Academic Self-Efficacy and Personality Factors Predicting Academic Achievement Motivation among Open/Distance Learning Students of University of Ibadan

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Difficulty of access to regular/traditional schooling system at tertiary level has increased the demand for open(distance learning (ODL) mode of study at university level. Achievement motivation has been found to be an important factor for academic success, continuity and completion of academic programme in the ODL mode of study. Therefore, this study investigated academic self-efficacy and personality as predictors of achievement motivation among open/distance learning students of University of Ibadan, Nigeria. The research adopted an ex-post facto research design and randomly sampled 199 distance learning students of University of Ibadan comprising of 94 females and 105 males, with ages between 20 and 46 years. A self-administered structured questionnaire that contained validated scales measuring achievement motivation, academic self-efficacy and personality was administered via the institutional e-mail addresses. Academic self-efficacy and personality factors accounted for 45.3% of the academic achievement motivation among students in ODL programmes ($R^2=.453$; $F(7,190)=24.261$, $p<.01$). The ODL students’ level of agreeableness and emotional stability significantly determined motivation towards academic achievement ($\beta=-.306; p<.01$) & ($\beta=.311; p<.01$) respectively. There was a significant interaction between gender and employment status of distance learning students ($F(1, 195)=12.78$, $p<.01$), such that employed males were more motivated towards academic achievement. For open/distance learning students to be motivated to follow through their programmes to the end, their academic self-efficacy is very important, bearing the few student-lecturer contact hours characteristic of ODL. Each ODL institution needs to put this into consideration when designing their programme curricula, with keen attention to the personality differences of the students.

Keywords: Achievement motivation, academic self-efficacy, personality, Open/Distance Learning

Introduction

There is increasing interest in distance education in Nigeria as it has become the option of choice for adults who are gainfully employed and cannot afford the luxury of the traditional on-campus education. This is due to pressures related to the requirements set by work organizations as conditions necessary for continued employment and/or promotion; for some others it’s a matter of self-actualization as they were unable to achieve formal education when they were younger. Regardless of the reasons individuals have to undertake open/distance education, it is important that they have high level of motivation, maturity, and self-discipline as such are necessary general characteristics of successful students for the achievement of distance education programs and for the continuity of students in the program (Willis, 1994).

Achievement motivation has been defined as self determination to succeed in whatever activities one engages in, be it academic work, professional work or sporting event, among others (Tella, 2007). It is the motivation to achieve; a stable learned characteristic in which a person obtains satisfaction by striving for and attaining a level of excellence (Nwankwo, Obi and Agu, 2013). It also refers to an individual’s desire for significant accomplishment, mastering of skills control or high standards (McClelland et al., 1953). People with a high need for achievement have been found to seek out situations in which they can compete against...
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some standard. Nwankwo, Obi and Agu (2013) in their study among university undergraduates opined that such individuals, in picking their challenges, tend to avoid situations in which success will come too easily (i.e. which would be unchallenging) and situations in which success is unlikely to come. However, they also are of the opinion that individuals who have a low level of achievement motivation are driven primarily by a need to avoid failure. This makes them more likely to seek out easy tasks which they are sure failure is not imminent or and has no negative consequences. Such people with a high fear of failure will stay away from task of intermediate difficulty because they may fail where others have been successful (Atkinson and Feather, 1966). Achievement motivation is associated with the following range of actions. These include ‘intense, prolonged and repeated efforts to accomplish something difficult, to work with singleness of purpose towards a high and distant goal, to have the determination to win’.

The concept of achievement motivation or the need for achievement was popularized by the psychologist David McClelland. The need for achievement theory by McClelland (1961), refers to an individual preference for success under conditions of competition and the need for achievement has been studied both at the individual and societal level. However, the main objective behind this theory is to understand the characteristics of higher need achievers, the outcome associated with high need achievement and method of increasing the need for achievement. The theory posits that people with a high need for achievement tend to set moderately difficult goals, make moderately risky decisions, want immediate feedback, become preoccupied with their task and assume personal responsibility (Moorhead and Griffin, 1995). It has been found that people with high self-esteem have performance expectations higher than those of low self-esteem (Atkinson, Bastian, Earl and Litwin, 1960; Covington and Omelich, 1979). No wonder, some undergraduates in university do better than others when faced with the same task, the probability of success estimate of high self-esteem people will therefore be higher than those of low self-esteem people. Perhaps, students’ motivation has a more positive value in learning process compared with students’ intelligence. Higher level of motivation leads to permanent learning, and lower level of motivation leads to unstable learning (Saif, 2013). Najafi and Fakadjang (2008) and Abolghasemi (2011) found a positive relationship between achievement motivation and children’s learning (Najafi and Fakadjang, 2007; Abolghasemi, 2011), meaning that high level of achievement motivation leads to better performance in learning process.

The focus of previous achievement motivation researches among students has had its lights on regular on-campus students. It is however obvious that the roles played by lecturers in on-campus education is not just that of teachers, but the student-lecturer contact develops a mentor-mentee relationship of a sort that turns out to boost the motivation of students to achieve academic success. It is however rhetorical if the motivation to achieve academic success among ODL students might be different bearing the absence of physical students-lecturer contact. Some factors considered to play an important role to promote or decline academic achievement include self-efficacy, achievement motivation, socioeconomic status and gender.

Self-efficacy is the measure of one's own competence to complete tasks and reach goals (Ormrod, 2006). It affects every area of human endeavour, by determining the beliefs a person holds regarding his or her power to affect situations, thus strongly influencing both the power a person actually has to face challenges competently and the choices a person is most likely to make. In academic settings, self-efficacy is a strong predictor of performance (Klassen, Krawchuk and Rajani, 2008).

Personality can affect an individual’s motivation towards achievement. Personality can be seen as a combination of pattern of behaviour or psychological characteristics or qualities that form an individual’s distinctive character, and which can be compared and contrasted with other people (Cattell, 1995). It consists of a person’s unique mixture of emotional, intellectual and character traits. The trait theory of personality upon which the Big Five Personality Factor which is used in this study is founded explains that our personality is
a function of a combination of certain traits or characteristics in us which have varying degrees or intensity from one person to another (Costa and McCrae, 1992). The Big five personality trait was the model to comprehend the relationship between personality and academic behaviours with its five dimensions corresponding to the five factors of personality: Extraversion, Neuroticism, Agreeableness, Openness, and Conscientiousness.

Some students have a need to achieve in all that they do. Their desire for success drives them to accomplish every task, no matter what the task is, or the difficulties involved in completing it. Other students also feel a need for success, but consider the value or worth of the task before attempting it. If the student feels the task has no value, the student chooses not to do the task, even though they are perfectly capable of accomplishing the task (Atkinson, 1974). Still others, who may or may not be capable, plod on with their tasks, some achieving accomplishment, others not; the inherent difference in the motivation to achieve academic success of students is out rightly traceable to their innate personality traits.

While considerable research has been conducted internationally to examine the potential factors accounting for achievement motivation of college/university students, there have been relatively few empirical studies on this topic in the Nigerian context. In addition, those studies that have been conducted are not comprehensive enough in illuminating, which factors are potentially robust in affecting students’ academic success at higher institutions as they focused on few factors and it is evident that students’ achievement motivation is a product of multifaceted factors. Therefore, the present research extends on this work by examining the effects of a range of non-cognitive factors (i.e., students’ academic self-efficacy and personality) on achievement motivation. This will help our comprehensive understanding of the potential factors which account for students’ academic self-efficacy and achievement motivation of Distance Learning university students and to develop and employ the possible and timely strategies for intervention.

Hence, this study is an attempt to examine the influence of academic self-efficacy and personality on achievement motivation among distance learning students of University of Ibadan, Opebi center, Lagos.

**Method**

**Design:** This study is a cross-sectional survey and the correlational design was used for this study to establish a relationship between the independent variables; academic self-efficacy and personality and the dependent variable, achievement motivation. The variables in the study were measured from the participants over a short period of time from a sample representative of the population.

**Population and Sample:** The study was carried out using participants from among Psychology students of the University of Ibadan Distance Learning Centre, which included students from 100 level to 500 level. The sample size consisted of 199 conveniently sampled DLC students of Lagos centre, Opebi among which 105 were males (52.8%) and 94 females (47.2%), 113 (56.8%) of them were employed, while 86 (43.2%) were unemployed. Their ages ranged between 20 and 46, with the mean age being 31.48 and a standard deviation of 5.8.

**Instruments**

**Demographic variables:** These include age, gender and employment status of the respondents. They were required to state their current ages, while option was given to tick their specific gender, either male or female while employment status was categorized into employed and unemployed.

**Academic Achievement Motivation Scale:** It was measured by employing the revised 10-item scale of Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) developed by Lang, J.W.B. & Fries, S. (2006). It focuses on two factors of achievement motivation: hope of success and fear of failure. It provides adequate reliability, lower inter-scale correlations, and criterion-related validity with respect to typical criteria of achievement-related behaviour (Lang & Fries, 2006). The response choice for each item was a five-point Likert-type scale ranged from 1 (Does not correspond at all) to 5 (Corresponds exactly). With respect to the psychometric property of the scale, the authors
reported an internal reliability (Cronbach alpha coefficient) to be higher than .70. A high score on this scale means high achievement motivation and vice versa.

**Academic Self-efficacy Scale:** Academic self-efficacy was conceptualized in the present study as the extent to which students of DLC, University of Ibadan Lagos center believe in their abilities to perform academic tasks which are essential in enabling them to be successful in their university education. It was measured by the Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES) consisting of 33-Item assortment without hierarchical arrangement with a 5-point Likert-type instruction appended on degree of confidence on poles of (Very little... to Quite a lot) developed by Owen & Froman (1988). For reliability estimation, the scale was administered twice over an 8-week interval to another group of 88 educational psychology students (Owen & Froman, 1988). Alpha internal consistency estimates for the two occasions were .90 and .92. The 8-week stability estimate was .85. A high score infers high academic self-efficacy and vice versa.

**The Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI):**
This scale was developed by Gosling, S.D., Rentfrow, P.J. & Swann, W.B. (2003). It is an extremely brief measure of the Big-Five personality dimension consisting of a 10 item measure of the dimensions -2 items for each of the 5 dimensions on a 7 point Likert-type scale. It reached adequate levels in each of the criteria against which it was evaluated: convergent correlations (mean r=.72) far exceeded the discriminant correlations (absolute mean r =.20) and none of the discriminant correlations exceeded .36, test-retest validity was substantial (mean r=.72), patterns of external correlates with all column vector correlates exceeding .90. In scoring the scale, there are reverse scored items denoted by “R”: For extraversion: 1, 6R; Agreeableness: 2R, 7; Conscientiousness: 3, 8R; Emotional Stability: 4R, 9; Openness to experience: 5, 10R.

**PROCEDURE:** The questionnaire contained all the three scales (academic self-efficacy scale, achievement motivation scale and personality scale) and demographic questions were administered to the students that were conveniently selected. Two students of the center, who were provided with instructions regarding the administration procedure assisted in administering the survey forms. Some respondents administered their questionnaire online through the link sent to their school emails and on the school’s facebook platform. The personnel ensured that enough time was given to the respondents to complete the questionnaire. The respondents were allowed and encouraged to express their honest feelings without any bias. In addition, the questionnaire was retrieved same day from the respondents upon completion. A number of 220 questionnaire was administered, 207 questionnaire was retrieved but 199 questionnaire was considered valid for analysis.

**DATA ANALYSIS:** Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. Hypothesis one was tested with Pearson product moment correlation, hypothesis two with hierarchical multiple regression and hypothesis three with analysis of variance.

**Results**
Hypothesis one stated that academic self-efficacy, age and personality characteristics will be significantly correlated with achievement motivation. This was tested with a Pearson Product Moment Correlation as presented in a correlation matrix in Table 1.
Table 1: Correlation Matrix Showing Relationship between the Dependent Variable and Independent Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Achievement Motivation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.522*</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.407*</td>
<td>-.368**</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>.324*</td>
<td>.327**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Academic Self Efficacy</td>
<td>.522*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.407*</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.324*</td>
<td>.350**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.187**</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>.156*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.407*</td>
<td>.287**</td>
<td>.183*</td>
<td></td>
<td>.267**</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>.148</td>
<td>.162*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>-.368*</td>
<td>-.204**</td>
<td>-.267**</td>
<td>-.548**</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>.187**</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.148*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>.187**</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>-.211**</td>
<td>.131</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.148*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Emotional Stability</td>
<td>.324*</td>
<td>.058</td>
<td>-.014</td>
<td>.189**</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.115</td>
<td>.148*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Openness to Experience</td>
<td>.327*</td>
<td>.350**</td>
<td>.156*</td>
<td>.189**</td>
<td>-.058</td>
<td>.254**</td>
<td>.162</td>
<td>.148*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**. p < 0.01

Results in Table 1 show that achievement motivation has a significant positive relationship with academic self-efficacy, extraversion, emotional stability and openness to experience (r=.522, p<.01; r=.407, p<.01; r=.324, p<.01 and r=.327, p<.01) respectively, but a significant inverse relationship with agreeableness (r=-.368, p<.01). Hence, achievement motivation increases as academic self-efficacy, extraversion, emotional stability and openness to experience increases. and agreeableness decreases. However, the relationship of age and conscientiousness with achievement motivation were not significant (r=.109, p>.05; r=.086, p>.05) respectively. The stated hypothesis is therefore partially accepted.

Hypothesis two stated that academic self-efficacy, age and personality factors will have a significant independent and joint influence on achievement motivation. This was tested with a stepwise regression analysis as presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Summary Table of Stepwise multiple regression analysis showing the influence of academic self-efficacy, age and personality factors on achievement motivation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>T</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>R²Δ</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>FΔ</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>PΔ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>.517</td>
<td>8.460</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td>.269</td>
<td>.276</td>
<td>37.253</td>
<td>37.253</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.061</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>&gt;.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Self-Efficacy</td>
<td>.371</td>
<td>6.262</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td>.453</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>24.261</td>
<td>14.071</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>-.032</td>
<td>-.578</td>
<td>&gt;.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.074</td>
<td>1.072</td>
<td>&gt;.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>-.306</td>
<td>-.474</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.085</td>
<td>1.452</td>
<td>&gt;.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Stability</td>
<td>.311</td>
<td>5.473</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>.102</td>
<td>1.721</td>
<td>&gt;.05</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results from model 1 of Table 2 reveals that academic self-efficacy and age significantly jointly predicted achievement motivation (F(2, 195) = 37.253, p<.01; R²=.269), inferring that 26.9% of the variation observable in achievement motivation can be accounted for by academic self-efficacy and age. Further, the independent influence of academic self-efficacy on achievement motivation was significant (β=.517; t=8.460; p<.01) but not significant for
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age ($\beta = .061; t = .990; p > .05$). In model 2 of Table 4.2, personality factors were introduced into the model, with results revealing that the joint influence of academic self-efficacy, age and personality characteristics on achievement motivation was significant ($F(7, 190) = 24.261, p < .01; R^2 = .453$), with the inference that all these variables accounted for 45.3% of the variation observable in achievement motivation. Consequently, personality factors alone accounted for 19.6% of this observed variation ($R^2 = .196, F(5, 190) = 14.071, p < .01$).

Also in model 2, the independent influence of academic self-efficacy, agreeableness and emotional stability on achievement motivation were all significant ($\beta = .371; t = 6.262; p < .01$); ($\beta = -.306; t = -4.557; p < .01$); ($\beta = .311; t = 5.473; p < .01$) respectively but not significant for age, extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience ($\beta = -.032; t = -.578; p > .05$); ($\beta = .074; t = 1.072; p > .05$); ($\beta = .085; t = 1.452; p > .05$); ($\beta = .102; t = 1.721; p > .05$) respectively. The stated hypothesis is therefore partially accepted.

Hypothesis three stated that there will be a main and interactive influence of gender and Employment status on achievement motivation. This hypothesis was tested with a two by two analysis of variance as presented in Table 3.

**Table 3: Summary Table of the Analysis of Variance showing Influence of Gender and Employment Status on Achievement Motivation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>MS²</th>
<th>F ratio</th>
<th>P</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender (A)</td>
<td>117.35</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>117.35</td>
<td>2.49</td>
<td>&gt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment (B)</td>
<td>50.49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>50.49</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>&gt;.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AXB</td>
<td>601.82</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>601.82</td>
<td>12.78</td>
<td>&lt;.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Error</td>
<td>9185.61</td>
<td>195</td>
<td>47.11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>10009.60</td>
<td>199</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 4: Showing mean values of the interaction between Gender and Marital Status on Achievement Motivation**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>37.39</td>
<td>6.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>34.88</td>
<td>8.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>32.29</td>
<td>4.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>36.85</td>
<td>7.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Results from Table 3 reveals that the main influence of gender and employment status on achievement motivation were not significant ($F(1, 195) = 2.49, p > .05$) and ($F(1, 195) = 1.07, p > .05$) respectively. However, the interactive influence of gender and employment status was significant ($F(1, 195) = 12.78, p < .01$). A further observation of means in Table 4 reveal that employed males ($X = 37.39, SD = 6.89$) are the highest on achievement motivation, followed by unemployed females ($X = 36.85, SD = 7.05$), then unemployed males ($X = 34.88, SD = 8.51$); least were the employed females ($X = 32.29, SD = 4.82$).

**Discussion and Conclusion**

This study was set out to examine the influence of self-efficacy and personality characteristics on achievement motivation and the relationship amongst these variables with the intent of illuminating the potentially strong factors that predict achievement motivation of distance learning students of the University of Ibadan, Lagos center. Three hypotheses were stated to test these objectives.

Consequently, achievement motivation was found to have a significant positive relationship with academic self-efficacy, extraversion, emotional stability and openness to experience,
but a significant inverse relationship with agreeableness. Hence, achievement motivation can be said to increase as academic self-efficacy, extraversion, emotional stability and openness to experience increases, while agreeableness decreases. However, the relationship of age and conscientiousness with achievement motivation were not significant.

This finding is consistent with that of Elias, Noordin and Mahyuddin’s (2010) study when they found that there was a significant positive correlation between self-efficacy and achievement motivation. Also, Reynolds & Weigand (2010) demonstrated that academic self-efficacy had a significant positive association with intrinsic motivation as well as it had a significant positive correlation with motivation. Several other studies have yielded consistent evidence that students’ academic self-efficacy have a significant positive association with their academic motivation (e.g. Schunk & Hanson, 1985; Zimmerman, 2000). Overall, Pajares’ (2003) conclusion that students’ confidence in their capabilities (i.e., self-efficacy) influences their motivation is aligned with the findings of this study. Similarly, Sadiq (2014) found that motivation of Nigeria Army School of Education students was high; Eric and Barnie (2014) found that the achievement motivation of high school students in Ghana was high.

Aremu and Oluwole (2001), Adeyemo and Oluwole (2001) and Odedele (2000) have submitted that the way and manner a person perceives him/herself could affect the resultant academic performance.

The findings of correlations between the Five-Factor Model of personality and achievement motivation in this current study is also supported by the study of Komarraju, Karau and Schmeck (2009) when they found that achievement motivation was positively correlated with conscientiousness and extraversion, and negatively with neuroticism (emotional instability). The reason for this might be because there are similarities between descriptions of individuals who are high on conscientiousness, and/or extraversion (being assertive, wanting excitement, bubbling with positive emotions, etc.) with those high on achievement motivation. Achievement motivation might have been negatively correlated with neuroticism as a neurotic individual is found to worry a lot, experience negative emotions, and not want to attempt a hard task for the fear of failure, which does not fit with the description of an individual high in achievement motivation. According to Dweck and Leggett (1988), openness and achievement motivation was positively correlated, as being creative allowed an individual to work in an environment that offered stimulation, a chance to be ambitious, and to take risks. The finding of no significant correlation of age with achievement motivation is at variance with the result of an indigenous and current study by Akpan & Umobong (2013) on the analysis of achievement motivation and academic engagement of students in the Nigerian senior secondary classroom, which portrayed a significant influence of age on achievement motivation, with older students being more achievement motivated than others. This result was however affirmed by the findings of Wormington et al. (2011) which revealed that motivational profiles may be differentially adaptive for different age groups. A reason for this contradiction may be because of common practice of early entrance to secondary schools. Hence, they are not yet mature, leading to problems of school adjustments as it was found that students in the group of late adolescence were most achievement motivated, whereas, the present study had most of the population in their mid/late adolescence. Another study by Amro et al. (2015) is in line with this current study; it was found that though age predicted student achievement in college algebra in face-to-face courses, it could not predict student achievement in online courses. Colorado and Eberle (2010) and Kupczynski, Ice, Gibson, Richardson, and Challoo (2011) indicated that age is not one of the predictors of student achievement in an online setting, hence supporting the findings of this research.

This study also revealed that academic self-efficacy and age significantly jointly predicted achievement motivation, with 26.9% of the variation observable in achievement motivation being accounted for by academic self-efficacy and age. Further, the independent influence of academic self-efficacy on achievement motivation was significant but not significant for
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age. This corroborates the findings of Zimmerman (2000), that self-efficacy beliefs have shown convergent validity in influencing such key indices of academic motivation as choice of activities, level of effort, persistence, and emotional reactions. There is evidence (Bandura, 1997) that self-efficacious students participate more readily, work harder, persist longer, and have fewer adverse emotional reactions when they encounter difficulties than those who doubt their capabilities. Salomon (1984) has found that self-efficacy is positively related to self-rated mental effort and achievement during students’ learning from text material that was perceived as difficult. Path analyses by Schunk (1981) have shown that self-efficacy influences students’ skill acquisition both directly and indirectly by increasing their persistence. Similarly, in a meta-analytic review of nearly 70 studies of persistence and rate measures of motivation, Murlton, Brown, and Lent (1991) found a significant positive effect size of students’ self-efficacy beliefs with motivation.

Furthermore, when personality factors were introduced into the regression model, the joint influence of academic self-efficacy, age and personality characteristics on achievement motivation was significant. The independent influence of academic self-efficacy, agreeableness and emotional stability on achievement motivation were all significant but not significant for age, extraversion, conscientiousness and openness to experience. This is supported by the findings of Parks & Guay (2009) that emotional stability was found to relate to achievement motivation. The reason is because emotionally stable individuals were more effectively able to control their negative emotions when performing required tasks and so had higher self-efficacy motivation. Eggens, Hendriks, Bosker and Van der Werf (2010) had an opposing result as it was found that emotionally stable individuals were less likely to be concerned with achieving compared to individuals low in emotionally stability. Eggens et al. (2010) suggested the reason for this is that individuals who are low in emotional stability are easily overwhelmed and therefore work harder to try and reduce these feelings. Another supporting finding by Sharma (2013) shows that agreeableness is significantly correlated to achievement motivation.

The main influence of gender and employment status on achievement motivation was not significant. However, the interactive influence of gender and employment status was significant. A further observation revealed that employed males are the highest on achievement motivation, followed by unemployed females, and then unemployed males, least were the employed females. This finding is supported by various studies that have revealed that there are no significant gender differences in the achievement motivation of university students (Chandler, Cook & Wolf, 1979; Lindgren, 1976; Pandey & Ahmad, 2007; Pratibha, 2006; Torki, 1985).

However, Akpan & Umobong (2013) found that gender had a significant influence on achievement motivation of students, with males being more highly motivated than females. Some other results indicate that male university students possess significantly higher levels of achievement motivation compared to their female counterparts (Adsuil & Kamble, 2008; Fortes, Rodrigues & Tchantchane, 2010). Some other findings also show that female college/university students have significantly higher levels of achievement motivation in some fields of study but lower levels in other disciplines of study as compared to their male counterparts (Sid & Lindgren, 1981).

The study concludes that nonetheless the inherent differences between the conditions of students in the regular academic programmes and those in the distance learning programmes, the perception of self-efficacy is germane to their motivation to achieve academic success and as such, conscious efforts be made towards improving their perceptions of self-efficacy. Of course, the face to face contact of students with their lecturers in the regular programmes, alongside the regular contact with other students are build-in factors to improve the perception of efficacy for students; the absence of these conditions in the open/distance learning programme is however the reason other means of improving the efficacy of students in the programme should be sought. Future studies should however consider testing the difference
in the achievement motivation of regular and open distance learning students.

References


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