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CORRELATION BETWEEN ACADEMIC SELF EFFICACY AND RESEARCH ATTITUDE IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A STUDY OF ABIA STATE UNIVERSIRTY

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluated the correlation between academic self-efficacy and research attitude of students in Abia State University. The study seek to; find out the extent to which students' academic past performance, vicarious experiences and verbal persuasion/physiological cues have affected their research attitude in Abia State University. Survey research design was adopted for this study. With the use of Taro Yamane formula, a total sample size of (392) respondents were randomly selected out of (20,000) students from the eleven (11) faculties in Abia State University (Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Agriculture/Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Biological and Physical Sciences, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Engineering and Environmental Studies, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Faculty of Post Graduates). Average of (26) respondents were randomly selected from each of the eleven (11) faculties in Abia State University. A questionnaire titled: Academic Self Efficacy and Research Attitude Survey Questionnaire (ASERASQ), which was constructed for the respondents, containing 12 items and design on a 4-point Likert scale, was used for data collection in the study. The research instrument was validated by experts from the Faculties, as well as Department of Measurement and Evaluation Personnel. The instrument was trial tested and a reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. The data was collected and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and mean. Essentially the study discovered that there was significant relationship between students' academic past performance, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion/physiological cues and their research attitude in Abia State University. It was recommended that Students should be encouraged to keep away from the negative academic past performance, vicarious experiences as well as verbal persuasion/physiological cues and imbibe the culture of hard work to improve their research attitude.

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Keywords: Correlation, Academic self-efficacy, past performance, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion/physiological cues, Research attitude,

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Introduction

Students' beliefs about their competency are highly predictive of their grade point average. In turn grades are powerful determinants of self-efficacy, depending on whether the student interprets the grade obtained as a success or failure. Academic successes and failures may have different impacts on self-efficacy. Good grades seem to be less influential for the development of self-efficacy than bad grades; that is, good grades will not strengthen self-efficacy as much as bad grades will weaken self-efficacy (Crocker et al., 2003). Similarly, negative or discouraging appraisals can weaken self-efficacy more than positive or encouraging appraisals which can strengthen self-efficacy (Britner & Pajares, 2006). The type of feedback that is delivered in the academic environment also appears to have a critical role in academic achievement: Constructive feedback (e.g., references to the accuracy of the work completed) has a more positive impact on self-efficacy than feedback about deficiencies (e.g., references to the things missed in the work completed (Britner & Pajares, 2006).

When considering academic performance, self-efficacy can be divided into performance self-efficacy (i.e., beliefs about one's capacity derived from past experiences) and academic self-efficacy (beliefs about one's capacity derived from perceived competencies). Performance self-efficacy is useful when encountering familiar tasks, whereas academic self-efficacy is useful when encountering unfamiliar tasks, for which past experiences provide little information (Richardson et al., 2012). Self-efficacy develops partially based on feedback regarding performance. For students, performance feedback usually takes the form of grades, and as feedback accumulates (more grades are accrued in a particular subject), self-efficacy stabilizes. Beliefs about competency are important to set both short-term (e.g., passing an exam) and long-term (e.g., passing a course) academic goals, and influence the interpretation of mismatches between goals and performance. These mismatches can be interpreted in different manners based upon levels of self-efficacy. For example, a student with high self-efficacy obtaining a lower grade (performance) than desired (goal) could interpret the mismatch as a result of behavioral factors (e.g., not studying hard enough), whereas a student with low self-efficacy could interpret it as a result of individual factors (e.g., lack of capacity). This different interpretation would then strengthen or weaken self-efficacy (respectively), leading to differential goal setting and effort to attain those goals. Achieving a long-term goal requires attainment of many short-term goals; thus, self-efficacy can be continuously strengthened or weakened on the path to obtaining those goals (Rittmayer & Beier, 2009).

Self-efficacy is an essential component of self-regulation. It is the process that allows an individual to decide how to best implement his or her efforts. Self-regulation depends on individuals setting goals for

performance, which can motivate and guide action, and on self-evaluations of such performance, which result in emotional responses that can enhance or disrupt self-regulation. Self-efficacy beliefs determine the extent to which the goals set are challenging, the choice of activities to be performed to attain those goals, and how discrepancies between goals and performance are interpreted (Maddux, 2012). Pintrich (2004) suggests that self-regulation is related to the constructs of goal orientation, approach goals, academic intrinsic motivation, and academic self-efficacy. Pintrich's model can be assessed with the Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ), which assesses the use of cognitive strategies such as rehearsal, organization, critical thinking, and some aspects of meta cognition. Academic self-efficacy would be directly related to effort regulation, which determines persistence in the face of challenges, effort regulation can be viewed as similar to achievement motivation (Richardson et al., 2012). Thus, self-efficacy is intrinsically related to goal-setting and attainment, the choice of behaviors that will be used to pursue those goals, the self-evaluation of the outcomes of one's efforts, and persistence toward those goals.

However, people acquire their self-efficacy beliefs from the following sources:

i. **Past performance:** This is the single greatest contributor to students' confidence. If students have been successful at a particular skill in the past, they will probably believe that they will be successful at the skill in the future. The old adage, "Nothing breeds success like success" certainly is true when it comes to developing self-efficacy. Students bring a wide variety of past experiences with them when they enter classroom. Some of those experiences have been positive, others have not. How students interpretation to their past successes and failures can have a dramatic impact on their self-efficacy (Agiriga, 2021). If students believe their success in a particular area is the result of the skills they developed (their ability), they are much more likely to be confident about future success in that area ((Maddux, 2012). On the other hand, if students attribute their success solely to hard work, they may not necessarily expect future success, since they may not choose or even want to work equally hard on future assignments. Or they may believe they do not have the necessary skills to succeed in the future regardless of how hard they work.

Although, lecturers should know how much efforts one should put into a task to have a direct effect on the quality of the completed task, students often do not see the relationship. As late as eighth

grade, students report that the amount of effort they put into a subject is less important than their ability. Our highest achieving students may also believe that if they must work hard at something, they may not have high ability or be skillful in that area. A pattern often exists for students who do not do well. Students who explain their poor performance as a lack of effort demonstrate higher self-efficacy than those who explain it as low ability (Ebuka, 2022). Students who have not done well, but believe that all they must do to succeed is work harder may still be very confident about their skills. Some evidence also exists that boys and girls view their success and failure experiences in school differently. Boys tend to attribute their successes to skills, whereas girls often attribute their successes to effort. The reverse is true when viewing poor performance. Girls often attribute their poor performance to low ability, while boys blame theirs on low effort. Males and females react differently to average and low grades. Females often drop a class when they are receiving a C, while males may not. Barbara (1997) found that young women and men majoring in engineering receive similar grades in their introductory college calculus class. Unfortunately, young women often change career majors after receiving Bs and Cs, while young men with similar grades tend to continue in their engineering program.

ii. **Vicarious Experience:** When a student sees another student accomplish a task, the vicarious experience of observing a model can also have a strong influence on self-efficacy (Pajares and Miller, 1995). By observing others like themselves perform tasks individuals make judgments about their own capabilities. If a student sees a friend publish a poem, he might believe he can also have one published. A third grader observing other third graders learn multiplication tables is likely to believe that he can also learn them. The more students relate to the model being observed, the more likely the model's performance will have an impact on them (Orji, 2018). Unlike the self-efficacy beliefs which is derived from past experience, self-efficacy information gleaned through observation is less stable. Once strong self-efficacy is developed from one's own personal successes, an occasional failure may not have negative effects;

however, self-efficacy based on observing others succeed will diminish rapidly if observers subsequently have unsuccessful experiences of their own. Self-modeling, where students observe themselves succeed is also a powerful influence. Watching video tapes of successful performances or viewing photographs of past accomplishments can increase student confidence (Olive, 2017).

iii. **Verbal Persuasion/Physiological Cue:** This has to do with a lecturer telling his students that "they can do this," can also increase their confidence to do a task. Although, verbal persuasion such as this can be important, it does not contribute as much as an individual's own experiences or vicarious experiences. The short-term effects of persuasion need to be coupled with actual successes. The lecturer's credibility is also an important factor with verbal persuasion (Adebayo & Bolaji, 2020). Students experience higher self-efficacy when they are told they are capable by someone they believe is trustworthy. Students will also tend to discredit a lecturer if they believe the lecturer does not fully understand the demands of the task being faced. The old phrase, "Get real," applies here (Mohammed, 2017).

The final sources upon which self-efficacy beliefs are based are physiological cues. Sweaty hands or a dry mouth are often interpreted as signs of nervousness. Students may feel that such signs indicate they are not capable of succeeding at a particular task (Osas & Acomas, 2019). Conversely, students may be aware of feeling relaxed before confronting a new situation and develop a higher sense of efficacy toward the task they face (Nwosu & Dedekpo, 2022). Physiological cues are the weakest influence of all presented here.

Research is an integral part of all academic disciplines and the related foundational concepts should form the background knowledge of students within the disciplines. Moreover, (Adebayo & Bolaji, 2020) observes that students experienced immediate and long term effects from any adverse influences they meet in research classes and exhibit a reduced level of motivation to actively participate in research methods and activities. Students at the undergraduate level usually tend to view research methods negatively. Indeed, the challenges which these students experience with research instruction frequently results in their frustration. Research is an integral part of all academic disciplines and the

related foundational concepts should form the background knowledge of students within the linguistics programme. Therefore, in order to produce the ideal graduate, lecturers need to ensure that students develop the skills to conduct research using the accepted methodologies associated with the various sub-disciplines of linguistics. In addition, research activities were highlighted as part of the assessment for other courses. As a result, disciplines were of the view that students developed research skills through their engagement in various courses, particularly, Research Methodology. Furthermore, there was the perception that students would demonstrate their knowledge of research by preparing a thesis in their final year.

Statement of the Problem

Informal observation over five years revealed that a number of students in the undergraduate programme in Abia State University (ABSU) demonstrate negative attitudes towards courses which require them to learn and participate in the research process. Students encounter obstacles while studying in research methods in classes as well as applying learned knowledge. Again, the informal observation from the past to present day in Abia State University has revealed that a large percentage of level two and three students in the institution experience challenges in understanding several concepts and procedures of research in their respective disciplines. It is acknowledged that their deficiencies in comprehending the research process has a negative influence on their ability, as final year students, to apply this knowledge to writing the required final year research project, as well as to several related areas in their daily lives.

(Adebayo & Bolaji, 2020) observed that students experienced immediate and long term effects from any adverse influences they meet in research classes and exhibit a reduced level of motivation to actively participate in research methods and activities. Students at the undergraduate level usually tend to view research methods negatively. Indeed, the challenges which these students experience with research instruction frequently results in their frustration. However, an understanding of these attitudes is necessary to help instructors facilitate the learning of research principles for their students by enabling them to create more positive attitudes toward such courses. In this regard, literature shows that it is possible to counteract this level of negativity associated with instruction in research by removing the inadequate traditional methods and replacing them with more effective methods which are beneficial to the learners. Further to this, Mark (2002) maintained that the challenge to course designers is how to realize these benefits practically without compromising the principles of sound research.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to examine the correlation between academic self-efficacy and research attitude of

students in Abia State University. The specific objectives of the study are:

1. To find out the extent to which academic past performance has affected the research attitude of students in Abia State University.
2. To examine the extent to which academic vicarious experiences have affected the research attitude of students in Abia State University.
3. To assess the extent to which academic verbal persuasion/physiological cues have affected the research attitude of students in Abia State University.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives, the following research questions were posed for the study:

1. To what extent has the academic past performance affected the research attitude of students in Abia State University?
2. To what extent have the academic vicarious experiences affected the research attitude of students in Abia State University?
3. To what extent have the academic verbal persuasion/physiological cues affected the research attitude of students in Abia State University?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the conduct of the study:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between academic past performance and the research attitude of students in Abia State University.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between academic vicarious experiences and the research attitude of students in Abia State University.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between academic verbal persuasion/physiological cues and the research attitude of students in Abia State University

Research Method

The study adopted a survey research design. The targeted population for the study comprised of all the students in Abia State University. With the use of Taro Yamane formula, a total sample size of (392) respondents were randomly selected out of (20,000) students from the eleven (11) faculties in Abia State University (Faculty of Humanities, Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Agriculture/Veterinary Medicine, Faculty of Biological and Physical Sciences, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Engineering and Environmental Studies, Faculty of Law, Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Faculty of Post Graduates). Average of (26) respondents were randomly selected from each of the eleven (11) faculties in Abia State University. A questionnaire titled: Academic Self Efficacy and Research Attitude Survey Questionnaire (ASERASQ), which was constructed for the respondents, containing 12 items and design

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on a 4-point Likert scale, was used for data collection in the study. The research instrument was validated by experts from the Faculties, as well as Department of Measurement and Evaluation Personnel. The instrument was trial tested and a reliability coefficient of 0.87 was obtained. The data was collected and analyzed using frequency counts, percentages and mean. The decision rule for interpretation of the results for the data analysis was that of a mean score of 2.5 and above, which was regarded as agreed/ accepted while, below 2.5 was disagreed/ rejected.

Presentation of Results

Research Question 1: To what extent has the academic past performance affected the research attitude of students in Abia State University?

Table 1: Mean Response on Academic Past Performance and Research Attitude of Students. N = 391

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	FX	MEAN	DECISION
1.	A student with high self-efficacy obtaining a lower grade performance in research than desired (goal) could interpret the mismatch as a result of behavioral factors (e.g., not studying hard enough).	120 (30.7%) 480	118 (30.2%) 354	92(23.5%) 184	61 (15.6%) 61	1,079	2.76	Agreed
2.	Few of the students' experiences on research are positive, while majority are not.	129 (33.0%) 516	122 (31.2%) 366	83(21.2%) 166	57(14.6%) 57	1,105	2.83	Agreed
3.	A student with low self-efficacy on research could interpret it as a result of individual factors (e.g., lack of capacity).	170(43.5%) 680	107(27.4%) 321	60(15.3%) 120	54(13.8%) 54	1,175	3.01	Agreed
4.	Students bring a wide variety of research past experiences with them when they start research work.	61(15.6%) 224	92(23.5%) 276	117(129.9%) 234	121(30.9%) 121	855	2.19	Agreed
	Grand Mean						**2.70**	Agreed

Source: Survey Data, 2024.

Table 1 revealed that the respondents in all the items; 1, 2, 3 and 4 with mean scores above 2.50 agreed that the academic past performance affected the research attitude of students in Abia State University. Thus, the grand mean for research question 1 is 2.70. The implication is that, majority of the people/respondents believe that to a reasonable degree, the academic past performance affects the research attitude of students in Abia State University.

Research Question 2: To what extent have the academic vicarious experiences affected

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the research attitude of students in Abia State University?

Table 2: Mean Response on Academic Vicarious Experiences and Research Attitude of Students. **N = 391**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	FX	MEAN	DECISION
5.	Students' vicarious experience of observing a model can have a strong influence on self-efficacy.	160(40.9%) 640	115 (29.4%) 345	66(16.9%) 132	50 (12.8%) 50	1,167	2.98	Agreed
6.	Viewing photographs of past accomplishments cannot increase student confidence.	131 (33.5%) 524	118 (30.2%) 354	83(21.2%) 166	59(15.1%) 59	1,103	2.82	Disagreed
7.	Observing students perform tasks allow them to make judgments about their own capabilities.	121(30.9%) 484	117(129.9%) 357	92(23.5%) 184	61(15.6%) 61	1,080	2.76	Agreed
8.	Self-efficacy is developed from one's own personal success, an occasional failure may not have negative effects	161(41.2%) 644	116(29.7%) 348	64(16.4%) 128	50 (12.8%) 50	1,170	2.99	Agreed
	Grand Mean						**2.89**	Agreed

Source: Survey Data, 2024.

Table 2 revealed that the respondents in items 5, 7 and 8 with mean scores above 2.50 agreed that the academic vicarious experiences affected the research attitude of students in Abia State University while, only the respondents in item 6 with mean score below 2.50 disagreed. Meanwhile, the grand mean for research question 1 is 2.89. This underscores the fact that majority of the people/respondents believe that to a reasonable degree, the academic vicarious experiences affects the research attitude of students in Abia State University.

Research Question 3: To what extent have the academic verbal persuasion/physiological cues affected the research attitude of students in Abia State University?

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Table 1: Mean Response on Academic Verbal Persuasion/**P**hysiological Cues and Research Attitude of Students. **N = 391**

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD	FX	MEAN	DECISION
9.	Students experience higher self-efficacy when they are told they are capable of handling research project by their supervisors.	133(34.0%) 532	116(29.7%) 348	81(20.7%) 162	61(15.6%) 61	1,103	2.82	Agreed
10.	Students will also tend to discredit a lecturer if they believe the lecturer does not fully understand the demands of the task being faced.	181 (46.3%) 724	129 (33.0%) 387	50(12.8%) 100	31 (7.9%) 31	1,289	3.30	Agreed
11.	Students' sweaty hands are often interpreted as signs of nervousness.	129 (33.0%) 516	122 (31.2%) 366	83(21.2%) 166	57(14.6%) 57	1,105	2.83	Agreed
12.	Students' attitude towards research work (academic physiological cue) indicates that they are not capable of carrying out a particular task.	170(43.5%) 680	107(27.4%) 321	60(15.3%) 120	54(13.8%) 54	1,175	3.01	Agreed
	Grand Mean						**2.99**	Agreed

Source: Survey Data, 2024.

Table 3 revealed that the respondents in all the items; 9, 10, 11 and 12 with mean scores above 2.50 agreed that the academic verbal persuasion/physiological cues affected the research attitude of students in Abia State University. Thus, the grand mean for research question 1 is 2.99. This implies that majority of the people/respondents believe that to a reasonable degree, the academic verbal persuasion/physiological cues affect the research attitude of students in Abia State University.

Testing of Hypotheses

Hypothesis one: There is no significant relationship between academic past performance and the research attitude of students in Abia State University.

Items 1 and 2 are relevant for the hypothesis one.

Table 4: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for hypothesis one, table 1 was used.

X	Y	XY	X^2	Y^2
120	129	15,480	14,400	16,641
118	122	14,396	13,924	14,884
92	83	7,636	8,464	6,889
61	57	3,477	3,721	3,249
391	**391**	**40,989**	**40,509**	**41,663**

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$$r = \frac{n\sum X\,Y - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{(n\sum X^2 - (\sum Y)^2)\,(n\sum Y^2) - (\sum Y)^2)}}$$

Where, $\sum X = \sum Y = 391$, $\sum X^2 = 40{,}509$, $\sum Y^2 = 41{,}663$, $\sum XY = 40{,}989$.

$$r = \frac{4\,(40{,}989) - (391)\,(391)}{\sqrt{(4(40{,}509) - (391)^2)4(41{,}663) - (391)^2)}}$$

$$r = \frac{163{,}956 - 152{,}881}{\sqrt{(162{,}036 - 152{,}881)\,(166{,}652 - 152{,}881)}}$$

$$r = \frac{11{,}075}{\sqrt{9{,}155 \times 13{,}771}}$$

$$r = \frac{11{,}075}{\sqrt{126{,}073{,}505}}$$

$$r \quad \frac{11{,}075}{11{,}228}$$

$$r = \underline{0.9864}$$

Since the calculated value of r, 0.9864 is greater than 0.5, the researcher accepted the alternative hypothesis and rejected the null hypothesis. Which mean that there was significant relationship between academic past performance and the research attitude of students in Abia State University as; the r calculated value is above 0.5, indicating relationship between the two variables. Sequel to this, we hold that poor academic past performance has negative effects on the research attitude of students in Abia State University. This is pointing to the fact that there is poor attitude of students towards academic research in Abia State University (For example, in Abia State University few of the students' experiences on research are positive, while majority are not).

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Hypothesis Two: There is no significant relationship between academic vicarious experiences and the research attitude of students in Abia State University.

Items 5 and 6 are relevant to the hypothesis two.

Table 5: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for hypothesis two, table 2 was used.

X	Y	XY	X^2	Y^2
160	131	20,960	25,600	17,161
115	118	13,570	13,225	13,924
66	83	5,478	4,356	6,889
50	59	2,950	2,500	3,481
391	**391**	**42,958**	**45,681**	**41,455**

$$r = \frac{n\sum X Y - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{(n\sum X^2 - (\sum Y)^2)\,(n\sum Y^2) - (\sum Y)^2)}}$$

Where, $\sum X = \sum Y = 391$, $\sum X^2 =$ **45,681**, $\sum Y^2 =$ **41,455**, $\sum XY =$ **42,958**

$$r = \frac{4\,(42,958) - (391)\,(391)}{\sqrt{(4(45,681) - (391)^2)4(41,455) - (391)^2)}}$$

$$r = \frac{171,832 - 152,881}{\sqrt{(182,724 - 152,881)\,(165,820 - 152,881)}}$$

$$r = \frac{18,951}{\sqrt{(29,843)\,(12,939)}}$$

$$r = \frac{18,951}{\sqrt{386,139,577}}$$

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$$r = \frac{18,951}{19,650}$$

$$r = 0.9644$$

Since the calculated value of r, 0.9644 is greater than 0.5, the researcher accepted the alternative hypothesis and rejected the null hypothesis. Which means that there was significant relationship between academic vicarious experiences and the research attitude of students in Abia State University as; the r calculated value is above 0.5, indicating relationship between the two variables. In view of this, we hold that poor academic vicarious experience has negative effects on the research attitude of students in Abia State University (For example, students' vicarious experience of observing a model can have a strong influence on self-efficacy).

Hypothesis Three: There is no significant relationship between academic verbal persuasion/physiological cues and the research attitude of students in Abia State University

Items 9 and 10 are relevant to the hypothesis three.

Table 6: Pearson's Product Moment Correlation Coefficient for hypothesis two, tables 3 was used.

X	Y	XY	X^2	Y^2
133	181	24,073	17,689	32,761
116	129	14,964	13,456	16,461
81	50	4,050	6,561	2,500
61	31	1,891	3,721	961
391	**391**	**44,978**	**41,427**	**52,863**

$$r = \frac{n\sum X\,Y - \sum X \sum Y}{\sqrt{(n\sum X^2 - (\sum Y)^2)(n\sum Y^2) - (\sum Y)^2)}}$$

Where, $\sum X = \sum Y == 391$,

$\sum X^2 = 41,427$,

$\sum Y^2 = 52,863$,

$\sum XY = 44,978$.

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$$r = \frac{4\,(44{,}978) - (391)\,(391)}{\sqrt{(4(41{,}427)-(391)^2)4(52{,}863)-(391)^2)}}$$

$$r = \frac{179{,}912 - 152881}{\sqrt{(165{,}708-152{,}881)\,(211{,}452-152{,}881)}}$$

$$r = \frac{27{,}031}{\sqrt{12{,}827 \times 58{,}571}}$$

$$r = \frac{27{,}031}{\sqrt{571{,}290{,}217}}$$

$$r \quad \frac{27{,}031}{27{,}410}$$

$r = \underline{0.9862}$

Since the calculated value of r, 0.9862 is greater than 0.5, the researcher accepted the alternative hypothesis and rejected the null hypothesis. Which means that there was significant relationship between academic verbal persuasion/physiological cues and the research attitude of students in Abia State University as; the r calculated value is above 0.5, indicating relationship between the two variables. Consequent upon this, we hold that the poor academic verbal persuasion/physiological cues has negative effects on the research attitude of students in Abia State University.

Discussion of Findings

The test of hypothesis one, revealed that there is no significant relationship between academic past performance and the research attitude of students in Abia State University. Further evaluation showed that poor academic past performance has negative effects on the research attitude of students in Abia State University. This is pointing to the fact that there is poor attitude of

students towards academic research in Abia State University (For example, in Abia State University few of the students' experiences on research are positive, while majority are not). For example, Agiriga (2021) argued that students interpretation to their past successes and failures can have a dramatic impact on their self-efficacy. Supporting this position, Maddux (2012) observed that if students believe their success in a particular area is the result of the skills they developed (their ability), they are much more likely to be confident about future success in that area. For him, if students attribute their success solely to hard work, they may not necessarily expect future success, since they may not choose or even want to work equally hard on future assignments.

The test of hypothesis two indicated that there was significant relationship between academic vicarious experiences and the research attitude of students in Abia State University. Further analysis showed that poor academic vicarious experience has negative effects on the research attitude of students in Abia State University (For example, students' vicarious experience of looking at a fellow student not engaging himself/herself on project can have a negative effect on self-efficacy). For example, (Onyebueke, 2020) noted that when a student sees another student accomplish a task, the vicarious experience of observing a model can also have a strong influence on self-efficacy. He pointed out that, by observing others like themselves perform tasks students make judgments about their own capabilities. In consonance with this, Orji (2018) exemplified that if a student sees a friend publish a poem, he might believe he can also have one published. According to him, in a school setting, a third grader observing other third graders learn multiplication tables is likely to believe that he can also learn them. The more students relate to the model being observed, the more likely the model's performance will have an impact on them.

The test of hypothesis three revealed that there is no significant relationship between academic verbal persuasion/physiological cues and the research attitude of students in Abia State University Further assessment showed that the poor academic verbal persuasion/physiological cues has negative effects on the research attitude of students in Abia State University. For example, (Adebayo & Bolaji, 2020) posited that the short-term effects of persuasion need to be coupled with actual successes. The lecturer's credibility is also an important factor with verbal persuasion. Supporting result, Mohammed (2017) submitted that students experience higher self-efficacy when they are told they are capable by someone they believe is trustworthy. For him, students will also tend to discredit a lecturer if they believe the lecturer does not fully understand the demands of the task being faced. Although, verbal persuasion such as this can be important, it does not contribute as much as an individual's own experiences or vicarious experiences.

Conclusion

It has been meaningful analyzing the correlation between academic self-efficacy and research attitude of students in Abia State University. Self-efficacy is an essential

component of self-regulation. It is the process that allows an individual to decide how to best implement his or her efforts. Self-regulation depends on individuals setting goals for performance, which can motivate and guide action, based on self-evaluations of such performance, which result in emotional responses that can enhance or disrupt self-regulation.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, it was recommended that:

1. Students should be encouraged to keep away from their past research performance and focus on the present in order to enhance their academic performance (research attitude).

2. Students should be encouraged to shun academic vicarious experiences and imbibe the culture of hard work to improve their research attitude.

3. The management should as a matter of urgency encourage positive academic verbal persuasion/physiological cues capable of improving the research attitude of students.

Contribution to Knowledge

This study has contributed to knowledge by assessing the correlation between academic self-efficacy and research attitude of students in Abia State University. This study has contributed to knowledge by focusing on the correlation between academic self-efficacy and research attitude of students. It also used Abia State University a study which is a contribution to knowledge. This study has contributed to knowledge by utilizing divergent variables and research methodology from what have not been used by past researches. Here, survey research design was used and data were collected through primary source (questionnaire). The data was analyzed using frequency counts, simple percentage, mean and inference statistics. The final contribution to knowledge is presented in the model below:

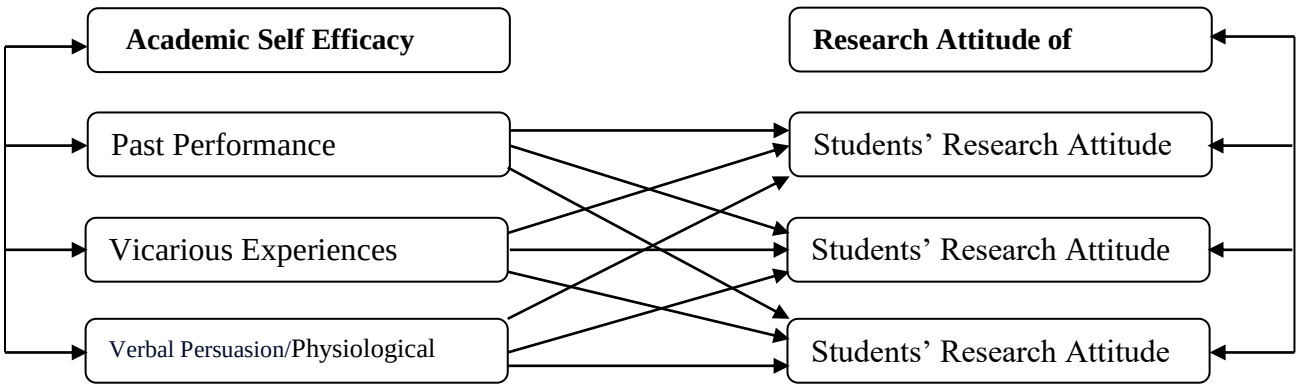


Fig. 5.1: Heuristic model; **Source**: The Researcher, 2023

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