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**STUDENT'- STUDENT RELATIONSHIP AND ACADEMIC
ACHIEVEMENT IN CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT:

This study described the influence of students-student relationship and academic achievement of secondary school students in Cross River State. One research question and one null hypothesis guided the study. Literature was reviewed according to the variable under study. The ex-post facto design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 15,080 SS2 students, in all the 272 public secondary schools in Cross River State. A sample of 1, 029 students was used for the study. An instrument named “Student-student relationship questionnaire was` used for data collection. The reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha reliability method .77. The study equally involved data from school administrative records which were students’ academic achievement records for 2018 promotion examinations in English language, Mathematics and Biology obtained from school authorities. Data collected from 1,029 of the subjects were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The findings from the results revealed that students-student relationship had positive significant influence on students’ academic achievement. It is therefore concluded that school routine activities influence academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Cross River State. Based on the above finding, it was recommended among others that peer group has both positive and negative

influence on adolescent students' academic achievement. Hence, parents should urge their wards to relate with responsible friends who know the importance of education

INTRODUCTION:

The desire for a high level of academic performance puts a lot of pressure on students, teachers and schools and in general the education system itself. In fact, it appears as if the whole education revolves round the academic performance of students, though various other outcomes are also expected from the system. The contemporary society cannot achieve its aim of economic growth, technological development and cultural advancement without harnessing the talents of its citizens (Kharazi, 2006).

There has been a fall in students' academic achievement in school over the years as compared to other years. Evidence abounds that students have not been doing well in school. Adeosun (2010) observed that the low standard of students' performance is reflected in the large number of candidates who failed SSCE exams over the years. From the result, it has shown a drastic decline in the achievement of students. This statistics and report is a call for concern for any patriotic stakeholder in the education subsector to ponder over the system.

There are numerous reasons why students may lose interest in school, and engagement is a key factor. Considering that students spend about twenty-five percent of their waking hours in a classroom, it is essential that students are engaged or they will not be willing to learn. This creates a problem for both the teacher and the student. Throughout an average school day, teachers frequently overhear students complaining about an assignment, a class, or even a teacher. If students have positive relationships with their teachers, they will be more engaged and thus more motivated throughout each of their classes.

The interactions among peers in the classroom are a normal and essential part of the learning process that influences the lifelong learning habits of students. The potential effects of peer relationships are reciprocal: Some students are more receptive than others. On one extreme, for example, is the student who values and seeks peer input on every decision; on the other is the social isolate who avoids interaction in and out of the classroom. Despite evidence that student-student relationships matter for students' academic outcomes, one critical issue remains unresolved. It is the direction of influence. Whereas studies typically focus on how students-students relationship impact academic achievement, they often do not account for the dynamic nature of students-students relationship. Thus there is a need for research that examines both how student-student relationship influence students' academic achievement in schools.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY:

The purpose of this study was to examine student'-student relationship and academic achievement in Cross River State.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS:

What is the relationship between student'-student relationship and academic achievement?

LITERATURE REVIEW:

To understand the consequences of peer relationship on academic achievement, it is pertinent to highlight what constitutes this important relationship. Peer interaction is the children's ability to relate to each other, for example, walking to class together, sharing ideas on a lesson and going out together with friends, among others. Peer relationship plays an important role in the lives of

adolescents. It determines to a reasonable extent the quality of adjustment which they make in their school life (social and academic). The peer group is seen to be an influential group consisting of members who have similar traits and characteristics, could be of the same age range or mixed group. They also set goals for themselves which they strive to achieve for the survival of the group. In striving to achieve the standards they set for themselves they tend to bond stronger, many a time believing in one another more than their parents or teachers.

Literature reveals that in the relationship among peer group members, acceptance, rejection, compliance and non-compliance and so on, are common phenomena. These features in peer relationship give the members some status within their group. Four types of children who exist in the school learning environment based on their status are; (i) Popular, (ii) neglected (iii) rejected and (iv) controversial (Wentzel & Ahser as cited in Irozuru, 2016). Popular children are frequently nominated by their peers as ‘best friends’, they are rarely disliked by them; rejected children are also infrequently nominated by their peers as ‘best friends’. Controversial children are in between may frequently be nominated both as best friends and as being disliked. In other words, the quality of a child’s relationship determines his or her acceptability by peers (Jranks Articles, 2013). A popular child is considered the accepted one. He or she is socially competent, friendly, cooperative and good in conversation. Also, the popular child is assertive, possess problem solving skills and good spirit of sportsmanship. According to Zettergreen (2003) accepted students tend to display positive peer relation, pro-social behaviour, good academic skill, good conflict resolution skills and leadership qualities.

The quality of goals set by peers can readily be observed in their activities or behaviour of members. According to Shaffer and Kipp (2007) the nature of relationship between peers, determines the kind of socialization that takes place. Johnson (2005) and Santrock (2006) observe that relationship between peers has great influence on a child’s personality and all round development. The researchers explained that it can make them to develop corresponding disposition towards school, educational cravings and achievement, character, behaviour, career as well as future adjustment.

Olugbode (2012) conducted a descriptive survey designed study on the effects of social problems on academic and social adjustment of senior secondary school (SSS) students in Shomolu Education District II of Lagos State. The study population was SSS 2 students in the education district. The researcher employed stratified random sampling technique to select the six schools and three hundred students (150 males and 150 females) for the study. A self designed questionnaire was constructed for the study. Pearson product moment correlation and independent t-test were used where applicable for the data analysis. The findings showed that social problems have adverse effects on students academic performance and social adjustment in school ($r_{cal} > r_{critical}$ at 298;df, 0.05 level of significant). This is because mean score of social problem ($\bar{x} = 43.6$) is greater than the mean score of their social life adjustment ($\bar{x} = 41.2$). The author thus recommended that teachers should serve as models and provide needed support to students for proper school adjustment. Also that the school authority should encourage co-curricular activities among the learners that inculcate pro-social behaviour.

Deepika and Prema (2017) analyzed the relationship between peer pressure and academic achievement of deviant students. Purposive random sampling technique was used to study the deviant student’s behavioural factor. The sample was drawn from the population of 7546

students. 145 deviant students were used as sample from classes VI to XII about 2% of the entire population of the school. The result revealed that negative correlation exists between peer pressure and academic achievement. The result equally showed that peer pressure plays a vital role in lowering academic achievement.

Azua (2016) conducted a study to find out the peer influence and parental support on the academic achievement of senior secondary school students in Giwa educational zone. Ex-post factor design was adopted for the study. The sample was selected using cluster and simple random sampling method. A total population of 1606 and a sample size of 338 students from four senior secondary schools were used for the study. Two questionnaires from peer support and parental support inventories were used for the study. The academic achievement was obtained from the scores in English language and mathematics obtained from the students' mock examination. Three hypotheses formulated were tested using Pearson product moment correlation. The result revealed that there is a significant relationship between peer support and academic achievement ($r = 0.742$, $p = 0.018$) parental psychological support and academic achievement ($r = 0.756$, $p = 0.003$). A significant relationship exist between parental monitoring of homework and academic achievement ($r = 0.838$, $p = 0.002$). It was recommended that parents should offer psychological support to their children by way of counselling and fostering educational career and aspiration in the child. They are to monitor the type of friends their children keep and give appropriate advice.

METHODOLOGY:

The study adopted Ex-post facto research design. The study was carried out in Cross River State, which is one of the thirty six states in Nigeria. Cross River State, as presently constituted, is located within the tropical rain forest belt of Nigeria. It lies between latitude $5^{\circ}32'$ and $4^{\circ}27'$ North of the Equator and longitude $7^{\circ}50'$ and $9^{\circ}28'$ East of the Greenwich Meridian. The population of the study consisted of all the 15,080 SS2 students, in all the 272 public secondary schools in Cross River State. A total of 7,142 of the students are males, while 7,938 are females. The stratified random sampling technique was adopted for the study. The sample for the study comprised 1,037 SS2 students randomly selected from 30 public schools. Data for the study were collected in two phases. Phase one involved the use of a questionnaire titled "Student-student relationship and Academic achievement Questionnaire" (SRAQ). Phase two involved the extraction from school records students' score in 2018 promotion examination in (English Language, Mathematics and Biology). The questionnaire had four parts: Parts A, B, C and D. Part A elicited from the respondents information about their demographic such as sex and age. Part B was a five items Likert-type scale with four point response alternatives measuring extent of students' involvement in relationships with students. Part C was a fifteen item, four point Likert type scale that measured students' perception of the importance to them of relationships with students.

The reliability of the instrument (SRASRQ) was established using Cronbach alpha reliability method to obtain the reliability coefficient of .77. Descriptive statistics (simple percentages and bar graphs) and One way Analysis of Variance were used in responding to the research questions and hypothesis.

RESULT/FINDING:

This study was aimed at determining the extent to which students-student relationship influence students' academic achievement. In answering research the question, simple percentages were

used in matching levels of students’ academic achievement against their perception of taking/examination in order to estimate the extent to which academic achievement was influenced by their students’ perception of taking/examination.

The results as presented in Table 1 showed that, out of the 286 subjects who had low relationship among themselves, 35.3 per cent, 38.8 per cent and 25.9 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in English Language, while out of the 555 subjects who had moderate relationship among peer, 8.6 per cent, 83.6 per cent and 7.7 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in English Language, and out of the 188 subjects who had high relationship among peer, 2.7 per cent, 60.6 per cent and 36.7 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in English Language. Apparently, the results showed that healthy relationship among peers promotes academic achievement in English Language.

The results also showed that, out of the 286 subjects who had low relationship among peers, 35.3 per cent, 48.6 per cent and 16.1 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in Mathematics, while out of the 555 subjects who had moderate relationship among peer, 10.5 per cent, 75.0 per cent and 14.6 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in Mathematics, and out of the 188 subjects who had high relationship among peers, 3.7 per cent, 68.6 per cent and 27.7 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in Mathematics. Apparently, the results also indicated that healthy relationship among peers promotes academic achievement in Mathematics.

TABLE 1: Proportions of subjects who were low, average and high in academic achievement across levels of student – student relationship

Variables	Relationship among peer	N	Low (%)	Moderate (%)	High (%)	Total (%)
English Language	Low	286	35.3	38.8	25.9	100
	Moderate	555	8.6	83.6	7.7	100
	High	188	2.7	60.6	36.7	100
	Total	1029	15.0	67.0	18.1	100
Mathematics	Low	286	35.3	48.6	16.1	100
	Moderate	555	10.5	75.0	14.6	100
	High	188	3.7	68.6	27.7	100
	Total	1029	16.1	66.5	17.4	100
Biology	Low	286	26.6	63.3	10.1	100
	Moderate	555	9.4	76.0	14.6	100
	High	188	0.0	64.4	35.6	100
	Total	1029	12.4	70.4	17.2	100
Overall academic achievement	Low	286	41.3	53.8	4.9	100
	Moderate	555	17.7	74.4	7.9	100

High	188	7.4	63.8	28.7	100
Total	1029	22.4	66.8	10.9	100

The result in Table 18 further showed that, out of the 286 subjects who had low relationship among peers, 26.6 per cent, 63.3 per cent and 10.1 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in Biology, while out of the 555 subjects who had moderate relationship among peer, 9.4 per cent, 76.0 per cent and 14.6 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in Biology, and out of the 188 subjects who had high relationship among peer, 0.0 per cent, 64.4 per cent and 35.6 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of achievement in Biology. Apparently, the results also indicated that healthy relationship among peers promotes academic achievement in Biology.

The results finally showed that, out of the 286 subjects who had low relationship among peers, 41.3 per cent, 53.8 per cent and 4.9 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of overall academic achievement, while out of the 555 subjects who had moderate relationship among peer, 17.7 per cent, 74.4 per cent and 7.9 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of overall academic achievement, and out of the 188 subjects who had high relationship among peer, 7.4 per cent, 63.8 per cent and 28.7 per cent respectively had low, moderate and high level of overall academic achievement. Apparently, the results also indicated that students’ relationship among peers as being important promotes overall academic achievement.

As presented in Table 2, the results of the One-way Analysis of Variance showed that students-student relationship had significant influence on their English Language achievement($F=24.356$; $df=2, 1026$; $p<.05$); Mathematics achievement($F=32.494$; $df=2, 1026$; $p<.05$); Biology ($F=65.907$; $df=2, 1026$; $p<.05$) and overall academic achievement ($F=65.889$; $df=2, 1026$; $p<.05$). By implication, the null hypothesis that student-student relationship does not significantly influence their academic achievement is therefore rejected for achievement in English Language, Mathematics, Biology and overall academic achievement. These results imply that, student-student relation significantly influences students’ academic achievement.

Given the significant F-ratios, a post hoc analysis was conducted using the Fishers Least Significant Difference (LSD) multiple comparison test to check for the source of the difference. The results as presented in Table 3 showed that, the subjects who had low level of relationship with peer had significantly lower mean achievement in English Language when compared with those who had moderate level of relationship among peer ($MD=-2.93$; $p<.05$), and those who had high level of relationship among peer ($MD=-6.22$; $p<.05$). Other pair wise comparison showed that subjects who had moderate level of relationship among peers had a significant lower mean score in English Language when compared with those that had high level of relationship among peers ($MD=-3.29$; $p<.05$).

TABLE 2: One-way Analysis of Variance for student-student relationship and their academic achievement

Variable	Level of relationship among peers	N	Mean	SD
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English Language	Low	286	47.43	11.53
	Moderate	555	50.36	8.78
	High	188	53.65	8.36
	Total	1029	50.15	9.77
Mathematics	Low	286	46.70	10.14
	Moderate	555	50.76	9.11
	High	188	53.69	10.10
	Total	1029	50.17	9.88
Biology	Low	286	45.43	10.47
	Moderate	555	50.38	9.06
	High	188	55.49	8.80
	Total	1029	49.94	10.01
Overall academic achievement	Low	286	139.56	24.90
	Moderate	555	151.50	19.33
	High	188	162.84	24.21
	Total	1029	150.25	23.27

	Source of variance	Sum of squares	Df	Mean square	F-ratio	p-level
English Language	Between groups	4447.650	2	2223.825	24.356*	.000
	Within groups	93680.805	1026	91.307		
	Total	98128.455	1028			
Mathematics	Between groups	5975.829	2	2987.914	32.494*	.000
	Within groups	94342.678	1026	91.952		
	Total	100318.506	1028			
Biology	Between groups	11716.647	2	5858.324	65.907*	.000
	Within groups	91199.074	1026	88.888		
	Total	102915.721	1028			
Overall academic achievement	Between groups	63355.333	2	31677.666	65.889*	.000
	Within groups	493271.857	1026	480.772		
	Total	556627.190	1028			

*Sig. .05 alpha level; $p < .05$.

TABLE 3: Fishers Least Significant Difference Post Hoc Test for student-student relationship and their academic achievement

Variable	Relationship among peer	N	Mean	Mean difference	p-level
English Language	Low	286	47.43	-2.93*	.000
	Moderate	555	50.36		

Mathematics	Low	286	47.43	-6.22*	.000
	High	188	53.65		
	Moderate	555	50.36	-3.29*	.000
	High	188	53.65		
	Low	286	46.70	-4.06*	.000
	Moderate	555	50.76		
Biology	Low	286	46.70	-7.00*	.000
	High	188	53.69		
	Moderate	555	50.76	-2.94*	.000
	High	188	53.69		
	Low	286	45.43	-4.95*	.000
	Moderate	555	50.38		
Overall academic achievement	Low	286	45.43	-10.06*	.000
	High	188	55.49		
	Moderate	555	50.38	-5.11*	.000
	High	188	55.49		
	Low	286	139.56	-11.95*	.000
	Moderate	555	151.50		
	Low	286	139.56	-23.28*	.000
	High	188	162.84		
	Moderate	555	151.50	-11.34*	.000
	High	188	162.84		

*Significant at .05 level; $p < .05$.

For academic achievement in Mathematics, the subjects who had low level of student-student relationship had significant lower mean when compared with those who had moderate level of relationship among peer (MD=-4.06; $p < .05$), and those who had high level of relationship among peer (MD=-7.00; $p < .05$). Other pair wise comparison showed that the subjects who had moderate level of relationship with peers had a significantly lower mean score in Mathematics when compared with those who had high level of relationship with peers (MD=-2.94; $p < .05$).

For academic achievement in Biology, the subjects who had low level of relationship with peers had significant lower mean score when compared with those who had moderate level of relationship among peer (MD=-4.95; $p < .05$), and those who had high level of relationship among peer (MD=-10.06; $p < .05$). Other pair wise comparison showed that the subjects who had moderate level of relationship with peers had significant lower mean score when compared with those who had high level of relationship with peers (MD=-5.11; $p < .05$).

For overall academic achievement, the subjects who had low level of relationship with peers had significantly lower mean score when compared with those who had moderate level of relationship with peers (MD=-11.95; $p < .05$), and those who had high level of relationship with peers (MD=-23.28; $p < .05$). Other pair wise comparison showed that the subjects who had

moderate level of relationship with peers had a significantly lower mean score in overall academic achievement when compared with those who had high level of relationship with peers (MD=-11.34; $p<.05$).

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS:

The findings of research question five showed that relationship among peers promotes academic achievement. The finding also showed that healthy relationship among peer had significant influence on students' academic achievement. In support of the findings above, a pair wise comparison of students level of relationship among peer with their level of achievement revealed that; students who had low level of relationship among peer had a significant lower mean score in English Language in comparison with their counterparts that had either moderate or high relationship among peer. The above trend was observed in the comparative achievement scores in mathematics and biology respectively.

Similarly, the findings of this study finds support in the work of Olugbode (2012) who found that social problems have adverse effects on students' academic achievement and social adjustment in school. In this work social problems likened to low level of student- student relationship revealed a significant lower achievement in the subjects examined. This finding finds support in that of Osa-Edoh and Iyamu (2012) that found a significant relationship between social life (example peer group relationship) and academic achievement among the learners. The researcher noted that the reason for the outcome is that well-adjusted children achieve better academically than their counterparts who fail to socially adjust. This observation above is further buttressed by Burgess (2013) and Boulton, Don and Boulton (2011). Burges (2013) noted that communication breakdown in peer relationship can have a devastating impact on students' academic achievement, while in the view of Boulton, Don and Boulton (2011) liking and enjoyment of school impacted students' academic achievement.

CONCLUSION:

From the results of this study, it was concluded that students-students significantly influenced students' academic achievement. Student-student relationship is important for both students. How to build a close relationship with students should be considered by every student.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Based on the finding of the study, it was recommended that peer group has both positive and negative influence on adolescent students' academic achievement. Hence, parents should urge their wards to relate with responsible friends who know the importance of education

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