

TEACHERS' SELF-EFFICACY AND ANXIETY AS DETERMINANTS OF STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT IN FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING AMONG SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BENUE STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract

This study examined the extent to which Teacher's Self-efficacy and Anxiety determined students' academic achievement in financial accounting in Benue State. The study was guided by two objectives, two (2) research questions and two (2) hypotheses. The study adopted correlational research design. In this study, 21 financial accounting Teachers and 400 financial accounting Senior Secondary II (SS2) students were used for the study. Three sets of instruments called Teachers' Self-Efficacy Scale (TSS), Teachers' Anxiety Scale (TANS) and Students' Financial Accounting Achievement Proforma (SFAAP) were used for data collection. The instruments were validated by five experts, one from faculty of education and four from the faculty vocational VTE. Cronbach's Alpha (α) was used to calculate the reliability indices of (TSS) and (TANS) which yielded 0.87 and 0.77 respectively. The study adopted direct administration and retrieval of TSS and TANS. The data collected were analysed using correlation coefficients (r) and coefficients of determination (r^2) to answer all the research questions while Analysis of Linear Regression was used to test the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study, among others, showed that there is a strong positive relationship between teachers' self- efficacy and Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting. The proportion of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting that is attributed to teachers' self-efficacy is statistically significant. Further analysis revealed that there is a positive strong relationship between teachers' anxiety and Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting. The proportion of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting that is attributed to teachers' anxiety is statistically significant. In conclusion, the study highlighted the critical role that teachers' self-efficacy and anxiety play in shaping students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting. Teachers with high self-efficacy positively influenced students' motivation and engagement, thereby fostering a more robust academic achievement in the subject. It was recommended among others that School heads should always conduct teacher counseling sessions to identify and mitigate factors contributing to anxiety toward teaching Financial Accounting. They should also provide teaching aids and support systems on regular basis to make lessons engaging and less stressful for educators.

Keywords: Financial Accounting, Teacher's Self-efficacy, Teacher's Anxiety, Academic Achievement, Gender.

Introduction

Financial accounting is the discipline that focuses on recording financial transactions of an organization and presenting them in financial statements such as the balance sheet, income statement, and cash flow statement. According to Bhavani, Babu and Shaik (2020),

financial accounting is a specific branch of accounting involving a process of recording, summarizing, and reporting the myriad of transactions resulting from business operations over a period of time. Financial accounting is one of the subjects offered at senior secondary school level of education in Nigeria. One of the objectives of studying financial accounting in schools according to National Policy on Education (NPE, 2013) is to enable senior secondary school students appreciate the basic rules, functions and principles of accounting, to lay proper foundation for further study of accountancy and allied courses at higher level and to enable the students understand basic accounting principles, practice and their applications to modern business activities. The knowledge of Financial Accounting is so vital in the success of every stakeholder, including investors, management and regulatory bodies. However, the continuous poor achievement of students in Financial Accounting at secondary school level is becoming a global concern given its importance to the organisations and governments both big and small that desire growth and sustainability. In spite of the importance of Financial Accounting and its usefulness in everyday life of organizations, students always achieve poorly (National Examination Council {NECO}, Chief Examiner's report, 2018).

Academic achievement is generally referred to as an accomplishment by means of exertion, skill, practice or perseverance. According to Huang (2022), academic achievement represents performance outcomes that indicate the extent to which a person has accomplished specific goals that were the focus of activities in instructional environments, specifically in school, college, and university. Academic achievement indicates the level of intellectual education of a person, a group, or a whole nation. Wild and Neef (2023) stated that academic achievement is the general term for performance outcomes in intellectual domains taught at school, college, and university which indicates the level of intellectual education of a person, a group, or a whole nation. From the report of the earlier researchers, there are many factors that could lead to students' poor achievement in financial accounting such as locus of control, learning methods, and learning resources (Litasari & Pustikaningsih, 2019), along with expectations, volition, and learning approaches (Alimbudiono, 2020), Pérez-López & Ibarrondo-Dávila, 2020), as well as gender, interest, and working status (Robson & Peetz, 2020), personality, and parental influence (Beatson et al., 2019), as contributing to poor achievement in financial accounting. However, the researcher has identified factors which could influence student academic achievement as teachers' anxiety and self- efficacy.

Self-efficacy is an individual belief in his abilities. Teacher self-efficacy is defined as a belief in one's own capabilities to bring about desired outcomes of student engagement and

learning, even when students are difficult or unmotivated (Lazarides & Warner, 2020). Teachers with high self-efficacy are more open to new ideas and new teaching methods; they exhibit a greater level of planning and organisation, and are more constructive in handling student's mistakes, and are more persistent in the face of difficulty (Samfira & Palos, 2021). The self-efficacy of financial accounting teachers relates to how they can positively influence students to foster success in financial accounting (Kwarteng, & Sappor, 2021) and this could decrease anxiety and unfavorable beliefs about financial accounting. Shahzad and Naureen (2017) say one of the most important factors influencing student achievement, effective teaching strategies, and student behaviours, particularly those that are influenced by the teacher, is teacher self-efficacy. Depending on how confident the teachers are in their ability to teach financial accounting, it may have a positive or negative effect on the academic achievement of the students. It is therefore important to determine the effect of teachers' self-efficacy on students' achievement in financial accounting while also taking into account the effect of teachers' Anxiety on the academic achievement of students in financial accounting.

Anxiety appears to be a factor that impedes performance negatively. Anxiety is an aspect of emotions or feelings in which there is fear and uncertainty about something (Carey, Hill & Devine, 2017). According to Cho, Li and Goh (2020), anxiety is a feeling of helplessness, feeling blocked, unable to find a solution to problems. In teaching, such anxiety creates more phobias in handling teaching and learning activities by teachers. According to Boaler (2018), teachers who identify and address their anxiety will help cope with and overcome anxiety in teaching. It is critical to ensure that students are confident and well prepared if they are going to compete for any high-technical job at any point in time. This can be achieved by the teacher through arousing students' interest in the content area, which will boost their academic achievement.

Empirical evidences reveal the correlation between teacher anxiety and students' achievement. For instance, Syokwaa, Aloka and Ndunge (2019); Boaler (2018); and other researchers found that teachers' anxiety affects students' achievement indirectly. In a similar vein, Yuliani, Suryadi and Dahlan (2019), claimed that teachers' unfavorable attitudes and feelings toward teaching can make students anxious and less interested in a subject. Yuliani, Suryadi and Dahlan however, stated that anxiety affects male and females differently and hence this takes us again to the much-discussed concept of gender.

Gender can be said to be social attributes or cultural attributes ascribed to either male or female in a given culture or society. The concept of gender is the expectations held about

characteristics, attitudes, and likely behavior of both men and women (masculinity and femininity) in the society (Ezeh, 2015). According to Ogunkunle (2024) gender is dynamic and culturally determined whereby responsibilities are assigned to male and female individuals. Also, Rath. and Nanda (2022) see gender as the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between men and women, and boy and girls. Those attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization process. Gender disparities have been a persistent topic in academic discussions. Research indicates that there is a gender imbalance in subjects like financial accounting, leading to considerable debate among scholars. In financial accounting, it is often observed that professions such as auditing, tax consulting, and corporate finance are perceived as male dominated fields. This is similar to how fields like mathematics and science are seen as male oriented, as highlighted by Robson and Peetz (2020). Despite this perception, the actual performance and capabilities of females in these areas, such as in complex financial analysis or managerial accounting, do not reflect any inherent disadvantage when compared to their male counterparts. Indeed, studies and workplace performance metrics frequently demonstrate that female professionals in financial accounting exhibit proficiency at par with males, challenging the stereotypical gender biases in industries. The academic literature on gender differences also abounds with the forgone. For instance, a study by Robson and Peetz (2020) revealed that female CFOs are even more conservative in their financial reporting than males. However, this finding is contested by Egara and Mosimege (2023), who observed no significant gender difference in the post test mean scores and also in the mean retention scores of male and female students taught financial accounting. These conflicting findings highlight the need for more research into how gender influences student performance, particularly in subjects like financial accounting.

Numerous studies have been carried out on the variables that might affect students' achievement in financial accounting. Researchers have found that variables like teachers' anxiety and self-efficacy may affect how well students learn. However, a lot of these studies were conducted in other subjects and some of them were conducted in other countries. The findings of international research cannot be applied universally to individuals from various racial and educational backgrounds. The implication is that there is not enough literature in Nigeria to support the relationship between these variables. Additionally, the present researcher is not aware of any study or studies that looked into the effect of teachers' self-efficacy and anxiety on students' achievement in financial accounting. This emphasizes the necessity of the

current study. The researcher is thus driven to investigate effects of teachers' self-efficacy and anxiety on students' academic achievement in financial accounting in secondary schools in Benue State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the proportion of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting that is attributed to teachers' self-efficacy?
2. What is the proportion of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting that is attributed to teachers' anxiety?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guided the study and were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

H₀₁: The proportion of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting that is attributed to teachers' self-efficacy is not statistically significant.

H₀₂: The proportion of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting that is attributed to teachers' anxiety is not statistically significant.

Design of the study

The study adopted a correlation research design. According to Nworgu (2015), correlation survey design sorts to establish and indicate the degree of relationship and magnitude between two or more variables.

Area of the study

The study was carried out in Benue State. The State is made up of 23 Local Government Areas with three Education Zones namely; Zone "A", Zone "B" and Zone "C" respectively.

Population and sample of the study

The population of the study is 1,259, comprising of 1,236 senior secondary (SS1I) students from the (21) public secondary schools in Benue State that offer Financial Accounting, and 23 financial accounting teachers. The sample size for the study comprised 400 SS11 students (by applying Taro Yamene Formula) and 21 Financial Accounting Teachers from the three Education Zones of "A" and "B" and "C" respectively.

Instrument for Data Collection

Three sets of instruments which were developed by the researcher were used for data collection, namely; Teachers' Self-Efficacy Scale (TSS), Teachers' Anxiety Scale (TANS)

and Students' Financial Accounting Achievement Proforma (SFAAP). Five experts validated the instrument to ensure that the instruments measured what they were meant to measure. Cronbach's Alpha (α) was used to calculate the reliability indices of (TSS) and (TANS) which yielded 0.87 and 0.77 reliability coefficients respectively.

Method of Data Collection

The researcher adopted face-face administration of the instruments with the help of six research assistants who were adequately briefed on the mode of administration and retrieval. Afterwards, they were administered by the researcher and the research assistants to the respondents and retrieved on the spot upon completion to ensure 100% return rate of the instruments.

Method of Data Analysis

Data collected were analysed using simple linear regression analysis on SPSS version 23 (statistical Package for Social Sciences). The correlation coefficients (r) and coefficients of determination (r^2) were used to answer all the research questions. Regression ANOVA was adopted in testing the hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

This section presents the results of the data analysis in line with the research questions and hypotheses.

Table 1: Linear Regression Analysis of the Proportion of Students' Academic Achievement in Financial Accounting that is Attributed to Teachers' Self-Efficacy

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.617 ^a	.380	.348	6.013

a. Predictors: (Constant), Teachers' Self-Efficacy

Table 1 show that the proportion of students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting that is attributed to teachers' self- efficacy is 0.617. The result implies that there exists a positive strong relationship between teachers' self- efficacy and Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting. The result also revealed that the coefficient of determination (R^2) associated with the correlation coefficient of 0.617 was 0.380. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.380 indicates that the proportion of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting that is been determine by teachers' self- efficacy accounts for up to 38.0%. This is an indication that 62.0% of the proportion in Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting is attributed to other factors other than teachers' self- efficacy. The findings indicate the importance of teachers' self- efficacy as a

factor of enhancing Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting among secondary school students in Benue state.

Table 2: Regression t-test Analysis of the Proportion of Students' Academic Achievement in Financial Accounting that is Attributed to Teachers' Self-Efficacy

Source	Teachers' Self-Efficacy			T	Sig.	Remarks
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
Students' Financial Accounting Achievement (Constant)	-97.562	47.596		-2.050	.054	
Teachers' Self-Efficacy	2.042	.598	.617	3.416	.003	S

Table 2 revealed that Regression t-test analysis of the proportion of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting that is attributed to teachers' self-efficacy. The regression coefficient (B) for teachers' self-efficacy is 2.042 with a standard error of 0.598. The standard beta coefficient (β) is 0.617. The t-value for teachers' self-efficacy is 3.416, with a significance level (Sig.) of 0.003. This significance level is below the alpha level of 0.05, indicating that teachers' self-efficacy is a statistically significant determinant of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting among secondary school students in Benue state. Therefore, hypothesis one which stated that, the proportion of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting that is attributed to teachers' self-efficacy is not statistically significant was rejected showing that there is a significance correlative power of teachers' self-efficacy on Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting. The researcher therefore, concludes that teachers' self-efficacy significantly determines Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting. The results indicate that teachers who exhibit self-efficacy in their teaching ability could inspire financial accounting students to achieve high in financial accounting.

Table 3: Linear Regression Analysis of the Proportion of Students' Academic Achievement in Financial Accounting that is Attributed to Teachers' Anxiety

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.801 ^a	.642	.623	4.570

a. Predictors: (Constant), Teachers' Anxiety Scale

Table 3 shows that the proportion of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting that is attributed to teachers' anxiety is 0.801. The result implies that there exists a positive strong relationship between teachers' anxiety and Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting. The result also revealed that the coefficient of determination (R^2) associated with

the correlation coefficient of 0.801 was 0.642. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.642 indicates that teachers' anxiety determines or accounts for up to 64.2% of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting. This is an indication that 35.8% of the variation in Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting is attributed to other factors such as teaching experiences, teaching/learning environment among others, other than teachers' anxiety.

Table 4: Regression t-test Analysis of the Proportion of Students' Academic Achievement in Financial Accounting that is Attributed to Teachers' Anxiety

Source	TEACHERS' ANXIETY				Sig.	Remarks
	B	Std. Error	Beta	T		
Students' Financial Accounting Achievement (Constant)	231.500	28.541		8.111	.000	S
Teachers' Anxiety	2.138	.366	.801	5.839	.000	S

Table 4 shows regression t-test analysis of the proportion of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting that is attributed to teachers' anxiety. The regression coefficient (B) for teachers' self-efficacy is 2.138 with a standard error of 0.366. The standard beta coefficient (β) is 0.801. The t-value for teachers' anxiety is 5.839, with a significance level (Sig.) of 0.000. This significance level is below the alpha level of 0.05, indicating that teachers' anxiety is a statistically significant determinant of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting among secondary school students in Benue state. Therefore, hypothesis two which states that, the proportion of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting that is attributed to teachers' anxiety is not statistically significant was rejected showing that there is a significance predictive proportion of teachers' anxiety on Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting. The researcher therefore, concludes that teachers' anxiety significantly determines Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting among secondary school students in Benue state.

Discussion

The results of the findings showed that there exists a positive strong relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting. The finding further indicates from the test of hypothesis one that the proportion of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting that is attributed to teachers' self-efficacy is statistically significant. This means that teachers' self-efficacy is responsible for students'

academic achievement in Financial Accounting and it can affect financial accounting students in positive or negative ways. This suggests that, as teachers' self-efficacy improves, Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting also tends to increase achievement in financial accounting among the students. The findings of the study corroborate with the finding of Muhammad, Muhammad and Muhammed (2017) who conducted a research on Relationship between Mathematics Teachers Self-efficacy and Students' academic achievement in Mathematics at Secondary Level in Punjab province of Pakistan. The findings showed that teachers' self-efficacy is directly related to students' academic achievement and overall learning. The study also agrees with the study by Gulistan, Hussain and Mushtaq (2017) who carried out a research on Relationship between Mathematics Teachers' self-efficacy and students' academic achievement in Mathematics in Ibadan. The findings of the study reflected a strong correlation between Mathematics teachers' self-efficacy and their students' academic achievement. It follows from the above finding that teachers who have high self-efficacy tends to get their students more engaged, motivated and interested in the learning process and hence this could lead to a robust academic achievement in financial accounting and vice versa. This could be true since students are likely to imitate and copy what they observe from their teachers. It implies that any certain traits expressed by the financial accounting teachers may be imitated by students. It is a known fact that teachers who have high self-efficacy usually express more enthusiasm in teaching students which could influence students' academic achievement in financial accounting learning. Therefore, the findings of the study which show that there is a direct positive and significant relationship between teachers' self-efficacy and students' academic achievement in financial accounting is true.

Furthermore, the study's findings also showed that there exists a positive strong relationship between teachers' anxiety and Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting. The finding further indicates from the test of hypothesis two that the proportion of Students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting that is attributed to teachers' anxiety is statistically significant. This implies that a percentage of students' achievement in Financial Accounting is due to the teachers' anxiety level. The above finding lend support to previous findings of Dull, Schleifer and McMillan (2018) who carried out a study on relationship between financial accounting anxiety and the academic performance of the freshmen college students of the naval state university. The result of the finding revealed that, teachers' anxiety significantly affects students' academic achievement in Mathematics. The finding of this study is in order because anxious teachers do express fear for so many events

including performing poorly. This may affect their level of teaching financial accounting and they may want to impress their students in the class and even management to avoid blames. As such, they may use very active and students' engaging teaching methods and strategies in teaching financial accounting. This could in turn help improve students' achievement in financial accounting; hence, the above finding could hold.

Conclusions

The study sought to investigate teachers' self-efficacy and anxiety as determinants of students' academic achievement in financial accounting among senior secondary schools in Benue state, Nigeria. The study highlighted the critical role that teachers' self-efficacy and anxiety play in shaping students' academic achievement in Financial Accounting. Teachers with high self-efficacy positively influence students' engagement, thereby fostering a more robust academic achievement in the subject. This underscores the importance of empowering teachers through professional development, emotional support, and pedagogical training to mitigate the adverse effects of self-efficacy and anxiety. The findings provide valuable insights for policymakers, educators, and stakeholders in Benue State to develop targeted interventions that focus on improving teacher attitudes and reducing anxiety, ultimately promoting better academic achievement in Financial Accounting.

Recommendations

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

1. School heads should encourage a positive teaching environment by reducing workload and providing access to mental health resources for teachers. They should also incorporate peer-support groups where teachers can share experiences and strategies to overcome anxiety.
2. Schools should provide additional learning resources such as e-books, online tutorials, and accounting software to aid student understanding. They should also establish remedial classes or peer-tutoring sessions for students struggling with Financial Accounting.

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