.04$, $SD = 1.38$) and students who have siblings ($N = 136$, $X = 9.45$, $SD = 0.79$) perception of class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience. Class-peer monitoring would foster academic resilience among students in public senior secondary schools students as it would improve interpersonal relationships, prosocial behaviour and give students a sense of belongings. Recommendations are given to educational stakeholders, teachers, counsellors, non-governmental organizations; and adolescents and youth mentors.

Keywords: Academic resilience, class-peer monitoring, educational reform, public schools

1. Introduction

Academic achievement among students in public secondary schools in Nigerian is abysmal and most times, it is perceived as a problem with no major basis for its existence. This assumption emanates from the fact that the Nigerian public secondary schools have a high influx of graduate teachers teaching students in these schools. It is not therefore presumptuous to acknowledge the average Nigerian public secondary school has teachers with degrees from the National College of Education Certificate (NCE), Bachelors in Education, Masters in Education and even in some few cases, Doctor of Philosophy (PhDs). Looking at the available qualified teaching hands that are in charge of students' academic achievement in Nigerian public secondary schools, one would have expected a higher level of academic achievement, success and resilience among the students, however, the reverse has mostly been the case. A latest sample is the 2014 West African Examination result which reveals that 84% of Nigerian Senior Secondary School students who sat for the examination could not achieve the mandatory '5' credits of English, Mathematics and three other relevant subjects (Ministry of Education, 2014).

In view of this, the following questions, then arose. Why is it that examination records overtime (especially Senior Secondary School Examinations) shows a higher rate of underachievement among public senior secondary schools students and is a bit better among their peers in the privately owned senior secondary schools? Why is it that underachievement are mostly reported in specific core subjects like English language, Mathematics, Government, Biology, Physics and Chemistry for students in public schools? To respond to these queries, a lot of psycho-social factors can be assumed to influence academic achievement and resilience to succeed academically among Nigerian public senior secondary schools students (Caffo & Belaise, 2003; Olaogun, 2005; and Adeyemo, 2007). The society is a major factor which can determine the extent other factors would influence a student. The society is a unit of communities in which an individual lives and it is largely made up of families who in one way would be connected by blood, marriage, work, school or friendship. How effectively run and the perceived provision people enjoy in the society would influence their behaviour and interaction with others. Thus, the society and the people appointed to run its affairs should see to it that every sector is run effectively and appropriately while putting in place adequate policies and effective system of implementation. Unfortunately, the Nigerian society is yet to achieve this level of effectiveness and a larger number of its populace cannot lay claim to

benefits enjoyed in the system. The situation is revealed in the incessant strike actions seen among civil servants, professionals in various fields (Academic, Medical workers, Oil and Gas workers and so on). Little budget and lack of proper implementation of such budget trails the system. The most hit are usually teachers in the Public and Primary Schools who are forced to teach students who cannot afford mundane learning materials. These teachers are employed into schools with no instructional materials or teaching aids, a standard library and laboratory to bring home and make real what is taught in the classroom. In view of this, teaching effort is frustrated for the teacher and the student who is left to use imagination to develop objects his/her counterparts in private schools have access to. This inadequacy would make a mockery of what is regarded as the quality of teaching and learning in most Nigerian public schools and can only influence a consistent rise in academic underachievement.

Moreover, a society with an unstable socio-economic situation will leave a lot of family with consistent worries, fear of how best to survive and meet their daily need. The family is another psycho-social factor that is germane to students academic achievement (Ceballo, Aretakis, & Ramirez, 2001); it is the main socializing agent of a child and most students in the Nigerian public secondary schools come from low income homes or large families that are trailed with unstable socio-economic crisis. The unstable socio-economic crisis as experienced by a family most times lead to existential which in itself can be a basis for the development of emotional, psychological and social disturbance not just for the adults but the children in the as well. In view of the familial problems that the child carries to school, the Nigerian public secondary schools are placed at a disadvantage from the start as they do not only have to contend with students' academic problems but also the students' psycho-social challenges. This is because most of the students come from homes where the need to survive and meet their immediate needs is a huge problem. For the parents, the cost of maintaining and keeping these students in schools are a times seen as a luxury. The costs which are viewed as luxury includes, Parents-Teachers Association dues, school uniforms and books, payments for excursion and practical classes. Unfortunately, these payments are germane to every student's academic success and the inability to provide these needs frustrates students and make their resilience wane leading to an increased level of academic underachievement.

2. Academic Resilience

Academic resilience is the drive that enables a student faced with the educational challenges; belief there is a possibility to overcome the difficulty. To cite Richardson (2002), academic resilience among students connotes strength, flexibility, a capacity for mastery and resumption of normal functioning after excessive stress that challenges individual coping skills. Also, it means "bouncing back" from difficult experiences (APA Health Center, 2004). There are lots of educational challenges which made the development of academic resilience very germane, these include students' truancy, drop out, rebelliousness, delinquency or absence of self-efficacy. It is with this understanding of the challenges faced in public schools by students that this paper is essential in providing an understanding why fostering its development is essential. Till date different strategies have been utilized to enhance students' academic performance, but limited strategies cater to fostering academic resilience in students. There are books and guides that examine and proffer solutions on improving academic performance. However, majority of these books do not consider fostering academic resilience among students from low income homes and with inadequate or no teaching and learning aids to motivate learning and improve academic performance. This therefore is a major reason why class-peer monitoring technique is introduced in this paper to foster academic resilience among public school students.

3. Class-Peer Monitoring

Class-peer is a system of building effective learning interpersonal relationships among students through monitoring and evaluating partner's academic progress. It is a system that recognizes the importance of social support and assistance in educational development and adjustment of students. The goal and objective of class-peer is to improve academic performance among students by encouraging them to provide supports and assistance for one another which is necessary in fostering academic resilience. In class-peer monitoring, each student is expected to make an objective analysis of his/her area of academic deficiency and select a class member (partner) who is knowledgeable in this area as a class-peer. The essence of establishing the relationship between them is to support and encourage one another in learning and studying. To achieve this, some processes need to be in place, these processes include instruction, monitoring, regulation, understanding, review, evaluation of learning and performance. The essence of the processes is to guide students learning activities through an effective phase. More over, relationship under class-peer monitoring is expected to be symbiotic in a way that both partners do not feel they are given out learning supports and not receiving or benefiting from it. Some of the supports partners can provide for one another could be availability of needed learning resource materials, balancing each others' subject weakness and strength (I am good in Mathematics but you are better than me in English Language), and presence of study partner to reinforce studying culture in another. What this portends is that class-peer monitoring is a complementary way for student partners to foster academic resilience, understand, and develop self-worth and efficacy belief in improving students' academic performance.

In addition, the activities involved in class-peer monitoring assist students to develop effective social skills and prosocial behaviour which are germane in developing appropriate interpersonal relationships that would provide a balance for their psycho-social wellbeing. That is, class-peer monitoring gives students a sense of academic focus and confidence which makes them accept their psycho-social inadequacies, but belief that academic challenges can be overcome through academic resiliency. Students who engage in class-peer monitoring will find it easy to interact with classmates and teachers during classroom teaching. The fact that they regularly have after school interaction where they freely express their subject weakness and lay out questions for one another helps them overcome classroom timidity. Class-peer monitoring, thus gives students the feeling of "we are in this together and can share from one another". Thus, classroom teaching is made easy for the teachers as students who engage in class-peer monitoring are always

prepared and willing to give their best to succeed academically regardless of the various challenges they are exposed to economically, psychologically and socially.

4. Formation under Class-Peer Monitoring

Homogeneity: student to be paired together must be in the same class or grade level, must be undertaken similar subjects and have a similar syllabus for learning.

Interest: the students must be willing to spare and create time for studying and participating in the learning process in order to develop the needed academic resilience that would lead to improve academic performance. That is, peer-monitoring partners must both be active participants.

Knowledge: students must be genuinely knowledgeable as to the importance of having a partner. They should view each other as having individual inadequacy with a full resolution of setting up partnership to build and develop a better base to overcome their weakness in a subject. Thus, the basis of class-peer monitoring technique is to build strength into each other's weakness.

4.1. Purpose of the Study

This study examines the psycho-social perception of students towards class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience in senior secondary schools in Epe, Lagos State. The study further tests the importance of gender in class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience.

4.2. Significance of the Study

This study is important for theory and practice in the educational and counselling sectors where learning; academic achievement and psychological well-being of learners are the focus of the professionals; mainly because it provides a professional insight into the psycho-social perception of students towards class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience. Thus, the findings of this study would be useful for educational administrators, teachers and educational psychologists who are interested in the social, emotional and psychological wellbeing of students in general.

Moreover, the study proffer an effective means of assisting students overcome underachievement and develop academic resilience. If the class-peer monitoring technique is utilised, it would go a long way in fostering students' academic resilience and improving academic achievements. This in itself would make educational goals and objective realistic for students in Nigerian public secondary schools.

4.3. Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance

1. There is no significant difference between male and female students perception of class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience.
2. There no significant difference between students who are an only child and those who have siblings perception of class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience.

5. Methodology

5.1. Instrument

A questionnaire which contained two sections A and B was administered to the respondents. Section A of the questionnaire generated demographic information of the respondents while section B has 15 items on the psycho-social perception of students towards class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience.

5.2. Sampling Method

The study consisted of 200(110 males and 90 females) students, randomly selected from four (4) public senior secondary schools in Epe, Lagos State. The public senior secondary schools were chosen across different locations in Epe to ensure coverage of all relevant demographic and academic indicators.

5.3. Data Analysis

The data collected in this study were analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and t-test.

5.4. Results

Gender			Parents Status			Home Status		
	Frequency	%		Frequency	%		Frequency	%
Male	110	55	Single Parent	97	49	Only Child	64	32
Female	90	45	Both Parents	103	51	Have Siblings	136	68
Total	200	100	Total	200	100	Total	200	100

Table 1: Frequency and Percentages counts

The frequency and percentage (%) analysis of the demographic information revealed that out of the 200 senior secondary students selected, 110 (55%) were males while 90 (45%) were females. Also, students who came from single parent families were 97 (49%) while those with both parents' families' were 103 (51%). In addition, 64 (32%) of the respondents were single child or only child while the rest, 136 (68%) were from a large family which comprises of more than one child.

5.5. Results of Hypotheses

- H_{01} : There is no significant difference between male and female students perception of class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience.

	N	Mean	SD	Df	t-cal	t-table
Male students	110	14.32	2.08	198	20.10	1.96
Female students	90	9.15	0.96			

Table 2

$$t(\text{cal}) = 20.10, t(\text{tab}) = 1.96, df = 198, 0.05 \text{ level of significance}$$

In Table 2 above, the analysis showed a significant difference between male ($N = 110$, $X = 14.32$, $SD = 2.08$) and female students ($N = 90$, $X = 3.15$, $SD = 0.96$) perception of class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience. This implies that male students perceive class-peer monitoring as effective in fostering academic resilience. The result here, shows that male students generally have more interest in group activities, learning inclusive than female students. This in a way assists them to perceive class-peer monitoring as a way of fostering their academic resilience which is germane to an improved academic achievement. Moreover, group ties are developed early in the male child and this makes them view class-peer monitoring in the same light. However, the perception of female students to class-peer monitoring may have been affected by the discrepancy in the number of population. In addition to this, at the adolescent and youth stage of the female child, most families discourage peer association. This is because the average Nigerian family becomes highly protective of the female child moral at this stage and see peer relationship as a negative influence. This belief and opinion, therefore would hinder the female students' perception of class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience.

In addition to the mean score, the analysis showed the $t(\text{cal})$ value of 20.10 has greater than the $t(\text{tab})$ value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. This result has therefore made null the hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between male and female students perception of class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience. Thus, the first hypothesis is rejected.

- H_{02} : There no significant difference between students who are an only child and those who have siblings perception of class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience.

	N	Mean (X)	SD	Df	t-cal	t-table
Only Child	64	12.04	1.38	198	19.22	1.96
Have Siblings	136	9.45	0.79			

Table 3

$$t(\text{cal}) = 19.22, t(\text{tab}) = 1.96, df = 198, 0.05 \text{ level of significance}$$

In Table 3 above, the analysis shows a significant difference between students who are an only child ($N = 64$, $X = 12.04$, $SD = 1.38$) and students who have siblings ($N = 136$, $X = 9.45$, $SD = 0.79$) perception of class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience. This implies that students who are an only child perceive class-peer monitoring as an important means of fostering academic resilience than other students who have siblings. A major reason for this difference in perception is that students who are only child do not have the support and assistance of siblings when faced with learning challenges. In addition, students who are only child are always conscious of their status and as such try as much as possible to encourage interpersonal relationships between themselves and their peers. More so, most of the parents that have children in public secondary schools in Nigeria are faced with unstable socioeconomic status, thereby learning resources that their children have, are limited. This makes students who are only child wants to enhance his/her academic achievement and resilience interested in a steady relationship with a classmate who they feel knows or is better equipped with study materials than they are. However, students with siblings are used to having their peers around them, as their friends or friends of older or younger sibling. They do not perceive the opportunity class-peer monitoring can provide for them as different from what they presently enjoy. They equally are conscious of the way other members of the family may view them and as such would rather hide the fact that they are academically weak by placing blames on teachers teaching methodology or the school curriculum.

Also, the result of this hypothesis shows that the $t(\text{cal})$ value of 19.22 is greater than the $t(\text{tab})$ value of 1.96 at 0.05 level of significance. In view of this result of the analysis, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant difference between students who are an only child and those who have siblings perception of class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience, is hereby rejected. Consequently, an alternate hypothesis which stated that, there is a significant difference between students who are an only child and those who have siblings perception of class-peer monitoring in fostering academic resilience, is hereby adopted.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

Class-peer monitoring is a way of fostering academic resilience among students in public secondary schools. This is so since it promotes positive interpersonal relationship among students which allows them to perceive one another as a support group for their individual success. Moreover, class-peer encourages prosocial behaviour and enhances the concept of sharing limited resources for the benefit of all among students in public secondary schools. The support and prosocial behaviour that class-peer monitoring promotes would help enhance academic resilience and achievement among students. Having considered these following benefits of class-peer monitoring, the following recommendations are raised:

Educational stakeholders and teachers should not see students in public schools as scape-goats to bear the effects of their conflicts regarding poor budgeting and implementation of educational policies. Doing this will stretch the coping capabilities of students and lead to poor academic performance and disinterest in academic pursuits. Thus, it is of import for people in the educational profession to encourage class-peer monitoring among secondary school students. This would enhance academic resilience in students and motivate them to set up academic homework and appropriate study habit.

Students should also be conscious of the fact knowledge and understanding come with challenges and the motivation to overcome such challenges is what grants success. In view of this, students should engage in effective study habit, be willing to serve as learning support for one another and understand the need for sharing in other to make up for each other limitations.

In addition, parents should always be attentive to their children educational activities. They should be willing to encourage their children academically regardless of the socio-economic challenges and limitation such student is exposed to in the home. This is because when a student perceives love, a sense of belonging and understanding within his/her family, academic resilience becomes enhanced. Moreover, since most of the class-peer monitoring activities would be done in the home, parents should always try to monitor and supervise the students work and equally give supports to reinforce the learning efforts.

The government at the federal, state and local levels should appropriately and effectively implement educational policies as this is the only way to build interest in the Nigerian educational sector in parents, teachers and students alike. Appropriate budgeting should be given to the educational sector so that adequate infrastructure and facilities that can enhance teaching and learning can be in place. In addition to this effective implementation of government policies will facilitate improvement in quality of education and academic performance of students within schools.

Also, school counsellors should ensure that there is a good interpersonal relationship between the school counseling centre, the students, teachers and other members of staff within the school community. If this is place, people would find it easy to relate and share their academic, vocational and socio-personal confusion with the counsellor.

In the same vein, mentors, investors and non-governmental organizations should see that educational scholarships are extended to other students who are not in the "A" category. They should try to build a system that appreciates the efforts of academic resilient students who daily diligently fight life challenges in order to improve their academic achievement. Taking this step would reinforce these students' efforts and foster academic resilience among them. Moreover, it would give these students another reason to strive for success, regardless of the limitations surrounding them, while improving their self-esteem, self-efficacy and sense of acceptance and belonging in the society.

7. References

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